



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
FROM: Raleigh Appearance Commission
RE: Community Appearance Survey: Initial Results
DATE: April 18, 2006

INTRODUCTION

As part of its 2005 Work Program, the Appearance Commission, with the assistance of the North Carolina State University Center for Urban Affairs & Community Services (CUACS), conducted a telephone survey of Raleigh residents in late 2005 to gather citizen views on various appearance issues. This initiative is the first phase of a three-part research effort, which will also include a series of focus group discussions and online visual preference survey.

For the telephone survey, a total of 730 City residents were interviewed. Respondents were selected at random, but care was taken to ensure that respondents from each of the City's zip code areas were included, to allow the Appearance Commission to infer the opinions of the City as a whole. The questions included on the survey were developed by the Appearance Commission, with consultation with CUACS. A copy of the survey instrument is attached as Appendix 1 of this memorandum. Following completion of the telephone survey, CUACS prepared a tally of the survey responses, which are summarized below.

FINDINGS

The survey revealed that community appearance is a matter of high importance to respondents, and that most are willing to financially support appearance-related initiatives. For example:

- Ninety-five (95) percent feel that Raleigh's appearance is important to the City's economic future.
- Sixty-five (65) percent would support new initiatives to promote Raleigh's appearance and livability, even if these initiatives resulted in higher taxes or fees.

Respondents also noted that the City has made progress in addressing appearance-related issues. For instance:

- Seventy-two (72) percent believe that public areas are well-maintained.
- Fifty-eight (58) percent of those surveyed report that the appearance of the City has improved since they have lived here.

However, despite our progress to date, other results suggest that respondents believe more could be done. For example:

- Ninety (90) percent of respondents felt that Raleigh should invest more resources to ensure major roadways leading into the City are attractive.
- Eight-three (83) percent believe that the appearance of downtown should be a City priority.
- Eighty-six (86) percent feel that Raleigh should commit more resources to removing roadside litter and debris in a timely manner.
- Seventy-nine (79) percent believe that more resources should be committed to removing graffiti.

Almost three-quarters (74 percent) of those surveyed believe that City standards for landscaping and building design are having positive affect on Raleigh's appearance, but that additional efforts are needed. For instance:

- Sixty-four (64) percent of survey respondents feel that landscaping standards for retail, office, and multi-family housing developments should be strengthened.
- Nearly seventy-five (75) percent believe the City should do more to ensure that nonresidential trash, service, and equipment areas are less visible.
- Eighty-one (81) percent report that wider wooded buffers between single-family homes and nearby commercial development should be required.
- Eighty (80) percent among those surveyed support planting trees in medians or along streets in all new developments.

While there was clear consensus on many issues, there were a few topics for which respondents' opinions were more evenly split, among them:

- Whether buildings taller than 20 stories should only be allowed downtown.
- Whether the size of new homes should be limited in established neighborhoods.
- Whether the allowable heights of business signs along roadways should be lowered.
- Whether development should be required to aside a portion of project costs toward providing public art.

Most telephone survey question responses were structured on a five-point scale, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Appendix 2 of this memo graphs the responses to each of those questions.

The survey included a series of open-ended questions asking respondents to name a place in Raleigh that contributes positively to or detracts from the City's image. In regards to attractive places, no single location received an overwhelming majority of responses, but North Raleigh/ North Ridge/ North Hills were most often cited (73 times, or 9.5%) as an attractive place, followed by Pullen Park (58 times) and Downtown (52 times). There was slightly more consensus of opinion regarding problem areas. Downtown was listed most frequently (138 times, or 19%), closely followed by Capital Boulevard (118 times). The fact that the downtown was listed as one of the best- and worst-looking portions of the City signals that additional exploration of public opinion is needed as to that issue, particularly in light of the fact that eighty-three (83) percent of the respondents indicated that the appearance of downtown should be a City priority.

In addition to the questions on appearance-related issues, the survey also included questions related to demographics and respondent location. These questions will allow cross tabulation of survey results by age group, location of residence, home ownership, and other factors. CUACS has applied weighting factors to these results to permit the Appearance Commission to compare the opinions of residents in one portion of the City (north, south, east, west, or downtown) to the opinions of residents in other portions of the City. Results from this analysis will be forthcoming in a subsequent report.

The survey included a question asking whether the respondent would be willing to participate in a focus group discussion. Almost 400 people (54 percent) volunteered. While 400 is too many to accommodate in a focus group discussion, such a response underscores the importance Raleigh residents place on the appearance of their community.

NEXT STEPS

As discussed in the 2005 Appearance Commission Work Program, the 2005 Appearance Survey project includes 3 major components; a telephone survey (which is the subject of this memorandum), a series of focus group discussions held to further explore the issues identified in the telephone survey, and a visual preference survey that asks respondents to "score" the appearance of a series of design responses to appearance issues.

