

**City of Piedmont**

**GENERAL PLAN  
RESIDENT SURVEY REPORT**

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Barry J Miller, AICP  
Urban and Environmental Planning



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report summarizes the findings of a resident survey conducted in Spring 2007 as part of the Piedmont General Plan Update. The intent of the survey was to identify residents' priorities for Piedmont's future so that the updated Plan's policies and actions are responsive and relevant.

The survey was also designed to evaluate resident satisfaction with City services, determine views on planning and development procedures, identify capital improvement priorities, and gain insight into residents' perspectives on environmental sustainability. A combination of open-ended questions and interval-scale multiple-choice questions was used.

The response to the survey exceeded all expectations. Approximately 3,800 surveys were mailed out, and almost 1,300 surveys were completed and returned. The results provide valuable information on the opinions of Piedmont residents. Findings may be used directly—to shape General Plan policies and actions—and indirectly, to guide future decisions on budgeting, capital improvements, and City operations.

This report describes the mechanics of the resident survey, summarizes the response to each question, and provides insights on the implications of the responses for the General Plan. An appendix to this report provides extensive excerpts from the returned surveys.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Piedmont is in the process of updating its General Plan, the state-mandated document that establishes local policies on planning and development issues. The existing Plan was prepared in 1994 and was adopted in 1996. A major Update was initiated in January 2007 and will be completed in Spring 2008.

The City is using a number of tools to gather citizen input, including regular meetings with the Planning Commission, community workshops, and Council briefings. The resident survey was designed to supplement participation through these conventional methods since turnout at General Plan meetings has historically been low. The survey provided an opportunity for all Piedmont households to "weigh in" on the issues covered by the Plan.

An administrative draft survey was prepared in February 2007. This draft was reviewed by City Department heads, Council members, and Planning Commissioners and a number of changes were made in response.

## SURVEY LOGISTICS

The resident survey contained 16 questions, and was formatted as a four-page “newsletter.” The first page included instructions, along with background information on the General Plan. The survey was mailed with a cover letter explaining its purpose, and a self-addressed stamped envelope to encourage recipients to reply.

Survey questions are summarized below:

- Questions 1-3 were open-ended questions asking respondents to describe what they **liked best** about living in Piedmont (Q1), what they **liked least** (Q2), and what **changes or improvements** they would like to see (Q3).
- Question 4 asked residents to indicate their **level of satisfaction with City services** and other facets of life in Piedmont using a five-grade interval scale. There were 26 line items in the question
- Question 5 asked residents to weigh in on the city's **planning and building regulations**. This question included both an open-ended portion and multiple choice portion.
- Question 6 asked residents to state their relative level of agreement or disagreement with 15 different **policy options**.
- Questions 7 and 8 asked residents to indicate their level of support for 13 potential **capital improvement projects**.
- Question 9 was an open-ended question asking for ideas about how Piedmont can be more **environmentally sustainable**.
- Question 10 asked residents to select from a menu of choices indicating **why they moved to Piedmont**.
- Questions 11 through 16 related to the demographics of the respondent. These questions were included to determine if particular groups were over-represented or under-represented in the replies. Questions pertained to **household size, age of respondent, ethnicity, length of residency, and address**.

The survey was distributed by a professional mail house on April 12 and arrived in home mailboxes around April 14. Residents were asked to return their completed surveys by May 7. A single survey was sent to each household, although the instructions noted that households could request a second paper survey if more than one adult wished to reply. The “honor system” was used to ensure that the same individual did not submit more than one survey. Households were also directed to the city's website, where an on-line version of the survey was available. The on-line survey was designed to prevent multiple replies from the same e-mail (IP) address.

Surveys were numbered and coded as they arrived. The interval-rated and demographic questions were manually transcribed into Excel spreadsheets corresponding to each question. The open-ended questions were “post-coded” based on recurring themes and key words. Each open-ended response was categorized based on the theme or key word that most closely corresponded. Due to budget limitations, cross-tabulations (e.g., analyses of the relationships between different sub-populations and the responses) were not prepared. However, during Summer, 2007 the responses were sorted by geographic area for further comparison.

By the end of May, the City had received 1,085 paper surveys and 199 on-line surveys back, for a total of 1,284 replies. Based on the response to Survey Question 15 (will another member of your household be submitting a survey?), it is estimated that about 100 households submitted more than one survey. Thus, approximately 1,180 households participated, representing 31 percent of all Piedmont households.

The survey was not intended to be “scientific.” Because households were allowed to submit multiple surveys, some were arguably “over-represented.” In addition, many of the questions were open-ended, and the post-coding of replies is a subjective process. For instance, when asked what they liked best about Piedmont, some respondents listed just one feature; others listed eight or nine features. Moreover, certain groups (such as long-time Piedmont residents) are over-represented in the returned surveys while other groups (such as households aged 18-34) are under-represented.

Nonetheless, the sheer volume of replies and the thoughtfulness of the responses made this survey a valuable and extremely important research tool for the city. The replies provide an opportunity for City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council to hear from hundreds and hundreds of constituents. Many good ideas have been offered, much constructive criticism has been delivered, and a great deal of “food for thought” has been provided.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

### Geographic Distribution

To confirm that respondents came from all parts of Piedmont, a map of the city was included in the survey (Q.16). On the map, the City was divided into six sub-areas (see Figure 1); residents were asked to indicate which sub-area they lived in.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 indicates the total percentage of Piedmont households living in each sub-area and the total percentage of survey respondents from each sub-area. The table indicates excellent representation from all six areas.

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<sup>1</sup> In the web version of the survey, residents had to provide their street addresses. These were later post-coded to correspond to the six sub-areas on the paper map.

Figure 1: Piedmont General Plan Survey Sub-areas

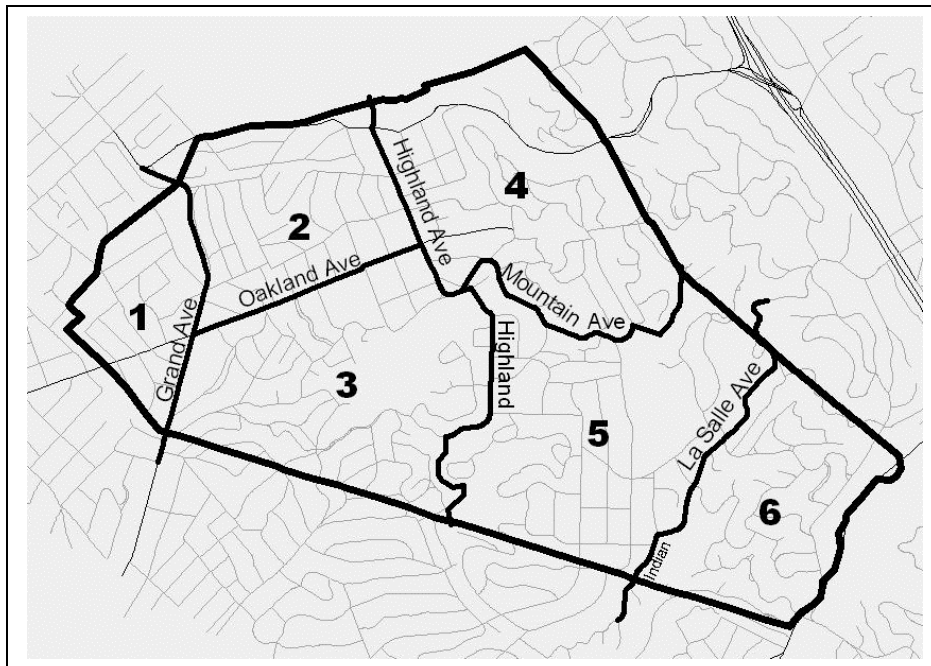


Table 1: Distribution of Households and Survey Respondents by Sub-area

Sub-area (see map above)	Percent of Total Piedmont Households in Sub-area	Percent of Survey Respondents in Sub-area
1	11.8%	8.8%
2	19.0%	18.0%
3	24.0%	25.8%
4	19.9%	20.8%
5	14.7%	16.6%
6	10.6%	9.9%

### Household Size and Presence of Children

The 1,100 households responding to the survey contained an estimated 3,420 residents. Average household size for respondents was 2.97, compared to the citywide average of 2.88. Responding households included 1,099 children, including 232 aged 5 and under, 378 aged 6-11, and 489 aged 12-18. The responding households included 2,320 adults, or almost exactly two adults per household. This is slightly higher than the number for the city as a whole.



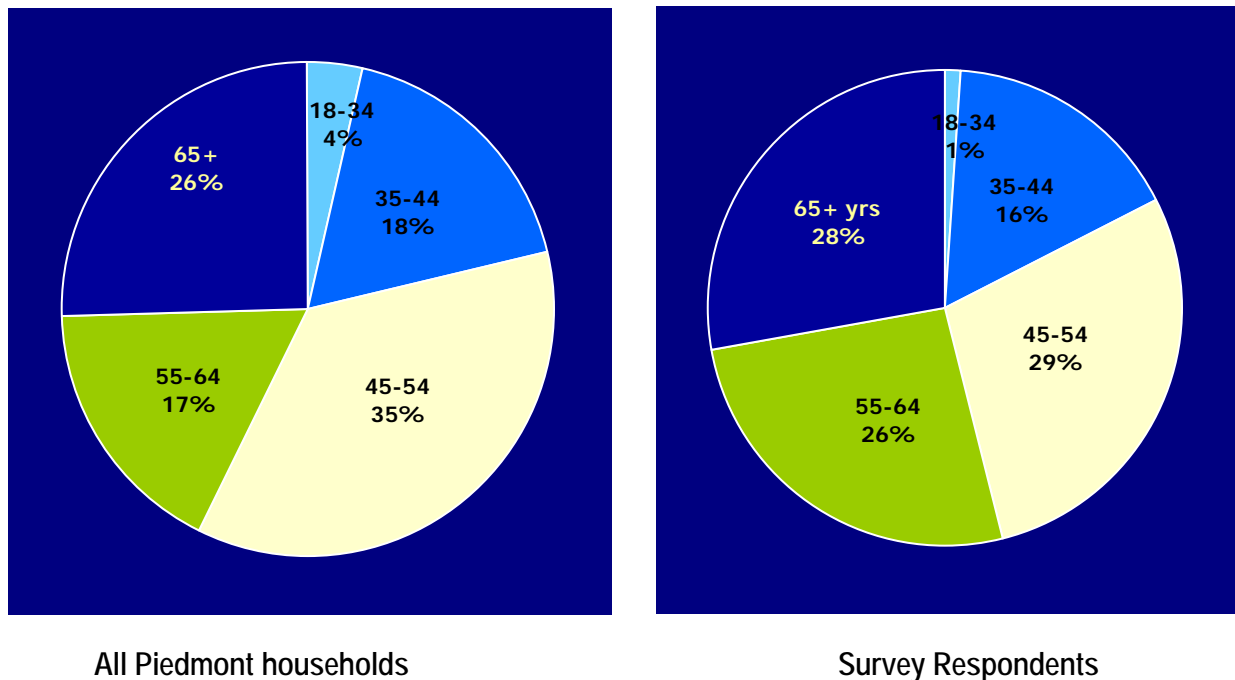
## Age of Respondents

Survey respondents tended to be slightly older than Piedmont residents as a whole. However, all age groups participated and were well represented.

Figure 2 compares the age distribution of all Piedmont heads of household to the age distribution of survey respondents. Persons over 55 were over-represented in the survey, making up 54 percent of all respondents while they comprise 43 percent of all heads of household. The 55-64 age group was particularly over-represented, with more than a quarter of the respondents in that cohort (compared to 17 percent in the general population).

Younger households were less well represented. While 22 percent of the city's heads of household are 18-44, only 17 percent of the survey respondents were in this cohort. This is particularly true for persons between 18 and 34, who comprise four percent of the city's heads of household but represent only one percent of the survey respondents.

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Piedmont "Heads of Household" (2000) and Survey Respondents<sup>2</sup>

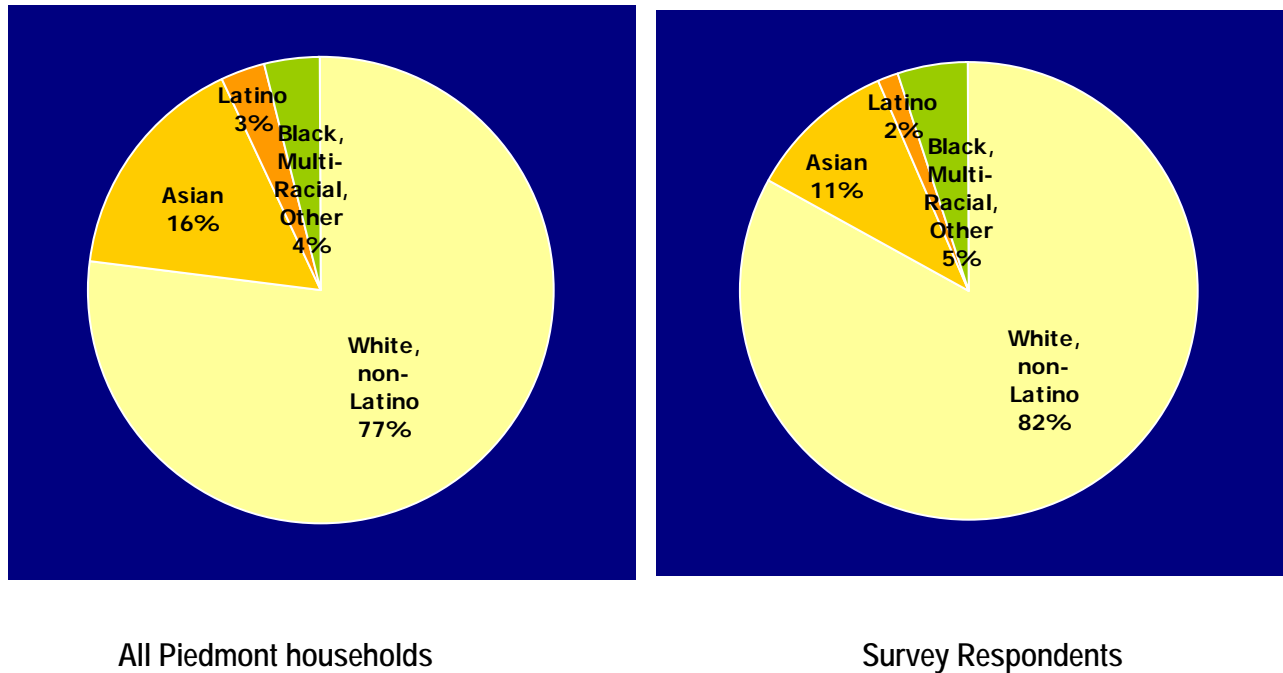


<sup>2</sup> All of the citywide demographic data in Figures 2, 3, and 4 is from the 2000 Census. These proportions may have shifted somewhat in the last seven years.

