



**Town of Arlington
Office of the Town Manager**

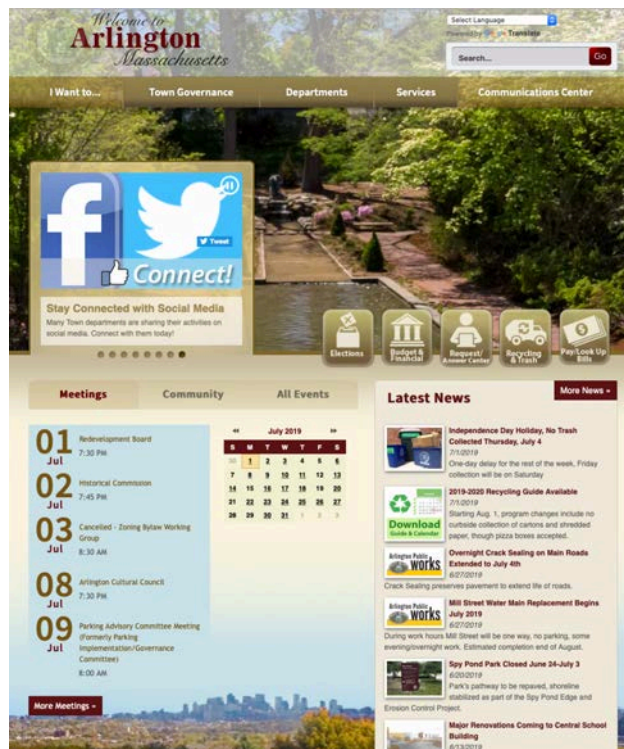
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2019 Website Survey Results

Introduction

The Town of Arlington updated its website, www.arlingtonma.gov, in July 2014 with the goal of making the site more user-friendly for visitors and easier for staff to engage the public in their respective communication and customer service initiatives. This new website employs responsive web design (RWD) and is powered by a robust customer management system (CMS), which has served the Town well since its launch. However, websites should be periodically reviewed to ensure they are meeting resident needs. Additionally, several new features and communications channels have been added since the new site was deployed. With that in mind, the Town administered a survey to Arlington residents in May 2019 to measure customer satisfaction of those new features as well as knowledge of them. This survey is the third such survey in six years and some comparisons are included in this report. It is important to repeat some questions to identify trends, expectations, and perceptions of website visitors.



With 652 responses to the 23-question survey, the results are not comprehensive, but they do provide some valuable insight and guidance to assist our current online communication efforts and evaluate future improvements and enhancements. As part of our contract with Granicus—our website vendor—a free website redesign (refresh) is provided after the first four years of service. The refresh provides the Town with the opportunity to choose from several templates that employ municipal best practices in web design and to update color schemes. Some questions on this survey were included to help us choose the appropriate template or, depending on the responses, not update our site at all.

Based on the survey results we will be taking advantage of the free redesign/refresh and guided by survey results, Google analytics, and engaging internal stakeholders will select the appropriate template.

The Town would like to thank survey participants for their valuable feedback and staff for their continued input. The action items identified as a result of this survey are listed on the next page. Full survey results are on the following pages.

Action Items at a Glance

- Review survey results with content posters and other communication stakeholders.
- Share survey results with website vendor (Granicus) during redesign/refresh process. Pay attention to navigation, layout (graphics and buttons), and improve accessibility (color contrast). Keep Town colors.
- Improve mobile experience (sub-navigation).
- Review methods for improving website Google search results, such as search engine optimization (SEO).
- Improve promotion of Town's communication channels outside of its main channels such as Town tax bills (buck slip), local media, ACMI, and encourage cross-promotion with boards/committees. If we can improve Town Notices and social subscriptions we can better promote Town initiatives and activities as well as online features.
- Improve promotion of online features: Request/Answer Center, Mobile app, Property Search, Cemetery Search, Open Checkbook, Public Records Center, Arlington Visual Budget, and Maps Library.

Other observations

Results show some reduction of visit frequency to website, although traffic to the website remains healthy. In 2018 the site reported approximately 1.7M page views and 650K sessions (visits), which is similar to 2017¹. The increase in social media use by the Town could be a contributing factor. Survey results do not provide enough data to make a conclusive determination, but suggest that this may be a trend to watch as social media use continues to rise. At the end of 2018 there were 11K Twitter followers and 10K Facebook fans for all Town social channels. At the beginning of July 2019, there are 12K Twitter followers and 11K Facebook fans.

Survey Results

Methodologies

The survey was conducted via Survey Monkey and publicized on the Town's website, Town Notices, local media, and social media channels.

Top line / Demographic Information

Number of respondents: 652 respondents to a 23-question survey

Frequency respondents visit the website: 44% (288) respondents report using the site monthly or less, 29% (188) respondents report they visit 2-3 times per month, 17% (108) report about once per week, and 9% (60) report more than once per week.

Residents vs. non-resident: 99% (538) resident; 1% (7) non-resident.

