



# Prince William County 2012 Community Survey

November 20, 2012

**ORC***International*



# Project Overview

# Why Communities Do Surveys?

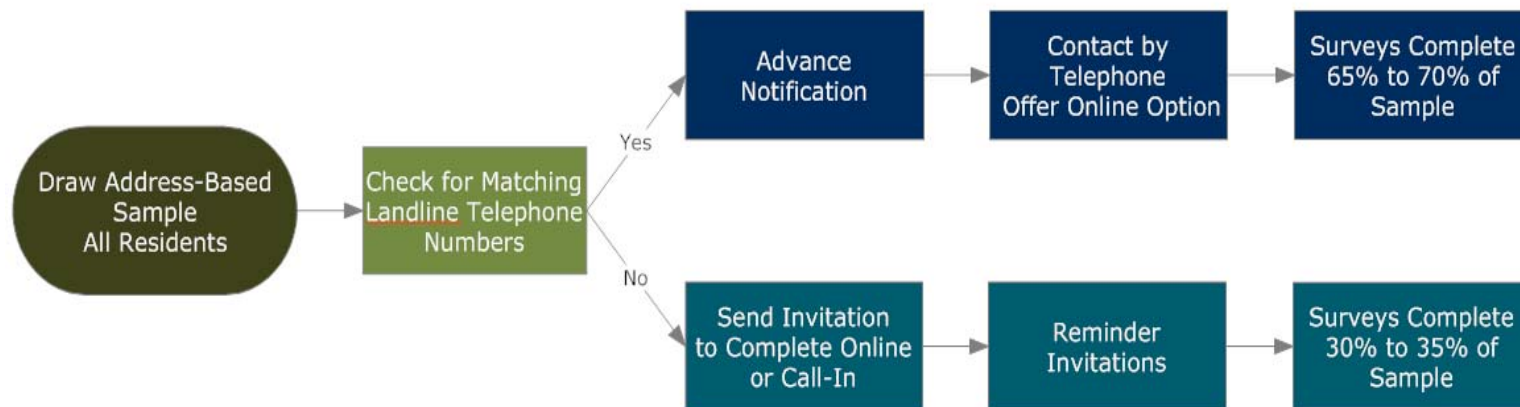
- ◆ Communities such as Prince William County do surveys to:
  - Provide **valid** insights from a **representative** sample on performance
  - Provide **reliable** indicators of public support for proposed policies and initiatives
  - Track changes in demographics and attitudes
  - Help inform budget and resource allocation decisions
- ◆ Done correctly, community surveys provide **reliable** and **valid** data to inform a community's strategic decisions
  - More **representative** sample than people who attend town hall meetings or write to their council members
  - Controlled responses—everyone gets asked the same question in the same way
  - Independent administration—reduces bias

# Background & Objectives

- ◆ Prince William County has conducted an annual resident survey since 1993
- ◆ Decision made to change to a biennial survey beginning in 2012
- ◆ Objectives remain similar to those in the past
  - To assess resident perceptions of the overall quality of life in Prince William County
  - To assess perceptions of County services
  - To identify subgroups which may be underserved
  - To address specific and relevant topics of interest
- ◆ New vendor (ORC International) selected
  - Improved methodology obtain a more representative sample of all residents
  - Strategic studies for local jurisdictions an area of expertise
  - Benchmarking provides additional insights into areas for improvement and maintenance

# Study Methodology

- ◆ Study methodology changed to address changes in the survey industry—mixed modes of data collection—and growing prevalence of cell phone only households and to ensure a representative sample of all Prince William County residents



- ◆ A total of 1,727 surveys were completed
  - 1,269 or 73% were completed by phone
  - 458 were completed online

