



Weddington Community Survey 2018



Town of Weddington Community Survey:

Executive Summary

To gain a better understanding of resident perceptions and inform future planning initiatives, a survey was created and administered through Survey Monkey for the Town of Weddington. Overall, there were 965 unique survey respondents who answered the vast majority of questions presented, representing 31 percent of households in the Town of Weddington. Below, you will find a summary of respondent characteristics, along with summaries from the different question categories, and associated implications from the analysis.

Respondent Profile

Survey respondents represent a variety of age ranges and subdivisions within the Town of Weddington. Many of the respondents have been Town residents for over fifteen years (39%), offering a different and unique perspective from the next highest represented group, who have lived in Weddington between one and five years (25%). The majority of the respondents work within Mecklenburg County (62%), while 20 percent work in Union County and another 18 percent work within Weddington, typically from their home. There is a solid mix of ages ranging from 18-65+ with the biggest two age ranges being 45-54 (32%) and 55-64 (26%). Respondents represent 62 subdivisions within the Town. Other respondents are from homes outside of a traditional subdivision or did not wish to declare where they lived. These criteria do show that the sample is representative of the Town's demographics. This data further explains that the majority of respondents are families with children, moved to Weddington before development increased substantially, and have invested in the Town.

Land Use

Survey respondents know what attracted them to Weddington – the small-town charm, the large lots, houses tucked away in wooded lots, and quality green spaces. While transportation, pace of growth, and school overcrowding are major themes in all resident responses, the largest concern throughout this section is to create parkland or open spaces for existing residents to gather, recreating a sense of community. Many residents are concerned that the pace of growth is outpacing infrastructure and their sense of community, threatening to swallow the small-town charm and becoming another town resembling Charlotte. Residents wish to maintain what charm they feel is left and want the Council to consider limiting growth and modifying the conservation subdivision. While many do believe 55+ age communities would be appropriate, many have stated that this type of development should be limited to areas adjacent to existing commercial areas due to walkability concerns.

Non-residential Development

Respondents were very strong in their responses about non-residential development. The major theme through the majority of these questions is that current residents do not want commercial development, but would prefer civic or park-related development, offering suggestions for parks, greenways, and open spaces for gathering. There was a solid group of respondents that did wish to see sit-down eatery

locations within their Town for dinner and gathering with neighbors. It is clear that the majority of residents want this type of development to continue along NC 16, clustered toward Weddington Crossing, as opposed to creating any new commercial spaces. A vast majority of respondents said that they do not want any large scale commercial or service development, absolutely no big-box style stores, or any adult, tattoo, vape, or other similar establishments within their Town.

Transportation

Transportation is a significant concern for residents within the Town. The residents do feel that the work to widen shoulders, repave roads, and widen NC 16 with sidewalks is adequate (74%). While many of the residents do want a more walkable community (47%), respondents do feel that road-related projects still outrank any other mode of transportation (76%). More than half of residents feel that walkability is important (56%) and want to focus on connecting sidewalks throughout the Town. When asked specifically about major transportation concerns, the number one issue is an increase in traffic, which follows previous discussion on why residents do not want commercial development or increases in residential density or development. Many specific issues were mentioned and will be shared with Council and Town Staff to help prioritize future efforts. Overall, residents understand that they chose to live in a Town that is outside of the major metropolitan area, requiring the need to drive. However, the increases in homes, traffic, and lack of safety with this growth does create an overall unease with how the transportation system has kept pace with growth.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Weddington survey participants have mixed reviews about parks, recreation, and open spaces. Roughly half of the respondents said they are satisfied with park and recreation facilities currently available, while the other half of respondents are not. Some respondents commented on not knowing where the park facilities were located. A majority of residents (66%) believe a new park will be worth the Town's investment. When asked about greenways or multi-use paths, the majority of respondents believe traditional greenway development is more appropriate (45%), while a smaller group advocated for multi-use paths (29%). These responses highlight that parks or recreation development is acceptable to the majority of residents. When given the choice, residents would prefer this type of development over commercial or residential spaces, offering residents open spaces to walk, play, and gather.

Services

Residents were asked a series of questions about ordinances, police and fire protection, and other Town services. Participants responded that they did think noise, lighting, and sign ordinances are adequate (48%), though 39 percent either did not think they were adequate or did not know about them. Survey participants were satisfied with police and fire protection services (73% and 69%, respectively) and did not want to increase services for either. When asked about experiences with Town services, the vast majority (89%) stated they had a good experience. Respondents had a variety of ideas for additional services, from garbage and recycling pickup, to road maintenance, to park services. Many stated they did not know what services they were actually provided as a Town resident. When asked if they would pay for any increase in or additional services, 37 percent said they would pay at least a minimal increase to offer the services, 35 percent would not be willing to pay for an increase in services, and 30 percent said it would depend on the cost. Overall, residents would prefer to have greater enforcement for all

services, but especially nuisance complaints, as well as other zoning codes and speed monitoring by the police.

General

The last category of questions related to the Town of Weddington in general, or its staff. The majority of residents did not interact with Town staff (60%), but respondents who did, stated that the staff was professional and courteous, or that they could not interact with staff because of the hours of operation for Town Hall. The majority of respondents had used the Town's website (66%) and rated it an average of four stars for ease of use and three stars for the quality of information available. Perhaps, most importantly, survey participants overwhelmingly responded that they felt their property values were protected in Weddington (84%) and rated their overall quality of life at four or five stars (84%).

Implications

This survey is a testament to how many residents value the Town of Weddington. The response rate alone shows this, but the value of input and thought given by each resident represents their pride. Having gone through all of the responses, there are a few main points that stand out from many of the respondents. They are summarized below.

