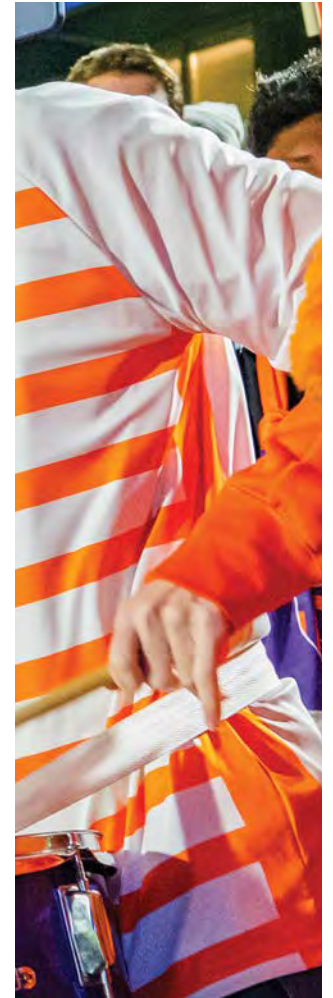


# TOWN of CARY

TOWN OF CARY  
NORTH CAROLINA



**BIENNIAL CITIZEN  
SURVEY REPORT 2022**

# 2022

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE RESULTS FOR THE TOWN OF CARY'S 2022 BIENNIAL CITIZEN SURVEY WERE VERY POSITIVE AGAIN THIS YEAR. THERE WAS A SLIGHT DECLINE FROM THE 2020 RESULTS.

A total of **400 residents** were surveyed and the resulting margin of error was  $\pm 4.89\%$ . The telephone survey methodology included listed, unlisted, and wireless numbers in the sampling frame with 94.0% of the numbers contacted being wireless.

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### The Town Government staff received very good marks for the seven service dimensions measured with grades ranging from A- to B-.

The grade remained unchanged for **professionalism** (A-), while the grades declined for **courteous** (A to A-), **knowledgeable** (A- to B+), **helpful** (A- to B), **fairness** (A- to B), and **promptness of response** (A- to B). The largest decline was for **quality of customer service** falling from A- to B- this year.

The cleanliness and appearance of public areas continued to earn exceptionally strong ratings from

the respondents. The grades remained very high and unchanged for **parks** (A), **greenways** (A), **streets** (A-), **median/roadsides** (A-), and **bus shelters** (A-).

The Town's grades were unchanged this year for how well they maintain **traffic signs** (A-), **traffic signals** (B+), and **street pavement markings** (B+). The grades improved for the **maintenance of sidewalks** (B to B+) and **streets** (B- to B). How well Cary maintains **accessibility for the disabled** earned a solid grade of B+ for its first time rated in the survey. The streets and roads mentioned most frequently as needing attention were Maynard Road and Cary Parkway.

The Cary Police Department continued to earn very good ratings this year but with a slight decline evident in three of the five service dimensions. The grades remained high and unchanged for **response time** (A) and **problem solving** (A-). However, there was a decline from A to A- in the grades for **courteous, fairness, and competence**. Even with the decline, the Police earned very solid A to A-level ratings. The Cary Fire Department continued to earn the best overall ratings for any department examined in the survey. The department earned A+ grades for **courteous, fairness, competence, problem solving, and response time**. The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department continued to receive excellent ratings this year as well though showing a slight drop off from 2020. The grades fell from A to A- for **overall experience, facility quality, instructor/coach quality, program quality, and cost or fee**. There was a somewhat larger decline from A to B+ for **ease of registration**. The highest rated aspect was **inclusiveness** earning an A the first time rated in the survey.

The respondents were positive in their rating of **Cary as a place to live** giving the Town a mean score of 8.28 (8.30 in 2020) on the 9-point scale.



This would equate to a grade of A- which is the same as 2020. There were 97.6% of the responses on the “desirable” side of the scale and only 0.8% on the “undesirable” side. The grade (B+) was unchanged for the **overall quality of the services provided by Cary**. The **overall value of the services provided for the taxes and fees paid** earned a grade of B- improving from C+ in 2020. The respondents were also asked if they would **recommend Cary as a place to relocate**. There were 85.0% who would recommend Cary with 11.8% responding “maybe” and only 3.3% responding “no”. The 2020 percentages were 90% “yes” and 6.8% “maybe”, with 3.3% “no”. The major reasons given for not recommending Cary as a place to relocate were overcrowded, lack of affordable housing, and the cost of living.

When asked the most important issue facing Cary, the primary response was growth-related concerns with 134 comments. Other key issues were affordable housing (62 comments), traffic (26 comments), infrastructure (24 comments), cost of living (19 comments), schools (19 comments), and street/roads (19 comments). In 2020, the key issues were also growth-related concerns (132 comments), traffic (61 comments), affordable housing (23

comments), schools (21 comments), infrastructure (17 comments), and cutting down trees/greenspace (14 comments).