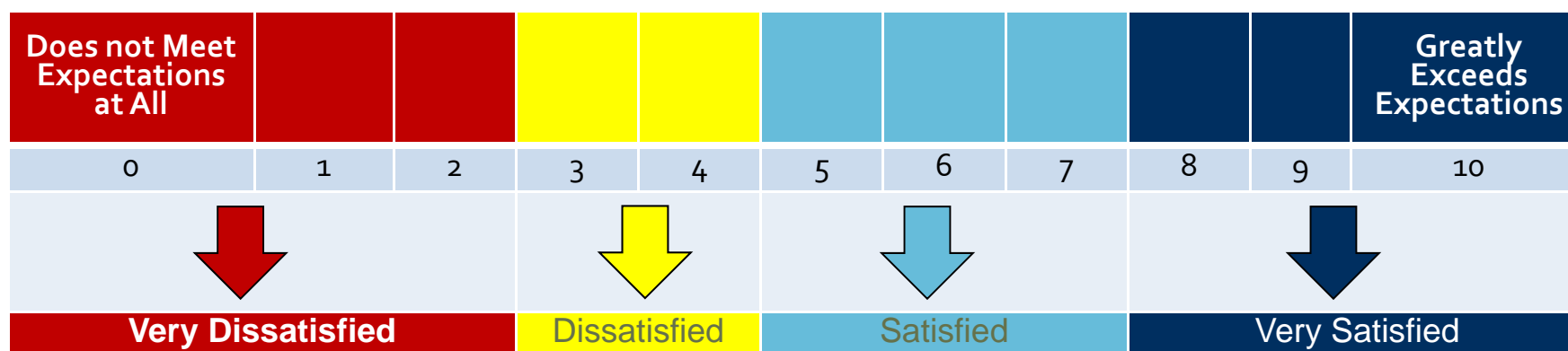
Total Sample	1,727
Overall Precision 95% confidence	+ / - 2.4%

# Greater Focus on Outcomes

- ◆ Measures and analysis focus more on outcomes—being the “community of choice”—rather than simply performance



- ◆ Measurement scales were changed to obtain more detailed insights and more accurately reflect whether expectations are being met
  - Matches key national benchmark measures and also allows for comparisons to previous years



# Comparing to Previous Years

## 2012 – Value for Tax Dollar

Very Poor Value										Very Good Value	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2.1%	1.2%	1.9%	3.5%	6.4%	15.4%	13.9%	20.4%	20.3%	8.7%	6.3%	
Very Poor			Poor		Good			Very Good			
1			2		3			4			
5%			10%		50%			35%			
Poor					Good						
15%					85%						

## 2010 – Value for Tax Dollar

Very Poor		Poor		Good		Very Good	
1	2	3	4				
6%	11%	56%	27%				
Poor			Good				
17%			83%				

# Benchmarking

- ◆ Why benchmark?
  - Quantifies measures of performance
  - Quantifies the gap between your community and best practices
  - Encourages focus on outcomes rather than simply performance
- ◆ Benchmarking methodology
  - National sample of 2,000 residents across the United States
    - ✧ We do not aggregate results from studies we complete for other jurisdictions
  - Jurisdictions of all sizes represented
  - Updated annually
  - Most recent (November 2012) benchmarking focused on six key questions
    - Overall quality of life
    - Comparability of life in resident community compared to others
    - Overall quality of services
    - Direction community is headed
    - Value of services received for tax dollars paid
    - Views on taxes and services



