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# Georgetown City Planning Survey

## November 2001

### Executive Summary

The Georgetown City Planning Survey was conducted between November 7, 2001 and November 19, 2001, with a total of 406 respondents in the City of Georgetown. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.9%. The purpose of the study was to determine citizen opinion on a variety of topics and issues that affect residents in the City of Georgetown. Respondents were not told that the study was being conducted for the City of Georgetown.

### Key Findings

1. Planning-related issues rated high in the survey. As illustrated in the answers below, providing for greater retail selection, addressing transportation issues, and managing growth to preserve the natural areas of Georgetown were all issues that ranked high with those surveyed.
2. In an open-ended question which had no pre-set list of responses to choose from, the most popular answer to the “one main thing” that the City of Georgetown could do to make the quality of life better in Georgetown was to “bring in more business” (16.5%)— especially retail outlets like restaurants, shopping centers, entertainment facilities, etc. But “issues with city council” (13.8%) and “improving the traffic situation” (13.6%) were in a statistical tie with that answer. “Managed growth” (9.4%) was just below those responses.
3. In a question in which people chose from a list we gave them, 25.2% said a “greater retail selection” would make Georgetown a better place to live. But another 21.2% said that improving the traffic situation was more important—again, traffic is in a statistical tie in terms of importance to our respondents. “Managed growth and development” (14.1%) was the next highest rated issue among respondents.
4. Efforts to preserve natural areas through restricted development are very important (58.9%) or somewhat important (34.3%) to a majority of the residents in Georgetown.
5. The majority of residents say that “location” (24.0%) and “good, caring, nice people” (23.5%) are the best things about living in Georgetown.
6. The majority of respondents shop in Austin or Round Rock for the series of goods and services we listed, with the exception of groceries and healthcare.
7. “Restaurants” and “shopping” will bring older patrons to downtown more often, while “entertainment” will bring more young people.
8. The majority of citizens support annexation of undeveloped (54.6%) and developed (59.0%) areas.
9. Throughout the survey, all transportation issues (traffic issues, street building and maintenance, pedestrian and bicycle mobility) ranked as especially important to the people of Georgetown, as was participating in regional transportation planning efforts.

10. The citizens of Georgetown are very satisfied overall with the quality of utility services provided to them. All utilities except streets were described as “excellent” or “good” by 80% or more of respondents. And even streets received an impressive 65% “excellent” or “good” response.
11. Only about 17% of citizens know that Georgetown has the lowest tax rate of any community along the I-35 corridor.

# Planning and Quality of Life in Georgetown

When asked what they like most about living in Georgetown, 24% of respondents stated “location,” while 23.5% cited “good, caring, nice people.” Each of these responses came up twice as many times as the next two reasons: “landscape, natural beauty” (11.6%) and “community spirit, involvement in local activities” (10.1%).

Respondents in the northwest portion mentioned “location” (30.1%) even more often than other respondents (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). People who have lived in Georgetown for less than five years were also more likely to say that they like “location” (27.7%) the most.

**The Best Thing About Living in Georgetown by Area**

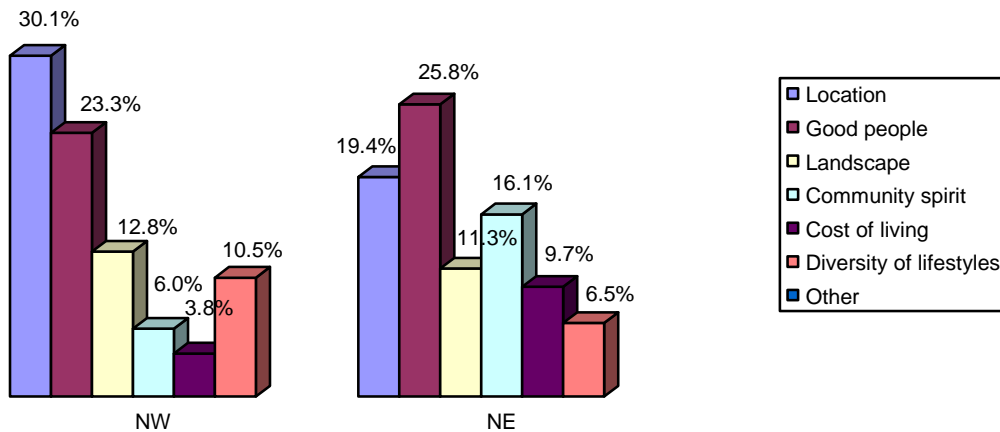


Figure 1

**The Best Thing About Living in Georgetown by Area**

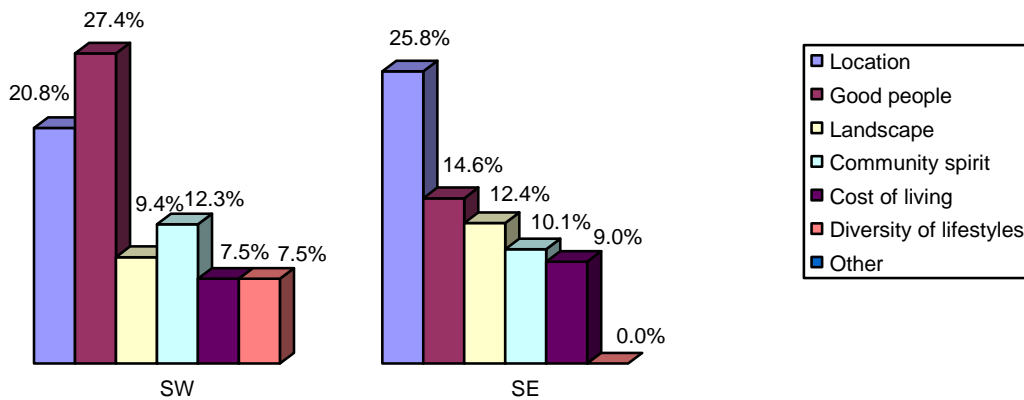


Figure 2

In contrast, people who have lived in Georgetown for ten or more years were more likely to cite “good, caring, nice people” (27.6%) than other respondents. Respondents age 55 and older (29.9%),

including seniors (33.3%), were also much more likely than younger respondents to say that “good, caring, nice people” are the best thing about Georgetown.

There was a split along gender lines. Men were more likely to say “location” (28.8%) here, but women were more likely to say “good, caring, nice people” (28.0%).

Respondents with children were more likely than others to say that the “cost of living” (11.4%) and “educational opportunities” (11.4%) are the best things about Georgetown.

**Changes for a better Georgetown**

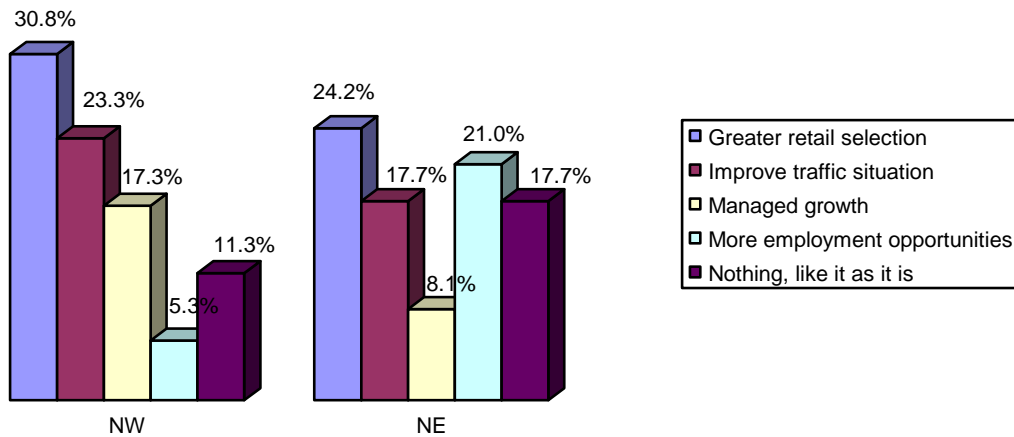
Next, we asked what change would make Georgetown a better place to live. Over one-quarter of respondents (25.2%) said that “greater retail selection” would make Georgetown a better place to live, while 21.2% preferred “improving the traffic situation”—a statistical dead heat between the two top answers. 14.1% of respondents wanted “managed growth/development.” About one in ten people (10.9%) said that Georgetown did not need to change and was fine the way it is.

