

Town of Cary
2004 Biennial Survey Focus Group Report
Executive Summary

Reasons for Living in Cary

- The participants mentioned proximity to work as one of the major reasons to live in Town. Other important reasons included quality schools, small town atmosphere, physical attractiveness, sense of community, weather, safety, roads, well-organized town, and the conservativeness of the area.

Growth in Cary

- The participants were most concerned about the by-products of growth including traffic, congestion, roads, crime, overcrowded schools, and loss of greenspace. Also mentioned were poor subdivision planning and infrastructure problems.
- Virtually all the participants overestimated or were unsure of the present growth rate in Cary of 1.3%. They did not estimate an appropriate growth rate but felt the rate should not exceed the ability of the infrastructure to keep pace.
- The participants mentioned several ways the Town could better manage growth including increasing the number of schools, improving roads, maintaining greenspace, mandating larger lot sizes for new subdivisions, adding public facilities, and more affordable housing.
- The focus group members felt that Cary is doing as good a job or a better job at managing growth than other local communities. They also mentioned they hold Cary to a higher standard due to its reputation.

Traffic Problems

- The participants generally agreed the traffic in Cary is acceptable. They noted it is easy to get around Cary with the exception of a few areas, especially Crossroads. Several respondents felt traffic was a necessary evil with growth.
- The problem traffic areas mentioned were the entire Crossroads region, US 164, Tryon Road, Cary Parkway, 40 merging into Crossroads area, and Walnut Road (at all times). These were problems mostly in the mornings and afternoons.
- The participants suggested the Town can improve traffic by better synchronization of stoplights (especially the bridge at Crossroads), improving 4 to 2 lane merging areas, better traffic law enforcement, better coordination with Wake County to improve roads, widening Tryon and 440, and adding sidewalks.

Revenues

- The focus group members agreed the Town might need to increase taxes at some time especially if a growth ceiling is reached. They were concerned that the Town could save money elsewhere such as retaining the present impact fees, having developers build infrastructure items, eliminating unnecessary projects, and starting curbside collection.
- The participants thought a one or two cent increase in taxes would not be excessive. However, they were insistent they would like to see accountability to where the money would be spent. The participants favored a gradual tax increase each year rather than larger increases every couple of years.

- There was a split in the participants concerning using growth versus tax increases to generate revenues. Several participants preferred some level of growth over tax increases. They felt growth had some positive consequences such as increasing the standard of living. Other participants preferred a slight tax increase as opposed to growth. It is important to note that several members were not sure what the concept of growth meant (letting more people in, building more homes, annexation, or attracting more businesses).

Backyard Garbage Collection

- Approximately 40% of the focus group participants supported curbside collection when they responded to the Biennial Survey. When given reasons supporting curbside collection, the savings of one million dollars over three years garnered the most attention from the focus group members. However, several members questioned what percentage of the Solid Waste Department's budget is the one million dollars. Interestingly, the participants grew slightly more critical of curbside collection with continued discussion. The issue of carts left on the streets was a concern.

Involvement in Town Decisions

- The participants felt there were adequate opportunities to get involved in the Town's decision making process.
- The members indicated they would like more information posted on the Town's website concerning how to get involved in the process. Several participants indicated they would like more information on Cary's projects. They believed the Town should be proactive in getting more balanced information out to residents concerning the pros and cons of a particular project.
- Several options for increasing the involvement of the residents were suggested to the participants. They favored quarterly or semiannual Town Hall meetings held at different locations around Cary with the Mayor and Town Council present. They also were somewhat positive about adding web polls to existing public hearings to gauge citizen support on Town policies and initiative. However, they were concerned about individuals voting more than once and the ability to explain complex issues on the web. Several expressed concerns about decisions being made based on the results.

Communication

- The participants indicated they desired information on activities/events in Town, recycling, and Town regulations. They generally felt well informed and that BUD does a very good job at keeping them informed.
- Most felt the Town does not need to be more aggressive in dispensing information. They were complimentary of BUD and the Town's website as key information sources. The only area they believed the Town needed to be more aggressive at getting information out was to apartment dwellers.

Nonsmoking Program

- The two focus groups were somewhat split over the issue of the Town developing a promotional campaign to encourage restaurants to go smoke-free or designate nonsmoking spaces. One group was adamant the Town should not spend taxpayer's money on this program, although tobacco settlement money would be acceptable. The second group was somewhat more positive about the program and viewed spending the Town's funds on the program as more acceptable, but no dollar amount was agreed on.
- Neither group saw this as a major issue for the Town.
- Most of the participants indicated a restaurant's smoking status was a factor in their choice of a place to eat. They would check the level of smoke in the establishment before deciding on whether to eat there.
- There was support for the Town publicizing a list of smoke-free restaurants in Cary. The groups would like to expand this list to include all Cary restaurants and their status. It was suggested the sanitation grade also be included and links added to the restaurant's website to help publicize eating places in Cary.

Town of Cary
2004 Biennial Survey Focus Group Report
March 13, 2004

Methodology

In January 2004, the Cary Biennial Citizen Survey was conducted examining numerous issues relating to the overall functioning and operation of the Town. The results of this survey were followed-up by two focus groups conducted by BKL Research that examined specific issues to gather more detailed information. Respondents to the citizen survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group session (45% of the sample) and this was the pool that the participants were selected.

The composition of the groups was controlled in respect to two factors, age and gender. Participants were selected so that there was a balance of both age and gender in each session. All the participants owned homes except for one member who lived in an apartment complex. A total of 7 participants were in the first session and 6 in the second session. Appendix A has the roster of participants for both sessions and Appendix B has the seating charts. The participants were compensated for their involvement.

The sessions were held on March 13 at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in Cary. The first session lasted 1 hour and 10 minutes and the second session lasted 1 hour and 30 minutes. A relatively structured set of questions was used for both groups (Appendix C). This ensured that both groups were asked the same core questions, although discretion was allowed to explore other areas of importance during the sessions. All the proposed questions were asked during both sessions; however, the final two questions were covered very quickly without extended discussion in the second focus group session due to time constraints. Appendix D and E have the transcribed text of both focus groups.

Reasons for Living in Cary

- 1. We're glad to report that respondents overall continue to feel good about living in Cary. I'd like to hear from each of you what things you like about Cary, the things that make you choose to live in Cary over other places in the state and nation.*

Session 1

Three of the participants indicated that proximity to work was the major reason they lived in Town. Other reasons mentioned included quality schools, small town atmosphere, and a good investment in real estate.

Session 2

This group of participants indicated more varied reasons for living in Town. Some of the more common reasons were the small town feel (with big city amenities) and the physical attractiveness of the area. Other reasons given include roads, weather, sense of community, safety, very well organized, and conservativeness of the area. Several participants were concerned about the loss of greenspace in the Town and the level of development.

Growth in Cary

2a. *What about growth do you think concerns folks? For example, is it byproducts of growth, such as traffic or waiting in line at stores?*

Session 1

The by-products of growth were the major concerns for this group. They mentioned traffic and congestion as prominent concerns. Poor roads and synchronization of stoplights were also mentioned. Other concerns were crime, schools, loss of greenspace, poor subdivision planning, and infrastructure problems.

Session 2

The members of this focus group were more concerned with the planning aspects to growth. They mentioned poorly planned subdivisions with very small lot sizes, poor aesthetics, overcrowded schools, and new strip malls leaving old ones empty.

2b. *What do you think Cary's rate of growth is now?*

Session 1

The responses to this question were on the high side ranging from 8% to 15%. One participant was aware the growth rate had slowed down to less than 5%. Most were very surprised to learn the actual growth rate was only 1.3%.

Session 2

The participants were mostly uncertain as to the actual growth rate. One individual ventured a guess of 30% a year. The group was also very surprised it was only 1.3%. They were generally not familiar with the recent decline in the growth rate from previous years.

2c. *What would be a good rate of growth for Cary? What makes that a good rate? What is the ideal growth situation?*

Session 1

The participants were generally not sure what an appropriate growth rate should be for Cary. Most agreed the growth rate should not exceed the ability of the infrastructure to keep pace. Schools were mentioned as a major concern with continued growth. The key for this group was the manageability of the growth not necessarily the amount of growth.

Session 2

There was no consensus from this group. There was discussion as to population density and the use of annexation as growth options. Housing values were a concern in light of the high housing availability and the detrimental impact this has on home prices with continued development and building.

2d. *What do you think the Town should be doing to better manage growth?*

Session 1

The participants indicated the school issue was a major concern. One member mentioned they liked the idea of community schools (Apex, Cary, Morrisville). The group also mentioned that roads need to be improved. The overall management and coordination of growth with other surrounding communities and Wake County was considered important to pursue.

Session 2

This session mentioned briefly areas such as maintaining greenspace, better planned subdivisions with larger lot sizes, more schools, adding public facilities (pool, library), and increasing affordable housing. The Crossroads area was mentioned as an example of a poor planning area. There was concern about the continued use of the Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) philosophy.

2e. *How do you rate the Town of Cary's efforts at managing growth against those of other Wake County communities such as Raleigh, Apex, Holly Springs?*

Session 1

All the participants agreed Cary was managing growth just as good as other local communities. They mentioned that no community has mastered the process. They noted Holly Springs did a poor job with growth management. The term "smart growth" was mentioned and used by the participants. They noted all the areas have traffic problems but that Cary has done well with traffic and residents can get around relatively well in Town.

Session 2

All agreed that Cary is better than the other local communities at managing growth. One participant was unsure as to the consequences of growth. He noted besides traffic and schools that everything seemed fine to him. One resident was concerned that Cary was participating with Wake County in sharing costs on a project that should be funded entirely by the County.

Traffic Problems

3a. *How do you feel traffic is in and around Cary?*

Session 1

The participants agreed that traffic is "not bad" around Cary. They indicated residents can get around easily in Town with the exception of a few trouble spots. One resident indicated Cary is held to a higher standard due to the reputation and others agreed.

Session 2

Most indicated overall that traffic was good. They mentioned trouble spots like the Crossroads area and Tryon Road.

3b. *Are most of the problem spots more in Cary or outside Cary? Can you name some of them? Are they problem spots on weekdays, weekends, or specific times of day?*

Session 1

The trouble spots mentioned included US 164, Tryon Road to 40, Cary Parkway, US 164 North between Cary Parkway and Walnut, and 40 merging into Crossroads. These were viewed as problems mostly during the morning and evening drive times. The Walnut Road area was seen as a problem at all times. Several participants had concerns about roads with 4 lanes that subsequently merged into 2 lanes. It was noted that drivers would recklessly shift lanes to get where they want to go. The members agreed they would like to see better coordination with the State to improve roads.

Session 2

The trouble spots mentioned included Crossroads area, South Hills to Cary Parkway, and Cary Parkway to Crossroads. Primarily Crossroads was the major concern at most times of the day. They noted the overall traffic patterns were good and recognized that traffic was a necessary evil with growth.

3c. *What do you think the Town should be doing to improve traffic?*

Session 1

The participants mentioned “smart lights” that recognize when cars are present, improved traffic enforcement (not necessarily speeding), and taking the narrow parts out of roads. One resident mentioned improving mass transit but others did not agree. The other members believed it would be too much of an inconvenience not to have a car to get around and run errands after work. The participants also perceived bus schedules to be poor and noted that Crossroads once had a bus service that was discontinued. Several participants commented that traffic is not bad in Cary and they have learned to use back roads to get around effectively. One participant would like to see more sidewalks for walking places, especially around malls. Another member was concerned about removing the traffic light at a local restaurant (Ruby Tuesdays) and the danger of having to turn against several lanes of traffic in a heavily traveled road.

Session 2

The residents indicated the bridge at Crossroads needs improving due to poor light synchronization that causes traffic to build up. The backing up of traffic on the bridge blocks other lanes and causes bottlenecks. Widening Tryon and 440 were mentioned as potential projects.

Revenues

(Introductory statement) We'd like your thoughts now on the best ways for the Town to increase revenues so that we can continue to provide the same high level of services you're used to. As we've already discussed, the Town has listened to citizens and dramatically lowered the growth rate, from nearly 13% in the mid 1990's to now less than 2%. One issue with this, however, is that to pay for the increasing costs of services, the Town needs to maintain at least a 4% rate of growth in the tax base or find other ways to pay. We'd like to get your opinions on some of our options. As you think about the questions I'm going to ask, let's agree to the following assumptions: (a) We're talking about raising revenues to maintain what we're currently doing – no expansions. (b) While we know we're running efficiently, we are continuing to look for ways to save money. (c) Taxes in Cary haven't been raised in over a decade; in fact, they've been lowered. (d) Over the last ten years, voters approved more than \$200 million in bonds for water, roads, streets, and parks projects. Voters were told that we might have to raise taxes more than 10 cents to pay for the bonds, but so far, we haven't had to raise taxes because of new growth.

- 4a. *First, how supportive would you be generally of the Town raising property taxes – that is, how many of you could envision a situation where it might be okay to raise taxes? (The current tax rate is 42 cents per \$100 valuation; that's \$420 a year for a \$100,000 home)***

Session 1

Several of the respondents agreed there may be a situation where taxes will need to be raised. One respondent indicated the Town will eventually reach a growth wall and will eventually need to raise taxes.

Session 2

This group expressed concern about the Town saving in other areas before raising taxes. One participant referred to a recent 30% decrease in impact fees. Another member perceived the Town was not operating efficiently mentioning unnecessary expenditures like the new buildings. The need for curbside collection was also mentioned. Making developers pay for roads, schools, libraries, and other infrastructure items was viewed positively.

- 4b. *How many of you would support a one cent increase (permanent) on the current tax rate; that's an extra \$10 a year for a \$100,000 home? Why and why not?***

Session 1

The participants agreed a one cent increase was not excessive. However, there was concern over the continuing rise in service fees as hidden tax increases. The participants agreed they would like accountability for what the tax increase would fund.

Session 2

This group also agreed this increase would not be excessive. They would also like accountability for where the money would be spent.

- 4c. How many of you would support a two cent increase on the current tax rate; that's an extra \$20 a year? Why and why not?**

Session 1

Again this group mentioned the need for accountability for where the money would be used. There was a concern the Town was asking permission for a tax increase. Overall, the participants were unsure what the upper limit would be for an increase, it depended on how the tax money would be used. Another participant wondered why they needed to pay more in taxes since much of the infrastructure (i.e. roads) was already in place. There was also concern that Cary was contributing money to the State for roads and Wake County for schools when this was not their responsibility.

Session 2

This group also indicated they would need to know where the money would be spent. Several of the participants said they knew that expenses were higher in Cary due to the level of services offered to its citizens.

- 4d. Let's assume that the Town needs to raise taxes by five cents, or an extra \$50 a month for a \$100,000 home. Do you think it would be better to raise taxes one cent a year for five years, or would it be better to raise it two or three cents one year and make up the other two or three cents in a one time hit in another year or two?**

Session 1

Most agreed a gradual one percent increase a year was the best alternative. However, one participant indicated he did not want Cary to get the mindset that they are accepting the tax increase and others agreed.

Session 2

Not discussed in this group.

- 4e. Finally, how many of you would rather see the Town allow a little more growth, say up to four or five percent, and how many of you would rather see the Town raise taxes, say up four or five cents?**

Session 1

Several participants thought some growth had positive consequences such as higher standards of living and increased revenues. The type of growth was debated including commercial/ industrial versus residential. They agreed a mix of both is needed. One participant indicated without business growth that residents would have to pay more of the tax burden. Several participants expressed the need for a better mix of residential housing in all price ranges. The term "smart growth" was used again in relation to this question. The issue of Cary not working with other local communities was mentioned. One participant felt Cary was not being a team player and trying to take more than its fair share in annexation from neighboring communities like Apex and Holly Springs.

Session 2

This group had more opposition to growth. Several participants indicated they would prefer paying higher taxes as opposed to growth. They would accept a slight increase in taxes to maintain the present service level. Several participants were uncertain about what the Town meant by growth. They were not sure if it referred to population growth, building more homes, annexation, or attracting more businesses into Cary. There was also concern about the older areas of Cary turning into rental property. Most of the participants felt the tax rate was currently low compared to other areas.

Backyard Garbage Collection

- 5a. *We'd like to explore in a little more detail the issue of replacing backyard garbage collection with curbside collection, which the majority of respondents supported on the survey. First, how many of you supported the idea?***

Session 1

Two of the seven participants supported curbside collection.

Session 2

Three of the six participants supported curbside collection.

- 5b. *I want to give you a few more facts about it to see if there's any change in how you feel. Disabled residents with a note from a doctor would be able to add their names to a registry to continue backyard collection. What does that fact do with your opinion?***

Session 1

The respondents expressed little reaction to the potential doctor's exemption. One participant asked how long must the driveway be before you can get a note.

Session 2

The respondent's expressed little reaction to the potential doctor's exemption.

- 5c. *By replacing once a week backyard collection with once a week curbside collection using Town-provided rollout carts, The Town may be able to save \$1 million over the first three years. What does that fact do with your opinion?***

Session 1

The participants responded positively to the savings. However, one member asked what percentage of the budget was the one million dollar savings and indicated it does not sound like that much.

Session 2

This group also indicated they would like to know how much the one million dollar saving would constitute of the Solid Waste Department's budget.

- 5d. *About 27% of households already bring their garbage to the curb. What does that fact do with your opinion?***

Session 1

This fact had little impact on their opinions. Three of the respondents preferred backyard, two liked curbside, and 2 were undecided. One participant indicated backyard collection made them feel special in Cary. Distance to the curb was also mentioned as a problem.

Session 2

This fact had little impact, if any, on the group. Many of the participants grew more negative about curbside collection as they discussed how it works. Leaving carts on the street and the size of the cart were seen as problems. Retirees and the amount of paperwork were viewed as issues.

- 5e. *Are there any other facts that we could present that might influence your opinion on this?***

Session 1

None were given.

Session 2

None were given.

Communication

- 6a. *What kinds of information or on what topics do you think most citizens want or need to know about?***

Session 1

The participants mentioned activities/events, recycling (collection points), and Town regulations (i.e. signs). They additionally mentioned that BUD tells them much of what they need to know.

Session 2

The group mentioned Parks & Recreation news for their children. They also indicated BUD does a great job keeping them informed.

- 6b. *How informed does each of you feel on these? How do you feel about that level of being informed – is it okay with you; that is, do you feel you know all you want to know about these issues? If someone were to say they felt uninformed or underinformed, what do you think they might be referring to? Should we be more aggressive about getting the information to you or in letting you know how to get the information on your own, i.e. promoting the web site?***

Session 1

Most of the participants felt well informed with only one who did not feel that way. She lived in an apartment and did not receive BUD. Most felt the Town does not need to be more aggressive in getting information to them. They saw the website as more than adequate. All had visited the website and viewed it as easy to navigate. They indicated the only area to be aggressive was getting information out to the residents who reside in apartments.

Session 2

Most of the participants indicated they felt well informed. Most agreed they would like to see information on the budget. One member who did not feel as well informed indicated she had problems getting information on trash collection in bad weather when she could not access the website. She would like to have a recorded voice message she could call with this information. This person also suggested the Town should send out a yearly mailing with information on all aspects of the Town's functioning. The participants did not see the need for the Town to be more aggressive in getting information to them. They believed the website and BUD were more than adequate.

Involvement in Town Decisions

- 7a. *Based on the survey results, the Town has some room for improvement in the area of citizen satisfaction with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. Would you agree?***

Session 1

The group felt it would be hard to get the level of participation the Town desires unless the issue had the potential to be controversial. One participant indicated he would like more information on how to get involved posted on the website.

Session 2

The group did not agree the Town needed to improve opportunities for citizen participation in decision making. They felt there were ample opportunities for citizens to participate. They indicated a resident could easily watch the Town Council meetings on cable or come to the meetings.

- 7b. Can you give me some examples of a topic or issue that you think did not include satisfactory opportunities for citizen input?**

Session 1

A couple of the participants mentioned the need for the new Town Hall buildings and parking garage considering the slow airport construction. The participants would like more information on Town projects. One member noted the time lag between discussions and actual start date. They would like the Town to be more proactive and show balanced information on the project with the public before the media publicizes it.

Session 2

This group agreed they would like to see the website give information on how to participate in the decision making process. One participant wanted to get involved with the Town Council's decision to pick up the expenses on a soccer field that Raleigh had agreed to construct.

- 7c. What do you think of quarterly or semiannual "Town Hall" meetings held in different locations around Town where the Mayor and other Council would be on hand to listen to and answer questions from anyone who showed up. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would attend?**

Session 1

This proposal was very well received by the group. They liked the idea of different locations so everyone had an opportunity to get involved. Five of the seven participants indicated they would possibly attend these meetings.

Session 2

This group also liked the proposal, but not as overwhelmingly as the first group. However, the support grew as the other proposals were read later. Five of the six participants indicated they would possibly attend these meetings.

- 7d. What do you think of a monthly breakfast held in different locations around Town and featuring a different Council member each month who would be there to listen to and answer questions from anyone who showed up. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would attend?**

Session 1

This proposal was not well received. They indicated breakfast is a bad time for participation. They also would want more than one Council member present. None of the participants indicated they would attend.

