

Community Preference Report Executive Summary

A Community Preference Survey is a technique that solicits community viewpoints and enables participants to evaluate images of natural and built environments. The Community Preference Survey (CPS) was designed to develop a better understanding of the relationship between transportation and land use, and also provided information on the local housing market.

The traditional residential market and public policies supported detached single-family houses on suburban lots and large acreage. However, several key objectives in the COMPASS long-range, regional transportation plan, *Communities in Motion* (CIM), required higher density housing along certain transit corridors and nodes. CIM identifies wider options for transit and opportunities for higher density developments in appropriate locations. However, if market realities do not support those ideals than planning for those facilities are vain. The COMPASS CPS was launched to explore whether there is a market for and tolerance of transit-supportive housing densities.

The CPS provides data for three (3) main COMPASS products:

1. *Communities in Motion* Implementation Guidebook.
2. Mobility Management Development Guidebook.
3. UPlan Land Use Allocation Model.

The report includes: the first section gives an introduction to CPS and their use in COMPASS efforts to plan transportation networks, including how the survey was prepared and distributed. The second section includes the results of the image ratings. The third section of the survey shows how participants chose between two different land use and travel options to identify characteristics of preferred communities. The fourth section includes feedback received during the post-survey focus groups which enabled survey participants to more fully describe their preferences for housing and transportation options. The findings section includes the analysis of the survey results and recommendations of how to use this data for the COMPASS products for which this survey was designed. The last sections of the report include possible future actions that COMPASS could take in improving this survey and a recap of the survey. The appendices include additional information on the survey and a complete data results section.

The results of the survey provided quality data on a variety of transportation and housing issues.

The existing housing market may reflect traditional preferences for single-family housing on suburban-sized lots. However, the future of housing in the region may shift toward a more compact housing pattern to accommodate demographic changes, such as aging baby-boomers and younger families. These two groups, as well as others, sought detached, single-family housing on compact lots as a good use of space and money for their housing choices. The increased awareness of sprawl and the higher transportation costs associated with a jobs-housing imbalance also promoted a preference for compact housing.

While there is demand for more compact housing, this must be done with attractive architecture to integrate into existing communities. The most popular housing choices were for slightly higher densities than the current development model. Both large lots and much higher densities ranked below compact housing choices as the general consensus desired small but manageable outdoor recreation space. Much higher densities ranked low in the survey. Survey and focus group participants also supported slightly higher density housing in neighborhoods when design features mitigated the appearance of multiple units in a building.

Key findings include the desire by almost all demographic and economic groups for additional multi-modal transportation options, especially walking and biking. The scenario section of the report indicates that the majority of participants desired mixed use areas with smaller lots closer to urban conveniences, and a more integrated street network with more space for walking and biking and less lanes for vehicles.