## Ethnicity

The survey respondents were not quite as diverse as the general population in Piedmont, but all major ethnic groups living in the city were represented. Figure 3 indicates that 82 percent of the survey respondents were White, non-Latinos. In the city as a whole, 77 percent of the residents are White, non-Latinos. Approximately 11 percent of the survey respondents were Asian, while Asians represent 16 percent of the city's population. Some 2 percent of the respondents were Latino (any race), while Latinos represent 3 percent of Piedmont's population. The percentage of survey respondents who were Black or multi-racial was about 5 percent, which is about the same for the city as a whole.

Figure 3: Ethnicity of Piedmont Residents Compared to Survey Respondents



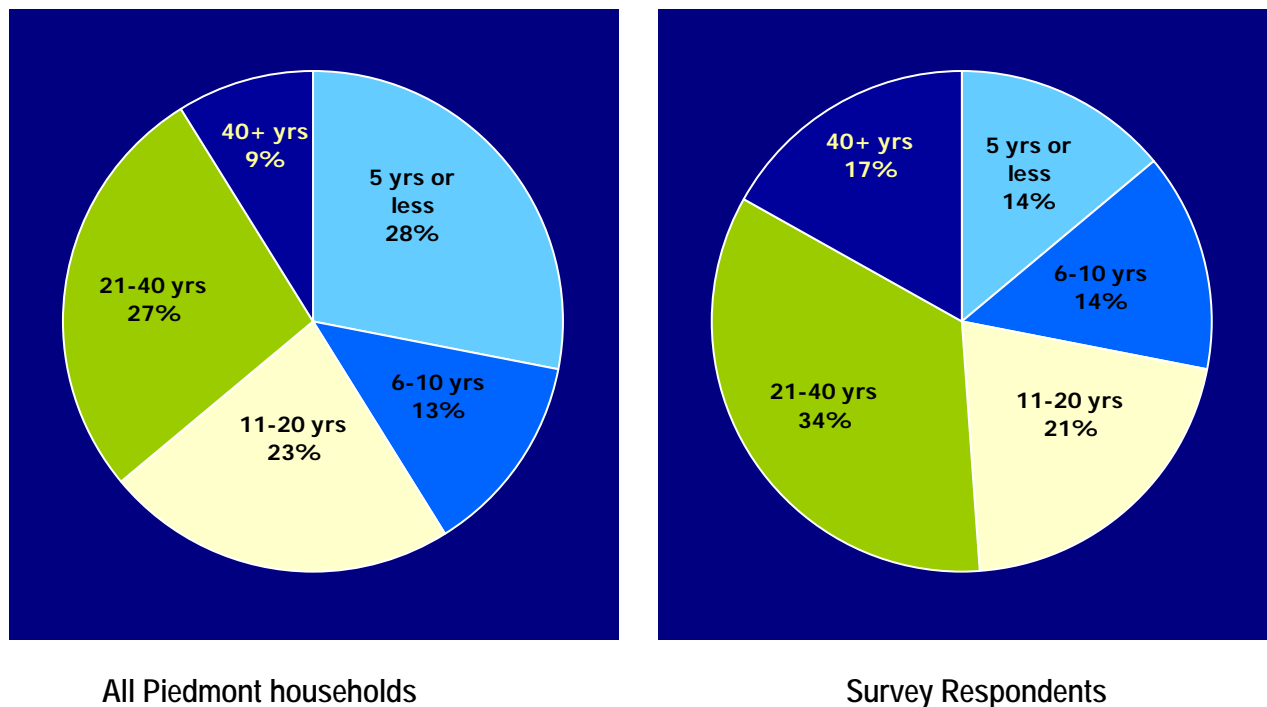
## Length of Residency

Figure 4 compares the length of residency in Piedmont for all residents and for survey respondents.

Survey respondents tended to be long-time Piedmont residents. In fact, 51 percent of the respondents have lived in Piedmont for more than 20 years. By contrast, about 36 percent of the total households in the city have been in Piedmont more than 20 years.<sup>3</sup> Piedmont newcomers—that is, persons who have lived in the city five years or less—constitute 28 percent of Piedmont residents but only 14 percent of the survey respondents.

Approximately 36 percent of Piedmont's households have been in the city for between five and 20 years. This group was almost perfectly represented by the survey, with 35 percent of all respondents in this category.

Figure 4: Length of Residency in Piedmont for all Households and for Survey Respondents



<sup>3</sup> This is based on the 2000 Census, which is now 7 years old. The percentage of residents who have lived in the city 40 years or more (in Figure 4) has been interpolated based on historic census records for 1990, 1980, and 1970.

## Reason for Moving to Piedmont

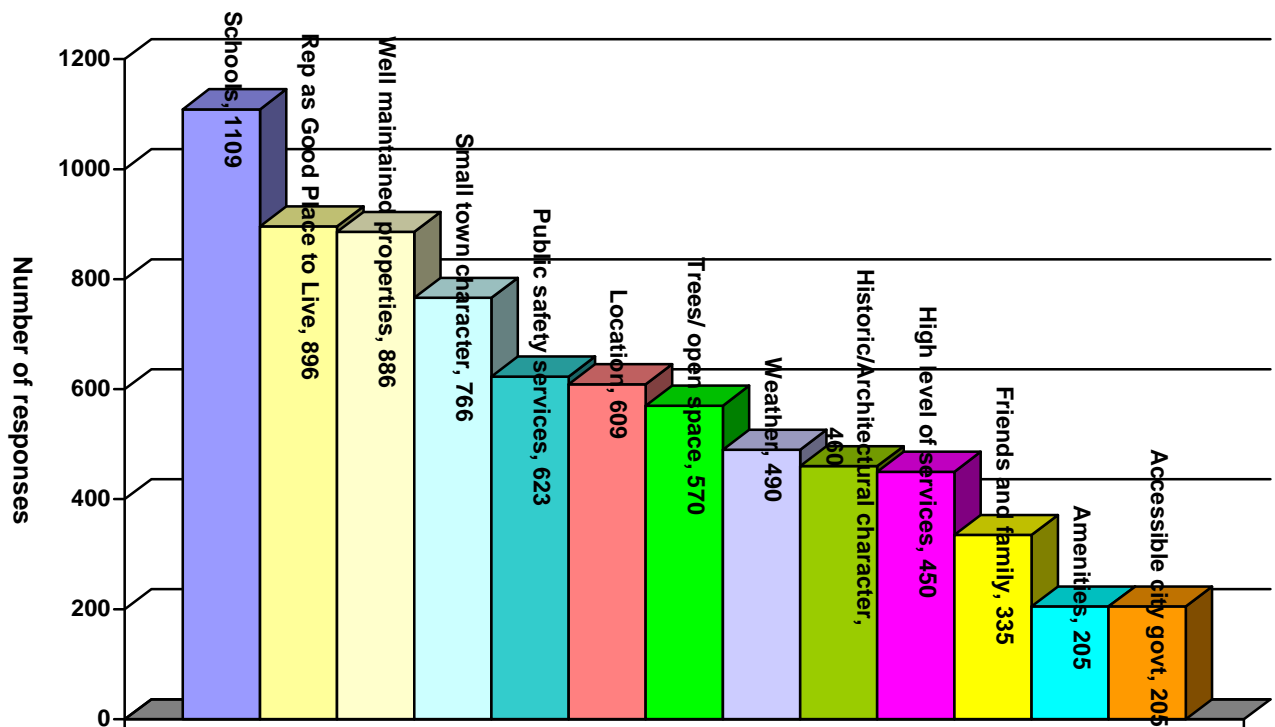
Respondents were asked to indicate why they initially moved to Piedmont. A menu of 13 choices was provided and respondents could select as many options as they wanted. A write-in option was also provided. Approximately 95 percent of persons returning the survey answered this question.

Figure 5 indicates the frequency with which each choice was selected. As the figure indicates, more than 90 percent—over 1,100 respondents—indicated they moved to Piedmont because of the schools. This was by far the top answer to this question.

Second, with 896 replies (or about 73 percent of the respondents) was the city's reputation as a good place to live, followed closely by well-maintained properties (886 replies) and small town character (766 replies). Public safety and location were next, each selected by about half of all the respondents.

The most common "write-in" answer was from people who were born in Piedmont, which was not one of the choices on the list.

Figure 5: Reason for Moving to Piedmont



## LIKES, DISLIKES, AND DESIRED CHANGES

The first page of the survey presented three open-ended questions:

- Please tell us what you like best about living in Piedmont
- Please tell us what you like least about living in Piedmont
- Please share with us any changes or improvements you would like to see in Piedmont in the years ahead

The replies to these simple questions yielded some of the most insightful comments in the resident survey. Responses ranged from short one- and two- word answers to multi-page essays. The first question (“likes”) was completed by 1,112 respondents. The second and third questions were completed by 935 and 914 respondents, respectively.

Respondents tended to provide short lists of two- and three-word attributes when describing their “likes” (e.g., good schools, beautiful homes, and convenient location). The lists of “dislikes” were more complex, and were typically expressed in short paragraphs. Most residents listed four or five discrete attributes as “likes” but listed only one or two attributes (but in greater detail) as dislikes. In many cases, the response to the third question (desired changes) related back to the list of dislikes. For instance, a respondent might indicate they disliked speeding traffic in Question 2; and then ask for a stop sign on their block in Question 3.

### Likes

A total of 3,540 distinct attributes were listed as “likes” on the returned questionnaires. Figure 6 summarizes the most common answers. Appendix A presents excerpts of the responses to give a sense of their character and common themes.

Piedmont’s schools were the most frequently listed positive quality. About half of all respondents cited the schools at some point in their replies (“outstanding schools”, “high quality schools”, “great schools,” “the schools are excellent,” etc.). This is consistent with the responses to Question 10 (why did you move to Piedmont), where schools were cited as the city’s top attractor.

More than 500 of the respondents cited public safety in their replies, with some specifically referencing the police and fire departments (“good fire department”, “rapid responses from police and fire”), and others simply mentioning the relatively low crime rate (“feeling of safety,” “I feel comfortable and secure,” “relatively safe community,” etc.).

The third most frequent “thread” in the replies related to Piedmont’s sense of community. Responses took many different forms, some citing the city’s “small town feel” and others referencing the “wonderful neighborhood feeling,” “community spirit,” and so on. Many residents elaborated on what they meant by “small town feel”, citing the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, the sense of cooperation and civic-mindedness, the fact that “everyone knows each other,” etc.

The fourth major thread in the replies related to aesthetics. Approximately 325 surveys made reference to the city’s attractive physical qualities (“appearance of the city,” “beautiful and diverse architecture and gardens,” “beautiful trees, parks, and houses,” “the beauty of our town is truly amazing”, etc.).

The fifth most common thread related to the city’s location. Some 277 respondents cited Piedmont’s central location or its proximity to San Francisco and Oakland in their replies. Some were general (“good location,” “centrally located,” “very convenient”) and others were more specific (“access to Oakland’s shopping and entertainment districts,” “close to Berkeley, San Francisco, and Walnut Creek,” “proximity to the rest of the Bay Area and close to freeways.”)

The sixth most common thread, referenced in 260 of the surveys, related to Piedmont residents themselves. Many respondents indicated they liked their neighbors, the friendliness of residents, the family-orientation and child-friendly qualities of the city, their lifelong friends, and other qualities of a human or personal nature.

Seventh on the list was the city’s cleanliness and the high level of property maintenance. Some 169 respondents—or about 15 percent of the total—made reference to property upkeep. Some emphasized private property; others addressed city facilities and the public rights of way. Typical responses in this thread included: “I like that it is kept clean,” “most homeowners keep their property in nice shape,” “well-kept civic facilities,” “well-kept neighborhoods”, etc.