Session 2

Most of the participants viewed this proposal negatively. One member indicated this time would be better for housewives. They indicated the time frame would be too short to discuss many items at breakfast. Only one of the six participants indicated they would attend the sessions.

- 7e. *What do you think of a live “call-in/email-in” television show on CARY TV featuring the Mayor and Town Council. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would participate?***

Session 1

The group expressed concern that satellite users could not receive the broadcast. The proposal was not particularly well received by the group.

Session 2

This received a lukewarm reception. One participant indicated he preferred to talk to people in person. Another member suggested this was more for Council’s benefit than residents.

- 7f. *What do you think about adding Web polls to the existing public hearing process to gauge citizen support on Town policies and initiatives before they are adopted by Council. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would participate?***

Session 1

Several participants liked this proposal. They expressed concerns that individuals would vote more than once. They also mentioned that individuals may not have enough background on the issue to vote, especially complex ones. They did not want decisions based on the poll.

Session 2

This group was also concerned about individuals voting more than once. In addition, one member worried about the cost associated with this proposal.

- 7g. *Have you attended a Town Council meeting?***

Session 1

2 of 7 have attended.

Session 2

4 of 6 have attended.

7h. *Have you watched a Town Council meeting on Cary TV?*

Session 1

4 of 7 have watched.

Session 2

6 of 6 have watched.

7i. *Have you listened to a Town Council meeting on the Web?*

Session 1

None have listened.

Session 2

None have listened.

7j. *Have you sent an e-mail to a Town Council member?*

Session 1

3 of 7 have sent an e-mail.

Session 2

None have sent an e-mail.

7k. *Have you sent an e-mail to a Town staff member?*

Session 1

None have sent an e-mail.

Session 2

1 of 6 has sent an e-mail.

7l. *Have you telephoned a Town Council member?*

Session 1

2 of 7 have telephoned (overall 3 have spoken with Town Council members).

Session 2

1 of 6 has telephoned (overall 2 have spoken with Town Council members).

7m. Have you telephoned a Town staff member?

Session 1

3 of 7 have telephoned.

Session 2

5 of 6 have telephoned.

7n. Have you written a letter to the Town?

Session 1

1 of 7 has written a letter.

Session 2

1 of 6 has written a letter.

7o. Have you attended a public meeting or open house sponsored by the Town, such as the ones held for the Public Art Master Plan or the Southeast Area Plan?

Session 1

2 of 7 have attended a public meeting or open house.

Session 2

1 of 6 has attended a public meeting or open house.

7p. Have you applied to be a member of a Town board or commission?

Session 1

1 of 7 has applied to be a member.

Session 2

None have applied to be a member.

7q. Have you participated in a Town Web poll or threaded discussion?

Session 1

None have participated.

Session 2

None have participated.

Nonsmoking Program

- 8a. *The Town has received some requests from citizens to help increase the number of smoke-free restaurants, bars, and taverns in Cary. According to State law, the Town cannot force these establishments to become smoke-free. That said, one idea to meet this request is for the Town to develop a promotional campaign that encourages these establishments to voluntarily become smoke-free or at least increase the amount of space designated as nonsmoking. How important is this issue to you relative to other issues the Town is facing?***

Session 1

The group felt the Town should not get involved. Three of the participants indicated it was not an issue to them. They agreed they did not want to spend taxpayer's money for this project. They did indicate that spending money from the tobacco company settlement fund would be appropriate.

Session 2

This group was more supportive of the project. They did not see the issue as a major one for the Town to be concerned about. Due to time constraints, this group did not have as much discussion time on this subject as the first group.

- 8b. *How supportive are you of the Town spending up to \$10,000, \$20,000, or \$50,000 on this effort?***

Session 1

No dollar amounts were discussed in this group due to the strong opinion that no taxpayer money should be spent on this program.

Session 2

This group agreed that some level of spending was acceptable but no exact figures were decided upon.

- 8c. *How much of your choice on where to eat and drink is based on the establishment's smoking status?***

Session 1

Five of the seven participants indicated it made a difference in where they decide to eat. Several indicated they will go to another establishment if the smoke is too heavy in a restaurant when they enter. However, one participant said that smoking and nonsmoking sections were irrelevant since smoke would bleed over to the nonsmoking area.

Session 2

All the participants responded it made a difference in their choice of a restaurant.

8d. *How many of you refuse to go to a bar, restaurant, or tavern that allows smoking?*

Session 1

Half the participants indicated they check out the level of smoke before deciding if they would stay and eat at the establishment. One participant did not believe it was the government's choice to tell people where they can smoke.

Session 2

Most of the participants would check out the level of smoke before deciding if they would stay and eat.

8e. *If the Town publicized a list of smoke-free restaurants, bars, and taverns, how many of you think you would likely use the list to decide which places to patronize?*

Session 1

All agreed this would be a good program and indicated Cary's website would be the appropriate place to post this list. They would like to see all Cary restaurants listed and their smoking status. One participant mentioned that sanitation grades should also be listed and all of the other members supported this idea. Another respondent felt the list would help promote restaurants and help newcomers to learn about the Town. They felt the Town could also link to the restaurant's website for additional promotion.

Session 2

This group also supported this program. They indicated the Cary's website would be the best place to post this information. They felt that all restaurants should have nonsmoking sections.

Amphitheatre at Regency Park

There was additional discussion concerning the Amphitheater at Regency Park not included in the questionnaire in session 1 only.

Session 1

One participant felt the Amphitheater was too costly to attend and did not serve everyone in the community. Others tended to agree with this comment. He would like to see more balance to the events including more inexpensive family shows and free activities. Six of the seven participants had been to the Amphitheatre.

Other Suggestions

Other comments from the focus group session 1.

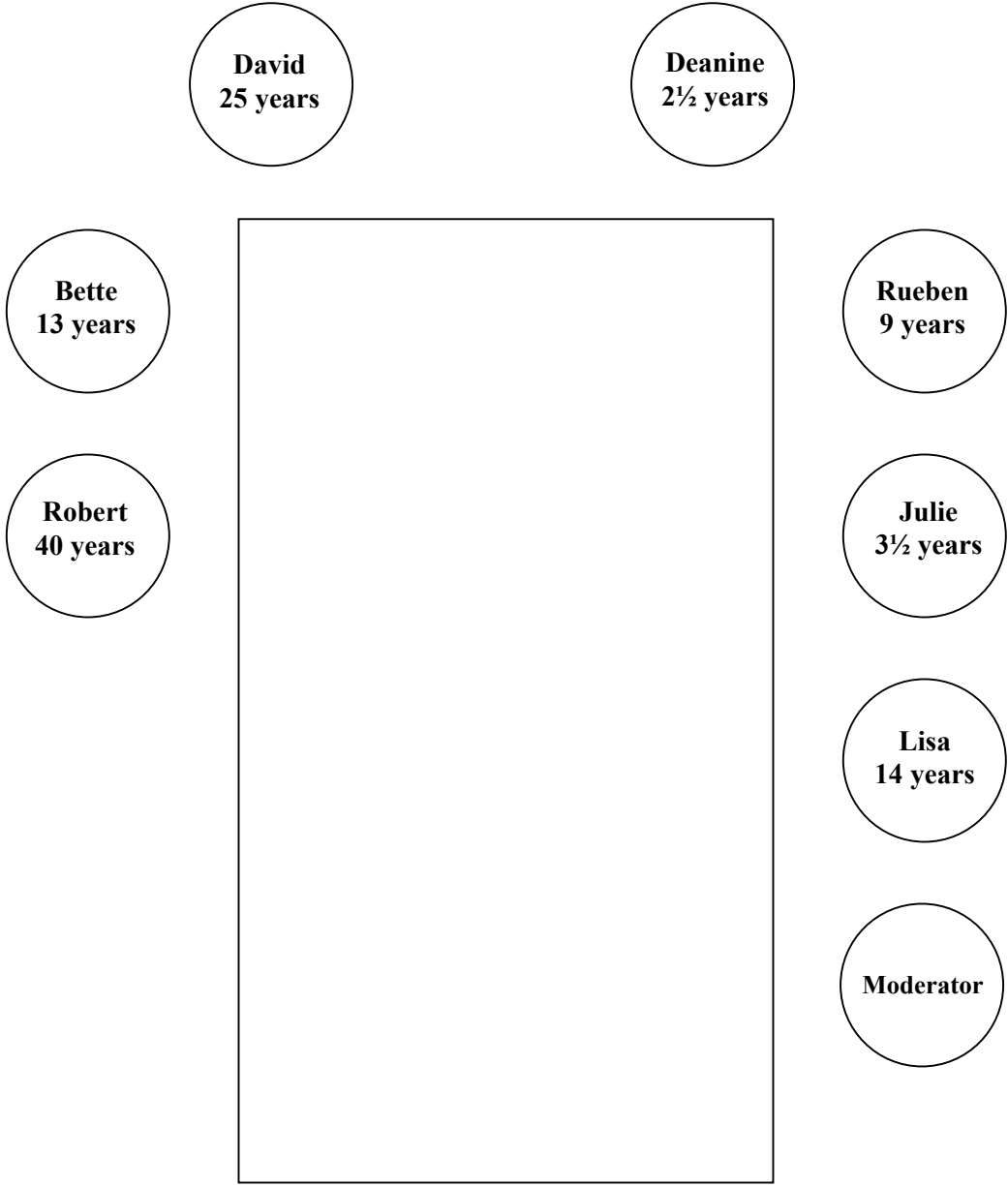
Session 1

Adding more cultural activities for the young was suggested. There were comments that the Town was too family-oriented and more activities need to be tailored for younger residents. Lazy Daze was praised as a good activity. Several respondents indicated the Town is great for families with good schools and neighborhoods but does little to attract singles. Also mentioned was the need for a public aquatic center and parks on the outskirts of Town as needed public facilities.

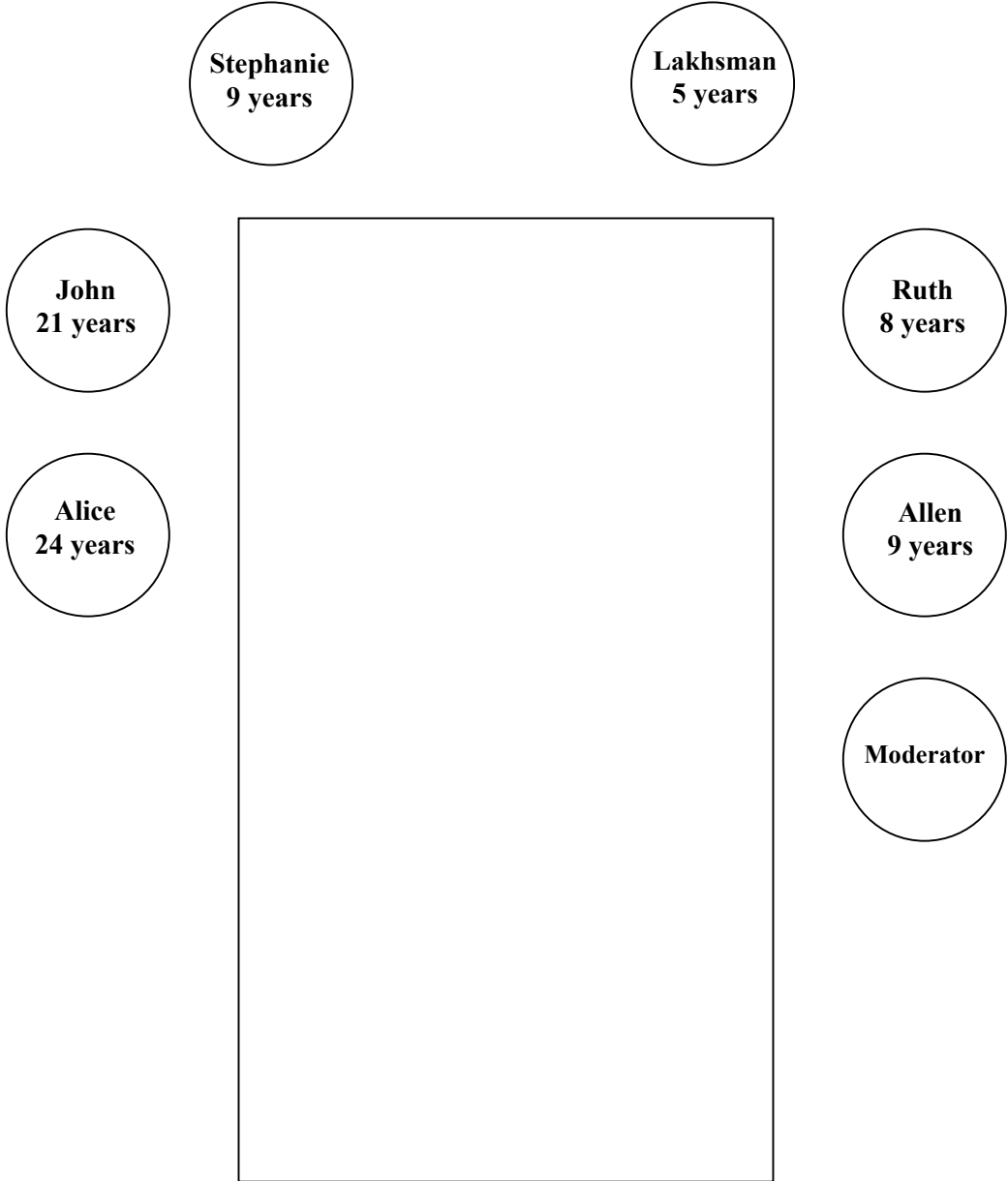
Appendix A
Session Focus Group Participants
2004 Biennial Citizen Survey

Session 1		Session 2	
Name	Age Group	Name	Age Group
Lisa Berger	36-45	Ruth Cruz	56-65
Reuben Clark	26-35	John Gilligan	46-55
Deanine Halliman	26-35	Alice Ligon	46-55
Julie Harris	36-45	Stephanie Pond	26-35
David Herlong	46-55	Lakshman Ramamurthy	36-45
Robert Hinshaw	66-75	Allen Spangberg	56-65
Bette Llewellyn	46-55		

Appendix B
2004 Biennial Citizen Survey Focus Group Seating Chart
(Name, Years in Cary)
Session 1



**2004 Biennial Citizen Survey Focus Group Seating Chart
(Name, Years in Cary)
Session 2**



Appendix C
Focus Group Questionnaire
2004 Biennial Survey

Introduction

Our goal today is to get your opinions about how the Town might move forward in improving upon its scores on specific items in the survey and to discuss in more detail issues and concerns respondents like you raised in the survey.

How many of you ever participated in a focus group before?
Facilitator explains how it works.

Just to get an idea of whom you all are, let me ask a few demographic questions.

Demographics

Do all of you live within the Town limits?

How long has each of you lived in Cary?

How many of you live in apartments?

Great. Now let's get started by talking about Town operations.

Quality of Life

1. We're glad to report that respondents overall continue to feel good about living in Cary. I'd like to hear from each of you what things you like about Cary, the things that make you choose to live in Cary over other places in the state and nation.

Concerns

- 2a. Let's start with growth in Cary, which showed up again in this year's survey as a concern. What about growth do you think concerns folks? For example, is it byproducts of growth, such as traffic or waiting in line at stores?
- 2b. What do you think Cary's rate of growth is now? *(It was 1.3 percent last year)*
- 2c. What would be a good rate of growth for Cary? What makes that a good rate? What would be the ideal growth situation in Cary?
- 2d. What do you think the Town should be doing to better manage growth?
- 2e. How do you rate the Town of Cary's efforts at managing growth against those of other Wake communities, such as Raleigh, Apex, Holly Springs?

Traffic

- 3a. Now let's talk about traffic, which also remains a concern of citizens in this year's survey. How do you feel traffic is in and around Cary?
- 3b. Are most of the problem spots more in Cary or outside Cary? Can you name some of them? Are they problem spots on weekdays, weekends, specific times of day?
- 3c. What do you think the Town should be doing to improve traffic? (*Probe as necessary with building more roads, getting state roads widened like HWY 55 and Davis Drive, developing mass transit, bike lanes, HOV lanes, better traffic signal system timing*)
- 3d. Are there any other big concerns you want to relate to the Town before we leave this topic? (*For any that are given, ask if they have solutions or model communities for the Town to look to for solutions*)

Revenues

We'd like your thoughts now on the best ways for the Town to increase revenues so that we can continue to provide the same high level of services you're used to. As we've already discussed, the Town has listened to citizens and dramatically lowered the growth rate, from nearly 13 percent in the mid 1990's to now less than 2 percent. One issue with this, however, is that to pay for the increasing costs of services, the Town needs to maintain at least a 4 percent rate of growth in the tax base or find other ways to pay.

We'd like to get your opinions on some of our options. As you think about the questions I'm going to ask, let's agree to the following assumptions:

- We're talking about raising revenues only to maintain what we're currently doing – no expansions
 - While we know we're running efficiently, we are continuing to look for ways to save money
 - Taxes in Cary haven't been raised in over a decade; in fact, they've been lowered
 - Over the last ten years, voters approved more than \$200 million in bonds for water, roads, streets, and parks projects. Voters were told that we might have to raise taxes more than 10 cents to pay for the bonds, but so far, we haven't had to raise taxes because of new growth
- 4a. First, how supportive would you be generally of the Town raising property taxes – that is, how many of you could envision a situation where it might be okay to raise taxes? (*The current tax rate is 42 cents per \$100 valuation; that's \$420 a year for a \$100,000 home*)
 - 4b. How many of you would support a one cent increase (*permanent*) on the current tax rate; that's an extra \$10 a year for a \$100,000 home? Why and why not?
 - 4c. How many of you would support a two cent increase on the current tax rate; that's an extra \$20 a year? Why and why not?

- 4d. Let's assume that the Town needs to raise taxes by five cents, or an extra \$50 a month for a \$100,000 home. Do you think it would be better to raise taxes one cent a year for five years, or would it be better to raise it two or three cents one year and make up the other two or three cents in a one time hit in another year or two?
- 4e. Finally, how many of you would rather see the Town allow a little more growth, say up to four or five percent, and how many of you would rather see the Town raise taxes, say up four or five cents?

Backyard Garbage Collection

- 5a. We'd like to explore in a little more detail the issue of replacing backyard garbage collection with curbside collection, which the majority of respondents supported on the survey. First, how many of you supported the idea? And the rest of you did not.
- 5b. I want to give you a few more facts about it to see if there's any change in how you feel. Disabled residents with a note from a doctor would be able to add their names to a registry to continue backyard collection. What does that fact do with your opinion?
- 5c. By replacing once a week backyard collection with once a week curbside collection using Town-provided rollout carts, The Town may be able to save \$1 million over the first three years. What does that fact do with your opinion?
- 5d. About 27 percent of households already bring their garbage to the curb. What does that fact do with your opinion?
- 5e. Are there any other facts that we could present that might influence your opinion on this?

Communications

It's very important to the Town that Cary citizens feel they have access to all the information they could want on their government. We also know that there is a limited number of hours in each day, making it more or less difficult or more or less important for each of you to pay attention to government information. So let's prioritize.

- 6a. What kinds of information or on what topics do you think most citizens want or need to know about? (*Facilitator to probe as necessary with services like garbage collection or recycling, planning initiatives, construction projects, recreation programs*)
- 6b. How informed does each of you feel on these? How do you feel about that level of being informed – is it okay with you; that is, do you feel you know all you want to know about these issues? Should we be more aggressive about getting the information to you or in letting you know how to get the information on your own, i.e. promoting the web site? If someone were to say they felt uninformed or underinformed, what do you think they might be referring to topics, amounts, or other areas?

Involvement

- 7a. Based on the survey results, the Town has some room for improvement in the area of citizen satisfaction with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. Would you agree? *(If they disagree, ask them to help us understand what others might be thinking.)*
- 7b. Give me some examples of a topic or issue that you think did not include satisfactory opportunities for citizen input. *Explore each example that is given and get ideas on how it could have been improved. Explore the examples terms of:*
1. *The number of opportunities the Town offers*
 2. *The quality of those opportunities*
 3. *The impact those opportunities have on the decisions that are made, and*
 4. *The timing of the opportunities.*
 5. *Publicizing the opportunities.*

We're also interested in your opinions about a few ideas that have been suggested to add to existing involvement opportunities. For each, tell me how big a difference it would make to you and then, how often you think you might participate.

- 7c. Quarterly or semiannual "Town Hall" meetings held in different locations around Town where the Mayor and other Council would be on hand to listen to and answer questions from anyone who showed up. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would attend?
- 7d. A monthly breakfast held in different locations around Town and featuring a different Council member each month who would be there to listen to and answer questions from anyone who showed up. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would attend?
- 7e. A live "call-in/e-mail-in" television show on CARY TV featuring the Mayor and Town Council. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would participate?
- 7f. Adding Web polls to the existing public hearing process to gauge citizen support on Town policies and initiatives before they are adopted by Council. Do you think citizens would see these as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process? How often do you think you would participate?
- 7g. Finally, I'd like to get a show of hands from this group on how you've taken advantage of existing involvement opportunities in the last two years. How many of you have attended a Town Council meeting?
- 7h. Watched a Town Council meeting on Cary TV?
- 7i. Listened to a Town Council meeting on the Web?
- 7j. Sent an e-mail to a Town Council member?