Newcomers in particular want more shopping possibilities. People who have lived in Georgetown less than ten years were twice as likely as people who have lived in Georgetown for ten or more years to say that Georgetown needs “greater retail selection.”

Traffic was a particular concern for people in the northwest (23.3%) and southwest (24.5%) parts of the city, who chose it as the most-needed change at a rate up to nine points higher than residents of the eastern parts of the city. Respondents 55 or older (29.9%) were also more likely than younger respondents to say that the traffic situation needs to be improved.

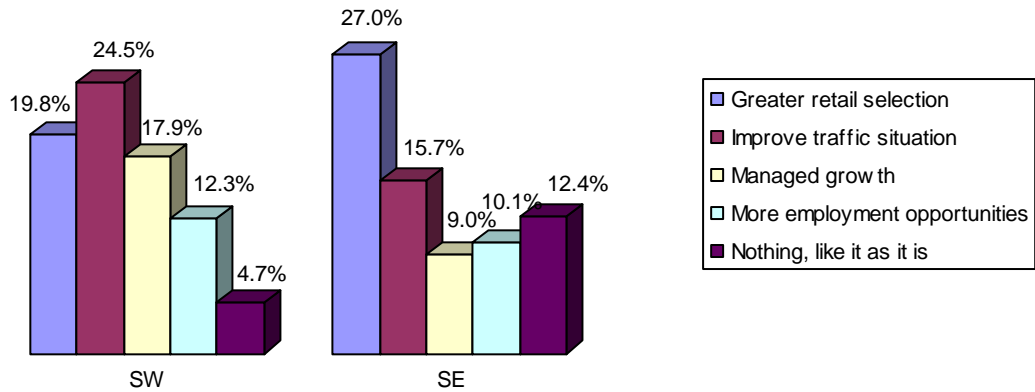
People in the northwest (17.9%) and southwest (17.9%) were more likely to choose “managed growth/development” than people in the eastern parts of the city (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).

**Change That Would Make Georgetown a Better Place to Live by Area**



**Figure 3**

**Change That Would Make Georgetown a Better Place to Live  
by Area**

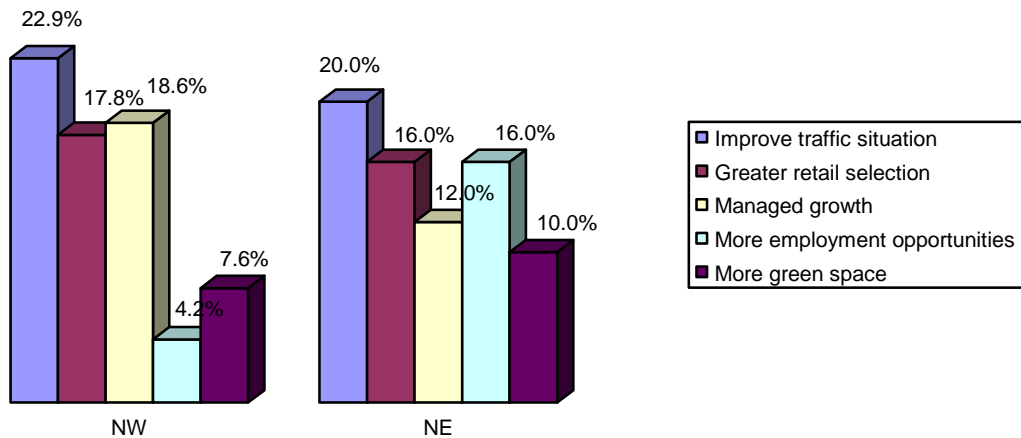


**Figure 4**

There was an ethnic split in this question as well. White respondents were much more likely than Hispanics to say that Georgetown needs “greater retail selection” (27.4%) and “improved traffic situation” (24.0%). But Hispanic respondents were more than twice as likely to say that Georgetown needs “more employment opportunities” (21.2%).

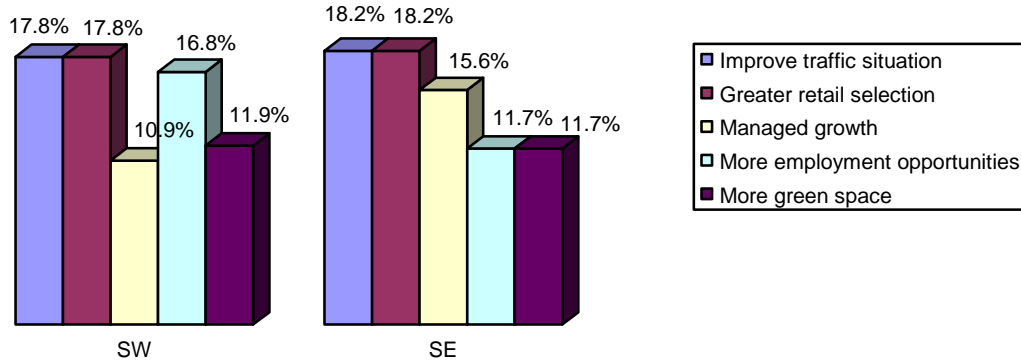
When we asked a follow-up question about what other change, if any, would make Georgetown a better place to live, reading respondents the same list to choose from, the results were similar to the first question (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). “Improve traffic situation” (20.1%) moved to the most mentioned change, while “greater retail selection” (17.9%) dropped one spot to the second most mentioned change.

**Another Change That Would Make Georgetown a Better Place to Live  
by Area**



**Figure 5**

**Another Change That Would Make Georgetown a Better Place to Live  
by Area**



**Figure 6**

In this follow-up question, people who have lived in Georgetown for less than five years were more likely to say that “managed growth/development” (18.5%) should be exercised than other residents.

People with children (17.9%) were more likely to say here that Georgetown needs “more employment opportunities” than people without children (7.9%).

### One main thing to make Georgetown quality of life better

The last question asked in this study was “What ONE main thing the City could do to make the quality of life in Georgetown better?” This was an open-ended question, in which respondents could say whatever they liked.

The highest-mentioned response was “bring in more business” (16.5%). While “business” here included everything from retail stores to commercial installations, the majority of responses suggested bringing in more retail outlets—restaurants, shopping centers, entertainment facilities, etc.—that the residents of Georgetown could patronize.

The next two highest mentioned responses were actually in a statistical tie with the first answer. 13.8% of respondents cited “issues with the mayor/city council/local government.” The majority of these comments carried a negative tone. 13.6% mentioned “improve traffic situation/maintain streets” as the best way to improve Georgetown (see Figure 7).

