



Survey: Anne Arundel residents want slower growth

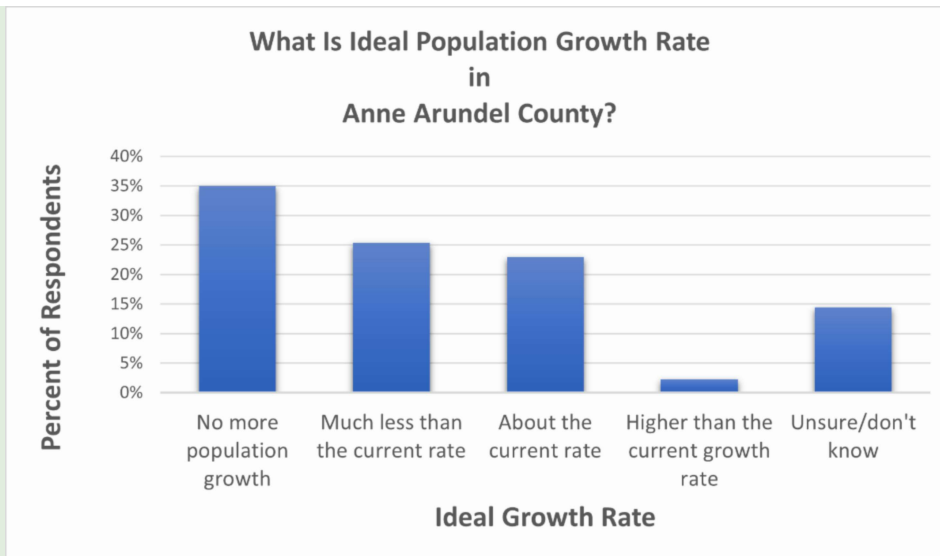


In this election year, County voters will go to the polls to select legislative and executive leaders who will best carry out their vision of the future. Successful candidates will properly identify the wishes of the electorate and craft campaign platforms and post-election strategies that address these wishes. Sometimes, the most difficult challenge for candidates is identifying what the majority of the electorate wants. Often a credible survey of citizen perspectives can provide valuable guidance for future actions.

The Center for Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at the Anne Arundel Community College directed by Prof. Dan Nataf and has been surveying the perspectives of County residents twice a year since 2009. The credibility of its survey results is seldom challenged. Recently the CSLI released the results of its 2022 Spring Survey, which addressed a wide variety of issues of interest to County residents. Below, we will focus on two topics covered by the survey that are fundamental to future activities of the County government: population growth and development. Space limitations will restrict the discussion to key conclusions, but the full survey is available for review at the [CLSI survey webpage](#), with these topics addressed on pages 59-61.

In general, the survey showed that the ideal future envisioned by current residents is one characterized by significantly slower population growth, residential development that prioritizes affordable housing and redevelopment, and slower commercial development with emphasis upon redevelopment of older commercial centers and encouragement of small retail merchants. The charts below show the distribution of responses on these issues.

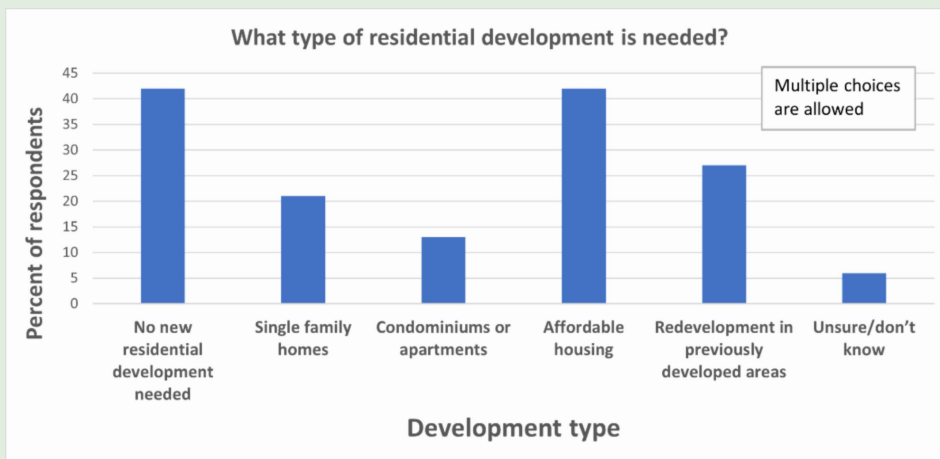
The topic of population growth was opened with the multiple choice question “What is your view on the ideal rate of population growth in the County?” The chart below summarizes the choices and the responses.



