



Legislation Text

File #: 2023-0132, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Christel Querijero and Jennifer Larocque, (707) 565-2431

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Community Survey Results Report

Recommended Action:

Receive a report on the results of the Community Survey

Executive Summary:

Goal 2, Objective 1 of the Organizational Excellence pillar in the County's Five-Year Strategic Plan is to conduct a community satisfaction survey. The survey is intended to provide baseline data that may be used to evaluate trends in future years and will inform the County's community engagement strategy. This item provides the results of the community survey.

Following a competitive procurement process, on December 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved the Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to select EMC Research to prepare and conduct a community survey. On March 21, 2023 the Board of Supervisors approved the Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to use the questionnaire that was developed by EMC Research through an iterative process with County staff.

Discussion:

On March 2, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the Sonoma County Five-Year Strategic Plan, including Goal 2, Objective 1 of the Organizational Excellence pillar: conduct a community satisfaction survey to identify baseline perceptions. On February 1, 2022, the Board approved funding for select Strategic Plan recommendations, including \$150,000 to contract with a research firm specializing in conducting scientifically valid, statistically representative community satisfaction surveys.

During the October 18, 2022, Board of Supervisors' meeting, the Board established a short-term ad hoc to work with staff in selecting a consultant for the community satisfaction survey objective under the County's Strategic Plan pillar of Organizational Excellence. Supervisors David Rabbitt and Chris Coursey were appointed to the Community Survey Ad Hoc.

Following a competitive procurement process, on December 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved the Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to select EMC Research to prepare and conduct a community survey.

On March 21, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved the Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to use the questionnaire that was developed by EMC Research through an iterative process with County staff. The survey included several categories of questions, including quality of life, top issues/concerns, County of Sonoma government overall ratings, services ratings, emergency preparedness, communications, and demographics. The survey took approximately 18 minutes, which is the recommended maximum length for a survey.

EMC conducted the survey from March 28, 2023, through April 7, 2023. They used mixed modes methodology (phone and web) to reach individuals in English and Spanish. A total of 1,019 interviews were conducted with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval. Of the interviews, 10% were conducted by phone, 47% by email, 43% by text. 97% of interviews (both phone and online) were conducted in English and 3% were conducted in Spanish. 12% of phone surveys were taken in Spanish while 2% of online surveys were taken in Spanish.

EMC Research employs mixed mode methodology, ensuring a random sample that is demographically and geographically representative of County adult residents based on American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. In this survey, 72% of survey respondents were from incorporated Sonoma County and 28% were unincorporated residents. Santa Rosa and Petaluma have the largest populations, and therefore the proportion of respondents from Petaluma and Santa Rosa mirrors the proportion in Sonoma County.

The Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee met on April 20, 2023, to review the results of the report. The final report can be viewed in Attachment A.

Key findings from the survey include:

- Sonoma County residents are divided about the direction of the county, but the majority are content with their quality of life, particularly in their neighborhoods.
- Most who have accessed county services in recent years have had positive interactions with county employees.
- Majorities say they are excited about the future of Sonoma County, that services are convenient and easy to access, and that Sonoma County is a welcoming place to live. However, a majority are worried about changes happening in the county.
- Homelessness, affordable housing, road repairs, crime, and cost of living are top concerns for residents. Most residents believe that homelessness has worsened in recent years.
- Housing affordability is a significant concern, with many residents worried about finding affordable housing for themselves and their loved ones.
- Overall job ratings for both county and city governments are negative, suggesting a general dissatisfaction with government.
- The county receives positive ratings for emergency and disaster response, fire services, parks and playgrounds, and preservation of natural areas.
- Ratings for street and road maintenance, services for those experiencing mental health crises, and services for the homeless indicate a perceived need for improvement in these areas.

The County Administrator's Office plans to conduct a community survey every two years moving forward. This initial survey will provide baseline data that may be used to evaluate trends in future years. The County

Administrator's Office will share the report with the Office of Equity for their review as they implement Strategic Plan Organizational and Excellence Pillar Goal 2, Objective 2: Using results from survey, develop and launch a community engagement and outreach strategy, establish a process for engagement and collaboration, and ensure the strategy is inclusive of all underserved populations by the end of 2022.

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Organizational Excellence

Goal: Goal 2: Increase information sharing and transparency and improve County and community engagement

Objective: Objective 1: Conduct a community satisfaction survey to identify baseline expectations.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

Yes

The survey is a statistically representative snapshot of Sonoma County's residents' perception of government performance. Results are demographically representative of adult resident demographics based on age, ethnicity, location and other factors.

County ratings and attitudes are generally consistent across demographics, with a few exceptions. Some of the notable exceptions include that while white residents in Sonoma County are more likely to say that homelessness in Sonoma County has "gotten worse" in the past few years, Hispanic or Latino residents are more likely to express concerns about finding affordable housing for themselves, with 78% of Hispanic or Latino residents agreeing with the statement: "I am concerned about finding an affordable place to live in Sonoma County for myself", compared to around six-in-ten of white (60%) and other BIPOC residents (64%). Assessments of income inequality and racial inequity in Sonoma County also exhibit disparities among racial groups, with a higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents (54%) indicating income inequality as a "very serious" issue compared to around a third (36%) of their counterparts. Likewise, when asked about racial inequity as an issue, just under a third (32%) of Hispanic or Latino residents and just over a quarter (27%) of other BIPOC residents say it is a "very serious" issue in contrast to just 18% of white residents.

Prior Board Actions:

3/21/2023: Board of Supervisors approved the Community Survey Ad Hoc's recommendation to utilize the community survey questionnaire developed by EMC Research

12/13/2022: Board of Supervisors approved Community Survey Ad Hoc recommendation to select EMC Research to design and conduct a statistically significant community survey.

10/18/2022: The Board Chair established the Community Survey Ad Hoc.

02/01/2022: The Board of Supervisors approved Strategic Plan Funding recommendation for Goal 2, objective 1 of the Organizational Excellence pillar (OE2.1).

01/26/2021: The Board of Supervisors approved County of Sonoma Five-Year Strategic Plan.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This action does not have a fiscal impact. However, given the assumption that the County Administrator’s Office will plan on completing the same survey every two years to gauge shifting perceptions in the community, assuming a 6% annual increase, staff expects to finance the next two biennial surveys from the existing \$150,000 allocation included within the County Administrator’s budget.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

NA

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Final Report
- Attachment B: Presentation
- Attachment C: Equity Analysis
- Attachment D: Spanish Overview of Results

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None