Work in Arlington: 16% (89) yes; 84% (456) no.

Arlington Business Owners: 7% (38) yes; 93% (507) no.

Demographics: 51% (280) respondents are between the ages of 30-54; 21% (117) are between 55-64; 19% (106) are between 65-74, 6% (32) are over 75; and 2% (10) are 18-29.

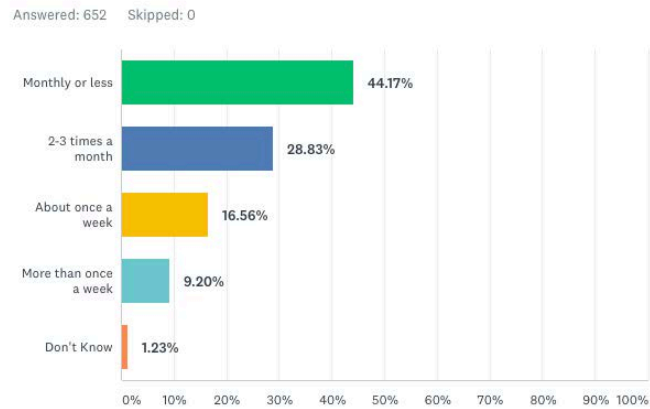
¹ 2018 Annual Report. Town of Arlington, MA. p. 8

**Frequency of Visits to Town Website
652 Respondents**

- 44% Monthly or less
- 29% 2-3 times per month
- 17% About once per week
- 9% More than once per week

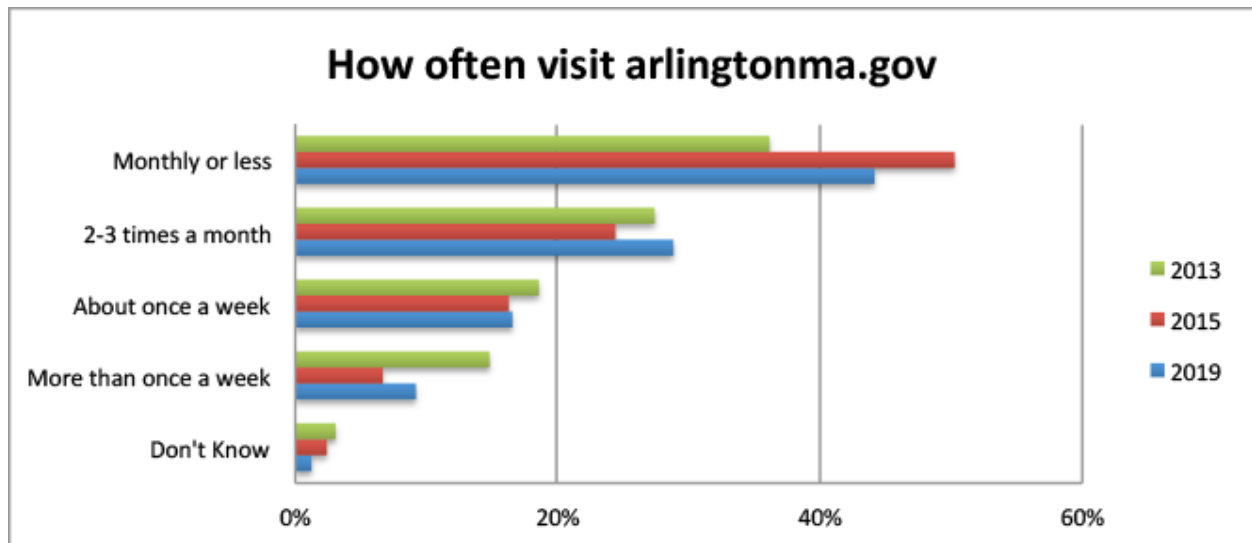
Most respondents report they visit the website monthly or less (44%), with 29% reporting they visit 2-3 times per month and 17% visit about once per week. Nine percent report they visit more than once per week.

How often do you visit the Town of Arlington website?



Comparisons from last three surveys.

Comparing respondent answers over the last 3 surveys (below), frequency of site visits has reduced, especially between the 2013 and 2019 surveys. Since 2014 the Town has added several social media channels, which may be diversifying the channels through which respondents receive Town information or otherwise engage with the Town.