The residents do not want to continue to grow at this pace. Many residents do not feel the conservation district accomplishes its intent, stating that a lot of the land set aside ends up in an overgrown state, does not conserve any usable land, and may be developed at a later date. If the Town wishes to continue using conservation subdivisions, it would be worth investigating how to educate residents on the development restrictions in place on conservation areas and having formal board approval of where these open spaces would be located. Additionally, the 12,000 square foot lot size may need to be revised to 20,000 or more as per respondent comments. Otherwise, the Town many want to update their future land use map significantly to conserve land from certain types of development.

Survey respondents are worried that the pace of growth will significantly deteriorate the transportation and school system. These issues highlight compatibility and cohesion issues between the Town and the County; development zoning decisions occur within the Town, but transportation and school decisions are administered by the County. It may be advantageous to start a dialogue with the County about these expressed concerns.

It became apparent during the survey analysis that some public education material would be helpful to residents, especially new residents, about what the Town can and cannot control and some general planning practices. There seems to be a perception that the Town can deny subdivisions because they do not want more growth; whereas, the Town cannot deny a subdivision if it meets current ordinances. Other educational outreach may include discussions on how conservation land is protected, services available, what the Town can regulate, how to report a code violation, and the process for code violations and remediation.

Perhaps the clearest opinion to come out of this survey is that residents do not want commercial development, aside from a small boutique-style complex adjacent to the current commercial area. Instead, residents would prefer an investment into park and open spaces with greenways and sidewalks to improve connectivity. This opinion came across strong in the majority of the survey sections, leading it to be a top priority for Weddington's future.

Questions and Answers

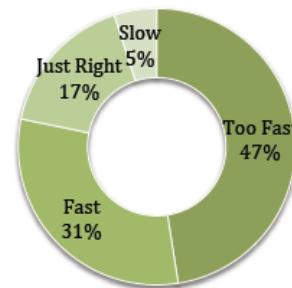
Land Use

Survey participants are very clear about what land uses they like and support and which ones they do not. The largest concerns are focused on infrastructure and services not keeping pace with growth. While this may seem to indicate that the residents would like infrastructure to increase to accommodate growth, respondents feel growth should slow or stop altogether. Additionally, many residents would like to focus on growing Town park facilities over additional residential development. Residents wish to maintain what charm they feel is left. While many do believe 55+ age communities would be appropriate, many have stated that this type of development should be limited to around the existing commercial areas due to walkability.

Question 1 - What is your perception of the pace of growth in the Town of Weddington?

The majority of respondents feel that Weddington is growing too fast, 48 percent, or fast, 31 percent. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents feel the pace of growth is just right, while five percent (5%) say it is growing slowly.

Wedding's Pace of Growth



Question 2 - What type of new development do you prefer?

Of the categories listed, 67 percent of respondents selected parkland or open space for the type of new development they would prefer. This was followed by local business (31%), and public spaces and residential with 28 percent each. It is important to note that 11 percent of respondents originally selected "other," but referred to parks or open space, schools and post offices as public spaces, or local business types. The one percent (1%) of responses that remained "other," after analysis, referred to transportation, infrastructure, or a master planned style of mixed-use development.

"I did not select local business/retail; however, if this development should come it should have a hometown feel similar to the downtown areas of Davidson, Statesville, or Waxhaw. The buildings should be upscale, brick, charming and create a sense of community. After all, people gravitate to these downtown areas and spend a lot of money."

Question 3 - If you selected “Local business or retail” above, what type of new business uses do you feel are needed?

Over half of respondents (53%) stated they felt restaurants were needed, specifically non-chain, small-scale, locally-owned restaurants ranging from a small coffee shop to a fine-dine experience in a historic-looking structure. Respondents also expressed a need for boutique-style shopping (35%) with a historic town center feel. Specifically mentioned were book stores, higher-end daycare, medical offices, specialty or small-scale food stores, restaurants and other services. There was also an expressed need for improved walkability within this area connecting to neighboring developments. Numerous respondents stated that this development should only occur along NC 16, Providence Road.

“Small commercial development tied to the Hwy 16 corridor. Limited height structures with low impact to the visual appeal in the area. The development in Hilton Head is a good example for blending with the environment.”

Question 4 – Which residential types would you prefer to see in the Town?

Preferred housing types are overwhelmingly larger lot, single-family homes on one acre (86%). Types of housing that are not preferred include town or patio homes (80%), smaller lot residential (75%), a mix of various-sized residential and small business spaces (66%), and age-restricted communities (45%). Respondents could click any that applied for either preferred, not preferred, or no preference.

Question 5 – Do you support the use of conservation residential districts?

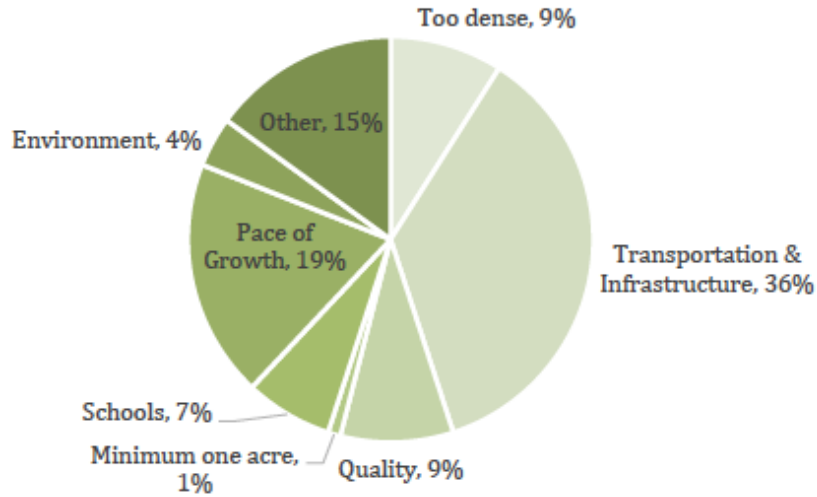
Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents stated that they supported the use of conservation residential districts, with 46 percent opposing this district. Twenty-nine (29) people skipped this question. Those that did not like the concept stated that they felt the guidelines provided houses too close together, allowed for poor quality housing, and increased density.