Based on preliminary evaluation of the telephone survey's results, the commission plans to further explore the following issues in the remaining phases of the survey:

- Visual quality along the primary roadways (Gateway Corridors) into the City.
- Better gauge of public opinion regarding the visual aspects of downtown.
- Initiatives to address litter and graffiti in a timely manner.
- Improvements to landscaping and screening standards.
- Better buffering of residential areas from nonresidential uses.
- Methods to increase tree cover along streets.

The next steps in the survey process will include:

1. The preparation of a cross-tabulated summary report allowing comparison of citizen opinions from different portions of the City (to be completed as part of the Commission's 2006-07 work program).
2. The completion of seven focus group discussion sessions (led by CUACS), aimed at deeper examination of over-arching appearance issues and survey questions for which there was not a strong consensus of opinion.
3. The administration of an on-line visual preference survey, designed to gauge public opinion on a variety of design and appearance issues (such as vertically-mixed mixed-use development, building to the street, contextual infill, and pedestrian access).

The commission's 2006-2007 Work Program report will go into more detail on the process, timing, and objectives of the next steps.

Thank you for the chance to pursue this survey, and for your support and continued interest in its results. We look forward to further exploration of public opinion regarding appearance issues.

Sincerely,



Chad Meadows, Chair
Raleigh Appearance Commission



Courtney Telfaire, Vice Chair
Raleigh Appearance Commission

CC: Russell Allen, City Manager
Mitchell Silver, Planning Director

CITY OF RALEIGH APPEARANCE SURVEY - 2005

PHONE: _____ ZIP: _____ ID NUMBER: _____ CARD 1 (1-4)
(5)

CONTACT STATUS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
TIME													
DATE													
STATUS													

C	AM	ANSWERING MACHINE	CL	CAN'T LOCATE	PC	PARTIALLY COMPLETED
O	BS	BUSY SIGNAL	FX	FAX / MODEM / TDD	RI	RESPONDENT INELIGIBLE
D	BG	BUSINESS/GOVERNMENT	NA	NO ANSWER	RF	REFUSED
E	CB	CALL BACK	NL	NO LISTING	TI	TERMINATED INTERVIEW
S	CI	COMPLETED INTERVIEW	OS	OUT OF SERVICE	WN	WRONG NUMBER

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Hello, my name is [NAME] and I'm calling from The Center for Urban Affairs and Community Service at NC State University. We're conducting a study of Raleigh citizens' opinions about community appearance on behalf of the City of Raleigh.

We're interested in learning more about citizen views regarding community appearance issues and using that information to help direct City resources toward addressing those issues. May I please speak to someone who is at least 18 years of age? **[IF NECESSARY REPEAT THE INTRODUCTION]**

Your telephone number was selected at random so I need to verify that I have reached [Phone Number]

YES: NUMBER IS CORRECT [CONTINUE INTERVIEW] 1
 NO: NUMBER IS INCORRECT [TERMINATE INTERVIEW] 2

(6)

TERMINATE: "I'm sorry (...I misdialed.). We are only talking today with citizens who are included in our sample. Thanks for your time." [CODE TI.]

Is this a household or a business?

HOUSEHOLD: [CONTINUE INTERVIEW] 1
 BUSINESS: [TERMINATE INTERVIEW] 2

(7)

TERMINATE: "I'm sorry. The study requires us to sample households only. Thanks for your time." [CODE TI.]

Do you live within the Raleigh City limits?

YES: [CONTINUE INTERVIEW] 1
 NO: [TERMINATE INTERVIEW] 2

(8)

TERMINATE: "I'm sorry. We are only talking today with citizens who live inside the city limits of Raleigh. Thanks for your time." [CODE TI.]