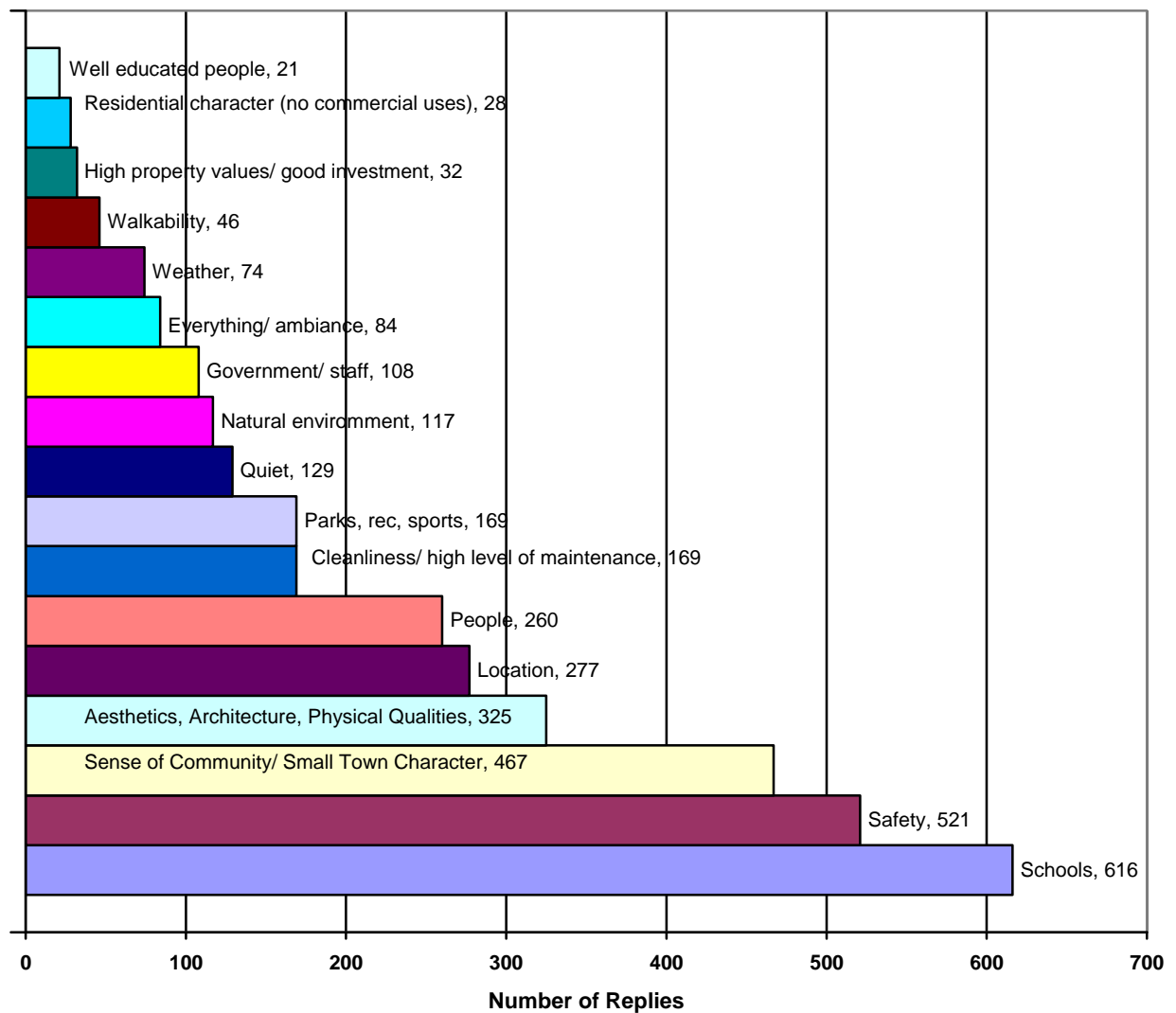
Tied for seventh place, 169 respondents cited the city’s parks and recreational programs in their replies. Many respondents mentioned the city’s parks in general (“nice parks,” “parks and athletic facilities,” “wonderful parks,” etc.) while others referenced specific recreational facilities (the swim club, dog parks, tennis, Piedmont Park, etc.) or recreational programs (“good recreation department”, “great activities,” “high quality volunteer sports organizations,” etc.)

The ninth most frequent thread related to the quiet ambiance of the city. More than 10 percent of the respondents (129 in total) mentioned Piedmont’s peaceful nature. Typical replies included: “peacefulness and quiet,” “quiet residential areas,” and “quiet tree-lined streets.” Many respondents also mentioned the light traffic volumes and lack of serious congestion.

The tenth most frequent thread was Piedmont’s natural environment. Some 117 respondents praised the city’s scenery, hills, views and vistas, trees, and natural setting when describing what they liked best.

Other themes in the replies included the responsiveness of city staff (mentioned in 108 surveys), Piedmont’s weather (mentioned in 74 surveys), the city’s walkability (mentioned in 46 surveys), high property values (mentioned in 32 surveys), the fact that the city had little or no commercial uses (mentioned in 28 surveys), and the concentration of well-educated and like-minded people (mentioned in 21 surveys). Respondents on 84 of the surveys did not specify anything in particular in their replies, simply stating that they “liked everything” about Piedmont.

**Figure 5: What Residents Like Most About Piedmont**



## Dislikes

A total of 1,400 attributes were noted as “dislikes” by the 935 persons responding to this question. As noted above, most respondents listed a single item, elaborating on what it was they didn’t like and why. A smaller number of respondents listed multiple things they disliked about the city or presented a punch list of “negatives” that countered their list of “positives” in Question 1. The responses are summarized in Figure 7 and are further analyzed below. Appendix B presents excerpts of the responses to give a sense of common themes. About 20 “threads,” or recurring themes, were noted.

The most frequently mentioned dislike, noted by 153 respondents, was the lack of a central gathering place in the city. However, the responses took many forms, with some emphasizing the lack of retail in general or the “inconvenience” of having to travel to Oakland for shopping and restaurants, and others focusing on “sense of place” issues (e.g., “no there there”). It is worth noting that although this was the top issue raised by commenters, it was only raised by 12 percent of the respondents in total (and 16 percent of those who answered the question).

Some respondents were quite explicit about their dissatisfaction with the lack of a center (“No nice place to get lunch or coffee,” “Absence of amenities in central business zone such as coffee shop,” “No place to walk for dinner”, etc.). Others were more philosophical (“No real center that is alluring and aesthetic,” “We don’t have a central place to meet and gather,” “Lack of vibrant commercial heart,” etc.) This sentiment was by no means universal, though, as other respondents (albeit a smaller number) stated their opposition to commercial development in their response to this question.

The second most frequent thread related to the downside of being an affluent community. More than 10 percent of the responses to this question—130 in all—made explicit reference to “the sense of entitlement,” “snarkiness and snootiness,” snobby people who make disparaging remarks about Oakland,” “smug insularity,” a “sense of superiority”, “elitist attitude” and so on. Others commented on “social pressure,” “conspicuous consumption,” “the effects of excessive wealth on kids,” and the “skewed value system.”

Third in the array of dislikes was the high cost of living. About 80 residents specifically referenced property taxes but others focused on high housing costs or high fees. For example, one respondent noted, “There is no townhouse type project or condo where I could cash out the value of my house yet still live in Piedmont.” Others decried “out of control spending” or mentioned school bond measures and other specific tax measures they felt were unfair or excessive.

The fourth thread, and the only other “dislike” that was mentioned by more than 100 respondents was the planning and building process. The common theme was that there were “too many rules and regulations” and that the process was “cumbersome and intrusive.” Some residents commented that the process was “too time-consuming and expensive” while others sought clearer directions and more predictable outcomes.



These comments were echoed in a later question specifically requesting feedback on planning and building (see Question 5 discussion later in this report).

Nearly 100 respondents mentioned traffic issues in their dislikes. Common comments related to speeding cars, the lack of a good public transportation system, traffic around schools, and the hazards of narrow streets. In some cases, commenters named the problem streets (Moraga, Highland, and Oakland Avenues were mentioned most frequently) but in others the comments were more universal ("not being able to get out of my driveway," "need to keep my children indoors as traffic regulations are not enforced," "high school students driving fast," etc.)

The sixth most common thread in the list of dislikes was crime, listed by 86 of the respondents. These respondents felt that crime was on the increase, and shared anecdotes and personal experiences in their replies ("a lot of burglaries have been going on on my street," "I now feel unsafe walking my dog," "We have had one car stolen and the other one broken into," etc). Others specifically referenced "the rising crime rate," "crime spilling over from Oakland," or "the increasing crime influence." A number of respondents complained about police enforcement and follow-up in their replies.

Seventh in the list of recurring topics was the lack of diversity in the city. Some took this a step further and expressed concerns about prejudice and sexism, but most simply stated "lack of diversity" or "homogeneity" as their reply.

Coming in at eighth on the list of dislikes was parking. Many respondents simply wrote the word "parking" as what they liked least about Piedmont; others gave their street name or other locations in town (particularly the Civic Center area). Several respondents complained about homeowners using their garages for storage instead of off-street parking; others complained about homeowners with numerous vehicles, and still others made basic statements such as "too many cars parked on the street!"

Ninth on the list were issues relating to recreational facilities, with about 70 mentions. Most of the comments specifically pertained to sports fields and the Piedmont Swim Club. A number of residents disliked the "inadequate facilities for swimming," the "lack of good swimming facilities," etc. while others cited the public discussion about the future of the pool as their dislike. About half of the comments related to sports fields, with most stating that there were not enough facilities ("parks and rec fields crowded with organized sports," "lack of playing fields," "not enough fields for sports and the number of kids in town.").

Rounding out the top ten were overhead utility wires, mentioned by 65 of the respondents as what they liked least. However, not all of the statements were consistent; some disliked the wires ("a real eyesore," "everything should be underground," "the safety and aesthetic unpleasantness of underground wires") while others disliked the proposal to underground them ("I do not like being pushed into accepting

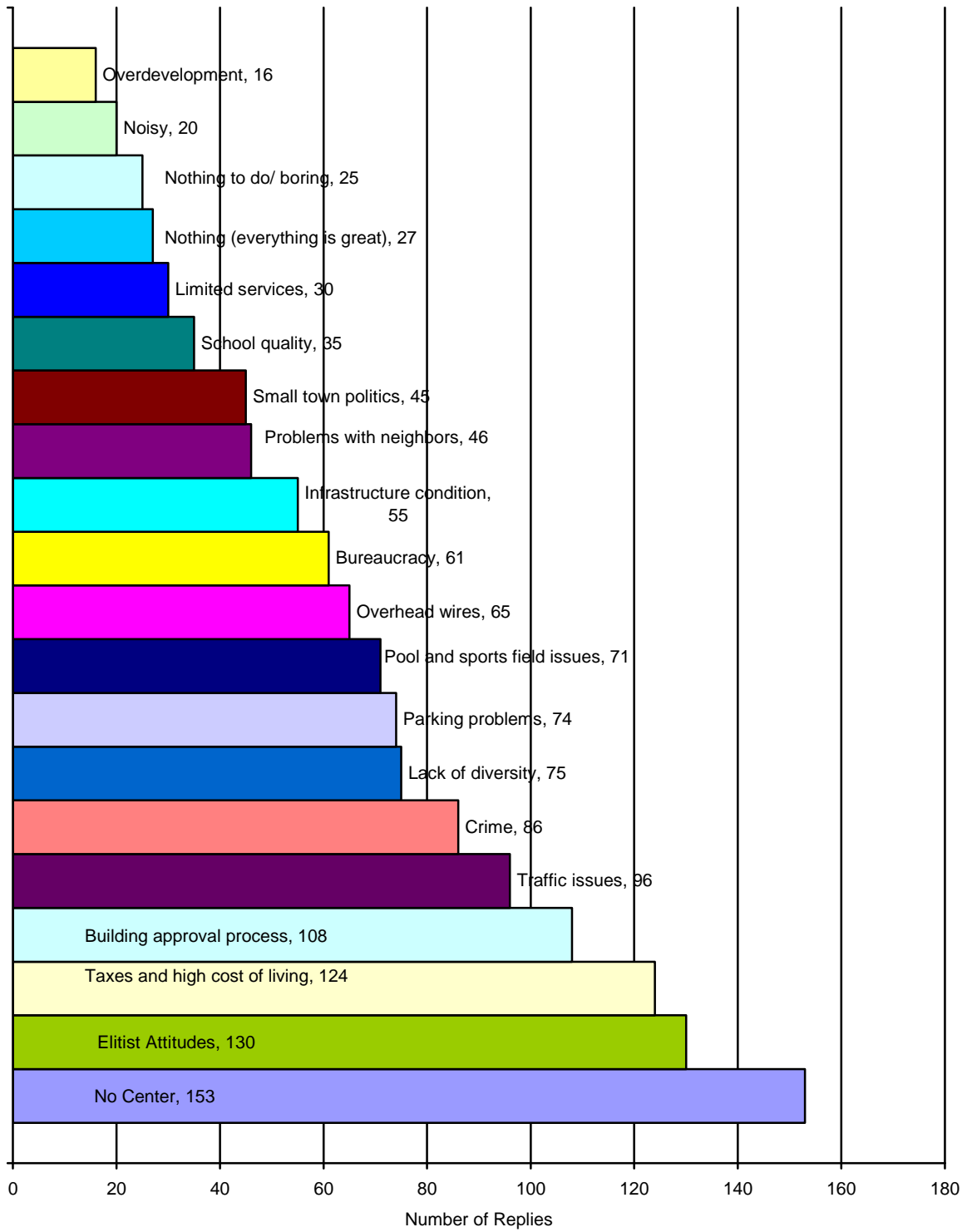
undergrounding of utilities," not all can afford such a gigantic expense.") Some respondents stated that they disliked the public discussion on undergrounding and hoped for a fair solution.

At least ten additional threads were noted in the list of dislikes, although each of these was mentioned on fewer than five percent of the surveys. These included:

- **City bureaucracy** ("takes too long to get things done," "lack of city government to listen to the public," "lots of government for such a small town," etc.)
- **Condition of infrastructure**, especially sidewalks ("trees that bust up my sidewalk and drop too many leaves," "dim street lighting," "sidewalks blocked by overgrown foliage," "I get drainage from others," etc.).
- **Problems with neighbors**, either related to intrusive behavior or nuisances on their properties ("I get tired of cleaning up others' yards," "folks who don't curb their dogs," "it's a little too small and everyone knows everything," etc.)
- **Small town politics** and "cronyism" ("vocal minority seem to rule the roost," "watching meetings on TV where one person babbles on and on," "apparent drifting of appointed commissions from their actual topics and designated authority," etc.)
- **School quality**, principally related to curriculum rather than facilities ("over-rated public school system," "lack of phonics-based reading programs in schools," "over-emphasis on schools...to the detriment of every other group in the city," "overemphasis on competitive sports over academics," etc.)
- **Limited city services**, especially the lack of a library and/ or post office ("I wish we had a public library," "lack of a town library," "the absence of community structures," etc.)
- **Nothing to do**, particularly for teens ("there is no place for the kids to hang out," "little for teens to do," "lack of activities for teenagers," "no entertainment," etc.)
- **Excessive noise**, with construction, leaf blowers, barking dogs, freeways, and sirens all specifically mentioned.
- **Overdevelopment**, both relating to large homes ("mega-addition building," "constant pressure on space—houses getting bigger," "risk of home expansion to McMansions," etc.) and development in general ("efforts to duplicate commercial activities found just outside city limits," "we are too limited in space to add something new," etc.)