Question 6 – If you have concerns with subdivisions, what would they be?

The response to what concerns respondents have with subdivisions mirrored a lot of the responses opposing conservation districts; namely that the area is growing too fast to handle the influx of residents. The responses were categorized based upon focus, with some responses being categorized twice if they mentioned more than one main focus. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents reported an increase of traffic, the current quality of transportation routes, and infrastructure quality as major concerns with both conservation and new subdivisions. This was followed by an overall concern over the pace of growth (19%) with many stating that growth should not continue until transportation and infrastructure are upgraded. It is important to note that many people included an opinion that existing residents are paying for new water and sewer lines for new development while they are not supported by these services. Other responses centered around too much density, the increase in school attendance without an increase in the number of schools, the overall loss of trees and environmental degradation, low quality homes being built, and the mistrust of developers conserving spaces to be developed at a later time, all under 10 percent each.

“Traffic, overall congestion will take away from the exclusivity and quality of life in Weddington. One thing that makes living in Weddington special is that it's close to the city but it's tucked away.”

Subdivision Concerns



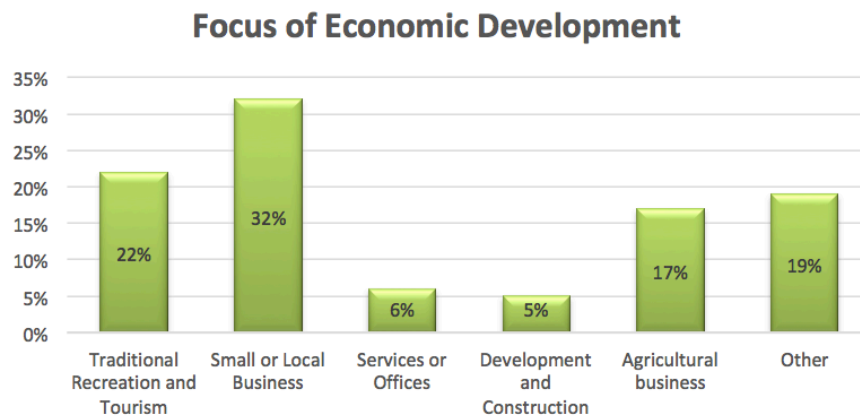
Dear Weddington, We are having our cake and eating it too. We need to share. We moved to this place for a reason 11 years ago. It was beautiful and it was country, but was easy access to the city. (I know you have heard this lament before). Do we really need another million \$ subdivision? Can residential taxes pay for the services that this type of consumer wants? Can't someone design a mixed-use center. I do know that all poor people are not criminals and they have the same hopes and desires as you do. Let's look outside the box and try to accommodate 'others' to make them 'us'.

Non-residential Development

While there are some that would enjoy small, boutique style retail or food establishments, the majority of survey participants do not want any non-residential development, aside from a park or common green space. There is a significant group of respondents that would like sit-down restaurants, especially if in renovated historic buildings. Respondents did state they wished that if commercial development occurred, it be concentrated to Providence Road around Weddington Crossings.

Question 7 – Where should economic development efforts focus?

When asked about economic development efforts, 35 percent of respondents stated that they wanted to focus on small or local businesses. This was followed by 21 percent stating they wanted to focus on traditional recreation or tourism efforts. Agricultural business rounded out the top three with 15 percent of responses. Eighteen percent (18%) of respondents selected “other,” responding that they primarily did not want to see any economic development in Weddington.



Question 8 – Would you like to see more small business, office, or retail development in Weddington?

Of the 920 answers to this question, 62 percent of responses stated no. This supports the responses above including those that did not want this type of development and those that wanted recreation and tourism efforts.

Question 9 – What style of eateries would you prefer to see in Weddington?

Almost 500 respondents (53%) stated that they wanted sit-down restaurants as the main style of eatery for the Town. Another 29 percent stated that they did not want any style of eatery in Weddington, while eight percent (8%) responded “other,” with suggestions from having enough eateries nearby to non-chain style fine dining to boutique cafes or coffee houses focused on local products. A main concern noted was that no development should happen until traffic issues have been alleviated and/or there is more transportation infrastructure to accommodate the business.

Question 10 – What type of shopping opportunities would you prefer?

When asked about shopping opportunities, respondents stated that they wanted none (38%), while 29 percent stated they wanted a neighborhood market over other types. Specialty stores were preferred by 20 percent of respondents while general merchandise stores carried four percent (4%) of the responses. Convenience stores had less than one percent (1%) of responses. Seven percent (7%) of respondents selected “other” where they shared the desire for a farmer’s market and perhaps upscale stores, but still cautioned that no development should be allowed without transportation improvements, if at all.

Question 11 – Where do you typically go for shopping and services?

Respondents generally shop as close to home as possible. Generally, 19 percent of respondents shop in Charlotte, whereas 16 percent shop in Wesley Chapel, 13 percent at Weddington Crossing, 12 percent in Matthews, 11 percent specifically at Blakeney, and 10 percent specifically at Waverly. Other shopping areas were under 10 percent each and included online, Austin Village, Ballantyne, Chestnut, Indian Trail, Monroe, Providence Promenade, South Park, Stonecrest, and Waxhaw.

Question 12 – Are there types of business you would like to see in Weddington?

Survey participants were clear that they want nothing (29%), sit down restaurants (19%), small or local businesses (8%), unique shops (7%), services or offices (4%), and competition grocery (4%). Some residents gave specific examples of what they would like, such as Trader Joes, a small coffee shop, park spaces, and a post office.

“I feel like we have it all already! Sit down restaurants are nice, and I'd like more options in this category BUT do not want to sacrifice less-funds being directed at roadway improvement!”

Question 13 – Are there types of business you would like to keep out of Weddington?