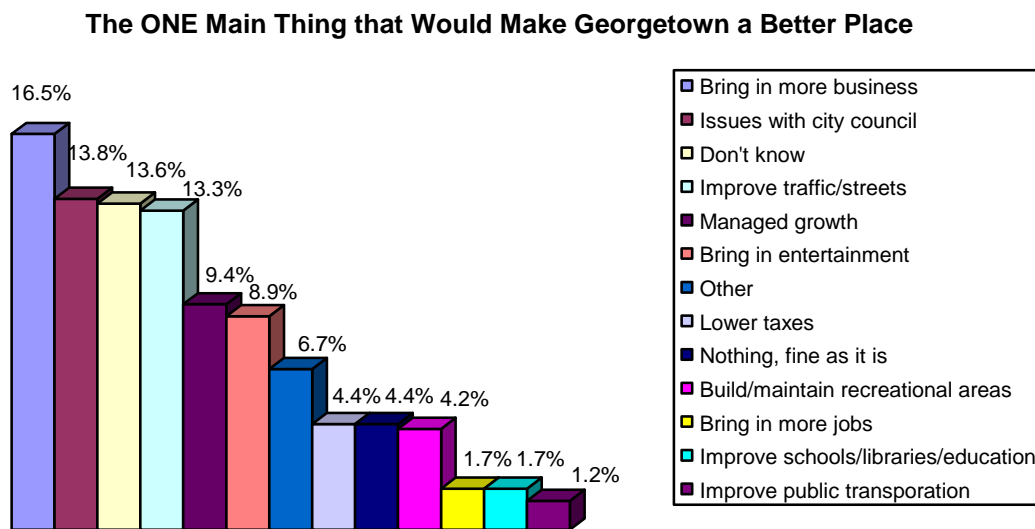
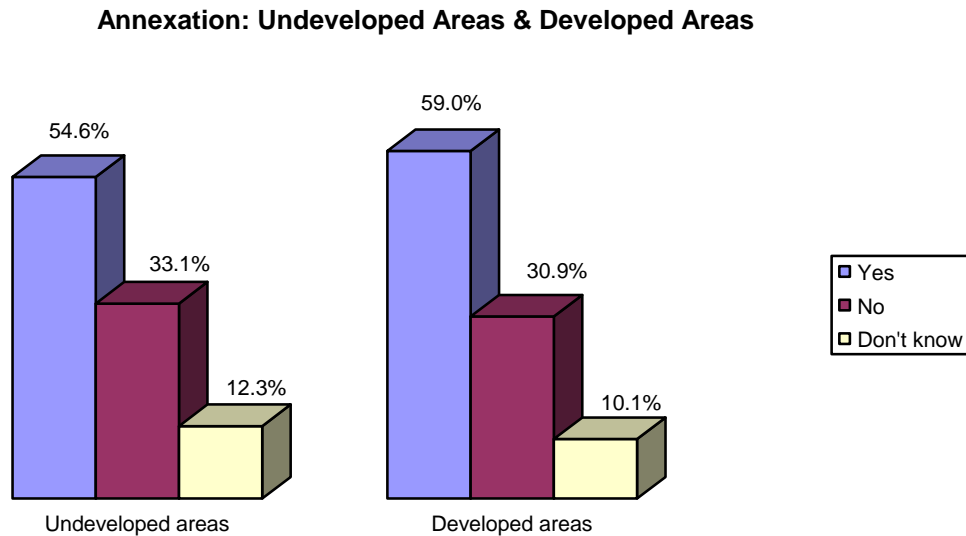


Figure 7



## Annexation Issues

We asked respondents about the issue of annexation by the City of surrounding areas, both undeveloped and developed (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8**

Slightly over half of respondents (54.6%) feel that the City should pursue annexation of undeveloped areas for growth management purposes. About one-third (33.1%) said the City should not annex undeveloped areas, and the remaining 12.3% were undecided.

Respondents in the eastern parts of Georgetown were slightly more likely to say “yes” than citizens in the western parts. Those who have lived in Georgetown for less than five years were also more likely to say that the City should pursue annexation for growth than those that have lived in Georgetown longer.

On the same note, residents 18-34 years old (70.7%) were quite a bit more likely to respond that Georgetown should annex undeveloped areas than respondents in older age groups (35-54 year olds, 52.8%; 55 or older, 48.7%).

When asked about the annexation of developed areas, respondents’ answers were similar to those for undeveloped annexation. 59% of respondents say that the City should annex developed areas as a way to increase the City’s tax base. Slightly less than one-third (30.9%) said the City should not pursue annexation, while 10.1% said that they did not know.

Unlike with annexation of undeveloped areas, there were no real differences between subgroups in this question.

## Housing Issues

The final growth and development issue involved Georgetown housing types. We gave respondents the following statement, asking them to agree or disagree: In the City of Georgetown, we need a greater variety of housing types.

Respondents were split almost evenly on this statement - 47.7% agree and 48.1% disagree.

Residents in the northwest portion of the city were slightly more likely to disagree with this statement than residents in other areas of city.

# Development and Growth

## Economic Growth

When asked what aspects of economic growth the City of Georgetown should work to promote, 42% of residents stated “all of the above,” a list that includes regional shopping centers, neighborhood retail, tourism, industrial recruitment, and small to mid-sized commercial offices. The aspect of economic growth that was most likely to be cited alone was “regional shopping centers” at 19.8% (see Figure 9 and Figure 10). Such shopping centers were cited more than twice as often as the next highest aspect - neighborhood retail (8.4%).