There was an exceptional perception of **feeling safe in Cary** overall this year. The mean was 8.25 (8.35 in 2020) with 99.0% answering on the “safe” side of the scale with only 0.3% on the unsafe side.

The top ten major information sources (in order) used by the respondents include **word-of-mouth, Cary’s website, television, BUD, Facebook, Cary email subscriptions, Nextdoor, Cary Magazine, radio, and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Brochure**. The biggest increases among sources in the top ten were **Cary email subscriptions** (11th to 6th) and **Cary Magazine**. The biggest decreases were **Raleigh News & Observer** (7th to 11th) and **Cary Citizen website** (9th to 13th). Besides **Cary Magazine**, two other new sources rated this year were **text/SMS** (14th) and **smart devices** (20th).

There has been a level of decline in the effectiveness of Cary’s communication efforts with citizens. The level of satisfaction fell for **Cary making information available to citizens about important services, projects, issues,**



**and programs.** This year's mean was 7.04 (7.69 in 2020) with 78.8% on the "satisfied" side of the scale compared to 91.2% in 2020. In addition, the respondents were also less satisfied with **the opportunities Cary gives citizens to participate in the decision-making process.** The mean decreased from 7.53 to 6.70 with 67.9% on the "satisfied" side of the scale down from 87.8% in 2020.

Solid Waste Services continued to receive very good marks this year for all the curbside collection services that were mostly unchanged from 2020. The grades remained the same for **garbage**

**collection (A), yard waste collection (A-), and recycling collection (A-).** There was one grade decline and that was for **loose leaf collection (A- to B+).** **Special collections** was included for the first time in the survey and earned an A-.

The Town Council focus areas earned solid ratings this year with somewhat mixed results. There were two grades that improved, two grades that declined, and one that was unchanged. The highest rated focus area with a mean of 8.04 (8.17 in 2020) was the job the Town does with **recreational facilities;** although, the grade fell from A- to B+. Even with the decline, there were 93.3% on the "satisfied" side of the scale. Rated second was the job the Town does with **environmental protection** with a mean of 7.56 (7.39 in 2020). The grade improved (B- to B) with 89.8% on the "satisfied" side of the scale. Rated third was **Town Council being effective in keeping Cary the best place to live, work, and enjoy** with a mean of 7.34 (7.80 in 2020). There was a larger decline in the grade (B+ to B-), but there was still a high percentage (82.4%) on the "satisfied" side of the scale which fell from 92.0% in 2020. The grade improved for the job the Town does with **transportation (C+ to B-)** which ranked fourth earning a mean of 7.18 (7.02 in 2020) with 84.1% on the "satisfied" side of the scale. Finally, the grade was unchanged for the job the Town does with **planning and development (C+)** with a mean of 6.72 (6.80 in 2020) and 74.5% on the "satisfied" side of the scale.

The respondents were asked to prioritize several environmental focus areas in terms of importance. The three highest priorities were **providing safe drinking water (8.58), controlling litter (8.09), and preserving open space/natural lands (8.06).** In addition, these focus areas earned relatively high means including **recycling/waste reduction (7.97), protecting/planting trees**

(7.95), and **mitigating stormwater/flooding impacts** (7.92). The somewhat lower rated priorities were helping address **food insecurity** (7.75), increasing **biodiverse wildlife habitats** (7.55), and promoting **solar/non-fossil energy** (7.16). In terms of neighborhood characteristics, the highest rated aspect was neighborhood safety which rated an A-, unchanged from 2020. This was followed by **neighborhood desirability** also remaining an A-. **Neighborhood strength** declined this year from a B+ to B as the mean fell from 7.96 to 7.63. Finally, **neighborhood community connection** also declined (B to B-) as the mean decreased from 7.71 to 7.21.

The respondents were again asked about the job the Town is doing in providing housing choices to accommodate different preferences. The mean fell for all the housing choices this year. The Town rated highest in **providing for households with children** with the grade falling from B- to C+. The grades also declined for the other housing choices (in order) for **households without children** (B- to C+), **young professionals** (C+ to C), **members of the local workforce** (C+ to C-), **seniors** (C to C-), and **multi-generational households** (C+ to D+).

In regards to bicycling in Cary, there were 51% of the respondents who ride bicycles at least sometime during the year. The most frequent was a **few times a year** (17.5%), followed by a **few times a month** (16.2%), and a **few times a week** (15.7%). Only 1.5% **ride their bicycle every day** in Cary. The respondents indicated adding greenways was the best possible action Cary could take that may increase how often they would ride their bicycles. Other possible actions (in order) were adding bike lanes physically separated from traffic, adding more sidewalks, adding painted lanes to more Cary streets, and adding more bike racks/lockers rated last.

