

2019 Hamilton Citizen Survey

RESULTS

Presented by
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City Administrator

August 23, 2019

I. Introduction

Surveys are one tool among many to help decision makers evaluate important aspects of any operation. It seems appropriate to "take stock" as comprehensively as possible at the start of a new administration or any significant change in operation. It is hoped that this survey can provide an additional tool to help collectively gauge the performance and expectations of Hamilton's city government.

II. Confidence and Limitations

No survey is perfect. Surveys can be useful if four important rules are followed:

1. A clear goal of the survey is defined.
2. The population is defined.
3. The respondents are random, appropriate in size, and represent the population.
4. Questions are unbiased.

Clear Goal

The goal of the survey is to provide general feedback about the performance of Hamilton's city government. The survey is not designed to set any policy or procedures or to make any official decisions. It is only general information to be used by and for city officials. As with any survey, the results are subjective and interpretive.

Population defined

The survey was sent by mail to the 1503 addresses that also receive city utility bills. As a practical matter, this is the most comprehensive mailing list the city has, and it is a minimal cost strategy. It is also assumed that some participants followed the instructions to make a copy for others in the household who might have been interested. As such, while the survey is titled Hamilton Citizen Survey, the results must be qualified as "citizens who receive utility bills from the city." It is theoretically expected that those who receive utility bills represent the views of those households that comprise the city - especially given that provisions were made to include those who may have differing opinions.

Sample of population

A total of 240 responses were received for a response rate of 16 percent. No control was exercised over response procedures, which lends to the assumption of randomness. It also presents the possibility that individuals may have submitted more than one survey - without any evidence of such, it is believed safe to assume that the responses are reflections of random individuals who chose to respond. Furthermore, as revealed in the results, the respondents appear to represent the population as a whole with the exception of a slightly higher percentage of college education than is represented in U.S. census data. This may be due to the nature of the survey, old census data, exaggerated self-identification, or bad response categories.

Ultimately, the response rate, representation, and randomness provide much confidence that the responses are a valid reflection of how the population as a whole might respond. In terms of statistical significance, there is 95 percent confidence that in general these results are within five percent of how the overall population would respond.

Unbiased questions

The questions in the survey are simply stated with appropriate response categories. This does not, however, preclude misinterpretations, unintended bias, or just plain mistakes. For instance, the survey asks for the respondent's birthplace, but the response categories are not exclusive, which can create confusion and weaken interpretation. Also, how a participant defines the terms in the question is very subjective. For instance, in the first question, the term "great" is used. That is a participant-defined term that makes any specific interpretation impossible. Furthermore, the issues and projects list is an arbitrary list and may not include other important items or may include superfluous items. These "problems" do not inhibit the ability to draw general conclusions from valid responses, but it should prevent anyone from making any mandate from the resulting information.

Who Responded?

Section 1:

240 total respondents.

The 16 percent response rate is a high response rate, whereas many survey programs hope for a 10 percent response rate. Equally interesting is that more than half of the responses were returned within a few days of the initial surveys being made available. This suggests an eagerness to voice an opinion.

The demographic information reflected in the tables on this page suggests a good representation of the overall population. Each of the demographic subsets were analyzed to determine if they excessively weighted any single response category. At the conclusion of that analysis, it appears the opinions reflected in the responses are an across-the-board representation and do not reflect any one demographic group more strongly.

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|
| <u>DO YOU LIVE IN THE CITY LIMITS?</u> | | |
| | YES | 213 |
| | NO | 17 |
| <u>YEARS LIVING IN HAMILTON:</u> | | |
| | 0 to 4 | 27 |
| | 5 to 9 | 34 |
| | 10 to 14 | 21 |
| | 15 to 19 | 18 |
| | 20 + | 133 |
| <u>AGE:</u> | | |
| | < 20 | 0 |
| | 20 to 29 | 0 |
| | 30 to 39 | 8 |
| | 40 to 49 | 18 |
| | 50 to 59 | 26 |
| | 60 to 69 | 65 |
| | > 69 | 107 |
| <u>EDUCATION:</u> | | |
| | High School | 73 |
| | Vocational | 19 |
| | College + | 122 |
| <u>EMPLOYMENT STATUS:</u> | | |
| | RETIRED | 126 |
| | EMPLOYED | 58 |
| | SELF-EMPLOYED | 23 |
| | UNABLE TO WORK | 6 |
| | A HOMEMAKER | 4 |
| | MILITARY | 3 |
| | A STUDENT | 0 |
| | OUT OF WK/LOOKING FOR WK | 0 |
| <u>OCCUPATION:</u> | | |
| | RETIRED | 85 |
| | OTHER | 32 |
| | EDUCATION | 21 |
| | HEALTHCARE | 18 |
| | AGRICULTURE | 14 |
| | OFFICE | 9 |
| | CONSTRUCTION | 9 |
| | RETAIL | 8 |
| | FOOD SERVICE | 6 |
| | MAINTENANCE | 1 |

Agreement

Section 2:

The following table details the level of agreement with the listed statements:

Sect. 3

Hamilton is a great place to live.