In addition to the responses listed above, 27 residents replied to this question by saying that there was nothing they disliked about Piedmont. As one respondent put it "what's not to like?"

Figure 7: What Residents Like Least About Piedmont



## Desired Changes

Respondents were asked what they would like to change or improve in Piedmont during the coming years. Almost 1,500 attributes were listed by the 914 persons who answered this question. Most identified a single item ("a library," "free wireless," "more sports fields," etc.), but a large number listed several items or wrote detailed responses. Figure 8 summarizes the top "threads" in the replies. Appendix C provides excerpts to give a sense of the major messages.

The most common response, mentioned on almost 250 surveys, involved new public facilities. An array of facilities was mentioned, although a swimming pool led the pack ("a large public swimming pool," "a competitive pool," "a regulation-sized swimming pool," "a family-friendly pool," and so on). A sizeable number used this question to describe how they would like to see the Piedmont Swim Club lease issue resolved. Many respondents called for more sports fields, sometimes specifying the activity (i.e., soccer) and sometimes the location (Blair Park, etc.). Other popular responses to this question called for a town library, a post office, a community garden, and more dog parks.

The second most common response, made by 236 respondents, was that Piedmont needed a more distinctive central gathering place. Many respondents specifically called for a small coffee shop/ café. Some talked about wanting a "more usable center of town" or an "updated city center" while others said they wanted a "place to congregate" or wished that Central Piedmont's banks could be "traded out for other retail options." Others stated their desire for "a good grocery store," "a destination café," a "sweet shop," or conversion of the old Christian Science Church into a café.

The third "thread" in the responses, mentioned on about 200 of the surveys, was undergrounding of electric utilities. About three-quarters of these respondents simply wrote "undergrounding," "put utilities underground," "undergrounding mandatory," etc. The remainder elaborated, indicating why or how they felt undergrounding should be handled. For example, one person wrote, "utility undergrounding should be done citywide with additional improvements like optical broadband to the home installed at the same time." Another wrote, "would like to see the utilities undergrounded throughout but particularly on major thoroughfares and narrow streets where telephone poles obstruct the sidewalks."

The fourth most common thread in the survey related to other infrastructure issues. Better street lighting was mentioned most frequently, followed by sidewalk repair and street maintenance. Other desired changes included sewer main replacement, Dracena Park drainage improvements, pothole repair, and the use of grass instead of AstroTurf at sports fields.

Fifth on the list was more crime prevention and law enforcement. This was noted on 80 surveys, which is approximately the same number that listed "crime" as what they liked least about Piedmont in Question 2. Some asked for "more police presence" or "more vigilant policing." Others were more explicit about what

they would do to reduce crime. For instance, one respondent called for police to “drive around the neighborhoods constantly and continuously,” another suggested the city use “cameras as deterrents to catch criminals,” while another asked for “more police dogs.”

The sixth most frequent response related to parking management, cited on 76 surveys. Some simply wrote “more parking,” “better parking,” “please do something about parking,” etc. Others were more specific, specifying location (almost always the Civic Center area) or their own solutions (“Limit the number of cars per household,” “Mandatory garage use for cars,” “Restrict the number of cars one resident is allowed to park on the street,” and so on.) Some called for a parking garage in Central Piedmont, while others stated their opposition to a garage.

The seventh most common reply related to traffic and public transportation. There were many requests to provide shuttle service to BART (Rockridge or MacArthur stations) and to improve AC Transit bus service. There were also a number of suggestions for speed humps, traffic control devices (stop signs, etc.), more speed limit signs, and increased enforcement of traffic laws, often with specific streets mentioned. Respondents also called for bike lanes, adding traffic officers, improved drop-off areas for schools, and making Scenic Avenue a one-way street.

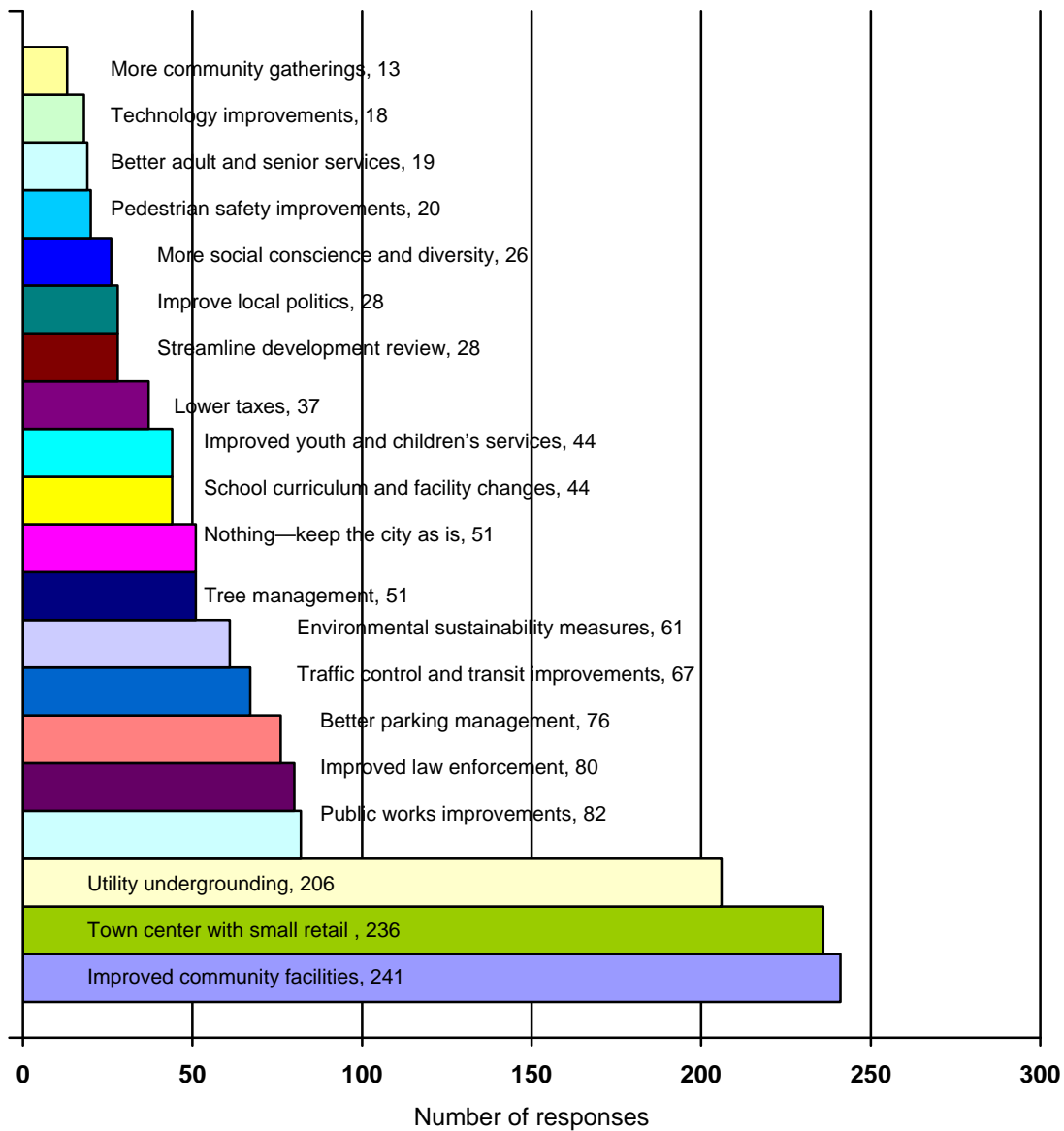
Eighth on the list, with 61 mentions, were environmental sustainability issues. These included suggestions to increase recycling and composting, reduce use of herbicides and pesticides, encourage green building practices, support solar power, promote alternative energy vehicles, adopt greenhouse gas reduction policies, and improve water quality.

Ninth on the list, with 60 mentions, was “nothing”—in other words, respondents who stated there was nothing they would change about Piedmont. In some cases, these respondents praised the city (“Continue what you’re doing,” “Keep up the good work,” “Piedmont is great the way it is,” and so on). In other cases, respondents implored City officials to maintain the status quo and not initiate changes (“Do not make any changes. We moved here for what was here.” “The town is what it is. Its nice, it’s small,” “I would be concerned to see some grand master plan,” etc.)

At number ten was tree management. Comments addressed all aspects of tree care, including planting (“trees in front of all homes,” “more big trees lining the streets,” “plant trees everywhere you can,” “extensive tree planting to replace lost trees” , etc.), replacement of existing trees with more appropriate species (“replace all sycamore trees,” “[use] street trees that are more appropriate for cities,” “replace liquidambirs—they litter and damage my yard and create tripping hazards, etc”), and trimming (“maintenance of trees,” “annual tree trimming on Grand Avenue,” etc.). Some respondents called for a tree ordinance in their replies.

Beyond the top ten, other themes on the list of “desired changes” included school-related changes (44 mentions), more activities for teens (44 mentions), streamlining of the planning and design review processes (34 mentions), more diversity (25 mentions), changes to the political structure and process (21 mentions), pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements (18 mentions), free wi-fi and more technology (17 mentions), more community events and gatherings (12 mentions), more arts and cultural programs (10 mentions), better disaster preparedness (9 mentions), more senior programs (8 mentions), and a landscaping ordinance (7 mentions).

Figure 8: Changes Desired by Piedmont Residents



## SATISFACTION INDICES

Question 4 of the resident survey asked respondents to rate 26 aspects of life in Piedmont using a five-point interval scale where “1” was Very Dissatisfied and “5” was Very Satisfied. Residents also had the option of checking “0” (no opinion) or skipping the question.

A total of 1,250 residents responded to this question (97.3 percent of all returns), although about half of the respondents did not rank all 26 factors. For example, 1,235 residents rated the city’s physical appearance, but only 648 rated the city’s website and only 790 rated its dog parks. On 11 of the 26 attributes, at least 1,200 persons replied, and on nine of the 26 attributes the number of respondents was between 1,000 and 1,200.

The 26 items were grouped under four major subheadings, profiled below. A numerical summary of the replies is provided in Table 2.

### Quality of Place

Most residents are very satisfied with life in Piedmont and take great pride in the city’s physical appearance. About 80 percent of the respondents stated they were “very satisfied” with Piedmont as a place to live and 13 percent said they were “somewhat satisfied.” Only one percent of the respondents were either somewhat or very dissatisfied. About 75 percent of the respondents were “very satisfied” with the city’s physical appearance and 18 percent were “somewhat satisfied.” Again, only one percent were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. About four percent of the respondents skipped these two questions or had no opinion.

This section of the survey also included questions on safety, traffic, and parking.

Residents were asked to rate safety and security on the street where they lived. Satisfaction levels were very high. Some 76 percent of all respondents were satisfied (29.9%) or very satisfied (46.3%); only seven percent were dissatisfied.

Opinions on parking were solicited through two questions. The first asked respondents to rate parking on the street where they lived; the second asked respondents to rate parking in the Piedmont Civic Center area. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with parking on their street, but only about one-third were satisfied or very satisfied with parking in the Civic Center. Conversely, only 15 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied with parking on their street while 27 percent were dissatisfied with parking around the Civic Center. Many people (25 percent) had mixed opinions about Civic Center parking and almost 12 percent skipped the question or had no opinion.

Respondents were asked to rate traffic flow in and through the city. Nearly 70 percent indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied and only eight percent were dissatisfied. Approximately 16 percent had mixed opinions, and six percent skipped the question or had no opinion. Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with traffic enforcement. The reactions were similar to the question on traffic flow. About 65 percent were satisfied or very satisfied and about eight percent were dissatisfied. About 13 percent had mixed opinions and 15 percent skipped the question or had no opinion.

In sum, the responses suggest generally high levels of satisfaction with the issues listed, with the exception of Civic Center parking. There are diverse views on this issue, evidenced by the large percentage of residents stating they have “mixed opinions” as well as the relatively large number of residents on either side of the “satisfied/dissatisfied” continuum.

Sub-Area Differences. The responses to this question were sorted by planning area to see if there were noticeable geographic differences in the replies (see Figure 1 for the map of sub-areas and Table 3 for the numerical summary). Residents in all six areas were overwhelmingly satisfied with Piedmont as a place to live, and with the City’s physical appearance. Satisfaction ratings were above 95 percent in all sub-areas (excluding the skipped replies).

There was greater variation on safety, parking, and traffic flow questions. Residents in Area 1 (below Grand Avenue) were noticeably less satisfied with public safety than those in Upper Piedmont. Residents in Area 4 (above Highland, north of Mountain) and Area 1 were less satisfied with on-street parking than residents elsewhere, while those in Area 5 (above Highland, Mountain to LaSalle) were the most satisfied. Conversely, residents of Area 5 were the least satisfied with Civic Center parking while residents of Area 3 (which includes the Civic Center itself) were most satisfied. Satisfaction levels with traffic flow ranged from 69.6 percent in Area 4 to 81.3 percent in Area 6 (St. James/Estates Dr area).

## City Services

Residents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the city’s website, the maintenance of streets and sidewalks, street lighting, trash collection, recyclables collection, green waste collection, bulk waste and e-waste collection, police services, and fire/EMS services. The cluster of questions on waste collection was intended to inform a parallel effort on the city’s solid waste management contract.

Table 2 shows the responses to this question. Because the percentages are skewed by variations in the number of people who answered or skipped each question, the figure shows percentages based on total surveys (1,284) and also the percentages based only on those who replied. This is especially important for the questions on the city’s website and bulk waste collection, which were skipped by more than one-quarter of the respondents.



The survey found that the Police and Fire departments are very highly regarded. An impressive 76 percent of the respondents were “very satisfied” with Fire and EMS services and another 10 percent were “somewhat satisfied.” Less than one percent of the respondents said they were dissatisfied, one percent had mixed opinions, and 12 percent skipped the question or had no opinion. The Police Department also fared very well, with 84 percent satisfied, four percent dissatisfied, six percent with mixed feelings, and six percent skipping the question or expressing no opinion.