Why Respondents Visit the Town’s Website 627 Respondents

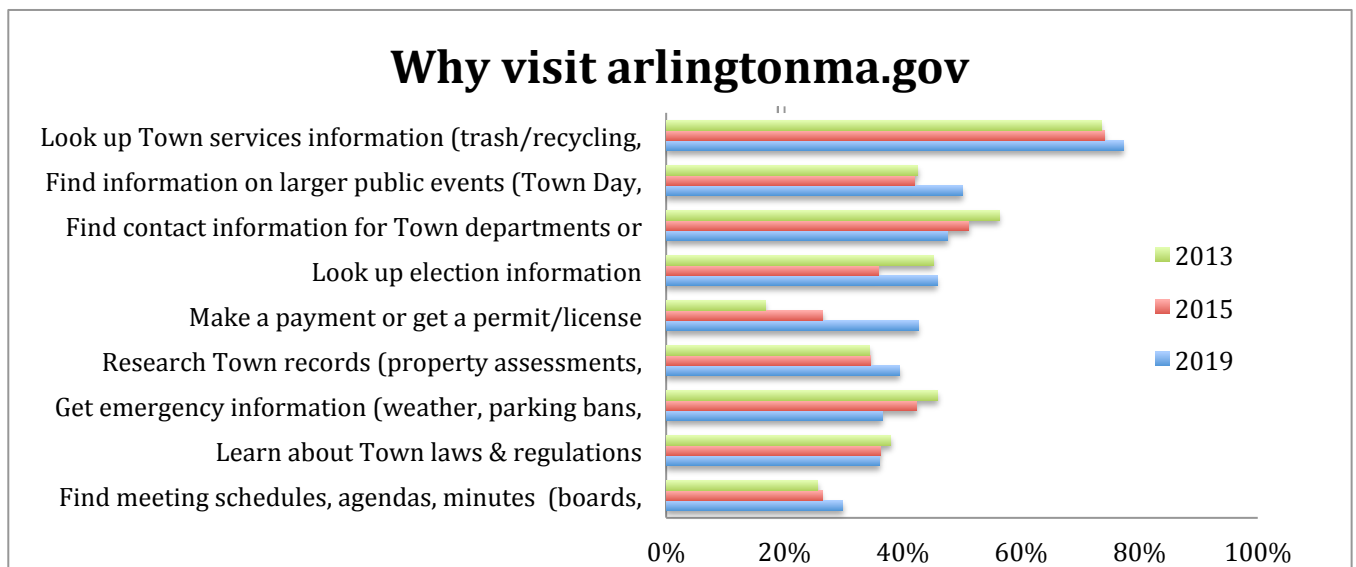
For what reasons do you regularly visit the Town of Arlington website arlingtonma.gov? (select all that apply)

Answered: 627 Skipped: 25

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|--|------------|
| Look up Town services information (trash/recycling, public safety, street sweeping, health, etc) | 77.19% 484 |
| Find information on larger public events (Town Day, parades, etc.) | 50.08% 314 |
| Find contact information for Town departments or staff | 47.53% 298 |
| Look up election information | 45.77% 287 |
| Make a payment or get a permit/license | 42.58% 267 |
| Research Town records (property assessments, building permits, etc.) | 39.39% 247 |
| Get emergency information (weather, parking bans, closures, etc.) | 36.52% 229 |
| Learn about Town laws & regulations | 36.04% 226 |
| Find meeting schedules, agendas, minutes (boards, committees, etc.) | 29.82% 187 |
| Find a Town-sponsored community activity (recreation, arts, etc.) | 28.71% 180 |
| Sign up for or manage alerts and updates (email, text, or phone) | 23.13% 145 |
| Get information about Arlington schools | 22.81% 143 |
| Submit a service or information request | 19.14% 120 |
| Learn about services for families and seniors in need (affordable housing, senior transportation, etc.). | 9.25% 58 |
| Find an elected official | 8.61% 54 |
| Look for job opportunities | 5.90% 37 |
| Manage my local business | 1.28% 8 |
| Total Respondents: 627 | |

Comparison from last three surveys

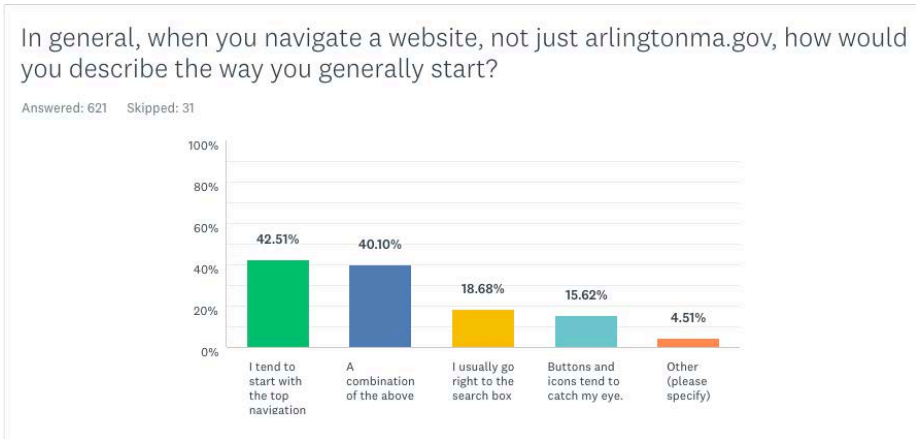
In the chart below, “Look up Town services” continues to be the top reason visitors come to the website. “Make a payment or get a permit” showed significant increases from respondents and aligned with improvements in these areas. There was also an increase in “researching Town records, finding meeting schedules, agendas/minutes, and finding information on larger public events.” The launch of the Public Records Center in 2016 and the Town’s ongoing transparency efforts may be contributors in the increase in researching Town records and finding meeting information. The increase in seeking information on larger public events may be attributed to the Town’s consistent coverage of events like Town Day, Patriots Day Parade, and other similar large-scale events. Significant decreases were seen in “finding contact information” and “get emergency information.” The latter is now communicated on all Town channels so users do not have to visit the website for this information (Arlington Alert, social, Town email) and the former still ranks very high on the list (3rd).