When asked what respondents want to keep out of Weddington, in terms of non-residential development, respondents stated that they did not want any development (32%), big box style establishments (18%), or fast food establishments (12%). Other types of businesses that were discouraged included ABC stores, tattoo parlors, vaping shops, auto-care shops, adult establishments, dollar style stores, industrial or manufacturing, and any type of large-scale development.

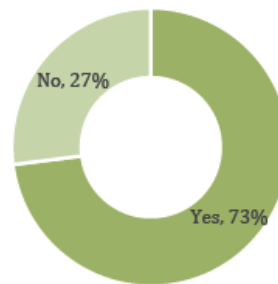
Transportation

Residents of the Town of Weddington have seen a tremendous increase in traffic over the last decade, which has highlighted issues related to development, discussed in previous sections. While the work that has been completed is satisfactory, road maintenance has not kept up with the pace of growth, creating a myriad of issues. Many residents want more attention for transportation-related concerns, as well as to increase walkability within the Town. While not every comment can be shared in this document, all the comments and suggestions have been forwarded to Town Staff.

Question 14 – Are you satisfied with road improvements?

Survey respondents appreciate the work Weddington has done to encourage NCDOT to perform roadway improvements, namely the work to re-pave roads, widen shoulders and widen NC 16 with sidewalks. Seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents stated that they were satisfied with these road improvements. For the 26 percent that chose “no, please specify,” the comments ranged from widening more roads, to fixing potholes, to confusion over how the sidewalk connects to the rest of the Town. Many who commented on the sidewalks also asked for more sidewalks in order to create a network that people could use to get from one place to another.

Satisfied with Existing Improvements



Question 15 – What are the top transportation-related issues that current affect you?

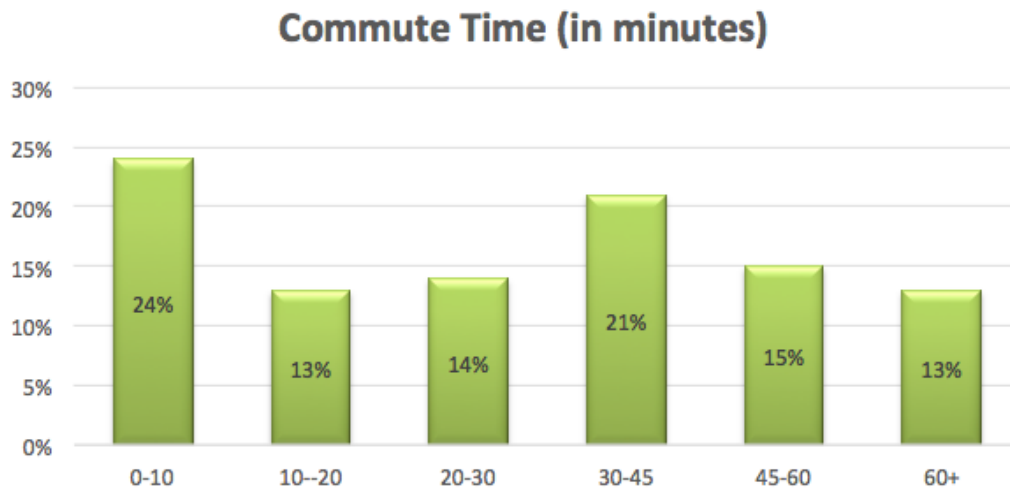
When asked what transportation issues concerned them, respondents answered with general and specific information. Generally, the largest concern was an increase in traffic and congestion (45% of total responses). Other concerns were the lack of traffic lights on country roads and overall road conditions including soft shoulders, potholes, and the need for re-pavement. Specifically, numerous responses focused on Providence Road, NC 84, Forest Lawn, Rea Road Extension, Potter Road, Weddington Road, Tilley Morris Road and Antioch Church Road. It is important to note that Providence Road and Antioch Church Road concerns were the two highest occurrences with nine and six percent (9%, 6%) of the total responses, respectively.

Question 16 – Would you prefer to have access to other modes of transportation, such as bicycle lanes, pedestrian pathways/walkways, a bus route, etc.?

Weddington survey respondents were split about if they would prefer to have access to other modes of transportation, aside from the automobile. Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents stated that they did not prefer access to other modes, while 56 percent said they would. Of those who responded yes, interest was expressed in sidewalks/pedestrian pathways that were connected and created a walkable Town, as well as bicycle lanes or widened shoulders to allow for bicyclist and motorist safety.

Question 17 – How long is your typical commute?

When asked about commute times, 24 percent of respondents stated that they lived at home and did not commute, further commenting that this was necessitated by the heavy traffic. Twenty-one percent (21%) of respondents had a commute between 30 and 45 minutes, while 20 percent had a commute between 10 and 30 minutes. There are 28 percent of respondents who drive over 45 minutes to get to work each way. This highlights the traffic issues as many respondents stated their commute from 5 years ago was much shorter.



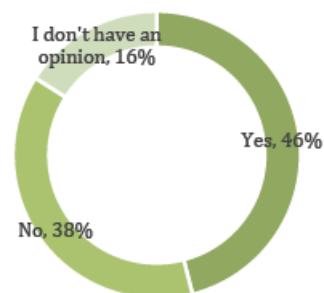
Question 18 – What roadway connections are needed in Weddington?

The majority of residents skipped this question or said that they did not know which roadway connections were needed. The intent of this question was to query residents who use the roads everyday to determine if they felt an obvious connection was missing. Of those that did respond, 36 percent mentioned the necessity of finishing the Rea Road Extension project. This was followed by 15 percent of respondents stating that they would like to see an additional exit for Interstate 485. Other various connections were mentioned, at a smaller scale, including NC 84 and Providence Road, Antioch Church Road and Providence Road, and alternative roads to Waxhaw and Wesley Chapel.

Question 19 – Is walkability important to you?

When asked if walkability was important, the majority of respondents said that walkability is important (47%), while 36 percent said it was not important. Seventeen percent (17%) had no opinion and there were 94 respondents who skipped this question.

Is Walkability Important?



