

**Town of Cary**  
**2006 Biennial Survey Focus Group Report**  
**Executive Summary**

***Reasons for Living in Cary***

- The participants mentioned the convenience of Cary's location to Raleigh and other destinations as a major reason to live in the Town of Cary. The proximity to work was also mentioned frequently. In addition, there were numerous other positive aspects named by the focus group members.

***Growth in Cary***

- The participants felt Cary was doing a good job in managing growth compared to other local municipalities. There was no consensus on what should be the ideal growth situation. There was not a great deal of overt opposition to growth in general, the participants stressed the need for managed growth.
- The byproducts of growth were the biggest concerns and the key ones were traffic, schools, and water issues. Several participants indicated even if growth were restricted in Cary, the overall growth in the region would still impact schools, traffic, and water.
- The type of growth was also an issue. The participants tended to favor commercial and industrial growth over residential growth. Residential growth was viewed as more demanding on the infrastructure.
- Regional cooperation was seen as holding potential for solutions as to the growth issue. There was hope that Triangle J could work more effectively today.
- The use of impact fees on developers and businesses that profit from growth was supported. The participants would like to see the Town have the monies available for infrastructure improvement before approving developments.

***Traffic***

- The Crossroads area and construction zones were seen as the major traffic problems. The streets and roads mentioned were Davis, Kildaire Farm, Walnut, High House, Tryon, Piney Plains as well as 54, I-40, and Triangle Park traffic.
- The use of better traffic signal synchronization was suggested.
- There were complaints about residents driving too slowly or going side-by-side and causing congestion.
- Some suggestions were to have mass transit out of Cary on weekends and having a train to the airport.

***Schools***

- The primary concerns regarding schools were student reassignment, placement/location, and the high cost of building new schools.
- The participants felt Cary should not get involved in school issues except for selecting potential sites for schools and sharing information on future developments with the School Board. They would also like to see Cary improve academic programs in the schools to attract more students such as offering foreign languages.

## ***Revenues***

- Taxes and fees were seen as a long-term solution since Cary will eventually not have the space available for further growth.
- The participants did not want taxes used to fuel more development but used for projects that benefited everyone.
- Both a two and three cent increase in the property tax rate was supported and more frequent reassessment was acceptable with gradual increases in taxes being preferred over a one-time larger increase.
- The participants generally preferred a reasonable level of growth over increased taxes to maintain the present level of service.
- Impact fees, sales or meal taxes were suggested as viable options to raise revenues and the participants would like more information on what other cities are doing.

## ***Operation and Management***

- The participants agreed that Cary has great customer service.
- Although the focus groups represented a very limited sample, there were a few individuals who had a somewhat poor interaction with the Town's staff. This stresses the importance of making every interaction a positive one.
- Voice mail was not viewed favorably. The participants preferred to have one designated person or an email address to contact who would make sure the proper Department received the message.

## ***Communication***

- The participants felt well-informed and mentioned the website is very thorough and they felt the Town was being aggressive enough in getting information out to them.
- The participants indicated they are inundated with information overload today. They noted they cannot get the quality information on Cary they want from the News & Observer, television, or radio since they do not cover the Town in depth. They requested targeted and strategically placed information from Cary.
- They were not supportive of global email from Cary. They only want informational type email sent to them when they sign up to receive the service. This email should have one or two line descriptions and links to get more detail if they desire it. The participants indicated they would give their email addresses to the Town for this purpose.
- BUD and Cary TV 11 (use set program times) were seen as good sources.
- The participants would like abridged information on Cary initiatives and the budget disseminated to residents possibly quarterly using email, Cary's website, or through hardcopies at the Town Hall or library.
- Other information the participants would like to receive was tax rate changes, roads information, and cultural events.
- The information in BUD was described as sometimes dated before it reached some homes.

### ***Involvement in Town Decisions***

- Many of the participants were unaware of opportunities to participate in the Town's decision-making process. However, those who were aware did not participate.
- They would like information on participation opportunities disseminated by emails, BUD, Cary's website, Cary News, and the News & Observer.
- The participants liked the idea of quarterly or semiannual Town Hall meetings held at different locations around Town with the Mayor and Town Council present. They also supported a regular call-in/email television show on Cary TV 11 with the Mayor or Town Council, especially for senior citizens.

### ***Streets and Roads***

- The key concern for the participants was the potholes in the roadways.
- Sight issues and cleanliness of parks and greenways were not issues.

### ***Wi-Fi in Cary***

- The focus group members believed Wi-Fi should be in public areas on a per-minute fee basis (not in private businesses) especially if the Town contributes funds for the services.
- There were also suggestions to have it available for homes by subscription.
- The participants would support Cary charging to recoup their investment in the service. There were several who supported the Town making a profit.

### ***Additional Suggestions***

- Improve downtown Cary with better nightlife.
- Repair the road at the Convenience Center on Dixon Road.
- Extend recycling to businesses and townhouses.
- Improve the process for paying utilities online.
- Place volunteer opportunities online for seniors.
- Restrict the cutting down of trees for development.
- Add more activities for teens.
- Solid waste services - ease the rules for trash pick up of yard waste, increase recycling bin size/add rollers, pick up leaves more often, and pick up items left beside the carts.
- Improve road repairs.

**Town of Cary**  
**2006 Biennial Survey Focus Group Report**  
**February 25, 2006**

**Methodology**

In February 2006, the Cary Biennial Citizen Survey was conducted examining numerous issues relating to the overall functioning, operation, and current issues concerning the Town of Cary. The results of this survey were followed-up by two focus groups conducted by BKL Research that further examined specific issues revealed in the survey in order to gather more detailed information. Respondents to the citizen survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group session (49% of the sample indicated they would participate) and this was the pool from which the participants were selected.

The composition of the groups was controlled in respect to age and gender. Participants were selected so that there was a balance of both age and gender in each session. All the participants were homeowners except for one member who lived in an apartment complex and another who lived in a townhouse. A total of 8 participants were in the first session and 6 in the second session. Appendix A has the roster of participants for both sessions and the seating charts. The participants were compensated for their involvement.

The sessions were held on February 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in Cary. The first session lasted 1 hour and 40 minutes and the second session lasted 1 hour and 30 minutes. A relatively structured set of questions was used for both groups (Appendix B). This ensured that both groups were asked the same core questions, although discretion was allowed to explore other areas of importance during the sessions. Due to the volume of discussion, the first group did not discuss all the topics but focused on growth issues and overall operation topics. The second group covered all the topics designed for the focus groups. Appendices C and D have the transcribed text of both focus groups.

## Quality of Life 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

The major aspect mentioned by the participants was the convenience of Cary being near Raleigh and other destinations. Other comments focused on the proximity to their work as the primary reason they lived in Town. There were also numerous other positive aspects or amenities mentioned including the progressiveness of the Town Council, family-oriented culture, Parks & Recreation opportunities, the new dog park, availability of cultural opportunities, business-friendly environment, biking opportunities, low crime rate, cleanliness of the Town, quality of the schools, small town atmosphere, and a good investment in real estate. Traffic (with the exception of a few problem areas) was even mentioned as a positive when compared to other more congested areas. Overall, the participants were quick to think of positive aspects about Cary and made numerous comments.

### Session 2

Did not discuss due to reordering of questions.

## **Growth in Cary**

- 2a. *Let's move on now to talk about some of the concerns citizens raised in the survey. Let's start with growth in Cary, which showed up again in this year's survey as a concern. Is the concern for growth in Cary, growth in Wake County, or growth in the Triangle?***

### Session 1

The participants were split as to whether it was growth in Cary or the region that was their primary concern. Several of the participants mentioned it was specifically growth in Cary they were focused on while others indicated it was in Wake County or the Triangle. One member indicated he may have changed his view if asked specifically about other areas besides Cary. There were concerns expressed that the developers were not sharing in the cost of infrastructure growth. However, this individual was not opposed to growth in general. Another member indicated she was not concerned about growth noting the proactive growth in the western side of Cary. Although, no consensus was reached on this question, there was not a high degree of opposition expressed to some level of growth. The concern was for infrastructure issues.

### Session 2

Most of the participants felt growth was an issue for all of Wake County and there was no center for the growth. However, there was one member who perceived the growth issue as a Cary problem and questioned if the impact fees were still in place noting recent developments seem to have infrastructure issues. Another member noted Cary is having the same issues as Round Rock where Dell Computers is located and also felt Cary was doing a better job than Raleigh in managing growth. This member felt Raleigh was too lax on restrictions and opened the floodgates to overdevelopment. Charlotte was also mentioned as not having an effective growth management plan.

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

### Session 1

The participants indicated the traffic was a chief concern in certain areas (540, 1, 64) due to development. The issue of developer contribution and impact fees arose. One member believed that developers should share in the cost of infrastructure improvements and felt the impact fees are too low and Town Council was tight with the developers. Several other participants disagreed and indicated the fees do not seem high and higher fees would only be passed on to the buyer. One area most of the participants did agree on was water. They expressed concerns about water availability and how development will continue to raise the water costs. Several of the members stressed that school and water are Wake County issues, not just Cary's responsibility. One member indicated slowing growth here means development would go to other surrounding areas of Wake County and still impact the schools. There was a high degree of agreement in the need for regional solutions. Overall, the byproducts of growth (traffic, schools, water) were the key issues and the group members stressed the need for regional cooperation.

## Session 2

The primary issue for this group was traffic. The participants were very concerned about traffic in areas such as Crossroads. In addition, one member wanted the Town to buy up open space to slow down all the housing developments. There was limited discussion due to reordering of the questions and time constraints.

- 2c. ***How much do you think the general concerns over growth are directly related to school capacity issues, such as overcrowding and reassignment. Would you say the vast majority, a good amount, maybe half, less than half?***

## Session 1

There were major concerns about the schools expressed by this group. One participant indicated his wife was a school teacher and believed the overall planning for schools was poor compared to the Delaware school system where they lived previously. They were concerned about the low teacher pay and very high cost to build the schools. The Highcroft area was cited as an example of how to solve the school problem with the developer building the school for the community. Others argued this method may not always work since Wake County determines where the schools are needed and there may not be enough demand for a school to be placed where the developer is willing to build it. This was supported by others who said Wake County still has to provide the teachers and budget for the new school. The busing of children could be an issue if the children in the new school are not bused while children from other areas are bused. Two other issues came up during the discussion on schools. These were the cost for everyone in terms of repaying bonds and school reassignments. Several members indicated their conversations with other parents led them to believe reassignment was a major issue. One solution offered was for Cary to start a separate school system to gain more control. Overall, schools were a major concern especially reassignment of students, placement of new schools, and cost.

## Session 2

This group agreed they would like their children to go to neighborhood schools and continue to attend with the same group of friends. They noted the high growth rate makes this very difficult. One member stressed the need for impact fees to help out with the infrastructure. There was consensus that regional cooperation holds the most promise for a possible solution. However, one member did not believe all local entities wanted to cooperate at this time. Triangle J was mentioned as an attempt at cooperation, but one member felt other localities did not want to be involved. Again, there was support for impact fees as the conversation on this issue closed.

**2d. *When you think about what the Town Government has done regarding growth over the last two years, what comes to mind -- is it positive or negative?***

Session 1

One participant felt the current Administration was making progress citing the previous Administration polarized things and other communities would not cooperate with Cary. Other members felt cooperation was better now with Morrisville, Holly Springs, and Apex, but not necessarily Raleigh. They thought Triangle J could work better today. Others agreed that regional cooperation was the best solution. There was a belief that businesses that profit from the development should bear some of the infrastructure costs. However, one small business owner in the group was concerned the taxes could hurt her business.

Session 2

Not discussed due to question reordering and time constraints.

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

Session 1

The participants all agreed that Cary was better prepared than other communities. Holly Springs was cited as an example where there was a lack of infrastructure for their growth, especially traffic and the need for 540.

Session 2

All agreed that Cary is better than the other local communities at managing growth with minimal discussion.

**2f. *What would be the ideal growth situation in Cary?***

Session 1

There was no consensus on what ideal growth would entail. One participant indicated the ideal situation would be a balance between homeowners/residents and corporate entities in sharing the cost for infrastructure development. Others were not sure what ideal growth would be in their minds. One member indicated the moratorium or freeze on building permits almost made it impossible for his family to move into Cary.

Session 2

Several of the participants felt planning for growth should have started years ago and are not sure if anything could be done now. Another member was very pleased that downtown Cary was preserved and no roads were allowed to cut through the center of Town. Others agreed and indicated they would like to see downtown more vibrant with a better nightlife like Charlotte. There was a call to make it more user-friendly. When asked to explain, they indicated live music and more cultural activities.



- 2g. *The revenues that come from growth in tax base account for most of the money Cary gets to provide you with services. And growth in the tax base is tied pretty closely to population growth. If Cary were able to slow growth and, therefore, slow revenues, what would be the best way for the Town to pay for the rising cost of infrastructure and services like increasing property tax rate or increase fees – what are your ideas?***

#### Session 1

Several participants would like to see the Town have the funds first before starting or approving projects. One member did not like “growth for growth’s sake” philosophy and would prefer more controlled or managed growth. There was a call for more information (high-level) from the Town concerning major initiatives and the budget in an abridged version sent out possibly quarterly. The participants mentioned having hard copies available at Town locations such as the library and also emailing information to residents. The Cary website and BUD were also mentioned as information sources. One member indicated the residents could give email feedback to Town Council. Another member would prefer a drop box somewhere to keep the responses anonymous.

#### Session 2

The participants felt raising taxes and fees were inevitable since growth cannot continue indefinitely. One member would like more of a gradual focus on taxes and fees over the next decade and Cary should focus on making it a better place to live to keep people here. There were also concerns over the kind of growth in Cary, residential versus commercial. Commercial was more desired because residential-type growth tended to cause the most problems for the infrastructure.

## Traffic Problems

- 3a. *Now let's talk specifically about traffic. Are most of the problem spots in Cary or outside Cary? Can you name some of them? Are these problems on weekdays, weekends, specific times of the day?*

### Session 1

The Crossroads area was prominent in the participant's minds. Davis Drive, Kildaire Farm, Walnut, and High House Road were mentioned as key problem areas. This was especially true during the holidays. Construction on 55 and Davis Drive created congested areas. The fact that industry is so concentrated in Triangle Park has been a problem and the road systems have not kept up with the growth in the Park. Another area stressed was Kildaire Farm between 5:00 and 6:00 between Maynard and Cary Parkway. There was another participant who suggested the synchronization of the traffic lights could be improved. One participant suggested the train system could help or possibly monorails. This member was also pleased with the transit system and indicated it could shuttle people to the train or monorail. The area around Cary Elementary School was also mentioned, but there were concerns about damaging the downtown region to fix this traffic problem.

### Session 2

This group indicated the problem areas are both inside and outside of Cary. They mentioned the construction on Piney Plains Road and on 54. Tryon to Walnut and Davis were also mentioned. Just as in the first group, Crossroads was mentioned as a major problem area. I-40 at Harrison was viewed as a problem at 5:00 in the afternoon. High House was seen as a problem area on Friday nights as well as traffic coming from the Triangle Park.

- 3b. *What ideas do you have for how the Town should improve traffic?*

### Session 1

The conversation tended to focus on the problem with residents driving too slowly and side-by-side in the passing lanes congesting traffic flow. They would like to see better enforcement by the police of these individuals who slow down traffic. One participant would like to see traffic cameras used to catch these individuals in much the same way they catch people running red lights.

### Session 2

The participants indicated better traffic coordination would help. The Crossroads area was mentioned. One member felt using the traffic cameras to catch those running lights made the situation worse by causing more rear-end collisions. One participant indicated how he enjoyed using mass transit when his car was not available for a period of time. He had to stop using mass transit due to the fact service was discontinued. However, he felt most people would not use it. The participants wondered why there was no mass transit out of Cary during the weekends. One member indicated the use of train to the airport would be desirable.

## Schools

4. *A third topic that came up was schools, particularly reassignment. Given that the Town doesn't oversee schools – Wake County does – what role do you expect the Town to take in helping solve school concerns?*

### Session 1

The participants generally felt that Cary should not get involved in the school situation. One participant felt it was best if the Town stayed out of the school situation because all the localities would be at odds with each other on what to do. Another member felt it could create a class system since Cary could pay more and create a better school system versus other localities. There was a concern if Cary or other municipalities fought against busing and reassignment they would get labeled by others. They believed a balance was needed to minimize reassignment and meeting academic goals. The participants indicated there were socioeconomic goals as well as overcrowding issues in reassignment. They did recognize that moving students was inevitable with growth. One former educator indicated the concept of year-round schools was appealing and a way to save money. This person viewed taking summers off as detrimental to teaching and the money saved could be used to pay teachers more from not building additional schools.

### Session 2

The participants would like to see the Town pick sites and possibly buy the land now with good access points. The Town could also share plans with the School Board on future developments. At this time the Town could get the developers to set aside the land. One participant would like to see the Town make the school more attractive by offering better academic programs for students such as foreign languages.

## Revenues

(Introductory statement) We'd like your thoughts now on the best ways for the Town to pay for the high level of services you're used to. As we've already discussed, citizens have concerns over growth. And while the current rate of growth is about 3 percent, to pay for the increasing cost of services, the Town really needs to maintain at least a 4 percent rate of growth in the tax base or find other ways to pay. So we'd like to get your opinion 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 implement long-range plans for roads, parks, water, and sewer and to operate and maintain what we already have. (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 \$320 million in bonds for water, roads, streets, and parks projects. Voters were told that we might have to raise taxes more than 17 cents to pay for the bonds, but so far, we haven't had to raise taxes because of continued growth in the tax base.

- 5a. *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

The participants indicated a level of support without discussion.

### Session 2

There was support indicated by the participants. However, one member would not like to see the tax increase used to fuel growth, but for things that benefit the public and make things better such as a public swimming pool.

- 5b. *How many of you would support a two cent increase (permanent) on the current tax rate; that's an extra \$20 a year for a \$100,000 home? Why and why not?***

### Session 1

The participants indicated a level of support without discussion.

### Session 2

The participants indicated a level of support without discussion.

- 5c. *How many of you would support a three cent increase (permanent) on the current tax rate; that's an extra \$30 a year for a \$100,000 home? Why and why not?***

### Session 1

The discussion centered on using reassessments to accomplish the same goal as a tax increase. Some of the participants felt the Town did not reassess the home's value often

enough and this could serve to increase the Town's revenues. The group noted how much housing values have increased over the past two or three years.

#### Session 2

The participants indicated a level of support without discussion.

- 5d. *Let's assume that the Town needs to raise taxes by five cents, or an extra \$50 a year for a \$100,000 home. Do you think it would be better to raise taxes by 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

Although one member indicated the one-time upfront increase was acceptable, most of the participants felt the gradual one cent a year was better and would engender less resistance overall. One member noted a school bond referendum that failed due to the fact the initial upfront cost to taxpayers was too high.

#### Session 2

This group also supported the gradual increase in taxes over five years. One member noted he can't foresee the economic conditions in the next three to four years and would like the tax increase more gradual.

- 5e. *How many of you would rather see the Town allow a little more growth, say up to five or six percent, and how many of you would rather see the Town raise taxes?***

#### Session 1

There was support for the growth option. The participants prefaced the support with the comments that the infrastructure was in place and could handle it. Many of the members support growth in general stating concerns over the budget shortfall during the previous moratorium on growth. The concern was for early and mid 90's style double digit growth that could not be supported. The term managed growth was used by several participants. One participant was concerned that growth cannot continue forever due to the limited space available in Cary. Overall, the growth option was preferred by this group.

#### Session 2

This group was concerned with the type of growth. The members preferred commercial and industrial growth, not residential. They felt commercial growth increases the tax base without the dramatic need for infrastructure services. The participants did not want their taxes subsidizing the services for new development coming into Cary. Several members would prefer the newcomers pay for this in taxes or fees (impact fees). If tax increases were used, then they would like to see it improve things like a swim center, art center, the library, or downtown Cary. These are improvements that would benefit everyone.

**5f. *Finally, do any of you have ideas for other ways the Town could raise significant revenues?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints. However, impact fees were consistently viewed as viable alternatives by this group consistently.

Session 2

This group mentioned a sales tax or meals tax as a possible option. They would like to know what other areas with high growth were doing to pay for the infrastructure items. One member indicated that Portland Oregon shut the door on some types of development and the housing prices skyrocketed to the point people could not afford to live there as property taxes rose.

## Operation and Management of Cary

- 6a. *One of the things we asked your opinion of was the overall operation and management of the Town. When each of you gave your opinion on this question, what kinds of things were you thinking about?***

### Session 1

The participants generally agreed it was planning. One member noted how well the recycling program was planned out. Another member indicated the overall quality of life was the key including roads, public safety, and streets.

### Session 2

The participants mentioned operational management involving the paid Town staff that carry out day-to-day operations.

- 6b. *Who were you thinking about, generally speaking – Town staff, elected officials, or both?***

### Session 1

There were mixed impressions in regards to this question. Some felt it was Town staff and others elected officials. However, most of the participants perceived it to be both. One member indicated it starts at the top and filters down.

### Session 2

Several participants indicated they were thinking about the staff. Others indicated it was elected officials because they manage growth and come up with the solutions.

- 6c. *With that in mind, what do you think could be done better in operating and managing the Town Government? For example, is there anything you can think of that you'd do more or less of?***

### Session 1

Several suggestions were made to this question. One participant indicated the road at the Recycling Center on Dixon Drive is muddy and full of potholes that can damage a car. Another member would like to see recycling extended to businesses and townhouses. Another suggestion is to make it easier to pay utility bills with credit cards online. The time frame to pay is too restrictive. A participant suggested the Town put volunteer opportunities in a newsletter for seniors in the area. A member also complimented the proactive response to gangs by the Cary Police Department. There was also a suggestion to stop developers from clearing out areas of trees when building new subdivisions. A participant asked that the Town keep adding activities for teenagers in Town. One member suggested the old elementary school would make a wonderful library and could have use for other activities.

## Session 2

One respondent who has a spouse that works for the Town of Cary indicated the work ethic could be improved for Town employees. Other suggestions include the rules for picking up yard waste such as sticks and branches are too strict. Another participant indicated the recycling bin was too small and needed wheels. There was also concern about not picking up all items not in the cart or bin and the charge for not having everything in the containers was a concern.



## **Town Culture**

- 7a. *It's very important to us that Town staff provide a positive interaction with citizens. That's why each year we ask folks who have interacted with them to rate them on being courteous, professional, prompt, and knowledgeable. While the scores are still good, we saw some of these slip a little, and we're wondering if you can offer us any insights on this. For example, what expectations do you have for staff?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants gave examples of poor interactions with the Town. One member indicated the Town employees and a plumber got into an argument in front of her house working on her water (sewer) problem. She indicated she had to pay \$1,800 to have an exit valve put in so the Town could clean out something under the road not on her property. Another member experienced a poor (unfriendly) interaction with a staff member while paying a water bill downtown. Other participants indicated more positive interactions, especially with garbage and recycling pick ups. A participant indicated the Police were prompt and polite when bikes were stolen from their carports.