Appendix 1: Survey Instrument

<p>The following questions focus on the subject of community appearance. Community appearance refers to the overall image, character, and attractiveness that the City of Raleigh projects.</p>						
1. In general, how do you rate the City of Raleigh’s overall appearance? Would you say Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor ...?	Excellent.....	1				(7)
	Good	2				
	Fair.....	3				
	Poor.....	4				
	Don’t Know	8				
	Refused	9				
2. Overall, how has the city’s appearance changed in the time you have lived here? Would you say Much better, Somewhat better, About the same, Somewhat worse, or Much worse ...?	Much better.....	1				(7)
	Somewhat better	2				
	About the same	3				
	Somewhat worse.....	4				
	Much worse	5				
	Don’t Know	8				
	Refused	9				
3. Identify a place within the city limits that you think <u>contributes most positively</u> to the overall image and attractiveness of Raleigh. By “place,” we mean any specific road, neighborhood, commercial area, natural area, or setting that is open to public view.	[SPECIFY]					(7)
	Don’t Know	98				
	Refused	99				
4. Identify a place within the city limits that you think <u>detracts most from</u> the overall image and attractiveness of Raleigh. Again, by “place,” we mean any specific road, neighborhood, commercial area, natural area, or setting that is open to public view.	[SPECIFY]					(7)
	Don’t Know	98				
	Refused	99				
<p>5. The following statements continue to focus on community appearance. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statements I read, using the following scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. We simply would like your opinions. <u>As you respond, keep in mind that committing city resources to an appearance-related issue may require redirecting some funds, materials, labor, or time from other city initiatives; or, possibly require an increase in some taxes or fees.</u></p>						
Read Scale After Each Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
a. Raleigh’s appearance is important to the City’s future economic success.	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
b. City rules for building design and landscaping are having a positive impact on how Raleigh looks.	1	2	3	4	5	(16)
c. Public areas around the City are well-maintained.	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
d. The appearance of downtown Raleigh (i.e., the center of the city) should be a community priority.	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
e. The City of Raleigh should provide resources to place existing overhead utility lines underground, even if it requires additional fees or taxes.	1	2	3	4	5	(16)

Appendix 1: Survey Instrument

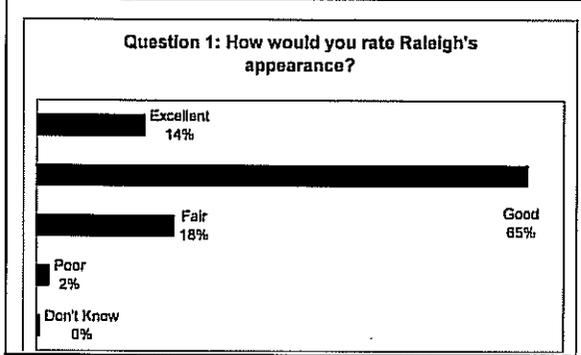
f. The City of Raleigh should set stricter rules limiting the brightness of outdoor lighting levels around office and commercial developments.	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
g. Raleigh should be doing more to make it easier to walk, jog, or bicycle throughout the City.	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
h. The City should require developers to spend, or set aside, a percentage of their project costs on public artwork.	1	2	3	4	5	(16)
i. The City should strengthen landscaping standards for retail, office, and multi-family housing developments.	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
j. The City should require that commercial developments locate their parking to the side or rear of the buildings.	1	2	3	4	5	(16)
k. Raleigh should commit more resources to remove graffiti in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5	
l. Raleigh should require wider wooded buffers between single-family homes and nearby commercial development.	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
m. The City should be doing more to promote energy-saving building design and construction, even if it increases the cost of development.	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
n. The City should adopt new rules designed to lower the heights of business signs along our roadways.	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
o. The City should set stricter rules regarding the size of new houses that can be built in older neighborhoods.	1	2	3	4	5	(16)
p. The City should commit more resources to ensure that the trash dumpsters, service areas, and equipment like meter boxes, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning around non-residential areas are less visible to public view.	1	2	3	4	5	
q. Trees should be planted in medians or along the streets of all new development.	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
r. Raleigh should commit more resources to remove roadside litter and debris in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5	
s. The City should do more to encourage a mix of uses in new development, such as placing apartments and offices above stores.	1	2	3	4	5	(16)
t. The City should invest more resources to ensure major roadways leading in to Raleigh (e.g., Capitol Blvd, Western Blvd, Glenwood Ave, US Hwy 64, New Bern Ave, etc.) are attractive and scenic entryways to the city.	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
u. Buildings taller than 20 stories should only be allowed downtown (i.e., in the center of the city).	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
v. New residential development, including subdivisions, should be required to include recreation areas.	1	2	3	4	5	
w. I would support new initiatives and efforts to improve Raleigh's appearance and livability, even if it required additional fees or taxes.	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
6. Are you aware that Raleigh has an Appearance Commission, a group of citizen volunteers who advise the City Council on matters of community appearance?	Yes.....1 No.....2					(11)
Finally, I'd like to ask you a few background questions.						