- 7k. Sent an e-mail to a Town staff member?
- 7l. Telephoned a Town Council member?
- 7m. Telephoned a Town staff member?
- 7n. Written a letter to the Town?
- 7o. Attended a public meeting or open house sponsored by the Town, such as the ones held for the Public Art Master Plan or the Southeast Area Plan?
- 7p. Applied to be a member of a Town board or commission?
- 7q. Participated in a Town Web poll or threaded discussion?

Nonsmoking

The Town has received some requests from citizens to help increase the number of smoke-free restaurants, bars, and taverns in Cary. According to the Wake County Public Health Department, every day in North Carolina, 33 people die from smoking; that is, one out of five deaths in North Carolina is related to smoking. According to Stat law, the Town cannot force these establishments to become smoke-free. That said, one idea to meet this request is for the Town to develop a promotional campaign that encourages these establishments to voluntarily become smoke-free or at least increase the amount of space designated as nonsmoking. We'd like to ask your opinions on this idea. Specifically,

- 8a. How important is this issue to you relative to other issues the Town is facing?
- 8b. How supportive are you of the Town spending up to \$10,000, \$20,000, or \$50,000 on this effort?
- 8c. How much of your choice on where to eat and drink is based on the establishment's smoking status?
- 8d. How many of you refuse to go to a bar, restaurant, or tavern that allows smoking?
- 8e. If the Town publicized a list of smoke-free restaurants, bars, and taverns, how many of you think you would likely use the list to decide which places to patronize?

Closing

In closing, we are very interested in knowing what, in your opinion, would help us achieve our goal of being the best local government in North Carolina? Is there anything else about the Town of Cary government that you'd like to share with us before we close today?

Appendix D
Biennial Survey Focus Group Transcript
Session 1

MODERATOR: Now, all of you do live in Cary.

(Agreement)

MODERATOR: Okay, one lives in apartments. That's good, that gives us a little more background then. Let me start out by talking a little bit about some of the town operations. The first thing is in the survey most people felt very good about living in Cary, we had very positive responses. And the first thing the town would like to know, what are some of the things that make you choose to live in Cary over any other place maybe in North Carolina or even in the country overall?

FEMALE: My husband's job brought us here.

MODERATOR: Does he work in the Triangle?

FEMALE: He works at (inaudible).

FEMALE: My husband's job brought us here, too, but we felt like Cary was a good investment real estate-wise.

MALE: The schools.

MODERATOR: The school system.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Work, and living in Cary specifically, convenience to my job.

MALE: It was my job, and it originally initially was closest to the job that I had at the time.

FEMALE: The schools and the small town attitude, it's not a big city.

MALE: I'm thinking a lot was on appearance and development standards, I think it was probably 30-plus, about '72 when we moved here, but then we begun to have underground wiring and that sort of thing, the subdivisions were very neat appearing, and it was close to where I was going to work, but it wasn't necessary that I live here.

MODERATOR: Okay. Now, let's start out talking about a few concerns that came out in the survey, and one of them that came out was growth. What about growth concerns you guys? And the key what we're looking for, is it the growth itself or is it the byproducts of growth, like the traffic and stuff? What are the key concerns for you guys with growth?

MALE: The byproducts for me, congestion, crime, because you have more people, different socioeconomic blend of people.

FEMALE: I would say the traffic is a big problem, and the school system.

MALE: I think there is a positive of having more conveniences because when I first moved here you had to go to Raleigh to go to K-Mart, but with that comes traffic disasters like Crossroads where I just hate going there, it's convenient, it's close, but it's really not close timewise.

FEMALE: Right.

MALE: I guess for me the congestion, almost never until just recently started synchronizing the stoplights and that sort of thing. So there are places where you don't have the traffic flow (inaudible) back up a lot and even Crossroads, even on Saturdays it's hard to get down one street anywhere, that sort of thing. So I think it's the congestion and lack of management of some of the roads.

FEMALE: I've got three upper teenage kids, and I've noticed that there are a lot of kids in Cary, a lot of kids have moved here and grown up here and stuff like that, but there is nothing for them to do, there is no place for them to go, and so they are left roaming the streets, and I think Cary really needs to address that, have someplace for them to go, encourage clubs or something like that.

MODERATOR: So if we were to put it into a nutshell, would traffic be one of the major issues then with growth that's bothering you guys, and maybe some critical issues, schools would come into play?

FEMALE: Uh-huh.

FEMALE: And something for me that hasn't been brought up is the loss of green space and the fact that sometimes development doesn't seem like it's managed. I know in my neighborhood we're starting to have a lot of problems with erosion because of storm water runoff, and that to me is serious, that's a consequence of not developing smartly.

FEMALE: Also, like she said, infrastructure, for me, for this place not to have a lot of snow, the roads, I'll go down Tryon Road and I'm bumping on Tryon Road for a section, and for this place not to be that populated, obviously the infrastructure is going to be eroded after awhile, too, the streets. So that's my concern.

MODERATOR: Another question: If I were to ask you, what do you think Cary's growth rate is now percentage-wise?

MALE: 8 percent?

MODERATOR: 8 percent?

MALE: Yeah, just in the last couple of years you mean?

MODERATOR: Yeah, the last couple of years.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, it's slowed down a lot, that's probably a good number.

MALE: I think it was, what, 15, 15 or 19 percent.

MODERATOR: Around 13?

MALE: I think it's probably less than 5 now, recent years.

MODERATOR: Last year it was about 1.3 percent, but at one time it was about 13 percent. Just a question: What would be an ideal growth rate?

MALE: I'm not sure that I would know what that is, as long as it's done well, managed in a way that would not transfer the burden from one group to another.

MODERATOR: So you're for infrastructure.

PREVIOUS MALE: If we can keep up with it, and a lot of that is out of control. We've learned with the school systems we don't have control on it as citizens of Cary, you know, it's a different entity that runs that. So the fact that we do control water, sewer, to some degree, other infrastructure, but I think as long as the development doesn't look like a land (inaudible), that it really is done in a way that is manageable without again impacting -- the privileged few impacting everybody else, then I don't know that there needs to be limits on it, but that in itself is a limiting factor, being able to do it in a manageable way.

MODERATOR: That leads to my next question, you sort of helped answer that. In other words, what do you think Cary should do to manage growth, or what is the ideal growth situation? And you're inferring that maybe they should keep up with infrastructure items for growth. What else? Anything else you can think of?

FEMALE: Well, like he said, we don't really have the control over the schools, but then it's a big -- the Wake County school system is so messed up with the way that they have to move kids every year, and there is not enough space for all the kids. So if the Town of Cary can somehow put pressure on Wake County to do better with that, build more schools, or I don't know, I kind of like the community school idea that they talked about a couple years ago (inaudible) Cary more into doing their own little school system, I don't know how that will ever happen, but that and the roads, like she said, a lot of the roads are really needing some repair and widening and so forth.

MODERATOR: We'll get to roads here in a minute, too. What else? Anything else Cary should do better to manage growth?

MALE: To me the overall management and coordination. We moved here right after the schools had been consolidated countywide. There was a Cary high school that was really a Cary high school, and those kind of things. And the big deal there was, which it failed in a vote a couple of times, but was done through the General Assembly, and one of the problems (inaudible) it can be more cost effective and that sort of thing, which really never happened, I don't think, as far as the schools are concerned, everything just got bigger. So I think the key is: Can it really be managed and coordinated, at least county-wide, we're more than -- we're a big part of the county, and it seems like sometimes the county government continues to look at all the municipalities, places outside the county, when we're all in Wake County and pay their taxes as well.

MODERATOR: When you look at Cary and how they manage growth, how would you compare that to like Raleigh or Apex or Holly Springs? Better or worse?

MALE: I would say it's just as good as far as I'm concerned.

MODERATOR: Could you agree?

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: I don't know that anybody has got it figured out yet. I think everybody -- because you take something like Holly Springs, which has experienced phenomenal growth almost overnight, they had the opportunity to -- quote -- do it from the ground up right, but I'm not sure they have the answer or the model to follow because each community is different as far as needs, size, demographics, the whole makeup. So I don't know that there is a good model. I know we talked about smart growth and going around to communities and seeing how (inaudible) the communities, a good excuse to (inaudible), but when it comes time to putting it on the ground, I think it's very difficult to implement a best model.

MALE: So we're probably seeming no better, no worse than any other community as far as Cary goes.

FEMALE: Actually, not having lived here very long, I feel like I've come in and a lot has already been done, and every city is going to have traffic problems. I think Cary has actually done a pretty good job, I can get

around town pretty easily, yeah, Crossroads is horrible, but what city is not going to have a major shopping area like that that's not going to be a mess? I mean, you know, the fact that there is only one, and you can get around pretty well most of the time I think is admirable actually.

MODERATOR: Well, that's the next topic. Let's go ahead and go into it, and that's traffic. How do you feel about traffic in and around Cary? Overall, not just in one area.

FEMALE: I think, like she said, in general it's not that bad, it's just a few small areas like Crossroads or whatever, but in general I get around pretty quickly and easily and I don't feel like I wait too long in a particular intersection, maybe I'm not going to the right places that are congested. But I tend to hold Cary to a higher standard for some reason than other areas I go to, and I think its reputation, and I feel like for the most part it meets my expectations.

MODERATOR: Do you agree?

FEMALE: Yes.

FEMALE: I think it's pretty good. I would say that the traffic, coordination of the lights, because I will be going -- like it took me 14 minutes to get here and I'm just coming from the Crossroads area, and even I'll get on Tryon Road, for me to get from Cary Parkway to MacGregor takes 10 minutes, that's not even like 5 minutes. I mean, I should be able to roll down that street without a problem, but I'm stopping at every single light. I think that's going to compound the traffic problems as more people come, so they might want to look into that. And I see a lot of people -- again, I see these campaigns where people are sitting in their cars on the side of the street kind of taking traffic patterns down and stuff, and things do change, but I think the light coordination might help alleviate some of the traffic problems.

MALE: Look at Cary Parkway, it gets good marks from let's say Kildaire Farm Road to High Hills. I travel that a fair amount, and with the divided median, with the turnout lanes, with the limited number of lights at the intersections, I feel I can move across Cary that way pretty effectively. Now, taking other routes, it's less so, although I think that's the best, Cary Parkway, and after that it kind of starts breaking down. But that I think is good. The other challenges of course is the whole US 164, Tryon Road to 40, during morning and afternoon rush hour, you know, because having the third lane coming south from the turnoff onto Cary Parkway looked pretty smart. Why didn't they put a third one going north to effect that merge? Because it's the merging that slows things down at Cary Parkway and Trion Road. I come in at Cary Parkway, so I start down there, but having to slow to 5 or 10 miles an hour and waving people in just causes things to back up and get slower. I don't know why another third lane wasn't put in there. But I think that rush hour is rush hour, and there's not a lot you can do, but I think that seeing how we can keep the main stems flowing best needs some more attention.

MODERATOR: Let's talk about some of those spots. You said the parkway has certain areas in there, they need a third lane you said.

PREVIOUS MALE: US 164 North between Cary Parkway and Walnut.

MODERATOR: Okay. What are some other hot spots that you see that are trouble spots in traffic and when?

MALE: Coming south on that same way, the merge, if you come off of 440 or 40, it's the same thing, especially in the evening.

MALE: (Inaudible) one lane.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah. Once you get on that third lane it flows fine, but it's getting to it.

MALE: I used to have to cut in that way, but now I come in down at the main part of US 1, I think it's nice.

(Laughter.)

MALE: You take I-40, you're merging into Crossroads, and you're bringing it down to one lane, put into that new third lane --

MALE: There are two merges there.

PREVIOUS MALE: And then everybody is doing this. Now (inaudible) more lanes doesn't make traffic better, it actually makes it worse because people are trying to shift more lanes, but I would like to see if we could come up with something better for all that merging in.

FEMALE: Yeah, and the interchange that sits on top of that area, that Walnut Road and Buck Jones, I mean, I don't even go that way, you know, it's like the last resort.

MODERATOR: Is this morning or afternoon drives?

MALE: Or Saturdays and Sundays.

FEMALE: Yeah. I was going to say that interchange is always --

MALE: It's murder. But drive time for the merging is what I was referring to.

FEMALE: Don't go to Crossroads anytime between Thanksgiving and New Year's, it's just a nightmare, the traffic, it's just really bad. And I hear they're trying to work on that.

MALE: It's easier to get to Crossroads from Raleigh than it is from Cary.

FEMALE: It is.

PREVIOUS MALE: It's a flyover. Which I know was put in by the previous developer when they were building (inaudible), I mean, they kind of got that, but coming up from the south, from Walnut, it looked like, "We don't care how those people get there, we don't care how we get people off the road."

MALE: I think a lot of this is coupled, several streets that I think, as somebody mentioned, Tryon and others, when they were developed several years ago the town required an extra width in front of that subdivision, the idea being that it would help get wider streets sooner, but we've ended up with a lot of the lanes end and you've got to merge back in, and then part of those are called state roads and part of them town roads, and so you don't have that coordination as far as construction, and then with the state situation now in terms of what they're going to construct when and where is always a big question, so it needs to be coordination, some better system of getting at least the critical areas, something done about them, which is not happening now here and years.

MODERATOR: I have a couple questions then. They want to know how the town should improve traffic. And just to give you an idea, build more roads, getting state roads widened, like Highway 55 or Davis Drive, mass transit, bike lanes, HOV lanes, signaling systems, like you said. I mean, what are some of your ideas?

MALE: Well, one thing on the traffic lights, or the smart lights, somebody said that not necessarily traffic lights, make it flow smoother, you can put too many in, in a lot of cases that happens, but when you do, make sure they are smart lights where they can recognize when cars are there, and then in time you can get people moving quickly. And the other thing is on the traffic enforcement -- if this is being recorded, I'm not going to say I drive fast, but I know one thing that really -- people don't pay attention, and part of not paying attention is turning into your own lanes, because so many times people hold up traffic because they're waiting to turn out because they can't make the turn into their own lane, and they just hold up a lot of traffic that way, and either people need to be educated through enforcement or just better education before they get their license or

their yearly test, not signaling changing lanes, I think too many times the law enforcement focuses on what's easy for them to do, and it's easy to sit there with your radar gun and catch somebody doing 8 or 12 miles an hour over. I mean, my opinion, 60 miles an hour on Cary Parkway, once you get past any road much further north of Preston Corners and everybody does it because it's easy, there is plenty of room to turn, it was well laid out. And somebody is going to catch somebody doing 58 instead of somebody changing lanes in front of somebody not looking, not signaling, and that's what causes problems.

FEMALE: Right.

MALE: Like Maynard Road, I live close to that, and it's 5 lanes, and as far as I can tell, it runs okay, but police are staked out there a couple, three times a week because people run much more than -- they run 60 or 65 sometimes on Maynard Road coming through what used to be residential neighborhoods and people are still trying to get out. But they do have to be controlled, and I think again some of these adjoining streets, if they had the narrow parts taken out of them as early as possible, it would help a lot rather than everybody go to the 5-lane roads.

MALE: Exactly.

FEMALE: I think if we had a better mass transit -- if we had a bus system in Cary, there would be a lot of people who would use the bus system rather than get in their own cars and drive around.

MALE: Don't we have one now?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But it's not much of one. It's very --

MALE: I don't know of anybody that would, personally.

FEMALE: I don't think that would work personally. I don't think people would give up the convenience of having their own car and can get up and go whenever they want to, to get on the bus. But it just depends on where they're going. You know, if they're going to work, that's fine, but if they've got three errands to run afterwards, they're probably not going to take the bus, and that seems like --

MALE: If I was going to go to the grocery store and haul home five or six bags of groceries, which we buy at one time rather than a day's worth, that makes it difficult. I know it wouldn't be a choice for me. I would like to be able to do that, but the reality of it is not --

MALE: We like the freedom also, going exactly when you want to go, not waiting on somebody else's schedule. I travel a lot all over the country, I used to live in Charlotte, I mean, living there, they have a lot of traffic problems, but they went through a tremendous growth period, compared to something like that, or L.A. and some of the bad areas, Chicago, we've got it made here, but you hold your own home to a higher standard when you have the opportunity to, and like she said, there is no reason it should take her that long to go that little short distance. I think I got here because I live west of here in less time than she did and I'm probably two and a half times further, but that's just what I like. I always find ways, because I don't like sitting in traffic, that (inaudible).

MALE: I think some of that can change with public transportation. We really don't have public transportation as known in a lot of places, and the buses, the local buses, are not really scheduled to go somewhere at a certain time. We've got the Triangle Transit buses that come through going to the Park or other places, and again they're not -- they're running largely morning and afternoon to a great extent. I road a bus into Raleigh to work in the early '70s when the gasoline prices first changed, and they were pretty well used, but when they went from 29 cents a gallon to all of a sudden a dollar and a half a gallon, a lot of people, it got their attention. I think it's about to do that again, from what I read, we might be going to two or three dollars a gallon, and the buses are not really, I don't think, made for you to go to the grocery store, but if you

really want to go across town or in or out to work, that's still a good possibility subject to some change in attitude and habits.

FEMALE: I think adding some sidewalks. I live less than a mile from Crossroads, but I can't walk to Crossroads because there are no sidewalks, so I'm just another person riding in my car to Crossroads, where I would prefer to walk, at least I can go up there, grab something to eat, and walk back. You know, the fact that you have to get in your car, go from this part of Crossroads to the other part of Crossroads, there are no sidewalks in that shopping area, so you're just adding onto the congestion. I think in those shopping center areas, adding the nice sidewalks and also maybe branching out into some of the neighborhoods in the periphery might alleviate some of the traffic problems in those congested areas. But again that's due to people wanting to get out and walk a little bit more. I know I like to walk. I'm from some of the northern cities, so I'm used to walking down the strip and enjoying my afternoon, if I want to go shopping or whatever.

FEMALE: When they first built Crossroads they did have a bus that was there that would run you from one place to another, I don't think it was used very much, and so it kind of went away, but maybe if they had a better system of that, people would maybe use it. I don't know if they would or not. I want to just say one more thing about Crossroads, I was looking in the newspaper at the proposed road changes, and there is one thing that concerns me. If you're at, say, Ruby Tuesdays or Toy-R-U's and you want to come out, you used to come out at a light, and they're proposing to move that light. But if you decide you want to turn left, there are two lanes now coming in from Route 1 and you are not going to be able to turn there, to turn left, you'll sit there forever. So you'll have to drive back through the parking lot, through where Toys-R-U's or Best Buy or something another to come out at a different place, and that's kind of inconvenient. That's my opinion.

MODERATOR: Any other comments before we leave this area? Any other big concerns? I think we hit a bunch of those. The next area we'll talk about is revenues. Now, we're trying to figure out ways that the town can increase their revenues, and the reason they'll need to do that is to continue to offer the services that they offer you that you guys spoke so highly of on the survey, and we talked about this earlier, that the growth rate used about to around 13 percent and it's been reduced to a little less than 2 percent, or quite a bit less than 2 percent here lately. However, there are some concerns here, to maintain the services that the town wants to maintain, we have to find ways to pay for it, and one way is through growth, and growth of around 4 to 4-1/2 percent would maintain the same level of services, or of course the other option would be to increase taxes. So that said, I want to pass out the assumptions so that you can look at these overall, and just pass these around and take a look at these assumptions before we start talking about the issue, so you get a little bit of education on the issue.

MALE: And so far the only services we've spoken about are just some infrastructure services.

MODERATOR: That's right.

PREVIOUS MALE: There are quite a few others that we could look at.

MODERATOR: Let me start with the first one. Here is the assumption that we're going to rest on. First off, revenues that will be raised will be only for keeping the current level of services, not any other things like buildings or anything like that overall. The town now is running very efficiently, but they want to look for ways to save more money, too. The Town of Cary has not raised taxes in over a decade, in fact they've lowered the taxes, but over the past 10 years voters have approved over \$200 million in bonds, and that's been used for the water, the roads, the streets, and the parks, and you've noticed the improvements in those areas you've seen. But they were also told they may have to raise taxes about 10 cents per \$100 valuation to do that, but so far they haven't had to basically because of growth, let's face it, that's what's done the job. Now, those are the assumptions we'll rest on, with what's been done so far. Now, would any of you, thinking about this, support the town raising property taxes? Or is there any situation where you see they could or may raise property taxes?

MALE: What was the question again?

MODERATOR: Is there any situation where you could see the town, could envision the town, in a situation where it would be okay to raise the taxes?