- 7b. *Is there a general dislike of automated services like email or voice mail?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

There were several participants who did not like voice mail. Others did not have a problem with it. However, one member indicated they need to be concise and get you to the person you need to reach. Another member indicated email can be effective and noted interaction with C-Tran. However, another participant indicated a neighbor tried to get information on C-Tran and no one would respond to her.

- 7c. *Can you name some places around the Triangle that have excellent customer service that you think the Town should try to emulate?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

There was agreement that the Town's customer service exceeds other establishments they have dealt with in Town.

## Communications

- 8a. *We want Cary citizens to feel they have access to all the information they could want about their government. We also know that there's 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. What kinds of information or on what topics do you think citizens want or need to know about most?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants mentioned changing tax rates, roads, and cultural events. One member mentioned the information provided on Parks & Recreation programs in BUD was dated by the time it arrives at their home.

- 8b. *How informed do each of you feel on these?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

Several participants indicated they can find what they need on Cary's website. They mentioned Parks & Recreation activities and C-Tran information. One participant indicated the Town is open to feedback when you have trouble finding information on the website. Overall, the participants felt well informed.

- 8c. *Should we be more aggressive about getting information to you or in letting you know how to get the information on your own (i.e., promoting the website)?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The group noted a few areas which they felt were ineffective. One member indicated she still gets Park & Recreation postcards even though her children are in their twenties. Another indicated a C-Tran magnet was mailed to them and they did not recognize it as a magnet and almost threw it away. It appeared the group felt the Town as being aggressive enough for their needs.

**8d. *As a citizen what barriers do you see to the Town being able to communicate better with you?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants felt it was difficult to get information out due to the fact the News & Observer, television, and radio does not generally cover Cary that well. Most agreed the Town does a good job communicating. The participants indicated they are inundated with information and they put up barriers. They believe the Town needs to be more strategic in their placement of information.

**8e. *One thought we had was asking people for their email addresses when they sign up for utility services. We'd then begin emailing them information on a regular basis. How does that sound?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

This was not particularly well received. They indicated this was too much information flow. The group indicated it would be fine if it were something you could sign up for and are interested in receiving it. This could be things like Parks & Recreation programs or cultural events. The participants indicated they would like to be able to pick and choose the topics they would receive email on. One member liked emails that have one or two lines describing a topic that you can click on for more details. Overall, the group liked the idea of targeted emails with subject lines providing links to receive additional information.

**8f. *If we asked you for your email address like this, would you give it to us?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants supported giving their email addresses to the Town for this purpose. One member indicated the email should not be sold to others.

**8g. *Do you have any other ideas for communicating with citizens?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

## Session 2

A participant requested more information on what is going on in the government placed in the Cary News about once a month. Another member would like to see information on Cary initiatives. There was also a request for more information shown on Cary TV 11 at a set time. The use of BUD for information was seen as fine, but dated by the time it arrived in some households.

## **Involvement**

- 9a. *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

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The group was generally unaware of the opportunities to participate in decision making. One member indicated she felt out of the loop because Cary News was geared more to people with children in the schools. For that reason, she now reads the News & Observer. Another member felt Cary did not feel like it had a sense of community and this could impact participation. This was followed up by another member who was aware of the opportunities to participate by seeing them in BUD, but did not participate. The participants would like to see the opportunities advertised in email, BUD, and the website. The participants did not like using Cary TV 11 as a method to disseminate information on participation opportunities due to low viewership. They also liked Cary News and the News & Observer as better sources.

- 9b. *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. How about 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. So 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

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The focus group members generally liked the idea. One member would prefer an agenda to discuss. Another member indicated the lack of a school system in Cary hurts from having a cohesive sense of community. Several participants indicated they would attend.

**9c. *What about a regular call-in/email television show on Cary TV 11 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

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants indicated it depends on the time of day and felt it would be good for senior citizens. When asked to choose between these two options the participants would like to see both used.

## **Cleanliness**

**10a. *When you were asked to evaluate how well Cary maintains streets, what came to mind – potholes, pavement cuts, how new the pavement is, pavement marking, construction or dirt and mud, trash, etc.?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

Most participants indicated potholes were the issue. Several noted that construction was likely the main cause.

**10b. *What about sight distance issues such as tall grass or trees that need pruning, are those in the list of things that come to mind?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants did not perceive this to be a concern. One member indicated a visitor to the area remarked on how clean the Town is and the lack of billboards and clutter, including resident's yards.

**10c. *Same thing for cleanliness of parks and greenways – what are the cleanliness issues there?***

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The group did not respond with any problems. There was a subsequent discussion started on support for a swimming center in Cary. They noted that they were surprised a Town of Cary's size does not have a public pool. They members indicated residents do not have access unless they have a homeowner's association with a neighborhood pool or can afford to join the YMCA.

## Wi-Fi in Cary

**11a. The survey revealed that there is some interest in having the Town work with the private sector to provide Wi-Fi in certain areas in Cary, like downtown. In thinking about downtown, where do you think the Town might most appropriately focus any future Wi-Fi efforts? For example, do you think the Town should make it available inside businesses or should the Town focus its participation on projects that involve public areas like parks, public buildings, and streetscapes?**

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The groups all agreed Wi-Fi should be public areas not inside businesses. They indicated this seems like subsidizing private industry.

**11b. If the Town were to work with the private sector on Wi-Fi projects, how many of you think there should be a charge for the service?**

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants supported the fee for the service. However, there were questions about having Wi-Fi available in parks indicating it defeats the purpose of going to the park. There were also questions about having Wi-Fi in downtown considering its small size. They indicated it may be more appropriate in a larger city. One participant supported the use in homes and desired making it price competitive with cable or DSL.

**11c. Assuming the decision was made to charge for the service, any ideas on how much should be charged – either in terms of a specific dollar amount or in terms relative to going rates – such as about the same as other going rates or less than going rates?**

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants mentioned a per-minute basis for Wi-Fi around Town and use a subscription basis for home use.



**11d. How many of you think the charge for the service needs to be whatever it takes to recoup the Town's investment of taxpayer dollars over some period of time?**

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

The participants supported the Town recouping its investment. The use of a per-minute charge was seen as the appropriate method to recoup the investment. However, there were members who wondered if the time is right and would rather see tax dollars spent elsewhere. There were questions about the Town setting up cable or fiber optic networks and how this would affect Wi-Fi service.

**11e. How many of you think the services should be priced so that the Town could make a profit?**

Session 1

Not discussed due to time constraints.

Session 2

Several of the respondents agreed that the service should be priced to make a profit as long as it is a competitive rate. There were a couple of participants who indicated they had concerns about the government making money. They viewed the service as similar to a utility and believed it should be run on a breakeven basis. Another member indicated some of the users may not be from Cary and the Town should be able to make money on them.

## Other Suggestions

Some of the other suggestions made at the end of the focus groups were to pick up leaves more often. Road maintenance and pothole repair was a suggestion. A member indicated he got the runaround when calling to report a traffic light out. The group agreed they would like to have one person at the Town to call or email who takes the information and disseminates to the responsible Departments.

Additional comments brought in by one of the participants:

- Recycling – provide large, multi-purpose recycling bins (not just residential curbside boxes for private residences) for all apartments and businesses for their recycling of newspapers, magazines, clear-brown-green glass, aluminum cans, food cans, plastic bottles, etc.
- Repave the exit lane at the Dixon Road Recycling Center. It is filled with too numerous to count huge muddy potholes. Most people do not want to have to pay for a front-end car alignment and car wash just to recycle their household trash.
- Produce a map showing the exact location of the Recycling Center at 313 N. Dixon plus list the kinds of things that can be recycled there, i.e., newspapers, magazines, clear-brown-green glass bottles, plastic bottles, computers, yard waste, aluminum cans, food cans, corrugated cardboard, cereal boxes, etc.
- Excessive litter and unkempt curbsides – this is particularly prevalent along both East and West Chatham Streets, plus also along many Cary side streets that have vacant lots, i.e., Kilmayne East behind CVS Pharmacy and South Maynard between West Chatham and Lake Pine. Use the Town’s truck, which is normally used to suction up leaves, to suck up the excessive litter and roadside debris from these areas on a regularly scheduled basis. Clean up the northbound curbside of High House Road between West Chatham Street and Old Apex Road. There is excessive trash, dumped car parts, construction debris, discarded signs, clogged street drains and overgrown grass.
- Sidewalks – extend sidewalks down both sides the entire length of West Chatham Street. Finish the sidewalk on the northbound land of High House Road between West Chatham and Old Apex Roads.
- Traffic lights – install a traffic light at the corner of West Chatham and High House Roads.
- Cary Transit – require the C-Tran buses to actually come to a full stop and not a drive through at each designated C-Tran stop regardless of whether there is a visible passenger waiting or not such that the elderly waiting inside (Cary Senior Center, Highland Village, etc) can have time to come outside especially if the weather is inclement. Require that Cary Transit bus drivers bring a senior or disabled person’s personal (light-weight) grocery cart onto and off of the bus without question and to make that policy change public with a flyer. As it now stands, it is up to the discretion of the bus driver to get the bags on and off the bus but this does not meet the needs of the elderly and disabled population who need to get their shopping/grocery bags back home.
- Police – police should fine any driver and especially truck drivers when they turn a corner by driving diagonally across or into any lane of on-coming traffic coming from the opposite direction. Also have police do more spot checks on drivers’ licenses of anyone driving landscape or construction vehicles. This is not Mexico. Furthermore have police ticket the ever increasing amount of vehicles without mufflers (or with altered mufflers)

that allow motorcycles/trucks to “roar” around town. Have the police ticket drivers who play their music too loudly in traffic such that normal traffic and emergency warning sounds can not be heard. Police should do more spot checks on out of state licenses and handicapped licenses. Many people are moving here and do not update with DMV or NC for a handicapped permit.

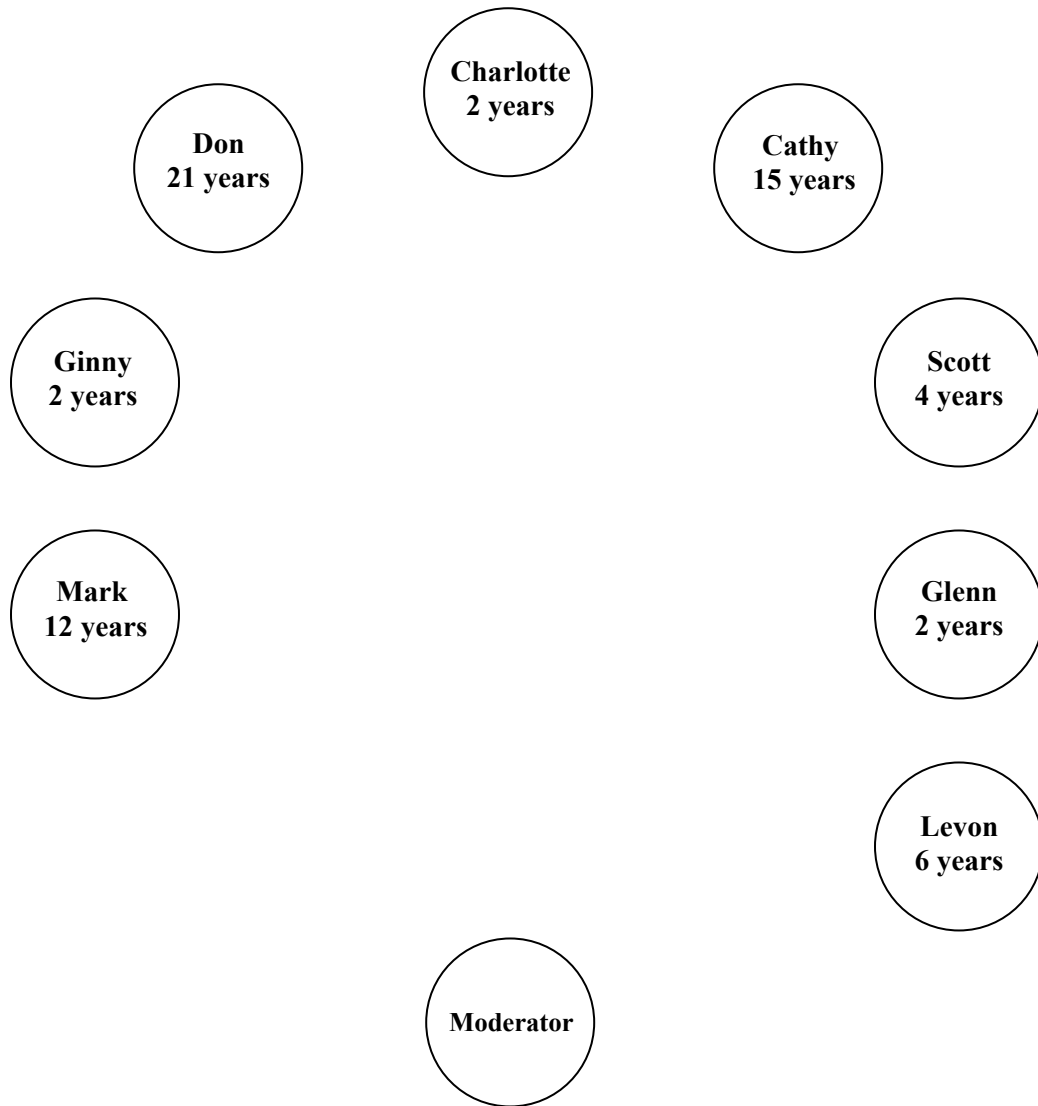
- Spanish – offer free conversational Spanish classes at the Public Library as well as at Cary Community Centers. Invest in more cassettes/CD’s and audio with repeat performance diskettes for learning Spanish at home. We are a bilingual nation and need to all move forward.
- Town of Cary Newsletter – make this available at the library for free. Publish a summary of Cary’s award winning year-round water conservations policy. Also explain the “why” about Cary’s required water drainage ponds on some properties. Publish a list of emergency shelter locations and emergency evacuation routes/plans for the Town of Cary. Publish major actions/plans passed on by Town Council.
- Town of Cary newcomer packet – have Cary newcomer packet that is also free but different in scope from that given out by the Cary Chamber of Commerce, i.e., supply a town map, greenway map, recycling map with a list of kinds of recycling bins, booklet of local activities from Parks & Recreation, offer a time for a quarterly tour of new Town of Cary building, provide information about Cary Transit and suggest very specific volunteer opportunities with very specific times, talents and physical abilities needed with the Town of Cary.
- Suggestion drop box – start anonymous drop boxes at Cary Community Center for written suggestions to Town Council.
- Non-Council suggestions – the Fine Arts League might like to have a volunteer artist available every month for anyone wanting to walk together and attend Cary’s Friday Art Loop. The group could meet at Cary Town Hall parking lot. Ask Amtrak trains to stop excessive whistle blowing when approaching and passing through Cary. It is much too loud in volume. It is blown too many times and each whistle is way too long in duration. This excessive whistle blowing discourages business and residential interests in the area. If they have any legal discretion in this matter, please get this excessive noise disturbance uniformly lessened by all train engineers. Talk with Department of Motor Vehicles about requiring a hearing test for all drivers over 60 years of age. Too many people who are not physically disabled have handicapped licenses. Have the doctor submit medical reports showing actual proof of the disability and have this review every two years.
- Love the small town feel and benefits of the big town. We don’t have kids yet but the constant school redistricting makes me nervous. Always in the back of my mind but not a priority yet for me. Before you tax me, look at yourselves first (the budget). Re-evaluation sound better than raising property taxes. Either way you get your money.
- Town Hall looks great.

## Appendix A

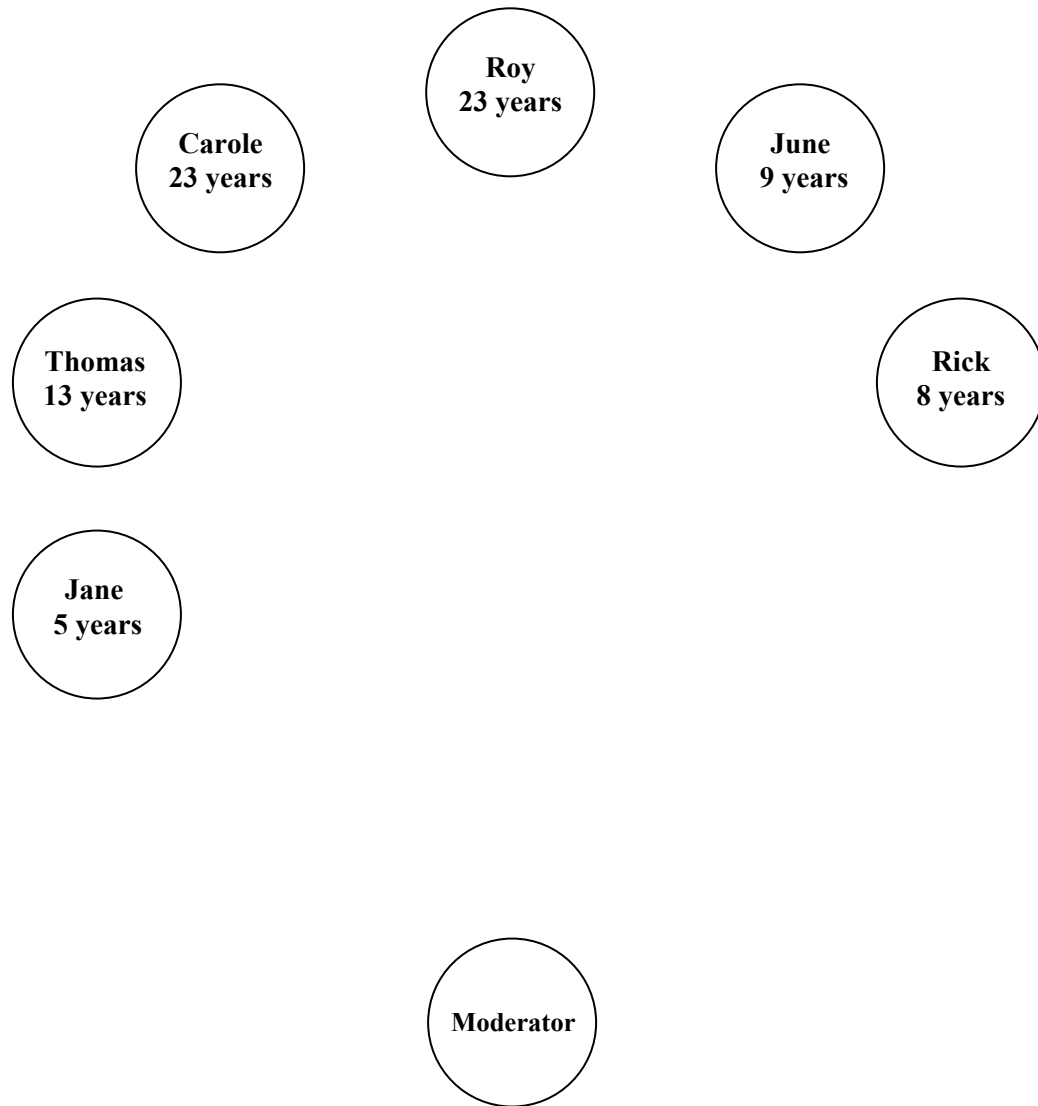
### Session Focus Group Participants 2006 Biennial Citizen Survey

Session 1		Session 2	
Name	Age Group	Name	Age Group
Charlotte	56-65	Roy	46-55
Glenn	46-55	Carole	56-65
Ginny	26-35	June	46-55
Cathy	46-55	Thomas	36-45
Levon	56-65	Jane	26-35
Mark	36-45	Rick	46-55
Don	46-55		
Scott	26-35		

**2006 Biennial Citizen Survey Focus Group Seating Chart  
(Name, Years in Cary)  
Session 1**



**2006 Biennial Citizen Survey Focus Group Seating Chart  
(Name, Years in Cary)  
Session 2**



## Appendix B

### Focus Group Questionnaire 2006 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 have ever participated in a focus group before?  
*(Moderator explains how a focus group works)*

#### Demographics

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

Do all of you live within the Town limits?

How long have each of you lived in Cary?

How many of you live in apartments?

#### 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. Is the concern growth in Cary, growth in Wake County, or growth in the Triangle?
- 2b. What about growth do you think concerns folks? For example, is it byproducts of growth, such as traffic or waiting in line at stores?
- 2c. How much do you think the general concerns over growth are directly related to school capacity issues, such as overcrowding and reassignment. Would you say the vast majority, a good amount, maybe half, less than half?
- 2d. When you think about what the Town Government has done regarding growth over the last two years, what comes to mind is it positive or negative? 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?
- 2f. What would be the ideal growth situation in Cary?
- 2g. The revenues that come from growth in tax base account for most of the money Cary gets to provide you with services. And growth in the tax base is tied pretty closely to population growth. If Cary were able to slow growth and, therefore, slow revenues, what would be the best way for the Town to pay for the rising cost of infrastructure and services like increasing the property tax rate or increase fees — What are your ideas?

### **Traffic**

- 3a. Now let's talk specifically about traffic. 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?
- 3b. What ideas do you have for how the Town should 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...)*

### **Schools**

- 4. A third topic that came up was schools, particularly reassignment. Given that the Town doesn't oversee schools — Wake County does — what role do you expect the Town to take in helping solve school concerns? What specific actions would you recommend to the Town Council, other than starting a separate Cary school system?

### **Revenues**

Introductory statement - We'd like your thoughts now on the best ways for the Town to pay for the high level of services you're used to. As we've already discussed, citizens have concerns over growth. And while our current rate of growth is about 3 percent, to pay for the increasing costs of services, the Town really needs to maintain at least a 4 percent rate of growth in the tax base or find other ways to pay. So, 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 implement long-range plans for roads, parks, water, and sewer and to operate and maintain what we already have. (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 \$320 million in bonds for water, roads, streets, and parks projects. Voters were told that we might have to raise taxes more than 17 cents to pay for the bonds, but so far, we haven't had to raise taxes because of continued growth in the tax base.



- 5a. 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. *(Assuming at least one person says yes, continue)*
- 5b. How many of you would support a two cent increase — permanent — on the current tax rate; that’s an extra \$20 a year for a \$100,000 home? Why and why not?
- 5c. How many of you would support a three cent increase on the current tax rate; that’s an extra \$30 a year? Why and why not?
- 5d. Let’s assume that the Town needs to raise taxes by five cents, or an extra \$50 a year 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?
- 5e. How many of you would rather see the Town allow a little more growth, say up to five or six percent, and how many of you would rather see the Town raise taxes?
- 5f. Finally, do any of you have ideas for other ways the Town could raise significant revenues?

