LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL
Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **February 28, 2006**, Work Session | AGENDA ITEM NO.: 6

CONSENT: | REGULAR: **X** | CLOSED SESSION: (Confidential)

ACTION: | INFORMATION: **X**

ITEM TITLE: **2006 Citizens Survey Overview and Discussion**

RECOMMENDATION: Begin to discuss the topics for the three policy questions and an optional open-ended question to be included in the 2006 Citizens Survey.

SUMMARY: In 2004, the City contracted with the National Research Center to conduct its first Citizens Survey. Endorsed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) the survey was distributed to 1200 city residents with a response rate of 39%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%. City Council endorsed conducting the National Citizen Survey every two years.

The Citizens Survey provides an overview of citizen satisfaction with City services, allows the City to benchmark itself against other communities, and complements the performance measurement initiative.

Staff recommends conducting the survey during late May/early June in order to get results by July 31st. Shortly after the results are received and analyzed, staff will schedule a special meeting to discuss the results and appropriate follow up actions.

The City is allowed to include three policy questions in the survey. And, for an additional fee of $1,350, an open ended question can also be included.

Staff suggests that City Council consider topics for the three open-ended questions between now and the March 28th work session so that the survey can be developed and finalized.

PRIOR ACTION(S): Survey conducted in May 2004

FISCAL IMPACT: Funds budgeted in FY 2006 in the amount of $13,000. The base price of the survey is $8,400 with additional costs of $850 for demographic cross-tabulation, $1,100 for geographic (Ward) tabulation, and $1,350 for an open-ended question for total costs of $11,700. Additional funds were used in FY 2004 to pay for a consultant to help analyze the results.

CONTACT(S):
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ATTACHMENT(S):
Citizen Survey April 2006 Schedule
2004 Policy Questions
2004 Open-ended Question

REVIEWED BY: lkp

Timeline for The National Citizen Survey™ April 2006 Class

Legend: ◀ Indicates when items **from NRC are due to you** ▶ Indicates when items **from you are due to NRC** ♦ Indicates information items

Item	Week	Actual Dates
Preparing for the survey		
♦ The NCS survey process is initiated upon receipt of your enrollment form and first payment	week 1	Apr 3
◀ NRC mails you The NCS worksheet packet	week 2	Apr 10
▶ Due to NRC: Worksheets and additional payment for add-on options	week 4	Apr 24
♦ NRC uses the information you provided to generate the sample and customize the survey instrument for your jurisdiction	weeks 5-6	May 1-May 8
◀ NRC provides confirmation documents about options selected by your jurisdiction and a sample of the postcard and mailing envelope for your records.	week 5	May 2
▶ Due to NRC: Confirmation of options selected.	week 6	May 8
◀ NRC provides samples of survey materials (cover letters and survey instrument) for your records.	week 6	May 8
♦ NRC prints materials and prepares mailings	weeks 5-6	May 1- May 8
Conducting the survey		
♦ Survey materials are mailed		
♦ Prenotification postcards delivered to post office	week 7	May 15
♦ 1st wave of surveys delivered to post office	week 8	May 22
♦ 2nd wave of surveys delivered to post office	week 9	May 30
♦ Data collection: surveys received for your jurisdiction	weeks 8-12	May 22 – June 19
♦ *Note 1*: During this time, you will receive postcards that were undeliverable due to bad addresses, or vacant housing units. This is normal. Please count all the postcards, as we will subtract the number of returned postcards from the total number mailed to estimate the number of "eligible" households in calculating the final response rate.		
♦ *Note 2*: You may receive phone calls from citizens during this time period who call to inform you they are outside of your jurisdiction's boundaries, or that they do not wish to receive additional mailings, etc. Please reassure them that their household was randomly selected, and while they may receive a total of three mailings from you, they will not receive any additional mailings after that time.		
▶ Due to NRC: evaluation questionnaire and timesheet about the data collection process	week 12	June 19
▶ Due to NRC: Final count of returned postcards	week 12	June 19
♦ Survey processing and report writing	week 12-14	June 19-Jul 3
♦ During this time, NRC will process the surveys, perform the data analysis, and produce a two-part draft report for your jurisdiction. The report of results will contain a description of the methodology, information on understanding the results, and graphs and tables of your results. The second report will include a description of NRC's database of normative data from across the U.S. and actual comparisons to your results, where appropriate.		
◀ NRC emails draft report (in PDF format) to you	week 15	Jul 10
▶ Due to NRC: jurisdiction feedback on the draft report	week 16	Jul 17
◀ NRC mails final report and data file to you (unless otherwise specified)	week 17	Jul 24
◀ NRC mails final invoice to you	week 17	Jul 24
◀ NRC mails final evaluation questionnaire and timesheet to you	week 17	Jul 24
▶ Due to NRC: Final half of costs of The NCS	week 18	Jul 31
▶ Due to NRC: completed final evaluation questionnaire and timesheet	week 18	Jul 31

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Three additional questions were asked by the City of Lynchburg as listed below. The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results.

Figure 25: Policy Question #1	
	To what extent do you support or oppose increasing taxes and fees to maintain current services and programs?
	Percent of Respondents
strongly support	5%
somewhat support	21%
neither support nor oppose	11%
somewhat oppose	24%
strongly oppose	30%
don't know	8%
Total	100%

Figure 26: Policy Question #2	
	Please indicate the degree to which you would support or oppose giving public funds to non-profit agencies in the City as determined by the City Council
	Percent of Respondents
strongly support	11%
somewhat support	29%
neither support nor oppose	15%
somewhat oppose	18%
strongly oppose	17%
don't know	10%
Total	100%

Figure 27: Policy Question #3	
	How likely or unlikely are you to use the Internet to conduct business with the City?
	Percent of Respondents
very likely	33%
somewhat likely	26%
neither likely nor unlikely	6%
somewhat unlikely	9%
very unlikely	22%
don't know	4%
Total	100%

Question 16d: What three services could the City of Lynchburg improve upon?	
Services:	**Percent of Respondents**
Roads / Traffic / Transportation	37%
Utilities / Recycling / Cable / Water / Snow removal	26%
Education / Children and Youth programs	21%
Waste pickup / Weeds / Litter	19%
Recreation / Land Use / Shops & Businesses	17%
City spending / Economic management / Taxes /Job Growth	17%
Police / Fire / EMS / Crime / Safety	15%
City services / Customer service / Ordinance enforcement	13%
Housing /Treatment of Mentally ill / Seniors / Low-income	12%
Other	3%
Don't Know / Nothing	1%
Total	100%