



**Dorchester County  
Maryland**

**Citizen Survey  
2010**

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## **Introduction**

The County faces a projected deficit of \$4.0 million in its operating budget for Fiscal Year 2011 and beyond, primarily as a result of state cuts in highway funding. The purpose of the survey is to gather resident feedback as to the quality and priority of services funded with County tax dollars. The information will assist the Council in their planning and funding strategies for Fiscal Year 2011 and beyond.

The use of public participation surveys has been identified as a best practice by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) in that it identifies citizen preferences and satisfaction levels, and assures a broader perspective on the information used by Council during their budget deliberations.

The survey was primarily conducted as an internet survey, but supplemented by paper surveys as requested. The survey was opened for responses on March 5, 2010, and closed April 2, 2010. Total responses were 636 (2% of most recent population estimate for County), with responses 90% online and 10% manual.

## Summary

A profile of the most frequent survey responses:

| Question  | Response |
|---|----------|
| Lives in the City of Cambridge.....                             | 36.8%    |
| Lived in County for more than 20 years .....                    | 54.7%    |
| Currently employed, full time .....                             | 53.3%    |
| 55-64 years of age.....   | 28.5%    |
| Rates County as “good” place to live .....                      | 59.2%    |
| Rates County as “good” place to raise children .....            | 45.5%    |
| Rates County as “fair” place to work .....                      | 42.0%    |
| Rates County as “good” place to retire .....                    | 48.0%    |
| Rates overall quality of life in County as “good” .....         | 56.7%    |
| Rates public library as “excellent” quality.....                | 27.8%    |
| Rates fire services as “essential” service.....                 | 70.4%    |
| Rates jobs as “essential” issue to address.....                 | 68.2%    |
| Rates employment opportunities needs most improvement .....     | 84.3%    |
| Is satisfied with the current level of taxes and services ..... | 39.9%    |

## Demographics

### Place of Residence

| Do you live in...?      |                  |                |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options          | Response Percent | Response Count |
| City of Cambridge       | 36.8%            | 232            |
| Other                   | 13.8%            | 87             |
| North Dorchester        | 9.2%             | 58             |
| South Dorchester        | 8.1%             | 51             |
| Neck District           | 7.0%             | 44             |
| Central Dorchester      | 6.3%             | 40             |
| Town of East New Market | 5.9%             | 37             |
| Town of Hurlock         | 4.9%             | 31             |
| Town of Church Creek    | 2.7%             | 17             |
| Town of Secretary       | 1.7%             | 11             |
| Town of Vienna          | 1.3%             | 8              |
| Taylor's Island         | 1.1%             | 7              |
| Town of Galestown       | 1.0%             | 6              |
| Town of Brookview       | 0.2%             | 1              |
| Town of Eldorado        | 0.2%             | 1              |

### Years of Residence

| How many years have you lived in the County? |                  |                |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options                               | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Less than 2 years                            | 3.6%             | 23             |
| 2-5 years                                    | 12.0%            | 76             |
| 6-10 years                                   | 13.0%            | 82             |
| 11-20 years                                  | 16.6%            | 105            |
| More than 20 years                           | 54.7%            | 345            |

## Employment Status

| Are you currently employed? |                  |                |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options              | Response Percent | Response Count |
| No                          | 32.4%            | 204            |
| Yes, full time              | 53.3%            | 336            |
| Yes, part time              | 14.3%            | 90             |

## What is your age?

| What is your age? |                  |                |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options    | Response Percent | Response Count |
| 18-24 years       | 0.8%             | 5              |
| 25-34 years       | 10.8%            | 68             |
| 35-44 years       | 14.4%            | 91             |
| 45-54 years       | 19.3%            | 122            |
| 55-64 years       | 28.5%            | 180            |
| 65-74 years       | 16.2%            | 102            |
| 75 years or older | 10.0%            | 63             |