MALE: Well, eventually, if we're raising revenue by growth, eventually we will hit the growth wall where we cannot go any further and any direction. I think that that has to be looked at and planned for before we get there so that we don't have to have growth to pay for everything. I guess that's what you're saying, assuming we don't have growth, how are we going to pay it, and what are we willing to pay?

MODERATOR: Well, let's explore that in a little more detail. All right, how many of you would support a 1-cent increase -- now, this would be permanent -- on the current tax rate? And 1 cent would be about \$10 a year on a \$100,000 home, if you put it out. Would you or would you not support that if it was needed to maintain the level of services you have?

FEMALE: Sure.

FEMALE: I would say yes.

MODERATOR: So 1 cent.

MALE: I would say it's arguable, if you look at the whole picture. They say they haven't raised taxes in how many years, but they've raised fees a lot, sewer, water fees and this sort of thing. So if a tax increase is going to be as much as my sewer fee has increased, then I would want to know what the total picture was. It sounds pretty infinitesimal for 1 percent, but in balance --

MODERATOR: So we need to know what it's for.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: So by and large possibly a 1-percent increase if it's for stuff that we see it justifiable.

FEMALE: Well, if like you're saying, the services aren't changed or lowered, and we don't see that hidden tax, like you're talking about, where the fees are going up --

MODERATOR: Services, individual fees for services.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah. I mean, because it's --

MODERATOR: How about 2 percent, \$20 a year? Is that out of the realm?

MALE: It sounds like a very small amount. I would be interested in knowing that it would be used for. Yeah, \$20 spread over 12 months, 365 days, is not much, but it sounds like you're asking for permission to go for a tax increase, how much would we stand? If we go for \$30, \$40. I don't know where my payment point is at this point, but I like to know that the money is going for something that I agree with or that I feel is justifiable rather than, "Well, we just screwed up, and we underestimated this, and something, and now we've got to patch up some holes."

MODERATOR: That's what if you were going to tell the town, wait a minute on that, that's fine. I agree with you, we're here to get your opinions, so don't hold back. So you say 2 percent, let's see what it's for.

MALE: \$10 sounds fine, \$20 sounds fine. I don't know if you get to \$100, whether I'm going to go, wait a minute, \$100 is my limit. I don't know. I don't know if I can tell you that number today.

FEMALE: I agree. I'm not sure what the number is, 10 or 20 is fine, but it would be good to know exactly why it isn't working. I mean, you said just to maintain what we already have.

MODERATOR: That's what we're assuming now.

MALE: Here is my concern, when I hear that put that way, how about an extra \$10 or \$20 on \$100,000? I mean, okay, \$10 or \$20, but it's on top of the current revenue stream that's already there. But if we've already grown to the point where we are now and we've paid for it, we have issued some bonds, but we've been paying for it all along, if we are slowing the growth down, people aren't coming in, more and more people aren't requiring more and more services, why do we have to pay more and more on top of the current revenue stream that's there? The roads are there, they've been cut, they've been paved, the rock, I mean everything is there, all we have to do is maintain them now.

MODERATOR: I think some of the things that the town is coming from, suppose the gas prices go up two to three dollars, that's what affects them, and the fact that workers are paid higher wages, I mean they're trying to look at some of the costs do go up for them along with what happens for you, and that's what I think they're trying to explore a little bit more.

PREVIOUS MALE: What I would be willing to pay more for. I would be willing to pay a little bit more for maintaining backyard garbage pickup, that's one issue that I think is important to me. I don't know that I would pay one or two dollars more for something else, but that's something, a service, I pay for, as a cost, I have a direct benefit, I might be willing to pay a little bit more to maintain that.

MALE: I like that also, just as a side comment. That's one thing that's really nice about living here. Before raising taxes, though, I would look at cutting something else.

MODERATOR: Okay, well, we'll get to that, that's in our agenda.

MALE: That's an example where I could assign a dollar amount right now. You say \$10 more to maintain something that I can't quite see or feel or touch, I don't know, but --

MODERATOR: You would like information of any proposed taxes that we're looking into, you want full information on what it's going to go for, why it needs to be done, that's what you're telling me.

FEMALE: Absolutely.

MODERATOR: I mean, you want it laid out, you want to say this is exactly where this money is going to go, why it went up.

FEMALE: Sure.

MALE: In recent years we read where there is a few million, three or four million that was paid by the town for equipment in the schools, which is a county budget item we were always told up to then. Can't do anything about all the buildings and all because that's in the county system, but we did, somehow we raised money to put a few more computers in schools or that sort of thing, which again should have been a county responsibility as far as I'm concerned. The same thing with some of the state roads, the town actually, if I read in the paper right, is advancing money, front-end money at least, to get the state started doing some of the construction when again those roads are maintained, built, and owned by the state system. So again I think we need to know what money is being spent where before I'm willing to say I'm ready to pay 1 cent, 2 cents, 3 cents, or whatever, you know, to look at those other items like that that really we're in need of taking second thought about.

MALE: And to know that the state allocation of money to Raleigh, for Cary, to Cary for roads, which we get an annual allocation, that that in fact is spent on roads and not road-related items, which they're allowed to do. I mean, there is a leeway in that money, but if that's the money that's coming for that, make sure it's spent for that, if it's money needed for something else, then that needs to be accounted for, too, not taken away from the dedicated stream that that was for.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let me ask you another. Suppose Cary were to raise -- just a scenario -- taxes by 5 cents, or about \$50 a year, would it be better to raise those taxes at one cent a year, or put like a 2-cent-a-year early on and then 2 years down the road take another 2 to 3 percent? Which one is better for you?

MALE: You mean one over 5 years or 2-1/2 over 2 years? I mean, I think anyone wants it as gradual as possible so that maybe (inaudible) out of it is even there.

MODERATOR: I'm not saying they're going to do that, but just --

FEMALE: I agree, more gradual.

MALE: Gradual is better.

MALE: I don't even want to say that because that gives a mindset that people are willing to take that. I mean, when you look at a business, you take a business, you're a family, you make do with what you have, you either go out and you get additional revenue by increasing your value in the market, products and services you offer, and if you can't do that, then you have to manage with what you have. Otherwise, you just continue, you're going to go bankrupt at some point. And I feel, my personal opinion is, that government in general just has a mindset that they can raise their prices, they can increase their revenue, at will, but it's by the people, for the people, not by the government, for the government. And I just don't like that mindset at all about, well, what's more powerful to you, take a little bit of your money today, and every day over 5 days, or do I just take it all now? I'm going to take it is what you're telling me, I'm going to take it.

MODERATOR: I don't try to infer that's what they're trying to say here, but let me ask you this question then: Would you in any way support some level of growth -- notice we mentioned 4, 4-1/2 percent -- maybe some level of growth overall to circumvent or take away the fact that you have to increase taxes, or maybe even balance the two, where a little tax increase and a little -- would that be more desirable?

MALE: I think some growth is good. I mean, if you look at what's happened compared to the south and the northeast, our standard of living here -- and I've only lived in the south my whole life -- our standard of living has grown tremendously because of the growth, added revenue because people move in. And my wife is from Buffalo, New York, and in downtown Buffalo they have a tremendous problem because people are just pouring out of the city, one is taxes, and there are many other things, but that's certainly one of them, so there does need to be some amount of growth, whether you do it through just people having children, or people moving in. I think both, there does need to be some balance in that.

MALE: I think the type of growth also. You've been talking about growth as a general term, but we also need to make sure we have a balance between commercial, industrial type spaces, that there are formulas for a good balance. We were for years known as strictly a bedroom community, and we've been recruiting sort of favorable clean industries and trying to put jobs and homes near each other. I think that attempt to balance the types of growth and whether it's \$100,000 homes or \$400,000, I think that involves a healthy component to growth so that you have a balanced community at all levels of the economy, because I think that would in turn encourage and sort of insure economic stability. If you're all high end or all low end, I just think some diversity is very desirable, both in economic and commercial, residential industry.

MODERATOR: Good point.

FEMALE: I agree.

MODERATOR: Robert?

MALE: To me, if you don't grow, you die or start shrinking. I know since I've lived here a lot of people came in from the northeast particularly and said don't let happen here what happened to us, all of a sudden the industries have left and that sort of thing, and they were left to pay the entire school bill, taxes, and that sort of

thing, almost on residential properties. So I think we really need to be careful in terms of trying to cut too close, or even if we could, how much growth will take place.

MODERATOR: So some degree of growth is acceptable for you as long as it's not excessive and you can keep up with the infrastructure, as we talked, smart growth. Is that what you're trying to tell us?

FEMALE: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay, good. We're going to leave this area behind and we're going to move into one that we've already --

MALE: On growth, just one more thing.

MODERATOR: Sure, go ahead.

PREVIOUS MALE: We are one community and one of many, and I think that sometimes erroneously and sometimes factually, Cary acts either independently or in concert with other communities, and I think we need to look at working within all the neighbors within the Triangle area to achieve economies of scale for expensive pieces of infrastructure, even sharing how communities mesh, and right now we've kind of been the cookie monster gobbling up a lot of things, Apex and Holly Springs say wait a minute, we want our chance to benefit from some of that, and I know that Triangle J, people opted in and opted out, they like what's going on and they want to be in, but they don't like the way the region is growing and they want to go their own way. So I encourage the council to seek ways to be more of a team player and leveraging our capabilities and advantages amongst the greater I guess we would call them the metropolitan statistical area, which is really incredibly huge, how do we balance what we do in with all of that?

MALE: And participation needs to include the county I think, too.

PREVIOUS MALE: Oh, exactly.

PREVIOUS MALE: Because like I say, so many times they're kind of hands-off, municipalities are not really part of the county, we are worried about this rural area out here or something, which is not true at all anymore.

MODERATOR: Okay, well, let's move on to Robert's question. We want to (inaudible) in more detail. When we're getting the survey, replacing backyard with curbside collection, a majority of respondents did support curbside for backyard, over backyard. How many of you did support curbside? Any of you?

FEMALE: That's what we do now.

MODERATOR: Several of you said curbside? And the rest of you were either no or unsure? Let me give you a few more facts and see if that makes a difference in your judgment, and tell us honestly if it does or doesn't. First off, any resident that's disabled with a note from the doctor can (inaudible) continue backyard collection. Does that enhance the fact that we should switch over?

FEMALE: This is a non-issue for me. I mean, I moved from Charlotte here, and it was curbside, and I don't care one way or the other, I really don't. It's like, how long can a driveway be? I mean, honestly, you know.

MODERATOR: I think what they're saying is residents that are elderly, they could help.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, yeah.

MODERATOR: Well, how about this one, just a (inaudible). Replace once-a-week backyard collection with once-a-week curbside collection, the town will provide the roll-out carts. That will save the town about \$1 million over 3 years. Does that come into play?

FEMALE: Definitely.

MALE: It's \$330,000 a year is what you're saying.

MALE: What is that percentage-wise on the town budget?

MALE: Right, exactly.

FEMALE: Yeah, I was going to say it doesn't sound like very much.

MALE: That's nothing.

MODERATOR: Okay. All right, 27 percent of households already curbside collection in the town. Does that make a difference?

MALE: I still don't like it.

MODERATOR: You don't have to. This is what we want to hear. Are most of you now, your viewpoint, knowing those facts, it hasn't changed it, has it? You go for it?

MALE: My backyard is at the end of my driveway, so it's --

(Laughter.)

FEMALE: I like backyard collection.

MODERATOR: Backyard or curbside?

FEMALE: I don't care. I don't own a home here.

MALE: An apartment has its own collection system.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yeah, I lived in Charlotte, too, and it's no big deal, it's just nice, it makes you feel special that every other city in the country you have to roll your garbage can out there. I mean, I've been a lot of places, and that's what happens, and it's just nice, it makes you feel special, that they come right up the side of your garage or in your backyard or something.

FEMALE: Oh, and they remember to do it. (Inaudible), oh, they changed the crews, and a lot of people in my neighborhood (inaudible) some people take it to the curb, and we've done ours on the side of the house, I'm like I need my garbage picked up. It's like if I know I'm rolling it out, I know it's going to get picked up, which sounds lame, but you know --

MALE: No, you get it picked up.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I don't have any children, but if you've got three kids, and that happens, they forget to take out your trash, I mean, that can --

FEMALE: A lot of garbage.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah, it could be a lot of trash.

FEMALE: I live in a town house community, and to go from the front yard out to the curb, or even from the backyard to the curb is quite a distance for me, so dealing with a roll-up cart, I mean, it's all grass, it's going to ruin the grass, so it's a whole lot easier for them to come back and just dump and take the trash.

MODERATOR: And you say it's not an issue.

FEMALE: Uh-huh.

MODERATOR: Well, let's move on to communication. It's important that the Town of Cary system feel like you have access to the information that you really want from the town. We know that there are limited hours in a day, you can't spend all your time trying to find the information or digest the information, so we take that into account. Now, what kinds of information on what topics do you think most citizens need to know about? Just as an example, like garbage collection services, recycling, planning initiatives, construction, (inaudible). What are the key ones you want to know about if you want information from the town?

FEMALE: Recycling, for me, especially chemicals, oil, you know, things like that are very important. Also, where the collection sites are for paper, trash, things like that.

MODERATOR: Okay, recycling. What else?

FEMALE: I'm on the neighborhood board association, and one of the things that we look at often are the town's regulations on signs and different things like that. So those are the kinds of things I generally (inaudible).

MODERATOR: Anything else?

MALE: Flowers (inaudible) I've got everything I really need to know, are they going to change the collection dates for anything, like trash on Mondays or whatever, you know, those kind of things. I don't need a constant flow of information.

MALE: Yeah, the town is not that big.

MALE: The parade, like some of my kids (inaudible) in the parade, you know, when it starts and what day it's on.

MODERATOR: Anything else?

PREVIOUS MALE: Sprint Days and stuff like that.

MALE: Events that are going to happen.

MALE: Yeah, right.

MODERATOR: So overall, do most of you feel well informed about what's going on?

FEMALE: I do.

MALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: Or at least at a level you feel comfortable with?

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: No, I don't think so. I think --

MALE: You don't get the water bill, that's why.

(Laughter.)

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I (inaudible) the internet to try to find things to do and I don't think I really have a place to go to find out about things in town.

MODERATOR: See, now, that's an important point. I mean, homeowners tend to get more information than you get, and that's a point they need to know. Now, do you think, then, the town -- for most of you, you feel very comfortable with the information, you don't really feel the town needs to be more aggressive with you, right? Or do you?

FEMALE: Well, I signed up for a list through the town, so I get all the press releases in my e-mail, and I like that sort of in addition to the water bill or the notes through the trash and stuff.

MODERATOR: Do all of you visit the website and look at stuff there?

FEMALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: That's what the town wants to know, do you want them to be more aggressive in getting information to you, or maybe post it in places like on the website where you can go look it up as you want to find it? Which one is more important to you? Or maybe both.

FEMALE: More aggressive and post it on the website.

MALE: As long as it's there and you can find it. Right? Yeah.

FEMALE: Yeah.

PREVIOUS MALE: It just needs to be there.

MODERATOR: So really not try to reach you necessarily, they're doing a good job there is what you're telling me, what you want them to do is have stuff out there that if you need to find it, it's easy to. Is the website easy to navigate and find stuff?

FEMALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: Pretty good website? You visited the website?

FEMALE: Uh-huh.

MODERATOR: Very good.

MALE: It may be in the some of the larger apartment type developments or something that either they could give some of the leaflets like come in our water bills to the owner and have that distributed in their boxes or whatever.

FEMALE: Because I mean we do pay water and trash, but it's not through a company here, so we're not getting it.

MODERATOR: Yeah, need a new way to reach you guys.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Right.

MODERATOR: Any other things you feel uninformed about or need more information?

(No audible response.)

MODERATOR: So we're good?

(No audible response.)

MODERATOR: Okay, excellent. Now, also along with this communication is the involvement issue. The city makes decisions and they would like more citizen involvement. And based on the survey that was a problem area, that the city is not finding ways -- they've improved on it, but they haven't reached a place they want to be in getting citizens involved in decisions that are made. Do you think the town needs a lot of improvement in that area, getting you involved in decisions?

MALE: I think it's very difficult to get the level of participation that they would like to have. I think many times you have to take a sampling of the few and expand it to the large and then make a call from there. I think people are concerned, but when it comes down to daily lives, voluntarily coming forth unless you've got a hot button issue, you're getting ready to be pained or something that you're just passionate about, it's typical of American society now, it's the squeaky wheels that get heard the most and everybody is generally probably either doesn't know to say or is generally okay with the way things are happening, not that that's right, I'm just saying we all would like to have more information, but it is very difficult, and I'm not sure that the dollar return for the effort put into it -- at some point I think you have diminishing returns.

MODERATOR: Are there any topics or issues that you think there wasn't enough participation about citizen involvement?

MALE: These buildings here. Where did they come from? Why do we need these buildings? A parking deck?

MODERATOR: In other words, there wasn't enough opportunity to (inaudible)?

PREVIOUS MALE: Well, I mean, I was just kind of answering the question, but not really. I mean, I don't get downtown too often, and you're talking about raising taxes, I'm looking at what kind of services -- you know, 100,000, 120,000 people, are these government buildings here that we're paying for?

MALE: Right now, the town offices I know are spread out through I don't know how many locations throughout town.

MODERATOR: They're trying to consolidate that into one.

PREVIOUS MALE: If you want to go to the recs, you've got to go here. If you want to go to something else, you've got to go over here. So I assume this is an attempt to consolidate.

MODERATOR: Part of it.

MALE: What kind of services would require this kind of infrastructure?

MODERATOR: I can't answer it, but I can sort of relay your concerns for the building. I mean, what we're saying in general, then, you're not just referring to these buildings, it's like other projects maybe.

PREVIOUS MALE: Or any project I suppose. I guess summing it up would be we're a small town, we're a big town, small city, whatever you want to call it, we're a community, why do we want to look at continually raising taxes to provide more and more services that maybe nobody takes advantage of anyway? I don't know what these services are other than trash, water, sewer and the roads. Crime is very low.

MALE: Did you know that we have the eighth largest municipality in the state, bigger than Asheville and Wilmington?

PREVIOUS MALE: But, still, I mean --

PREVIOUS MALE: I mean, the point is we're not a small town anymore.

FEMALE: It just feels like a small town.

PREVIOUS MALE: But it tries to keep that flavor, and I applaud that.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I do, too.

MALE: I like that point, too, but I think we're right behind the high point in the growth, and so I think what I would like to see is more efficient, through consolidation, perhaps being able to reach a more efficient level of service.

MALE: If that's what's happening, I agree, but I'm just puzzled. I totally agree with that, and that goes back to my point earlier about trying to do more with what you have, I mean work within your limitations, but I was just surprised, I can't understand what kind of services we're getting that would constitute three large multistory buildings, a parking deck. You know, look how long it took to (inaudible) airport for 9 years, and we just got one built, and there is a four-story parking deck right here in little downtown Cary. I guess that's my point, is I'm just having a hard time understanding what services are being rendered that require this amount of infrastructure.

MALE: I think part of the problem (inaudible) the town staff is hearing, too, is the time lag between when something gets approved and something happens. In the meantime, there is a subdivision or two that goes around that, and they're not getting the word very well, "Oh, by the way, this is going to be a shopping center here, but it's a cow pasture now," and then when they start doing it, then people come in screaming.

MODERATOR: So what we're saying is that maybe the town is doing an adequate job with getting citizens involved overall?

MALE: I would like to think that they get them involved before it reaches some negative headline in the newspaper. I think perhaps that's what (inaudible) move somebody off of their comfort seat, is when something is said erroneously negatively or positively, that fortunately it's how much information can I take in a day's time to manage my life and my roll as a citizen, homeowner, family member? So generally I'm okay. I think that the various mailings I get from the town or what I read in the Cary news or The Observer, I just would like to get a little more balanced understanding of the issue before it becomes the local football that gets kicked around in the press, "What shade of beige are you going to paint your house in Cary this week?" And I know that that's tough given the current level of media in our society, but if the town can -- they pretty much know (inaudible) what the hot issues are or what the big issues are, and kind of be a little proactive rather than relying on the media strictly to interpret it to whatever degree it gets interpreted.

MODERATOR: Well, the town has come up with several suggestions here. Let's say an issue does become one you want to get involved in, and they wanted your opinion on several things they may do to increase your level of participation. The first one is to have quarterly or semiannually town hall meetings held at different locations around town, and both the mayor and council would show up, and they would answer any questions

for those who come or have those questions. Do you think citizens would see that as a significant increase in their ability to participate or be involved in decisions?

MALE: I think smaller group meetings would get people more likely to participate in a smaller group than a 200 or 300-member -- a lot of people don't like to speak up in front of a group, but (inaudible) something larger.

FEMALE: If you did it four times a year, maybe in like certain areas of the town or (inaudible) each time so the groups would be smaller.

MODERATOR: Might you attend?

FEMALE: I would.

MALE: Definitely.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: Oh, good. All right, next. How about a monthly breakfast held at different locations around town featuring a different council member each month who would be there to listen and answer questions for anyone who showed up? How about that one? Would that be perceived, do you think, as a --

MALE: I think we're going to have to live with a certain amount of apathy.