### **Operation and Management**

- 6a. One of the things we asked your opinion of was the overall operation and management of the Town. When each of you gave your opinion on this question, what kinds of things were you thinking about?
- 6b. Who were you thinking about, generally speaking — Town staff, elected officials, both?
- 6c. With that in mind, what do you think could be done better in operating and managing the Town Government? For example, is there anything you can think of that you’d do more or less of?

### **Town Culture**

- 7a. It’s very important to us that Town staff provide a positive interaction with citizens. That’s why each year we ask folks who’ve interacted with them to rate them on being courteous, professional, prompt, and knowledgeable. While the scores were still very good, we saw some of these slip a little, and we’re wondering if you can offer us any insights on this. For example, what expectations do you have for staff?
- 7b. Is there a general dislike of automated services like email and voice mail?
- 7c. Does anyone have a personal experience they’d like to share that we could learn from?
- 7d. Can you name some places around the Triangle that have excellent customer service that you think the Town should try to emulate?

## Communications

- 8a. We want Cary citizens to feel they have access to all the information they could want about their government. We also know that there's 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.
- 8b. What kinds of information or on what topics do you think most citizens want or need to know about most?  
*(Facilitator to probe as necessary with services like garbage collection or recycling, planning initiatives, construction projects, recreation programs)*
- 8c. How informed does each of you feel on these?
- 8d. 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?
- 8e. 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?
- 8f. As a citizen, what barriers do you see to the Town's being able to communicate better with you?
- 8g. One thought we had was asking people for their email addresses when they sign up for utility services. We'd then begin emailing them information on a regular basis. How does this sound?
- 8h. If we asked you for your email address like this, would you give it to us?
- 8i. Do you have any other ideas for communicating with citizens?

## Involvement

- 9a. 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).* 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: (a) The number of opportunities the Town offers. (b) The quality of those opportunities. (c) The impact those opportunities have on the decisions that are made. (d) The timing of the opportunities. (e) Publicizing the opportunities.)*
- 9b. 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. 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?

- 9c. How about regular “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?

### **Cleanliness**

- 10a. When you were asked to evaluate how well Cary maintains streets, what came to mind — potholes, pavement cuts, how new the pavement is, pavement marking, construction OR dirt and mud, trash, etc.?
- 10b. What about sight distance issues, such as tall grass or trees that need pruning, are those in the list of things that come to mind? Can you give me some suggestions — overall or specifically — on where we need to focus our efforts to improve?
- 10c. Same thing for cleanliness of parks and greenways — what are the cleanliness issues there? Can you give me some suggestions — overall or specifically — on where we need to focus our efforts to improve?

### **Wi-Fi**

- 11a. The survey revealed that there is some interest in having the Town work with the private sector to provide Wi-Fi in certain areas in Cary, like downtown. In thinking about downtown, where do you think the Town might most appropriately focus any future Wi-Fi effort? For example, do you think the Town should make it available inside businesses or should the Town focus its participation on projects that involve public areas like parks, public buildings, and streetscapes?
- 11b. If the Town were to work with the private sector on Wi-Fi projects, how many of you think there should be a charge for the service? So, the rest of you think the service should be “free”?
- 11c. Assuming the decision was made to charge for the service, any ideas on how much should be charged — either in terms of a specific dollar amount or in terms relative to going rates — such as “about the same” as other going rates” or “less than going rates”?
- 11d. How many of you think the charge for the service needs to be whatever it takes to recoup the Town’s investment of taxpayer dollars over some period of time?
- 11e. How many of you think the services should be priced so that the Town could make a profit on it?

### **Closing**

12. In closing, is there anything else about the Town of Cary Government that you’d like to share with us before we close today?

## Appendix C

### 2006 Biennial Survey Focus Group Transcript Session 1

**Moderator: All of you live in the Town of Cary?**

- All say yes.

**Moderator: Can I ask each of you how long have you lived in Cary?**

- 6 years.
- 2 years.
- 4 years.
- 15 years.
- 2 years.
- 21 years.
- 2 years.
- 12 years.

**Moderator: Okay very good. Anybody live in an apartment? Okay and then the rest of you homes? Okay.**

- I live in a townhome. I don't know if that would count.

**Moderator: Let's go ahead and get started. Let's first start out with something about the Town operations overall. Now when we did the survey, we were glad to hear the respondents felt very good about living in Cary. Those numbers were very strong. From each of you, what are the things that you like about Cary and why do you choose to live here over any other place you could live in Carolina, maybe even the nation to start out? Let's start out with Mark first.**

- Well, I mean I have to live in this area due to work, but I like it because I like the location, I like the quality of life. I think the schools are relatively good and it's just a nice place, it's a nice place in the long run. I think it's relatively family-oriented and it has a good balance of all things I think you look for in a place to live.

**Moderator: Very good. Ginny?**

- I agree with him. It's close to just about anything you could want.
- Relative to in the city limits; not so much 540, but otherwise traffic is pretty good around here compared to North Raleigh going into Sports Row or Wake Forest Road. We don't have nearly the congestion except Walnut where the malls are during shopping season and that's kind of nice. Strong Parks & Rec programs here were good for our kids when they were growing up. I live near downtown so I like the downtown area. I actually can walk downtown, walk to the Post Office and I like the fact that they've kept some of the downtown identity still despite the fact that (inaudible); a lot of restaurants, a lot to do.

**Moderator: Good. Charlotte?**

- I basically came from Raleigh and have watched Cary for some time and have been very, very impressed with the diversity and foresight of Town Council and that's one of the reasons I'm participating in this group today. Particularly last summer when Cary didn't really have much of a water problem as our surrounding neighbors and yet years ago

Cary had a problem but the Town Council got busy, made some very good policies and they're year-round and I think it's great. I've been very impressed with the cross cultural, cross background compositions of our Town Council members and bringing in relatively progressive ideas into a state that is not as progressive as one should be i.e., California being at least ten years ahead of here. Cary has upped the ante and so I'm very impressed with that. I think Cary has natural beauty and I see Town Council making great strides to not only incorporate the needed business communities but also the wonderful parks and recreations things that we have. I see very progressive things like our new dog park which I think is great and the great lengths that they've gone to make it a very first class thing. The cultural opportunities are absolutely astounding because we have Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill right at the Crossroads at 540. We can go to the mountains, the coast. It's really a terrific place.

**Moderator: Thank you.**

- I'm from Wilson which is only about 60 miles from here so I've been familiar with Cary since it's been about 2,500 people. I used to come up for Cary Band Day so knowing the area, I lived in Wilmington and we were looking at starting a business or buying a business and when we looked all over the state, and we could have gone anywhere, I mean if you're going to do a business it really for the most part, you try to find a place certainly where it will thrive so we had any number of choices of areas we could have gone, but we liked the area's proximity to Raleigh, Durham, basically the Triangle area and so it was certainly already a vibrant business community and certainly growing. That's the reason we ended up because we knew this was pretty much likely a good place to have a business. When we first came, I'd say with current Council and previous Council you don't always have to agree with their politics but I think there are bits and pieces of every Council that I've seen since I've been here that have been good for Cary. You find fault with earlier Councils because maybe they weren't more proactive but at least they weren't wasteful either. You get the good with the bad. Sometimes if they're not proactive and wasting money on other things you can get upset over that. At least maybe they weren't necessarily as proactive as more current Councils have been, but by the same token I think they at least left a good basis for this current group to work with so that's encouraging to see at least the Councils that I've seen have been relatively good stewards of the money that we've given them. Again, a vibrant area for a business and just generally speaking I think they've done a good job with the community. The Town itself has done a good job with the community.

**Moderator: Okay, got it.**

- I agree kind of with everybody. Really the reason I moved to Cary was location; 25 minutes to UNC, 20 minutes to Duke, 15 minutes to NC State. You can go see the basketball games and kind of keep that excitement and also the dog park. I go over there and it's cyclist friendly and I really like that and it's very clean. My parents come down and they comment it's a very clean town, very well kept.

**Moderator: Go ahead.**

- The thing I like about it is the location, too. You can fly out from here, go to different places. One of the things I didn't know about when I moved here was the greenways which I really enjoy the greenways and I think the thing I really like about it is that there's a standard here that is consistently maintained in Cary and I like that.

- There's not a whole lot extra to add. We did move to Cary. We moved down from Delaware because my job is in RTP so it became a choice about not very many places to live to get to the part where it's reasonable and at the end of the day that's why we moved here. As you said, I went to State and graduated in '66 so I remember Cary when it had the blinking light here in the corner and not much else.
- I just want to add one thing...

**Moderator: Sure.**

- We probably have all seen this, but low crime, another big reason I like Cary. I think the government has been very proactive and the police force here has been very proactive of when they see trends they address it. Negative trends, I think they put the money towards public safety that needs to be and I think I read something that they're looking to grow the force and so they kind of try and stay ahead of any crime issue and address it with the community and I think the police force is very proactive and does a great job and I think that's a big upside to Cary. I think that's why a lot of people come here, especially with families.
- Agreed.

**Moderator: Excellent. We'll start with some concerns that did come out of the survey. The major concern we found in the survey was growth. It showed up again on the survey as a concern of the citizens, actually across a pretty wide spectrum of citizens. When you think of growth, is the concern for growth in Cary, growth in Wake County or maybe just growth in the Triangle when you were thinking of growth and answered that question?**

- My concern is growth within the Town of Cary. Everybody hearing about how great this place is, and they all want to move here.

**Moderator: So it's Cary. Did everybody pretty much agree you were thinking about growth just in Cary?**

- Can you repeat the question?

**Moderator: The question was when you had concerns about growth we asked the question about what was the major concern and we got several responses that said, quite a few responses that said it was just growth and development and we want to know was it growth, were you thinking about just growth in Cary itself, the Town of Cary, maybe the whole Wake County or possibly could it have been the Triangle area?**

- And was that question meant to be, are you concerned about too much growth or too little growth?

**Moderator: Too much growth.**

- Too much growth, I don't remember how I answered that, but I would probably say the Town of Cary.

**Moderator: Just the Town of Cary. So most of you were thinking about just the Town when that question or that response came up.**

- But I bet if you ask more detailed like you just have now it may have sort of splintered from that...

**Moderator: That's what we were thinking.**

- You know, I can't see, it takes me eight minutes to get to work. I can't complain about how long it takes me to get to work, but I think folks that sit out on Davis Drive for hours going and coming from work every day, still when you talk about traffic congestion in Cary, they're probably still thinking Cary because that's where they came from and that's where they're headed back to so there may have been a little bit of splintering from that question.

- Morrisville is growing very fast and it's affecting that community.
- I think there are subgroups of what the concern is about development. I think a lot of it is going to be, well is the industry bearing, helping shoulder some of the cost of the development? I think as a life long, not life long but 12 or 13 year Cary resident, my concern...I'm sure we'll get into this, is that Cary more so doesn't exist to make a segment of industry. Healthy growth is great. I'm for growth, but I think they need to share, the builders and developers need to share on the infrastructure costs and I think my concern was the recent trend is they're not and I'm sure you'll get into that. So it's not a growth...there can be lots of growth issues; traffic, whatever. There's also like financial quality of life issues overall and how that's being shared across the spectrum. It would be the residents and the business people.

**Moderator: We had concerns of that, too. Just to clarify, so we were definitely thinking about growth in Cary but there's also concerns about growth in the region in general, like Wake County and the Triangle in relation to Cary, too?**

- Actually I'm not as concerned about growth.

**Moderator: Okay.**

- There was an article recently in either Wake Living or Cary Living that was absolutely wonderful. It explained in detail about the growth and development of Western Wake County, particularly as 540 reaches around the outside perimeter and comes down on the I guess the Western side of Cary, all of the infrastructure that is being built, the shopping malls and the residential areas, which naturally if you're going to build a big interstate through as a loop around something, I'm glad to see that more of our population is probably going to be building up in there which can have more easy access to RTP and that area. I think it's very foresighted to do that. They're certainly not going to leave that kind of area empty and have even more congestion downtown and at the shopping mall. What I see is very good plan development where they're going to be shopping where there's living, interstate going through it, adequate infrastructure, water, everything. I think it's great.

**Moderator: Let me ask another question. What about growth does concern you when we do have growth? Is it the byproducts of growth such as traffic, waiting in lines? What does concern you about growth?**

- Not concerns of planning, such as everything's building up around Apex and everything and I think that's due to the plans of 540 going over there, but things seem to bog down on 540. You see on the news all the time the funding because of the budget and all that stuff and it's going to be 15 years and then you start hearing this and it's like everyone's building out there. 1 and 64 is a nightmare at 5:30 at night. Luckily I don't have to wait in that traffic, but it's kind of like once 540 gets there, that will knock half that out. I feel like we need to more proactively get to those big problems because people do trickle off through the Town of Cary to get out of that 1 and 64 traffic so they're taking the one lane road to the two lane road so we do feel the pain.
- I don't want to confuse, I just want to get my point clear. I'm all for 540. In fact I'm all for the local mayors getting together and trying to make that happen. I think the big mistake is (inaudible due to noise from train in the background). You're still going to have building out in Holly Springs and Apex and all that and there's going to be no way for those people to get in officially. The point I think I want to be clear on is from an economic standpoint that the people who are making the...the developers and the builders, I think they're getting too much of a free pass and this goes back to the impact

fees where the previous Administration, maybe people thought they were too strict, I think the current Administration is too lax. We've got high school costs, high land costs, high infrastructure costs and the builders and developers who to them it's a great place, one of the best places on the East Coast to be building right now, they have got to be sharing the costs and I think the current Administration is too tight with that. I don't see that, I think their point of view is all growth is good and growth for growth's sake instead of okay let's see how everybody can share the price of the growth and the infrastructure costs. I just want to clarify that. I'm for the growth and I'm for 540. I want this to be a metropolitan area, be a big city. I'm all for that, but the people who are profiteering, who are making a lot of money off of it, I'm fine with that, they have got to pay their way. I don't think, I think in the current Administration, I think they're too tight with them. You see that at the federal level. You see it at the state level. I think we're seeing it too much here at the local level. That's my one concern with growth.

**Moderator: So when you say tight with them you mean not in terms of being strict but in terms of being...**

- Too close with the industry.

**Moderator: Too close, okay.**

- If this wasn't an issue you wouldn't see the commercials now from the home builders of Wake County or whoever it is that we're seeing now campaigning against impact fees that are being brought back up. If they say, well it's just going to be passed on to the homebuyer, if that was the case they wouldn't be all up in arms about it. Yeah, they'll pass some of it on but it's going to make them bear some of the economic brunt, which they should. Right? In my opinion.

**Moderator: Does everybody agree?**

- I think at the end of the day hitting a builder with impact fee is going to go straight to the guy who buys the house. Bottom line, whether you think differently or not, that's who's going to pay for it. I'm not so sure that I agree with Cary's impact fees are low. The Raleigh paper this morning or yesterday morning had an article talking about how they would have to dramatically raise impact fees for Raleigh to approach the level that Cary has so I think the impact fees are probably pretty hefty here already. We don't have a lot of industry in this Town. Cary is a bedroom community supporting the Park. Whatever else you want to say....
- It's still that.
- That's what it is and that's the reason we moved here. We moved from Wilmington, Delaware where we lived for 20 years and we lived outside the city, kind of like we live away from the Park here and we didn't want to move into "the city". My kids are both out of college and gone and my wife works too so we just didn't want to move into the, inside the beltway in Raleigh for instance. I would like to live there but it's just a little too (inaudible).
- I think I agree with what you said about the fees. If they do get raised, it's going to get passed on to the buyer.
- What's wrong with that? I mean what's wrong with that?
- No, I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it.
- And maybe it's not impact fees. Maybe that's the different way, maybe there's a different way. All I'm saying is that I think the development community which I think is very in tune with this Administration I think needs to, I mean look at the cost, look at the (inaudible) for schools and the infrastructure in the roads. I don't know about you, but



the water's going up, everything is going up and all I'm saying is that business community shouldn't just be getting all the upside from the popularity of this area. They somehow, I wish the Cary Administration would make sure that they share...however you do it and that's something for debate, that they're sharing some costs of this infrastructure because the Town, we're absorbing it, we're paying for it and that's just my opinion. My water fee and everything else has just gone through the roof. That's all I'm talking about is sharing the costs. I don't think we should show favoritism to an industry that needs to be balanced.

- That would be a concern of mine. With growth we have limited water now, but what do we do if we add 20 or 30% to the next 3-5 years? Where does that water come from and what does that do to my water? Is it 150 bucks a month just to take showers and wash dishes? So that is a concern.
- That's not even... I don't care if they charged you a million dollars a month if there's no water, it doesn't really matter, the cost obviously if there's none there.
- I think a lot of these issues, I think going back, Kevin, to what you're asking at the beginning, some of these frankly are Wake County lie issues or at least some because schools for example is a prime example there. Maybe one of the most alarming things is they're still having to be very reactive with how they're handling school growth. We're not anywhere near getting hold of that. Some of us probably have kids in the schools who are that age. Ours are just out. The reassignment was a record number this year and it's not going to go down for awhile.
- That's all irrelevant to where you are in Cary...
- And water is also to some degree, at least it's regional in the Southwest Wake area, we're all drawing water...
- You look at what happened with the Lang Administration. They go with the impact fees and APF and all that, I mean it looked really good on paper so if people stop building here, they build in Apex and Holly Springs and what have you, they're still coming here. The kids still come to school here, they shop here. It didn't really solve anything.
- I think, and we're seeing some of this Kevin, where the mayors and maybe even the councils and some of the towns are going to have to work together to plan. I think we're moving out of a phase, you know building a town is sort of, it comes in phases so if you look at the earlier Administrations, they try to concentrate on bringing in commercial and bringing in development and getting the Town established. You can argue how well they did that, but they did establish the basis for what we see today, but now we're into a different phase where we're trying to control things, but now it's really gone more regional.
- There's so much crossover in terms of...
- Very much so.
- Everything.

**Moderator: So are you telling me you want more regional cooperation?**

- Yeah. I think we've gone out of what existed in Town boundary issues. It's much bigger than that.

**Moderator: More regional planning then instead of just local. Do school issues come up and that was my next question. Thanks Don for pushing that way. How much do you think the general concerns over growth are actually directly related to school issues such as overcrowding and reassignment that we're seeing? Would you say it's a vast majority, a**

**good amount, maybe half, maybe even less than half? How much do you think the school is driving this concern over growth?**

- I personally think it's the majority for a lot of people. My wife is a school teacher. My boys are both out of college and gone. Because a lot of people have concerns with the schools and I see what she has to go through and I see what I think is extremely poor planning on the part of the Wake County School Board. We moved from Delaware and it's just a world of difference between the planning that went on in the system there and the planning here that goes on or doesn't go on here. I think there's a bureaucratic bloat if you will, in the school administrative system. The teachers don't have anywhere near what they do elsewhere. There's not a great deal of teachers who want to come here and teach because the pay is so low to be honest with you. It's just terrible. We would have never moved if we knew that were the case. That would have been a determining factor. The cost of schools, you look at what Wake County is building a new school for. In the article sometime over the last couple of weeks they had the difference between here, between Johnson County, differences as you go west. Some people have schools that cost half of what Wake County costs to build a middle school.
- It's the impact.
- The land.
- Well it's not the land. They're talking about the physical cost of building the school and I think Wake County, when you look at some of the new schools and they're pretty things on the inside. I think they're spending too much money and we're talking about a billion, billion plus dollars potentially to have to build the schools that we have that we're going to have to need here if growth keeps coming.
- What's the subdivision on 55 where the school's being built? The school is right in the subdivision I think.
- Well there's two or three out there. I live in the Reserve and Highcroft is behind that...
- Highcroft.
- He built that school. The county didn't build that school...
- And that might be an answer. I think that's a great example. If the developer wants to, I think the previous Administration was trying to get them to help pay for school, and I think they should because I think it's irresponsible to let them just throw up every subdivision and not pay for any of the infrastructure. We're going to be paying for the schools and roads, so if a developer can come in like Highcroft and they charge a premium to live there, I know, I looked, so if they can do that, build the school and make more money off of it, that's a great answer for everybody. It's the free market at work; you got school, a local school there. Sure enough Wake County will eventually get the kids and send them somewhere else, but anyway... I think that's a great example of business, meeting the needs of the community and then they can recoup their cost and make more money off of it I think.
- Well with the original, with the original adequate covered facilities ordinance the issue was putting schools in the specific neighborhood, the builder would be responsible. The problem they ran into with the Board, the School Board, that wasn't necessarily the area that they felt the school needed to be and see now you're dealing with two entities here. You've got, well actually three, you've got a Town that is saying you have got to put something out there, you've got a builder that's willing and a School Board that says that's not where we want the school. So sometimes even though the good intentions and again this came from back from Lang's Administration with trying to be sure that the

impact fees were there, they ran into issues with the school, with Wake County schools that did not want the school where the developer was going. Again, their situation where you've got to look at the demographics of the entire county because they are responsible for building for the entire county and it didn't necessarily mean that just because Cary Park let's you, because that was at the time the most western development out there, just because maybe the guy was willing to set aside some land for school and even provide money for it, there was nothing from Cary from all the way out to Cary Park that would indicate that you had enough kids to support building a multi-million dollar facility out there.

- Well remember now, Highcroft was actually built before Cary Park...
- I'm still saying, putting into account the six year olds just doesn't make up enough to build a school.
- I think that's a very good point.
- Highcroft is a huge development now. Cary Park is going to be huge.
- But you can't...
- When the developer at Highcroft offered to build that school, he spent more money than he would have had to by far on those impact fees to build that school. He built it. He didn't give them the land and say you build it. He actually built it. He put it up far quicker and he put it up far cheaper than the School Board is able to do.
- But, but I think I'd be really miffed at the School Board if they came and said well there's potential out there, let's go ahead and throw our money behind the school there and you never ended up with enough population out there to warrant building the school and then they wasted your money.
- That's a different issue than just having the developer do it on his dime. I think if the developer is willing to do it and this is an issue that's broader than...if the developer is willing to do it then the developer, the Town of Cary and the Wake County School Board have to all figure out how to make that happen so I think that's only an upside because the cost is being borne by the developer and the residents who choose to live there and I understand your point. I didn't know all about the clash between the....
- What happens is, okay let's say they do that just like they did out there, now you've got a school the Town, not the Town but the county has to provide teachers for, that maybe that wasn't the area that was needed, but they've now got to hire more teachers for out there, they're working with the budget, then you're dealing with busing the kids out there and that's what's going to have to happen if there's not enough population in that area. They're going to have to be bused in or you're going to have 900 mamas lined up with their kids out there.
- The counter to that though is that that's where the School Board did think a school needed to be built, was in that general area. Why the School Board didn't want to take it is because the builder at Highcroft said one thing I do want out of this is to guarantee that the people who do live in this development can send their kids to that school. That's what the school board objected to. Not the actual school itself or the location. They didn't want to have to say if you live in Highcroft you're going to be able to go to that elementary school.
- But can you imagine the can of worms that would evoke? Okay everybody in Highcroft can go to school there. You've got everybody else all over the county getting bused. I would not be happy.
- That's a broader issue and I don't agree with that.