Question 20 – How would you rank the need for these improvements?

Respondents were asked to rank the need for road, public transportation, bicycle facilities, and safe pedestrian pathways improvements. The majority of respondents selected road improvements as the most important (76%), with the second priority being safe pedestrian pathways (57% for this ranking). Bicycle facility importance came in third and public transportation was ranked last.

Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

The majority of residents value a Town park and/or greenways or pathways that connect developments to this park or venue. Some residents did not know what parks, recreation, or open space(s) were available outside of specific developments and were not shy about stating that they would prefer this type of development over any more residential and/or commercial, allowing for residents to gather and create the once lost sense of community that was typical of Weddington.

Question 21 – Are you satisfied with the park and recreation facilities available to you?

Respondents of the Weddington community survey were split on whether they were satisfied with the park and recreation facilities currently available, with 52 percent stating they are satisfied and 48 percent saying they are not.

Question 22 – What open space, parks, or recreation needs are not being met?

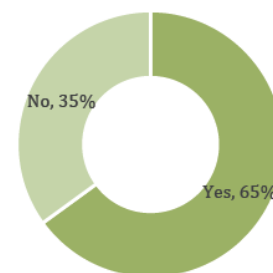
Residents were not shy to point out that they did not know if Weddington had anything to offer to address recreation, parks, or open space needs. Residents who answered this way, but offered no specifics on what they wanted were categorized as answering that none of their needs were met (16%). Thirty-seven percent (37%) stated that they wanted a park, even describing a Colonel Francis Beatty-style park, with another nine percent (9%) stating they wanted a common green area with a potential amphitheater or other layout to use for Town events and gatherings. Another 14 percent specifically suggested greenways or walking trails. Some respondents stated that they had no needs or were satisfied with what was around the area (14%). It is important to note that some participants specifically asked for a dog park (3%) or mentioned other amenities such as a golf course, lake for recreation, and/or splash pad facilities for young families (all categorized as “other” – 6%).

“There isn’t a park in Weddington. Now that the town bought the property behind town hall why not make it into a nice place to sit and have lunch/picnic, read a book in the open air or just sit and veg. Maybe even a small walking path with plant and tree identification markers.”

Question 23 – Do you feel a new park would be worth Weddington’s investment?

A majority of residents do feel a new park would be worth Town investment, with 66 percent of respondents showing their support. Thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents said a new park was not worth the investment and another 12 percent of survey participants skipped this question.

Is a New Park a Good Town Investment?



Question 24 – What public spaces would you like to see in Weddington?

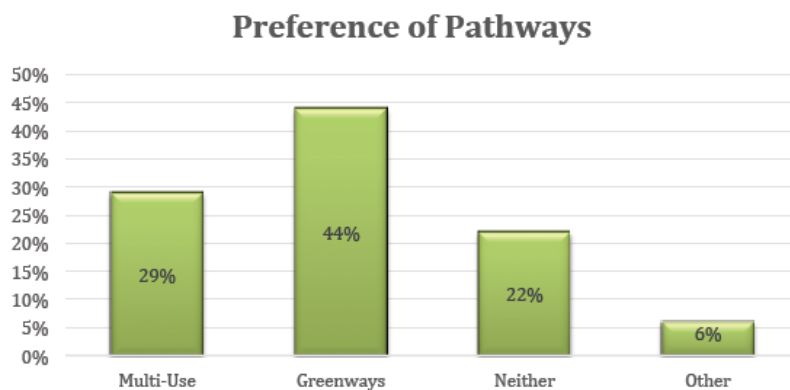
The majority of respondents reaffirmed their desire for a park (28%), while another 21 percent suggested a community center, 20 percent suggested a library, and eight percent (8%) suggested a common green area including an amphitheater.

“A unique old fashioned museum for children would be wonderful. It would be perfect in the old house which was recently purchased by the town by the back entrance of Weddington Corners. A place where no cell phones are allowed but blocks, dolls, trucks, a little garden in the back, a clothes line for the kids to hang up clothes, a room with books and little tables, a wooden kitchen with pots and pans. A place where imagination rules. An old fashioned place which really stimulates the mind. An experience they will always remember. I am sure there are lots of volunteers who would love to be part of something like that.”

Question 25 – Would you prefer a bicycle/pedestrian path connecting neighborhoods along existing roads or traditional greenway development?

Forty-five percent (45%) of respondents stated that traditional greenways were preferred with 29 percent advocating for multi-use paths. There was a group of people who did not want either option (21%) and a few respondents (5%) selected “other,” with the majority of these responses clarifying that they would prefer either or, or had no opinion.

It is important to note that some respondents seemed confused by this question. Further clarification on what constitutes a multi-use path versus a traditional greenway would be needed if this was asked of the Town residents in the future, as well as offering a “both” option to the list.



Question 26 – For either the paths or greenways determined above, where would you prioritize these connections?

The intent of this question was to specify locations where residents thought greenways, parks, or other facilities may be necessary. Less than half of survey participants responded, and many of those that did respond stated that they did not understand the question, were not sure, etc.

Specific locations that were mentioned focused mainly upon bicycle lanes and/or greenways and sidewalks. Suggestions include along NC 84 (31%) and connecting developments (12%). Connecting the schools was the third most populous answer with nine percent (9%) of the total. Other roads included Wedding-Matthews Road (7%), Hemby Road (5%), Antioch Church Road (3%), Providence Road (8%), and 12 Mile Creek Road (2%). Four percent (4%) of respondents stated that they wanted a connection to the center of Town, or they wanted to let the Town decide based upon existing projects.

Question 27 – Where do you typically go for park and/or outdoor recreation opportunities?

Survey participants mostly went to parks or greenways outside of the immediate area, utilizing Colonel Francis Beatty Park in Mecklenburg County (26%), greenways or parks in Charlotte (15%), and/or greenways and parks in Matthews (13%). Other mentions were all less than 10 percent each, but included Dogwood Park in Wesley Chapel, Cane Creek Park in Union County, Squirrel Lake Park in Matthews, and the Wesley Chapel Weddington Athletic Association fields.