Appendix 1: Survey Instrument

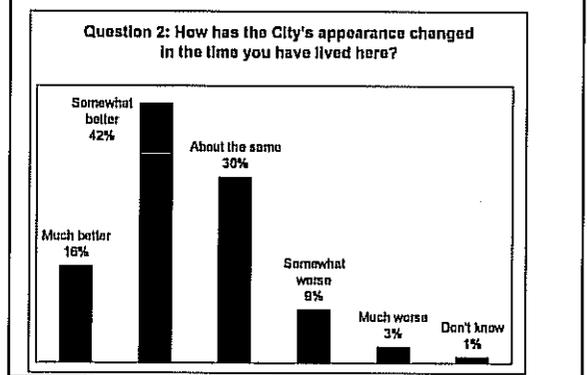
<p>7. Which category includes your age? [READ LIST]</p>	<p>18-24 years of age.....1 25-34 years of age.....2 35-49 years of age.....3 50-64 years of age.....4 Over 65 years of age.....5 Don't Know8 Refused9</p>	<p>(12)</p>
<p>8. What is your 5-digit zip code?</p>	<p>Five Digit Zip Code: _____</p>	<p>(13)</p>
<p>9. Do you live in an Urban, Rural, or Suburban area of Raleigh?</p>	<p>Urban1 Non-urban (answered either Rural or Suburban)...2 Don't Know8 Refused9</p>	<p>(12)</p>
<p>10. Do you Own or Rent the place where you live?</p>	<p>Own1 Rent.....2 Other [SPECIFY] _____ <input type="text"/> Don't Know8 Refused9</p>	<p>(12)</p>
<p>11. How long have you lived in Raleigh?</p>	<p>Less than 1 year1 1 to 5 years.....2 6 to 10 years.....3 11 to 20 years.....4 More than 20 years5 Don't Know8 Refused9</p>	<p>(12)</p>
<p>Over the next two months, the City of Raleigh will be conducting group interviews of survey respondents in order to discuss city appearance issues in greater depth. They will select names randomly from all survey respondents who volunteer.</p>		
<p>12. If you name is selected, would you be willing to participate in an hour-long group discussion?</p> <p>IF YES: Thank you. You will be contacted if your name is chosen. May I have your first name so that you may be called back if your name is chosen?</p>	<p>Yes1 No2</p> <p>RECORD NAME: _____</p>	<p>(12)</p>
<p>That concludes the interview. The information you provided will help the Appearance Commission prioritize activities that have an impact on Raleigh's appearance and quality of life.</p> <p>Summary results will be posted later this year on the City of Raleigh web site (www.raleighnc.gov).</p> <p>Thank you very much for your time.</p>		

Appendix 2: Survey Results

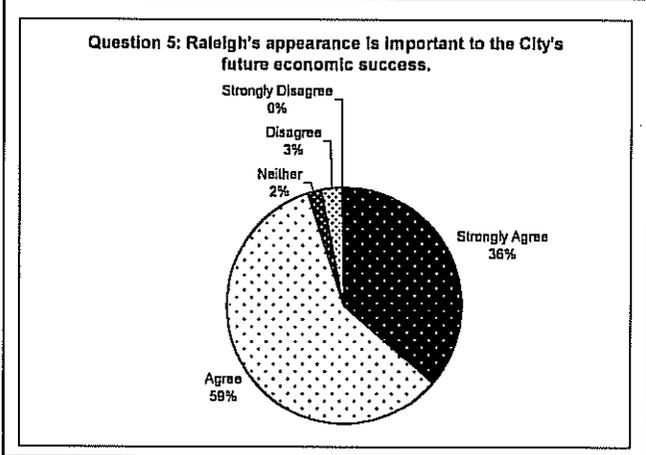
Question 1: How would you rate Raleigh's overall appearance?					
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	
105	478	134	12	3	730
14%	65%	18%	2%	0%	100%



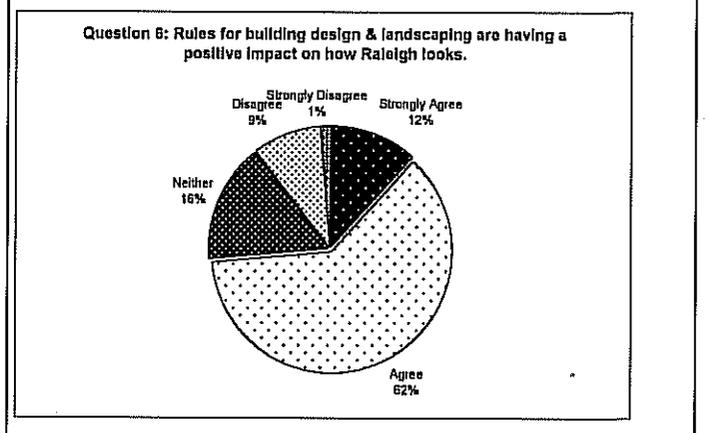
Question 2: How has the City's appearance changed in the time you have lived here?						
Much better	Somewhat better	About the same	Somewhat worse	Much worse	Don't know	
114	307	220	83	18	7	730
16%	42%	30%	8%	3%	1%	100%