- I don't agree with it either...
- I think it's wrong.
- But the one thing is that if the developer is willing to sink X million into a school, growth is coming. In all of these areas of western Wake it's coming.

**Moderator: So what you're telling me is the schools are a major issue to this growth factor.**

- And the cost. I mean because the cost is, when this bond issue gets voted and it probably will pass, it probably has to pass, it's all going to go on the homeowner so we're all going to be paying for it so if there's some economic...everybody should share the cost so if there's some economic alternatives where everybody is sharing the cost, we've got to look at that. I think Highcroft is a great example. I don't even want to get into the politics of the busing and Wake County. That's something we can't, we can't, the politicians are going to have to get together and figure that out.
- Around the office and stuff I haven't heard much talk about reassignment through the schools and stuff like that as far as judging from what you hear and what people are talking about, that's not the issue that I've heard. I'm sure it is an issue.
- Who has kids in school here?
- I don't have kids and maybe that's the reason.
- I don't either.
- I was just trying to say what I've heard at work. I hear conversations...
- There's 10,000 being reassigned; record numbers.
- I'm sure those parents are concerned.

**Moderator: So when you're in conversation with your neighbors, that's what they're saying, reassignment's an issue?**

- Yeah.
- Oh yeah.
- They just had a protest in the paper from Preston walking to Greenhope because the school's right there so they're showing, look we can walk to the school but you're reassigning our students out. Now I have a two and a one year old but my wife is a teacher so via Wake County they can go to elementary school wherever she's an elementary school teacher. As long as she's there they can go with her so I'm good for first through sixth grade, but if that wasn't the case and my wife was doing something else I'd be like everybody else. I'd be worried every year, you're going to have this...
- Frankly, the only way for this to be conquered at town level is for towns to say, we're going to have our own town schools. It used to be here in Wake County that you had Raleigh school district, you had Apex, well I don't know about the Apex school, but the town's that were established had their own school districts. Then you've got more control of the power. Right now you've got no control.

**Moderator: Over the past two years, just over the past two years what's your impression of what the Town of Cary has done? Positive or negative for managing growth?**

- The last two years?

**Moderator: Just over the past two years.**

- I think it's positive and I'll tell you why. I think that, and again I hate to mention names, but obviously you've got to have some sort of point. I think the Lang Administration really polarized things. I do. I think you have way too many, in this corner we've got, in that corner we've got, the other group. Whether or not you agree with what's going on with some of the current Administration, I think they've at least got people back to the

table to talk. I think when Glen was Mayor he made everybody mad. I know I was involved in trying to help get the Senior Center built. We couldn't even get the people in Apex, Holly Springs and Morrisville to talk to us. They're like no way. We're not doing anything with Cary. Now every time we see some of that same group that we worked with they're like, boy we sure wish we would have joined in with you because we just don't have the money to build one right now. I think at least this group has gotten people back to the table. You don't have to agree. Like here, we're not going to agree but at least we're talking.

**Moderator: So that's a positive view?**

- I think that's important because we're regional and we're having to do that now. We can't afford to be...
- Another thing that just blew me away, I used to teach school so believe me don't think I'm anti-school. I'm not. I'm actually for year-round schools. That's another issue. I used to work for Council Governments in Wilmington and when I came up here there was a big controversy. A lot of the communities were pulling out of Triangle J. They thought we could do a better job with that money. We're sending X number of dollars over to Triangle J for the regional planning and there was a real run on people deserting Triangle J at the time and I think most of those communities have come back now to Triangle J to help with the planning and I think almost the time, and this has been seven maybe eight years ago that that sort of ebb and flow was happening within the Triangle J and that's when you saw everybody in their own corner. There was no regional planning. There was no cooperation and I think once they realize, you know it's hard, I can plan all I want to for Cary but if I don't consider the surrounding area it's like putting up a fence and daring anybody to come in and I think once they decided to go back with Triangle J and let them at least be a focal point for the planning that we've seen a lot better cooperation, particularly with Morrisville, Holly Springs and Apex, not Raleigh. I still think Raleigh kind of travels to their own drummer over there, but I think the smaller communities around us have seen that we're not the bad guys, that we have seen the light so to speak.
- Except New Hill, we'll get to that later.
- I actually agree with you. I think overall, I think the regional cooperation is great. I am really liking what they're doing about the mayors trying to move that 540 ahead which I think it's crazy to delay it. I think that was a terrible decision by the state. The only concern I have with this group is I want to make sure that the industries that are making a lot of money off the growth of this area bear the infrastructure costs as well. That's it and if we can come to some agreement, you know some type, something like that, there needs to be some accountability from that aspect and then that's my one issue.
- With consideration of the small business owner also.
- Yeah. I think small business is immensely important, absolutely.
- I'm just concerned that some of these fees from the growth of the City of Cary are going to negatively impact small business owners.
- There's one right now that's doing that and it got pushed through the budget and there was very little talk of it and that's increasing the yearly tax that the businesses pay to operate in Cary. If you, depending, it's based, before it was just a flat fee. I think like \$450, something like that. It might have been \$700. To me, a smaller fee and according to the new budget, that same fee looks now like it's going to cost me about \$4,800. That's a huge jump and I'm a small business. I've got seven employees and I have a lot

of capital and don't misunderstand me, we pick on attorneys yet my business is different from an attorney's office. He might do a million dollars in billing and it's time, it's time, it's not capital investment of equipment. I spent two million dollars last year on capital improvements or the year before last and so my million, if I do a million dollars in business, my million dollars is not the same as his....

- No, you're right.
- ...and this new fee that they've got for the businesses in Cary, the business use I guess, whatever it's called, ours is going to go from about \$450 or so dollars to almost \$5,000 and that was, I'm serious that just kind of went just like that and I'm thinking aren't they going to have, I guess they wouldn't have a public hearing on that, you know some discussion on it, but none at all. It just went.
- Is this a flat fee?
- Yeah.
- So a big business is paying the same as you are?
- Well, no it's not a flat fee. It may be a sliding scale now. Before it was a flat fee. I think it was a flat fee. I think there was a cap on what was paid and now it's going to be a lot.
- It sounds like a big jump.
- That is a huge jump. To me, that's a part-time job for somebody. You talk about trying to provide jobs for the community. When you start having those kinds of jumps you have to start looking for places to cut, not add.

**Moderator: Let me ask you another question. How would you compare Cary with the other communities around here for controlling growth like Apex, Holly Springs and Raleigh?**

- I think Cary is more prepared.

**Moderator: You agree?**

- Mmm hmm.
- If you look at Holly Springs. I went down there. I've lived in Wake County 21, 22 years and I like to get out and look at what's being built and these subdivisions and get an idea of real estate. I mess with real estate a little bit and you look, you go down to Holly Springs and there's some, I think there's some great home values down there, some beautiful subdivisions but there's no way, this is the whole 540 issue, try to get into Raleigh or the Park at rush hour, so they're letting growth happen, but the infrastructure is not there yet. It goes back to the 540 coming.

**Moderator: Let me ask you another. What's the ideal growth situation for Cary? What would you consider ideal? Some of you mentioned, you mentioned some of the impact fees.**

- Yeah and I don't want to, I don't want to just use that word. I can tell you there's people here a lot more educated about what's going on than I am. I think the idea of growth, I think we're on a descent; I'm not upset with what we're doing now. I just think that the ideal growth is that the people as the growth continues out in western Wake and Wake County the cost for the schools, the costs for the infrastructure is just shared across the people who are driving that growth, who are building and putting up the condos and homes and all that. That's all I'm saying, as long as there's a fair balance across and everybody's sharing the burden and the pain, the homeowners, the residents, the citizens, the taxpayers, as well as, the corporate entities then I don't have any other complaints about it.

**Moderator: What does everybody else think the ideal growth situation should be?**

- It's kind of hard to say what's ideal. I don't, as long as it's a managed growth in terms of just not slapping up anything you want to put on the yard or a lot someplace. There's got to be some structure to how the growth goes. I don't like it when...we moved here six years ago. One reason we almost didn't move into Cary was that's when they had the freeze on building permits. I'm not going to say freeze, but...
- The moratorium.
- ...the moratorium and we'd look in one place and I said, well you know we've got however many lots out here, we might be able to get a building permit next month, we might not because of what Cary Town Council was doing and that's, that was just wrong I think.

**Moderator: Let me ask you another question in light of this. The revenues that come from the growth and the tax base account for most of the money that Cary uses to provide the high service level that you get at your homes. Now growth and the tax base is pretty much tied to population growth. Now if Cary were able to slow growth and therefore you would see the revenues slow down, what's the best way for the Town to pay for the cost of this infrastructure cost? Would it be maybe raise the property tax, increase fees, what are some of your ideas? That's if growth was slowed down.**

- It's almost like you want to shoot the people that are already here when you start talking about raising fees and taxes and things like that. I don't know what the answer is. I guess it's sort of like it is at my house. If you don't have it, you don't spend it. That to me is a problem with government across the board. I think they see this great plan out there, this pie in the sky plan and they start doing it, start purchasing or doing whatever it is they're doing without any, I mean they say they've thought about where the monies are coming from, but they go ahead and plan that and then they tell you about the tax increase later. That's not very good. I just don't buy it until I've got the money or at least I know I've got the means to pay for it.
- And that comes back to this point about managed growth rate. I think growth for growth's sake and I think we hear that too much. I think we have to be careful with that because with increased tax revenue comes increased costs. There's a reason why the tax revenue is going up. Well something is growing and something is there and something has to be supported and from all different municipality services. I don't buy into this growth for growth's sake. I buy into managed growth and budgeted growth and how the long run looks, not just throwing up everything and thinking that's going to solve your fiscal issues.
- I would like to see the Town of Cary come out with a newsletter that addresses a lot of things that we've talked about here, but particularly what their income is, what some of the, I mean other than Channel 11, other than what you get in the Cary paper or the Raleigh paper or whatever like that, something that's really specific for the people of Cary, distributed to Cary's Senior Center, the public library, have it something that it's across the board for people who want to know this information, can get this information.
- They have that. The budget's upstairs. You can go up to Scott Fogleman's office right now and get a copy of the budget.
- My plan is put it out in the public.
- It should be on their website.
- Nope. Put it out physically in the public for hard copies at different places. I would like to see that.

- And that comes in the mail or whatever, like a self addressed, postage already paid thing where I can send my comments, because after I read it...
- The other thing, too...
- ...right now we're in a focus group submitting comments and suggestions. That would be a real nice easy way to get a lot of feedback on comments and suggestions.
- Just practical, how frequently would you want something like that?
- Quarterly.
- Quarterly?
- Yeah. I think monthly is overdoing it. I think quarterly is fine. I know that Wake County comes up with a published thing that they put at the libraries.

**Moderator: And you want this mailed to you?**

- No.

**Moderator: Does this have to be mailed?**

- No.
- Just available at public libraries...
- We're talking about costs...
- They just talked about them raising our taxes...
- I know but perhaps you know, question if it were on a website and I would think you're on, not everybody, but most people have email. Those who didn't could go to the site, but if you could be on an email to say we're publishing the quarterly report on the status of Cary, the budget, anyone who has any input please respond by such and such a date, would that be of value?
- I think having it available for the current technology is great, but I also think there is valid gain for having a hard copy available and out in the public.
- I'm saying do both.
- Where are you going to put it out in the public?
- Like at the library.
- Senior Center or Young place. Wherever they have other publications that deal with things that are of value or interest to the city and give the public in Cary a three-month leeway as to when the Council is going to be bringing up some of these issues.

**Moderator: That's another issue we need to talk about. What about through BUD or something like that?**

- That's what I was thinking. BUD is the Wake County thing, yeah.
- You have those interesting, not interesting things. Do you read BUD when it comes?
- Yeah.
- Oh you do.
- BUD is Town of Cary.
- (Crosstalk)

**Moderator: That could be a good place to put this maybe quarterly, maybe even twice a year or something on major type initiatives?**

- I personally just as soon see it on the website. To me, it's a lot easier...

**Moderator: So multiple sites, maybe have it there...**

- But you've got to remember how big, are you familiar with how big the budget report is? Do you know? It's three different...



- It's a big chunk but yeah you can get it off the web. You should be able to go and download something like that off the web. We do it at work all the time, things that are hundreds of pages long.
- Unabridged on the web, very abridged in a publication.

**Moderator: Like a synopsis on BUD and then tell you where to find the rest of it...**

- Knowing what BUD already has now...
- And anybody who wants that information, they're going to go and like yourself Charlotte, you say I want to see it all...
- I just want to see a synopsis. I want to know what's coming in three months, what is on the agenda, what are they looking at. Give us time to give some feedback, that kind of thing; have it available for everybody.
- Yeah, I will agree that it's hard, I mean everybody's very busy. If you go looking you can find absolutely anything you want on the web, but it is hard to, a lot of times I think, especially in today's world, I think it's hard to get just a real high level this is what's coming in and these are the major things facing Cary down the road. These are the decisions, these are the something goings up, these are the commercial decisions being made. I agree. There's no high level, you can go find it, don't get me wrong...
- Well some things are tough to find sometimes and then just thinking about this, you know if there was some way to say these are the five proposals that we have and then handle growth, you can go vote on one here, just kind of give everybody their log in, something to do with your address or something like that. Everybody's a number somewhere. Something like that where you can go vote and say I'd like it handled this way or you know and maybe give a few pros and cons of each thing that's being brought up at the Town Council and if you have feedback maybe there's, I'm sure the Town Council has a lot of knowledgeable people, but maybe there's something they hadn't thought about.

**Moderator: Maybe give them email feedback on these?**

- Yeah.
- Mmm hmm.
- If you want.
- Likewise I would like to keep a broad perspective. We have the great technology but also I'd like to see a drop box, maybe even here somewhere on this property for those that would like to submit something anonymously. When you do an email you've got an email address that goes with it. Suppose you want to make some comments about something that might even have to do with your place of employment or might affect it, you certainly wouldn't want that to become property of the Town Council so somewhere you could do a hard copy reply, typed, put it in a box that would be checked and it would go to those that are doing the agenda for the Council or whatever to bring it up.
- Another comment as far as handling growth and this is just kind of my opinion. The widening of 1 and 64 seems to be a, it needs to be done but it seems to be a duplicate effort of the same thing that if you finish 540 going that way would kind of do because it seems that all the traffic is going out to Raleigh. There's a lot going in, but it's going both ways, but it seemed like 540 would really help reduce that congestion through there and all that road work is going on and it was down to one lane for a ways there, but it seems like, you know what I mean, they kind of go together; both of those things work together and it's duplicate efforts to solve the same problem. Maybe there's more to it than that.

**Moderator: Well let's start with traffic then. Let's go ahead. What are some of the problems, the problem sites that you see now in traffic, do you consider them more inside Cary or outside Cary?**

- Who on earth approved Crossroads? That's a good example. Did they graduate at bottom of their class? I'm serious. I think, I mean when I look at the neighborhoods in Cary, when we came here, you know your older towns, you've got a grid of streets. You can cut through this neighborhood and this is straight over, you can travel parallel, you can drive over to Market Street and Wilmington and get something. Here, if you cut in a neighborhood that you're going to cut through, you're going to be right on a cul-de-sac for two hours trying to find your way back out. I think maybe in trying to create that drive through without seeing everybody's backyard or front yard or whatever, we've sort of created our own nightmare here with everything being a PUD with one way in or maybe two ways in and I don't, because you're forcing all of the traffic onto Davis Drive or onto Kildaire Farm Road or High House Road or wherever instead of, and I know people don't want them cutting through the neighborhoods but if they lived in Raleigh, a long time of people cutting Dixie Trail or Wade Avenue and everywhere else, it's not that bad, but I think maybe we sort of created part of that little monster ourselves by just having only neighborhoods that you could get...they didn't go anywhere. You got in there, you had to come all the way back out.
- I think the new ones, like I live in the Reserves. People there didn't like the fact that High House was put in, but the Town of Cary insisted that there be openings cut through the Reserve into High House so it's, you come in off of 55, in my development there's one, two, three, four, five entrances and exits now. It just kind of goes out and we get tremendous amount of traffic within there, particularly when Highcroft early on was being built. You get a lot of heavy trucks down the residential streets because Cary insisted they be open.
- Now see that's not important because you're the only one out there. Had they not done all this to start with, it wouldn't be that way. It would have been sort of, but it's too late to fix that. It's just like...

**Moderator: Let me ask you, what are the problem areas inside Cary?**

- Crossroads.
- I want to say Walnut, really that whole Walnut quarter by the mall...
- From the mall at Crossroads...
- ...And the opening of the second mall really put it over the top and I know there was division in the Council at that time over the approval, that Glen was against it for example. It did get passed and that's just made that whole corridor a nightmare.
- It's that way on (inaudible) side of Town, too. When we moved here it took me eight, nine minutes to get in the office going up 55. If I'm lucky I can get there in 20 now.
- Yeah.
- It's just terribly congested. The fact that they're working on 55 all the way from 64 to 40 is a joke. Davis Drive which is the other entrance into the Park from the west side of Town is the same way. It's being worked on all the way.
- See the problem is, Research Triangle Park was a great idea when it was formulated in the '60s, '70s, but you've got all your places of work in one spot. Ultimately you're going to have to think about relocating. Again, it's a regional thing, but you just can't do that. No metropolitan...

- Well I thought it was a good idea when they did the Park, say there's no residential, that everybody had to work outside the Park and it's only after this became such a mecca for industry out there that they see the ills of their thinking there.
- I still think it's a good idea not to have housing in the Park and not to have commercial development of the Park. I just don't think the infrastructure and the road system were kept up properly and that's more of a state function I think than the Town or Wake County, but the roads, the roads are slow and behind and the way they're working on the highways is a joke.
- I have a spot that's kind of bad. Between five and six at night you'll wait two or three stoplights because traffic's backed up at the next stoplight ahead of you if you're on Kildaire between Maynard and Cary Parkway in front of the Outback and all that out there. That traffic is just awful in the evening. I go to the gym. I live right here in downtown Cary so I have to go through that and it's just like, well if I don't make it before five, wait till after six because I guess businesses do get out there. I do think once you hit Cary Parkway I think people take a left and go over to across 1 and 64, across that, I don't know...those neighborhoods over there and then people take a right and go home on Cary Parkway and the other way and you know some people keep going straight and go down towards the Wal-Mart and past that shopping center, but that's been extremely bad in the evenings.
- I'm thinking more synchronization of lights would help in some of these.

**Moderator: It was mentioned in the survey. Can you think of any areas that are particularly bad?**

- I think the one he just mentioned could benefit from synchronization.
- A lot of people are stuck in the middle, blocking the people who want to come across.
- It's probably good to distinguish between traffic bottlenecks that are within the Town of Cary that are not related to the commute to the RTP and so these would be, these would, because those are more I think under Cary's direct control. Maybe they can do something about it. During Christmas of course, Walnut's problems extend all the way back between Cary Town center and Crossroads. People that live back in those subdivisions have a hard time getting out because it literally can be backed up all the way. That's incredible and I don't know how much those lights being synchronized could help that. It's a mess.
- Yeah, unfortunately we're bringing traffic off the 1 and 64 and it's hard to synchronize there because then you end up backing up over that, so it's ugly.
- I'd like to talk about trains and C-Tran as we talk about the traffic problem. I think that the railing through 540 has been stopped. Has that not been, as I recall, they've stopped the funding on that?
- Oh the TTA?
- Yeah, the TTA, that's been stopped.
- Yeah.
- I think Cary and Raleigh and Durham would have an absolutely perfect situation. We've got Amtrak, north-south coming through here. We've got local, Caroline and Piedmont stuff coming through. Those trains are empty except for what materials they're carrying for manufacturing. I would love to see what's already a train track turned into a monorail system running north, south, that train goes right, follows 55 all the way. You can have a weigh station. People can get on that weigh station and you go out to RTP. The Cary, moving onto the bus system, I have been extremely pleased with the way that Ray

Boylston has organized Cary Transit System. We now have north-south routes that go all the way out to Weston Park. We have east-west routes that cover the entire thing. We've got Cary links. That bus, and there's stops and they're designated and they're clean and they're good price; those buses can pick up people most anywhere in Cary proper, bring them right here to this train station which is a lovely facility, jump on the monorail, take them out to RTP, take them up to Baltimore, it doesn't matter. We've already got that piece of property that comes right through the heart of our Town and I would just love to see it converted. Also, I'd like to see monorail also because the train is very loud and it discourages a lot of residential and businesses because of it being so loud, but to convert it to a modern, super monorail type of thing, floating on air, kind of like a Disneyworld thing would be super.

**Moderator: Let me ask you this other question. Any other ways you can think of that Cary can improve traffic? They mentioned some things such as building more roads, more state roads, widening 55, Davis Drive, mass transit which you were talking about, bike lanes, HOV lanes, maybe better traffic signaling which you mentioned. Anything else that comes to mind besides some of the ones you've already mentioned?**

- I don't know if this would help but it seems to be a pain if (inaudible). When there's not traffic and you do catch the green lights it seems that two cars will be side-by-side and they'll stay 10 or 15, doing 30 miles an hour in a 45 and it seems every day. We're pulling people over for doing six or seven miles over the speed limit. These people that are sitting there side from stoplight to stoplight for... I'm not trying to exaggerate, I'm trying to be realistic and it just seems like it happens all the time and nobody, they're just there, nothing is in front of them...
- That is just, I'm with you, that is just, the problem in this state, the people don't recognize there's a passing lane and then there's a right lane and I think, I don't know if the Town of Cary can do anything about it. I don't know if the police, the police want to pull anybody speeding, I mean they make a living off of it here, but you get people creating traffic and going side by side five miles under the speed limit....
- I travel a lot. It's everywhere in this country, believe me. In terms of if you're talking about an interstate or in Town, I mean the Cary Parkway has a left turn lane so it's absolutely legitimate for somebody to be doing the speed limit in the left lane. If they're going to be making a left they've got to be in the left lane, but when you get to interstates, that's another story.
- If they're going that much below the speed limit...
- Yeah I think 15 miles below...
- You should get a ticket.
- ...before you get a ticket, but it's kind of like going 30 in a 45, I have somewhere to be today...
- That's just a frustration we all experience.
- ...there's no demographic or anything. It's young, old, all colors.
- They missed that day in driver's ed, okay?
- I'm sure I'm guilty of it but maybe that's because of what's going to happen...
- There are those cameras now that are around Town that are not DMV, but they're Town of Cary I believe and they will take the picture of a car that is turning on a red light or whatever like that...
- Got one myself.
- ...and get a fine and it goes to the school. It doesn't get reported to the DMV...