Respondents also showed high levels of satisfaction with solid waste collection services. Some 84 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, five percent were dissatisfied, seven percent had mixed feelings, while four percent skipped the question or had no opinion. On recycling, 82 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, only six percent were dissatisfied, six percent had mixed feelings, and five percent skipped the question or had no opinion.

Green waste collection also received high marks. Among the 1,284 surveys received, 71 percent were very satisfied or satisfied, eight percent were dissatisfied, eight percent had mixed opinions, and 13 percent skipped the question or had no opinion.

The rankings for bulky waste collection were somewhat lower but still strong. Only 950 people replied to this question, with the other 26 percent skipping it or expressing no opinion. The remaining 74 percent included 50 percent who were satisfied, 12 percent who were dissatisfied, and 12 percent who expressed mixed opinions. Discounting the skipped surveys, the satisfaction rate among those who replied was about 68 percent.

Residents are generally satisfied with street lighting and street maintenance. On street and sidewalk maintenance, 72 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, 10 percent were dissatisfied, 14 percent had mixed opinions, and four percent did not respond or had no opinion. On street lighting, 64 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, 12 percent were dissatisfied, 18 percent had mixed opinions, and six percent skipped the question or had no opinion. The relatively high level of persons with mixed opinions suggests potential issues and concerns; many people discussed these concerns in greater detail in the “comments” section at the end of the question.

The adequacy of the Piedmont website was rated by about half of those returning their surveys. Ratings were generally positive (more than two-thirds of those who responded were satisfied), but the relatively low rate of return is significant. It suggests there may be more the City can do to raise awareness of the website and encourage its use among residents.

Sub-Area Differences. The responses to this question were sorted by planning area to see if there were noticeable geographic differences in the replies (see Figure 1 for the map of sub-areas and Table 3 for the

numerical summary). Residents in all six areas were overwhelmingly satisfied with Fire and EMS services, with ratings above 95 percent in all sub-areas (excluding the skipped replies). Satisfaction with police services ranged from 87 percent in Area 5 to 93 percent in Area 3.

For most of the services listed, the difference in ratings was less than 15 percentage points between sub-areas. Residents in Area 1 (below Grand Avenue) tended to have lower satisfaction levels than residents elsewhere. For instance, 77 percent of Area 1 respondents were satisfied with trash collection, compared to 89 percent in Areas 2, 3, and 6. Residents of Area 5 were the least satisfied with street lighting, which may not be surprising since Area 5 is the least dense (and thus, darkest) part of Piedmont. Street and sidewalk maintenance received its lowest rating in Area 6 (St. James/ Estates Dr. area, with 65 percent satisfied) and its highest rating in Area 3 (Civic Center/Magnolia/Wildwood—80 percent satisfied).

### **Leisure Services**

Piedmont's parks and recreational services scored very well in the survey. About 83 percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality and number of the city's parks. Less than five percent were dissatisfied, seven percent had mixed feelings, and five percent skipped the question.

Similar high levels of satisfaction were reported for recreational activities, although a larger number of respondents skipped the questions. For children's activities, 71 percent indicated they were satisfied, four percent were dissatisfied, seven percent had mixed feelings, and 18 percent skipped the question. For adult activities, 58 percent were satisfied, six percent were dissatisfied, 13 percent had mixed feelings, and 23 percent skipped the question. For arts and cultural programs, 49 percent were satisfied, seven percent were dissatisfied, 17 percent had mixed feelings, and 27 percent skipped the question.

The high percentage of persons skipping the question on children's activities is not surprising, since 52 percent of Piedmont households have no children under 18 living at home. The high percentage for adult programs and cultural programs is more telling, as it may indicate some residents are not aware of these programs or know of them but do not participate.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the adequacy of sports fields and off-leash dog areas (e.g., dog parks). Again, a sizeable number of people skipped these questions, presumably because they are not regular field users or dog owners. Those who replied were generally satisfied, but the percentage of residents dissatisfied with sports fields is worth noting. About 54 percent of the respondents were satisfied with sports fields, 13 percent were dissatisfied, 14 percent had mixed opinions, and 19 percent did not reply or had no opinion. For dog parks, 47 percent were satisfied, six percent were dissatisfied, nine percent had mixed opinions, and 38 percent did not reply or had no opinion.

Sub-Area Differences. The responses to this question were sorted by planning area to see if there were noticeable geographic differences in the replies (see Figure 1 for the map of sub-areas and Table 3 for the numerical summary). Satisfaction with the city's parks ranged from 85 percent in Area 4 (Above Highland, north of Mountain) to 90 percent in Areas 2 and 5—a narrow range of only five percentage points.

On the seven topics in this question, residents of Area 5 (Above Highland, Mountain to LaSalle) were generally the most satisfied while residents of Area 6 (St. James/ Estates Dr) were generally the least satisfied—however, the percentage differences were small. For instance, 92 percent of Area 5 residents were satisfied with recreational activities for children, compared to 79 percent in Area 6. About 82 percent of Area 5 residents were satisfied with community events, compared to 71 percent in Area 6. Other notable variations were ratings for dog parks. There was 81 percent satisfaction with off-leash dog areas in Area 3 (Civic Center/ Magnolia/ Wildwood) compared to 62 percent in Area 6.

### **Open-ended Replies**

Question 4 included several lines of “blank” space where respondents could add comments on the 26 items listed. Approximately 28 percent of those returning their surveys (357 respondents) chose to write something in this space. Responses ranged from a few words to multiple page attachments.

Although no single subject dominated the open-ended comments, about one-third addressed recreation (particularly issues related to the swimming pool and sports fields). Another one-third of the write-in comments dealt with traffic and parking issues—including many comments on roadway hazards or parking problems on specific streets. Other frequently mentioned topics were the future of the Civic Center area (e.g., differences of opinion on the need for retail and a “gathering place”), safety and crime, sidewalk condition, and street lighting.

Appendix D provides a sampling of the replies.

Table 2: Satisfaction Levels (Total respondents = 1,243)

Q.4: PLEASE INDICATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH...		Total replies and percentages, including those who did not answer								Percent of those answering the question (excludes skipped replies)				
		Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	No Opinion/ No Answer	Total Expressing Opinion	Weighted Average	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
a	Piedmont as a place to live	7 0.5%	8 0.6%	31 2.4%	167 13.0%	1021 79.5%	50 3.9%	1234	4.77	0.6%	0.6%	2.5%	13.5%	82.7%
b	City's physical appearance	7 0.5%	8 0.6%	22 1.7%	232 18.1%	966 75.2%	49 3.8%	1235	4.73	0.6%	0.6%	1.8%	18.8%	78.2%
c	Safety and Security on your street	28 2.2%	62 4.8%	161 12.5%	384 29.9%	595 46.3%	54 4.2%	1230	4.18	2.3%	5.0%	13.1%	31.2%	48.4%
d	Availability of on-street parking on your street	74 5.8%	114 8.9%	172 13.4%	276 21.5%	575 44.8%	73 5.7%	1211	3.96	6.1%	9.4%	14.2%	22.8%	47.5%
e	Availability of parking in the civic center area	106 8.3%	238 18.5%	319 24.8%	318 24.8%	154 12.0%	149 11.6%	1135	3.16	9.3%	21.0%	28.1%	28.0%	13.6%
f	Traffic flow in and through the city	40 3.1%	66 5.1%	212 16.5%	446 34.7%	445 34.7%	75 5.8%	1209	3.98	3.3%	5.5%	17.5%	36.9%	36.8%
g	Adequacy of the Piedmont website to provide information to residents	26 2.0%	56 4.4%	122 9.5%	250 19.5%	194 15.1%	636 49.5%	648	3.82	4.0%	8.6%	18.8%	38.6%	29.9%
h	Maintenance of streets and sidewalks	39 3.0%	85 6.6%	183 14.3%	473 36.8%	448 34.9%	56 4.4%	1228	3.98	3.2%	6.9%	14.9%	38.5%	36.5%
i	Street lighting	40 3.1%	115 9.0%	231 18.0%	435 33.9%	388 30.2%	75 5.8%	1209	3.84	3.3%	9.5%	19.1%	36.0%	32.1%
j	Trash collection	22 1.7%	38 3.0%	90 7.0%	331 25.8%	746 58.1%	57 4.4%	1227	4.42	1.8%	3.1%	7.3%	27.0%	60.8%
k	Recyclables collection	25 1.9%	56 4.4%	84 6.5%	342 26.6%	714 55.6%	63 4.9%	1221	4.36	2.0%	4.6%	6.9%	28.0%	58.5%
l	Green waste collection	35 2.7%	64 5.0%	99 7.7%	310 24.1%	609 47.4%	167 13.0%	1117	4.25	3.1%	5.7%	8.9%	27.8%	54.5%
m	Bulky waste/ electronic waste collection	53 4.1%	98 7.6%	154 12.0%	258 20.1%	387 30.1%	334 26.0%	950	3.87	5.6%	10.3%	16.2%	27.2%	40.7%
n	Police services	20 1.6%	31 2.4%	78 6.1%	248 19.3%	837 65.2%	70 5.5%	1214	4.52	1.6%	2.6%	6.4%	20.4%	68.9%

Table 2: Satisfaction Levels, page 2 (Total respondents = 1,243)

Q.4 CONTINUED: PLEASE INDICATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH...		Total replies and percentages, including those who did not answer								Percent of those answering the question (excludes skipped replies)				
		Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	No Opinion/ No Answer	Total Expressing Opinion	Weighted Average	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
o	Fire and EMS services	6 0.5%	1 0.1%	14 1.1%	127 9.9%	977 76.1%	159 12.4%	1125	4.84	0.5%	0.1%	1.2%	11.3%	86.8%
p	Enforcement of traffic rules	38 3.0%	60 4.7%	161 12.5%	373 29.0%	462 36.0%	190 14.8%	1094	4.06	3.5%	5.5%	14.7%	34.1%	42.2%
q	Building permit process	110 8.6%	151 11.8%	281 21.9%	319 24.8%	196 15.3%	227 17.7%	1057	3.32	10.4%	14.3%	26.6%	30.2%	18.5%
r	Design review requirements	154 12.0%	177 13.8%	287 22.4%	254 19.8%	166 12.9%	246 19.2%	1038	3.1	14.8%	17.1%	27.6%	24.5%	16.0%
s	City development policies	84 6.5%	120 9.3%	331 25.8%	238 18.5%	133 10.4%	378 29.4%	906	3.24	9.3%	13.2%	36.5%	26.3%	14.7%
t	Quality and number of Piedmont's parks	15 1.2%	46 3.6%	88 6.9%	331 25.8%	731 56.9%	73 5.7%	1211	4.42	1.2%	3.8%	7.3%	27.3%	60.4%
u	Recreational activities for children	16 1.2%	39 3.0%	90 7.0%	298 23.2%	615 47.9%	226 17.6%	1058	4.38	1.5%	3.7%	8.5%	28.2%	58.1%
v	Recreational activities for adults	17 1.3%	67 5.2%	167 13.0%	356 27.7%	383 29.8%	294 22.9%	990	4.03	1.7%	6.8%	16.9%	36.0%	38.7%
w	Adequacy of sports fields	59 4.6%	110 8.6%	183 14.3%	311 24.2%	384 29.9%	237 18.5%	1047	3.81	5.6%	10.5%	17.5%	29.7%	36.7%
x	Adequacy of off-leash dog areas	24 1.9%	51 4.0%	111 8.6%	207 16.1%	397 30.9%	494 38.5%	790	4.14	3.0%	6.5%	14.1%	26.2%	50.3%
y	Arts and cultural programs	20 1.6%	71 5.5%	212 16.5%	340 26.5%	289 22.5%	352 27.4%	932	3.87	2.1%	7.6%	22.7%	36.5%	31.0%
z	Community gatherings and special events	11 0.9%	47 3.7%	166 12.9%	359 28.0%	456 35.5%	245 19.1%	1039	4.16	1.1%	4.5%	16.0%	34.6%	43.9%

Total Respondents 1250  
(skipped this question entirely) 34

**Table 3: Percent of Residents Indicating “Somewhat Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” by Sub-Area**

	Citywide	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	No Area Stated
Piedmont as a place to live	96.3%	96.0%	97.5%	96.3%	95.4%	98.4%	97.3%	90.9%
City's physical appearance	97.0%	96.0%	99.5%	97.3%	96.6%	96.3%	97.3%	93.9%
Safety and security on your street	79.6%	63.4%	84.5%	76.6%	84.1%	83.2%	79.8%	77.0%
Availability of on-street parking on your street	70.3%	62.6%	78.3%	64.6%	62.0%	81.5%	79.2%	67.7%
Availability of on-street parking in Civic Center area	41.6%	39.5%	39.6%	45.8%	41.3%	37.6%	41.2%	44.0%
Traffic flow in and through city	73.7%	74.7%	75.1%	74.0%	69.6%	74.7%	81.3%	68.1%
Adequacy of website to provide info to residents	68.5%	67.9%	67.3%	69.8%	73.5%	71.7%	66.0%	48.9%
Maintenance of streets and sidewalks	75.0%	73.5%	76.5%	79.7%	73.9%	77.8%	65.5%	67.7%
Street lighting	68.1%	69.3%	70.2%	73.9%	65.3%	64.0%	67.0%	61.1%
Trash collection	87.8%	77.5%	90.6%	89.3%	88.6%	87.7%	89.2%	84.8%
Recyclables collection	86.5%	77.2%	89.6%	89.2%	86.4%	83.4%	89.1%	84.8%
Green waste collection	82.3%	72.4%	83.3%	83.9%	82.3%	83.4%	86.4%	78.1%
Bulky waste / electronic waste collection	67.9%	63.2%	70.9%	72.1%	66.0%	66.9%	65.1%	63.0%
Police	89.4%	88.0%	89.4%	93.4%	89.1%	87.1%	91.7%	81.3%
Fire/ EMS	98.1%	95.5%	98.4%	98.9%	99.1%	97.7%	96.1%	98.8%
Enforcement of traffic rules	76.3%	77.0%	79.5%	77.8%	75.8%	72.3%	76.3%	73.9%
Building permit process	48.7%	44.8%	42.9%	46.9%	47.2%	57.4%	51.0%	55.0%
Design review requirements	40.5%	36.8%	37.9%	38.6%	37.5%	45.7%	50.5%	40.8%
City development policies	40.9%	37.8%	38.2%	43.2%	36.2%	49.6%	41.8%	35.9%
Quality and number of Piedmont parks	87.7%	87.2%	90.1%	87.9%	84.8%	90.2%	87.2%	85.4%
Rec activities for children	86.3%	85.7%	86.0%	89.1%	81.0%	91.9%	79.3%	88.1%
Rec activities for adults	74.6%	75.9%	73.3%	76.7%	72.6%	78.2%	70.7%	72.8%
Adequacy of sports fields	66.4%	65.4%	62.1%	70.7%	61.4%	68.5%	64.3%	73.8%
Adequacy of offleash dog areas	76.5%	75.8%	77.4%	80.9%	75.2%	73.7%	62.1%	84.1%
Arts and cultural programs	67.5%	67.5%	62.6%	71.3%	64.7%	72.1%	63.8%	68.8%
Community gatherings and special events	78.4%	76.5%	74.6%	81.6%	80.0%	81.9%	71.0%	77.1%

*Shaded boxes indicate the “high” and “low” sub-areas for question, excluding respondents who did not indicate where they lived.*

## PLANNING AND BUILDING PROCESS

Survey Question 4 included a section on planning and building services in Piedmont. Respondents were asked to rate the building permit process, design review requirements, and the city's development policies. This was followed up in Question 5 with a multiple choice question asking respondents whether the city's requirements for major home improvements were too restrictive, not restrictive enough, or about right.