In conclusion, there were two grades that improved this year, 16 grades that remained unchanged, and 15 grades that declined among the 33 common service dimensions (up from 30 in 2020 due to new questions).

**Overall, the Town of Cary continues to receive an excellent report card from its citizens with 23 grades in the A range and 10 grades in the B range.**

The common service dimensions include the core ratings for government staff, public areas, maintenance, police department, fire department, and parks, recreation, and cultural resources. In terms of means, there were 7 means that increased, 25 means that decreased, and 1 mean remained unchanged. The final average for the 33 graded Cary service dimensions was 8.21 which corresponds with a grade of A-. For comparison, the mean in 2020 was 8.43 (A), 2018 was 8.37 (A-), 2016 was 8.30 (A-), 2014 was 8.18 (A-), 2012 was 8.36 (A-), 2010 was 8.25 (A-), 2008 was 8.19 (A-), and in 2006 was 7.92 (B+). Due to the addition of new questions, these means reflect comparisons to the common service dimensions from the previous survey period. Overall, the Town of Cary continues to receive an excellent report card from its citizens with 23 grades in the A range and 10 grades in the B range. It was very impressive that the lowest grade was one B- this year among the common service dimensions.

**400**

CARY RESIDENTS  
SURVEYED

**94%**

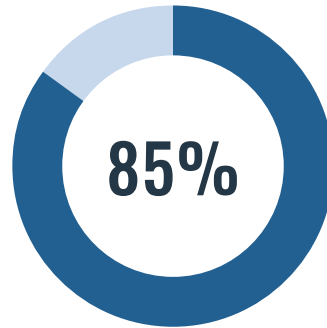
WIRELESS  
CALLERS

**6%**

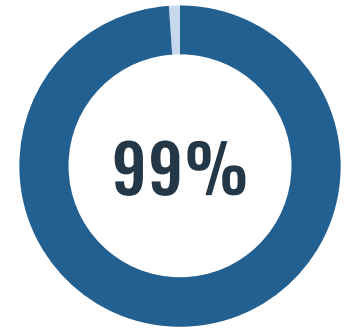
LANDLINE  
CALLERS

**A-**

CARY OVERALL  
AS A  
PLACE TO LIVE



RECOMMEND CARY AS A  
PLACE TO RELOCATE

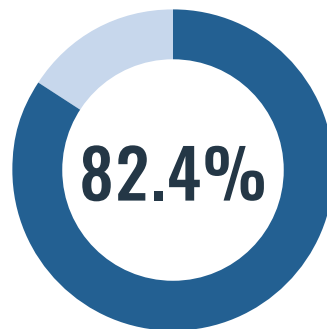


OF RESPONDENTS  
FEEL SAFE IN CARY

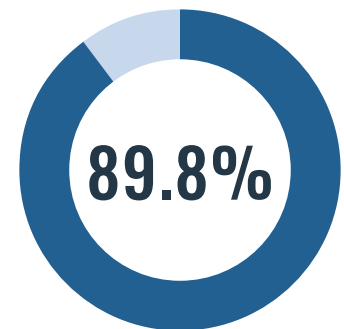
**A**

PARKS,  
RECREATION  
AND CULTURAL  
RESOURCES  
INCLUSIVENESS\*

\*First time asking  
this question



EFFECTIVENESS OF TOWN  
COUNCIL IN WORKING TO KEEP  
CARY THE BEST PLACE TO LIVE,  
WORK, AND ENJOY



RESPONDENTS SATISFIED WITH  
THE JOB CARY IS DOING ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PUBLIC AREA CLEANLINESS AND APPEARANCE		PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS		NEIGHBORHOOD ASPECTS	
Parks	A	Overall Experience	A-	Safety	A-
Greenways	A	Facility Quality	A-	Desirability	A-
Streets	A-	Program Quality	A-	Strength	B
Median/Roadways	A-	Cost of Fee	A-	Community Connection	B-
Bus Shelters	A-	Ease of Registration	B+		

<p><b>A-</b></p> <p><b>OVERALL PROFESSIONALISM FOR GOVERNMENT STAFF</b></p>	<p><b>B+</b></p> <p><b>OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED</b></p>	<p><b>B-</b></p> <p><b>OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY CARY FOR TAXES PAID</b></p>
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	TOWN GOVERNMENT STAFF	POLICE DEPARTMENT	FIRE DEPARTMENT
Courteous	A-	A-	A+
Fairness	B	A-	A+
Response Time	B	A	A+