(Laughter.)

MODERATOR: Might or might not show up?

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Probably not.

MALE: Breakfast, that time of day? There are a lot of things going on at that time of day. No for that one.

MODERATOR: Okay. Plus it's only one council member, which you would probably prefer to have everybody there, I'm guessing.

FEMALE: Uh-huh.

MODERATOR: A live call-in or e-mail-in television show like on Cary TV, and it features the mayor and town council, and that way you can send in your questions or concerns. Do you think that would be considered a fairly effective way to increase involvement?

MALE: (Inaudible) catch it on satellite? If you're not on cable, you wouldn't participate.

MODERATOR: Oh, so it would only cover the cable. Cary TV is only on cable. Okay, so an issue there would be if not everybody has cable.

MALE: Well, it is in the lower tier, but if you have satellite, you're not there. If you have just basic cable, you will get like Channel 11, but if you're not on cable at all, if you're on antenna or rabbit ears or satellite, then --

MODERATOR: So the concern there is it may not --

MALE: You may exclude some. But I have found interesting at times to tune into town council meetings, or I find more interesting the planning committee meetings, before things get to the town council, whether they're setbacks off of streams or the right amount of acres protected, or the impacts this will have. But you know, if you just look into that, there is no announcement of saying on this day we're going to be talking about these three (inaudible) that are coming before the planning board, if you have an interest, tune in. I don't know what that -- in fact, I can't even tell you what day it is anymore, but the times that I have stumbled across it, I've generally found it interesting. You know, generally it's something I'm interested in other than just a casual citizen, too, but to see (inaudible) working -- the struggles they go through to try to come up with the right answer I think is very important.

MODERATOR: Well, in relation to that, how about if they add a web poll, a web poll where during a public hearing type thing where they could gain citizen support to the policies or decisions they make, what do you think of that?

FEMALE: So what you're saying is you wouldn't have to be watching the --

MODERATOR: No, just web poll where they put it out there, they have the issues and concerns in the web poll on how you feel about it.

FEMALE: That would be good.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: As long as they can limit the response so I couldn't vote 100 times about the traffic.

(Laughter.)

MALE: I'm not sure how much background the people responding to the inquiry would --

FEMALE: How informed they were.

PREVIOUS MALE: If you watch the planning board meetings or that sort of thing, you get a lot of detail, but you would have a lot of -- I certainly don't think we should start gearing town council decisions based on --

MODERATOR: I don't think they would use that to make decisions because they do know that that's not a random sample.

MALE: If those are multiple choice questions, it's pretty limited to cover a complex issue.

MODERATOR: So there are concerns there depending on what -- it depends on the issue is what you're saying. Okay.

MALE: Any survey, it's only as good as it's well crafted.

MODERATOR: Let me ask you a couple of questions by a show of hands here. How many of you have attended a town council meeting before?

MALE: In Cary?

MODERATOR: Cary.

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay, two. How many have watched a town council meeting on Cary TV?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Four. How many have listened to a town council meeting on the web?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Two. How many of you have sent an e-mail to any town council member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Three. How many have sent an e-mail to any town staff member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay. How about telephoned a council member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Two of you. How about telephoned a town staff member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Three. How about written a letter to town?

(Show of hands.)

FEMALE: I have.

MODERATOR: Okay, one. How about attended a public meeting or open house sponsored by the town, such as the one held for the public art master plan or the southeast area plan?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Two. How about applied to be a member of the town board of commission?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay. Participated in a town web poll or discussion?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay, none.

MALE: You left one out.

MODERATOR: What's that?

PREVIOUS MALE: Spoken personally with a town council member.

MODERATOR: Have any of you spoken with a town --

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yeah.

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Three of you.

MALE: Which I feel is number one on the list.

MODERATOR: I'll put that one in.

PREVIOUS MALE: I kept waiting for you to come up with that.

(Laughter.)

MODERATOR: Now, one more thing, I'm going to run a little over, is that okay? If you have to go, please go. The last thing will be about non-smoking, the last issue. There has been a lot of request to the town about increasing the number of smoke-free restaurants, taverns, stuff in town. And they went over some of the statistics, 33 people died from smoking, about 1 in 5 deaths in North Carolina is related to that. So it is an issue, and the town knows that when they went through it. But you do know the state law says that you cannot force an establishment to become smoke-free, the state says that. So Cary cannot do anything to force them to be smoke-free. But there has been a request that the town should develop a promotional campaign so that these establishments will voluntarily become smoke-free or maybe increase the space of smoke-free areas, is what they're looking at. Now, do you think this is a very important issue for Cary?

FEMALE: I don't think it's a town issue.

MALE: I think they should stay out.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I don't think I can see any reason why the town should get involved in that issue. I mean, if the citizens want to get involved, but why should the government get involved?

MALE: Right. Let the marketplace decide. If you don't want to go to a smokey establishment, don't go.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah. I'll speak to the waiter or the owner or whatever and say, "It's too smokey in here, I couldn't enjoy my dinner," but I don't want the government spending my tax money suggesting to a restaurant, "Gee, can you cut out the smoking?"

MALE: If they could arrange to get some of the money that the tobacco companies are paying the state for health purposes, then maybe we could --

MALE: That's a really appropriate use of that money, is to promote safe healthy choices. The point of the matter that she was making about the government staying out of it, I agree, but unfortunately it's the government that pays the extra health costs to pick up the pieces after the fact, so somewhere there needs to be a balance of balancing what the public is paying and what the public is promoting in getting.

FEMALE: But I mean are you saying government like local government or government versus state or federal government? I think you are specifically talking Town of Cary government, and, yeah, I would agree with you.

MODERATOR: We're only talking about Cary.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: Let me ask you a question then. So really they were trying to get an idea of what would be appropriate to spend, but I'm assuming that from your responses that maybe we don't want them to spend anything on the campaign unless it comes from what?

MALE: Tobacco.

MALE: Yeah. That's what that settlement was supposed to be for.

MALE: Supposed to be, yeah.

MALE: And I don't think hardly any of it is used for that purpose.

FEMALE: I agree.

MALE: But in permitting of establishments, you can put in regulations, because that's what the town does, about percentage of space smoke-free or maybe incentive to make it all smoke-free. There are things that don't cost a lot of campaign billboard money that can still effect the issue.

MODERATOR: The state I don't think will allow them to do (inaudible) because of tobacco lobbies. Let me ask you one more question. When you go out and eat, does that make a difference if it's smoke-free?

MALE: Yes.

FEMALE: Definitely.

MODERATOR: Who does it make a difference to?

(Show of hands.)

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: I pick my place to sit to usually have alternatives, or if not, I go somewhere else, if it's that bad.

MALE: Or if you want to smoke a cigar after dinner, then that's going to make a difference, too. So I don't enjoy smoke at all during dinner, but if you want to after, then you have to go somewhere that does allow cigar smoking.

FEMALE: For me it doesn't matter just as long as I'm as far away as possible from the smoke area.

MODERATOR: That makes sense. And you say it does matter to you?

MALE: But having designated non-smoking and smoking, at some point they butt up, and the air handling system is generally common to the whole building. I mean, when it comes down to it, having non-smoking and smoking areas is really kind of a halfway measure.

MODERATOR: Does anybody here refuse to go someplace that allows smoking?

FEMALE: I've decided not to go to a couple of places where the smoke, there is too much of it, even if they have a non-smoking area.

MODERATOR: Right, but by and large, most of you would still go to a restaurant that allows --

MALE: If they don't have at least some designated area, I don't.

MODERATOR: But you need some designated area.

MALE: She's right. You go and you make a judgment within a few moments whether I'm going to tolerate this or not. You might stay that one time, but when you think again, you know, there are other choices.

FEMALE: I'm not going back.

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yeah, but we should have the right to make that choice, not the government.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: The town needs to stay out of it.

MODERATOR: The town, they're not trying to force restaurants to do this, they just want to try -- here is one of the things they're looking at, is how about if the town promoted a list of restaurants that were smoke-free, or maybe even restaurants that showed that had designated smoking and non-smoking areas, would you use that list?

FEMALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Put it on the website.

MALE: I think that's kind of an interesting point, though, because you're promoting a certain set of establishments only because the government favors them for their own purpose, but if you put a list on there of the total number of establishments in our town, the ones on this side are smoke-free totally, the ones in the middle are a mixture, and the ones on this side have no separation.

MODERATOR: If that list comes out, have them all on there.

PREVIOUS MALE: You have to have them all on there, otherwise you're --

MODERATOR: Do you agree with that?

FEMALE: I agree.

MALE: I think it's a bad idea.

MALE: I don't know if they do this, but I think (inaudible) but (inaudible).

MALE: Oh, yeah, that's good.

PREVIOUS MALE: That's a state thing, but again it's by restaurant, they all have to have it, and being able to list those, and as long as they're updated, they're changing, sometimes they get a low grade, you can upgrade within a few days or a week, but to me that's a public health issue that they're supposed to post it somewhere where you can see it, but can you name the last time you saw one in a restaurant?

MODERATOR: So put that on the website, too, if you're going to list all the restaurants?

MALE: Sure.

MALE: I mean, these are public health issues. Smoking, sanitation, the whole thing. If you're trying not to appear to be and in reality not be too (inaudible) in one direction, put the whole package up there.

MODERATOR: Would all of you agree with that?

MALE: Yeah, I would go even further to say this is something good that could promote the 4 percent healthy growth. She moved here, she just said, "I don't know where to go, I don't know what to do," I guarantee you that if we rode around the three miles from her apartment, we could find a lot of places for her to go, but she doesn't know to go there, and maybe a list of this, you know, and promote the smoking issue, the health issue, but just general awareness and get people to spend money, because, hey, economy and growth is what it's all about.

MALE: Is the town going to start listing the ones that have the Lean Cuisine and the ones that have --
(Laughter.)

FEMALE: And who is going to pay the web master? Are you willing to pay more taxes to have a web master to take care of restaurants?

MALE: That's certainly a tough issue, but you can't --

FEMALE: Well, you can certainly put a restaurant up there, and if they've got a website, and if on their own website they've got their menus, then you could certainly put that on the web page, and that's advertising for the restaurant, to say that they're smoke-free or, you know.

MALE: There is a total informational entertainment component where you could link to their site, you have the official -- their standing in government (inaudible) whatever it is, I mean, if you want to help promote local access to businesses here, maybe that is something that could be done cost effectively, that's not taking over their advertising dollars, but again it's part service, part public service, and part economic development support.

MODERATOR: Well, that's all we really had for it, and you've really given the town some good information and added a lot to what they even anticipated you would add to it. So that's really good.

MALE: I've got one last issue that you haven't mentioned, which might be small on the scheme of things, but it's about the amphitheater (inaudible) park.

MODERATOR: Okay.

PREVIOUS MALE: I started going out there when you had to sit on the pine cones, pick the pine cones out from under your blanket, and that was very nice, it was cost effective, it was kind of low-key, you had a fairly high entertainment value. That, too, is very nice, but I think everything that comes from there is way overpriced and does not serve the entire economic range of entertainment options.

FEMALE: That's true.

PREVIOUS MALE: When I heard that they were hiring a management company to book Axe (?) in there, I spoke directly to Nells Roseland, whom I knew, and I said, "Please don't let them turn that into Walnut Creek (inaudible) or heavy." My god if it isn't. You can't get anything out there without dropping 50 bucks, and I just think that is not good use of what we put into it. I know the town makes money on it, and I would like to see an economic accounting of how it's going, but there is an incredible amount of talent that is worth seeing in all genres of music that you can do for five or ten dollars a ticket, that would encourage family activities.

FEMALE: It would be nice to have a good balance of the higher price and even some free things, you know, for certain holiday events or whatever.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: I know the symphony is (inaudible) subsidized and it was cheap, and I understand that, but this town has made a lot of benefit from whatever that symphony thing has built to over the years, and I know you invest in a structure, you feel like you've got to book it as much as you can, you bring in professionals to book it, but every piece adds another 10, 20, 30 percent. Look at Walnut Creek now, who likes going out there? I mean, it's a (inaudible) center, they nickel and dime you, dollar and five dollar you, and the food is not even good, it's expensive and it's not even good. You know, so I think when you're looking at placing this community in perspective to the rest of the area, if you want to serve the people, you make good entertainment affordable. Now, I know we've had some things here recently, various community centers that have been very good and very affordable, but that's a nice facility and I think it needs to be made more accessible to the entire community.

MODERATOR: Does everybody agree?

FEMALE: Yes.

MODERATOR: How many people have been to it?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: A bunch of you have. Okay.

FEMALE: I would also say that my issue that I wanted to bring up was again bringing in more cultural activities. I still think the Town of Cary is not addressing the young population, the married population with no children, everything is here, it's centered around families. Well, me and my husband, we are a family unit, but we don't want to just go to Crossroads every single weekend. I mean, one great thing I enjoyed about Cary last year before (inaudible) was here was the Lazy Days Festival, you know, I enjoyed that. I would like to see more festivals like that during the spring and summer months. I think if you're trying to address growth, you do have a lot of young people move into the area because of jobs, you want to maintain them and keep them here. Right now you might not keep me here just because I don't want to have children, and like you were saying, your teenage son has nowhere to go but the mall and spend your money.

FEMALE: Well, they're kicked out of the mall now.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Oh, are they?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: The kids can't hang out at the mall anymore, they're kicked out.

MALE: (Inaudible) add skateboarding to a town park.

FEMALE: Right. But I think definitely bringing in more cultural activities, the parks are good, just, again like I said, the sidewalks so that kids can walk there and get there and so that people can walk there, you know, really addressing those cultural activities is important to me.

MALE: I kind of agree with what she said, but that's the reason I moved here. I mean, you lived in Charlotte, there are a lot of places that have a lot of cultural activities. I moved back to Cary because it's a family environment, that's I think what makes a community strong, it's young families, old families, people with or without kids, but it's the family environment. I mean, if I were single, I wouldn't live here, hands down, I just wouldn't do it, but because I have a family, this is the place I picked because the schools are next-door almost, it's very good community schools, you have tremendous involvement from the neighborhoods, the moms fight each other to be great moms, I mean, it's the complete opposite of what normally happens in a lot of school systems, and that's the kind of thing you want without having to pay for the private school and the price tags. And I kind of agree with what she said, but not at the price of changing the atmosphere away from the family atmosphere.

FEMALE: Families don't want culture?

PREVIOUS MALE: No, no, no, that's not what I'm saying, no, no, no, that's not what I'm saying, I said I think I agree with what you're saying, but I still want to maintain the family atmosphere, the family charm of living here, I don't want that aspect to change.

FEMALE: I think you can always have the family charm. I mean, you know, when I was at Lazy Days I saw plenty of families, they were out enjoying --

PREVIOUS MALE: Oh, I agree, that's a good one, right, I like that, too.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: What I'm saying is bringing in more of that to the Town of Cary I think would really enhance it. I mean, if you're trying to keep out non-families, I --

(Laughter.)

MALE: I wasn't able to go, but I heard very good things to say about the Indian Festival that was at Regency Park. I intended to go, but I wasn't able to go last time, but things like that where you're sharing cultural diversity, letting people understand the neighbors around them, (inaudible) cultural and political implications. I think those are very good, and to use our facilities in that way is a desirable use.

MALE: I think as we get more larger parks, right now it's Bond Park and there are still things there, but if we begin to have some of those in the outlying areas around the town, picking up on the school issue, if you had area parks that had some kind of activities for kids that (inaudible), I think you would get more parents involved in (inaudible) that's what happens with the schools, they've got to come to find out what they can do or what's going on with that, but maybe as we get some larger parks, if they promoted things around different times, it might help.

MALE: I've got one more thing, the aquatic swimming pool park thing. I've seen some very interesting proposals. I've lived here a long time. I lived in a neighborhood that didn't have a pool access, I live in one now that has privileges, but frankly it's way too unaffordable, and I think the town is in dire need of an affordable public aquatic facility to serve even those communities that have pools because you've got to teach these guys we just got way out of hand, it costs \$500 to have almost 10 weeks of access, assuming the weather is conducive. It's just not prudent. So let's build a good one, let's not make it like another Regency Park that you can't afford to go to, have it multi-use and as diverse as possible.

FEMALE: I've been going with my child to the Morrisville Community Center for years because it's affordable, it's not overcrowded, it's convenient, I would like to see even something more than that here, maybe a little bit bigger pool because it's not real big. But I agree with you, to join the Y or the neighborhood pools are just outrageous for something.

MALE: I can recommended Ridge Road Pool (inaudible) --

FEMALE: I've been there, too.

PREVIOUS MALE: It was "pay as you swim," for non-resident it was two or three dollars --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Right. That's about how Morrisville is, it's pay as you go, and for non-residents it was like four dollars or something, and you could stay all day if you want to.

PREVIOUS MALE: But you figure a neighborhood pool that has a \$500 or \$600 membership, and you get to use it during 10 weeks of the summer and maybe you go 15 times, 10 times, what you pay for a visit.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly.

PREVIOUS MALE: I know there are set costs to keep, but there is an economy of scale that I think this town has missed out on in providing that.

MALE: I think we need to be careful with the joint operation, the commercial operation --

PREVIOUS MALE: Let one (inaudible) the other.

PREVIOUS MALE: You'll end up with another RBC that the commercial people have control over the money that comes in, and the county gets to pay the bills, and where they're the same thing, whatever happened to the municipal recreation folks that were supposed to be skilled in doing these kind of things.

MODERATOR: We better wrap it up, we've got another group coming in, but I would just like to say thanks to everyone, you've been most informative, and I know the town wants to thank all of you, and so we'll close it down now. So thanks so much.

Appendix E
Biennial Survey Focus Group Transcript
Session 2

MODERATOR: All of you live within the town, right?

(Agreement)

MODERATOR: Let's start out with first with the quality of life issue. In the survey we got a lot of positive comments about people feeling good about living in town. Could you tell us some of the things that make you live in Cary versus other towns in North Carolina or anywhere else in the country?

MALE: The things that we like about Cary is I like good roads, good transportation, lots of good grocery stores. Of course, I'm retired now, so I play seniors tennis every morning, and that's a good group, 20/30 people, and a few golf courses. Not too exciting of a place, but it's -- the weather, the weather -- I'm from up north, Minnesota, and the weather is just gorgeous here, I like the winters and summers. I think it's kind of a regional thing. In many ways, it's kind of a "beige" place for me, it's not too exciting, but I do enjoy tennis and taking a few art courses, and things like that.

MODERATOR: Ruth, what do you like?

FEMALE: When I came over here, I guess was the sense of family that Cary used to have. I raised my children here, and I was going to -- the hangout for the boys was the apartment, we knew everyone, the police knew everyone in town, and things like that. Therefore, that sense of community was very tight, people were wonderful, and not that they are not wonderful now, but I am talking about when I came in here in the '70s. Just a wonderful place, and I must say I like everything here.

MALE: Well, I like that it's safe, and I like that actually it comes up various surveys or magazine reports, for example, that it is safe, so it's not just a perception that I have, but it's a perception many people have. But on the same hand, I also find that safety means you get sometimes a little bit less freedom. There are police swarming everywhere, and tickets are giving all the time, (inaudible). What else do I like? I like the fact that most of the people living here are the young couples, (inaudible), and myself being an Indian American, there are a lot of Asian Indians living here, so it's a very large minority. Also the fact that it's a very techie place, I feel very at home, and all the neighbors on my cul-de-sac are all techies. I feel like it's a very intelligent place, I like that. And so I feel like I'm living in a big city, but it's not a big city, I don't live in New York. So it feel very much like, for example, a Montgomery, Maryland kind of sense I get here, it's very much like that. But I absolutely agree with Allen, it's very "beige," it's kind of boring. But now I have a little kid, 3 years old, and I don't have time to do anything else, so (inaudible) boring part. I would like some more exciting -- I'm very concerned about the proliferation of things, I mean, (inaudible) I've already moved here, like they said, once you got up there, (inaudible), I wish they wouldn't cut down trees. And like on Maynard, the big Harris-Teeter, we didn't need another grocery store. I mean, they cut down a bunch of trees there, I dislike the development. I know the new mayor is -- I mean, this is (inaudible), so you can put this in the notebook or not, this is an opinion -- is that I guess I don't want us to get anti-slow growth, I want it to be intelligent growth. I don't want us to make up for the fact that we've had slow growth (inaudible) philosophy, that I want us to be intelligent. We don't need more growth. There are four grocery stores. I stumbled on one. We don't need that much development. We need some intelligent growth.

MODERATOR: Okay.

MALE: I agree.

MODERATOR: We'll get to those.

FEMALE: I grew up here, so I'm very partial to the area. I did move away for 5 years, and I lived in Wilmington. And having gone from there back to here, the town is actually very organized, you can go anywhere you want to, starting at one point, and go five or six different directions. I think that helps a lot with traffic flow, traffic issues. I like the fact that you can stay a small town, but if you want to go to a play, you can go to Raleigh, you can go to Durham, there are so many different places to go if you want to, or you can just stay right here and still have really anything available to you that you want to do. It's a very pretty area. Even though he mentioned the trees, there are a lot more than a lot of other areas. They do at least try to preserve some (inaudible).