Satisfaction levels with planning and building requirements were less favorable than those for other services, but were still mostly positive (see Table 2). On the building permit process, those who were "satisfied" outweighed those who were "dissatisfied" by a 2:1 margin. About 40 percent of the respondents were satisfied and 20 percent were dissatisfied, with 22 percent mixed and 18 percent with no opinion or skipping the question. On design review requirements, the balance was closer—33 percent were satisfied and 26 percent were dissatisfied. Some 22 percent had mixed feelings while about 19 percent had no opinion or skipped the question. Many of the "mixed" and "dissatisfied" responses were accompanied by written comments on how the process could be improved. Many of those with no opinion indicated in their comments that they had no experience with the planning and building processes.

Question 4 also asked respondents to evaluate the city's development policies. About 29 percent skipped this question (or had no opinion) and 26 percent indicated they had mixed feelings. About 29 percent were satisfied and 16 percent were dissatisfied. The high percentage of those who skipped the question indicates that many residents may be unfamiliar with the city's development policies, while the high percentage with mixed feelings indicates many residents may support some policies but not others.

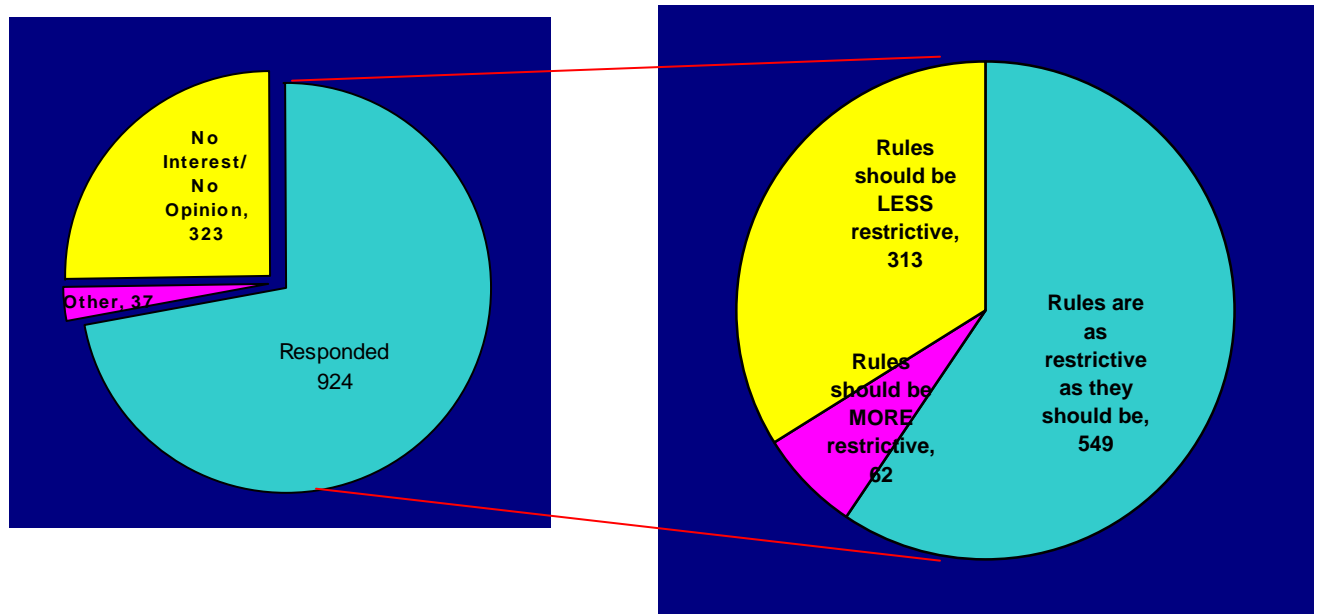
Moving on to Question 5, respondents were asked the following question:

"When it comes to permits for major home improvement projects in the City of Piedmont which is closest to your opinion"

Three options were provided. About 43 percent of the respondents indicated the permitting process was "just about as restrictive as it should be." About 25 percent indicated the "city should have less restrictive rules about what is allowed." About five percent felt the "city should have more restrictive rules about what is allowed." Some 25 percent skipped the question entirely, while three percent did not make a selection but instead wrote their own answer in the "comments" section.

Although a majority of those who answered this question felt that the City's permitting process was "as restrictive as it should be," the relatively large number who felt the rules should be "less restrictive" is significant. Many of the respondents wrote in comments, sometimes expressing frustration with the rules themselves, and sometimes expressing frustration with the process.

Figure 9: Opinions on Planning and Building Requirements



### Major Areas of Contention

The comments on Question 5 indicate a handful of persistent concerns about the planning and design review processes. Appendix E provides a summary of comments, organized by topic. While these views were expressed by a minority of those completing the survey, they may provide the basis for further discussion by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Among those who felt the rules should be less restrictive, respondents commented on these issues:

- *Exemptions for small projects:* Probably the greatest number of negative comments on the design review process related to small projects or projects that were minimally visible to neighbors. Many respondents felt that design review requirements for fences, windows, doors, and backyard/ side yard projects were too restrictive.
- *Micromanagement:* Some respondents feel the design review process is too intrusive and that the City oversteps its responsibilities by “micromanaging” projects.
- *Consistency:* Some respondents felt that decisions were not made in a consistent manner by the Planning Commission and that the process seemed overly subjective.



- *Flexibility:* A number of respondents believed that there was not enough flexibility in the application of the rules and felt that “common sense” should prevail more frequently.
- *Cost:* A number of respondents were unhappy with the cost of permits and planning/ design review applications.
- *Complexity:* Some respondents felt the process was cumbersome and took too long.
- *Clarity:* A number of people felt that rules were unclear or not well defined.
- *Excessive Input from Neighbors:* Several respondents commented that the weight given to the opinion of neighbors infringed on homeowners’ rights.
- *Parking requirements:* Some respondents found the link between bedroom count and parking requirements to be problematic.

Conversely, many respondents wrote annotated comments in support of design review, and used the “comments” section to express the reasons they felt the rules were essential and appropriate. Others used the comments section to express the reasons they felt more restrictive rules were needed. Their comments typically pertained to:

- *Views:* Some respondents expressed concerns about the impacts of second story additions on views and privacy.
- *“McMansions”:* Several respondents expressed concerns about excessively large homes on small lots.
- *“Landscaping”:* Some respondents believed that planning review should be expanded to include landscaping and tree removal.

### Sub-Area Differences

Responses to Questions 4 (q-s) and Question 5 were sorted by the six planning areas (see Figure 1 for a map of the six areas and Table 4 for the numeric data).

Table 4: Opinions on Planning and Building Regulations, Sorted by Area

			Percent	Total who replied to this question	<i>Of those who replied, Percentage "City should be less Restrictive"</i> <i>Percentage "City as restrictive as it should be"</i>
CITYWIDE	City should be less restrictive	313	24.4%	924	33.9%
	City should be more restrictive	62	4.8%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	549	42.8%		59.4%
	No Interest/ No Answer	323	25.2%		
	Other	37	2.9%		
	TOTAL	1284	100.0%		
AREA 1	Less Restrictive	33	32.4%	70	47.1%
	More restrictive	4	3.9%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	33	32.4%		47.1%
	No Interest/ No Answer	27	26.5%		
	Other	5	4.9%		
	TOTAL	102	100.0%		
AREA 2	Less Restrictive	55	26.6%	159	34.6%
	More restrictive	10	4.8%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	94	45.4%		59.1%
	No Interest/ No Answer	38	18.4%		
	Other	10	4.8%		
	TOTAL	197	100.0%		
AREA 3	Less Restrictive	90	30.3%	229	39.3%
	More restrictive	11	3.7%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	128	43.1%		55.9%
	No Interest/ No Answer	61	20.5%		
	Other	7	2.4%		
	TOTAL	297	100.0%		
AREA 4	Less Restrictive	58	24.0%	176	33.0%
	More restrictive	15	6.2%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	103	42.6%		58.5%
	No Interest/ No Answer	60	24.8%		
	Other	6	2.5%		
	TOTAL	242	100.0%		
AREA 5	Less Restrictive	40	20.8%	148	27.0%
	More restrictive	12	6.3%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	96	50.0%		64.9%
	No Interest/ No Answer	40	20.8%		
	Other	4	2.1%		
	TOTAL	192	100.0%		
AREA 6	Less Restrictive	23	20.2%	83	27.7%
	More restrictive	7	6.1%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	53	46.5%		63.9%
	No Interest/ No Answer	28	24.6%		
	Other	3	2.6%		
	TOTAL	114	100.0%		
No Address	Less Restrictive	14	10.8%	59	23.7%
	More restrictive	3	2.3%		
	City as restrictive as it should be	42	32.3%		71.2%
	No Interest/ No Answer	69	53.1%		
	Other	2	1.5%		
	TOTAL	130	100.0%		

Satisfaction levels with the building permit process ranged from 43 percent in Area 2 (Grand/ Highland/ Oakland/ Moraga) to 57 percent in Area 5 (Above Highland, Mountain to LaSalle). Satisfaction with the design review process ranged from 37 percent in Area 1 (below Grand) to 51 percent in Area 6 (St. James/ Estates Dr.). Satisfaction with the City's development policies ranged from 36 percent in Area 4 (Above Highland, north of Mountain) to 50 percent in Area 5.

Regarding the "restrictiveness" of the City's design review and construction rules, there were noticeable differences between Upper and Lower Piedmont. In Area 1 (below Grand), respondents were evenly split between those who thought the city's regulations were "too restrictive" or "as restrictive as they should be." On the other hand, in Areas 5 and 6 (above Highland, south of Mountain), about 64 percent felt the city's rules were as restrictive as they should be, while only 27 percent felt the rules were too strict. It is probable that the smaller lot sizes and more dense character of homes in Lower Piedmont makes the design review process more onerous.

## POLICY OPTIONS

Question 6 of the resident survey presented 15 policy statements and asked respondents to indicate whether they strongly disagreed, somewhat disagreed, somewhat agreed, or strongly agreed with each statement. Respondents also had the option of checking "no opinion" or skipping the question. A total of 1,243 respondents (97 percent of the total returns) answered all or part of this question, although not all respondents provided feedback on every statement.

The strongest level of agreement was on the issue of **maintaining Piedmont's small town character**. More than 82 percent of the respondents strongly agreed and 10 percent somewhat agreed. Fewer than two percent disagreed, and about six percent skipped the question.

Respondents also strongly supported the idea of **continuing on-demand bulky waste and electronic waste pick-up**. Almost 89 percent strongly agreed or somewhat agreed and fewer than two percent disagreed. About nine percent skipped the question. The statement with the next highest level of support was **providing additional AC transit service to BART**. About 75 percent agreed, seven percent disagreed, and 18 percent skipped the question.

Other policy statements with a high level of support included **improving pedestrian safety on Oakland Avenue** and **encouraging historic preservation**. The former was supported by 66 percent of the respondents, with only 12 percent disagreeing (and 21 percent skipping the question). The latter was supported by 76 percent of the respondents, with only 10 percent disagreeing (and 14 percent skipping the question). In addition, about 71 percent of the respondents agreed that **the area around City Hall should**

be transformed into more of a gathering place, with 17 percent disagreeing (and 12 percent skipping the question).

Seven more of the policy statements were supported by a majority of the respondents. In order, these were:

- **Develop better defined rules for home additions and remodels** (65% agree, 18% disagree, 17% skipped)
- **Rely more heavily on email to communicate with residents** (62% agree, 21% disagree, 17% skipped)
- **Encourage mixed use (housing/retail) on Grand Avenue** (60% agree, 24% disagree, 16% skipped)
- **Provide more opportunities for casual carpooling** (58% agree, 16% disagree, 26% skipped)
- **Implement a food scrap composting program as part of green waste service** (54% agree, 28% disagree, 18% skipped)
- **Require greener construction practices even if it means higher fees and construction costs** (54% agree, 35% disagree, 11% skipped)
- **Work harder to reduce noise levels in the city** (51% agree, 25% disagree, 14% skipped)

Two of the 15 policy statements had less than majority support. **Creating more retail in the civic center area** was supported by only 49 percent of the respondents – although the percentage rises to 54 percent when those who skipped the question are subtracted out. **Requiring tree removal permits** was supported by an even smaller percentage—just 39 percent, compared to 45 percent who were opposed. Even after those who skipped the question are subtracted out, the support rating is only 47 percent.