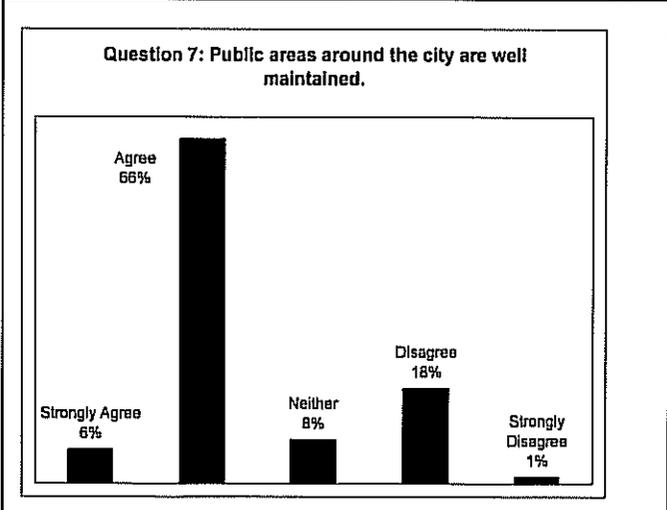
Question 5: Raleigh's appearance is important to the City's future economic success.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
266	428	14	20	2	730
36%	59%	2%	3%	0%	100%



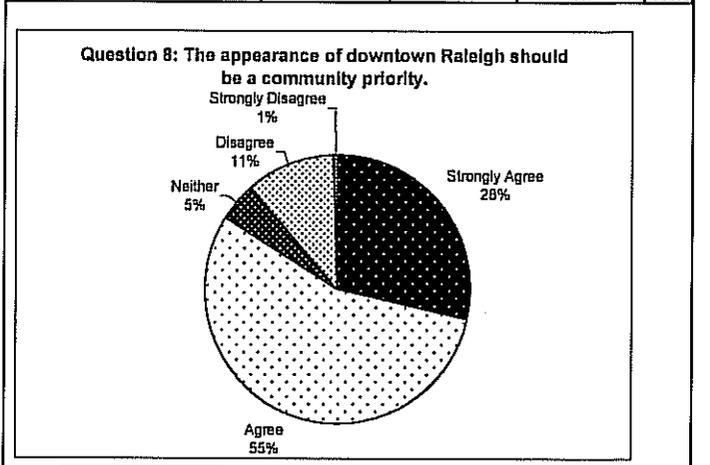
Question 6: Rules for building design & landscaping are having a positive impact on how Raleigh looks.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
88	451	116	67	10	730
12%	62%	16%	9%	1%	100%



Question 7: Public areas around the city are well maintained.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
47	480	81	133	9	730
6%	66%	8%	18%	1%	100%



Question 8: The appearance of downtown Raleigh should be a community priority.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
208	404	35	78	4	730
28%	55%	5%	11%	1%	100%

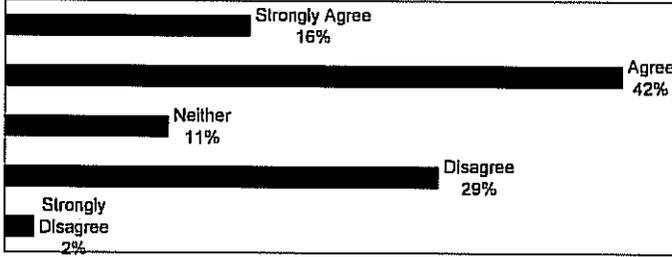


Our mission is to assist the Raleigh City Council in implementing broad community beautification and quality of life efforts. Through careful study of the aesthetic characteristics within the City, the Commission provides leadership and facilitates collaboration with other agencies.

Appendix 2: Survey Results

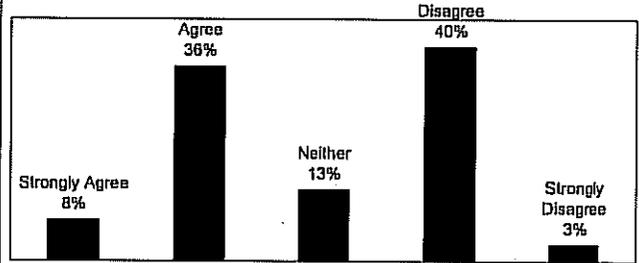
Question 9: Raleigh should provide resources to place existing overhead utility lines underground (even if it requires additional fees or taxes).					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
120	303	80	213	14	730
16%	42%	11%	29%	2%	100%

Question 9: Raleigh should provide resources to place existing overhead utility lines underground (even if it requires additional fees or taxes).