- Y'all keep running those lights then.
- ...those lights could also, since they're motion sensitive be recording people who are in effect blocking traffic during times. You don't need to have a policeman out there paying hourly wages and pensions. You can get one of those cameras out there. They may be an expensive up front investment, but for the areas that have been identified it will take a picture and then that person will get because their license will be photographed, they will get a bill.
- My roommate got a ticket. He stopped at the red light and then went on and it caught in the flash or whatever and evidently the penal code is two seconds, who is sitting there watching? A second and a half, a second and a half, give him a ticket. I'm like, we've got bigger fish to fry. He stopped. The car stopped motion and everything and it was just kind of, if it's the law it's the law, but we've got some other things we could do.
- Kevin, another bottleneck and I don't really know what to do about this, it's really around near where I live, but around Cary Elementary School, that odd sort of configuration in the roads, actually I try to make a left coming down Dry with the school on my right, trying to make a left onto Academy is extremely difficult. I don't even know if there's room for a left hand, well there would be, yeah there's room because there's two lanes there, but you don't have a left hand, left turn signal there. During the mornings when school is coming that's a pretty heavy backup going that way and at night the other way. That's a whole interesting, that whole Harrison, South Harrison, South Academy area, I don't know because I hate to see it destroy downtown by running major roads through there.
- They talked a couple years ago about...
- They did.
- Doing that changing the traffic pattern and the neighborhood was up in arms over that...
- It is upsetting. It would change the character of that area, that downtown area. I think even a left hand turn lane, I mean arrow, not a lane...

**Moderator: Okay we're going to hit a couple of others. I think that's a good point. We've hit the roads pretty well. Just a couple of quick questions on schools, particularly reassignment, that's something we get a lot of comments in effect. Given that the Town doesn't really oversee schools and all of you know that, what role do you see the Town taking in trying to help solve these school problems? Can you think of any role that they should play?**

- I'll be honest with you. As long as the schools are run by Wake County, and I disagree with the way they run them, but I think as long as the state law and the law is such that they're run by the county and not the towns, I think the towns and the cities and everybody else ought to stay the hell out of it. I think it would do no good for all the various municipalities to try and get involved because they're all going to be at odds with each other. Unless you can get the law changed, but the way it is now with the county being able to run it, everybody else getting their two cents in, I personally don't think it's going to do anything but cause trouble.
- Well you're talking about a class system. I think that could create one because communities like Cary that maybe pay more in property taxes versus Holly Springs right now. Let's say, not future, even marginal, but we're talking right now, we sure got a lot more money to spend on the schools so those poor kids over there are going to be in mobile units and we're going to have the Taj Mahal over here. We already get top Dudley. That would really do it.

- I think, is that part of the kid left behind act?
- No. It's nothing to do with that.
- No, but it is...
- That is a funding.
- ...it is why that's one reason they are busing.
- I heard something about that.
- It's not going to continue to work.
- If that's the case, then why you only combining Wake County?
- Well yeah...
- Where do you stop?
- I mean Wake County, they could do a reversal and sort of let everybody do what they want to do and that would be probably within the law right now. Wake County, they have an agenda and they believe their agenda's right whether we agree or disagree and I don't know if there's a whole heck of a lot you can do about it. It's very interesting. I don't know if you, it's such a tough issue because if you get certain communities fighting against it; if you get Morrisville, Cary and Apex fighting against the busing and reassignment they'll get labeled this, they'll get labeled that. I don't know what the answer is. The balance is, there's a balance in there somewhere where between you try and minimize reassignment but meet the academic goals for everybody.
- It gets back to building schools. I mean the reason they're having to bus is because they've got school over here and not over there. Not all of us, but I understand...
- (Crosstalk)
- If I've got ten classrooms but I need 15, I've got to send those kids somewhere and I'm forced to bus them.
- I think part of that's true. I think a lot of it is a smoke screen for making sure they have the right socioeconomic ratios more so than crowding.
- Well that's not even a smokescreen because Wake County School Board has a specific charter, they have a specific goal in mind for the fee and reduced wants. That's the current buzzword.
- That's what I was going to say. I don't think it's so much of a crowding issue as they want to meet that. We can't solve that problem.
- You do have to move some people. You're always going to have some reassignments when people grow, just because you've got too many people here...
- They're on the losing end of this. It's just going to take time for them to realize it because they're not only not holding ground, they're losing ground.
- It's still ironic because you came here, you've got three little kids, you came here because you like the area and then because everybody else behind you liked the area they followed you here and now we've got this problem and it don't mean it's ugly but it was created by you bringing them here, by you coming here and that's fine because we all came here for some of the same reasons. I like the school situation and as a former educator I would, I didn't have it, but I would love to see year-round schools be a bigger deal. Now I'm sure parents have some real mixed feelings there. As a business owner, I can't afford to go out and buy more equipment necessarily to operate another, you know more people on my dayshift to build my place bigger. If I'm really smart and I'm concerned about my bottom line I will run a second shift; utilize what I've got there and I think that's the whole theory behind the schools in terms of trying to do more year-round

schools is making use of what you got there and as a taxpayer, particularly one who owns a business and I'm paying it at home because we own property at both places, I like the idea of year-round schools. I don't have any kids. It's not that I'm against schools and all that kind of good stuff, but I'm already paying a serious amount of money and now they're talking about property taxes going up more, you know, blah, blah, blah to take care of the school and I'm like do what I have to do. Make use of what you've got there before you start spending more.

- I agree. Year-round schools, the concept of a year-round school I think makes a lot of sense.
- I can tell you from a teacher's perspective I like it. I know how it is when you get kids in there and then you get a three-month period of time here where they're off and it takes the whole month of September to corral them back in to thinking about, okay now sit back down and pay attention to what we need to do here. The idea of being able to go six weeks or however many it is and I'm going to spend that entire six weeks teaching digestive...I taught biology, physics, to be able to teach that one subject so that by the time we get out for our next track out or whatever, that we've already finished that. We've discussed it and when you come back in two weeks, three weeks, we're going to start on the circulatory system or something else.
- You were a teacher in year-round school?
- No, I said I was not. I would have loved to have that. Absolutely.
- Something I'm concerned with...

**Moderator: Let me move ahead...**

- Is teacher burnout with year-round schools. I mean I don't have, I'm not a teacher, don't have kids, but that's just...
- Well the theory, the teachers, the classroom teachers will segregate...my wife is a part classroom teacher and part what they call a resource teacher. She runs the SST, the (inaudible) program and she's a reading specialist, that's different than this traditional classroom teacher teaching biology, for instance or teaching social studies. Those teachers won't see any increase in work load. The typical classroom teacher will still have North Carolina's 205 days in the classroom a year; 180 with students, 25 without. The resource teachers on the other hand, under the current North Carolina and Wake County rule, the resource teachers like my wife is would now be in school for the same amount of money all year long. That's why my wife is against it and that's why the resource teachers are because they will not increase the pay for working full time. The teachers, the traditional classroom teachers won't have any increase.
- But can you imagine how much money that would save if you go to year-round school and give them a raise instead of building another school?
- Tremendous amount of money. Tremendous amount of money.
- Can you imagine what they can do salary-wise with five or six million dollars that it's going to take to build that school?
- How much to build a school?
- Five or six, that's what I saw in the paper.
- A middle school right now costs Wake County 46 million dollars.
- Okay 46. I don't know where I got my five. I was building a HUD over here. That was just a cafeteria (Laughs)

**Moderator: Let me move ahead to some revenue issues and we're running a little low on time so I'm going to try to go through these. We discussed citizens have concerns over**

growth, but the current growth rate in Cary is around 3% and to pay for all the services it's offering to you, the Town needs about 4% greater growth through the whole Town and that would provide the services they're offering you. Now I'm going to ask you a couple of questions and let me go over a few assumptions the Town wants you to know before you answer these questions. First off, we're talking about raising revenues to implement long term, long range plans for like roads, parks, water, sewer and to operate and maintain what we already have. Okay, first assumption. Second, the Town's already running efficiently and they like to continue and it will continue to look for ways to save money so they're not giving up on the efficiency aspect. Taxes in the Town have not been raised in a decade. Actually they've actually been lowered over that interim and over the past ten years voters have approved more than 320 million dollars in bonds for roads, water, streets, and park projects. Now the voters, when this was passed, were told that the taxes would probably have to go up more than 17 cents per \$100 valuation to pay for this, but in reality they haven't been raised at all because of the growth. We understand the assumptions that the Town wants you to know. This is for their perspective, where they're coming from. First, how supportive would you be generally of the Town raising property taxes, that is, would you ever envision a situation where the Town would have to raise or it's okay to raise property taxes and you know now that the current rate's about 42 cents per \$100 valuation so for \$100,00 house that's \$420 a year. Can you envision a situation where they should raise taxes or it's okay to raise taxes.

- Yes. Do you want us to go around the table?

**Moderator:** Now let me go and explore a little bit deeper since you said that. How many of you...

- I'm not speaking for the whole group. I'm just me.

**Moderator:** It only took one. Let's see, how many of you would support a two cent permanent increase on the current property tax rate? That's an extra \$20 a year for a \$100,000 home. Most of you would.

- I think I'd be okay with that.

**Moderator:** Okay, how about this: How about if we go to a three cent raise, increase in taxes, that's \$30 more a year, is that a reasonable rate?

- Kevin, the reason again that they really need to raise, if it were a 3% growth and they need four, is that what I heard you say?

**Moderator:** 4% or it has to come from somewhere else.

- So actually we're under growing...

**Moderator:** To support the service level, that would be a correct assumption. Let me give you another scenario...

- I have a philosophical disagreement with all of that.

**Moderator:** Okay.

- One is if the cost of services goes up every year, if you're saying they need to go up, the cost has to go up...

**Moderator:** To maintain what you originally have...

- Right, then the cost of our valuation of our house and businesses going up, which should bring in more money without increasing it, but they don't reevaluate. They don't reevaluate very well around here. They do a terrible job of revaluation.
- They are required to do it every eight years.
- Five years or eight years, I mean I lived in Delaware and it was every three and also you'll see somebody buy a house...like you said, you live in a house for eight years,



seven years and somebody buys the house right next to it; huge amount of higher taxes or a lot higher. I think the valuation needs to be, the readjustment of tax base needs to be done a lot more frequently than it is and if that happens then you don't really need increases.

**Moderator: Let me ask you all, how, yearly, twice a year, every three, not twice a year but every two years, three years?**

- Valuation?
- Revaluation?
- Every two to three years.
- Two to three.

**Moderator: Two to three?**

- Or every time the house is sold.
- You know we're all quite hurting ourselves financially by saying it, but if you look in the last two, like from '99 to 2003, the average appreciation in Cary is like 2%, 3%, not much, but if you look in the last couple years we're seeing double digit now. It's 16% in the last year because Cary's getting filled up, it's all being built out. Try and go buy a new 3,000 square foot home here in Cary and see what you pay; 400K, 450K. The re-evaluation, now is a good time to do it and you'll get a lot of money.
- They're pretty quick to reevaluate your house if you have some work done on it. Twice since we've been here my wife and I did some work and they're around in no time at all and your taxes have gone up, but they don't do it to the house next door.
- I think that's a very viable alternative. That's a very good point. You can look at raising rates. We've got to make the constant. You should preface the statement of do we agree with raising the property rates if you're not reevaluating at the same time, yeah, or are you going to reevaluate and then you can just cancel raising rates?
- The last time we had an evaluation here they did kind of what they called a revenue neutral where they lowered the taxes so that your tax didn't go up, but that same Council kept spending....
- Yeah, no, you can't do that.
- ...you can't do that either.
- It sounds like just six in one hand...
- It really is.
- ...you're going to pay either way.

**Moderator: Let me ask you another question here. Let's say the Town, let's hypothetically say it were to raise taxes about five cents and that would be an extra \$50 per year on a \$100,000 home, would it be better to raise this tax one cent a year over a five-year interim or maybe better to do a 2% for the first year and maybe a one time hit of 2-3% a year later, which one is more acceptable to you?**

- If you're going to do it, do it. Have the guts. If you're going to raise it 5%, don't mealy mouth around and say, well we'll give you a little bit of time. Just have the guts to do it all at once or vote against it.
- I see your point but I think the issue is if you, I don't care, but the issue is you'll get less resistance if you spread it out over two or three years. Whenever you get the tax increase everybody's up in arms so if you spread it out, use the initial paying...that's why that school bond failed five or six years ago because they were going to knock everybody with 200, a 1,000 bucks, I forgot what it was if you owned a house, a \$200,000 house and the bond issue failed because it was too much of a hit at one time.

- Incremental change I think. It's less recognizable.
- Then people ignore it. If you're against the increases, well it's a percent this year, a percent next, I'm not going to fool with it. I may disagree with the increases in total, but it's only a percent, what the heck.
- Right, and on the other hand I think if someone did it today at 5%, in two years from now they might say we need another 2% now, whereas over the five year period that 5% was just 1% a year.

**Moderator: So the 1% is not such a bad idea. Let me ask you another question. This is sort of a big question here, how many of you would rather see the Town allow a little more growth up to the 4% level or 5 or 6% level or would you rather see the Town raise taxes? The 5 or 6% growth or taxes, which one is...**

- If you've got the growth you're going to have more money. It's going to come in...
- Right. That's why you won't have to raise the taxes.

**Moderator: Which one is better, which one would you like to see?**

- Where I live the growth rate is much higher than 4% anyway.
- As long as the city can handle it.

**Moderator: So as long as the infrastructure is there you're saying growth, 5 or 6% level is not...**

- I think where Cary got in trouble, especially in the '80s was they were up in the double digits. I remember one year it was 15%...
- It was out of control.
- ...you can't manage that.
- In the early '90s and the mid '90s it was out of control.
- I'd like to keep my house value where it is so whoever's making this decision I'd like to...
- (Crosstalk)
- ...I don't know how growth effects that. If you do grow more I would think there would be less demand, more supply if you do allow more growth. I don't know, I'm not the economic real estate person but I'd like to see growth. I wouldn't like to see a 15% decline...
- Well, I can tell you, if you go back to when they did the moratorium on the growth and you see what it did to the budget, I mean we were in serious trouble and we're still digging our way out of that if you go look at the budget right now. You want to be careful, you want to be careful talking about slowing it down too much because they're already committed, they being us the Town, already being committed to a certain expenditures and anyway...I'm telling you, you can dig a deep hole there.
- Has the average been 5% for the last three or four years?

**Moderator: The average has been 3% for the last couple of years is the information they've given us and they really need about 4% to actually support no tax increases for you guys and so they would like to know, even if they take it out in terms of like reassessments or a tax increase in terms of pennies, which one is better for you and are you telling me that maybe 5-6% growth rate is not so....**

- It's not a problem.

**Moderator: It's not a problem as long as your...this is probably the same as what I'm hearing, as long as the infrastructure does...**

- Yeah. As long as it's managed...

- Managed growth.
- ...and the people who are profiting off Cary's growth significantly are sharing the cost of that growth.
- Cary is going to run into a problem like everybody else. One of these days it's not going to be able to grow...
- We're getting there.
- We're there.
- Well, no we're not.
- They're growing by annexation.
- Cary Park is not Cary. I'm sorry. They're calling it that, that's where the growth is going...
- I live out on that side of 55 and when we moved in there, the Reserve where I live was the last development and you've got all the way North of 40. There's nothing. There's still a huge amount of empty land over there. All you got to do is look at it from the air when you fly out of here; tremendous amount of open space.
- Somebody is going to build over there. Look how long it took Amberly.
- It's coming.
- And they've been talking about that for eight years.
- You can't grow this way in Cary I don't think. There's no open spots.

**Moderator: Can I ask one more little set and then we'll call it a day, how does that sound? I appreciate all your feedback, it's been excellent. Alright, one of the things we asked you was your opinion on the overall operation of management of the Town. Remember that question? And you actually rated those. Now, when you gave your opinion on that question what kind of things were you thinking about when you thought about the overall operation and management of the Town of Cary? Can you think of anything specific?**

- Can you say that one more time?

**Moderator: Okay. When you were thinking about, you rated the overall operation and management of the Town, you gave it a score between one and nine. What type of things were you thinking of when you think about the overall operation and management so we can get sort of a feel for what, why you gave the ratings you did?**

- Future orientation of planning...
- Yeah, the Town planning.
- Town planning.
- Proactive.
- Proactive Town planning, yes.
- Recycling, all that planning. They bring a bucket to your house and you put your glass in there and they come out and pick it up. The trash can, it seems like you're kind of well taken care of. Things are well planned out and the execution.

**Moderator: So the planning is key?**

- It's the overall quality of life. The roads, the public safety, the services, the street, just the overall quality of life.

**Moderator: Now, where you thinking of elected officials or Town Government staff when you gave this?**

- I think officials as well.
- I was thinking staff.
- I would say staff.

- I would say both.
- Yeah, I'd say both.

**Moderator: So it looks like there's a mix here. Some of you thought one, some of you thought the other, but by and large if we were to look at it...**

- To me, there's a consistency from the top down that whatever service we get I feel like I know I'm going to get good service wherever it is and somehow that's got to be both at the top, but filter down to the people.

**Moderator: When you think of all this, is there anything, besides some of the issues we've already talked about, anything else the Town could have done better in terms of this operation and management that you would like to tell them that?**

- Operation management?

**Moderator: In terms of operation and management, besides some of the stuff we've talked about, is there anything else?**

- Oh, than what we've talked about...

**Moderator: Yeah.**

- I have a small thing.

**Moderator: Okay.**

- The Recycling Center on Dixon Drive, have you ever gone there?

**Moderator: No ma'am.**

- It's great to go in, the pavement that goes up to where you recycle, but if you want to pay for a front-end alignment and a car wash every time you recycle it's a problem. When you turn to come out the designated exit road it is so full of potholes and mud and junk that you're scared my car is going to start...really you're looking for a front-end alignment.
- Oh you go out a different way than you came in?
- Oh yes, yes. When you come into the Dixon Recycling, they actually direct you to the left. You would normally think traffic would go to the right. You have to go to the left and up the hill which is this wonderfully paved and great area but you can't go backwards. You have to go forward. It is horrible.

**Moderator: Okay. That's a good point.**

- I would like to see the Town of Cary extend to businesses and apartments a form of recycling. Residences have been given the boxes and they put them out every so often with their whatever's. I think those multipurpose recycling bins should be at every major business that will have them and every major apartment complex that will have them for the basic things; newspapers, whatever kind of glass is the most prominent, aluminum cans, food cans, plastic bottles...
- Phone books.
- ...well phone books is pretty good for right down here at the old Cary Elementary...
- Phone books are junk type. You don't recycle that anyway.
- I think that the City of Raleigh does that. I know that my old apartment complex in Raleigh had one of those recycling...
- But they don't here, uh uh.

**Moderator: Anything else?**

- You know I got something. It's just a little gnawing thing.

**Moderator: Okay.**

- Cary has always, since we've been here, has billed itself as a technology oriented Town. You've got the website, you've got all that, but either I just can't find it or it's not there. When you go on the website and you want to pay your utility bills, everything else I can go and pay. I'm going to pay my credit card bill on March 17<sup>th</sup>, can't do my utility bills that way...
- You have to pay it that day.
- You either have to pay it then or come back later when you want to.
- It could be a simple programming thing.
- It should be very simple to do, in particularly if you are an organization that claims to be so technologically advanced.

**Moderator: Good point.**

- I have one other comment.

**Moderator: Sure.**

- If the Town of Cary does come out with a newsletter, I would like to see them specifically list volunteer opportunities; front desk, Town of Cary, greenway trash pick up, Godbold Park every Thursday. There's a growing number of seniors but not disabled people in this community, but nobody's just going to go, oh I can do anything, volunteer, because then you're kind of stuck with something, but if you could put it on a website and let your citizens know what you specifically have needs for. I see things for the Special Olympics or for the Cary road race or for SAS park, but what I want to see is something specific. We need two men who can set up tables at Cary Senior Center for the coffee with experts prior to the mayor's visit. We need three ladies who can fix coffee carts at the Cary Senior Center or for chamber members and this in itself can help defray perhaps some of the costs of having to hire other people to do that. There's a huge resource base. For example, UNC-TV recently had one of their, well during one of their fundraisers, they come up with these specific jobs that they put up on there, what talents they need. There is a gargantuan amount of diverse talent and thinking capacity in this community that is not being used, that Town Council can use, the Parks and Recreation can use. People want to volunteer but they don't know what's really needed and where and it would bring them even more into a sense of community.

**Moderator: Sounds good.**

- I've just got two quick things.

**Moderator: Okay.**

- When the Federal Government I think six or seven months ago did a gang sweep across the country, the state with the most arrests was North Carolina and which was surprising and you're seeing the gang problem in Durham, you're seeing it in eastern Wake. Drive out 64, you'll see the graffiti...
- Right down Holly Springs.
- ...right down Holly Springs. I've seen one or two things here in shopping centers, whether it's real or just kids, I don't know, but I think Cary has to be proactive and they probably are, but since you asked what a concern is and two things; programs to make sure that there's things for kids to do so they don't get into that and second, really tough enforcement so the gangs know, hey, no point in even messing around with Cary because it would be too much heat going and they probably are. I think Cary Police, I commend them since I've lived here 12 years, great, but it's coming and you need to address it now so it doesn't get a foot, toehold, so that's one thing. The second real quick is I wish, if you look in the older Cary neighborhoods like McGregor, Kildare Farm, the builders

came in there and they built and they left the trees. Amazingly they managed to bulldoze just what they needed to put the house up and left the trees. If you look at some new subdivisions in Chatham County like the Reserve where my in-laws live, same thing, the builder can not cut one tree outside of what he needs to build the house unless the owner requests it and I know it's a matter of money and we don't want to upset the builders in the Town of Cary, but why we can't hold them to a little tougher standard and they don't bulldoze everything, like you look up at Cary Parkway, they're building townhomes now. It's right across the street from where I live. Flatten the whole 20, 30 acres and they'll plant some twigs and say here you go and why we can't hold them to, we held them to a standard back in McGregor Downs and we held them to a standard, we held them to a standard 20 years ago and that standard's gone away and it's gone away in every community. It's all about dollars. It's more expensive for the builder to do it the way I am talking about, but I wish we would. I wish we'd kind of go back to that and that way you keep the beauty of the city and you keep the beauty of the neighborhoods in it. Drives up everybody's property value.

- I'll tell you a funny story, the exact opposite of that. I own a printing franchise and the guy that's president of our franchise from California, they don't have any trees out there. He came to visit us. We were on Apex Road, lots of trees, you really have to look when you come by and see it and his comment when we were standing outside was, you've got too many trees. I'm serious, those were his words. You have too many trees.
- When you fly in to RDU, it's amazing how many trees, this is a City of Oaks right? It's amazing how many trees there are. Strike a balance when you're building these huge subdivisions. Strike a balance between, I just don't think they should give them carte blanche to just, you saw it on Tryon Road that one year when they built that strip mall with the golden dome and they just laid waste to it. I don't know why 20 or 30 years ago when they built in Cary they had guidelines that they had to follow. That's why McGregor people like living there.
- I think you still see that in the higher cost developments because the people who are going to buy there want the trees there. You go to Highcroft behind mine, they didn't, very rarely did they ever take down trees. Cary Park was, of course Cary Park was built when they didn't have a lot of trees.
- A lot of this is farm land. You know farm land is bare so you go into an area, you don't see any trees, it wasn't necessarily clear...
- I'm just talking about things I've seen.
- We almost had too many. We lost, in the ice storm a couple of years ago we lost over a thousand trees in our development and you can't tell. Over a thousand trees came down.
- Mark, that's a flyer I picked up over in Parks and Recreations on the tree program in Cary if you'd like to have it.
- I will, thanks.
- I've got a couple things. Actually, the gang situation is also on my heart as well. Cary has, as Cary's matured over time, what used to be families with young children now have teens, there are many more teens demographically than there were and I remember when our kids were growing up, teenagers, they never felt like there was much for them to do here in Town other than shopping malls and theatres and I don't know how much of that was just being teenagers, but obviously as much as a town can do to create and think about it, there are things we can offer to do that. The idea of the skateboarding park was along the same lines.