**Economic Sources Needed for the Growth of Georgetown by Area**

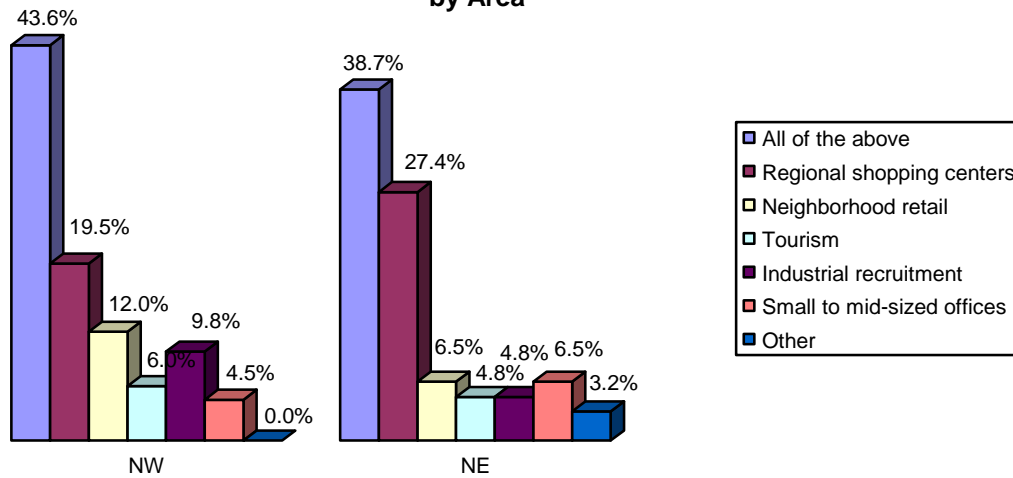


Figure 9

**Economic Sources Needed for the Growth of Georgetown by Area**

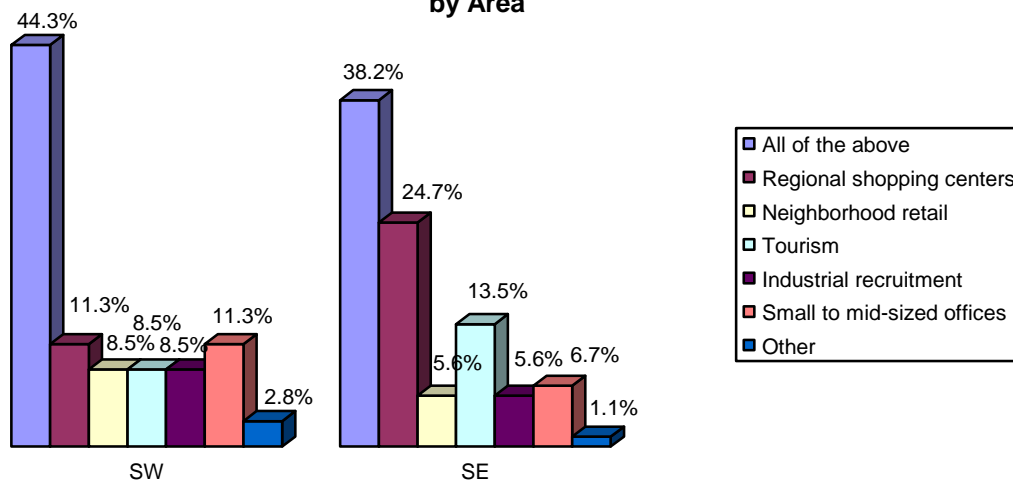


Figure 10

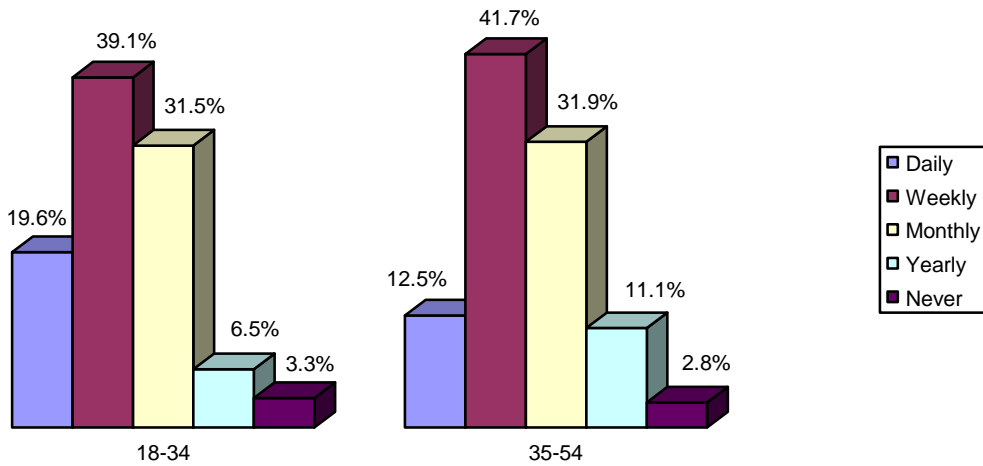
**Downtown Georgetown**

Two questions were asked concerning downtown Georgetown. First, we asked how often citizens visited downtown; and second, we asked what main attraction they thought would bring more people downtown.

The majority of residents visit downtown either “weekly” (46.2%) or “monthly” (30.4%).

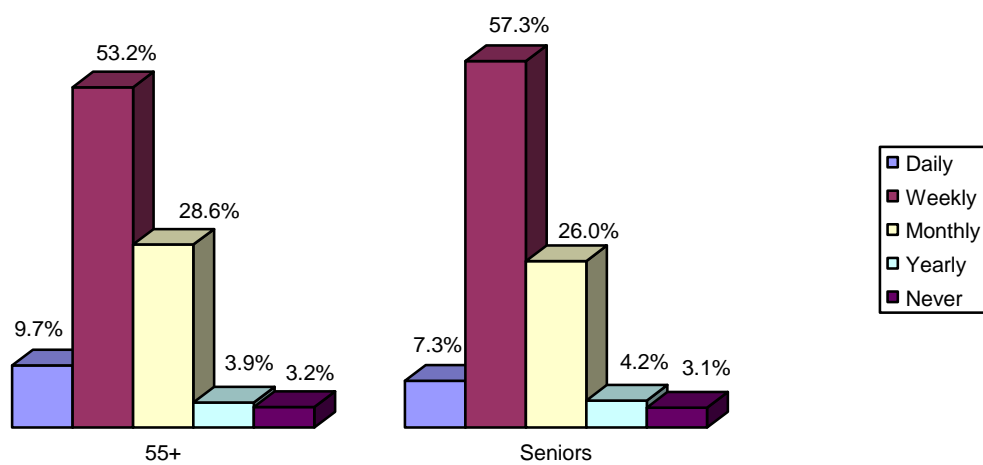
Slight differences exist between age groups (see Figure 11 and Figure 12). Older respondents are more likely to visit downtown “weekly” than younger respondents. Young respondents tend to visit either “daily” or “monthly.”

**Visits to Downtown Georgetown by Age**



**Figure 11**

**Visits to Downtown Georgetown by Age**



**Figure 12**

**Downtown attraction**

Dining establishments were by far the most looked-for downtown attraction. Almost half of Georgetown residents (42%) feel that “restaurants” were the one main attraction that would bring more people to downtown Georgetown. A little over one-quarter (26.7%) say that “entertainment” would draw more people and another 20% state that “shopping” would increase visits to downtown Georgetown.

The difference between age groups is interesting. Respondents age 18-34 (22.6%) were much less likely to say “restaurants” than all other age groups, in which “restaurants” were by far the most mentioned attraction - almost half of respondents in each other age group cite “restaurants.” Meanwhile, 18-34 year olds were much more likely to say “entertainment” (48.9%) than all other age groups. This interest in “entertainment” sees a sharp decrease with age (see Figure 13 and Figure 14).

**The Best Downtown Attraction Needed in Georgetown by Age**

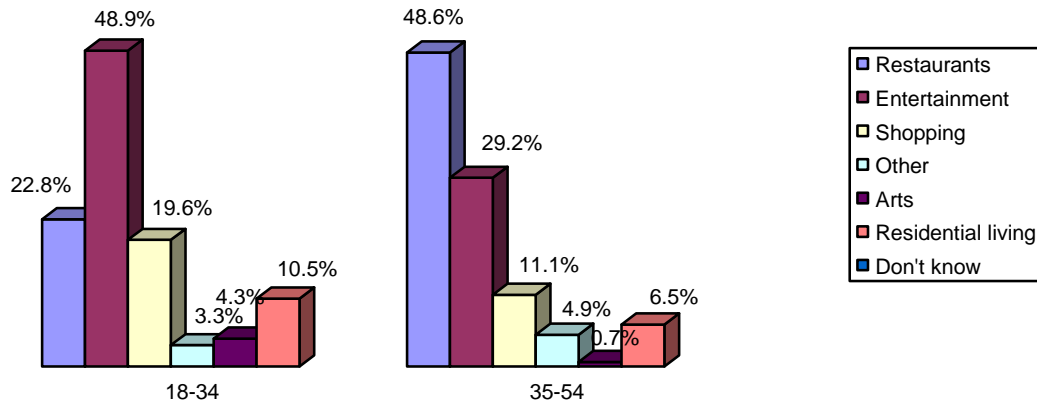


Figure 13

**The Best Downtown Attraction Needed in Georgetown by Age**

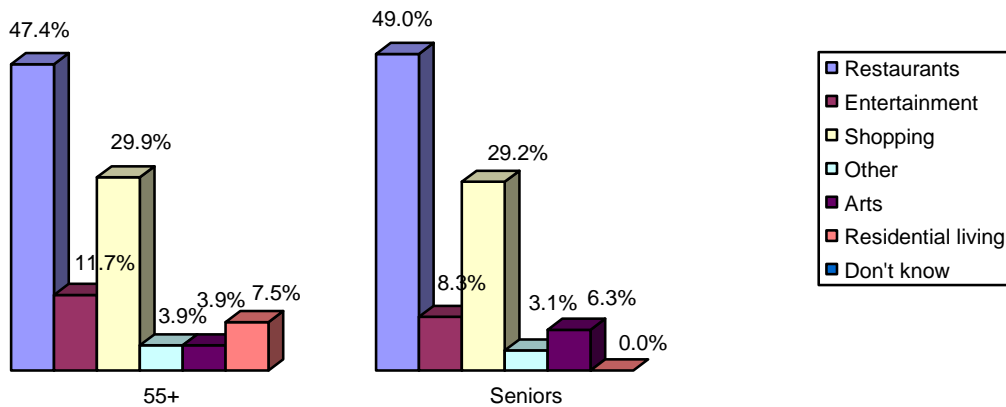


Figure 14

White respondents were more likely to say restaurants (43.6%) and shopping (21.2%) than Hispanic respondents, while Hispanic respondents were more likely to say that entertainment (46.2%) is the one main activity that downtown Georgetown needs.

People with children were almost twice as likely as people without children to mention entertainment as the one main activity that would bring people downtown. On the other hand, people without children were almost twice as likely to say shopping as people with children.

## Environmental Issues

When asked what kind of job people think the City is doing of making sure that there were sufficient green, open spaces throughout the city, 15.1% say that the City is doing an “excellent” job, and over half of respondents (53.3%) say that the City is doing a “good” job. 28.2% say “only fair” or “poor”. This means that the majority of respondents think that the City is doing a good job.

Next, we asked respondents how important to them were efforts to preserve natural areas through restricted development. Almost nine of every ten respondents said that efforts to preserve natural areas in Georgetown were important. Over half (55.6%) said that these efforts were “very important”; while an additional one-third (33.1%) said they were “somewhat important.”