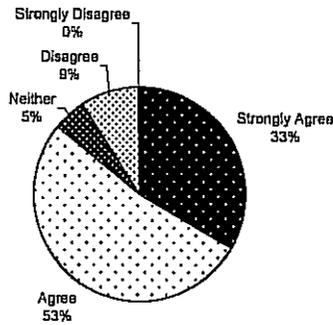
Question 10: Raleigh should set stricter rules limiting the brightness of outdoor lighting levels around office and commercial developments.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
55	264	97	291	23	730
8%	36%	13%	40%	3%	100%

Question 10: Raleigh should set stricter rules limiting the brightness of outdoor lighting levels around office and commercial developments.



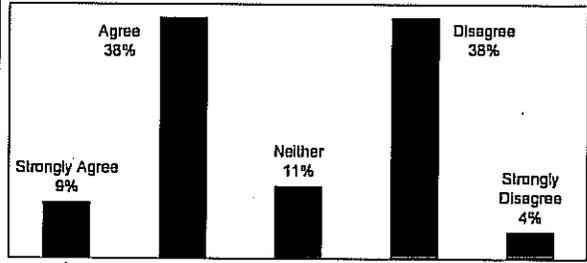
Question 11: Raleigh should be doing more to make it easier to walk, jog or bicycle throughout the City.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
244	382	37	65	2	730
33%	52%	5%	9%	0%	100%

Question 11: Raleigh should be doing more to make it easier to walk, jog or bicycle throughout the City.



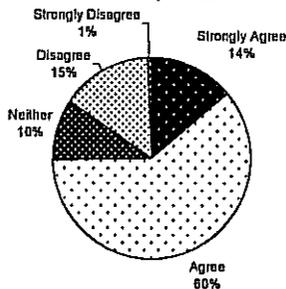
Question 12: Raleigh should require developers to spend or set aside a percentage of their project costs on public artwork.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
64	276	83	276	31	730
9%	38%	11%	38%	4%	100%

Question 12: Raleigh should require developers to spend or set aside a percentage of their project costs on public artwork.



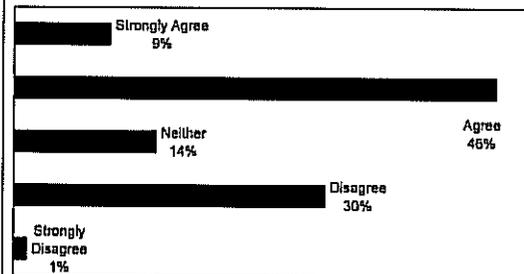
Question 13: Raleigh should strengthen landscaping standards for retail, office, and multi-family housing developments.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
101	444	72	107	6	730
14%	61%	10%	15%	1%	100%

Question 13: Raleigh should strengthen landscaping standards for retail, office, and multi-family housing developments.



Question 14: Raleigh should require commercial developments to locate parking to the side or rear of buildings.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
67	337	99	218	9	730
9%	46%	14%	30%	1%	100%

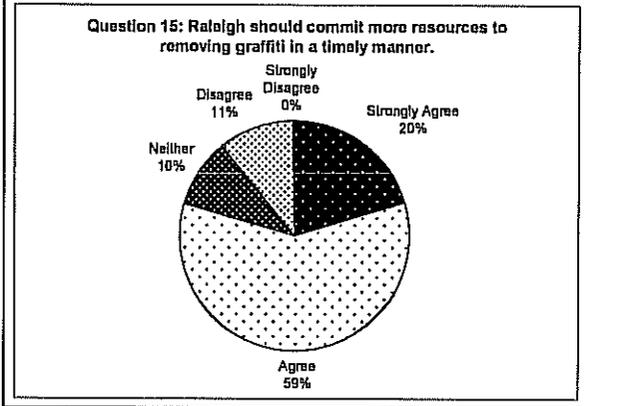
Question 14: Raleigh should require commercial developments to locate parking to the side or rear of buildings.



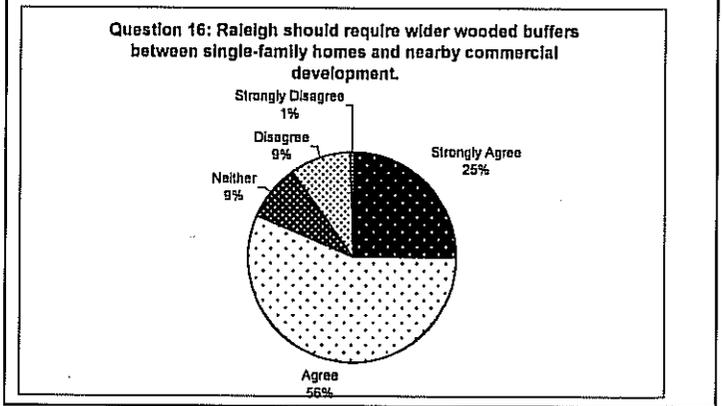
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Appendix 2: Survey Results