MALE: (inaudible), as far as changes.

FEMALE: Definitely. Yeah. The neighborhood that I grew up is now considered Old Cary. It's been a big difference, I don't know if it's always for the best, if they expand their boundary it kind of takes away from that small town atmosphere a little bit.

MALE: Except for the traffic congestion there at Crossroads Plaza.

FEMALE: Yeah. Except for that.

MALE: They didn't plan that one too well.

MODERATOR: (Inaudible) those issues too.

MALE: Yeah, Crossroads is a disaster. I saw that coming.

MALE: Well, when we first moved here, we looked all at North Raleigh, we looked inside the beltline, this was back in '83, and Cary was cheaper at that time, as I recall, just for the amount of house you could get. And it seemed more like it had a community focus, it had identifiable -- well, it was the name of a town, first of all, and it had a nice little downtown. So it had that sense of community, which was nice. We identified with our church, it was a very good church, and we're still with the same church, and that's a big focus for us. It had enough shopping, not too much, but enough that you didn't have to drive 20 miles to get to something that you might want on a day-to-day basis, as opposed to living out in the country. It had enough diversity, I mean people working in the park were from all around the country, I'm talking about diversity like that. So it had a mix of people from all over the country, that was exciting, and it had the sports programs for our kids, we raised all of our kids here, and the good schools, community flavor, spirit, it was all very attractive. And the growth has been -- while it's been large growth through expansion and all that, I think they've done a fairly good job in terms of pacing it, and keeping the trees -- and not enough roads, and Crossroads is a disaster and all that, but by and large I think they've done a very good job over the years putting the thing together. And no billboards. I mean, it just looked better, you could tell, back in the '80s it just looked better than certain other areas.

MALE: Did they have billboards before then?

PREVIOUS MALE: No. Well, I mean Cary was so small, it was so small until 1970, but even then there weren't --

FEMALE: But there were three, (inaudible) Hills, (inaudible) and Chatham(?). Remember?

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, yeah.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: They got rid of those.

MALE: Wasn't it a doll house kind of billboard?

FEMALE: No, no.

(Several speaking at once.)

FEMALE: I always remember, there was one for Virginia Slims. Remember?

MALE: Speaking of billboards, when we first came here, there was a very nice real estate lady who was southern, and she said, "Ya'll know what Cary stands for, don't you?" I said, "No, I don't." And she said, "Concentrated Area of Relocated Yankees."

(Laughter.)

MALE: The other thing I like about Cary is it's a fairly conservative, I want to say, it's definitely not a liberal place. It's fairly conservative, it's kind of the same philosophy, it has a family orientation, and that was very important for us too.

FEMALE: I'm the odd one, I moved here for the growth. I'm in the real estate industry, and this is where the money was being made.

(Laughter.)

MALE: Good that we have a mix of opinion. That's good.

MODERATOR: Let's go ahead and start then because the first issue we're going to talk about is growth.

MALE: Okay.

MODERATOR: What about growth concerns you? Is it the byproducts of growth that are the biggest issues?

FEMALE: I'm not sure I understand too much about growth, what it -- I guess for me, I would say anything that raises taxes is bad. I like lower property taxes.

FEMALE: But the more growth you get the less taxes you pay.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah. And I don't really know what happens, so that would be a good aspect of growth, from my point of view.

MALE: I guess a part of growth I'm not sure that I -- first of all, it actually doesn't look as pretty. If you think about it, the home that we live in was built 10 or 11 years ago, where lots were a third of an acre or more, many of them a third of an acre. Now you don't have to leave your kitchen to borrow a cup of sugar from the guy next door. I mean, you can actually tell which one was built when by looking at -- and these guys, the builders, and I think that without -- well, I mean that in the sense of frustration that I have about it.

FEMALE: But it's your elected officials that have allowed them to do that, it's not the developers and the builders.

PREVIOUS MALE: Right. I know, but absolutely, but like we are all citizens in the sense that I'm talking about even aesthetic value, is that even a builder shouldn't only look at it as a point of, "If I am allowed to do it, I will do it," but about preserving -- as you were saying (inaudible). You can actually tell which ones are the cookie-cutter homes. I'm not sure if you should put an example or not in your report, that's your decision, but if you go down Morrisville-Carpenter(?) Road, and go to Carpenter Village -- I know some people like living in a village like that, but honestly, those homes are -- you do not have to leave your kitchen. And so the bottom line is the builder and then of course the development people, whoever they are, including our (inaudible) as well, I mean I understand this is a business proposition for them, but as citizens of the town --

so it's just in terms of "aestheticness." I think because they can get away with giving you a home for \$450,000 on a point-25 acre lot, and they're going to do it, and I find that a little irksome. This is not San Francisco. If I have to buy a home of that size, or build it on that lot, I need to get some more tall (inaudible) with some (inaudible). But are we building enough schools? I mean, I know some --

MALE: We're always behind the curve on the schools because of the growth.

FEMALE: Well, the schools are based on the growth at the time they're started, so by the time they're finished, they're full.

MALE: Well, I'm worried about the aesthetic value.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I agree with you wholeheartedly.

PREVIOUS MALE: I mean, point-22 acres is not a lot. I'm sorry.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No.

PREVIOUS MALE: I mean, I don't know how many of you -- most of us all here have lived for a longer time, but my wife and I are thinking about moving out of our home now, which is about 5 years we've lived here, thinking of moving out, but I am dead against buying a home for \$400,000 with point-22 acres, I refuse to.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But what we need is control of trades. I'm from Williamsburg, Virginia, you cannot take down a 6-inch tree without a written permit, and I don't care if it's a weed you let go too long that got to be 6 inches around. That's the problem here, they don't care about the aesthetic value.

FEMALE: The concept of the smaller lots -- okay -- is just a concept, because like when I came over here, I bought a small house, (inaudible) dead center in the heart of Cary was my first home, I mean dead center. You throw a stone from (inaudible), you're in my house. Now, the problem is that when you have -- you can have a big house or a small house on a large lot, and you're not going to notice your neighbor. I mean, you can die in your house and no one will notice. Therefore, this new concept about being more together, a closer relationship with your neighborhood, that's what brought the smaller --

FEMALE: But that's all because of the cost of the land.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, because even the house that I live in now that is smaller, I mean, not small, but it is smaller, still I didn't pay that much in comparison with the ones today. See what I'm saying?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But it's what they're having to pay for the land is driving what they put on it.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly, but what I'm saying is I own three pieces of real estate in Cary. When I bought, they were not that much -- not that they are cheap either, but what I'm saying is I know the concept -- and she can tell you, the concept of big lots or a small lots, and when the smaller lots were brought to Cary, the idea was togetherness in the neighborhood. Right now, the home that I live in now, everyone -- not because we visit each other, not because we (inaudible), I just asked my neighbor from my house for a cup of sugar, it's just because I see them every day, before we didn't. Therefore, that concept is more (inaudible) means of neighborhoods, which we didn't have before.

FEMALE: It truly is driven by the price of the land.

MALE: It's driven by the price.

MALE: I get the impression the older homes actually have larger lots.

FEMALE: Exactly.

PREVIOUS MALE: So it's kind of a natural progression. But if they can pack two homes in a half-acre lot, they will do that.

MALE: Yeah.

PREVIOUS MALE: And in the interest of --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But again, just like said, that's the town who decides that.

FEMALE: It is. I mean, a developer is going to ask for anything they can get.

MALE: So the town decides that. Then I guess this survey will help you understand what kind of issues --

FEMALE: Yes.

FEMALE: We want larger lots and more trees.

MALE: Right.

MODERATOR: Let me ask you a question. Do you know what percentage-wise the growth rate has been in Cary, has been for the past couple of years?

MALE: Of what population?

MODERATOR: Just population growth, right.

MALE: I want to say 30 percent, or something like that.

MALE: Per year?

MODERATOR: In the past 2 or 3, it's about 1.3 percent.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: 1.3 has been what it's been lately. Question. What would be a good growth rate, do you think?

MALE: It depends. If you're meaning by growing in density. I'm talking about smaller lots, or apartments, or condominiums or things like that, versus acquisition with new land, which is primarily the way Cary has grown for the most part because the population density around here hasn't changed in 40 years, at least in this area. It's all be acquisition and growth through the outside. By and large, I don't think things have changed all that much in Cary, per se. I guess the question gets down to, in growth, is what is the demand for the big homes or the big lots, versus what the developers feel they can sell? Even in Raleigh, even those huge homes in the old Raleigh area, the development there, huge homes, tiny lots, the homes dominate the entire lot, it's ridiculous.

MALE: Right.

PREVIOUS MALE: I would never buy like that.

FEMALE: I want to remind you (inaudible), do you remember the town in Texas that when they grew like Cary was growing --

MALE: Plano?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Okay. People from Texas (inaudible) over here, and they were the ones who advised Cary to control that because we (inaudible).

MALE: The (inaudible)?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: The whole thing, because we were going to have houses so expensive that if something happened in the Triangle, and people go out of work, guess what? The town is going down. Therefore, I recall that now.

MALE: It's an economic bubble, like anything else.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, no. But people from Texas, from that town, they were brought over here, I remember that very well. I don't know if you remember that, but they were brought over here.

MALE: I think it was Plano, Texas people.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly.

PREVIOUS MALE: Arlington.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Because the value of the houses there crashed completely, and there were mortgages that they have to pay, but the houses (inaudible).

MALE: Yeah, but this area in a way it's more kind of insulated by that because we are near large universities and big government --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly, but still that doesn't mean it won't happen.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, but I am saying that we are more insulated than Plano, Texas, where I don't know of anything else around Plano, Texas.

MALE: There is a (inaudible).

(Laughter.)

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But I was (inaudible) that these people from Texas, they came over here (inaudible). Now, one thing I'm really very concerned about the growth is right now it seems that every time you turn around there is a grocery store, one in there, one in there, one in there.

MALE: But not one good one.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, but that's good because then there is competition. But the problem is what happens when everything keeps growing and we end up like Raleigh because (inaudible) are moving, or we have too many grocery stores, people are going to keep moving to the new ones, and then the other ones are going to be empty. It happens with the building of Harris-Teeter, where the Kentucky Fried is, that started as a Harris-Teeter. The Magnolia Place, that place was -- do you remember? -- it was very -- and it was flourishing, they moved Winn Dixie, that place was empty for how long? Many years.

FEMALE: Very, very long time.

MODERATOR: That's a mall, right?

FEMALE: Yes.

MALE: Well, it hasn't changed in size, but they used to have a (inaudible) Drug there.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: They used to have.

FEMALE: But it does have a better flavor now with Magnolia Place there.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, no.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, that's not what I'm referring to. What I'm referring to is before Magnolia Place, which I admit is a beautiful place, I would love to go there to spend my money, but the thing is (inaudible), where (inaudible) now used to be a Winn Dixie. Remember?

MALE: Uh-huh, down over here.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Okay, the problem is that this over-construction of grocery stores, or office building, when they empty, they stay empty for a long, long time.

FEMALE: They go to the newer, bigger nicer ones.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: How long was Serrel's(?) before Serrel's(?) moved into that Winn Dixie? Many, many years. And that space was there just ugly. And that's a concern that I have, is that it seems that they are not planning, they are just planning, "Oh, yeah, let's grow, let's grow, let's grow." But every time a grocery store -- like every 10 years they move to another place, or something like that, then it takes a long time for that place to be rented again.

MODERATOR: That's one question I had. What should Cary do to better manage growth? Or what's the ideal growth? And what I'm hearing is the aesthetics, lot sizes may be a bit too small.

MALE: Right.

MODERATOR: You said the trees and stuff are being cut down, and the issue.

MALE: Actually, on the lot size of houses, I mean, something John said I like very much, that the house should not over-encompass -- I guess that's a word you could use.

MALE: Dominate?

PREVIOUS MALE: Dominate the lot. So therefore, that's something the town can regulate.

FEMALE: Absolutely. They are the ones that allowed it to happen.

MALE: So therefore, could John build a home, whatever home, if the town can say if you're going to sell a home for \$450,000, you have to have some number of trees -- I don't know -- make up a number, 30, 40, whatever number of trees, and not all of them are skinny little pine trees. You have to have something substantial, it has to look pretty.

FEMALE: But you have to look at the concept that Cary was built on, the oldest planned unit development in the Southeast is in Cary. It started as a planned unit development.

MALE: What does that term mean?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Kildaire Farms is the oldest PUD, planned unit development, in the Southeast.

MALE: The subdivision is called a PUD?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, it's a mixed use subdivision.

FEMALE: It can be (inaudible).

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly.

MALE: Commercial?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, actually that one doesn't have any commercial except for the health club, but if you drive through that, you've got condos, you've got town houses, you've got single-family houses, all on small lots. That was the concept that was here before all this growth started. And I don't think it's a matter of let's change what we're doing, it's a matter of changing the way they think, because that's the way they've thought.

MALE: I mean, that's okay, Kildaire Farms is a nice area, and so is the Tanglewood area, and those are the real older ones, even before Kildaire Farm, I think, but that was not a PUD.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Right.

PREVIOUS MALE: But I think the thing that's affected growth -- I mean, the thing that affects growth is, we mentioned before, the schools have not been able to keep up, so the kids are always being moved around. I know it's a Wake County problem, but the cities need to be more aggressive in keeping good schools here, and keeping them growing at a rate that's consistent with the growth. Also, athletic facilities for kids. You can never find a soccer field for kids around here, you couldn't find a baseball field, you couldn't find anything that's ever kept up with the need, basketball courts. Eventually now we're kind of getting to that point, but tennis is another problem, swimming pools. There has been no central swimming facility in this town, indoor, and we really need something like that. I mean, to accommodate the needs of the residents coming from all over the country, they expect something like that, it's a high rent district, we need something like that. Now, the neighborhood pools are fine, they've done a very good job, in fact it does a nice in my opinion of focusing community flavor and all that kind of thing. And then these horrible areas like Crossroads, where the traffic has been concentrated for one reason or the other, I remember when they put that in, I immediately saw that there wasn't any room for --

MALE: Crossroads is a good name for it.

FEMALE: And they allowed them to expand.

MALE: All those crazy crossroads.

MALE: Yeah. It's just kind of crazy. I don't even go there anymore.

FEMALE: I don't know anybody who does.

FEMALE: But, I really like Crossroads as a shopping center.

MALE: It's got a lot of nice stuff.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I really like it. It's just that when they planned the going in and out, I mean, that was just a big boo-boo. They didn't plan. They have to know that that was going to be drawing in a whole bunch of --

MODERATOR: We'll get to traffic in just a second.

MALE: What about the YMCAs? They've got the YMCAs here. Don't they have a pool in them?

MALE: Yeah, but they don't have enough library, they don't have enough -- originally this little thing was just the only thing we had, and then they built the other one out in the Apex area, but that's not enough. We need more libraries, we need more public facilities.

MALE: They can build that, and then they can build more homes.

FEMALE: Yeah, but about the swimming pool, this is the thing, like you must be a member.

MALE: Oh, yeah.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I cannot go and --

MALE: It's not public.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly.

PREVIOUS MALE: That's not a bad idea, though.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: See, I lived in Europe, and one of the neatest things is you can go to the smallest town in Europe, and they have the community swimming pool, because the handicapped, they cannot go in the sun to swim, and they only have -- they have two days that they are only handicapped for a few hours. It's a whole bunch of people that cannot be in the sun. Therefore, a facility that is indoors provide more people.

MALE: Public facility. Because I'm paying my taxes.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly. They are making money because we have to pay to get --

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, but they are all private, and that's just the tradition. It was kind of surprising when we moved here that's the way it was, but it turns out it's okay. Except for, say, with golf courses -- well, up to a point, there were no public golf courses, you had to go to MacGregor, or private ones until Lockmere and some of those other ones came out. But there is just not a lot of good enough public facilities like libraries, swimming pools, and (inaudible) swimming, and all those kinds of things.

MALE: I never lived in a suburb until I was like 45, I've always lived in the city, and we had all the facilities there. I lived in London for 6, 7 years, and there you can see the same problems you talk about here, and in fact some of the most expensive places -- or for example, Minneapolis, where I'm from, the most expensive neighborhoods have very big Victorian houses on very small lots. So I don't think that's some modern phenomenon.

MALE: But Minneapolis is a big city, though, they're supposed to be --

PREVIOUS MALE: The spaciousness is more of a suburban phenomenon that never existed before 1960, 1950. From a senior point of view, I can play tennis -- it's quite nice, we've got all the facilities here. Nobody is there in the morning, there are about 30 of us who go play tennis every morning during the week. As long as we finish up by 3:00, when the high school guys come over and take over the courts, well, we're ready to go take our nap by then. And golf, nobody is on the golf course on Tuesdays, it's wonderful.

FEMALE: How many libraries does Cary have, public libraries?

MALE: One. One formally.

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: In the town.

MALE: Up in Perry there is one.

MALE: Yeah, but that's not -- it's an Apex -- in the Town of Cary itself, just that little tiny one.

FEMALE: It's right in the middle.

PREVIOUS MALE: Right over here on (inaudible).

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But see, that's what I was telling you before.

FEMALE: But what you're asking for by asking for more public services is you're asking for lower income levels to come in, that's what drive public pools and public libraries.

MALE: Explain that to me.

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: We're big enough that --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Oh, I think we should have it. I'm a big proponent.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, but we're big enough now. But yeah, when we were 30,000, I would say yeah, maybe.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: We need affordable housing. And that's what drives the public facility.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, but I think the public facilities we're talking about, the library, you could have two, a medium sized library that doesn't have to be huge, and you have the city library.

FEMALE: That brings --

FEMALE: The problem with that, because I grew up here, but in Raleigh, take Barton Pool, it was an excellent example. My family grew up right around there, and it was public, and after a while as we grew up, we were not allowed to go there because of who it attracted, because it was it no -- I mean it really does bring the lower income.

FEMALE: Is that in Raleigh? But in Raleigh, you have to be from Raleigh because they ask you for your driver's license.

MALE: You can come in if you're outside, you just have to pay a little bit more.

FEMALE: Yeah.

PREVIOUS MALE: But I think it's still good to have a public facility like that, in order to have swimming for year-round swimmers, or high school teams, or middle school, grade school, whatever, for seniors swimming, or for whatever age group.

MALE: To the libraries, who uses libraries?

MALE: I do.

PREVIOUS MALE: You do? This library?

PREVIOUS MALE: Yes, I do.

MALE: You go to see books, read books?

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah. And then my little girl, I have a little girl, and they --

MALE: (Inaudible) at libraries, don't they?

MALE: Not really. Not the public --

MALE: I mean, he's not at --

MALE: There are lots of young families, like myself, and you'll see a lot of kids. And for a small library, they do have a whole section of children's books, and kids love kind of nosing around there. By the same thing, you can go to Chapel Hill, they have built a huge library, they have moved from --

MALE: I actually use Barnes & Noble and Borders.

PREVIOUS MALE: I know, but you shouldn't have to do that. You know, we're paying 1 percent or whatever tax, real estate tax, on homes that are expensive, and they keep reappraising them. Where is the money going? I think we should have more libraries. We boast most of the techie people in this town, in Cary, in the Triangle, we should have more libraries.

MALE: I don't know. I disagree.

FEMALE: The high end tech industry doesn't use the library, they use the internet.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let me give you one more question and we'll leave this behind. How would you rate Cary as compared to the neighbors like Raleigh and Apex and Holly, and their growth efforts?

FEMALE: I think Cary is better than any of them.

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yeah, I do too.

MALE: I wouldn't move for that reason.

MALE: Cary is a central place, although I've got to admit, I don't understand what the consequences of growth is. If I look around here, I can see the roads are pretty good, I don't know if that's because of good growth, bad growth, or what. If you have higher growth, the roads get a lot of potholes? Maybe if you get higher growth, the roads get better. So I really can't see what the effects of growth are, except for there is maybe too much traffic. Or you get something like Crossroads Plaza, but I don't think that's because of Cary growth, because I think most people who go there are from someplace else anyway. So schools are one thing, probably the biggest impact of growth, and probably not roads here because the roads are already here. If they were new roads, that would be another story. But schools, and the schools is a county issue, and hopefully -- I did hear about some largess with Glen Lang about starting to finance schools with -- I don't know how true that was.

MALE: They gave some grants to the schools.

PREVIOUS MALE: I don't go for that at all.

PREVIOUS MALE: But that wasn't an ongoing deal, I think that was a 1- or 2-year deal.

PREVIOUS MALE: You've got to put the pressure on the people, the organizations with the responsibility, like Nassau County. We pay a lot of taxes for schools and roads to the county, and I don't think Cary should contribute one red cent to education, that they should put the pressure on the county. And the people aren't willing -- people have just have to be willing --

MODERATOR: Okay. Without getting into schools, let's go to another issue you mentioned, and that's traffic. Let's start out. How do you feel about traffic in and around Cary?