## Impression of County

### As a Place to Live

| How do you rate Dorchester County as a place to live? |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options  | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Excellent   | 20.1%            | 127            |
| Good  | 59.2%            | 374            |
| Fair  | 17.7%            | 112            |
| Poor  | 3.0%             | 19             |

### As a Place to Raise Children

| How do you rate Dorchester County as a place to raise children? |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options  | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Excellent   | 14.0%            | 86             |
| Good  | 45.5%            | 280            |
| Fair  | 32.8%            | 202            |
| Poor  | 7.8%             | 48             |

### As a Place to Work

| How do you rate Dorchester County as a place to work? |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options  | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Excellent   | 5.4%             | 33             |
| Good  | 25.6%            | 158            |
| Fair  | 42.0%            | 259            |
| Poor  | 26.9%            | 166            |

## As a Place to Retire

### How do you rate Dorchester County as a place to retire?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Excellent      | 21.7%            | 136            |
| Good           | 48.0%            | 301            |
| Fair           | 23.3%            | 146            |
| Poor           | 7.0%             | 44             |

## Overall Quality of Life

### Considering your answers to prior questions, how do you rate the OVERALL quality of life in the County?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Excellent      | 10.8%            | 68             |
| Good           | 56.7%            | 356            |
| Fair           | 29.0%            | 182            |
| Poor           | 3.5%             | 22             |

## Quality of Services

(4.00-Excellent; 3.00-Good; 2.00-Fair; 1.00-Poor)

| <b>Please rate the quality of each of the following services in<br/>Dorchester County.</b> |                           |                           |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>  | <b>Rating<br/>Average</b> | <b>Response<br/>Count</b> |
| Fire services  | 3.15                      | 630                       |
| 911 emergency communications   | 3.12                      | 631                       |
| Ambulance or emergency medical<br>services   | 3.11                      | 628                       |
| Chesapeake College   | 3.09                      | 620                       |
| Public library services  | 3.07                      | 619                       |
| Law enforcement services   | 2.80                      | 626                       |
| Health services  | 2.59                      | 624                       |
| Traffic enforcement on County roads<br>and highways  | 2.58                      | 614                       |
| Emergency preparedness   | 2.56                      | 628                       |
| Snow removal on County roads and<br>highways   | 2.50                      | 622                       |
| Preservation of natural areas  | 2.46                      | 624                       |
| Services for seniors   | 2.46                      | 617                       |
| Mental health services   | 2.39                      | 621                       |
| Parks  | 2.34                      | 611                       |
| Cable television providers   | 2.31                      | 628                       |
| Promotion of the County as a good<br>place to visit or work                                | 2.30                      | 625                       |
| Public schools (K-12)  | 2.28                      | 618                       |
| Prosecution of crimes  | 2.27                      | 623                       |
| Bus or transit services  | 2.26                      | 630                       |
| Recreation facilities or programs  | 2.17                      | 618                       |
| Storm drainage   | 2.16                      | 624                       |
| Land use, planning and zoning  | 2.09                      | 616                       |
| Recycling  | 1.99                      | 619                       |
| Street repairs and maintenance   | 1.95                      | 623                       |
| Code enforcement   | 1.91                      | 622                       |
| Services for youth   | 1.86                      | 616                       |

## Importance of Services

(4.00-Essential; 3.00-Very Important; 2.00-Somewhat Important; 1.00-Not At All Important)