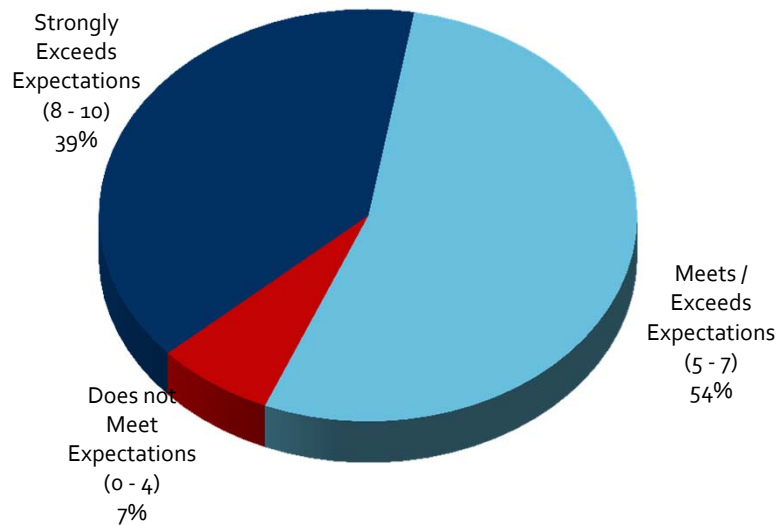


# Major Findings

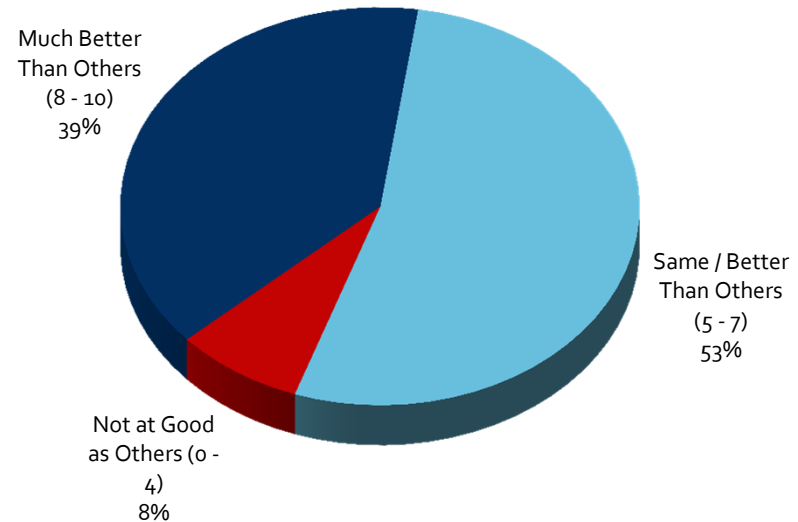
# Overall Quality of Life

- ◆ Prince William County residents are very positive about the overall quality of life in the community and feel it compares well to other communities

Overall Quality of Life

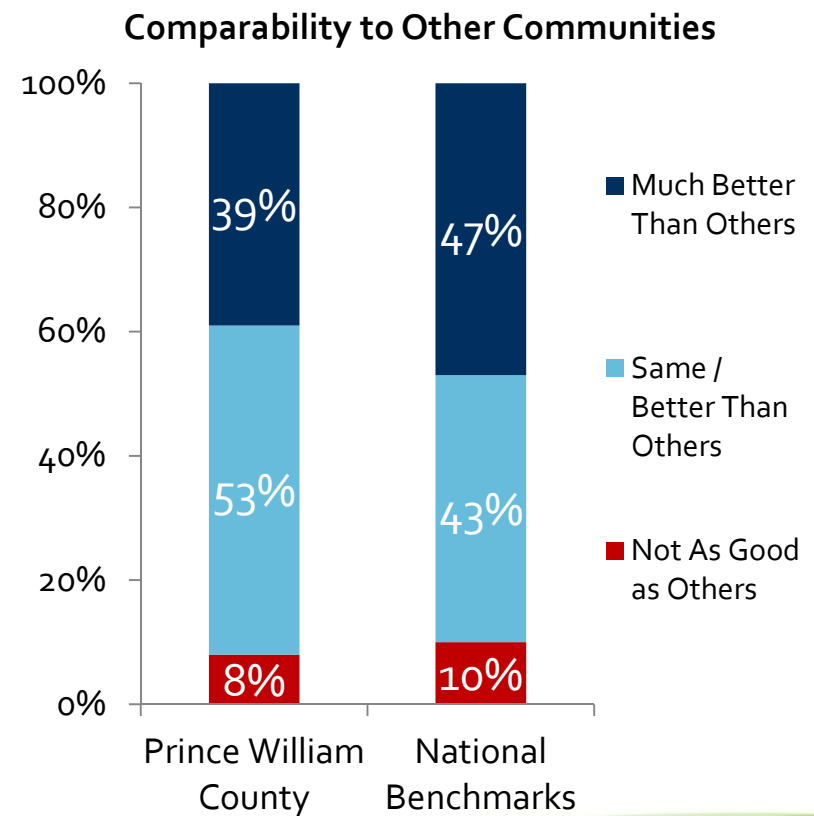
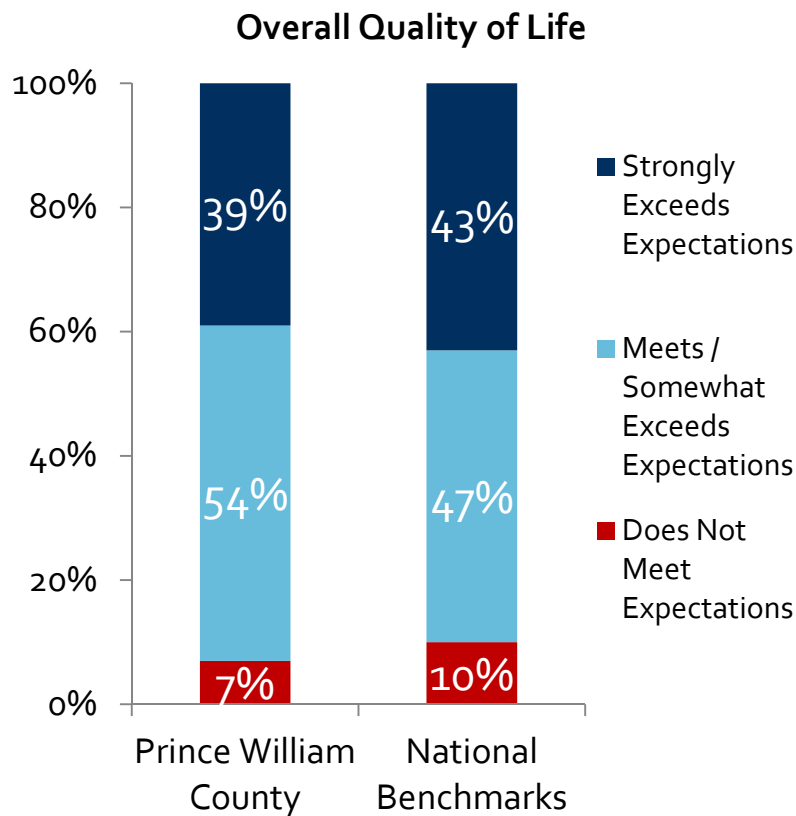


