



CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Colonial Heights Community Assessment Survey

Overview:

The Colonial Heights Community Assessment Survey is a survey designed to collect residents' experiences, opinions, and preferences related to the city's physical development and its overall impact on residents' quality of life. The City will collect and analyze community data related to each of the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals, which are: Community Character, Quality of Life, Economic Prosperity, and Sustainable Development. The assessment report will provide a snapshot of the community's opinion of the city's progress towards meeting these goals that can be used as a resource to inform decision making and planning initiatives. The survey may also be used by non-governmental organizations (i.e. non-profits, civic groups, religious institutions) or businesses to see responses for the desires and needs of the community.

The following are key benefits to performing the Community Assessment Survey.

- Identify gaps and challenges in service delivery
- Gain input and feedback from community over a longer period of time
- Identify resident preferences and expectations related to potential redevelopment
- Identify and address the needs of residents/Feedback for prioritization
- Categorize community buy-in which may help leverage funding for community projects, grants and programs

Purpose:

Community engagement is critical to building better communities and a key principle to the democratic process. However, many residents lack the availability and/or resources to meaningfully engage in public processes, including those that have the potential to directly affect their families and neighborhoods. It is also becoming increasingly difficult for governmental organizations to hear from all segments of the community when soliciting feedback on city issues due to scheduling conflicts and other challenges to attending in-person meetings. The Community Assessment Survey will provide an alternative means for resident engagement in a manner other than attendance at public meetings and allow residents to give their feedback using the format that is most comfortable to them (i.e. conversation, paper, online). Responses to the assessment will be compiled to develop an overview that represent the needs and experiences of the wider community. The community data collected can be used by city government to inform strategic planning and decision-making as well as allow city staff to evaluate the progress of ongoing initiatives.

Program:

The Planning and Community Development Department will develop the survey asking questions related to each of the city's comprehensive plan goals. For questions related to other City departments, Planning staff will consult with the respective department on the survey question. The City can use the information collected by the survey to address community needs, solicit grant funding by showing community support, and garner other organizations' support and feedback on important city initiatives.

The following is an outline of how a question will measure the residents' opinion of the Quality of Life goal in the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Comp Plan Goal:** Quality of Life - Preserve a high degree of enjoyment and satisfaction that is experienced in everyday life.
- **Comp Plan Objective:** Provide citizens with a network of safe streets, bikeways and walkways that connect neighborhoods with services.
- **Indicator:** Walkability
- **Question:** How would you rate your satisfaction with the City's overall connectivity for pedestrian mobility? (Highly satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, mostly dissatisfied, highly dissatisfied)
- **Question (open-ended):** Where do you feel most comfortable walking in the city?
- **Question (open-ended):** Where do you feel least comfortable walking in the city?

Planning staff will combine the questions on goals with demographic questions to create a community survey. The department will aim to collect completed surveys from 377 residents, a statistically significant sample size for the city's population (confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%).

After collection, Planning staff will compile and analyze the responses to prepare a report that serves as a baseline evaluation of the city's progress towards accomplishing the Comprehensive Plan goals.

Schedule:

The Community Assessment will be broken up into 4 phases:

1. Prepare,
2. Distribute & Collect,
3. Analyze & Report, and
4. Plan & Evaluate.

A general summary of each phase follows:

1. Prepare (2 month)

The Planning and Community Development Department will craft the survey. City Council endorsement before distribution.

2. Distribute & Collect (2 months)

The Planning and Community Development Department will partner with other City departments and interested local organizations to spread awareness of the survey and administer the survey to achieve a high response rate from the various neighborhoods in the city.

3. Analyze & Report (2-3 months)

The Planning and Community Development Department will create a report that clearly presents the data and highlights insights gained. The department will present the report and its findings to City Council and share it with the public using other available means such as press releases, website publications, informational handouts, and community meetings.

4. Plan & Evaluate (ongoing)

The assessment report will be used as a foundational resource for the department to inform current and future city planning efforts.