Navigation Behavior 621 Respondents

- 42% tend to start with top navigation
- 40% tend to start with combination of top navigation, buttons, search box
- 18% start with search box
- 16% start with a button/icon

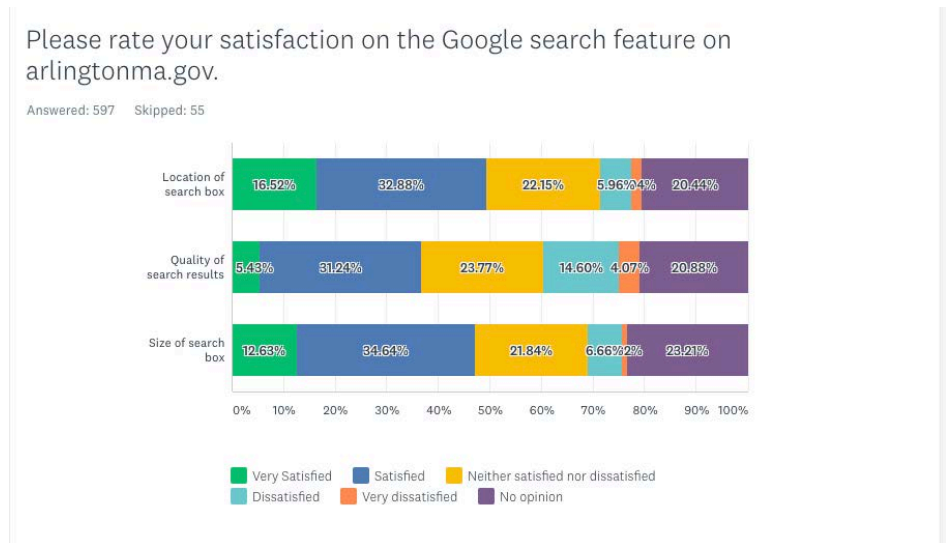
Top navigation continues to be of great importance to respondents. Thus, the redesign should focus on improving navigation. Search box and icons are used and are important. The Town will review analytics to test these assumptions to guide redesign and use of icons/buttons. A search box will remain.



User Satisfaction With Search Functionality 597 Respondents

- location: 49% Satisfied | 8% Dissatisfied
- box size: 46% Satisfied | 8% Dissatisfied
- search results quality: 37% Satisfied | 19% Dissatisfied

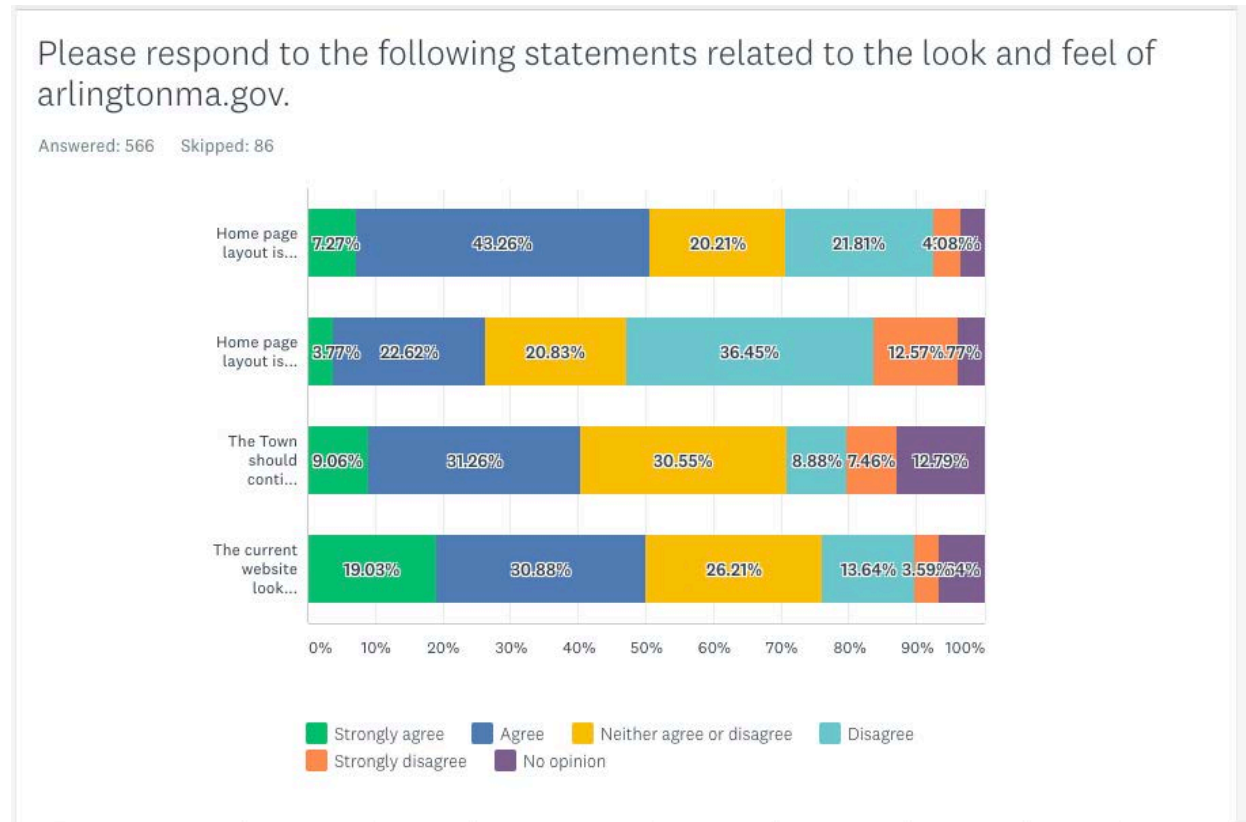
Search box: No change is required to location or size of search box, since overall, users are satisfied. However, the quality of search results should be reviewed with an eye toward improving them, such as through search engine optimization (SEO).