**Please rate how important each service is to you and other members of your household.**

| <b>Answer Options</b>                                    | <b>Rating Average</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Fire services  | 3.68                  | 623                   |
| Law enforcement services                                 | 3.56                  | 620                   |
| 911 emergency communications                             | 3.55                  | 627                   |
| Ambulance or emergency medical services                  | 3.55                  | 622                   |
| Prosecution of crimes                                    | 3.50                  | 617                   |
| Health services  | 3.43                  | 621                   |
| Public schools (K-12)                                    | 3.38                  | 614                   |
| Street repairs and maintenance                           | 3.27                  | 616                   |
| Snow removal on County roads and highways                | 3.21                  | 620                   |
| Emergency preparedness                                   | 3.21                  | 618                   |
| Public library services                                  | 3.21                  | 621                   |
| Storm drainage   | 3.10                  | 622                   |
| Traffic enforcement on County roads and highways         | 3.08                  | 617                   |
| Services for youth                                       | 3.03                  | 615                   |
| Preservation of natural areas                            | 2.98                  | 618                   |
| Land use, planning and zoning                            | 2.96                  | 618                   |
| Recycling  | 2.95                  | 614                   |
| Recreation facilities or programs                        | 2.91                  | 617                   |
| Promotion of the County as a good place to visit or work | 2.89                  | 619                   |
| Services for seniors                                     | 2.88                  | 623                   |
| Code enforcement   | 2.84                  | 619                   |
| Parks  | 2.77                  | 617                   |
| Mental health services                                   | 2.64                  | 618                   |
| Chesapeake College                                       | 2.46                  | 622                   |
| Cable television providers                               | 2.38                  | 622                   |
| Bus or transit services                                  | 1.84                  | 621                   |

## Prioritizing County Issues

### Importance of Issues

(4.00-Essential; 3.00-Very Important; 2.00-Somewhat Important; 1.00-Not At All Important)

**How important do you think it is for Dorchester County to address the following issues?**

| <b>Answer Options</b>   | <b>Rating Average</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Jobs                    | 3.64                  | 615                   |
| Education               | 3.59                  | 616                   |
| Crime                   | 3.53                  | 619                   |
| Health Care             | 3.31                  | 615                   |
| Taxes                   | 3.29                  | 613                   |
| Environment             | 3.19                  | 611                   |
| Growth                  | 3.12                  | 612                   |
| Child & Family Services | 3.02                  | 614                   |
| Housing                 | 2.95                  | 613                   |

### Issues to Improve or Fix

**What needs to be improved or fixed in Dorchester County? (check all that apply)**

| <b>Answer Options</b>          | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Employment opportunities       | 84.3%                   | 516                   |
| Quality of education           | 67.5%                   | 413                   |
| Condition of roads and streets | 52.9%                   | 324                   |
| Level of taxation              | 51.8%                   | 317                   |
| Safety of citizens             | 47.5%                   | 291                   |
| Recreation and culture         | 39.1%                   | 239                   |
| Availability of health care    | 38.9%                   | 238                   |
| Environment                    | 35.3%                   | 216                   |
| Rate of growth                 | 34.3%                   | 210                   |
| Cost of housing                | 30.2%                   | 185                   |
| Services for seniors           | 27.5%                   | 168                   |
| Public transportation          | 22.4%                   | 137                   |

## Satisfaction with Taxes and Services

| <b>Please select the statement that best describes your opinion.</b> |                         |                       |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>  | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
| I am satisfied with the current level of taxes and services.         | 39.9%                   | 214                   |
| I am willing to accept less services if it means lower taxes.        | 34.6%                   | 186                   |
| I am willing to pay more taxes to get more services.                 | 25.5%                   | 137                   |

## Appendix A

### Impression of County by Years of Residence

| <b>Considering your answers to questions 5 through 8, how do you rate the OVERALL quality of life in the County?</b> |   |                  |                   |                    |                           |                        |
|--|---|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>  | <b>How many years have you lived in the County?</b> |                  |                   |                    |                           | <b>Response Totals</b> |
|  | <b>Less than 2 years</b>                            | <b>2-5 years</b> | <b>6-10 years</b> | <b>11-20 years</b> | <b>More than 20 years</b> |                        |
| Excellent  | 13.0%<br>(3)  | 5.3%<br>(4)      | 7.3%<br>(6)       | 17.1%<br>(18)      | 10.7%<br>(37)             | 10.8%<br>(68)          |
| Good   | 43.5%<br>(10)                                       | 56.6%<br>(43)    | 57.3%<br>(47)     | 56.2%<br>(59)      | 58.0%<br>(200)            | 56.9%<br>(359)         |
| Fair   | 39.1%<br>(9)  | 27.6%<br>(21)    | 31.7%<br>(26)     | 25.7%<br>(27)      | 28.7%<br>(99)             | 28.8%<br>(182)         |
| Poor   | 4.3%<br>(1)   | 10.5%<br>(8)     | 3.7%<br>(3)       | 1.0%<br>(1)        | 2.6%<br>(9)               | 3.5%<br>(22)           |
| Totals   | 100.0%<br>(23)                                      | 100.0%<br>(76)   | 100.0%<br>(82)    | 100.0%<br>(105)    | 100.0%<br>(345)           | 100.0%<br>(631)        |