Table 5 shows the percentage breakdown for the 15 policy options.

### Sub-area Differences

Responses to Question 6 were sorted by the six planning areas (see Figure 1 for a map of the six areas). The results appear in Table 6. Generally the difference in responses between areas was only a few percentage points but there were a number of exceptions.

On the issue of improving pedestrian safety on Oakland Avenue, the highest support came from residents in Area 2—not surprisingly, since this area includes Oakland Avenue itself. On supporting better AC Transit service to BART, the highest support came from Area 1 (below Grand Avenue). This is also the most “urban” part of Piedmont and has higher densities than the other planning areas. The lowest level of support came from Area 5, which is the least dense part of the City. Area 1 residents also showed the highest level of support for retail in the civic center area, while residents in Area 3 (which includes the Civic Center) showed the lowest level of support. Similarly, residents of Areas 1 and 6, which are the furthest

**Table 5: Opinions on Policy Options** (Total respondents = 1,243)

Q6: PLEASE EXPRESS YOUR OPINION ON THE FOLLOWING LOCAL POLICY OPTIONS:  Over the next 20 years Piedmont's City leaders should...		Total replies and percentages, including those who did not answer						Percent of those answering the question (excludes skipped replies)				
		strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	strongly agree	no opinion/ no answer	Expressed Opinion	weighted average	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	strongly agree
a	...maintain Piedmont's small town feel	9 0.7%	14 1.1%	128 10.0%	1055 82.2%	78 6.1%	1206	3.85	0.7%	1.2%	10.6%	87.5%
b	...improve pedestrian safety on Oakland Avenue"	35 2.7%	123 9.6%	377 29.4%	476 37.1%	273 21.3%	1011	3.28	3.5%	12.2%	37.3%	47.1%
c	...support better A/C Transit service to BART"	23 1.8%	68 5.3%	312 24.3%	645 50.2%	236 18.4%	1048	3.51	2.2%	6.5%	29.8%	61.5%
d	...provide more opportunities for casual carpooling"	58 4.5%	153 11.9%	355 27.6%	383 29.8%	335 26.1%	949	3.12	6.1%	16.1%	37.4%	40.4%
e	...create more retail in the Civic Center area"	296 23.1%	239 18.6%	265 20.6%	359 28.0%	125 9.7%	1159	2.59	25.5%	20.6%	22.9%	31.0%
f	...work harder to reduce noise levels in the City"	81 6.3%	241 18.8%	380 29.6%	269 21.0%	313 24.4%	971	2.86	8.3%	24.8%	39.1%	27.7%
g	...encourage historic preservation"	34 2.6%	95 7.4%	411 32.0%	563 43.8%	181 14.1%	1103	3.36	3.1%	8.6%	37.3%	51.0%
h	...make the area around City Hall (Vista/ Highland) more of a town center and gathering place"	106 8.3%	110 8.6%	393 30.6%	522 40.7%	153 11.9%	1131	3.18	9.4%	9.7%	34.7%	46.2%
i	...encourage mixed uses (housing and retail) on Grand Avenue within the Piedmont City limits"	167 13.0%	146 11.4%	360 28.0%	411 32.0%	200 15.6%	1084	2.94	15.4%	13.5%	33.2%	37.9%
j	...start requiring permits for large tree removals"	319 24.8%	257 20.0%	234 18.2%	271 21.1%	203 15.8%	1081	2.42	29.5%	23.8%	21.6%	25.1%
k	...require "greener" construction practices even if it means higher fees and construction costs"	219 17.1%	226 17.6%	379 29.5%	319 24.8%	141 11.0%	1143	2.7	19.2%	19.8%	33.2%	27.9%
l	...implement a food scrap composting program as part of green waste service"	183 14.3%	177 13.8%	294 22.9%	396 30.8%	234 18.2%	1050	2.86	17.4%	16.9%	28.0%	37.7%
m	...continue providing on-demand bulky waste and electronic waste pick-up"	10 0.8%	14 1.1%	197 15.3%	950 74.0%	113 8.8%	1171	3.78	0.9%	1.2%	16.8%	81.1%
n	...rely more heavily on e-mail to communicate with residents"	120 9.3%	154 12.0%	375 29.2%	420 32.7%	215 16.7%	1069	3.02	11.2%	14.4%	35.1%	39.3%
o	...develop better-defined rules for home additions and remodels"	76 5.9%	149 11.6%	410 31.9%	429 33.4%	220 17.1%	1064	3.12	7.1%	14.0%	38.5%	40.3%

Table 6: Opinions on Policy Options by Sub-Area

PERCENT WHO "STRONGLY AGREE" OR "SOMEWHAT AGREE" <i>(Excludes respondents who skipped the question)</i>								
Over the next 20 years Piedmont's City leaders should...	Citywide	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	No Area stated
(a) ...maintain Piedmont's small town feel	98.1%	96.8%	98.0%	98.3%	97.8%	98.4%	98.2%	98.9%
(b) ...improve pedestrian safety on Oakland Avenue"	84.4%	85.5%	90.3%	87.8%	76.5%	76.7%	90.1%	87.0%
(c) ...support better A/C Transit service to BART"	91.3%	97.7%	92.5%	92.3%	89.0%	88.7%	93.9%	86.8%
(d) ...provide more opportunities for casual carpooling"	77.8%	78.3%	74.7%	83.6%	72.1%	78.8%	77.8%	79.2%
(e) ...create more retail in the Civic Center area"	53.8%	59.3%	53.4%	50.5%	56.9%	52.5%	53.9%	53.9%
(f) ...work harder to reduce noise levels in the City"	66.8%	72.9%	60.1%	73.5%	63.0%	58.8%	73.6%	73.7%
(g) ...encourage historic preservation"	88.3%	88.6%	89.1%	87.9%	85.4%	89.1%	89.2%	91.9%
(h) ...make the area around City Hall (Vista/ Highland) more of a town center and gathering place"	80.9%	86.2%	80.5%	80.0%	80.6%	80.1%	86.7%	75.3%
(i) ...encourage mixed uses (housing and retail) on Grand Avenue within the Piedmont City limits"	71.1%	67.4%	63.1%	72.6%	78.9%	71.7%	72.2%	65.8%
(j) ...start requiring permits for large tree removals"	46.7%	54.5%	48.5%	53.8%	36.3%	47.7%	46.2%	38.6%
(k)...require "greener" construction practices even if it means higher fees and construction costs"	61.1%	64.9%	61.5%	65.5%	56.6%	58.7%	62.7%	57.3%
(l) ...implement a food scrap composting program as part of green waste service"	65.7%	76.9%	74.1%	70.8%	56.3%	53.4%	67.8%	67.5%
(m) ...continue providing on-demand bulky waste and electronic waste pick-up"	98.0%	99.0%	96.9%	97.9%	98.3%	98.3%	100.0%	96.6%
(n) ...rely more heavily on e-mail to communicate with residents"	74.4%	68.2%	77.2%	75.2%	74.6%	75.4%	73.3%	71.1%
(o)...develop better-defined rules for home additions and remodels"	78.9%	77.9%	82.0%	76.7%	75.4%	82.1%	78.6%	83.1%

Shaded boxes indicate the "high" and "low" sub-areas for question, excluding respondents who did not indicate where they lived.

away from the Civic Center, were the most supportive of plans to make the Civic Center a gathering place, while residents of Area 3 were least supportive (although the range was narrow).

Residents in Area 6 (St. James/ Estates Dr. area) were the most supportive of additional noise control measures, while those in Area 5 were least supportive. Residents in Area 1 were the most supportive of restrictions on tree removal while those in Area 4 (above Highland, north of Mountain) were the least supportive. Conversely, residents in Area 4 were most supportive of mixed use development on Grand Avenue while those in Areas 1 and 2 (which include Grand Avenue itself) were least supportive. Residents in Upper Piedmont also tended to be somewhat less supportive of “green construction” requirements and food scrap recycling compared to Lower Piedmont.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

Question 7 presented a list of 13 potential capital projects and asked respondents if they would support additional City taxes or fees to cover their costs. Respondents were asked if they would “strongly support,” “somewhat support,” “somewhat oppose,” or “strongly oppose” spending for each project. Information on the relative costs of each project was not provided. Respondents were also allowed to “write in” their own projects—or offer comments on the projects listed. The numeric summary is presented in Table 7.

Two projects on the list of 13 clearly emerged as having the highest level of support. Landscaping/ tree planting topped the list, with 64 percent of the respondents in support, 26 percent opposed, and 10 percent skipping the question. Close behind, utility undergrounding expenditures were supported by 63 percent of the respondents, opposed by 27 percent, with 10 percent again skipping the question.

The controversial nature of utility undergrounding is evidenced by the clustering of responses in the “strongly” support and “strongly” oppose columns, rather than the “somewhat” support and “somewhat” oppose columns. When the skipped replies are subtracted out, 45 percent of the respondents indicated “strong” support for undergrounding, while 19 percent indicated “strong” opposition. The responses on landscaping and tree planting were more evenly distributed, with many more respondents selecting the “somewhat” support/oppose options.

At least five other capital project types were supported by a majority of survey respondents. Top among these were additional bike paths and bike lanes (supported by 59 percent of the respondents, or 69 percent of the respondents when those who skipped the question are factored out). A teen center also was supported by 59 percent of the respondents (69 percent when those who skipped the question are factored out). Creating a community gathering place or plaza was supported by 55 percent of the respondents (65 percent when those who skipped the question are factored out). Additional recreational facilities were

**Table 7: Opinions on Capital Improvement Priorities** (Total respondents = 1,236)

Q7: FOR WHICH TYPES OF PROJECTS WOULD YOU SUPPORT INCREASES IN CITY TAXES OR FEES?	Total replies and percentages, including those who did not answer							Percent of those answering the question (excludes skipped replies)			
	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support	No Opinion/ No Answer	Total with opinion	Response Average	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Somewhat Support	Strongly Support
Additional recreational facilities	225 17.5%	194 15.1%	398 31.0%	299 23.3%	168 13.1%	1116	2.69	20.2%	17.4%	35.7%	26.8%
Landscaping and tree planting	154 12.0%	175 13.6%	496 38.6%	330 25.7%	129 10.0%	1155	2.87	13.3%	15.2%	42.9%	28.6%
City-owned and maintained competitive-sized swimming pool	318 24.8%	170 13.2%	287 22.4%	349 27.2%	160 12.5%	1124	2.59	28.3%	15.1%	25.5%	31.0%
Undergrounding of overhead utility wires	214 16.7%	137 10.7%	290 22.6%	518 40.3%	125 9.7%	1159	2.96	18.5%	11.8%	25.0%	44.7%
A parking garage in the City Hall area	425 33.1%	243 18.9%	251 19.5%	203 15.8%	162 12.6%	1122	2.21	37.9%	21.7%	22.4%	18.1%
More child care centers	274 21.3%	259 20.2%	288 22.4%	111 8.6%	352 27.4%	932	2.25	29.4%	27.8%	30.9%	11.9%
A teen center	191 14.9%	133 10.4%	387 30.1%	372 29.0%	201 15.7%	1083	2.87	17.6%	12.3%	35.7%	34.3%
Bike paths and marked bike lanes	162 12.6%	182 14.2%	404 31.5%	347 27.0%	189 14.7%	1095	2.85	14.8%	16.6%	36.9%	31.7%
Creating a community gathering place or plaza	193 15.0%	181 14.1%	379 29.5%	327 25.5%	204 15.9%	1080	2.78	17.9%	16.8%	35.1%	30.3%
City arts and cultural center	237 18.5%	213 16.6%	392 30.5%	225 17.5%	217 16.9%	1067	2.57	22.2%	20.0%	36.7%	21.1%
Larger wheeled mixed materials recycling carts	222 17.3%	209 16.3%	291 22.7%	281 21.9%	281 21.9%	1003	2.63	22.1%	20.8%	29.0%	28.0%
Backyard service for recycling or green waste	233 18.1%	212 16.5%	272 21.2%	281 21.9%	286 22.3%	998	2.60	23.3%	21.2%	27.3%	28.2%
Free citywide wireless (WiFi) internet service	232 18.1%	139 10.8%	265 20.6%	394 30.7%	254 19.8%	1030	2.80	22.5%	13.5%	25.7%	38.3%



supported by 54 percent of the respondents (63 percent when those who skipped the question are factored out). Free wireless internet was supported by 51 percent of the respondents (64 percent when those who skipped the question are factored out).

Respondents were more evenly split on additional taxes or fees for a pool, and for a cultural arts center. As with utility undergrounding, respondents tended to be polarized on the idea of a city-owned and maintained competitive size swimming pool. Among those who replied, 31 percent “strongly” supported the idea and 28 percent were “strongly” opposed. The overall level of support was 50 percent, rising to 56 percent when those who skipped the question are factored out. Additional taxes/fees for an arts and cultural center were supported by 48 percent and opposed by 35 percent, with 17 percent skipping the question.

Two of the capital projects in the survey were related to solid waste collection. About 44 percent of the respondents supported additional fees for wheeled mixed materials recycling carts, while 34 percent were opposed and 22 percent skipped the question. About 43 percent supported fees for backyard green waste and recycling service, with 35 percent opposed and 22 percent skipping the question. It is worth noting that in each of these cases, the percentage in support rises to about 56 percent when those who skipped the question are not counted.

Two of the projects did not have majority support, even when those who skipped the question are subtracted out. These are (1) more child care centers, and (2) a parking garage in the City Hall area. Child care centers were supported by just 31 percent of the respondents, while a parking garage was supported by 35 percent. More child care centers were opposed by 42 percent of the respondents while a parking garage had 52 percent opposition. In fact, 33 percent of the respondents were “strongly opposed” to a parking garage—making this the most negatively ranked project in Question 7. A relatively large percentage of respondents (27 percent) skipped the question on child care, but only 12 percent skipped the question on the parking garage.