Look and Feel of Arlingtonma.gov
567 Respondents

Layout Simple to use: 51% Agree | 25% Disagree
 Layout Overwhelming: 51% Agree | 49% Disagree
 Town Colors, continue to use: 39% Agree | 16% Disagree | 43% Neither Agree/Disagree/No Opinion.

Respondents had conflicting responses regarding layout simplicity; the Town should endeavor to make/keep home page layout simple as possible. There is still a desire to incorporate Town colors, but not by the majority of respondents. The redesigned website should continue to use Town colors, but make them less predominant than they are on the current site.



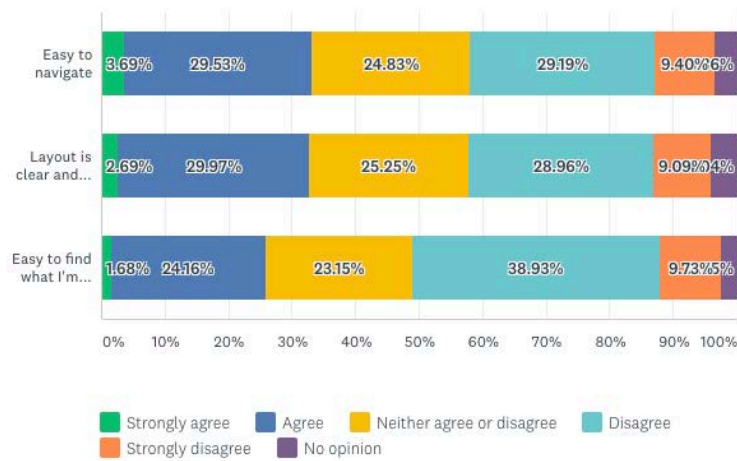
User Experience with Website on Mobile Devices (not app)
299 Respondents

Easy to Navigate: 33% Agree | 39% Disagree
 Layout clear, readable: 33% Agree | 38% Disagree
 Easy to find info: 27% Agree | 50% Disagree

During the website redesign, the site should be reviewed on different devices with an eye toward improving the mobile experience. Improvements to navigation and layout should result in improving users' ability to find information.

Please respond to the following statements related to your experience of visiting arlingtonma.gov using a mobile device. NOT the mobile app. We will ask about the Town's mobile app in a future question.