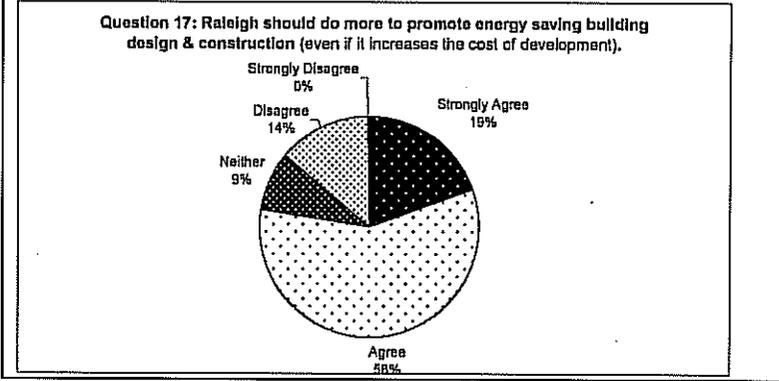
Question 15: Raleigh should commit more resources to removing graffiti in a timely manner.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
148	431	71	78	2	730
20%	59%	10%	11%	0%	100%



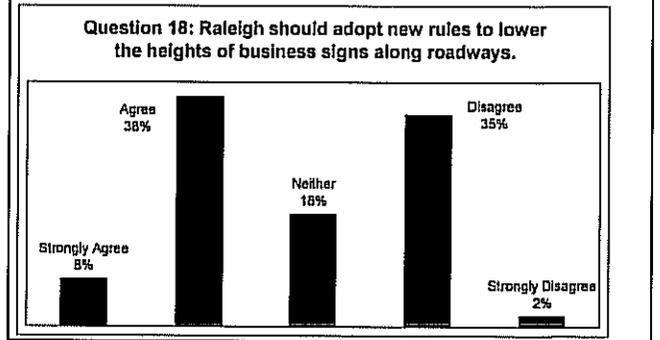
Question 16: Raleigh should require wider wooded buffers between single-family homes and nearby commercial development.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
182	413	63	67	5	730
25%	57%	9%	9%	1%	100%



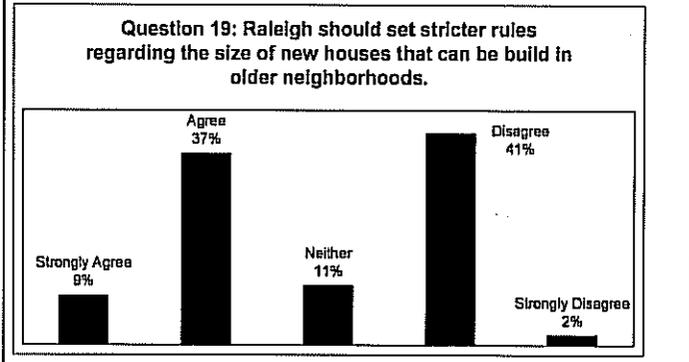
Question 17: Raleigh should do more to promote energy saving building design & construction (even if it increases the cost of development).					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
142	423	63	99	3	730
19%	58%	9%	14%	0%	100%



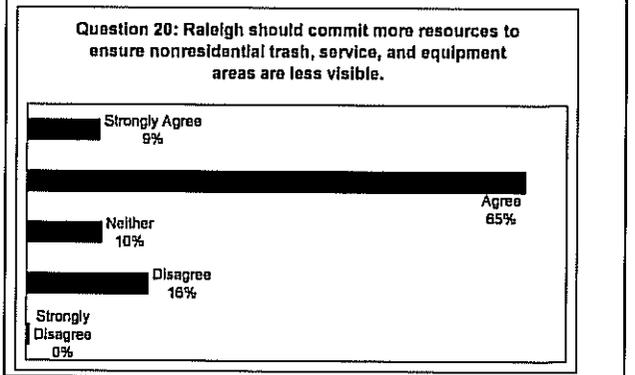
Question 18: Raleigh should adopt new rules to lower the heights of business signs along roadways.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
56	274	134	253	13	730
8%	38%	18%	35%	2%	100%



Question 19: Raleigh should set stricter rules regarding the size of new houses that can be built in older neighborhoods.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
69	268	83	208	14	730
9%	37%	11%	41%	2%	100%



Question 20: Raleigh should commit more resources to ensure nonresidential trash, service, and equipment areas are less visible.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
69	472	71	115	3	730
9%	65%	10%	16%	0%	100%