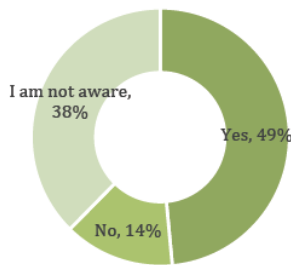
Services

Respondents were overall pleased with the services offered, stating that they were adequate and did not want to increase services. While the fire department is a controversial topic, it should be noted that residents were overall pleased with their coverage. In terms of code enforcement, there were mixed opinions about its effectiveness, with many respondents describing a situation that was not adequately handled. The majority of these cases refer to poorly maintained accessory structures, homes, or junk, which are not currently regulated by the Town of Weddington. Additionally, a significant amount of residents would like to have trash and recycling handled by the Town as opposed to individual Homeowners Associations.

Question 28 – Do you feel that the current noise, lighting, and sign ordinances are adequate?

When asked if they felt the current noise, lighting, and sign ordinances are adequate, just about half of respondents (48%) replied yes. The remaining respondents said that they were not aware of these

Are Current Ordinances Adequate?



ordinances (39%) or that they were not adequate, citing many issues with noise, signs, and lighting or the lack thereof. They also pointed out many apparent violations in terms of deteriorated accessory structures and/or junk. The responses for noise were similar, as well as signs, but in the case of street lighting, respondents were fairly split on whether there should be more lighting or less lighting. Overall, however, respondents felt that the enforcement of ordinances in place is insubstantial and needs to be more proactive.

Question 29 – How would you rate police services in Weddington?

Police services were rated as satisfying, with 24 percent of respondents being very satisfied and an additional 49 percent being satisfied. Roughly 20 percent of respondents had no opinion, with six percent (6%) stating they were dissatisfied.

Question 30 – Would you like to increase police presence in Weddington?

The majority of respondents do not want to increase police presence in Weddington (65%). Of those that do want to increase police presence, respondents wished to have more visible patrols and a larger presence at schools. It is important to note that it was mentioned that police presence will need to increase if development increases.

Question 31 – How would you rate fire protection in Weddington?

Similar to police presence, the majority of survey participants feel satisfied (42%) or very satisfied (27%) with fire protection in Weddington. Twenty-six percent (26%) of respondents had no opinion and five percent (5%) of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Question 32 – Would you like to increase fire protection in Weddington?

The vast majority (80%) of respondents stated that they did not want to increase fire protection in the Town of Weddington. Of those that did want to increase fire protection, most stated it was due to the increase in development or they did not know their existing coverage. Some residents focused on the lack of a fire hydrant nearby as opposed to increasing fire coverage.

Due to the complexity of fire issues in Weddington, there were also some respondents that shared their opinion of changes in the fire department and coverage. While it is important to note these opinions, this is also a political issue and deserves special consideration for analysis.

Question 33 – Have you had a poor experience with a Town service?

It speaks well for Weddington that 89 percent of 855 respondents stated they did not have a poor experience with Town services. There was a small percent (11%) of respondents that did, however. Respondents mentioned Council-related issues, reactionary code enforcement, and a lack of services available overall. One common issue reported was the availability of Town Hall and employees, mentioning that it is hard to meet with staff due to the short hours of operation. There were no dates associated with these incidents, so deficiencies cannot be placed on any specific people, on or off Council.

Question 34 – What types of services would you like to add to the existing planning, zoning, fire, and deputy services provided by the Town of Weddington?

When asked what other services were desired, 34 percent of residents stated they wanted no more services, or might want to reduce taxes and get rid of services they already had. However, 14 percent of respondents wished for unified trash and recycling collection to handle solid waste needs for the Town. Eleven percent (11%) of respondents included planning services; while the Town already provides these services, residents feel that planning is not sufficient or done at the whim of developers. In conjunction, three percent (3%) of respondents included code enforcement as a service to add, even though the Town already has these services. The majority of these responses related to junk and property maintenance, which the Town does not currently regulate. Respondents also included additional police (8%) and fire (5%) services, stating they wanted their fire department back, while another six percent (6%) wanted parks and recreation services. Lastly, three percent (3%) of respondents shared a desire to have water and sewer availability to existing residents.

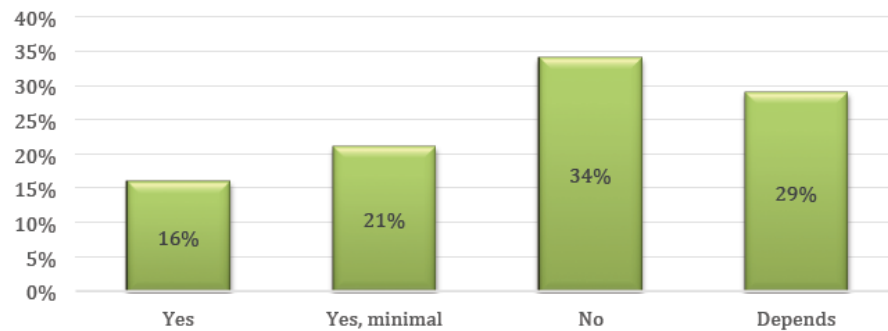
“I would like to see an ordinance that requires home owners to maintain their property. No trash, unregistered cars, etc.”

“More comprehensive ordinances prohibiting junk, inoperable, abandoned etc., vehicles, rv's, boats, trailers, tractors, and other safety hazards.”

Question 35 – Would you be willing to pay a property tax increase to support these additional Town-provided services?

Respondents were varied on whether they would be willing to pay an increase in taxes to support additional services they mentioned in Question 34. Thirty-five percent (35%) stated they were not willing to pay a tax increase, while 30 percent said it would depend on how much of an increase. An additional 37 percent said they would pay the increase, or would pay a minimal increase.

Would You Pay a Tax Increase for Services?