## Appendix B

### Issues to Improve or Fix by Place of Residence

#### Place of Residence / Top Three Priorities / Response %

##### **City of Cambridge (232 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (85.7%)
- #2 Quality of Education (71.7%)
- #3 Condition of Roads and Streets (57.0%)

##### **Town of Church Creek (17 responses)**

- #1 Quality of Education (82.4%)
- #2 Employment Opportunities (76.5%)
- #3 Level of Taxation (70.6%)

##### **Town of East New Market (37 responses)**

- #1 Quality of Education (85.3%)
- #2 Employment Opportunities (73.5%)
- #3 Safety of Citizens (61.8%)

##### **Town of Galestown (6 responses)**

- #1 Safety of Citizens (83.3%)
- #2 Employment Opportunities (83.3%)
- #3 Quality of Education (66.7%)

##### **Town of Hurlock (31 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (81.5%)
- #2 Safety of Citizens (77.8%)
- #3 Quality of Education (63.0%)

## Appendix B (continued)

### Issues to Improve or Fix by Place of Residence

#### Place of Residence / Top Three Priorities / Response %

##### **Town of Secretary (11 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (90.9%)
- #2 Condition of Roads and Streets (63.6%)
- #3 Quality of Education (63.6%)

##### **Town of Vienna (8 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (87.5%)
- #2 Quality of Education (62.5%)
- #3 Cost of Housing (50.0%)

##### **Neck District (44 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (86.4%)
- #2 Quality of Education (56.8%)
- #3 Condition of Roads and Streets (45.5%)

##### **North Dorchester (58 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (83.3%)
- #2 Quality of Education (66.7%)
- #3 Level of Taxation (63.0%)

##### **South Dorchester (51 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (80.0%)
- #2 Level of Taxation (60.0%)
- #3 Quality of Education (58.0%)

Appendix B (continued)

Issues to Improve or Fix by Place of Residence

Place of Residence / Top Three Priorities / Response %

**Taylor's Island (7 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (100.0%)
- #2 Condition of Roads and Streets (57.1%)
- #3 Level of Taxation (42.9%)