However, residents in the northwest portion of Georgetown feel much less strongly about these efforts than the other three areas (see Figure 15 and Figure 16).

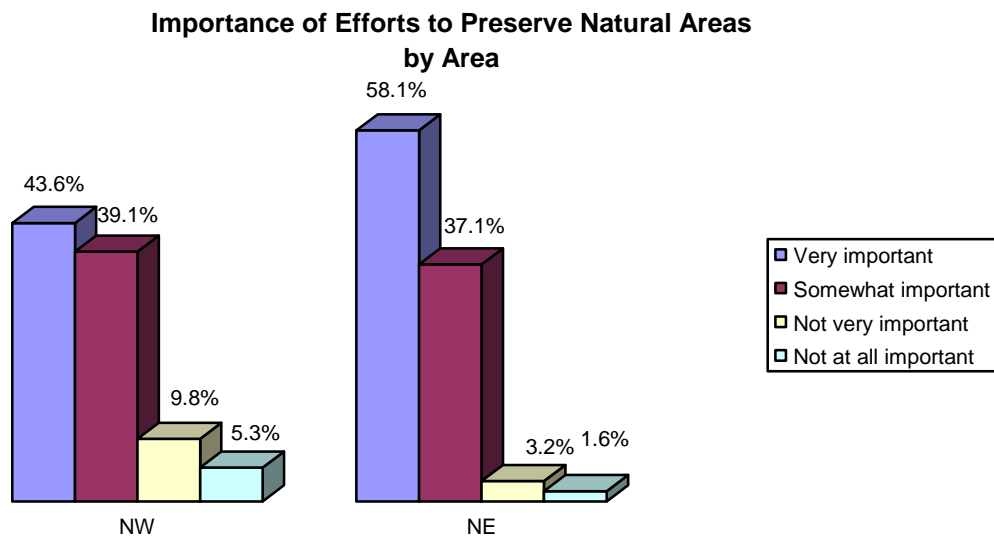


Figure 15

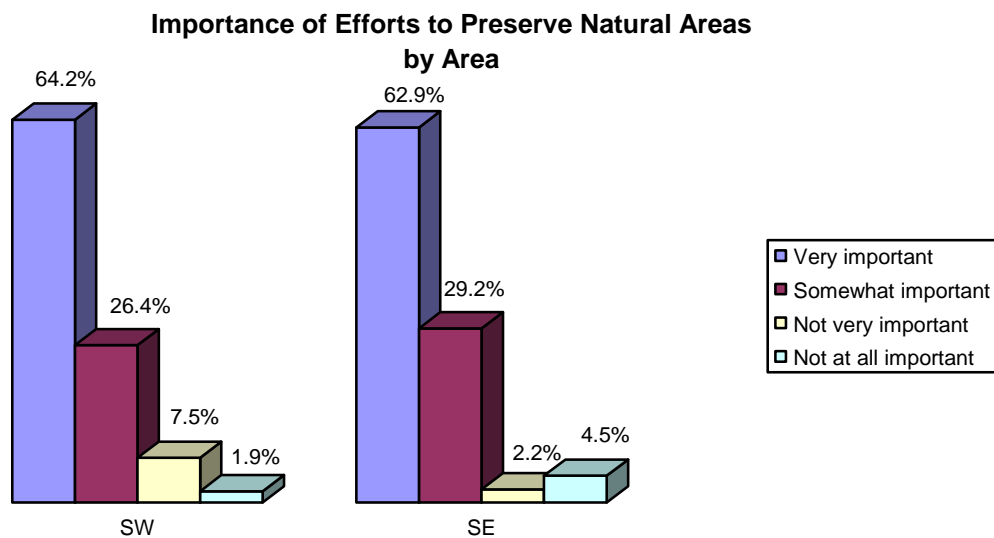


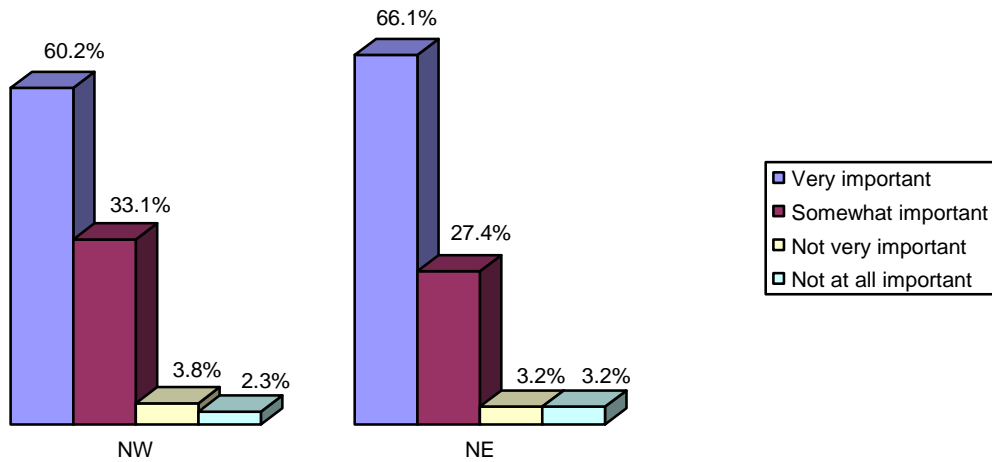
Figure 16

## Transportation Issues

Nearly all residents of Georgetown feel that traffic, as a quality of life issue, is important to some degree at least. In fact, well over half (58%) said that traffic issues are “very important,” while another 34.8% feel that traffic issues are “somewhat important.”

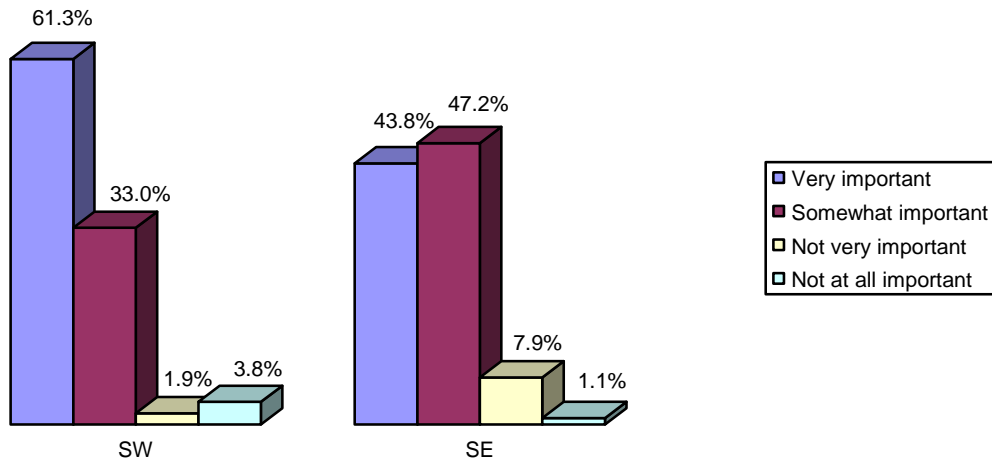
People in the southeast portion of the city (43.8%) feel somewhat less strongly about traffic issues - by about 20 points - than the other three areas (see Figure 17 and Figure 18). Young people aged 18-34 (44.6%) are also much less likely - also by about 20 points - to mention that traffic issues are “very important” than respondents in other age groups.

**Traffic as a Quality of Life Issue  
by Area**



**Figure 17**

**Traffic as a Quality of Life Issue  
by Area**



**Figure 18**



### Discussions about transportation issues

Respondents were asked if they thought the City of Georgetown should participate in discussions with surrounding communities concerning transit programs like bus and rail programs, and mobility programs such as more roads and road improvements.

Overwhelmingly, respondents feel that the city should participate in such discussions (82.5%). There were no substantial variations from this overall number in the crosstabs, except that residents of the northeast part of town (78.9%) were somewhat less enthusiastic than residents of the northwest (87.1%).