General Town

The last category of questions related to the Town of Weddington in general. While residents overwhelmingly felt that their property values were protected in Weddington, a significant portion of respondents felt that Weddington was a wonderful place and is now losing its charm due to overcrowding and the pace of growth. They still feel, however, that Weddington is a four or five star community and has potential to take stock of where they are and planning comprehensively for a future that maintains their rural atmosphere.

Question 36 – What other Town-sponsored events would you like to see?

Specific events in Towns are important for generating a sense of community. There were various great ideas shared by residents. Some suggestions included summer concerts (10%), Fall Festivals (9%), a 4th of July Celebration and Parade (8%), and Food Truck Fridays extending throughout the summer/fall (6%). Many residents also stated that they missed the Fall Festival and the Easter Egg Hunt from previous years. Lastly, it is important to call out that 28 percent of respondents said that they liked the amount of community events as they are and felt no more are necessary, especially without a better location.

Question 37 – Have you interacted with Weddington’s staff?

When asked whether respondents had interacted with Weddington’s staff, the majority (60%) had not. There were still 40 percent that did interact with staff and they responded about their experience in Question 38.

Question 38 – Please tell us about this experience?

Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents stated their experience(s) with Town Staff were positive, professional, and acceptable. The other 13 percent and six percent (6%) said their experiences were okay and poor, respectively. It is important to note that many of the negative responses referred to Council or Board members, not staff, and/or they were from many years ago.

Question 39 – Would you like to be added to our contact list?

There were 367 people (45%) who elected to be added to the contact list. Their emails have been shared with the Town Administration.

Question 40 – Have you used Weddington’s website?

There were 563 respondents who have used the Town of Weddington’s website (66%).

Question 41 – How would you grade the website’s ease of use?

Out of five stars, one being poor and five being excellent, the majority of respondents graded the website at 4 stars (41%), while 40 percent gave the website three stars, and 13% rated the website at five stars.

Question 42 – How would you grade the website’s quality of information?

The majority of respondents rated the Town’s website at three stars for the quality of information available (43%), followed by a four-star rating (34%).

Question 43 – Do you feel that your property values are stable in Weddington?

Overwhelmingly, Weddington survey respondents stated that they felt their property values are stable (84%). Of the 16 percent of respondents who did not feel their property values are stable, the majority cited concerns over the fast pace of development having a detrimental effect on their home values.

Question 44 – What is your overall perception of Weddington?

Survey respondents were detailed in describing their perception of the Town of Weddington. Overall, 56 percent of respondents feel that Weddington is a good place to live. Thirteen percent (13%) stated that they felt the Town is growing too fast, while others said its losing its charm (10%). Other keywords used to answer this question were bedroom community, small-town feel, developer friendly, needs an identity, and potential. Overall, the majority of residents like what Weddington was and could maintain if the amount of growth was controlled and regulated.



Question 45 – Why did you move to Weddington?

When asked why residents moved to Weddington, the majority of respondents moved for the quality of the local schools (30%), though it should be noted that some of these respondents have since gone through a school redistricting process. Rounding out the top reasons for moving to Weddington are the rural character of the area with open spaces (20%) and the large lot minimums in the Town (16%). Other noted reasons include the overall quality of life, the area has been their home or is where their ideal house was located, low taxes, and the ability to move out of the City of Charlotte while being in close proximity.



Question 46 – How would you rate your overall quality of life in Weddington?

When asked to rate their overall quality of life in Weddington, over 80 percent of respondents gave four or five stars (84%).

Question 47 – What can we do better?

When asked what the Town of Weddington could do better in the future, the majority of respondents wanted to slow or stop development, both residential and commercial (33%). Other responses included nothing (16%), work on improving transportation (12%), and maintaining a minimum lot size of one acre (7%). Various other responses represented at one or two percent each include Code Enforcement – specifically nuisance ordinance requests, allowing businesses, being flexible and progressive, improving social media and website usage, adding bike lanes, having a dedicated post office, building community through events, and improving communication with residents. Important to note with communication, there were quite a few residents who thanked the Town for this survey, many who want the results of this survey to be distributed.

“Be more open to change and ideas. The survey is a good start. Towns and the counties around Weddington seem more progressive and open. The quietness of the Town is good but it could get left behind. Finding balance in growth is good.”

“Follow up with residents after this survey to let us know what the consensus is and exactly what the town is doing to affect change.”

“This is a great start! Thanks for communicating. Always a challenge, and I am honestly always fearful that developers with the most money will have free reign. Thanks for your thoughtful approach and soliciting our opinions.”

Question 48 – Is there any additional information you would like us to know?

There were just over 200 different responses to this question that were all unique and, therefore, difficult to summarize. These responses have been shared with Town Staff and will be used accordingly.

Respondent Profile

Survey respondents represent a variety of age ranges and subdivisions within the Town of Weddington. Many of the respondents have been Town residents for over fifteen years (39%), offering a different and unique perspective from the next highest represented group, who have lived in Weddington between one and five years (25%). The majority of the respondents work within Mecklenburg County (62%), while 20 percent work in Union County and another 18 percent work within Weddington, typically from their home. There is a solid mix of ages ranging from 18-65+ with the biggest two age ranges being 45-54 (32%) and 55-64 (26%). Respondents represent 62 subdivisions within the Town. Other respondents are from homes outside of a traditional subdivision or did not wish to declare where they lived. These criteria do show that the sample is representative of the Town's demographics. This data further explains that the respondents are families with older children, moved to Weddington before development increased substantially, and have invested in the Town.