Comparability to Other Communities



# Overall Quality of Life -- Benchmarked

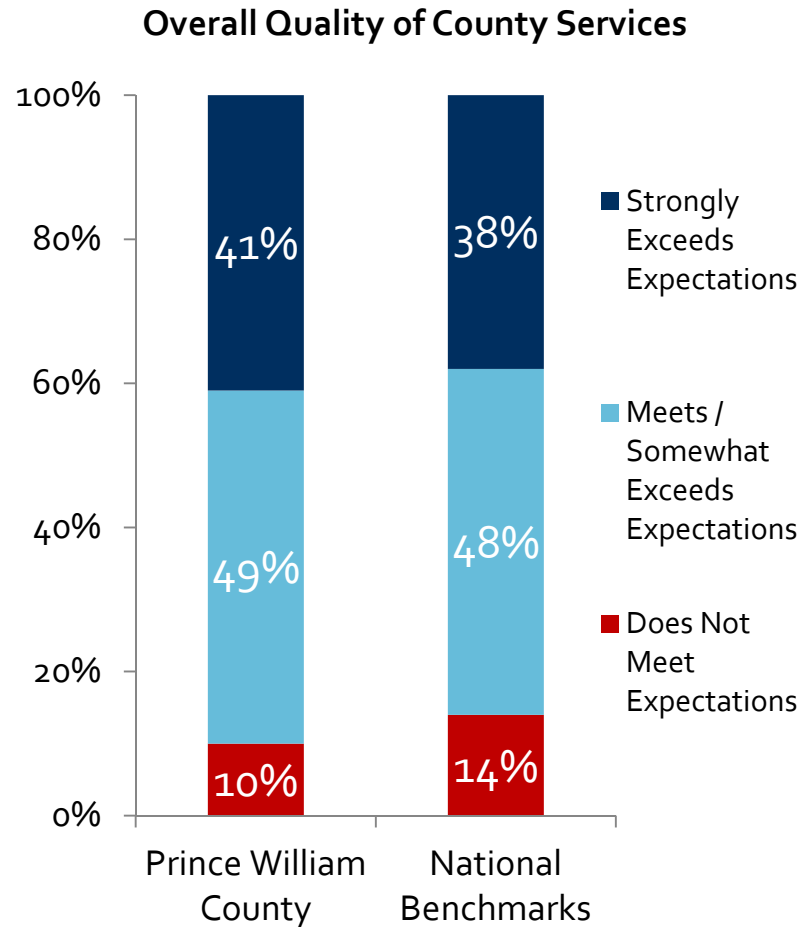
- ◆ PWC residents give ratings that are similar to national benchmarks for quality of life but rate the county lower compared to other communities