### **Open-ended Replies**

Respondents were provided with several lines of “blank” space to add comments on Question 7—about one-third (379 replies) did so. Most of the written comments further explained the numerical choices, but many suggested other projects that should be considered for funding. These included a library, a post office, traffic calming measures (stop signs, speed humps, etc.) on various streets, lighted crosswalks, renovated playground equipment, educational facilities, a gym, creek improvements, basketball courts, a farmers market, affordable housing, sewer and water line repairs, earthquake preparedness measures, and sustainability measures. Some respondents used the “comments” space to express their opposition to (or support for) a particular project on the list.

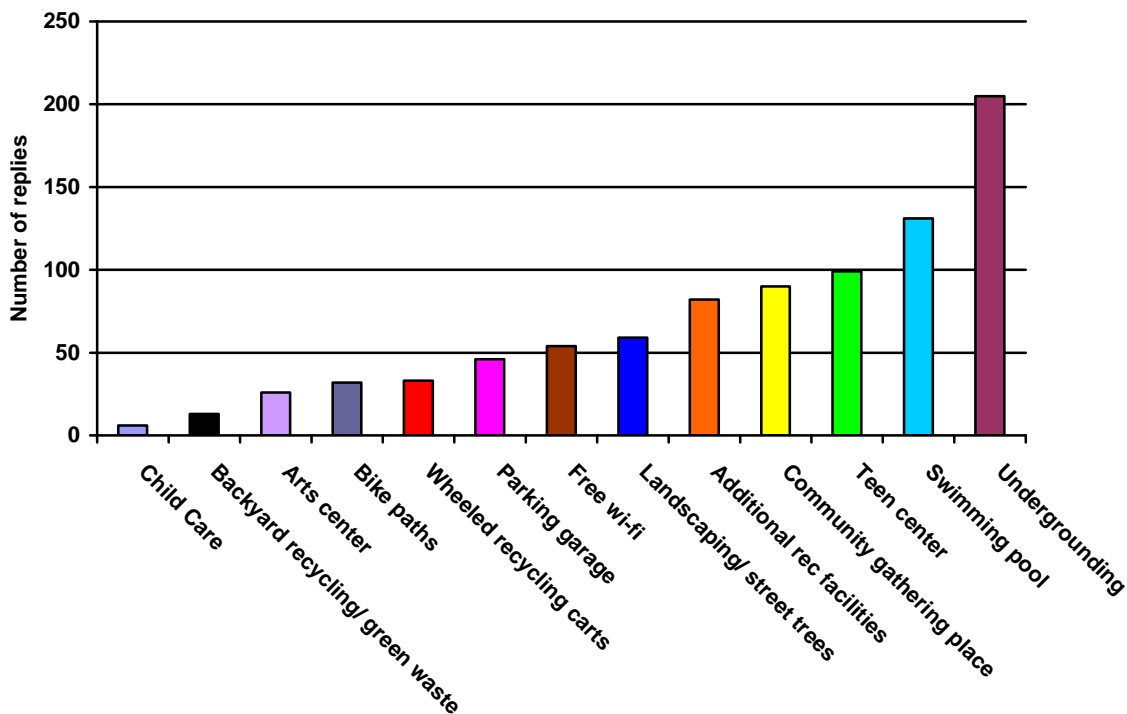
Approximately 50 respondents used the “comments” area to express their opposition to new taxes of any kind. These same respondents often indicated they “strongly opposed” every one of the 15 capital projects listed. Many respondents indicated their taxes were “high enough already” or that the priority should be maintenance of existing facilities rather than development of new facilities.

### Highest Priorities

Question 8 asked respondents which of the 15 projects listed in Question 7, if any, should be the city’s highest capital improvement priority. There were 938 replies, representing 73 percent of the total surveys. The results are shown in Figure 10.

The most frequently selected project was undergrounding of utilities, selected by 22 percent of those replying. The number selecting undergrounding was more than one-third higher than the second most frequently selected option—a city-owned competitive-sized swimming pool (chosen as the top priority by 14 percent of those replying). The next most popular “top” priorities, in order, were a teen center (chosen by 11 percent) and a community gathering place/plaza (chosen by 10 percent). The item least likely to be listed as a top priority was “more child care centers” (chosen by less than one percent).

Figure 10: Top-ranking Capital Improvement Priorities Among Survey Respondents



## Sub-Area Differences

Responses to Questions 7 were sorted by the six planning areas (see Figure 1 for a map of the six areas). The results appear in Table 8.

One of the most notable differences between areas was on child care centers. Support ranged from 35 percent in Area 5 (above Highland, Mountain to LaSalle) to 62 percent in Area 1 (below Grand). On utility undergrounding, nearly 84 percent of the respondents in Area 6 (St. James/ Estates Drive) supported taxes or fees, compared to only 57 percent in Area 1. A city-owned swimming pool had its highest support (61 percent) in Area 3 (which includes the Civic Center) and its lowest support (53 percent) in Area 4 (above Highland, north of Mountain)—a relatively narrow span of eight percentage points.

A teen center and bike lanes had their highest levels of support in Area 1 (76 and 78 percent respectively) and their lowest levels of support in Area 4 (67 percent and 62 percent respectively). Landscaping and tree planting had their highest level of support in Area 3 and their lowest level of support in Area 4. Free wi-fi was supported by 67 percent of the residents in Area 4 and 52 percent of the residents in Area 1. There was relatively little difference between areas in support for a Civic Center parking structure (only a seven percent spread between the highest and lowest sub-areas).

**Table 8: Capital Improvement Priorities by Sub-Area** (Total respondents = 1,236)

PERCENT WHO "STRONGLY SUPPORT" OR "SOMEWHAT SUPPORT"								
<i>(Excludes respondents who skipped the question)</i>								
For which types of projects would you support increases in City taxes or fees?	Citywide	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	No area stated
(a) Additional recreational facilities	62.5%	63.7%	59.8%	65.7%	61.5%	67.4%	61.1%	50.0%
(b) Landscaping and tree planting	71.5%	69.9%	68.8%	78.5%	65.9%	76.4%	68.6%	63.6%
(c) City-owned and maintained competitive-sized swimming pool	56.6%	57.8%	58.8%	61.0%	53.0%	54.5%	60.6%	44.7%
(d) Undergrounding of overhead utility wires	69.7%	56.8%	63.2%	71.0%	66.7%	80.1%	83.7%	62.8%
(e) A parking garage in the City Hall area	40.5%	40.0%	38.7%	40.8%	39.9%	46.0%	38.6%	34.9%
(f) More child care centers	42.8%	61.5%	38.3%	46.4%	42.7%	35.5%	49.4%	27.9%
(g) A teen center	70.1%	76.1%	73.6%	68.8%	67.3%	72.5%	74.5%	58.8%
(h) Bike paths and marked bike lanes	68.6%	78.0%	68.5%	72.1%	62.1%	65.5%	72.0%	65.3%
(i) Creating a community gathering place or plaza	65.4%	66.7%	65.0%	67.6%	62.1%	67.1%	71.4%	55.7%
(j) City arts and cultural center	57.8%	57.8%	58.3%	60.5%	54.3%	56.7%	60.2%	57.7%
(k) Larger wheeled mixed materials recycling carts	57.0%	65.9%	52.8%	62.6%	54.5%	53.4%	58.8%	51.2%
(l) Backyard service for recycling or green waste	55.4%	56.5%	53.3%	61.7%	49.5%	58.2%	52.4%	53.2%
(m) Free citywide wireless (WiFi) internet service	64.0%	51.7%	64.0%	63.3%	67.3%	66.9%	67.0%	61.0%

*Shaded boxes indicate the "high" and "low" sub-areas for question, excluding respondents who did not indicate where they lived.*

## GREENING PIEDMONT

The final question in the survey related to environmental sustainability:

*"Cities across California are exploring ways to reduce air and water pollution, conserve natural resources, curb global warming, and be "greener." Please use the space below to share any ideas you have about how Piedmont can be a "greener" city in the future."*

The question was completely open ended, with one-quarter page of lined "blank" space provided for respondents to write in ideas. Of the 1,284 questionnaires returned, 488 (38 percent) included a response.

Responses were manually transcribed and then batched into 10 "meta" categories, listed below. The topics in each category were further broken down into 80 subject areas. Some of these subject areas appear in the following list:

- **Air and water quality improvements** (limits on wood-burning fireplaces, gas-powered leaf blowers, reducing litter flows to creeks, reducing runoff volumes, sewer and storm drain improvements, etc.)
- **Lifestyle changes** (carbon footprint offsets, reducing consumption, eating healthier foods, organic gardening, banning plastics, using recycled products, walking more, etc.)
- **Transportation changes** (accommodating bicycles, encouraging carpooling and carsharing, providing incentives for hybrid cars, discouraging SUVs, improving connections to BART, etc)
- **Education** (raising awareness of environmental issues, special events, demonstration projects, school programs, and publications)
- **Reducing energy use** (supporting solar power, easing design review requirements for solar panels, encouraging the use of solar panels on homes and city buildings, encouraging energy retrofits, using more energy-efficient light fixtures, etc.)
- **Green construction** (changes to the building code, tax breaks and incentives for green building, etc.)
- **Waste management** (food waste recycling, composting, expanding green waste pickup, improving recycling containers, etc.)

- **Land use solutions** (creating a more walkable city center, limiting parking, allowing second units, etc.)
- **Greening the government** (creating a Green Commission, discouraging pesticide use for city landscaping, using email instead of paper for mailings, requiring public buildings to be LEED-certified, etc.)
- **Water conservation and vegetation management** (using native plants, using reclaimed water, reducing over-watering, discouraging excessive lawns, promoting tree planting, etc.)

The range of responses includes many of the “best practices” under consideration in (and in some cases already in practice by) other Bay Area cities. It also includes many creative and innovative ideas that the City could pursue in the future. The greatest number of responses were in the “transportation” and “energy” categories.

Appendix F summarizes 80 ideas for “greening” Piedmont, using quotes from Piedmont residents themselves to illustrate each point.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Resident Survey provides an important benchmark for the development of General Plan policies on land use, transportation, parks and open space, conservation, sustainability, and community services. With almost one in three Piedmont households participating, the findings represent broad-based public participation on a scale not seen in any previous General Plan for the city. The Survey confirms that the Plan’s overall direction should be to sustain Piedmont’s small town character, outstanding architecture and aesthetics, and high standards of property maintenance and public service delivery.

Several important findings emerge:

- While residents generally support the City’s approach to regulating planning and building, there may be opportunities to streamline and improve the process in a way that does not compromise design review objectives. Critics of the process have offered many constructive suggestions which may be considered by the Council and City administration. Some of these changes include reduced design review requirements for rear yard projects, and changes which make “green” construction (including solar panels) more viable.
- There is strong support for public improvements that make the Civic Center area into more of a gathering place for Piedmonters. There is also a broad consensus that improvements should be

very limited in scale (e.g., a small plaza and coffee shop) and that Piedmont's Civic Center should not be transformed into a retail shopping district, or a complex that draws significant additional traffic to the area. A majority of residents oppose a parking structure—suggesting that a more prudent approach, at least in the short-term—may be to develop a parking management strategy for Central Piedmont.

- The two most contentious issues addressed by the survey are utility undergrounding and the fate of the Piedmont Swim Club. These are both operational issues that would not ordinarily be addressed in a General Plan. Nonetheless, survey comments reflect strong emotions and opinions among residents. While there is majority support for undergrounding, there are concerns about cost and the lack of a comprehensive citywide strategy. Similarly, a majority of the community supports a new City pool but there is no consensus about how the pool should be managed or operated.
- There are concerns in all sections of the community about rising crime. Whether the increase is real or perceived, it is clearly weighing heavy on the public's mind. Crime prevention and community policing must be civic priorities in the coming years.
- Speeding traffic and on-street parking are on-going concerns in Piedmont, although the high "satisfaction" rankings in the survey suggest that some streets are much more heavily impacted than others. Some believe the city should do more to regulate on-street parking and control speeding—a significant number believe that the problems can be mitigated by encouraging students to walk to school (rather than drive), creating on-street parking limits, providing school buses, increasing traffic law enforcement, and implementing traffic calming measures.
- Although there is little support for large-scale development or increases in density in the city, there is interest in providing additional housing choices, particularly for seniors. The majority (60%) support for mixed use development on Grand Avenue is worth noting and suggests that the City look for opportunities to incentivize housing development on the handful of multi-family and commercially zoned properties along Grand Avenue.
- Three-quarters of the survey respondents believe the city should encourage historic preservation. Preservation is barely mentioned in the existing General Plan, and should receive greater attention in the Update.
- Many residents are unaware of Piedmont's website or are not regular visitors to the site. There is support for increasing email communication with residents and expanding the profile, visibility, and functionality of the website.

- While residents hold Piedmont's trees and wooded character in very high esteem, there is not majority support for a tree removal ordinance. On the other hand, street tree planting, maintenance and tree care are top priority issues for many residents. The General Plan can include policies to select appropriate trees for City streets, given planting conditions and maintenance needs.
- Piedmont residents are interested in making the city more environmentally sustainable. Many feel the City's role should be to lead by example, switching to hybrid City vehicles, solar energy on public buildings, and pesticide-free landscaping. Others feel this is an individual responsibility, and not something the City should impose or legislate. Many resident suggestions can be translated directly into General Plan policies that support transit (especially a BART shuttle), encourage bicycle use, accommodate carpooling, promote recycling, and reduce energy consumption.
- Many residents commented on the unmet need for recreational facilities (particularly sports fields and basketball courts) in the city. However, residents are also aware that Piedmont's land constraints make it impossible to meet all its needs within the city limits. It may be useful to take a comprehensive look at recreational needs and services to see if some of the City's public real estate can be used more productively. At the same time, residents are wary of "overbuilding" Piedmont's parks, and wish to retain passive open space as well as active parkland. Partnerships with other cities and Piedmont Unified School District might be considered to meet some of the city's unmet needs.
- There are differences of opinion on local services and planning issues from one Piedmont neighborhood to the next, but in most cases these differences are small. Regardless of location, Piedmont residents share the view that the City's priorities should be maintaining its schools, keeping the crime rate low, and retaining the relatively quiet, residential character of the city.