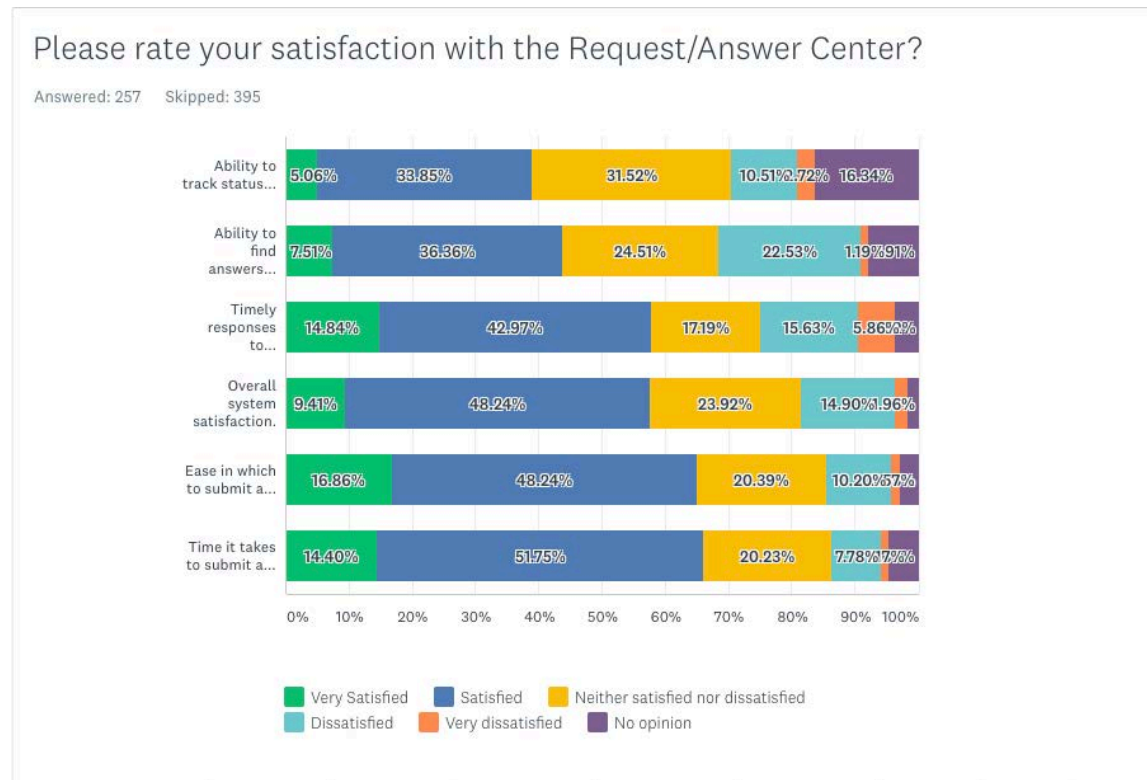
Answered: 299 Skipped: 353



User Satisfaction with Request/Answer Center (not app) 257 Respondents

Ability to track status: 39% Satisfied | 14% Dissatisfied
 Ability to Find FAQs: 44% Satisfied | 24% Dissatisfied
 Timely Responses: 58% Satisfied | 22% Dissatisfied
 Overall satisfaction: 48% Satisfied | 17% Dissatisfied
 Ease to submit: 65% Satisfied | 12% Dissatisfied
 Time to submit: 66% Satisfied | 9% Dissatisfied

Overall, these numbers indicate general satisfaction with the service, with the greatest dissatisfaction coming from “ability to find answers” (24%) “timely responses to requests” (21%). Although most are satisfied with this system, the Town should seek improvements in these areas.



User Satisfaction with Mobile App 12 Respondents

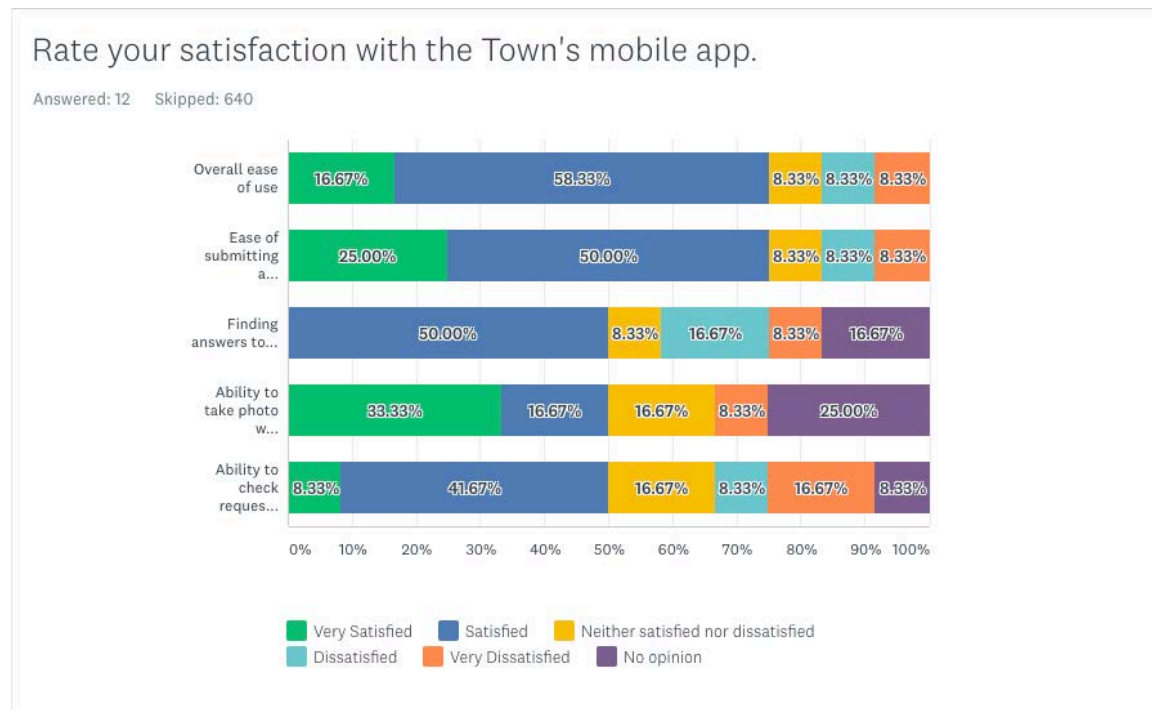
Only 12 respondents reported they downloaded the app; their ratings for overall satisfaction of the app are below:

9 Satisfied/Very Satisfied

2 Dissatisfied / Very dissatisfied

1 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

These results indicate that the Town could improve its promotion the mobile app. Since many more respondents reported visiting the site on the mobile app (299), the Town should focus its effort on improving the site's mobile experience.