- The skateboarding park is (inaudible).
- Yeah it is.
- Well they have a community center for the north side.
- Another thing, this is just sort of a specific thing, but and I haven't been in on the discussions for this and I know there have been, but the Cary downtown where I work is very small and of course some of this is really Wake County and not Cary, but there is a way I think that Cary could help that and I don't know what the status is going to be of the old elementary school, but it would certainly make a wonderful library facility that could also really maybe have other programs, at least for elementary school kids and maybe older. I don't know, I know there's been some meetings on that, but that would get my vote and I would roll up my sleeves and help, too. It's a very beautiful building. That would be a great use of that.

*(Facilitator ends focus groups and thanks participants)*

## Appendix D

### 2006 Biennial Survey Focus Group Transcript Session 2

**Moderator:** First off, all of you live in Cary. Okay, good. How long have you lived in Cary. Rick?

- 8 years.
- I think 9 years.
- 23 years.
- 23 years.
- 13 years.
- 5 years.

**Moderator:** Five years, okay, which is not unusual. We have a lot, certainly a growing community, we have a lot of folks that aren't here as long. I'm going to shift the order a little bit. Now, by the way anybody live in apartments? Okay, very good. I'm going to shift the order a little bit this time and cover some newer things that we didn't get a chance to hit last time. The first one we want to talk about is the Town's culture. It's important to the Town's staff that they give interactions with their citizens are very positive; anybody that works within any of the departments here. Every year we ask people that have had any interaction with the Town, anybody in the Town Government how courteous they were, professional, how prompt, how knowledgeable and you remember those questions because we went through them, we went through them with the Police, remember that, Town Government and all those. The scores were very good, but there was a slight drop or slip in those scores this time even though they were still on the high end, that was a concern for everybody, that there was a little bit of a slip there. Can you give us some sort of idea, what expectations do you have for the Town staff or why there might have been a slip?

- I can give you an example. I had a problem with my water, sewage. I found out the Water Board and they were fine, they were really nice. They said they would send somebody out, it would be a few hours. The truck turned up in about ten minutes. The guy from the Town and the plumber started having a row right in front of me. I mean they were really rude to each other. They were like giving each other the finger and I was standing in the middle trying to sort it out saying you're being useless to me as a homeowner, fighting between you. Help me, and they just, the sewage guys left. I was not thrilled and it ended up costing me something like \$1,800 to have my pipe, have an exit valve put in my pipe, my sewage pipe so the Town of Cary could come blow out something that was under the road, not on my property, had nothing to do with me, but was blocking my drains, so I'm not thrilled with the water in Cary at the moment.

**Moderator:** Okay. Anything else? What else?

- That was my one downer with the water people. That was just coming here, and I can't remember the circumstances that I came here to pay the bill because I usually mail it but the same person waited on me who waited on me several years ago and she was totally different and I don't know if it was a bad day or some things going on in Cary. I don't know, she was just totally unfriendly whereas before they've been very friendly.



**Moderator: You mean just how un...what do you mean by unfriendly?**

- Well she came up to the counter and I gave her my bill and I said I'd like to pay this and so she got me whatever I needed and I paid it and I said, how are you today. I mean just absolutely it might have well as been a robot. It was real different from what had been, but that was just my one experience.

**Moderator: Did anybody else have any interactions at all with the Town Government staff?**

- I've had interactions with them, but mine have mostly been very good, positive.
- Mine too. Just occasionally garbage doesn't get picked up on time. You call them up for motor oil that I often drain out of lawn mowers and I'll call them up and they say we'll be out on a given day to come pick it up and I've never really had any issues and a few times when the people from recycling didn't pick up what they're supposed to or yard waste, you call up and they had an individual who came out very quickly from the center of Town because I'm maybe ten minutes from here. They're very quick and apologizing from here. They said they should have picked it up and they picked it up and didn't have any other thing to say. For me, it's always been positive. I've never had anything negative so far to say.
- We had two bicycles stolen from our carport and my husband called one morning, I think he was off, he actually worked for the Town of Cary and he was off one morning and he called just to report it and to get any information that he could and they were in our house. We live really close to the center of downtown actually and they were at our house within five minutes probably, in our driveway filling out reports. It was a really pleasant fellow and other than that it's always been fine for us as well.

**Moderator: Good. Is there a dislike for automated services like email or voicemail among you?**

- I don't like voicemail. I'd rather talk to someone.
- I don't have a problem with voicemail or automated systems if they're not, if they're not openly hostile where they put you in a purposeful roundabout to try get to somebody or something. I haven't had that issue with the Town, but I have had it with a lot of companies, especially the phone company and it's just hateful. It's not a problem as long as they make it quick and you can get to someone reasonably fast.

**Moderator: Anybody else? Feelings about automated systems?**

- I think email is great. If you're trying to get somebody, I've been using it with the town on a couple of issues...
- I have too.
- ...and it's about the C-Tran because TTA has virtually abandoned service on Cary Parkway even though they'll say otherwise. I'm a user so I know firsthand and Mr. Boylston I believe who runs the C-Tran has been very helpful about giving me information about what the Town is going to do and it was through email and it was a matter of minutes, like 20, 30 minutes when I sent something in and he had a very detailed response so I was very impressed with that; the kind of detail he had.

**Moderator: Good.**

- I have the opposite to that because I have a friend who's trying to work out how the transit system works and she's phoned the Mayor, she's phoned, I don't know who she's phoned. She's one of those women who just pushes and phones everybody and she's left messages and nobody has called her back and she's livid and there's no bus service. So, she's not happy about that.

**Moderator: Can you think of any other places around the Triangle that have the kind of customer service that maybe that the Town should try to emulate? When you think of places you call that have excellent customer service.**

- I think the Town has the best of any place that I've called or emailed or anything.
- Yeah. Surprisingly better than most retail establishments that I've had experience with by a long shot, especially setting up a new office here in Town I've had to deal with the utility companies specifically like Bell South and Time Warner since they provide us with the internet service. Time Warner hasn't been bad but Bell South has been the run around.
- They are really awful. They call our offices where I work all the time and drive us crazy and they can actually be really rude right back to you. You ask them not to call anymore, they are terrible, surprisingly rude.

**Moderator: Let me move into communications for a minute. Did you have a comment?**

- No, go ahead.

**Moderator: Okay, let's move into communications just for a minute. We want, they want the citizens of Cary to know that they have access to all the information they could possibly want about the government. They want to be completely open with that. Now, they also recognize the limited number of hours for you guys to search for information then also due to your commitments it's not as important. It can be more important or less important depending on the issue so they recognize that. For the time being, the type of stuff you want to pay attention to is important to them, what information you want, so let's sort of prioritize that. What kinds of information are most important to you, are topics that you think that citizens most need to know about in terms of things like garbage collection, maybe recycling, planning initiatives, construction, Parks and Recreation programs, which ones do you consider the most important to you?**

- Changing tax rates.

**Moderator: Okay.**

- Roads.

**Moderator: So, major initiatives?**

- Mmm hmm.

**Moderator: Okay.**

- I like cultural events. I like to know, I have children in elementary, middle and high school and we're always looking for things that are low cost or free and we've actually participated in a lot in Town. I like to get emails about that.

**Moderator: What else?**

- I agree with her because I have kids and they went to a lot of the Parks and Rec programs and that BUD newsletter thing, I kind of, I read that much to my surprise, but I do actually read that for information about what's going on in the Town.

**Moderator: Does that serve the purpose for all of you?**

- The problem is by the time it gets to me, I guess I'm late in the cycle. I'll often see, I'm reading about things that happened early February and I just got it today so it seems to be the cycle of the way they print it and distribute it is way off in my case.

**Moderator: So it's not current enough.**

- In general it's not. Usually things have happened a week or two ago by the time I read it.

**Moderator: These issues, the Park and Recreation initiatives and stuff, do you feel you have enough information? Are you as informed as you want to be?**

- I know I can use the Town of Cary website to find a lot of, there's a table tennis thing coming up and I went straight to the website to get more information and they've been, I've somehow gotten into some sort of email list and it's already, I mean it's not very much effort to...

**Moderator: All of you use their website?**

- I have. That's how I found out a lot about the C-Tran information. It could be better organized...
- Some of their labels...

**Moderator: How could it be better organized?**

- For example, I was looking about the C-Tran and I had to in essence look down the alphabetical list to know what C-Tran was before I could find it. It wasn't under transportation or anything that you would think on the top level. So if you know what you're looking for and have a reasonable idea it's not hard to find things. It is long alphabetically, sometimes it's a long alphabetical list. There's good and bad to that, but what I wanted to find, once I found the webpage it was a lot of information and the individual that was in charge of running a lot of it was the one who was responding back to me through email. I was very impressed at the detail the man was giving me.
- They're very open to feedback because I had trouble with something like that. It was about recycling or something and it was hidden in some obscure place and I never could find it but they're very responsive and then changed that to be better for the user.

**Moderator: So the level they're giving you is sufficient in those areas?**

- Eventually, yes.

**Moderator: Or you can find it if you want to. That's another question; do you think the Town should be more aggressive in trying to get that information to you; either through contacting you in terms of mailings or something, maybe BUD, or the website. Do you think they're aggressive enough? Do you know enough to find everything you need? The reason this has come up, it was sort of an issue that the scores dropped a little bit here for their communication efforts and they're trying to figure out a little bit more information on how to communicate better with the citizens and that's what's really driving this.**

- Well the Parks and Rec are now mailing me things, mailing me postcards of programs that might be of interest to my children if they were still ten, but they're not. They've left home and they're 20 so it's a bit out of whack there with that information. Why they're picking on me to send that information to, but they still do send me postcards quite often.

**Moderator: Do the rest of you get the postcards?**

- Mmm hmm. No.
- I got a postcard from C-Tran recently and there was a magnet stuck on it but it didn't really look like a magnet. To me, I do a lot of packaging and product merchandizing where I work and I love little magnets because we usually take them and paint them and all that stuff. You probably don't like to hear that, but I thought it could have been a waste of money because it said nothing on it, I mean it seemed like a waste of money because here was this free magnet to stick on your fridge or whatever, but probably my guess is that if I had looked at it and not looked at it again I would have thrown it away because it didn't look like anything. It just looked like a picture of the C-Tran.

**Moderator: So the Town, probably what you're saying, is being aggressive enough? You're getting what you need across. Another question is what barriers do you see if any of the Town being able to communicate with you better? Any barriers? Anything inhibits or we could actually take away that would help?**

- You're not going to ever find out as much about what's going on here in the smaller Towns as opposed to Durham and Raleigh and it's because the local news media is going to concentrate on the two biggest population centers. So if I hear of something going on in Cary, sometimes it will be in the news if I don't find out or you'll find out through BUD or word of mouth, but you're not going to see something plastered on the WRAL about what's going on necessarily unless it's something really bad going on unfortunately, but Raleigh of course, someone in Raleigh might say they're more informed than they are here just because it's going to be on the front page of the Observer for top stories on our local news stations so I think Cary is doing a reasonably good job considering they don't have as many outlets that are passive where you can hear it in radio, television when you're watching TV or listening in the car to the news broadcast.

**Moderator: The barriers are tremendous, but it seems like they're doing a pretty good job.**

- I do agree. For as quickly as the Town's grown I'm surprised that the communication's been as good because sometimes services lag a little bit and you've got to hire more people in projecting. I don't really see much of a barrier. I agree.

**Moderator: So over the past two years you would say that communication is consistent, about the same level that it's been in the past?**

- Mmm hmm.

**Moderator: You would agree?**

- I mean we're inundated with information in this day and time from all kinds of sources so a lot of times we put up barriers....
- Don't want to hear it.
- ...so you've really got to be strategic about how you get it and then that's probably tougher on your job because I know a lot of times I just want to block it because there's so much stuff coming in.

**Moderator: Maybe that's part of the problem then. One of the solutions that they've been trying to address is to start asking people for their email addresses when they sign up for utility services and then they would start emailing the information to people. How does that sound?**

- No, thank you. I don't want anymore emails.
- It depends on what it is. There's too many, for me...
- What would be electronic mail for when it comes to utilities since it's just the water bill, I mean as far I'm concerned I see whatever's printed there on the bill or in that BUD. If some Rec change is happening or something about water conservation, it's going to be in there and it will be good enough. I will hear something like that on the television stations because it hits the whole area, not just one town in particular.
- But if you could target it, like you were saying, to cultural events or something it would come in as Town of Cary Cultural Events or something for the month, you could sign up for different things that might interest you.

**Moderator: So not a general email, but one more specific where you sign up?**

- It's too easy to mail everything...
- That's right...
- Where you pick and choose what topics you'd like to know about. We used to get one from the Town of Cary about accidents or you know. I just didn't want to hear about that. I would get like four or five a day and they would update you on the same accident...
- No, we don't want that.

- ...it was just like, it wasn't very, I mean I sort of got wrapped up in a little bit.
- A typical way, I don't know since I haven't gotten it from the Town I can't comment on what they're doing, but one way I've seen big organizations do it is email that has just certain bullets in one or two lines then a link buried in there if you wanted more detail so that way you could just scan through real quickly. Professional organizations often do it like that so they'll have, or financial companies when they send you information, there's maybe, so you'll have just one or two sentences. If it looks interesting, click on hyperlink because it's an email and you'll be taken to a webpage that has more information that way you can breeze through things a whole lot faster. There may be one specifically for utility issues and then there's one email you'll get for cultural, parks and recreation issues, things like that. So there's one target one and maybe you'll only have four or five global ones, maybe six, seven, I'm not sure which, but then each one of them has buried within it more information. TTA does that. If you get, you sign up for different kinds of alerts and some of them is based on a route or you can have one global and it has hyperlinks inside it if you want more details.

**Moderator: So if they ask you for your email you would concur to give them your email at that point?**

- As long as I know it's not going to be sold.

**Moderator: Okay. Now if they ask for...let's step back on this, so if you do take the email, give them the email, you're really, what you're telling me is you want them to be, what they're sending you would be something you asked them to send?**

- Targeted to my interest.
- Targeted, yeah.

**Moderator: So you just don't want general emails and those that do come, just a link would be good to tell us where to go to get...**

- One or two sentences is good.

**Moderator: ...more detail.**

- Mmm hmm.

**Moderator: Okay. That's good. Any other ideas how they can communicate a little more efficiently outside of the email that's a little bit more targeted, what else, anything?**

- Perhaps more information about what's going on in our government in Cary News since it is buried inside the Ins & Outs, it's buried now. It's a separate section now.

**Moderator: How often would you like to get information on that?**

- Once a month.

**Moderator: When you say, what type of information would you like to have? Roy, you said initiatives.**

- Yeah.

**Moderator: Anything else?**

- I'd like to be able to switch to Channel 11 right after the evening news and see some stuff on that. I use to watch the proceedings next door on TV.
- Is there a station that advertises, not advertises but puts information about the city on it? I don't think there is.
- Except for Channel 11.
- Channel 11.
- 11 though, shares it with other things.

**Moderator: So you want a channel that's just dedicated to...**

- At least a time where I know I can get some news about Cary.

**Moderator: Okay. Cary news on their TV stations.**

- Yeah.

**Moderator: Their cable TV.**

- Yeah.

**Moderator: Okay, instead of just the BUD. Is BUD fulfilling a pretty good purpose?**

- If it was timely. That is my only complaint with it. The cycle for people who get billing, my billing is usually in the middle of the month so today is when the bill showed up so quite a bit of what was in the BUD had already happened earlier in the month.

**Moderator: It needs to be more current or more in advance...**

- More in advance.

**Moderator: Okay, that makes sense. Now let's talk a little bit about actual involvement.**

**Not only just getting information out to you, there's a bit of concern among the citizens of their ability to actually, well participate in the decision-making process and that score went down a little bit. Based on, do you think there's room for improvement in satisfaction assistance with your opportunity to participate in the process? Are you unhappy with it?**

- What process?

**Moderator: In other words, when they're going to have an initiative, they're doing plans, anything they're looking to do; to get your input, let you participate in it. Are you happy with that? Even though you may not do it, are you happy that you could do it?**

- I don't think I'm even aware of those kinds of opportunities.
- Like hearings on houses?

**Moderator: Those things, initiatives, public hearings, the meetings that Town Council has, committees that have separate meetings.**

- I don't know much about that, but I know the person that lives two doors down from me is actually getting ready, has to leave their house because the Town of Cary won't fix a drainage pipe underneath their house that floods every time it rains and he was telling me about these meetings and I don't know anything about them. I mean I would have gone to support him at the meetings. When we were talking to him a month and a half ago, I would have gladly gone. I knew nothing about what was going on and unfortunately now it's too late. You can't get through to someone.

**Moderator: So this is an issue then. You think they need to give more information on how to participate?**

- I don't even know when they have them. I don't.

**Moderator: Makes sense.**

- It might be online.

**Moderator: What were you going to say?**

- I just have to be honest here and say I've pretty much given up on Cary. I just feel totally out of the loop and I go other places for cultural activities. I just, I have never had much information at all and all the Cary paper ever had in it was if you don't have a child in school there's nothing worth reading and my kids are all grown up so now that it's been in the News & Observer, I've read it more but that would be the main place where they could tell people about these things and they don't.

**Moderator: In Cary News or News and Observer?**

- The Cary News, now because it comes with the News & Observer whereas before I didn't read it, now it's right there. I read it, but what's in it? Not much.

**Moderator: Well, can you think of any topics or issues that you did not have satisfactory opportunities to participate? Or any topics or issues that you would have liked to have participated in?**

- I mean does anybody actually feel a part of Cary here? I feel like it's a bedroom community for the RTP or something. It just doesn't feel like a community that you really want to participate in, that you really care about. At least that's how I am. I don't know, I may be a minority.
- Me, I live and work here so it was one of the reasons that I located here because my first job was right near Crossroads Shopping Center so I bought a house reasonably close. The second place we're going to now that I'm changing jobs, I specifically picked it so it would be close to my house.
- So you feel really like participating more in the Town?
- More so. We don't really, except for maybe a few, say our church where we go to. Most everything we do is in this Town. We really don't do much else. We really don't have much reason to and I'm one of those people who has younger children so...
- But how much are you participating in these things that he's talking about?
- These, I'll be honest with you, not much.
- But do you know about it?
- I'm familiar with them because I've seen for example, requesting people to participate in different types of citizen's boards like cable television regulations is one that I've seen before and I don't know some of the other ones, but I know they have them in BUD. They're actually asking for volunteers. It's not like you don't know about it.

**Moderator: In other words, the information is there but at this point in time you're not really wanting to participate?**

- I don't think they put them in the BUD all the time, do they?
- I've seen them and they can't get anybody to sign up it seems like a lot of times.
- Where does it typically go? I mean where does it typically advertise now?

**Moderator: They don't give me that information. Probably I'd have to ask to find out.**

- It sounds like it's something you have to go to the website to dig up.
- It sounds like they need to probably promote those things so we could get them better....

**Moderator: Where would the best sites be to promote these things if we had to do it?**

- I think it goes back to that email thing he's talking about. It's two sentences; this month we're having a meeting on this new development in so and so place and then of course you have your links under that if you want to get more detail.
- Email is one, but since most people like my parents who don't live here but they have electronic mail at the house. They don't really use it a whole lot. My wife doesn't use it as much as I do because of the business. At least first shot something says something or at least more details to sign up for the Town of Cary's different email lists. In the BUD, at least advertise to get more details. It doesn't have to have many details in the BUD, but at least have a blurb in there and if people keep seeing it, if you want more details, this is where you go to sign up for different lists.
- Yeah it can make the headlines in the BUD.
- ...right.
- This is the thing that's coming up. If you need more details you need to go to the website...
- Most everyone is going to be getting a water bill....

**Moderator: The website is a good place, water bill...**

- ...The water bill in particular because most people...

**Moderator: That's what they want to know. They want to know the best place to put this to reach you overall. Is cable...?**

- I don't watch that channel.

**Moderator: Does anybody watch the cable?**

- Not enough people are watching that to make it worthwhile I don't think.

**Moderator: More appropriate would be the Cary News.**

- I think the News & Observer. I hate to have to buy a second newspaper.
- Well the Cary News comes with it on Wednesdays now.
- Right, it just started and that would be fine if they...
- About seven or eight years ago it was worth getting the Cary News separate because they had very good sports columns that I used to like.

**Moderator: Let me ask you another question. What they've done, they've brainstormed and they've come up with some ideas to actually help with involvement of the citizens and to get you more involved and they have two options they've looked at. The first one is have quarterly or semiannual Town Hall meetings held in different locations around the Town and actually the Mayor and all the Council members would be there and they would answer any questions that you may have, listen to your concerns at that point. Do you think that citizens would see this as a significant increase in opportunities to affect the decision-making process?**

- I think that would be great, yeah.

**Moderator: Okay. What's everybody else think?**

- It seems sort of general though. I don't know, if you don't have any specific things to talk about, I guess maybe people have their own agenda.
- If they come into your area though, you feel more a part of it. The thing I noticed about Cary is having the Wake County School system, if you do not have a school system that's just your town, you have no cohesive community. It's just so spread out. All your neighbors go to every different school so it's very hard for a community like Cary in my opinion, to really bring people together because they have to do it all themselves.

**Moderator: This may be a way to help?**

- I think so. I think that would be good.

**Moderator: Would any of you possibly participate at all in that?**

- I'd go if it came to my area and addressed things in my area.
- I would.

**Moderator: You would? So this seems like a pretty good option. Let me give you another option then. Regular call in or email television show and it would be on Cary TV and it would also have the Mayor and Town Council there. Do you think this would, citizens would see this as a significant increase in the ability to affect the decision-making process?**

- It would be a particular time of day.

**Moderator: It would have to be a particular time and you would call in or you could send an email in and then Council would respond to it and that would be on Cary TV 11. What do you think?**

- It'd be interesting. It might be entertaining.
- It might reach a lot more people.
- I think stay-at-home people like senior citizens would really go for that.



**Moderator: So certain groups it could be better for?**

- I would think so, yeah. It would really reach them.