# Overall Quality of County Services

- ◆ Residents generally agree that the overall quality of county services meets or exceeds their expectations and ratings are comparable to / slightly higher than national benchmarks
  - 2012 ratings comparable to 2010

	2010	2012
% Positive	92%	90%

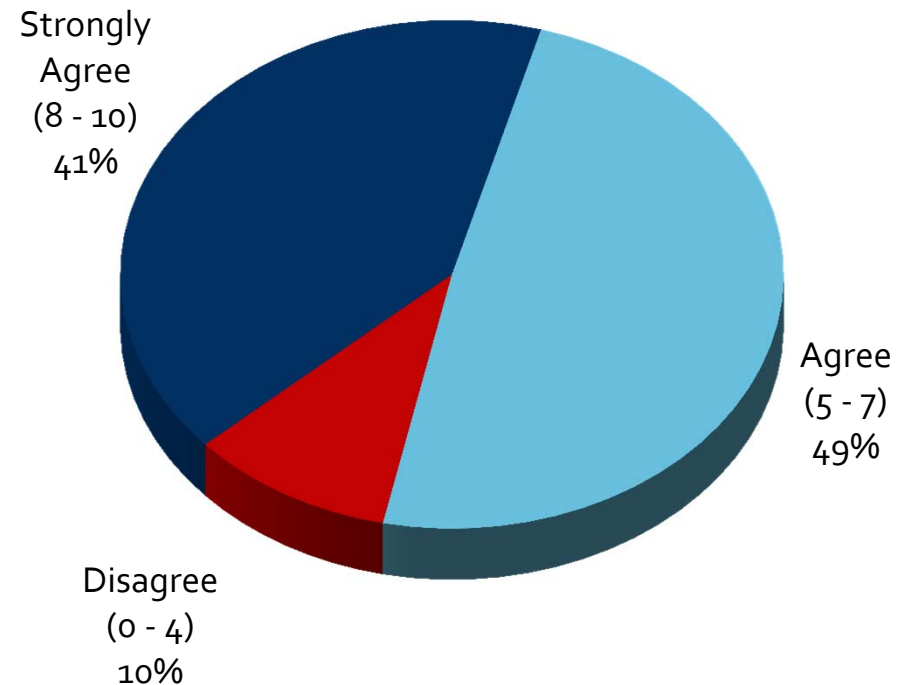


# Efficient & Effective Government

- ◆ The majority of residents agree that overall the County's services are efficient and effective
  - Ratings some slightly higher than in 2010

