



**MEMORANDUM TO:** Governance Committee

**VIA:** Gary Jackson, City Manager

**FROM:** Dawa Hitch, Communication & Public Engagement Director

**DATE:** February 9, 2015

**SUBJECT:** City of Asheville Citizen Survey

The following information is a follow-up to the December 9, 2014 Governance Committee discussion related to the National Citizen Survey. The survey results report is expected mid-May.

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**\*SURVEY QUESTIONS\***

Based on feedback from the committee, staff is working with National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) staff to include the following questions in the design of the survey. As part of the contracted service, NRC staff members advise on question design to minimize bias.

**OPEN ENDED QUESTION**

What do you think is the single biggest issue facing Asheville over the next three to five years?

**CLOSED ENDED QUESTION**

1. Please rate how important, if at all, you think each of the following investments is for the City of Asheville.
  - Improving roads
  - Recreation centers and youth programs
  - Maintenance of public buildings
  - Public safety including police, fire and emergency preparedness
  - Environmental protection and sustainability
  - Sidewalks, bikeways and greenways
  - Affordable housing development
  - Public transportation
  - Systems to maximize food security
  
2. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members: (2 times a week or more, 2-4 times a month, once a month or less, not at all)
  - Attended a local public meeting
  - Watched a local public meeting online

- Watched a local public meeting on television
- Watched a City of Asheville video on YouTube
- Visited the City of Asheville government website
- Read City of Asheville government news on the City blog
- Read City of Asheville government news through an e-newsletter
- Read City of Asheville government news through social media

3. When you are thinking about Asheville's identity and its character through future development, how important, if at all is each of the following dimensions?

- A place to work
- A place to shop
- A place to live
- A place for entertainment and community events
- A place where social services are available
- A place to worship
- A place with a variety of good transportation options

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**\*IS AN ONLINE VERSION OF THE SURVEY AVAILABLE?\***

A follow-up web survey is available for an additional \$400. Although it is not scientific, it could be made available after the scientific data is collected. A benefit to this course of action is it has the potential for more people in the community to interact with their government. A potential challenge is a misperception that the results are statistically valid. Staff's recommendation is find alternative ways to creatively engage the public through current and forthcoming communication tools, therefore maximizing the integrity of the scientific survey.

Current engagement opportunities exist through the city's social media tools, various project-based public input efforts and through the City's various boards and commissions. Opportunities will increase in the next quarters and beyond with the addition of staff in the third and fourth quarters of fiscal year 2015 and the implementation of an online public engagement application scheduled to launch in the first quarter of fiscal year 2016.

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**\*SURVEY METHODOLOGY \***

Appendix B: "Survey Methodology" from the 2008 survey is attached. In addition to the general description of survey validity, sub sections report specific data related to the administered survey. Subsections include: survey sampling, survey administration, survey response rate and confidence intervals, survey processing and survey data weighting.