MALE: I'm okay, I'm thumbs up.

MODERATOR: Okay.

MALE: Pretty good, except for those little concentrated areas.

MODERATOR: But overall?

MALE: Overall.

FEMALE: The area that I think takes too much traffic is you go down Parkway(?) to Highway 1, you have all that --

MALE: Tryon Road, you're talking about.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: All these people emptying to this intersection, and you have people coming from Tryon Road. And I think if they have to resolve a lot of trouble in there, (inaudible) some way they open one more stretch from South Hills to Parkway, they should -- and finish the other side, put it from the Parkway to Crossroads, because it's very -- I mean, that is the place I use, and it's in the mornings you have a lot of trouble, of people. Like if I am going to go Walnut Street, I go down in the highway, and I have to wiggle, and then go up again, up the next one, which if that stretch is open like they did in the other, that will be wonderful.

MODERATOR: Okay. Then tell us, what are the areas that are problematic for you in traffic and when are they problematic?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, the one problem, Parkway to the Crossroads. What is it called? That stretch.

(Several speaking at once.)

MALE: Anything around Crossroads is a disaster.

FEMALE: Other than that I think it actually run pretty smooth.

MODERATOR: So it's mostly just Crossroads?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: We've got the best traffic patterns of any place I've ever lived, and I've lived in a lot of places.

MALE: I like the plan they came up with, (inaudible) execute it.

MALE: One area we have trouble in --

MALE: Crossroads, that's a real --

MODERATOR: There are no other problem areas you see besides Crossroads?

FEMALE: That's the major problem, I think.

FEMALE: I think traffic is (inaudible).

FEMALE: I think whenever we have growth, it's a necessary evil because people have cars.

MODERATOR: Any suggestions to improve traffic? And somebody mentioned like widening some roads, like 55 and Davis Drive, more mass transit, the HOV lanes, traffic signaling. What do you think?

MALE: Like even at Crossroads, there are too many roads coming in there to begin with, but there is probably nothing you can do anything about.

MALE: The plan is going to address that a little bit, that I saw (inaudible) the other day, and it's a neat thing.

PREVIOUS MALE: There are too many roads going there, but especially that bridge at Crossroads, and I think the bridgework, you're talking about where Cary Parkway goes into 164.

FEMALE: Yeah.

PREVIOUS MALE: But it seems like there is traffic lights at the bridge, so sometimes the bridge is full, somebody gets a green light, and then they can't go onto the bridge because the bridge is full, the bridge can't empty because the other red light is holding them back. It seems to be --

MODERATOR: A timing issue.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah. It's just very difficult engineering, I would imagine.

FEMALE: I would think if they would widen it between Tryon Road and 440, take in Crossroads and take in the Cary Parkway crossover, all the way down to Tryon Road, then widen that and take the ramps away that lead to Crossroads.

MALE: I actually don't think they can solve those problems unless you (inaudible) a lot of roads.

MALE: I don't live in West Cary, so I don't know how bad it is.

FEMALE: Yeah, I live over in that Tryon area they're talking about. It's really only bad when you're trying to go in the morning and get home in the afternoon. But I know it, so I take the back road, I mean I'm all for the back roads. But I think when they straighten out Crossroads, that's going to straighten out a lot of that area because when I can cross over the bridge and I see it stopped, I'm going to go back and around (inaudible) Tryon, which is what everyone else is doing too.

MALE: But during non-rush hours, there is nothing wrong with Crossroads Plaza, I go there all the time. I go every morning, I drive from the Lockmere area through Crossroads to over near Cary Town Center. There is no traffic, it's just a very nice pleasant drive. It's just rush hour, it's rush hour traffic that it's bad there, but during the day it's --

MALE: And the weekends are bad.

PREVIOUS MALE: And of course the noon hour, everybody --

(Several speaking at once.)

MALE: So it's really just too many people doing the same thing at one time.

MODERATOR: I'm going to move ahead, and we're going to talk a little bit about revenues. And I'm going to pass these out, so just take one of these and pass it. And the reason I want to show you these because there are some assumptions I want you to be aware of before you answer any questions about it. Let me start out by saying that Cary in some way or another will probably have to raise revenue to actually keep the services you now have.

MALE: That's not good.

MODERATOR: That's a given, it's going to happen in the future. Now, the growth rate in the past was 13 percent, it's dropped to less than 2 percent now. But to keep the level of services you have now in town, a growth rate of around 4 to 4-1/2 percent. So no taxes would rise.

MALE: The tax rate would not change.

MODERATOR: The tax rate would not change at all. Now, here is the assumption before we ask any questions, we'll need to talk about. First off, the fact of the matter is we're not talking about raising revenues or anything like that to do anything new, but only to maintain. We're not doing any other expansion, just maintaining what you have now. Secondly, the town is running very efficiently now, but they're always looking for new ways to save money. So that's why I'm telling these things are on the table. Secondly, taxes haven't been raised here in about a decade, actually they've been lowered a little bit, and over the past 10 years \$200 million in bonds have been approved. And remember a while back they said they talked about 10 cents per \$100 valuation to pay for all of that, but so far they haven't had to. And you know the reason for that has been the growth. Now, based on these assumptions, is there any situation where you can envision -- can you envision a situation where it would be acceptable for the town to raise taxes?

MALE: So this is something -- explain this. I read something about 2 weeks that they're going to lower impact fees by 30 percent to builders. If we have to raise revenue to maintain service, why are we cutting down impact fees by 30 percent?

FEMALE: Or why not make the builders and developers build the schools? That's what most towns are doing.

PREVIOUS MALE: Right. But I'm just saying, this is like saying -- I mean, I don't understand that point. How can we say we're in revenue lowering, if they're giving 30 percent in (inaudible).

MALE: How much are we giving away, I wonder.

FEMALE: Well, our impact fees will see, at that 30-percent reduction, be higher than anybody else. That's the bottom line. We're going to attract that many more builders. But if you go into an area that's done it where they make the builders and developers pay for the schools, pay for the new libraries, pay for a public --

MALE: They actually do that? Do builders actually build the schools?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Absolutely. They do it in Chapel Hill, Orange County, Cobbler(?) all the time.

PREVIOUS MALE: Well, that's a good thing then.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I have an exception with number two. I don't think this town runs efficiently at all.

MODERATOR: Why?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I think they waste money on these wonderful retreats they dance off to, and things that -- we have these buildings, we're spending millions to build more of them. Use them. If you have to be here until 10:00 at night instead of going to Pinehurst to play golf. I think this town wastes tons of money. I think we should look at curbside pickup.

MODERATOR: We'll get to that one.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I don't think Cary runs efficiently.

MODERATOR: Let's take into account they've heard what you say, efficiency, they've heard the impact fees, maybe they shouldn't be reduced.

MALE: Not the 30 percent. I guess I'm (inaudible) want to bring more growth, so I guess if you want to bring more growth, you want to make them build more homes, more people will come. And because the previous mayor or administration was extremely anti-builder, and this mayor should not be extremely the other way, we have to have some compromise, I imagine. But 30 percent lowering is like giving them lunch.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, let me tell you where your compromise has been. I'm a real estate appraiser. In the last 2 years you haven't made a dime on your house.

PREVIOUS MALE: Right, I know.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: And that's because of the way it's been run the last 2 years here.

MALE: Is that because there are not enough builders coming in?

MALE: Too many builders.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: We have scared everybody away from Cary. We've always been, "Come on, come to Cary. We're up here. Come join us." Well, it's not that way anymore, the growth rate now is in North Raleigh, it's in Holly Springs. I appraise all over the entire State of North Carolina, and I live in Cary, and I would like to see my equity go up.

MALE: But the raising taxes is only going to scare more people away.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: It's all based on scarcity. If you build more, your house is going to be worth less.

PREVIOUS MALE: Right.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: If you keep the growth low, then the people are going to come because it's always been an attractive area, we've got every magazine in the country saying we're the best place to live.

MALE: But giving a 30-percent cut in impact fees, you're going to build even more.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, cut them off, don't let them build. I don't care. I mean, I don't make any money off whether they build or not, and I don't care what they do in that. But we need to cut down on the inventory. We've got about a 28-month inventory right now just in Cary.

MALE: Are you saying that there is too much growth right now.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Absolutely. It's the growth that's driving down everybody else's prices.

MALE: Well, also (inaudible) Nortel fired like 4,000 people. And we've also had a huge -- we've had economic problems as well, and Nortel for example, and that's only one company I know of, off the top of my head. These are people selling homes and moving somewhere else where they have a job.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I think what I'm saying is maintain the value of my property and I'll pay you a little more. That's pretty much where I stand.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let me ask you a question. To maintain the service level that you have now, would like a 1-cent increase in your tax rate -- the tax rate right now is about 42 cents per \$100 -- which would come to about \$10 a year. Would that be acceptable?

MALE: Oh, yeah.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Sure.

PREVIOUS MALE: You're talking about property tax, right?

MODERATOR: Property tax only.

FEMALE: Can we tap into some of these realtors? Older Cary, and I live in Older Cary, and I'm surrounded by renters, and they don't pay for these services that they're using. And you go into some of -- most of these apartments have become predominately Hispanic, they use all these services, they get a lot of services, but they don't pay a dime for it because their taxes, they don't have to pay the taxes.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: If you're dealing with a renter, though, whoever owns that house is paying taxes.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Technically, yeah. I agree.

FEMALE: I have property taxes, I have (inaudible) taxes, I have properties, I have one house that I rent, honey, and let me tell you --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Oh, I know you pay.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: At the end of the year, the only thing is that they are paying for the mortgage of the house, that's it. I get stuck with everything.

(Several speaking at once.)

FEMALE: But you live in Cary and you're paying the taxes, somebody else is also living in your house, and they're using the library, they're using all these facilities.

MALE: They shouldn't have to pay because they're renting. They also don't get equity, they don't get tax breaks, they throw the money down the toilet.

FEMALE: Yeah.

PREVIOUS MALE: So I mean, we can't charge people who rent.

MALE: We have to also factor into the property tax that the owner pays.

FEMALE: We need more schools because we've got more -- I mean, they're doubling up, tripling up, quadrupling up in apartments that are single family.

FEMALE: So what we need is zoning. Is that what you're saying?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I don't know.

(Several speaking at once.)

FEMALE: Now, let me ask you something. Before we talked about the swimming pool, the public swimming pool, it was put on the table that that would attract people that we wouldn't necessarily care for. Now, how do you --

FEMALE: That wasn't what I said, because we need low income, we need moderate income in Cary.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly. Now let me ask you something. Having too many schools built is not going to make the -- not the town -- Wake to bus more people into Cary, which they --

FEMALE: The schools aren't being built in Cary.

MALE: In other words, she's saying it's a (inaudible).

FEMALE: No, no.

MALE: The people are asking Wake County to (inaudible) more schools to Cary.

FEMALE: But the schools aren't being built in Cary, there is no land to build schools. We're being bussed out. There is no land to build any more schools in Cary.

MALE: Well, we're being bussed out for other reasons, for whatever reasons they buss kids.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But I'm saying --

PREVIOUS MALE: That's some philosophy some people don't agree with.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: I'm saying if you build a new school in what is now Cary, not when we take Chatham County and just blow them away and say you're Cary now. If you build more -- there are no pieces of property in Cary right now large enough to accommodate a new school.

FEMALE: Are we going to take over Holly Springs? That's out of (inaudible).

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Hey, they're making money.

MALE: They're making money.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: The object for me is for my value of my property to go up. If that means paying 10 cents more per dollar --

MALE: I know, but until the town -- and that's why I'm glad you have invited us, I love democracy, I love the fact that you've given us a chance to say this -- until they actually explain -- you already said a very good point that I didn't know about, that you're saying this town is run inefficiently, very, very inefficiently is what you said -- so I'm not paying one more cent until they tell me where the money goes. So for you to say I'll go pay -- I mean, I don't mind -- you can tax me, but I just need to know what you're going to do with it.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But you have the right to walk in there any day and ask for that and to see the books.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let's say we say 1 penny, maybe even 2 cents. What you're trying to tell the town is we want to know exactly where it's going, lay it out to us, why did it go up. Cary runs revenue neutral, in other words they don't try to make -- they just cover their expenses. So you want to know exactly where it's going before they -- you want it justified to you.

FEMALE: Exactly.

MODERATOR: That's what you're telling me.

FEMALE: Well, their expense is a lot higher than most other counties.

MALE: Right.

MALE: They give you a lot of services that other places don't have. I'm sure you know that.

MALE: They do.

FEMALE: But before, when she mentioned about the curbside pickup, you mentioned that. Watch out. Because I go to many neighborhoods that they have that system, and honey, let me tell you, you see all those garbage cans all over the place.

FEMALE: But if you had to see that one day a week --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: All over the place.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: If you had to see that one day a week and get your new library, wouldn't you do it?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, no, because if you go 2 weeks on vacation, your garbage can is going to be laying down. And I'm sorry, to me that is -- I have gone to brand new neighborhoods, and that is the most awful thing, when you go on, then they forget it because then the wind tossed it, you don't know where they are.

MALE: I think it's fine. I think it's excellent.

MALE: I think it's excellent.

MODERATOR: Hold on. We'll get to that issue in just a second. Let me ask one more important question in this area, and then we'll move on. How much of you would rather see a little more growth in Cary than the 1.3 percent, versus a tax increase or maybe a balance between some growth and the tax increase to maintain the same service level?

FEMALE: I would rather pay more taxes.

FEMALE: Me too.

MALE: But by growth, what do you define as growth? Does this mean bringing more people in, or building more homes?

FEMALE: Building more of those little tiny houses you don't want.

PREVIOUS MALE: No.

MODERATOR: But it also could mean annexation too.

PREVIOUS MALE: Right. But I mean, building more homes considering as our good real estate lady has said, you have a 28-month inventory. I mean, we have to bring more people here. You're going to bring more people here by reducing taxes in some measure, or something to make them -- I know people who live in Durham and Chapel Hill, I work in the Park, and they say, "I'm not paying that much real estate tax like in Cary." So I'm not saying cut taxes, I'm not a tax cut and spend, whatever you call that these days, but I

certainly think to increase growth, I mean, you're not going to do that by increasing by 1 or 2 cents. If you do that, then I think they have to do something intelligent with it.

MODERATOR: So what's the feel for you guys?

MALE: I'm in favor of a slight increase in taxes if I knew it was efficiently run and all that, if I could be convinced, and that it was bringing the important things, like central indoor facility -- I know that's a bond issue perhaps, or something beyond that. I don't see any problem with that, as opposed to going hog wild with growth.

MALE: Right.

MALE: I second it.

FEMALE: Our services are overworked now, we don't need to annex more people into those services.

MODERATOR: So keep growth about the way it is, maybe pay a little more for taxes, if we keep the same services, and it's justified where it goes.

MALE: Good.

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yeah, I think so. Except for can I ask a question?

MODERATOR: Sure, you can.

PREVIOUS MALE: When you say "growth," I hear two things, one is build more houses, which are going to be empty because there is a lot of emptiness in those houses, or bring new people. What do you mean by growth, build more houses or bring more people?

MODERATOR: It could be businesses too.

PREVIOUS MALE: You've already got enough houses to bring more people, you don't need to build more houses.

FEMALE: But if people want to come and you don't build houses, then they'll start going into these older neighborhoods and making them nice. There is huge difference in -- I paid \$150,000 for a 2,100 square foot home, I couldn't have bought that, I couldn't be living in Cary if it wasn't for the Old Cary, because the next level is \$15,000 more to get -- and I've got the land, I've got .4 acres, I've got all that. The people around me are not taking care of theirs, they're turning them into rentals and they're moving out.

FEMALE: There is a cycle.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: And they're not improving.

FEMALE: And the (inaudible) Forest and those areas up in there.

FEMALE: But you know, they're in the upswing of that now because it's being refurbished.

FEMALE: Some of them.

FEMALE: (Inaudible) the rentals, I really take good care, and when I sign that (inaudible) with the people, they (inaudible) give it to them or they are out, and I think -- well, (inaudible) my neighborhood, but I think

that in the same way Cary is picky for many things. I think anyone who have a rental property should be taking care, that for whoever they rent that home is going to follow very strict. Like I would not allow people to leave the (inaudible) outside, or buckets outside. I'm sorry. Maybe they wash their cars, I don't want to see that in there. Only two times we have to call, and I have been renting now for 16 years. Okay? I'm sorry, maybe, but I will call. Okay? And do me a favor, give me contract that says in there that you are not going to leave that out, and I have never had any problem. Actually I have been so successful that many people have moved out in morning, and the next renter is so clean that (inaudible) moving in the same community.

MODERATOR: I understand, rental property is a concern and we need to look at that.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yes.

MODERATOR: But also what Ellen mentioned is a concern, too, maybe we need Cary to define better what they mean by growth.

FEMALE: Yes.

MALE: Yeah, I hear two things. I hear, well, we've got too many empty houses now, and growth means to build more houses.

MALE: (Inaudible) city growth means population growth.

FEMALE: Population growth because we have rentals.

MALE: But the city needs growth, it needs more dollars, bigger tax base. So it could be increase taxes or it could be more people or it could be other mixes.

MALE: More people doesn't necessarily increase the revenue stream for the Town of Cary, whereas more taxes paid --

MALE: As long as they spend more on certain things.

FEMALE: It would because they have to buy gas in town, they have to do many things, you know.

MALE: Revenue growth could mean bringing --

MODERATOR: I just brought that up because I didn't understand (inaudible).

MALE: I would pay a little more taxes --

MODERATOR: But not too much.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, as long as it's not too much. In fact, I've just been exploring moving up to northern Wisconsin because we own a part of a marina up there and I like it up there, and they pay about 3 percent of the market value for a house. For \$100,000 house, you pay about \$3,000 a year taxes. Here people are paying \$10,000, \$15,000 a year taxes on \$300,000 homes.

FEMALE: Our real estate taxes are actually very cheap.

(Several speaking at once.)

PREVIOUS MALE: I said very good value for money.

MODERATOR: Very good. Let me move ahead because we're getting a little short on time. First, backyard garbage collection. Now, when we did the survey we got pretty good support for that among the people that responded. How many of you supported curbside collection?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Most of you did. Just a question, then --

MALE: Wait a minute, curbside versus?

MODERATOR: Backyard.

PREVIOUS MALE: Backyard is fine. I would want to know how much -- if they were going to go to curbside, how much do we really save?

MODERATOR: I can tell you. Okay, let me go through a couple points just to see. So most of you still support curbside over backyard.

MALE: I like backyard.

MODERATOR: But you like backyard.

FEMALE: I like backyard.

FEMALE: It's fine because (inaudible). You have to have it at the end of your driveway.

FEMALE: But it's a substantial (inaudible).

MODERATOR: Okay, let me give you some points now. Now, you said you may be a little more (inaudible) to backyard, but most of the rest of you said you can see a point for curbside if it's justified. Here are a few points that the town wants you to know. If a disabled or elderly resident gets a note from a doctor, they will still do backyard for them. Does that change anybody's mind, or you think that's okay, the way it should be?

FEMALE: It's okay.

MODERATOR: How about this one. If we go from one week, once-a-week backyard collection, and shift over to once-a-week curbside, it would save about a million dollars in the first three years.

MALE: Go with curbside then.

MALE: Is that a lot? What's the total town budget?

MODERATOR: I couldn't tell you the exact percentage, but from discussions with some people in the town office, it's quite a bit, because what happens is you'll probably see -- you could potentially see increases in your rates to pick up for backyard over time, and that sort of would save that. Does that make a difference?

MALE: If I'm curbside, which is fine, and then other people are backyard, is there a difference in backyard collection fees and curbside?

MODERATOR: Not in the town at present. Is that right?

MALE: I would prefer to see that. Curbside is cheap, (inaudible) the backyard (inaudible).

MALE: (Inaudible) percent of the people in Cary right now are actually curbside.

MALE: Yeah, I'm one of them.

MALE: I find that there is nothing wrong with it.

MODERATOR: Is that an equity issue for you guys? You're paying taxes at the same rate as somebody who gets a little more (inaudible).

MALE: I didn't know people had curbside. I've always had it at the house.

FEMALE: Yeah. On Thursday morning, (inaudible) they pick it up and it's gone by 10:00 in the morning.

MODERATOR: So most of you -- and, John, you're still on the fence maybe --

MALE: Yeah. I mean, I like it the way it is, but a million dollars sounds -- I mean, I don't mind bringing it out to the --

MODERATOR: Maybe the town needs to explain what sort of a savings a million dollars is and what it would mean to your services.

MALE: Yeah. If it's a half of a percent, then it's not a big --

MALE: That's right.

MODERATOR: Maybe looking at the budget of the solid waste department and see how that comes out.

MALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Be careful (inaudible).

(Several speaking at once.)

MODERATOR: I'll tell you why, in the first 3 years (inaudible) changeover and the economy (inaudible) if they continue. That's the way Raleigh works, initially (inaudible).