	2010	2012
% Positive	88%	90%

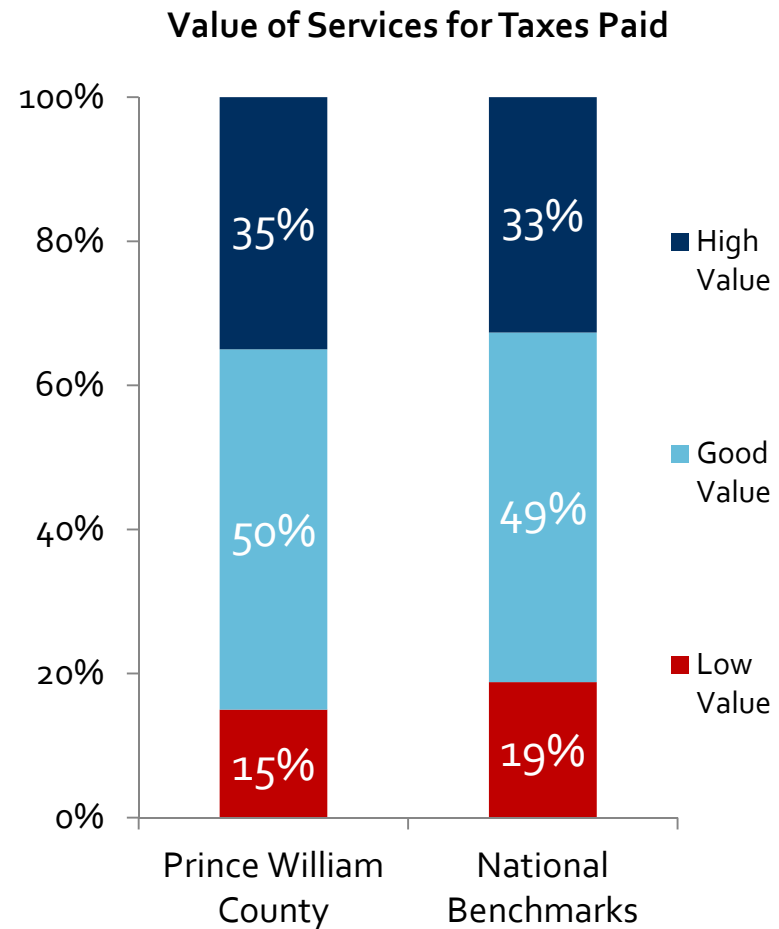
County Provides Efficient & Effective Service



# Value for Tax Dollars

- ◆ The majority of county residents feel they are getting value for their tax dollars and these ratings are comparable to / slightly better than national benchmarks
  - The percentage of positive ratings for value of services for taxes paid has been steadily increasing over the years

	2005 - 2009	2010	2012
% Positive	78%	83%	85%

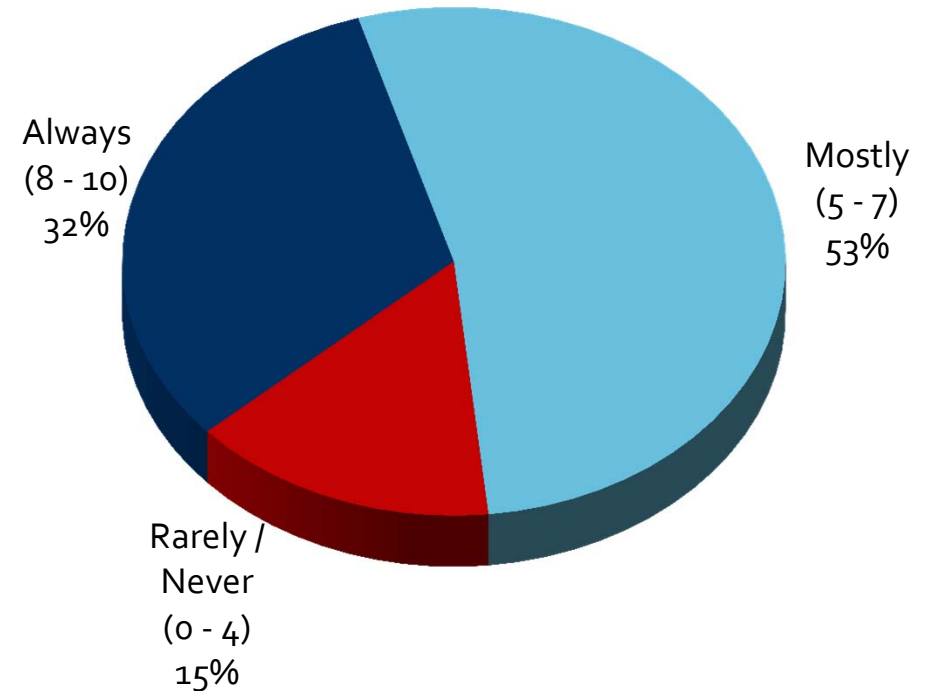


# Trust County Government to Do Right Thing

- ◆ Residents' trust in government is significantly higher in 2012 compared to 2010

