

Shape Our Fremont

Latest Survey Shows Growing Concerns

According to the City of Fremont's latest official community survey, the levels of concern about traffic congestion, housing costs, and the rate of growth are at an all-time high. At the same time, the feeling that Fremont is moving in the right direction is at an all-time low.

The survey was conducted between June 20 and July 3 of this year by an independent firm that contacted a sampling of residents in all parts of the city. Questions were asked in English, Spanish, or Mandarin depending on the resident's preference.

Major Concerns

Overall, 72 percent of the residents feel that Fremont is an excellent or good place to live. That's the good news. The bad news is that only 32 percent of the residents feel Fremont is moving in the right direction, which is down from 48 percent who felt that way in 2016.

The top concern is traffic congestion on highways and freeways, where 86 percent of the residents feel it is extremely serious or very serious. That number is up from 65 percent in 2016. Traffic on local streets and roads is rated extremely serious or very serious by 71 percent of the respondents, up from 57 percent in 2016.

The cost of housing is an extremely serious or very serious concern for 84 percent of the Fremont residents who responded to the survey. That number is up from 71 percent who felt that way in 2016.

And finally, when residents were asked "Do you think the rate of growth and development in Fremont is too fast, about right, or too slow?", 65 percent feel it is much too fast or somewhat too fast. That number is up from 46 percent who expressed that level of concern in 2016, and way up from only 19 percent in 2013.

Rating the City

When asked about their satisfaction with fire, police, and recreation services provided by the city, most residents responded positively. On the other end of the scale, the satisfaction with road maintenance, addressing homeless encampments, and providing services to homeless have significant levels of dissatisfaction that may merit attention.

When asked about crime in Fremont, three in five say they feel the overall level of crime has increased in the city over the past few years, with the perception that property crimes have increased more than violent crimes.

And when asked specifically "How confident are you that Fremont City government operates in a way that is open and accountable to the public?" the number of residents who are extremely or very confident and the number who are not too confident are about equal.

The Question Marks

Although residents did have opinions on many important issues, the results of the survey also revealed several areas where residents have little or no knowledge about city plans and how those plans will affect the residents' lives.

When asked about Fremont's plans for the new Downtown Fremont and the Warm Springs Innovation District around the new BART station, the majority are not familiar with these development projects, nor do they believe the projects will significantly improve the local quality of life.

Residents were also unfamiliar with the city's budget management, and many have no idea if the city needs additional funding to provide essential services.

Perhaps the biggest surprise is that only 22 percent of the residents know elections for City Council seats are now based on districts, and only 7 percent actually know which district they live in.

This is especially alarming when you consider that elections for four of the districts are now less than a month away.

What's Next?

At the City Council meeting on October 2, the council reviewed the survey results and discussed ways that improvements could be made. Mayor Lily Mei stated that the council owed it to the community to be aware of residents' feelings and concerns, and she encouraged more public participation in community affairs.

To view the results of the latest city Community Survey as well as past surveys, go to <http://www.fremont.gov/1546/Community-Survey>