Social Media Use by Respondents 500 Respondents

| | | | |
|------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Facebook: | 46% Daily/Weekly | 13% < weekly | 42% Do Not Use |
| Twitter: | 23% Daily/Weekly | 15% < weekly | 62% Do Not Use |
| Instagram: | 22% Daily/Weekly | 9% < weekly | 68% Do Not Use |
| Snapchat: | 1.5% Daily/Weekly | 3% < weekly | 96% Do Not Use |
| LinkedIn: | 21% Daily/Weekly | 30% < weekly | 49% Do Not Use |

Considerations: With the exception of Facebook, social media use among respondents is rather low. It is important to note that most respondents (over 400) came to the survey via a Town Notice (email). There was also significant promotion of the survey on social media. It is unclear that what is reflected below correlates with the entry point of respondents, but it is worth consideration.

The Town should continue to use existing social media channels (Twitter and Facebook) and improve promotion of its social media channels in the Town's existing channels (Notices) and on outside channels such as Town tax bills (buck slip), local media, ACMi, sandwich boards in front of Town Hall, and encourage cross-promotion with Town boards/committees.

Since the last survey, the Town has added many social media options and is interested in the social media channels you engage with (and not just with the Town). Please let us know how frequently you visit the following social media channels.

Answered: 551 Skipped: 101

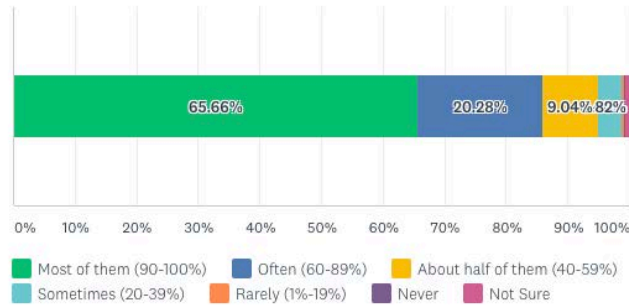


How Many Town Notices do You Read 498 Respondents

86% reported they read “Most of them or often (60-100%)
 9% reported they read “half” of them 40-59%
 4% reported they read “sometimes” or “rarely”

On average, how many of these emailed Town Notices do you read?

Answered: 498 Skipped: 154



Respondents who reported receiving Town Notices are highly engaged with them, with 66% reporting they read most of them (90-100%) and 20% reporting they read them often. In the open comments, many respondents reported that the subject line was important, as the survey comment below indicates.

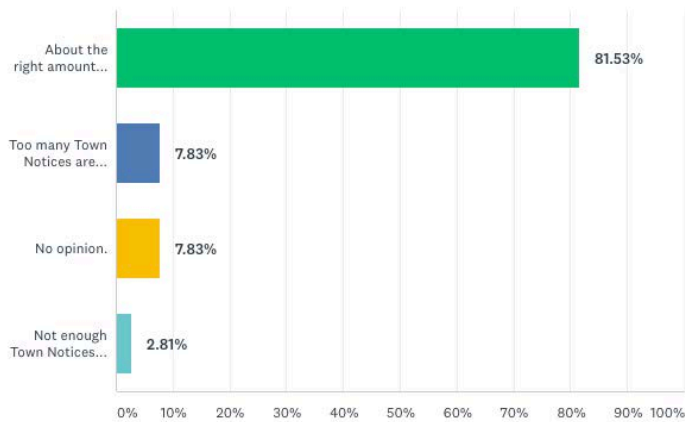
“Subject lines matter. Continue to be clear as to what the notice is about in the subject line. This helps me sort quickly what I want to read and what I don’t.”

Volume of Town Notices 498 Respondents

81% - About the right amount
 8% - Too much
 3% - Not enough
 8% - No opinion

How would you categorize the amount of Town Notices that are sent?

Answered: 498 Skipped: 154



A large percentage of respondents (81%) report the frequency of Town Notices is just about right.

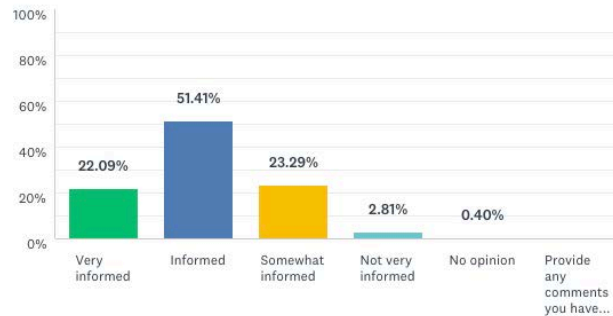
“I find the frequency is appropriate and they are brief with links for more information.”