	2010	2012
% Positive	63%	85%

Trust County to Do Right Thing

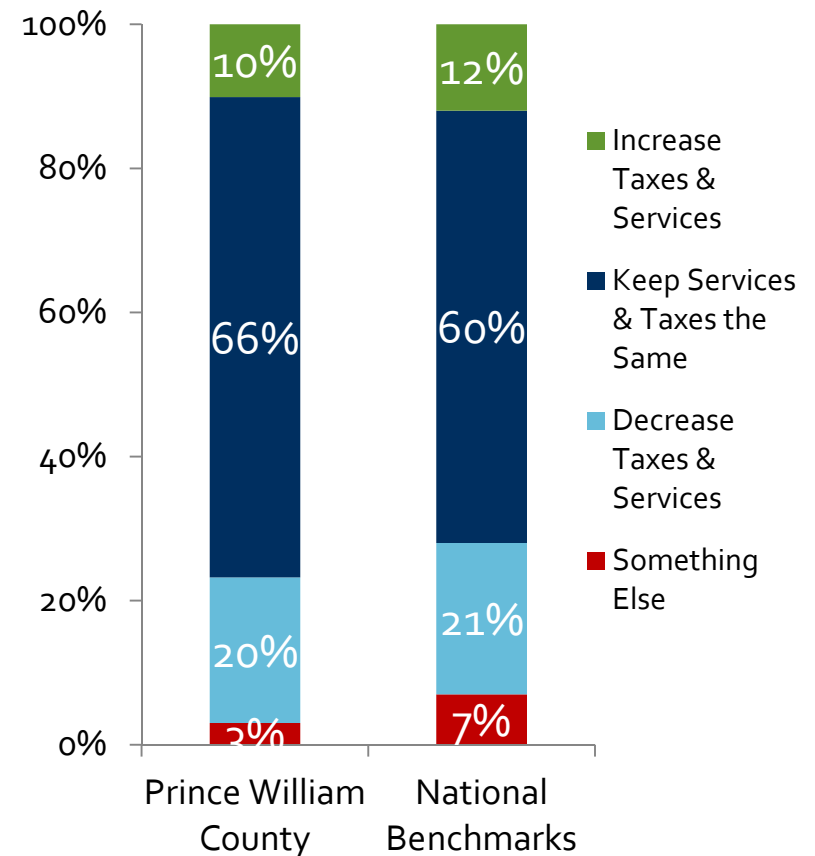


# View on Taxes

- ◆ Despite the economy, the majority of residents want the county to keep both taxes and services the same

	2010	2012
Increase Taxes & Services	11%	10%
Keep Taxes & Services the Same	65%	66%
Decrease Taxes & Services	15%	20%
Something Else	10%	3%

What Should County do?







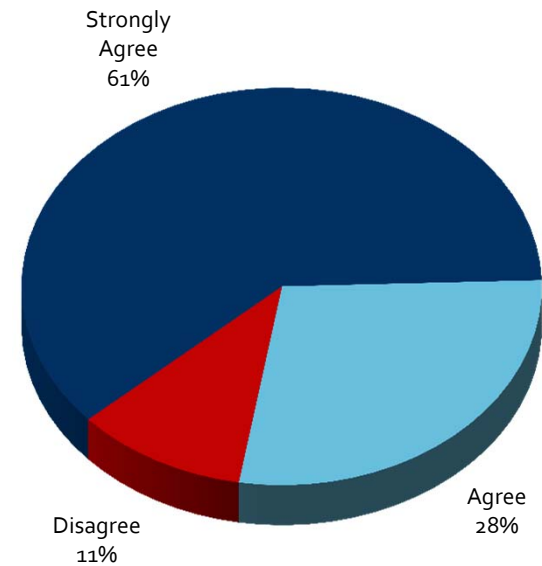
# Detailed Findings

# County Employees

- ◆ County employees receive very high ratings for being courteous & helpful
  - Positive ratings are significantly higher in 2012 than in 2010