### Pedestrian and bicycle mobility

38.3% of respondents feel that pedestrian mobility in Georgetown is “good”, while 27.7% of respondents feel that pedestrian mobility is “only fair.” 18.5% of respondents feel that it is “poor.” Only 10.4% of residents said that pedestrian mobility is “excellent.” Notice that nearly half of respondents answer here with at least a somewhat negative rating of pedestrian mobility in Georgetown, which may signify a problem.

Residents in the northeast and southeast portions were more likely to say that pedestrian mobility is “excellent” or “good” than residents in the northwest and southwest portions of Georgetown.

Bicycle mobility fared slightly less well than pedestrian mobility (see Figure 19). A little over one-quarter of respondents each say that bicycle mobility is “good” (25.9%), “only fair” (28.6%), or “poor” (26.9). Only 4.9% say that bicycle mobility is “excellent.” When well over half (55.5%) say bicycle mobility is “only fair” or “poor,” that signals a problem.

Once again, overall, residents in the eastern parts of the city were more likely - by 10 points or more - to say that bicycle mobility is “excellent” or “good” than residents in the western parts.

**Pedestrian Mobility & Bicycle Mobility**

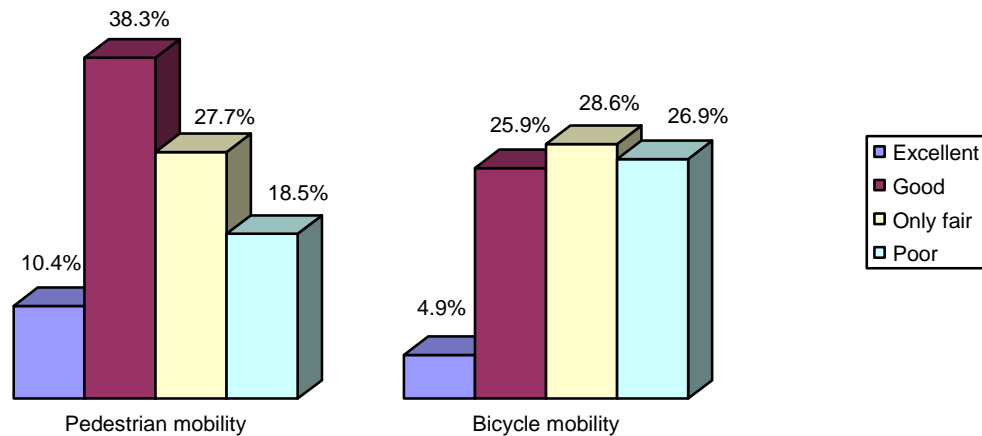


Figure 19

## Where Residents Purchase Goods and Services

In the next series of questions, respondents were asked where they primarily purchase the following goods and services: groceries, clothing, hardware/lumber, restaurants, furniture and appliances, and healthcare facilities.

### Groceries

Almost all of Georgetown's residents (93.6%) purchase their groceries primarily in Georgetown. There were no real differences between subgroups.

### Clothing

45.7% of Georgetown residents primarily shop in Austin for their clothing. 21.5% shop in Georgetown and 20.2% shop in Round Rock for clothing.

Residents in the southern portion of Georgetown were slightly more likely to buy their clothing in Georgetown than residents in the northern portion.

The longer respondents have lived in Georgetown, the more likely they were to shop for clothes there. People who have lived in Georgetown for ten or more years were three times as likely to buy their clothes in Georgetown (31.0%) than those that have lived in Georgetown for under five years (10.9%), and twice as likely than those who have lived in Georgetown five to nine years (20.7%). In contrast, people who have lived in Georgetown for less than ten years are about twice as likely to shop in Round Rock for clothing than those that have lived in Georgetown for ten years or more (12.4%).

Also, however, the younger the resident, the more likely he or she will drive to Austin to buy clothing. Respondents 18-34 years old (59.8%) primarily buy their clothes in Austin, while only 45.8% of 35-54 year olds and 34.4% of those 55 years old or more buy their clothes in Austin.

### Hardware/lumber

For hardware/lumber, respondents were pretty evenly split between two cities - Georgetown (44.4%) and Round Rock (45.9%).

Residents who have lived in Georgetown longer tend to buy hardware and lumber in Georgetown, while newer residents were more likely to buy these supplies in Round Rock.

Similarly, older residents tend to purchase their hardware and lumber in Georgetown, whereas younger residents will drive to Round Rock.

### Restaurants

Most residents either stay in Georgetown (39.8%) or go to Round Rock (40.2%) to eat dinner out, while another 15.1% primarily go to Austin.

Once again, we see that young people and relative newcomers to Georgetown were more likely to eat out in Round Rock than older age groups and long-term residents. The percentage of people who primarily eat out in Austin also increases among younger residents and newer residents.

### Furniture and appliances

Over half of Georgetown's residents (52.6%) travel to Austin to purchase furniture and appliances. The majority of the remaining half are split evenly - 17.3% of respondents shop for furniture and appliances primarily in Georgetown while another 17.3% shop in Round Rock.

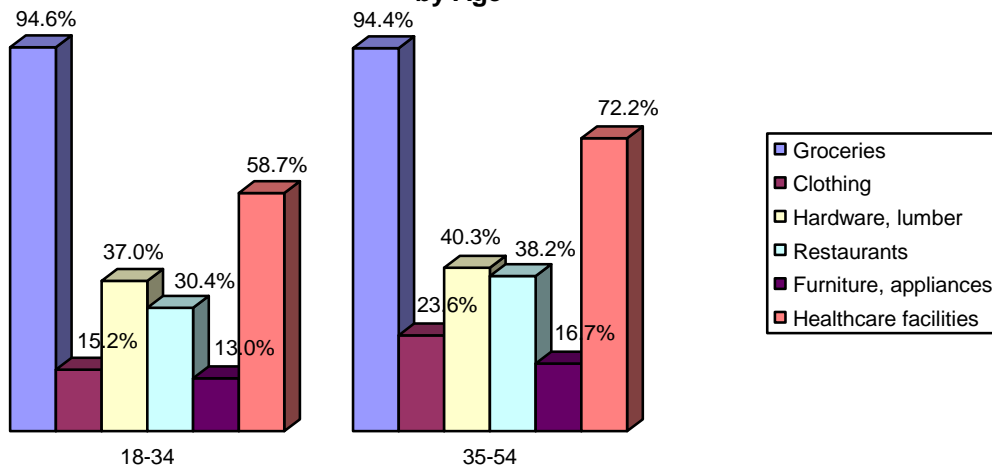
**Healthcare facilities**

About seven out ten respondents purchase health care in Georgetown (70.9%). 13.9% purchase health care in Austin and 7.9% in Round Rock.

People in the northwest portion of the city were more likely to say that they purchase health care in Georgetown than residents in other parts of the city.

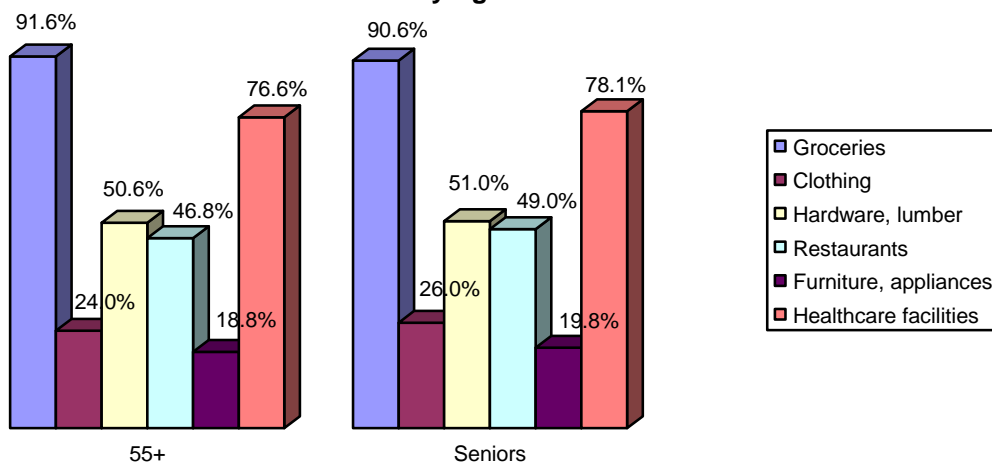
As an overall comment on this series of questions, the basic trend is for younger people and newer residents of Georgetown to leave Georgetown to purchase goods and services, instead shopping primarily in Round Rock and Austin. Older residents and longer-term residents tend to stay in Georgetown (see Figure 20 and Figure 21).