**Central Dorchester (40 responses)**

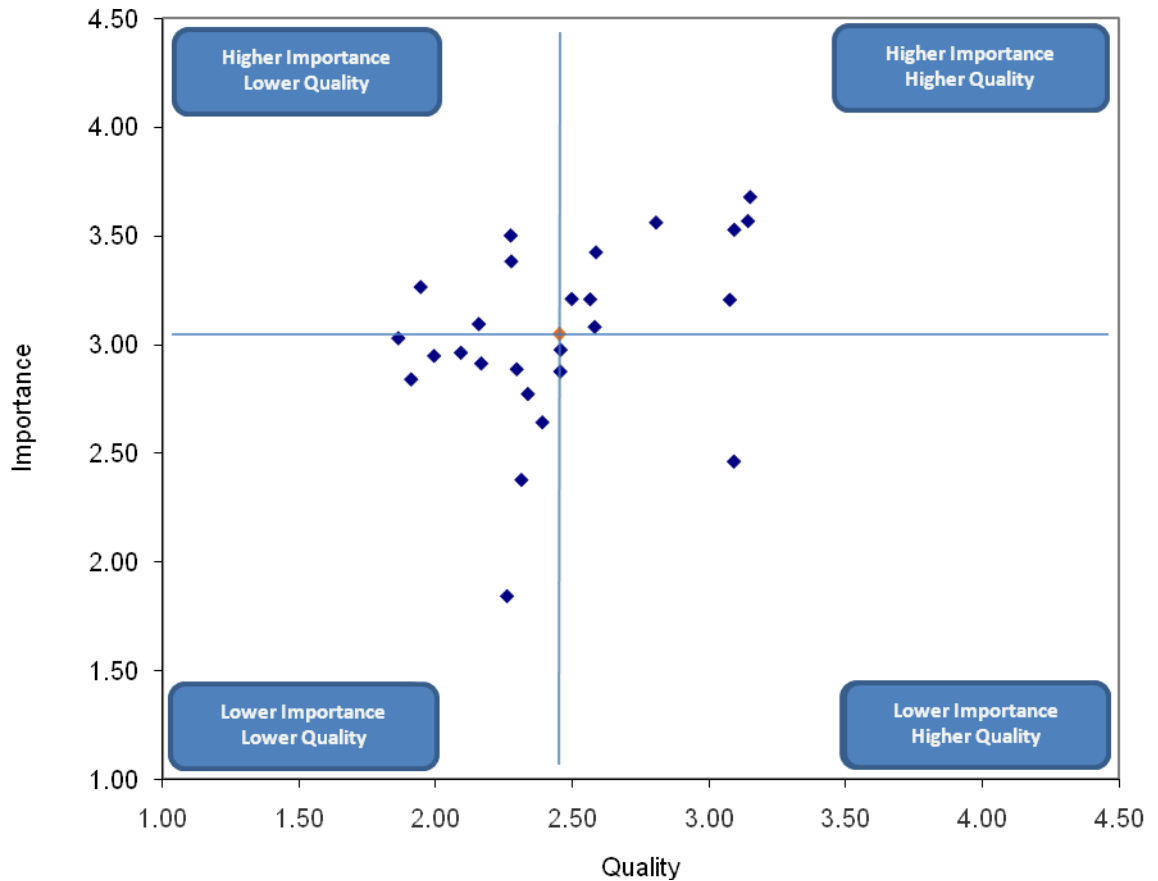
- #1 Employment Opportunities (87.2%)
- #2 Quality of Education (61.5%)
- #3 Condition of Roads and Streets (56.4%)

**All Other (89 responses)**

- #1 Employment Opportunities (87.1%)
- #2 Quality of Education (67.1%)
- #3 Level of Taxation (61.2%)

## Appendix C Combining Quality & Importance of Services

The scatter graph below combines the average ratings of quality and importance of services. The intersection of the average ratings for both quality and importance is marked with an orange marker below, creating four quadrants, labeled as “Higher Importance & Higher Quality”; “Higher Importance & Lower Quality”; “Lower Importance & Higher Quality”; and “Lower Importance & Lower Quality”.



## Appendix C (continued)

### Combining Quality & Importance of Services

#### **Higher Importance & Lower Quality:**

Prosecution of Crimes  
Public Schools (K-12)  
Storm Drainage  
Street Repairs and Maintenance

#### **Higher Importance & Higher Quality:**

Fire Services  
911 Emergency Communications  
Ambulance or Emergency Medical Services  
Law Enforcement Services  
Public Library Services  
Health Services  
Emergency Preparedness  
Snow Removal on County Roads or Highways  
Traffic Enforcement on County Roads or Highways

#### **Lower Importance & Lower Quality:**

Promotion of the County as a Good Place to Visit or Work  
Parks  
Recreation Facilities or Programs  
Land Use, Planning and Zoning  
Mental Health Services  
Recycling  
Services for Youth  
Code Enforcement  
Cable Television Providers  
Bus or Transit Services

#### **Lower Importance & Higher Quality:**

Chesapeake College  
Preservation of Natural Areas  
Services for Seniors