FEMALE: I mean, on a windy day I see those things --

MALE: (Inaudible) the person has to be responsible. You can go up to his house, knock, and say, "Don't be a jerk and collect your bin or have somebody do that." I'm not going to pay more money because somebody let his dog out and go poop. I mean, no. I think that is irresponsible resident. You should feel free to go up to the door and tell them, "Your garbage cans are going all around the neighborhood, can you please stop that?" I don't think I'm going to say I'm going to come to your home backyard. People are already lazy enough, they should make them all lazy, and if it costs less (inaudible).

MALE: You've got a garbage can, it's got a cover on it, the town should require that. You've got the recycling bins, the town should require that.

MODERATOR: You could have say you need to have the can back off the street within --

MALE: Absolutely.

MALE: Right.

MODERATOR: Would that be acceptable?

FEMALE: What happens when someone goes on vacation? Say that I leave my garbage --

FEMALE: (Inaudible) have my neighbor --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, and (inaudible) my neighbor. Because what I have noticed, too, is when they go and pick up my garbage they pick it up, I always have a line (inaudible) or they don't even have to move the can, they just leave (inaudible) and put it down and go, and I have a short driveway. Now, I forgot what I was -- most of the times what I have noticed in the neighborhoods where they go on the curbside is they leave the thing, they toss it, and then they toss it again in the ground. They don't put it -- see, my stays in place. I mean, the wind can come and that thing is never going to move.

MODERATOR: Your backyard.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah. Let's don't call it backyard because really it's at the end of my driveway. It is in the back, then I have to bring it to the end of my driveway.

MODERATOR: Are you curbside or are you backyard?

MALE: Curbside.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Okay, this is my driveway, okay? And my yard is here, my garbage is here.

MODERATOR: So they go back and grab it.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: It's short. But the thing is --

MALE: The side of it is the garage.

MALE: (Inaudible) roll your cart, that would be (inaudible) city, out to the curb.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Right, exactly.

MALE: But even right now (inaudible).

(Several speaking at once.)

MODERATOR: One at a time.

FEMALE: On the curbside, and I have seen this, because my husband and I, we have discussed that. They take the thing, they empty, and then they just toss it in there. Don't think that they put it back and put the lid for being nice, look nice.

MODERATOR: Toss it on the curb or something?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: They just toss it in there.

FEMALE: These are huge things, it's all done mechanically. They pick it up and set it down. These are huge. It's a different thing.

MALE: Even now we have once-a-week -- what is it? Yard waste? You've got to put out on the curb. So that makes a mess, too.

FEMALE: You have two days.

PREVIOUS MALE: Two. So it would be two days instead of one day that makes a mess.

MODERATOR: Are you curbside?

MALE: No, I'm backyard.

MALE: I'm confused. Are you saying curbside is (inaudible)?

MALE: Street, top of the street.

PREVIOUS MALE: So they (inaudible) big something and you go and --

PREVIOUS MALE: No, we don't have any.

FEMALE: That's what they're talking about, yes.

MODERATOR: It's about a 96-gallon can, and you roll it out, it has wheels on it, and you roll it to the street, and the town would provide you with it.

FEMALE: And it's one person in the truck, it's all mechanical. He goes up, the truck picks it up and dumps it, the truck sets it down, and he goes to the next one.

MALE: I haven't heard that described yet.

MODERATOR: That would be curbside collection.

MALE: Right now I own two garbage cans, 36 gallons, and I drag it up the driveway and I leave it out there, and for that they don't need a mechanical device. The guy comes out and he puts the thing in there.

MODERATOR: 96 gallons.

PREVIOUS MALE: Sometimes he lets it roll, and it's okay, I pick it up and I put it in the garage, it's no big deal.

MALE: They're big. Where am I going to put it?

MALE: Yeah, that would be big, that would be ugly.

MODERATOR: 96 gallons.

MALE: Yellow and green?

FEMALE: In the summer (inaudible).

MALE: (Inaudible) like the ones that Raleigh practiced with, I think what they were going to select.

MALE: Okay, well, I'm changing my mind, we don't want curbside pickup.

MALE: I have to say (inaudible).

MODERATOR: Are we for or against curbside pickup?

MALE: I would say more negative now, until I saw it and see how much it saved and see what the thing looked like.

MALE: The same here. I mean, I don't need 90 -- I can't even -- we should use less garbage.

FEMALE: Just to save a million?

MODERATOR: Over 3 years.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Over 3 years? No, no, no. There are a lot of things that are more wasted than that.

MODERATOR: (Inaudible) over 3 may not mean the savings are (inaudible), there is a buildup of savings probably, and the third year may be higher.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, because remember one thing, Cary (inaudible).

(Several speaking at once.)

MODERATOR: I can't figure out what you're saying. Okay, go ahead.

FEMALE: Cary right now has a lot of young people, but Cary is attracting a whole bunch of retirees. Okay? Well, say that in a neighborhood half of them, they get a note from -- first of all, they have to pay the doctor for that stupid letter, and just what the government needs, more paper piling up on someone else desk, and then they can hire someone to go through all that and spend more. Therefore, half of the town in a few years is going to be having the backyard pickup, and then the other half are going to be protesting because they say, "Wait a minute, you minute they are just because a note from the doctor, when I have to go and bring that thing and roll it out?" Be careful, be careful what you wish, because (inaudible).

MALE: Actually, I'm a retiree and I don't think there is anybody at the table in better shape than the guy I'm playing tennis with.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, no, that's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is, see, you're talking about this group, I'm not talking about this group, I'm talking about population. I'm saying, if you heard what he said about if they have a note from the doctor, because they are going to have so many elderly people having notes from their doctors that they are going to come to the town and sit in someone else's desk (inaudible) then have to hire someone with benefits and everything to take care of that because that's the problem with the government, they say, "Oh, yeah, we have this idea," but --

MALE: (Inaudible) everybody that had backyard (inaudible).

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Exactly, because at the end we are going to end up paying more for all those notes that someone has to verify.

MALE: Okay, the special cases.

MODERATOR: Let's move ahead because we're over an hour. Is it okay if we just spend a couple more minutes on a couple of topics and then we'll call it a day?

FEMALE: Yeah, my AC is going now.

MODERATOR: There are two issues, and we'll leave this last one out. The first one is communication. The town knows that communicating with you is important, and we've got some pretty good marks for that, but we also know that you don't have that much time to look for information from the town. What type of information is most important to you that the town gets out to you or you have available to you? And just an

example, they give things like recycling, planning initiatives, construction, recreation. What's the most important thing?

MALE: Parks and recreation for my kids. I mean, now, in the future that may not be important, but all that information is very, very, very good. Websites are very good, but I say with the town (inaudible).

MODERATOR: That's an issue, too. Along with this --

FEMALE: What is the (inaudible) thing that they send every (inaudible)? That is great, that is great, keep it.

MODERATOR: So would you say are you as informed as you want to be now?

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: You're not?

FEMALE: I think there is more --

MALE: Except for the dollars, we don't hear a lot about the dollars.

FEMALE: If you go to the computer, you can get all the information.

FEMALE: I can get everything I want on my computer, but if they're not going to come and pick up my trash on days that it snows, why would I go to my computer when my power is out? Because that happened to me on the last snow. You're supposed to know that. So when I called, they said, "Well, it's on the website." Duh. We need a once-a-year standard mailing that describes all the what-ifs on those type of services.

MODERATOR: Okay, and I noticed Allen said financial stuff. We don't have enough information on financials?

FEMALE: No, we don't.

FEMALE: No.

MODERATOR: That would be nice, to put more out there?

MALE: Yeah, I would read that.

MODERATOR: Would you want the town to be more aggressive in getting that to you or maybe a little more passive and putting it on the website so you can look it up --

MALE: The website.

FEMALE: (Inaudible) the extra expense with some (inaudible), and most people won't be.

MALE: Exactly. Websites are okay.

MODERATOR: Websites? But you want it a little more aggressive, you want to see a once-a-year information, almost like a report a company would give in their annual report.

FEMALE: (Inaudible) Cary News. I know not everyone buys the Cary News, but I have bought it for --

MODERATOR: The Cary News is okay then?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: That is another source. You know, like the website can be one, the Cary News can be the other one. As I said, that thing that they send is very good. I don't have a problem with the little notes, the yellow cards that they leave in the garbage (inaudible), I think that's very good. But I agree, that we need a little bit more information, but I think put it in the Cary News for people who buy the Cary News.

MODERATOR: Okay, so just to summarize, you're saying that it would be nice at least to be aggressive at least once a year to us, and then other than that, website, post it and make it easy to find.

MALE: (Inaudible) mail. I mean, if you're very concerned on the snow, when it snows and my driveway is full, I couldn't care less if they don't come and pick up the garbage. Honestly, I'm home drinking hot chocolate.

(Laughter.)

PREVIOUS MALE: But (inaudible) wants to know, and if their phone is on, then you can have a tape recorded voicemail because I definitely don't want to hire someone to answer the phones in that.

FEMALE: But here is the scenario. My pickup day hypothetically is Monday, and it snows on Monday, and it's 80 on Tuesday, and my trash is sitting there. So I need to know their policy. Do they come the next day or do they not come until the end of the week, because I don't want to leave it sitting there.

MALE: (Inaudible) went to the recycling center and dump it, I don't mess around with trying to figure out when they're going to come.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Well, I'm not carrying it (inaudible), I pay for Cary to pick up my trash, and I'm not carrying it anywhere.

MALE: But you can call (inaudible) and somebody will answer.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: That's what I did.

MALE: There are so few occasions like that, I think there have been about a couple of them this year for me, three, and actually they leave this yellow card, and it worked fine.

MALE: I like the little yellow card they leave on my garbage can when they won't pick up the next week. Actually my neighbor Lisa is all the time on the computer printing out, so if she puts the garbage out, I put the garbage out. It's always good to watch informed neighbors as well. But I definitely like the little yellow card.

MODERATOR: Let's talk about your involvement, it's the last topic we have. Now, we had some concerns in the survey, even though involvement has improved, and your involvement in decisions that the town makes has improved, there is still a little bit of an issue there for several residents. Are there any examples you can give us of where you didn't get enough opportunity to give your input to the city?

MALE: No.

FEMALE: (Inaudible.)

MALE: You can watch the town council meetings on TV, you can come here and be bored to death or speak up, whatever. I think the planning commission or whatever --

FEMALE: Yeah. Twice I have been (inaudible) in there because they give certain times that you have to sign in there, and just because I was a split second after the thing, I was not able to --

MALE: There is an issue going on now that (inaudible) involved that kind of bugs me, and it's something about the Town of Cary picking up some expenses on the soccer field that Raleigh had agreed to do, and now they can't come across with the money, and so that's something that makes smoke come out of my ears.

MODERATOR: But you don't know how to get involved.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah. And I would like to see them say, hey, you signed on, don't bug us with your soccer crap.

MODERATOR: So tell the town, show us how to get involved.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah. I would like to project the image that Cary is not responsible for other towns --

MODERATOR: On the website would be a good place to do this?

PREVIOUS MALE: Well, I guess I know -- well, I heard the issue that Cary may be considering it. I guess I would like to get involved and say don't consider it, don't (inaudible) soccer field or whatever it is.

FEMALE: If you could give that feedback on the website, that would be nice.

PREVIOUS MALE: Yeah, I would like that, yeah.

MODERATOR: Let me hit a couple issues here. The town have several of things that they're planning on doing, and council has suggested some of these, and let me see how you feel about these. First off, to hold quarterly or semi-annual town hall meetings, they're at different locations, and the mayor and council will show up for these meetings, listen to whatever you have to say, answer any questions. Do you think that would enhance participation?

MALE: I like that because I think that it gives a sense of community as well, so I like that.

FEMALE: We should look for bigger places because the times that I have been, that little room, tiny little room, many people come and they have to stand outside not hearing what is --

MODERATOR: Bigger room (inaudible) would be okay.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: We need larger rooms (inaudible), maybe to one not too many people will show up, but when people realize there are places that they can sit and get in, because many times I have come and we have to stay outside.

MODERATOR: Good. If it is a big enough room, would you possibly go to that?

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Yeah, because I think (inaudible).

MODERATOR: Some of you would go?

FEMALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: (Inaudible) time.

MODERATOR: How about this one. A monthly breakfast, different locations in town, but with one, a different council member each month shows up, and they would listen and answer questions.

MALE: I say no.

FEMALE: No.

MALE: I wouldn't do that.

FEMALE: Well, remember probably you are the ones out working (inaudible).

MODERATOR: Timing is not good because it's a monthly --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: No, because let me tell you what I think is good is (inaudible) that will be (inaudible) to women (inaudible) children, the only time at the meetings they are going to be too busy to come to a meeting, and too tired, but that will (inaudible) the homemakers to come and give their input, too.

MODERATOR: Would you say this is better than the first one or the first --

MALE: I like the first one better.

FEMALE: The first.

MODERATOR: If you had to choose, you would choose the first one.

MALE: Yeah. Because we have on a Saturday or something, weekend time, and plus it will be short, breakfast. I mean, trying to organize (inaudible), so we don't need more expenses (inaudible).

FEMALE: Exactly.

MODERATOR: How about a live call-in, a call-in or e-mail-in, television show that would be on the Cary TV channel, and the mayor and town council would be there and they would answer any questions. How about that one?

MALE: I think (inaudible) okay. I think most of these will benefit the council --

FEMALE: Exactly.

MALE: I actually like to see real people.

MALE: I don't think we are a town that has problems that need to be addressed --

FEMALE: In that way.

FEMALE: I think radio might be more effective than TV just because there are regular listeners to the talk radio, and they're the ones that are going to listen regardless of what's on. My husband loves to listen to that, and he's going to listen, and if there is an opinion that he's hearing about, he would call in, but he's not going to sit down and watch a TV program like that.

MODERATOR: So of the three, you probably would still -- which one would you like?

MALE: I like the town hall number one.

FEMALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MODERATOR: Very good. And one more thing, how about if on the website they had web polls on existing public hearing process, and that's just to gauge citizen disagreement --

MALE: As long as they only allowed one vote per --

FEMALE: Exactly.

MODERATOR: Only one vote.

MALE: One vote instead of somebody trying to flood the --

MODERATOR: That's right. Just to get a feel, not to make decisions on it, but to get a feel for it.

FEMALE: How would they control that?

MODERATOR: What do you mean?

MALE: You can do it, IT. I mean --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: You can do it, IT, but can you imagine how expensive it will be to set that up?

FEMALE: No.

MALE: Well, I mean, no, but -- well --

PREVIOUS FEMALE: It's okay, forget I asked the question.

MALE: (Inaudible) company (inaudible).

MODERATOR: Yeah, you can't lock out a website after one vote.

FEMALE: Let me ask, if each person that is a taxpayer has the right to give their input, well, in my house we have three people that pay taxes, and they are going to sit at my computer and I can only vote one.

MALE: No, each (inaudible) --

(Several speaking at once.)

MODERATOR: This is just to get an idea or a feel, it's not a scientific poll, and they know that. Because, see, people outside the area could also --

MALE: (Inaudible) it wouldn't even matter if you had the controlled security. I mean, really --

FEMALE: (Inaudible.)

PREVIOUS MALE: No, no, hold on. This is just they wanted to have some idea. Suppose they want to build a brand-new (inaudible) on the corner of Maynard and (inaudible), and they want to know if you (inaudible) like that, and if everybody says no, then they would think about it, but that's all.

MODERATOR: And then let me ask you one more question. Possibly add that in, knowing there is some --

PREVIOUS MALE: Because you said it's not a scientific poll, I like that, the fact that you accept it.

MALE: I mean, plus you could (inaudible) too.

PREVIOUS MALE: Right, absolutely, I agree.

MODERATOR: Let me ask you one more thing, just a show of hands. How many of you have attended a council meeting?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Four. How many have watched one on TV?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: All of you. Good. How many have listened to a town council meeting on the web?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay. How many have sent an e-mail to a town council member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay. How many have sent an e-mail to just a staff member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay.

FEMALE: I have not done it, but in my house my children have done it.

MALE: After this I am doing all of that (inaudible) involved.

(Laughter.)

MODERATOR: Thank you. They're just trying to get a feel for (inaudible). Have you ever telephoned a town council member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay, good. Have you ever telephoned a staff member?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: At least three of you.

MALE: I think (inaudible) phoned (inaudible) like the one you have.

MODERATOR: So probably most of you have done that for some thing or other.

MALE: Yeah, something.

MODERATOR: How about just written a letter to the town in general?

(Show of hands.)

MALE: Probably, yeah.

(Laughter.)

PREVIOUS MALE: I did one about a month ago as a matter of fact. I was complaining about something. They took care of it.

MODERATOR: Have you ever attended a public meeting or open house sponsored by the town such the ones for the Public Art Master Plan or the Southeast Area Plan?

MALE: I haven't done that.

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Any of you applied to be a member of the town board of commission?

(Show of hands.)

MALE: I want to after this. And you tell me how, and I would like to know, and I'm not joking. I want to be involved in the place where I live and (inaudible) how it's going to grow, I want to be involved.

MALE: There is a (inaudible) and things like that.

MODERATOR: And one more, have you participated in a town web poll or discussion?

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Half of you have had a chance to. How about this one, have you spoken with a town council member in person?

FEMALE: For any reason?

MODERATOR: Any reason.

MALE: Oh, yeah.

MALE: Oh, yeah, sure.

(Show of hands.)

MODERATOR: Okay, very good. There is one other topic, but we're not going to get into that one, it's a non-smoking issue, which I don't think you guys will -- it didn't bring a lot of joy to these focus groups. It's about the town -- you know, in North Carolina you can't require a restaurant to be non-smoking or even have non-smoking sections. And the town wants to know if they should -- and actually what they are looking at, is should they encourage restaurants voluntarily to be smoke-free or designate sections as smoke-free?

MALE: Yes.

MODERATOR: Do you guys think they should?

MALE: Yes.

MALE: Designate sections that are smoke-free or non-smoking.

MODERATOR: The question being then, is this a major issue to you or a minor issue?

MALE: It is a (inaudible) for me.

FEMALE: I am a two-pack-a-day smoker, and I thoroughly agree with all of that, absolutely.

MODERATOR: Good, good. And so all of you think it is sort of an issue.

MALE: It's sort of an issue, but it hasn't affected me so far. I mean, I haven't gone to a restaurant where I was forced out because there was too much smoke already there. I would like to see that as a normal (inaudible).

FEMALE: I have wanted to. I mean, I wanted to eat there, but they tell you it's non-smoking and right beside on this half wall there is no divider, it's smoking, and it's just as bad as if you were smoking.

MODERATOR: The town was considering spending \$10,000, \$25,000 or \$50,000 on the effort. And without getting into exact numbers, would you support them spending some money on --

FEMALE: To study it or to do it?

MODERATOR: To do it.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: To do it I would spend the money.

MALE: Yeah, yeah, that's reasonable, I suppose.

MODERATOR: Okay, good. So all of you, does it make a difference when you go to eat if --

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: Yes.

MODERATOR: Oh, you do look at it.

MALE: The smoking environment (inaudible).

MODERATOR: All right, the last thing then that the town wants to know is, do any of you refuse to go to places that are not non-smoking or don't have a dividing thing?

MALE: If it's too smokey, I wouldn't go there.

MODERATOR: Okay, now, here is the last thing, how about if the town publicized a list of restaurants that are non-smoking, smoking, and have designated smoking areas, would you support that?

MALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: Yes.

MODERATOR: On the website possibly.

MALE: Yeah.

MALE: Right, but I don't see why every restaurant cannot have a designated non-smoking section, and they can --

MODERATOR: Well, the council tried to encourage that.

PREVIOUS MALE: Well, no, I think it's more than encourage, I think it is okay for a restaurant, particularly -- I mean, Cary, there aren't too many restaurants here -- well, the (inaudible) and the Stonewoods, the new colonial big huge restaurants, sure, they can afford to have a smoke-free section, and they do it.

FEMALE: Let me ask you something, can restaurants be encouraged to have good extractors? Because, see, I cannot be around smoking, but I understand that people have the right to kill themselves if they want to go to smoking --

(Laughter.)

PREVIOUS FEMALE: But sometimes you go to a restaurant and the funny thing is they put the smokers here and the non-smoker here, and guess where it's going out. But I have always felt, you know, in the section of non-smokers, restaurants put good extractors, you know --

MODERATOR: There are places like that.

PREVIOUS FEMALE: Because (inaudible) Lanes, they have extractors, and there is a big difference if you go to Fairlanes in South Hills, and you see all that smoke going around, you go to the (inaudible) bowling alley, and you don't see the smoke, it's because extractors they have. Therefore encouraging the restaurants to have those extractors on the section, on the smoking section, and I don't see any (inaudible), as I say they have the right to (inaudible) if they want to.

FEMALE: I would support Cary doing non-smoking in every (inaudible), and I'm a smoker.

MODERATOR: Well, that's what they want to know your opinion on. We've run over, I sure appreciate all of you staying. Thanks so much.