**Good and Services Purchased in Georgetown by Age**



**Figure 20**

**Good and Services Purchased in Georgetown by Age**



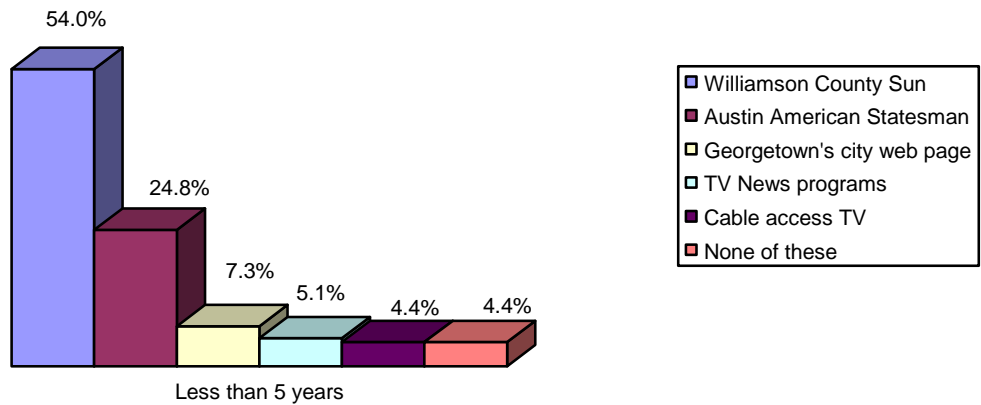
**Figure 21**

**Media Sources**

Over one-half of Georgetown residents primarily use the Williamson County Sun to obtain information about Georgetown (62.7%). 19% use the Austin American Statesman as their main source. All other sources were used by less than 5% of residents each.

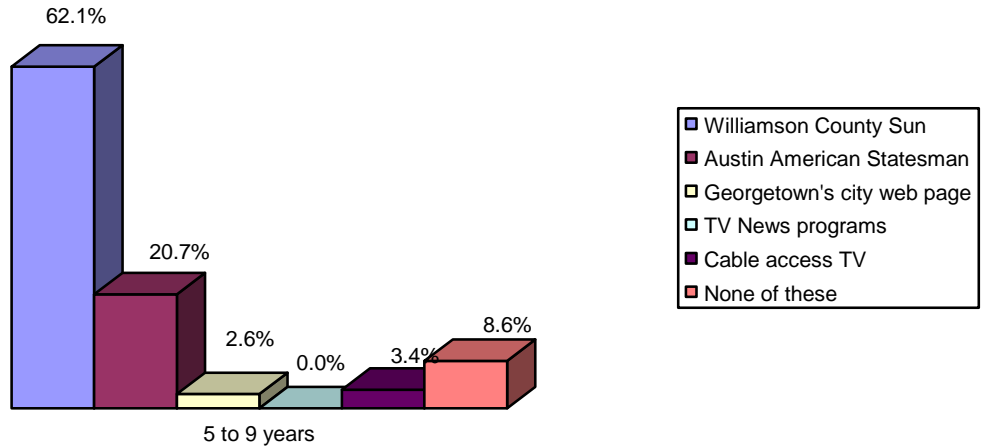
Residents who have lived in Georgetown for longer periods of time tend to use the Williamson County Sun more than newer residents. New residents have a higher usage of the Austin American Statesman; still over half of residents who have lived in Georgetown five years or less primarily read the Williamson County Sun for information about Georgetown (see Figure 22, Figure 23 and Figure 24).

**Media Sources Used to Find Out About Georgetown by Years in Georgetown**



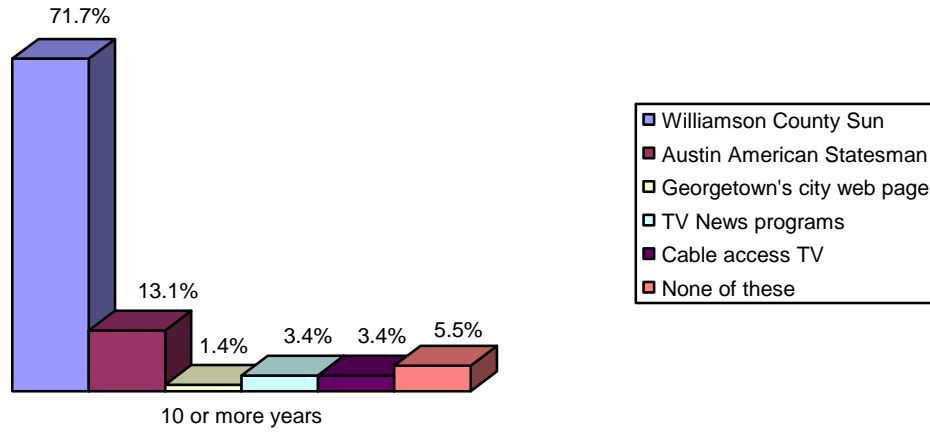
**Figure 22**

**Media Sources Used to Find Out About Georgetown by Years in Georgetown**



**Figure 23**

**Media Sources Used to Find Out About Georgetown  
by Years in Georgetown**



**Figure 24**

Having Internet access has very little influence on what media sources were used to find information about Georgetown. Only 4.6% of those with Internet access use Georgetown's city website as their primary source of information. (This does not mean, of course, that they may not use it as a secondary source.)

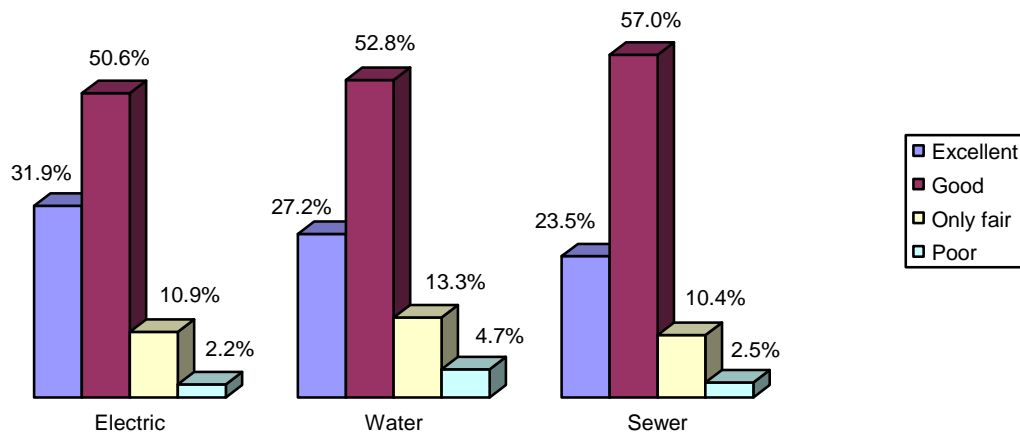
## City Services

Overall, utility services received very positive responses from the citizens of Georgetown. All utilities, except streets, were said to be “excellent” or “good” by 80% or more of respondents. Streets, although not as high as the other four utilities, still received an impressive overall response from over 65% of Georgetown citizens.

Interestingly, newcomers to Georgetown were more likely to give higher ratings for all utilities than those who have lived in Georgetown for a long time. There were also some slight differences between different geographic areas of Georgetown.