How Informed Respondents Are About Town Initiatives/Activities 498 Respondents

73% Very Informed/Informed
23% Somewhat Informed
3% Not Very Informed

Based on these emailed Town Notices, how informed about Town activities and initiatives do you feel?

Answered: 498 Skipped: 154



Respondent Comments

"I can always ignore them but I like that the Town proactively reaches out to inform citizens. It's much easier to read and delete an email than it is to follow a link to a website."

"Receiving Town Notices by email is great. I read nearly every word of every TN. Sometimes I save them for reference. They are an excellent resource."

"If you spend any time on the Arlington List facebook page it's clear that many people do not subscribe to the Town Notices. Half of the questions people have are things the town notifies us of in the emails. Perhaps add a feature to the home page advertising these emails so people know to sign up."

"They're brief and easy to read, which is good! I appreciate links to read more where interested. Please keep them simple!!! I have to deal with too many fancy constant contact newsletters that are much harder to review quickly. Please don't go that route!"

"Exquisitely curated, lucid, pithy, and salient - Bravo!"

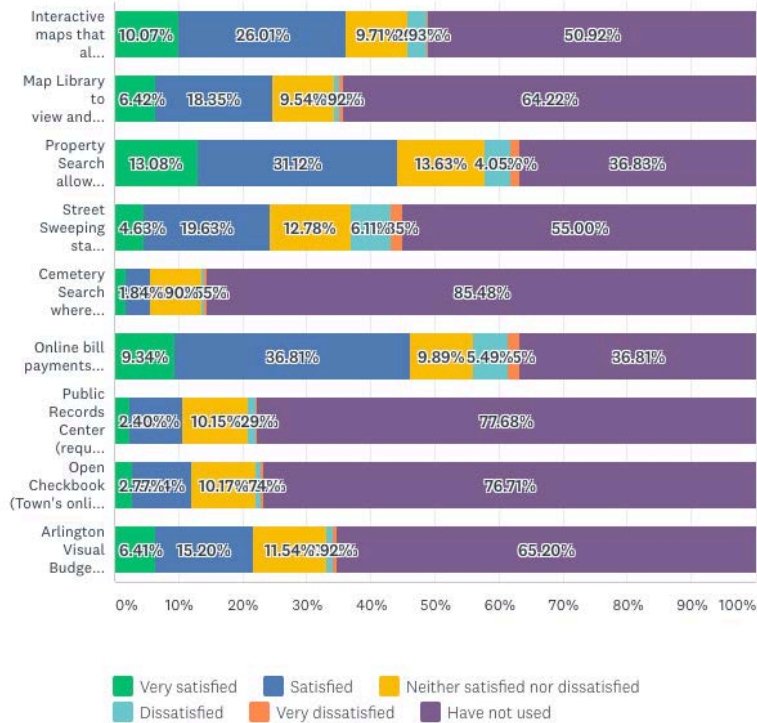
Satisfaction with Website Features

Overall, users who knew of the features listed in the question were generally satisfied with them. What is notable in these responses is that respondents were overwhelmingly not aware of these features.

The Town will work with the respective departments to develop outreach on these features.

We've added or enhanced several features and tools on the Town's website. We ask you rate your satisfaction on their use.

Answered: 546 Skipped: 106



Respondent Comments

"I have not used many of these services, but it's nice to know about them."

"I have not used these features, but I intend to look for them. They sound like the kind of features I'd like to have on the site."

"Did not know most of these services existed."

Sample of comments provided that sum up website and communication sentiments provided by respondents.

"I think the most important thing is improving the user experience of finding info quickly on webpage using mobile."

"Overall I think the town website is good in that the info is usually there and I am usually able to find it. Sometimes I wish the navigation was easier and the information I am looking for easier to find."

"Please include links to meeting agendas." [email notices]

"Look into how to improve google searches as well."

"Overall the site is good. It is well laid out and for the most part I can find what I'm looking for. The biggest pet peeve is look - it is very dated."

"I'm fine with the website—I just think the aesthetics are unappealing and somehow don't capture the spirit I connect with Arlington. I'm not asking for trendy or hip, but I think the gold is a little sepia-like, which is maybe where some the dated-feeling comes from?"

"The town website is better than many other public websites, it looks a little dated (maybe especially because of the town colors), but overall the functionality is pretty good! Looking forward to seeing a new look and new features roll out!"

"Making some small style changes to the website would go a long way toward making it look modern and more usable. Bigger default fonts, maybe a white background using the town colors as accents."

Web style considerations: Consider a white background, larger and/or darker default fonts for improved ADA compliance. Review top navigation and improve mobile version (sub-navigation is confusing). Recommend direct links to Agendas in Boards/Committees that send email notifications. Employ more search engine optimization to improve search results.