**Moderator: Would any, either or both would be appropriate? What would you rather see?**

- I think you almost have to do both. I think it'll be better for both because there are certain people who aren't going to go to the meetings, but they'd sit in their home and maybe make a phone call...
- Absolutely.
- ...you know my water pipe's busted. I've been trying to get it for years and years.

**Moderator: That makes sense.**

- And also the transportation in the roads because they're widening Maynard and I have no idea what's happening with that and it seems to have stopped and I know it's going to affect me when it happens, but when? I don't know.

**Moderator: Let's go into some of these issues then. The next issue we'd like to talk about would be actually growth so let's talk a little bit about that. In the survey, that came up as a concern for a lot of the respondents, that the growth issue came back. Let's first start, when you think of growth, now when you answered the question, this really came out an open ended question...when you answered the question and a lot of people put out they're really concerned with growth and development in the area. When you answered that question were you talking about growth in Cary, growth in Wake, or maybe just growth in the whole Triangle?**

- It seems to me that Cary is exploding and it's going to be all of Wake County and it's going to go out as far as Pittsboro. It doesn't seem to have any center. It's just like an amoeba.

**Moderator: So it's really sort of the whole area...**

- Is becoming Cary, yeah. You drive in and out of it, you go into another town and then hey you're back in Cary again, just having passed through Apex or something.
- I guess for me it's more Cary, but like these subdivisions, if you've driven down High House and Davis Drive, they're almost no trees left over there anywhere any more, where it used to be all farms, even at Kildare Farm. I just want to make sure that the developers are chipping in with some of this infrastructure...
- Good luck.
- ...and not just sucking up all the fees because if they're going to build a thousand houses, that's a school and a half that we have to build just in schools, let alone the infrastructure, the sewer, the water's got to get there and I just hope that they're paying some kind of impact fee to help with that.
- Didn't they used to have to do that a long time ago or wasn't it a requirement?
- And it was rolled back when the new Mayor came down.
- Yeah, I remember hearing something about that.
- And we still may be more than in some communities but I don't think it's enough to just let them wipe it out and say, well you guys build the schools and get us our water.
- That is unfortunately a regional wide or even national issue because living in Austin when it happened, Austin was ahead of Raleigh by about 10-15 years and so they had their small towns like Round Rock where Dell Computers headquarters are, looks a lot like Cary. When I left there, there was, when I got to Austin there was maybe 10,000 and there was 30,000 when I left in 1993 and there's probably 100, 120,000 there so it looks very similar to Cary and it butts right up to Austin. Unfortunately, unless you look at it

from a regional standpoint, Cary is actually better if you look at Raleigh believe it or not. The reason I say that is having now been on the other side, having to have something built out, listening to the developers saying, oh it's easier to get it done in Cary because we've already, things have slowed down a lot, we can't build as easily as we used to and they get the permitting process done in a fraction of the time that Raleigh does. That it has slowed down here, that Raleigh actually has got a lot more going because they've opened the flood gates and they don't charge any impact fees and then you're having them spreading more around Wake Forest and other areas and the growth I think is more, not just here because I can tell you going into Raleigh it's as bad or worse. It's like going in parts of Apex, if anyone's gone on 55 there where they built that Beaver Creek area. Now, it's hateful to drive through there. There's an example of it doesn't matter, it's not just here.

- It's definitely Wake County, but if Cary stood up and said we want to make sure...
- But they did a few years ago and got...and the Mayor, he was brash and he was brazen but he got smacked down so I hear you and I personally was for that, but a lot of people apparently weren't because if growth slows down and jobs start drying up and they wanted the flood gates opened back up to try and make things pick up.

**Moderator: So we're not necessarily saying it's Cary. Cary's a part of it, but it's the region that's having the growth...**

- To me it's the region, it's the whole region.
- Absolutely.
- If you've been anywhere else in the growth areas, the state, like around Charlotte, it's worse...
- Oh Charlotte is...
- The way things are done now, nobody builds around small towns. You build neighborhoods and around the neighborhoods you build schools and shopping areas. The town is never the central thing anymore, it's the shopping center.

**Moderator: Okay, so let me ask you another question then. What do you think concerns people most about growth, is it the byproducts of growth such as the traffic, standing in line, are those the big issues with growth?**

- The traffic, to me, traffic being one big issue. Schools, especially if you track young families is the other one because unfortunately when the towns let it happen, the School Board's got to pick up the mess and they haven't got the authority to do much.

**Moderator: Traffic and schools, what else?**

- I think it's mostly traffic.
- I agree.
- Crossroads.
- Yes, Crossroads.
- It's terrible.
- I refuse to go down there.
- We can't get out of our neighborhood from between October and January because of the Walnut Street parking lot between the two shopping centers.
- They're redoing that now...
- On the weekends...
- ...I hear they're possibly redoing that...
- ...I'd be very curious to see....

- You're talking about...
- ...that whole interchange is being redone.
- Yeah. I drive on that interchange.
- They say it will be better but I can't quite see it yet.
- I go around on Cary Town Blvd and get on 40 to get into Crossroads and I live like right here. I just go around. It's faster, because I used to go to Crossroads everyday and I would just go...

**Moderator: We'll get to traffic too in just a second.**

- Another concern on that is if we don't hurry up and buy up some of this open space, it will turn into a housing development because there's just a finite amount of land in Cary, for instance, and if you keep it permitted for something else it's going to never be...you've got to have a certain amount of parts and open space without all the in field.

**Moderator: Let's talk, so traffic and roads seem to be an issue. What about schools? If you look at the schools in terms of overcrowding and reassignment, they seem to be the two major concerns that came out in the survey when we talked with residents. Would you say a vast majority or a pretty good amount or maybe even half of it or less than half of the problems with growth come from that? Are schools driving these concerns? Let me ask you a first question. Anybody have children in the school system?**

- Mmm hmm. I do.

**Moderator: You do. Okay. Would that be a driver, was that a major driver do you think?**

- Of what?
- Can you rephrase the question again?

**Moderator: Of the growth issue, we want to find out what's causing such concern for growth and we know you guys told us traffic and roads are a major issue for you. What about the school systems? And what the two areas that came out were the fact that they were over crowded and they do a lot of redistricting, reassignment of schools. Do you think when you talk with other people and among yourselves that schools are a driver of this concern about growth?**

- No, they are a recipient of it.
- Exactly.
- Absolutely.
- It's like the guy who develops the thousand houses, now we have to have him provide a school for that.
- The developers are driving the growth in my opinion.
- Oh, absolutely.

**Moderator: Is that a major concern for everybody?**

- Which is a major concern?

**Moderator: The schools.**

- It is. I guess the redistricting doesn't bother me quite as much as some people because I was in a court ordered desegregated school system in the '60s and we changed schools by court order every two years so it's not as big a deal to me...
- Yeah, but didn't you do it all as a group?
- ...not necessarily, no. It got split up and diversified. It was not quite as consistent as you think.
- I would just see my children and the whole neighborhood go to one school for some cohesive thought.

- There is something to be said for going from kindergarten through your senior year of high school with the same group of people. I grew up in a small town outside Charlotte and that's the way it was for me.
- It would be nice to have a school bus that came somewhat near closer to your house than they do.
- And not have to ride on it for an hour to get where you're going.
- Right.
- Yeah.
- And not have to drive them to the bus stop to get them on the bus.
- Yeah, we do that with one of my kids...
- It's ridiculous.
- ...the express bus.
- But it's hard for the schools to keep up if they get 6,000 new students. That's like 15 schools. You can't build 15 schools in three months.
- That was one difference that I noticed and this is getting too global, but where I lived in Texas for a few years, the School Board were taxing entities so here they gotta go hand and hand to the county. The county doesn't have any control of the growth so all the people who are making the decisions don't really suffer the repercussions unfortunately.
- This is where the impact fees can help out. I mean if you have the people that are actually driving the growth help out with the infrastructure you have a chance maybe to keep up.
- To make it really stick it has to be not just Cary, it has to be all over.
- Oh yeah, it would have to be the whole county, absolutely.

**Moderator: So that's the next question I have. What can Cary do better to help manage growth? You said impact fees. Are you saying regional cooperation in this?**

- Absolutely.
- That's one of the big ones, yes. If the question is how can you get the big boys to play, let's face it, if Raleigh or Durham doesn't want to do it they'd tell everyone to drop dead and it falls apart unfortunately and that seems to be too often what happens, that Durham and Raleigh, especially Raleigh, they don't want to really play with anybody else. We're the biggest kid on the block, not just Cary, we're the biggest one on the block, we don't want to do it, we want to do it the way we want.
- How often do the leaders meet with Raleigh and everybody else? I mean how often do they meet as a unit?

**Moderator: That's an issue. That's a question.**

- I would figure they should be meeting all the time, at least once a month.
- There was a Triangle J Council that was supposed to be everybody in the whole multi-county area, but it slowly fell apart as my understanding. One of the biggest was, I understand, that Raleigh didn't want to play. They said when we're a third, a half of the population in the city or in the county, we can do whatever we want. You follow us. You don't like it, stick it.

**Moderator: Can Cary do anything individually without that do you think?**

- The impact fees, I think, did a lot because it changed the mentality in the whole area.

**Moderator: Were you positive to those or negative?**

- You better believe it because I've gotten screwed by builders before and anything to make sure they pay their fair way is more, I'm all for it.

**Moderator: Anybody else, are you for impact fees?**

- Yeah, absolutely. I think you have to pay to play otherwise they are just going to keep raising property taxes so we have to subsidize all this new development coming.
- When I hear this garbage about well the growth pays for itself, then why if there's more people and I understand from an operations standpoint that the property taxes are going to cover them, but if you don't pay for some of that capital it's going to have you put up front, the people who are here local have to subsidize it. If that's what everybody wants then fine, but you can't have the growth and then people want it to grow, they want their housing prices to go up, they want it both. Well it's going to make the housing prices go up too much. Yeah, but maybe that's what it costs really to build a house. It isn't just putting it up and all the materials. There is some other external factors that aren't being taken into consideration and that's the impact fees coming out.

**Moderator: How would you rate Cary if you looked at other towns around here like Apex or Holly Springs or maybe even Raleigh in terms of managing growth?**

- I think they're doing a better job than the other two even though (inaudible).
- I do, too.
- It's a great place.
- I'm thinking they haven't done a bad job.

**Moderator: Okay let me ask you another one. If you had an ideal growth situation for Cary, what would it be?**

- It would have started quite a number of years ago, for one thing, so I don't know what you can do now.
- I think if they protected the downtown area and don't put more roads through the middle of it and split it up, make it more of a center, it would help.

**Moderator: Preserve it?**

- Yeah. Preserve what we've got.

**Moderator: Mmm hmm.**

- I think making the downtown area more user-friendly. Like Charlotte is an excellent example of that. I grew up right outside there and lived right outside Charlotte until we moved here five years ago and when I go back now, they have, I mean I watched Nation's Bank being built everyday when I was in high school. I rode by there on the bus and when they first started putting, there were shopping centers that were built and then they failed 15 or 20 years ago and now when you go to downtown Charlotte there's an unbelievable nightlife, there's people walking around all hours, well up until 12 or 1 o'clock at night.

**Moderator: Is that what you mean by user-friendly?**

- I would love for things to be happening down here in the downtown area.

**Moderator: What kind of things would you like to see down here?**

- I would love it if we had a train. I don't know if we're ever going to get that, but just I'd love it if we could have live music. I don't know if, why there are no, I mean I guess it's a bar or not, I'm not real sure what you would call that. There are things that go on at Page Walker that we've gone to which is great, but just more, I mean we walk, we would walk up here and go to art or just more cultural things in general I guess.

**Moderator: More cultural activities?**

- Yeah.
- Didn't I hear they're moving, they used to have a jazz, um, I don't quite remember, near Cary High School there was a stand and they used to play jazz...

- They still do...
- There's different venues around Town that they could probably bring into the city center and make it alive maybe.

**Moderator: More in the downtown area, is that what you're saying?**

- Mmm hmm.

**Moderator: The other question on this is a lot of revenues that come from growth and the tax base account for the money that Cary uses to provide the high level of service that you guys get and if the growth and the tax....let's face it, the growth and the tax base now is pretty, it's been tied to population growth. So if Cary were to slow down growth in terms of growth and development which would cut down a little bit on the population growth, they'd have to come up with other ways to pay for the infrastructure items that you guys are used to plus you would need in the future. How could they do this? Would raising taxes or fees or something be the way to go?**

- I do think that's the right strategy for Cary. I don't think the Town will be able to grow forever and at some point you're going to want to make Cary a place where people will want to come for some reason so I do think that, you asked us what we felt about growth and I would like to see less...
- More consistency.
- ...I would like to see a gradual focus over the next decade on infrastructure.

**Moderator: You're saying slower growth? There is still some growth, but not as...**

- Yes. Begin to slow it down and it will slow eventually.
- It's slowing a lot already.
- Society, the baby boomers are passing through like a mouse through a snake's throat. Once that's done Cary is going to position itself to be a place to live, to keep people here.
- So when you say growth, are you talking specifically about residential, commercial or retail because I personally, if there were more commercial growth, meaning office parks and the like, I'm all for it. They're not only relatively nonpolluting, but high tax base for personal impact and that's one thing that is not a bad thing to have. Retail, yeah it's going to show up, but it would be nice to see more office parks if there's going to be growth instead of strictly residential because residential, especially...I'm guilty of it too, that what does it encourage? It encourages cul-de-sacs being built all over the place because that's what people want to buy.

**Moderator: Let's talk about another issue related to growth and that's traffic. When you think of the problem areas, are you thinking mostly in Cary or outside of Cary for traffic?**

- Both.
- Both.
- And it's the interminable time it takes to finish a project. Perfect example, Piney Plains Road. First, I don't know why it's being widened. I traveled that road for 12 years, back and forth, a couple times a day and it was being widened the last year...

**Moderator: You said Piney...?**

- Piney Plains Road which...
- The Tryon...
- ...from Tryon to Walnut and for the life of me I can't figure out why it's being widened and the second thing is why it's taking so long now that projects start. It's like work happens in fury then stops really two and three months at a time and it's like if you're going to start, finish it.

- They could wait until there's so many people using and block off one lane like they did Davis. They waited way too long on that.
- Well Davis was a sticky situation because it was a state road. Piney Plains isn't, it's a city road and it just, why if they're going to start something, at least finish it.

**Moderator: Well let me ask you a question. What are some of the problem areas that you see and when are they problems? Like are they problems on the...**

- Crossroads is number one in my book.
- (Crosstalk)

**Moderator: Is that weekdays or just?**

- Weekends and then Black Friday through the day after Christmas.

**Moderator: Okay. Crossroads has come up a lot. Any other areas?**

- I-40 at Harrison, every day at 5 o'clock is at a stand still.

**Moderator: Okay. What else?**

- Because it's two lanes there and then it goes to three lanes before it gets...it's an odd thing; it's a bunch of lanes and then it goes to two and then it goes back to three, but it's right in the middle of a huge area.

**Moderator: Where else?**

- And also the sewage works is there so when you get stuck in the summer with your window open, you're sitting there trying to get off and the sewage smells. I'll just throw that in.
- 54 gets congested sometimes right through here, but I guess they're working on that from Trinity.

**Moderator: Mmm hmm.**

- Widening it.

**Moderator: Okay. What ideas do you have for the Town, if you have any, to improve traffic? And some of the things, build more roads, state roads, widen 55 and Davis Drive, mass transit, bike lanes, HOV's, what do you think?**

- Traffic light coordination.
- Yes.

**Moderator: Can you think of any areas that come to mind?**

- Harrison.
- One place would be all along Walnut that is just, that place is just, I don't even want to use the word, the phrase that I'm thinking of what it is. First off, I always joke that whoever was the architect for Crossroads shopping center, I'd bring him in and stand him next to a group of architecture students and say see everything here? Everything here is wrong and whack the guy over the head while you're telling the students it's wrong because I've never seen a more badly designed infrastructure because you have a huge shopping center with one entrance for all intensive purposes and then you've got a busy thoroughfare that's four lanes and you've got so much retail in one spot and the traffic lights just have the worst coordination that you can imagine and then you're going to probably get more rear end collisions now because somebody was more interested in putting in red light cameras than coordinating the darn traffic lights so people won't run the red lights all the time.
- I got one of those tickets just a couple of months ago.
- I fortunately have not gotten one.

- They added those little stop lights to sort of band-aid the speeding problem down that main thoroughfare at Crossroads Blvd but wasn't it supposed to be some sort of indoor mall at first and then they changed?
- It was a whole project.
- Yeah, a very high level indoor mall with Sax Fifth Avenue and all that business...
- Yeah.
- ...it just seems like it was sort of thrown together.
- Turned inside out...

**Moderator: Any other areas that come to mind?**

- Are you thinking mass transit? Are we continue since TTA it's gotten...
- Mass transit, I'll tell you, I take, I used to use it two years solid, everyday I was taking it. Nobody wants to ride it because you try to get people out of their cars. I started using it finally because my car was bought back by the factory because it was an official lemon and I said let me try this for a couple of weeks before I go buy another car. My wife had the car and I could use it whenever. That two weeks turned into two years and I didn't buy a car for a year because I just didn't need it.
- You loved it?
- I loved it. I hate driving to work now. I despise it. Unfortunately, TTA did away with the route and so I purposely picked that office to be on a TTA route where my house is. What happens is two months later that route was abandoned so on the big bus that I was on there had at most maybe six or seven people on it and I had coworkers on the same route that wouldn't take it. Well a few of them took it a few times. I gave them the bus passes. It didn't cost them anything. Hey this is great, and never rode it again. People talk about mass transit, but most people won't use it.
- There is no mass transit in Cary to get out of Cary on the weekends. The TTA doesn't run apparently. I don't use it, never have.
- No, it doesn't run. There are some routes that are going to run on the weekends, but TTA in general isn't going to run on the weekends. Raleigh does, some areas. Durham does. Durham's got a lot of usage with the bus. Raleigh has less so. Try to get anyone around here to even use it.
- I have this friend who's riding it to Durham. It takes her about three hours.
- Yeah, see I'm thinking more trains than buses.
- Yeah.
- I would go on the train. I would love it if the train, the train should go to the airport. Apparently they're not planning for it to do, which is ridiculous because that's the one time everybody would use it.
- I actually used it in January.
- The train will run more on time and it doesn't make as many stops. At least that's how it should be set up I think. If you go in cities like DC or New York and all those subways, people ride that stuff...
- Oh, they have to.
- ...they have to, but I mean they still do it...
- They do it, but they're forced to.
- ...more roads and force people to live and you get a lot of congestion and they get so expensive to drive a car...



- That's why people do it. A friend of mine lives in Chicago. It's \$300 a month if he drives his car. He says it's \$100 a month between commuting and a bus pass and a train pass, but it's \$300-\$350 a month just for the parking, forget about the gas.
- One other traffic area, just to go back to what your other question was. Out High House, we used to go out High House every Friday night and we ended up just taking sort of side roads because just going out High House to get to take a left on Davis Drive, especially when they were doing whatever it is that they were doing out there was nightmarish. It just seemed ridiculous at 6 o'clock to be sitting at Davis Drive light.
- And the traffic from the park coming back.
- Yeah, it's terrible.

**Moderator: Let me ask you another question on schools then, just a brief one. You know Cary doesn't have any oversight over the school system, that's Wake County, but they wanted to know what role do you expect the Town in helping to solve school concerns above and beyond they can't start their own system, leave that out of the mix for now. Anything they could possibly do?**

- They could help us buy land. Pick sites that don't get developed because schools have to have land and if you don't, then you're going to be cramming on sites that aren't really good; there's no ingress and egress.
- Makes sense.

**Moderator: What else, anything else?**

- At least show growth plans, share them with the School Boards so they have an idea instead of being surprised. Guess what, we just approved a 2,000 house development, too late, you guys figure out how to pay for it.
- You see, at that stage you can get the developers to pony up some land to build a school because someone's gotta build it somewhere and if we're paying 100 grand an acre for it, we're not going to be able to afford that much longer.
- And even if they don't have control over the schools and like whether or not they're magnet, I don't know if they could make a school that was closer to your house more appealing. We're zoned for Reedy Creek and it's just not an option because Reedy Creek offers almost nothing and for my middle schooler last year, no foreign language that she was interested in, nothing extracurricular that she wanted to do and electives. I don't understand how a place like Reedy Creek could have nothing and then she could go to a gifted and talented magnet where they have 150 different choices, so maybe the community that's around that school can do something for it to make it more appealing and make us want to be able to drop our kids off or just have a school that's five minutes away rather than 20 or 30 minute bus ride every day.

**Moderator: Let me ask you a couple of questions then about the cleanliness. There was sort of a concern, too. You were asked how well Cary maintains the streets and roads. Do you remember that question? What came to mind? Was it the potholes, pavement cuts, maybe new pavement, pavement marking, construction, or were you thinking about dirt, mud, trash, when you talked about maintenance?**

- Potholes.
- Potholes.
- I know why it's happened and the Town doesn't have much control. It's the obscenely heavy dump trucks that are destroying the roads and that's a statewide issue. I mean if you get the News & Observer there was a big series of articles. Where I live off of the Parkway, I couldn't figure out why potholes, watching, when you stand up and watch

waiting for the bus, you get to see a lot of things you don't normally get to see and I couldn't find out why coming out of my development which is over there near Waldo Route, there were potholes in an area that is mostly residential cars. Well I seen these dump trucks going down to the US 1 repair that's going on, right over the US 1 overpass. They were oversized dump trucks because they often look like fully loaded with only one axle down and I would see when those guys would go over little bumps, the kind of destruction they would do because I'd seen a pothole and never knew how it happened until I saw it standing on the side of the road. It's the dump trucks doing it and the city can't keep up. It's true in Raleigh. It's worse in Morrisville. If anyone's taken Airport it's like dodging landmines. You think you're out in (inaudible).

- I drive out on the Cary Parkway area to get on 1 every day and they close them up, but then they happen again and I used to know where all the potholes were and then they fixed them, but now there's other potholes. It's crazy.
- Donaldson Road is not really, and you know it's a state road, it's not a city road...
- Cary Parkway is?
- Yes, it's a state road. The way I found out is the homeowners had to pay to rip out all the plants and the medians because it used to be Town, then they turned it over to the state and that's why it's not as well maintained anymore.

**Moderator: Do you have any sight distance issues such as tall grass, trees that need pruning, any of those things come to mind in areas? Is Council doing a good job with those?**

- Yeah, I've been to Town...I have friends who come here, they're quite struck with not only how clean it is, but lack of billboards and just that everything looks well kept up and maintained and not just the city itself, but just the people's yards and stuff, it's just not dumpy looking and some people say it's very bland...
- Even the power lines...
- ...it's very bland. I said, well I guess I've lived places where it's more colorful and sometimes bland is nice.
- Colorful is being kind.
- If someone complains about it I say, you want to go live on Capitol Blvd be my guest.

**Moderator: Well let me ask you a question about parks and greenways. Cleanliness issues there? How are they? Any ways to improve them?**

- More of them, especially some kind of public swimming pools.