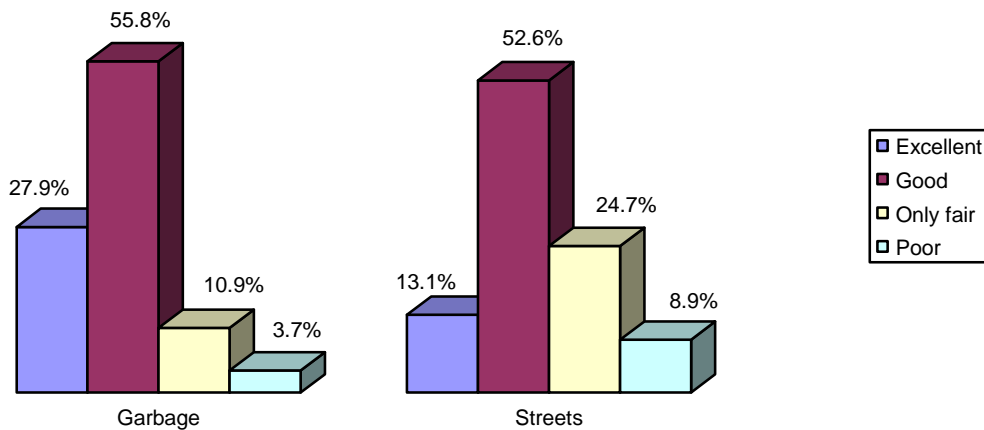
We also asked a series of questions about the quality of five city utility services. Four got very high ratings, so close in rank that they were within the margin of error of being tied, while the fifth city service (streets) did moderately well (see Figure 25 and Figure 26).

**City Utility Service Ratings**



**Figure 25**

**City Utility Service Ratings**



**Figure 26**

### **Electric**

The electric utility gets high marks, with 31.9% of respondents describing it as “excellent” and “good” by 50.6% of citizens.

Respondents in the northeast and northwest parts of Georgetown tended to give slightly higher responses than those in the southern parts; however, the overall response is very high everywhere.

### **Water**

The water utility received a high overall response from 80% of the respondents. 27.2% said the water utility is “excellent” and 52.8% say it is “good.”

### **Sewer**

23.5% said that the sewer system is “excellent” and 57.0% said that it is “good” - that is, again, over 80% of all respondents provided a favorable response here.

People in the northeast part of the city gave higher responses than those in the other parts, but this difference is very small.

### **Garbage**

Over half of Georgetown residents called the quality of their garbage service “good” (55.8%) while another 27.9% said that garbage utilities were “excellent.”

### **Streets**

While streets did not fare as well as the other utility services, the majority of Georgetown citizens (65%) still give streets a positive rating. Over half (52.6%) of respondents say that streets were “good,” while 13.1% say that streets were “excellent.”

Unlike responses to the other city services, there were some noticeable differences between quadrants for street rating. Notably, respondents in the northeast (75.4%) and southwest (71.7%) gave higher overall ratings of “excellent” or “good” than respondents in the northeast (59.7%) and southeast (49.4%) sections of town, where street maintenance is apparently perceived to be more of a problem.

## **City Tax Dollars and Perceived Value**

When asked how the Georgetown tax rate compares to other communities in the I-35 corridor, 28.4% say their tax rate is “higher”, 17.3% say it is “lower”, 36.3% say it’s “about the same”, and 18% admit that they don’t know. This means that only 17% of Georgetown’s citizens know that the tax rate IS actually the lowest of all other communities in the I-35 corridor. It is imperative that the City makes this fact known to the residents of Georgetown.

There were some noticeable differences between subgroups on tax rate perception. Respondents in the western part of Georgetown were more apt to say that taxes were higher than those in the eastern portion of the city, who tend to say “about the same.”

Older respondents were also more likely to say that taxes were higher. 19.6% of people age 18-34 say that taxes were “higher”, while 23.6% of 35-54 year olds and 35.7% of 55 or older say the same.

Differences also exist among ethnicities. White respondents (30.5%) were twice as likely to say that taxes were higher compared to Hispanics (15.4%). Hispanics were more likely to say that taxes were lower (25%) or about the same (46.2%).

People without children (32.3%) were more likely to say that taxes were higher than people with children (20.7%). People with children tend to say that taxes were “about the same” (23.6%) or “lower” (43.6%).

**Value of utility rate dollars**

After asking residents their perception of Georgetown’s tax rate compared to other communities, we then asked them to rate the value they got for their utility rate dollars.

57.3% of respondents said “good”, while an additional 9.1% said “excellent.” Overall, 66.4% of respondents rate their value positively, which is moderately good. But since we know from the series of questions above that Georgetown residents show high satisfaction with most city utility services, this somewhat lower level of satisfaction with value-for-utility-dollar may suggest they feel those services are good, but a bit overpriced.

Older respondents were more likely to say that they get an “excellent” or “good” value than younger respondents.

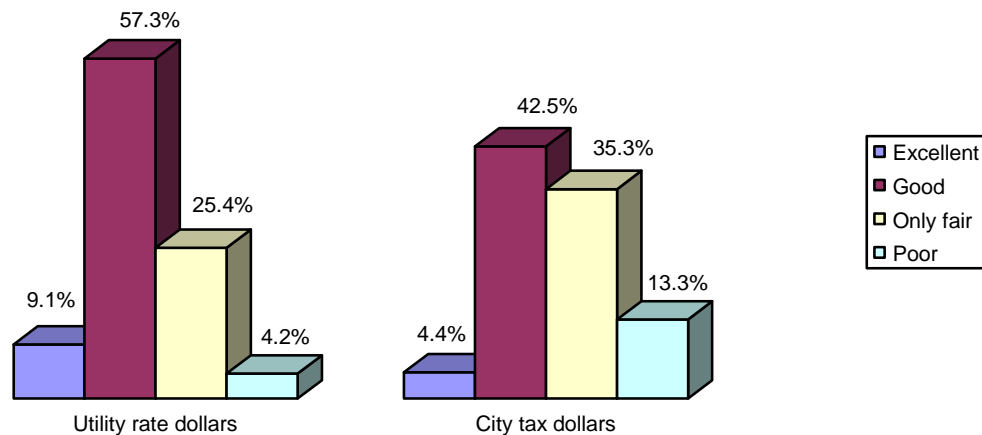
Those who have lived in Georgetown for shorter periods of time tend to give more positive responses to this question than more long-term residents.

**Value of city tax dollars**

We followed the utility tax value question with a similar question that asked respondents the value they thought they received from their tax dollars.

Although fairly evenly divided between positive and negative for city tax dollars, respondents did not feel that the value for city tax dollars was as good as value for utility rate dollars (see Figure 27). 42.5% of respondents said that city tax dollar rate is “good”; only 4.4% said “excellent”. Additionally, 35.5% thought that value was “only fair”, while 13.3% said “poor”. Respondents are fairly evenly divided between positive and negative for city tax dollars.

**Utility Rate Dollars vs. City Tax Dollars**



**Figure 27**

**City Employees**

We asked respondents to rate their experiences with city employees in general. Nearly three-quarters of respondents said that their experiences have been “excellent” (20.2%) or “good” (53.8%)- a strong commendation of Georgetown city employees.



## Conclusion

Overall, the citizens of Georgetown have a high opinion of their city and the job that the City is doing to guarantee their quality of life. People like Georgetown's location and the good people who live there. And they feel the City is doing an excellent job providing quality utility services and a good job protecting natural areas of the city. Interestingly, however, few citizens are aware that they have the lowest tax rate of surrounding communities, and it might be useful to educate them.

On planning issues, residents expressed several areas of concern.

The top two priorities should be bringing in new retail businesses and improving the traffic situation. Residents want more places to shop in Georgetown (right now, they do most of their shopping in Austin or Round Rock) as well as more entertainment choices. When given the opportunity to choose an area of change or improvement for the City, most citizens wanted regional shopping centers and a greater retail selection.

Transportation rated as a very important quality of life issue with the residents of Georgetown. There is strong support for steps to help traffic, such as building new roads and maintaining current ones.

Finally, negative "issues with the city council" registered in a statistical tie for first place in our open-ended question about what one main thing would make Georgetown quality of life better. Issues with the council were just as important to respondents as lack of retail choices and traffic problems.