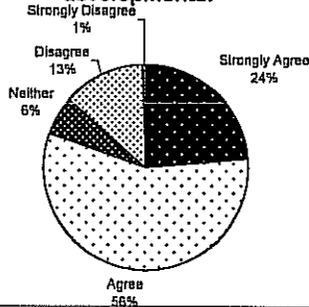


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Appendix 2: Survey Results

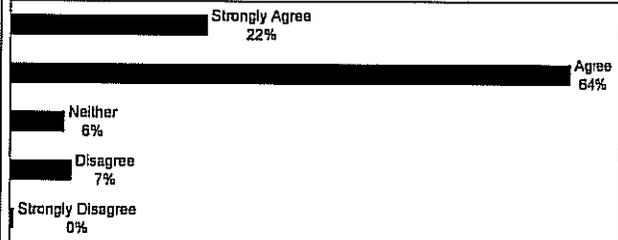
Question 21: Trees should be planted in medians or along the streets of all new developments.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
172	414	45	95	4	730
24%	57%	6%	13%	1%	100%

Question 21: Trees should be planted in medians or along the streets of all new developments.



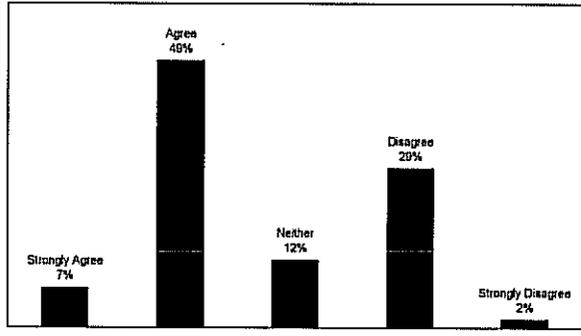
Question 22: Raleigh should commit more resources to removing roadside litter and debris in a timely manner.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
164	467	45	51	3	730
22%	64%	6%	7%	0%	100%

Question 22: Raleigh should commit more resources to removing roadside litter and debris in a timely manner.



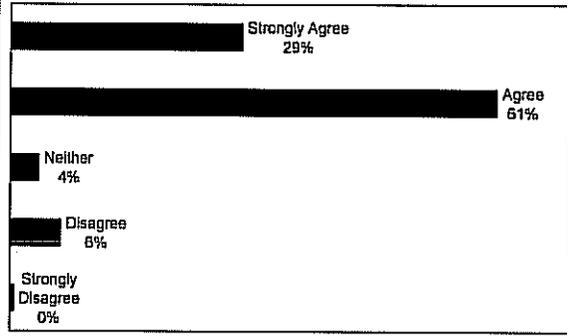
Question 23: Raleigh should do more to encourage a mix of uses in new development (such as placing apartments and offices above stores).					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
53	360	91	215	11	730
7%	49%	12%	29%	2%	100%

Question 23: Raleigh should do more to encourage a mix of uses in new development (such as placing apartments and offices above stores).



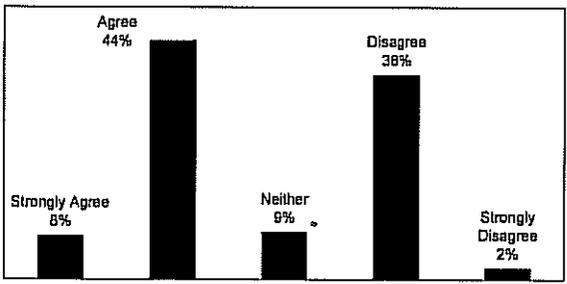
Question 24: Raleigh should invest more resources to ensure major roadways leading into the City are attractive and scenic.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
211	444	26	46	3	730
29%	61%	4%	6%	0%	100%

Question 24: Raleigh should invest more resources to ensure major roadways leading into the City are attractive and scenic.



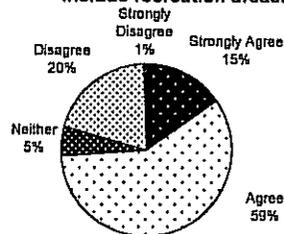
Question 25: Buildings taller than 20 stories should only be allowed downtown.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
58	320	63	274	15	730
8%	44%	9%	38%	2%	100%

Question 25: Buildings taller than 20 stories should only be allowed downtown.



Question 26: New residential development (including subdivisions) should be required to include recreation areas.					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
112	427	40	147	4	730
15%	58%	5%	20%	1%	100%

Question 26: New residential development (including subdivisions) should be required to include recreation areas.



Our mission is to assist the Raleigh City Council in implementing broad community beautification and quality of life efforts. Through careful study of the aesthetic characteristics within the City, the Commission provides leadership and facilitates collaboration with other agencies.

Appendix 2: Survey Results