**Moderator: They're fine now, well maintained?**

- A swimming center would be excellent.
- I think they're building it...

**Moderator: It was in the survey...**

- One of the things, I mean it doesn't have to be something real fancy, but I can tell you that moving here, that was one thing that did take me aback. I grew up in Winston-Salem which now is actually the same size as Cary 30 years later and there were several public swimming pools. They were just good size pools, nothing special, didn't have beautiful duns or anything on it. They were filled up in the summertime. Here, unless you happen to have one in your homeowner's association or you can afford to join that Y which is as crowded as can be...
- I can't afford to join that Y.
- ...I can't either.

- We're members of a neighborhood pool because my in-laws live in that neighborhood and our kids swim on the swim team. That's the only reason. We can't afford it.
- It was just a bit stunning to me to see a town this size without a single public pool. I know there's supposed to be some going in now.

**Moderator:** There's an issue and it wasn't in the survey. They actually didn't put that in there. Can I ask you a couple of questions about revenue and maybe you can give us your thoughts on that. Okay, Cary pretty much, the growth rate in Cary over the past two or three years has been about 3%, but to actually fund the increasing costs of the services and infrastructure items that you're used to we need growth of around 4% so we're about a percentile off on that. So they have to find other ways to pay for it if they stay at the current rate of growth of 3% and you even eluded to that a second ago, Roy. Now, let me give you some assumptions Cary wants you to know beforehand. First off, we're talking about raising revenues for long term plans such as roads, parks, water and sewer. Okay. Secondly, basically to operate those. Secondly, we're running as efficiently as possible and they're constantly looking for ways to get more efficient so efficiency, they know that and they are aware of it and they're trying to get more efficient to save money that way. Taxes in Cary haven't been raised in over a decade and actually they've been lowered a little bit over that interim. Last thing, over the past ten years voters have approved about 320 million dollars in bonds for road, water, streets and park projects, you remember. Now as a part of that voters were told that taxes could go up about 17 cents but taxes have not increased at all.

- The tax rate has not increased.

**Moderator:** That's right.

- Taxes have gone up because property values have gone up.

**Moderator:** And that's true, too. Reassessments have occurred and we had some discussions in a previous focus group, but they haven't had to raise the basic rate...

- Right.

**Moderator:** ...at all. Based on those assumptions, how supportive would you be generally of the Town raising property taxes or could you envision a situation where it's okay for them to raise taxes?

- Theoretically I would be in favor of it, but when I see a building like this, I don't like to see my tax dollars go for something like this.

**Moderator:** Okay.

- I would rather see it go for something that benefits more people like public swimming pools. Who needs this?

**Moderator:** But you're saying there could be situations, right?

- Pardon me?

**Moderator:** You were saying though that there could be situations where they could raise, it would be okay?

- If they used the money...

**Moderator:** If it were used the way you wanted it to be used.

- For the people, for more people...

**Moderator:** Are we talking about water, sewer, regular services?

- To make things better, right?

**Moderator:** Exactly.

- Not to fuel more growth.

**Moderator:** Or even in some respects to maintain the level of service they have now. That would be a part of it and make it better.

- Hmm...

**Moderator:** That sort of thing. Okay, let me just go over a couple of scenarios here.

Would you support a two cent permanent increase in your taxes? Now, to give you an idea what a two cent would be and you know the current tax rate right now is 42 cents per \$100 valuation. A two cent increase on a \$100k house would be about an extra \$20 a year.

Would that be a tolerable increase?

- Absolutely.
- Yeah.

**Moderator:** How about a three cent, that would be a \$30?

- *(Supported by the participants)*

**Moderator:** Okay. They also, now suppose, now just suppose this assumption is they did raise taxes by five cents and just to get an idea of how they should go about implementing this, would it be better to do one cent, I mean a one cent increase a year for five years or a two cent increase and then maybe a big hit down the road of two or three in a few years? Which one is better?

- Gradual because you can't foresee what the economy is going to be like in three or four years.

**Moderator:** Okay so maybe a one cent everytime would be good. That's pretty much what we're hearing. Another thing, how many of you would rather see the Town allow a little more growth, maybe 5-6% or how many of you would rather see a tax increase? It is sort of a give or take. What would be more...

- Depends what kind of growth.
- Exactly.
- Exactly.

**Moderator:** What kind of growth would you like to see?

- More, like I said earlier, more commercial, strictly commercial. Retail to a lesser extent because you try to encourage more commercial or even industrial type growth because that jumps the tax base up more dramatically without the common need of services.

**Moderator:** So you're saying the type of growth is an issue?

- The type of growth, exactly.

**Moderator:** Everybody agree?

- Mmm hmm.
- Or you could raise the growth up but you've got to make the people coming in pay more to help us with that as opposed to having us subsidize, providing services for somebody that's coming in.
- You mean impact fees?
- I don't care what you call it, they've got to, I just feel like if we have to pay more to support them it's a tougher sell.
- I think what you're hearing is that if property taxes go up to fuel more population growth for more people to spread out further and wider and not make things better, I don't think you'll get a lot of support for that, but to make things better for the people that are here, I think then that you would get support; schools, roads, downtown areas, I think that, you would get a good buy in for property tax increases. Other than that...

**Moderator:** Everybody agree?

- Yeah, to build a swim center or...

- To build an art center, to make the library better...
- Yes, it would be nice if the downtown...

**Moderator: Services to benefit everybody, not just to support new people coming in.**

- Yeah.
- What are they going to do with the Cary Junior Elementary, that big building sitting there? Isn't it empty?

**Moderator: I don't know, but we had some suggestions for its use in the last meeting and one of those was to move, have the library as part of that, move that there. I don't know what you guys feel about what the use should be for that.**

- I thought it was supposed to be some sort of art center and they were going to have art classes in there, but I would love that. That would be great.
- It would show talent, it would bring the people in.

**Moderator: Can you think of any other ways the Town can raise revenues besides tax increases or growth, any other things come to mind? You said impact fees. What else?**

- They could put a little few meals on every sales tax in Cary. I mean there's a huge movement to get away with property tax altogether and replace it with sales tax which may happen in the future.

**Moderator: So possible sales tax.**

- I thought local communities have sales tax.
- Don't we have one?
- Do we have one?

**Moderator: Some communities have meals taxes.**

- I know Raleigh, around here they do. Charlotte has one. Charlotte actually has a half cent that's levied for the rail system they want to build right now. I don't know if it's Mecklenberg County or just Charlotte itself.
- How much are they studying these other places around the country that are growing at the same rate we're growing?

**Moderator: I couldn't tell you. That is not the scope of the survey.**

- This guy don't work for the Town at all.

**Moderator: I don't work for the Town through the department. I know, I pick up some things and can answer as much as possible and some things that I think are really a little beyond the scope of what we're doing, but if that's an issue that will certainly make it into the report. Now I don't mind you asking those questions...**

- They make you learn quite a bit from areas that are doing good things. There's sales tax things happening, there's impact fees things happening across the country, there's...

**Moderator: See, that's an information thing they need. When you bring that up it goes into a report and then that's some information they need to pass along when they're doing that kind of research.**

- I can tell you from some friends of mine who moved a couple of years ago from across the street, now he's living in Portland and they have a lot of the hyper growth issues like this area faces. They literally slammed the door on certain kinds of developments in a certain perimeter and prices of housing sky rocketed and it's to the point that people can't afford to live there if they haven't bought there ten years ago and of course the property taxes went up so you've got the worst of all possible worlds at the same time.
- Well we don't want to slam the door, but you can drive around Cary and there's a lot of stuff going on. I don't know about your area but in my area there, there's a lot of houses being built.

- Go down not far from here, down High House, these big mansions...
- That's what I'm saying.
- Yeah, there's that giant neighborhood out on Davis Drive that's got all the mixed; it's got like condos and then smaller and larger, I don't know...we were selling luminaries out there and they seem like they were on another planet really. I didn't even know that was part of Cary. I was out there and they were like, what's a luminary? It was terrible. Cookie cutter neighborhoods.
- Really?

**Moderator: Let me ask you a couple of questions about the operation and management. One of the things we asked earlier, but did we talk about the overall operation management yet? One of the things we talked about was the overall operation management of Cary and we asked you to give your opinion of that. Now, when you think about the overall operation management, what are the kind of things you were thinking about?**

- Operational management, I consider that mostly just the paid Town staff that handles the day to day operations, garbage collection, making sure the water system is working.

**Moderator: That's another part. Were you thinking about elected officials or the staff?**

- The staff.

**Moderator: Staff? What about the rest of you?**

- Probably staff.
- I was thinking about the elected officials that I assume are looking at the overall problems that we're talking about with the growth and trying to manage that and come up with some solutions.

**Moderator: You mean planning initiatives?**

- What I have seen in the 23 years I've been here is a particular Mayor who loved growth and it just grew like top seed during his Administration and I couldn't see that there was much thought given to any of it.

**Moderator: Okay, let me ask you another. When you think about...**

- The backlash...
- That's what happened. There was a big backlash against that and now it's starting to even out a little bit.

**Moderator: Can you think of anything the government should be doing more of or less of when you think, just think about the operation and management?**

- Well, I have to tell you, my husband works for public works and I don't know how you can change people's work ethic or bureaucracy, but...
- Especially in government.
- ...yeah, you guys would be so surprised. He actually has an excellent work ethic and is really frustrated when he comes home from work everyday. People get Town of Cary jobs and they're never going to get fired because they don't do their work. I don't even want to go into it, but the things that he tells me about what goes on, you know on the different crews and what doesn't happen and how slowly things do happen. You don't want to work too fast, you don't want to get too many projects done in a week or it will, you just don't want to do anything too fast when you work on a crew in the Town of Cary. He's actually worked on the water....
- Noooooo.
- ...yeah, he worked on those little valves that you're talking about...
- Yes.

- ...you have to put that in yourself...
- The closeout valves, yes.
- ...we don't have one either and I hope they don't...
- For irrigation?
- ...it's a little valve near the street. If they come and clean your manhole and you don't have one, it could go up in your house and anyway, it just seems...
- Build it for me, the Town of Cary said uh uh, no.
- ...it's your responsibility...
- ...it's your responsibility and you've got to get the plumber in and when the plumbers put it in...
- Is it a recycling valve?
- I can't remember what it is, but when they, if they spray and clean the pipes...
- A closeout valve is what it's called.
- ...yeah, I think that's what it is.
- It's a closeout valve that has to be five feet from the curb otherwise they wouldn't come near you.
- In any case...it just seemed like...

**Moderator: Anything else you think of that they probably need to hear?**

- How about the guys that pick up the sticks and stuff? I mean if it's not four feet long and bundled up, it is sort of comical because I have to go out there when they're there and throw it in the truck for them because oh you know, it's too big, it's too small, it's not wrapped up. The guys, my neighbors laugh at me from Wake Forest because you've got all these trees that fall down. You can't get it just perfectly. I mean they want it like it's manufactured so they can throw it on the truck and it's sort of comical and also the recycling bins. As we recycle more and more the little bins I get, if you're doing your job, that thing fills up pretty quickly...
- Yeah, we have to throw things away or...
- ...yeah so we need a bigger container...

**Moderator: The recycling bin container you say?**

- It probably needs to be twice that size and maybe needs to roll...
- With wheels.
- Green. They make blue ones in some cities that are about twice the size volume-wise.
- Greensboro has the two; the trash one and the recycling bin.
- I think you have to pay, don't you?
- You can get more, but they still, why not put one on wheels that you can drag out into the street and we used to, they used to come all the way down and get the trash and drag it all the way back up and now of course we do that, which we just changed...
- To the curb.
- ...which is fine with me. I think that's a smart move, but now they're like, well if it doesn't all fit inside the deal we're going to send you a bill for ten dollars...
- I think that's ridiculous.
- ...and it's ridiculous. They used to pick up everything you could get out there and now it's like not only do you have to bring it to the street, if you can't get it in this container we gave you then we're gonna charge you extra.
- They don't even have the trucks to pick them up. They have to wheel those containers to the truck, hitch it up and then the truck tips it.

- Oh, it doesn't have an arm?
- No.
- Raleigh does.
- It takes them more work.
- You know why? They are buying the trucks in...
- Right.
- Well I figured probably that was what was happening.
- They're buying them slowly.
- So it says if you don't consistently get your trash in this trash can completely then we're going to charge you extra. What does consistently mean? Is that once every three weeks or twice a month or three times a month or? If I can't get it in there once every six weeks am I okay or? At what point, I don't know, just because you don't ever know when you get home how that much trash is going to be there after they come through.

**Moderator: I have one more section and we're running a little short on time and so I'm going to try to go through this sort of quickly and we really do need your opinion on this and that's Wi-Fi. You know what Wi-Fi is?**

- Mmm hmm.

**Moderator: Which is wireless internet access throughout Town so somebody could just sit and bring their laptop in and could access the internet. The survey revealed there's a degree of interest in having the Town work with the private sector now, not totally public, but work with the private sector to provide Wi-Fi in certain areas of Cary, especially downtown was one area that was mentioned and the thing about downtown, where do you think the Town might most appropriately focus any Wi-Fi efforts? Should it be available inside businesses or the focus should be on projects that involve public areas like parks, buildings and streetscapes?**

- Public.
- Public.

**Moderator: Is that all of you, public?**

- If you're in private business why should you be subsidized? People get wound up about welfare. There's just as much if not worse with corporate welfare.

**Moderator: Okay. Alright if the Town were to work with the private sector on Wi-Fi projects, how many of you think there should be a charge for this service?**

- I think so.

**Moderator: You think so?**

- There should be some kind of a charge because else people are belly aching about their taxes going up, but that's a mighty nice luxury to be giving away for free.
- Is that a one time charge?
- I think it should be like \$9 a month.

**Moderator: Well that depends on the future. They want to know how they should do it too.**

- But why are they going to put that in a park? I mean why would that go into a park? It just seems like it would be defeating the purpose of a park. You mentioned that in a public place. Why would you want to take your laptop out?

**Moderator: Okay the park might not be the ideal. How about maybe have it in the downtown area? Do you think there should be a fee?**

- I mean what would we, why would I come down there with my laptop?



- If you were coming down here because there was some great cultural event going on all weekend or something, what would be the purpose of that?

**Moderator: So you really don't see, the need is not that great you think?**

- I wouldn't think so, I think if you had a large downtown or a large open area place like a larger city would. Let's face it, Cary's really not that big...
- Yeah, San Francisco and those guys...
- ...San Francisco, somewhere like a Charlotte, somewhere like a Raleigh it would make sense to a certain degree, but it is a luxury that some cities have been using. I know they've been given all kinds of backlash from the Telecomm companies because they're doing that.
- Philadelphia's going through, I don't know how they ever settled it, but it was Verizon pretty much sticking a knife in their back.

**Moderator: So what's your level of support for Wi-Fi?**

- I would prefer to have actually the ability that people could use it for a service in their house if it was broadcast around the city and then you pay for it, but at some rate that's competitive if not cheaper than what we're getting raped by DSL or for cable because...

**Moderator: When you say town-wide you mean town-wide?**

- I mean town-wide, but you pay to get access to the signal and it would be a utility like water. If you don't want to get hooked up you don't have to.

**Moderator: Okay. So this service then in this case would not be free?**

- No, it would not.

**Moderator: There would be a fee. Okay so that's the next question. Assuming the Town made a charge for the service, any ideas on how they should charge? In other words, a dollar amount or should it be about the same as other rates of the going rate? What do you think they should charge?**

- No, because it's slower. I mean most of the ones out here...
- Wi-Fi? Not necessarily.
- ...well there's different, yeah there's different ones because of what they put in.
- I would assume that it would have to be, if you're doing public areas, I would assume like you see in airports, a per-minute charge. I don't know what the rate would be. I know that I have a laptop that I've used in airports and there's corporate software that in essence bills the company directly and it ain't cheap. Believe me, it ain't cheap.

**Moderator: Would that work for the home basis do you think?**

- No.
- For home base, it would be more like subscription model than it would be for if you had it in home like you do now for any other service. You just pay a flat amount each month.

**Moderator: There's a train. The mic would definitely pick up the train. Yeah, so what we're saying is maybe if they use just the downtown area if they had to charge a per-minute fee, but if it's all over Town, we're talking about monthly fees?**

- I would think it would be a monthly fee just like you've got a subscription to it, just like I pay with my present internet service provider. I have to pay a monthly subscription fee, same thing.
- But I think you should give people lots of excuses not to be on the internet. They should be getting out of their houses and we should have a lot more choices of things to do other than...

- But Wi-Fi does get you out of the house. That's really the whole point of that is you can...
- Yeah, but you're still connected to something if it's not your pager or your cell phone, you're looking at your computer screen.
- This is the future.
- Unfortunately that's the future.
- It is. Hmm.

**Moderator: Let's ask you another question here. Suppose they do choose areas, not town-wide but just in certain areas and stuff, should the Town charge enough for the service to recoup the investment that they had to put into it for tax payers?**

- Absolutely.
- Yeah I think so.
- Absolutely.

**Moderator: That's a definite?**

- That's a luxury that the general citizen shouldn't have to shoulder in the end. I really think that's something...it's like water bills. We have to pay the water bill each month...

**Moderator: So definitely recoup the investment, do we all agree?**

- Recoup the investment from whom? From whoever uses it?
- Whoever is going to be using it, but not from everybody in the city.
- No, that's what he's saying.
- It's a regional...
- It's like a water bill. If you use more water that month you're going to be paying the part that's for the infrastructure but also for the water usage, too.
- Okay.
- Per-minute charge. That's the way it works now if you go to the airport.
- I just don't know if our city is ready for that service or the need of that service.
- I have a lot of, I had my reservations when asked about that. It's a neat idea...
- I just think it's needed, I'm sorry...
- ...go ahead.
- ...I just think in the future there will be more gadgets accessed, but right now I don't think this city has enough density to really make it work.
- You don't think the time is right.
- Right. I think it's coming, but I don't, let's let San Francisco and those guys experiment where they have a ton of density and see how they do.

**Moderator: Okay. Okay.**

- It'd be hard to recoup your money I think for the investment right now.
- I'd kind of rather see those tax dollars spent on something else.
- At this time, right.
- Yeah.

**Moderator: So if they did use the service, you're saying the users, if they have to charge, only should charge the people who use it? It shouldn't be the vast of the population?**

- Right.
- Yeah.

**Moderator: So to recoup the investment will come from anybody who does use it.**

- Yeah.

**Moderator: Maybe on a per-minute basis, whatever.**

- If you're using it out in public, but if it's something that you can actually, because I know the previous Mayor brought it up, is actually setting up cable or fiber optic loop where it would be utility to compete against the phone company.
- But where is that? That's supposed to have been going on for a number of years.
- They are building up to it is my understanding.
- They laid a lot of cable.
- A lot of dark fiber out there all over the country. They use a lot of dark fiber. The building I'm in, three quarters of it is dark I was told.
- We wouldn't want the city to lay out a lot of wireless infrastructure and have nobody willing to pay.
- Exactly.

**Moderator: Okay.**

- It has to be a good business model.

**Moderator: One more question. Should it be priced so the Town makes a profit? We know the recouping, but how about a profit?**

- Absolutely.
- As long as it was still a competitive rate. If I'm paying, like he said \$45 I'm getting hosed I think because there's no really no competition from the cable companies. If they could do it for \$30 and make a profit or \$25, more power to them.
- I think people would have a problem with the Town making a profit.
- I have a problem with government making money...
- I do, too.
- ...in this power.
- In general, the internet service everywhere but the U.S. internet is considered a utility and typically run by governments and the U.S. pays on average about 4 times what the rest of the world does or industrialized countries for the same service and so it wouldn't be a bad idea but I still think you should be breakeven. The problem is going to be state legislature and what's, how are Bell South and Time Warner paying off to make sure the rules are rigged against them.
- But what if you found that 30% of the people that used it didn't live here?
- Meaning what?
- Meaning they're still...why can't we make money on the people? You know what I'm saying? If 30% of the people utilizing the service did not live here you're still preventing them from making money on that. I don't know. It's just a question.
- I just figure if it's a utility, it's a city run utility it ought to be a breakeven basis. I mean definitely not lose money, definitely not make the taxpayers pay.

**Moderator: Definitely recoup your investment, but you're telling me there's a possibility of profits maybe? There's a possibility is what you're trying to say. I know you're inferring it's not necessarily just going to be Cary residents that use this service. It could be anybody that comes in the region, right?**

- Right. If it's Wi-Fi they could hook up and go. I mean it's like a hotel tax as far as I'm concerned. They come in and they...
- The way I look at it though is if you pay a per-minute rate, if you're just out in the middle of Town, then it doesn't matter who you are, you're just helping to pay the bills and to put it up. It doesn't matter if you're from Charlotte or Raleigh or Cary, it doesn't matter. The money still has to be paid to put it up.

**Moderator: Good. Excellent. We've run out of time and I just want to say how good your focus group was. It was very, very informative and I'm sure the city, Town is going to get a lot out of it. One more thing I want to ask you guys is there anything else above and beyond what we just went through that you want to say. Tell the Town because you have an opportunity now.**

- Pick up leaves more often.

**Moderator: Pick them up more often? Okay.**

- Road maintenance, specifically potholes. It's gotten, it's not just here but they could do a better job.
- And is that something we should be calling in about? I mean, I don't know, should we email the city when we've got like, for instance Maynard from Kildaire Farm to Old Chatham...
- Have you ever tried to call in when a traffic light's out?
- No.
- I have a few times. It's the runaround you get. Oh no, we don't maintain that road. Call the state, call up the state. You might go through a couple or you call the state. No, we don't maintain that road, but call up Cary and that sometimes gets a little bit aggravating.
- That's why I thought you could send one email maybe to whoever the one guy is that he could disseminate it out. At least the information, we know that it would be out there because every time I hit a pothole I wonder do they know about it.
- That's the best thing I've heard in this whole hour. Say that again. He's got it for the tape.

**Moderator: Say it again. You want a contact person that you can call...**

- Not call. I think for me email because that way I'm done with it and he's got it on paper is the road from Kildare Farm, from Maynard to Kildare Farm to so and so...
- If it gets more detailed he'll know who did it and he can write you back...
- ...exactly. Then I'm done and he has time that he can do it on his time.

**Moderator: And then should they give a response that they've received it?**

- That's fine. We've got your response...
- In the Town of Cary at least they'll forward it to the right people in the state.
- Right.

**Moderator: Great.**

- Because if they're in charge they should want to know. We've got plenty of people over here that have time to do it.
- Times I called them about traffic lights they called up the state and said this is the number in case we get disconnected, but they said let me put you on hold while I contact someone from the state to let them know about the light out. There's quite a few...I said Cary Parkway for example is not a city road, it's a state road so all the traffic lights though, I'm not sure how they're handled because some of them on the intersection are city roads like Old Apex controlled by the city.

*(Facilitator ends focus groups and thanks participants)*