

# COUNTY OF YORK

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** December 20, 2024

**TO:** York County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Mark L. Bellamy, Jr., County Administrator



**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Citizen Survey

As requested by the Board, we are in the process of procuring services for a comprehensive citizen survey. In 2019, a survey was conducted by the Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR) as part of the Comprehensive Plan process and looked at citizen's thoughts on various Comprehensive Plan related items and visioning. This year, we are taking the opportunity to modernize our approach by engaging Polco to administer the survey.

Polco is a digital-first platform that employs online distribution, social media outreach, and physical mailings to achieve a statistically accurate survey. Unlike traditional phone surveys, Polco's methodology reduces overall costs while delivering superior results. Once the survey is complete, the Board will receive a remote online presentation at a work session where Polco will discuss the survey findings. Additionally, the County will have access to detailed online analyses of the results, including benchmarking data comparing York County to other localities in Virginia and nationwide. Notably, nearby localities such as Williamsburg and Newport News already use Polco for their citizen surveys, and the platform is widely utilized across the country.

It is important to distinguish Polco from the County's FlashVote software. While FlashVote is an effective tool for addressing timely topics with concise 4-10 question surveys designed to be completed in just a few minutes, Polco provides a much broader scope. Polco surveys typically include over 100 questions, offering a comprehensive evaluation of various local government services. Most jurisdictions using Polco conduct surveys every two years to measure, track, and analyze service trends over time.

We believe this modernized approach to citizen engagement will provide a detailed and valuable understanding of the County's strengths and challenges as perceived by the population we serve. In addition, it will serve to fulfill an item the Board asked for County Administration to complete.

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