Specific subdivisions represented include:

Aero Plantation	Rosehill
Antioch Plantation	Sanctuary at Weddington
Antioch Woods	Shannon Woods
Atherton Estates	Shagbark Lane
Avery	Shaver Farms
Bromley	Steeple Chase
The Falls at Weddington	Stratford Hall
Fox Run	Stratford on Providence
Gatewood	The Retreat
Greylyn	Valley Ranch
Greystone	Walden on Providence
Hadley Park	Waybridge
Highgate	Weddington Brook
Highview Estates	Weddington Downs
Hunting Creek	Weddington Estates
Lake Forest Preserve	Weddington Heights
Lake Providence	Weddington Heritage
Lake Providence East	Weddington Hills
Lochaven	Weddington Preserve
Mandy's Plantation	Weddington Oaks
Meadows at Weddington	Weddington Woods
Preserve at Brookhaven	Wedgewood
Providnece Acres	Wellington Place
Providence Forest	Wellington Woods
Providence Place	White Oak Colony
Providence Woods	Williamsburg
Providence Woods South	Willow Oaks

Analysis & Implications

Analysis

As part of this community survey, responses were reviewed and analyzed based upon voting district, age, tenure, and type of development. Below you will find a brief description on how different groups deviated from the overall average responses given previously.

Voting Districts

When survey responses were isolated based upon voting districts, there were no significant deviations from the overall survey response outcomes. This means that opinions and perceptions remain fairly even throughout the Town, regardless of district.

Respondent Age

In terms of age, when younger respondents, those between the ages of 18 and 54, were isolated, there was a stronger support for parks (72% as opposed to the 66% of overall respondents) and more dissatisfaction with available park and recreation amenities (56% of young respondents as opposed to 48% of overall respondents). Additionally, younger respondents also valued other modes of transportation more with 61 percent wanting access to other modes, as opposed to 56 percent of the overall population.

This analysis highlights that as the population declines in age, there will be more value placed upon greenways, parks, and sidewalks to connect the developments to Town facilities. This is common for the younger generations who value quality outdoor and gathering spaces.

Resident Tenure

Respondents were split based upon how long they have lived in the Town of Weddington to highlight any issues between new and old residents. Newer residents seem to be more open to commercial spaces in the Town with 36 percent supporting neighborhood markets, as opposed to only 29 percent of overall residents. Similarly, newer residents also support access to public transportation (66%) more than older residents (56%). Newer residents also believe a new park is well worth Weddington's investment (76%), as opposed to an overall support of 66 percent. It is important to note that the majority of newer residents are also younger residents (78%), further highlighting the differences between population groups.

Development Type

Perceptions of land use were analyzed based upon style of development – conventional versus conservation residential developments. This analysis was performed to determine if residents in conservation residential developments supported its continued use or not. There was a strong support for continued use of conservation districts among respondents who currently live in one (74%) as opposed to residents of conventional subdivisions (48%). Respondents who live in conservation residential districts also were less satisfied with park, recreation, and open spaces (36%) down from 52 percent, and 77 percent of these respondents thought a new park would be a great investment for the Town.

Implications

This survey is a testament to how many residents value the Town of Weddington. The response rate alone shows this, but the value of input and thought given by each resident represents their pride. Many respondents thanked the Town for having the foresight to survey their residents and allow them ample opportunity to share their opinions and desires. Having gone through all of the responses, there are a few main points that stand out from many of the respondents. These are summarized below.

The residents do not want to continue to grow at this pace. Many residents do not feel the conservation district accomplishes its intent, stating that a lot of the land set aside ends up in an overgrown state, does not conserve any usable land, and may be developed at a later date. If the Town wishes to continue using conservation subdivisions, it would be worth educating the public on how the conservation sections of development are preserved from future development and having a board formally approval where these open spaces are located. Additionally, the 12,000 square foot lot size may need to be revised to 20,000 or more as per respondent comments; it seems that at the 12,000 square foot lot size, the houses are too dense and lose the charm of a traditional Weddington neighborhood. Otherwise, the Town may want to consider options to slow or stop growth until a comprehensive plan update and review of zoning can be accomplished.

Survey respondents are worried that the pace of growth will significantly deteriorate the transportation and school system. These issues highlight compatibility and cohesion issues between the Town and the County; development and zoning decisions occur within the Town, but transportation and school decisions are administered by the County. Similarly, infrastructure decisions are made at the County level, based on growth. It may be advantageous to start a dialogue with the County about these expressed concerns and determine how to improve the situation in the future.

It became apparent during the survey analysis that some public education material would be helpful to residents, especially new residents, about what the Town can and cannot control and some general planning practices. There seems to be a perception that the Town can deny subdivisions because they do not want more growth; whereas, the Town cannot deny a subdivision if it meets current ordinances. Other educational outreach may include discussions on services available, how to report a code violation, and the process for code violations and remediation.

Specifically related to code enforcement is the misconception that the Town can enforce property maintenance. Currently, the Town does not have nuisance ordinances regulating outside junk, property maintenance, high grass, etc. Without these ordinances, the Town's enforcement office cannot regulate properties, even with complaints. The Town may want to consider adopting a set of nuisance regulations or discuss options with Homeowners Associations to adequately handle these requests.

Perhaps the clearest opinion to come out of this survey is that residents do not want commercial development, aside from a small boutique-style complex adjacent to the current commercial area. While the Town cannot regulate specific businesses in or out of any district, there can be some distinction within the zoning use tables to allow sit-down versus fast food restaurants.

Instead, residents would prefer an investment into park and open spaces with greenways and sidewalks to improve connectivity. This opinion came across strong in the majority of the survey sections, becoming a top priority for Weddington's future. Sidewalks were mentioned throughout transportation related questions, but greenways and trails, and a community green space and/or park were highlighted

in several sections. There are also a handful of dedicated respondents who feel its their mission to ensure a farmer's market comes to Town.

Overall, residents are happy with their Town, but are worried about the future. New residents want more, albeit sparse, options for gathering and shopping. Older residents want to have larger lots, with two-three acre minimums, that maintain a rural atmosphere. Marrying these two opinions, along with ensuring continued growth does not inundate the Town, is the complex problem that now faces Weddington. There are numerous options to accommodate these requests, but this will take a transparent process that includes significant community participation to create a happy medium.