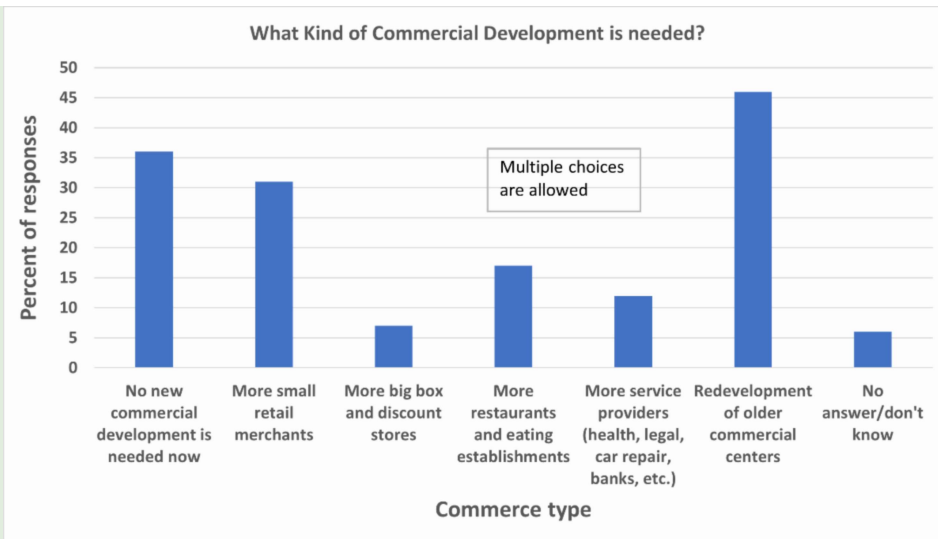
Sixty percent of respondents said that the ideal growth rate was slower than the current rate, while only 25 percent preferred a higher rate. More than one-third said that no more growth was desirable. Partisan differences were minor.

Variation in the survey results over Council Districts have been made available by CSLI and can be viewed at [this link](#). Roughly comparable results were reported in all Districts.

Respondents were also asked to suggest the types of residential and commercial development that should be prioritized.



Forty two percent of respondents saw no new residential development needed. Those who did see a need for residential development saw affordable housing and redevelopment as the prime needs. Multiple choices were allowed for this question, so that the percentage total is greater than 100%.



Of the 64 percent who thought more commercial development would be desirable, the need for redevelopment of older commercial centers and a need for more small retail merchants stood out.

All of this suggests that the ideal future envisioned by the majority of residents of the county would be characterized by a more stable, slower growing population, with better workforce housing, and redevelopment of aging commercial and residential areas.

Nearly all of these features have been suppressed by growth management policies allowing dense and highly profitable greenfield residential and commercial development. **Breakdown of the survey data showed, in every Council district, that citizens experience little improvement in the way that the County has managed growth and development in the past few years. (See linked documents above).**

The CSLI survey data on growth and development provide valuable insight into the perspectives of County voters. All candidates for public office would be well advised to take these into consideration.

About the Alliance

The Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities is a non-partisan coalition of 25 local and state organizations advocating for sustainable growth and environmental protections to safeguard and enhance residents' quality of life.

Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities

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