Overall, the Hamilton city government is effective.

City employees are courteous and professional.

I am satisfied with the quality of city services.

Hamilton is doing what it can for economic development.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 75 | 127 | 21 | 8 |
| 20 | 123 | 64 | 19 |
| 67 | 142 | 21 | 0 |
| 22 | 109 | 74 | 22 |
| 28 | 102 | 73 | 16 |

Priorities

Section 3:

The following table details the identification of important issues and projects and those who identified them as priorities for the city. Rankings are also listed in the yellow shaded portion of the grid:

| <u>SECTION 3:</u> | | Important | Not Important | Rank 1 | Rank 2 | Rank 3 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Improving Streets/Alleys | 234 | 2 | 100 | 24 | 22 |
| | Employment Opportunities | 207 | 15 | 8 | 17 | 27 |
| | Utility Rates/Fees | 204 | 14 | 8 | 24 | 19 |
| | Water Main Line Replacement | 202 | 15 | 15 | 27 | 16 |
| | Property Taxes | 191 | 22 | 8 | 14 | 11 |
| | Sewer Main Line Replacement | 191 | 24 | 1 | 11 | 27 |
| | Blighted/Unsightly Property | 188 | 27 | 12 | 17 | 13 |
| | Improving Law Enforcement | 155 | 47 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| | Availability of Housing | 146 | 62 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| | Improving Storm Water Control | 146 | 60 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | New HVFD Fire Facility | 133 | 71 | 6 | 9 | 11 |
| | Improving Parks & Cemetery | 118 | 80 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| | City Lake Dam Improvements | 106 | 92 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | City Pool Replacement | 98 | 104 | 0 | 2 | 2 |

Recommendations and Conclusion

This information provides general direction with some mixed results.

With limited financial resources, it will be even more important to be aware of the differences of opinion and the intensity of opinions as the Council researches appropriate community investments and solutions.

Appendix.

The following are the open-ended comments provided in the survey responses. These responses are unedited with the exception of proper names have been concealed by [brackets].

(still being tabulated as of 8-23-19)

2019 Hamilton Citizen Survey

CITY OF Hamilton, Texas

254-386-8116

200 E. Main Street, Hamilton, TX 76531

Hamilton’s future enjoys many great opportunities and faces some significant challenges. As we continue to progress, it is important that your local government meets the expectations and focuses on the priorities of the citizens it serves. To better measure our efforts, we are asking for your input! Your response will remain anonymous as we are not requesting names or addresses on the form. The responses on the forms will be tabulated and a report will be made to the City Council of the results. If you need forms for other members of your household, please feel free to make a copy or contact the city office. Please complete only one survey for each adult in the household. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to call City Hall at 254-386-8116, ext. 6. We appreciate your time and interest.

The Mayor and City Council of Hamilton.

Section 1. Please circle the category that describes you:

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-----|
| Do you live in the city limits? | Yes | No | | | | | |
| Years living in Hamilton: | 0-4 | 5-9 | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20+ | | |
| Age: | <20 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | >69 |
| Education: | High School | | Vocational | College+ | | | |
| Employment Status: | Employed | Self-employed | Out of work and looking for work | | | A Homemaker | |
| | A student | | Military | Retired | | Unable to work | |
| Occupation: | Agriculture | Construction | Education | Food Service | Healthcare | | |
| | Maintenance | Office | Retail | Retired | Other | | |

Section 2. Please select with a check mark your level of agreement with the following statements:

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hamilton is a great place to live. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overall, the Hamilton city government is effective. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| City employees are courteous and professional. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am satisfied with the quality of city services. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hamilton is doing what it can for Economic Development. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section 3. Please select with a check mark the importance of each of these issues and projects.

| Issue | Important | Not Important | Rank | Issue | Important | Not Important | Rank |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------|
| Availability of Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | City Lake Dam Improvements | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Blighted/Unightly Property | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | City Pool Replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Improving Law Enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Property Taxes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Employment Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Utility Rates/Fees | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Improving Parks & Cemetery | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | A New HVFD Fire Facility | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Improving Storm Water Control | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Water Main Line Replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Improving Streets/Sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Sewer Main Line Replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Section 4. Please rank your top three (3) issues and projects listed above in Section 3 as 1,2 and 3.

Additional Comments:

Please place completed survey in the city utility payment box; or return by U. S. Mail; or hand deliver by 3 p.m. Thursday, August 22, 2019. THANK YOU!