	2010	2012
% Positive	82%	92%

## County employees are courteous & helpful

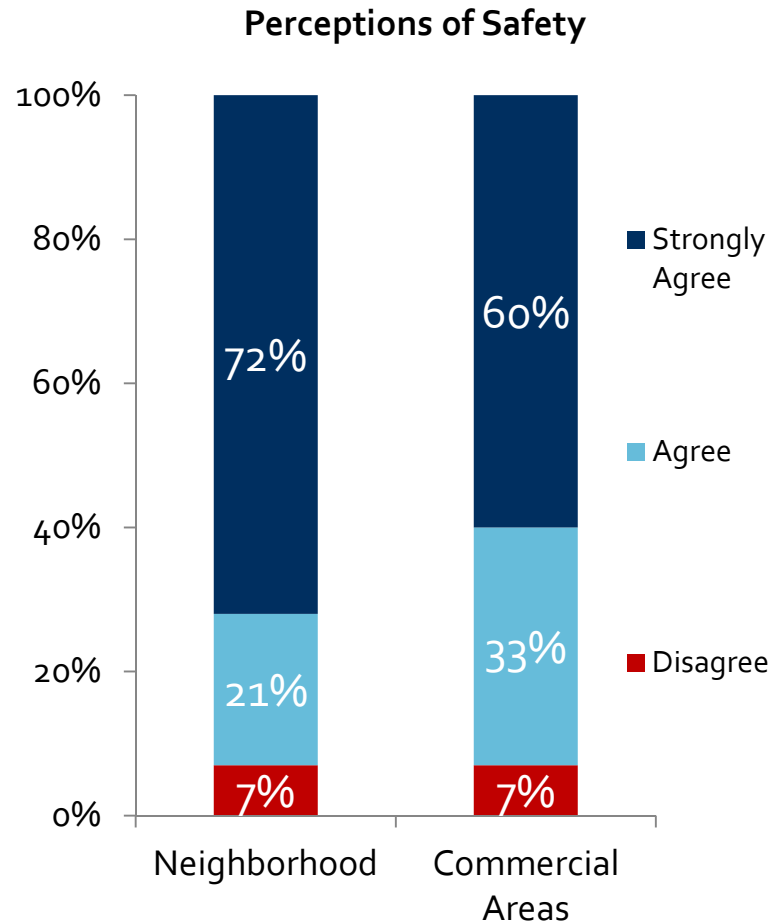


# Safety

- ◆ Residents generally feel safe in Prince William County
  - Perceptions of safety are higher for their own neighborhood than in commercial areas around the county
- ◆ Ratings for neighborhood are the same as in 2010 but have improved for commercial areas

	2010*	2012
Neighborhoods	91%	93%
Commercial Areas	88%	93%

\* In 2010, daytime and nighttime safety were separated. For comparison purposes ratings are average.



# Public Safety

- ◆ All public safety services are given high ratings
  - Ratings are similar to previous years

2010	2012
Firefighting services are prompt and reliable	
Not asked	98%
Emergency Medical Services staff are skilled and reliable	
96%	97%
Requests for police assistance receive a prompt response	
90%	92%
Police department's overall performance meets community needs	
92%	93%
Police officers are courteous and helpful to all community members	
85%*	90%
* In 2010, question was worded police attitudes and behaviors toward citizens	

# Getting Around

- ◆ While residents generally agree they can get around by car, they rate the adequacy of local bus service and the overall transportation and road system rate much lower

2010	2012
I can easily get around by car within Prince William County	
64%*	84%
I can easily get around by car throughout Northern Virginia	
41%*	75%
Local bus service between County destinations meets residents' needs	
Not asked	72%
Transportation and road systems adequately support residential and business developments	
57%	68%
* Question changed to focus on car; new question added to address transit	



# Summary & Conclusions

# Summary & Conclusions

- ◆ The new methodology clearly resulted in data that can provide greater insights into Prince William County strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ On the whole the County performs well—consistent with previous years and on par with national benchmarks
  - There is an opportunity for improvement by identifying those areas where residents do not feel services are comparable to other communities
- ◆ Additional analysis will provide insights into how data varies by key demographics (income, age, gender, race / ethnicity) as well as providing some further insights into possible reasons that are driving some of the major findings
  - This will enable staff to develop specific strategies for targeted improvements