

# Pasadena General Plan Update Survey Report

Presented to the City of Pasadena  
September 2011

**[bw]** RESEARCH  
PARTNERSHIP

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	i
List of Figures.....	ii
List of Tables.....	ii
Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction to the Study .....	1
Methodology Overview.....	1
Key Findings .....	1
Conclusions .....	3
The Pasadena General Plan's Guiding Principles .....	6
Support for Additional Themes .....	8
Respondents' Suggestions for the Principles .....	10
Agreement With the Mobility Element.....	11
Land Use Alternatives .....	13
Influencing Factors.....	26
Respondents' Zip Code of Residency & Work or School .....	28
Appendix A: Methodology .....	A-1
Appendix B: Toplines .....	B-1

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Prioritization of the Guiding Principles of Pasadena’s General Plan .....	6
Figure 2: Support for Additional Themes to the Guiding Principles .....	8
Figure 3: Suggested Changes or Revisions to Principles .....	10
Figure 4: Agreement with Statements Related to the Four Objectives of the Mobility Element.....	11
Figure 5: Map of the City of Pasadena’s Planning Areas .....	14
Figure 6: Alternative Preferences by Planning Area .....	15
Figure 7: Alternative Preferences by Home Zip Code.....	17
Figure 8: Pasadena Zip Code Map.....	18
Figure 9: Alternative Preferences by Work/ School Zip Code .....	19
Figure 10: Alternative Preferences For the Central District by Home Zip Code.....	20
Figure 11: Alternative Preferences For South Fair Oaks by Home Zip Code .....	21
Figure 12: Alternative Preferences For North Lake by Home Zip Code .....	22
Figure 13: Alternative Preferences For Fair Oaks / Orange Avenue by Home Zip Code	23
Figure 14: Alternative Preferences For East Colorado Corridor by Home Zip Code .....	24
Figure 15: Alternative Preferences For East Pasadena by Home Zip Code.....	25
Figure 16: Respondents’ Home Zip Codes.....	28
Figure 17: Respondents’ Work or School Zip Codes .....	28

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: City of Pasadena Land Use Alternatives.....	13
Table 2: Top Five Influencing Factors for Each Planning Area .....	26
Table 3: Top Five Influencing Factors for Each Planning Area .....	27
Table 4: Overview of Project Methodology .....	A-1
Table 5: Overall Response Rate by Zip Code .....	A-2

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The City of Pasadena partnered with BW Research Partnership, Inc. (BW Research) to conduct its General Plan Update Survey during the summer of 2011.

The main research objectives of this study were to:

- Assess the level of prioritization, support and agreement with the guiding principles, themes and objectives of the City's General Plan;
- Determine preferences for each of the four land use alternatives within the City's six planning areas and the factors influencing each preference; and
- Determine the support for the existing mobility objectives.

### METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

A city-wide mail and web survey of residents and businesses was administered from June 10 through July 13. The City of Pasadena utilized a census-style approach to mail out over 70,000 surveys to all Pasadena households and businesses in a special newsletter. In total, 2,893 surveys were completed (1,848 mail survey completes and 1,045 web survey completes), resulting in a maximum margin of error +/- 1.78 percent (at the 95 percent level of confidence) for questions answered by all 2,893 respondents<sup>1</sup>. Mail versions of the survey were available in English and Spanish. Spanish versions of the survey accounted for just over five percent of all completed mail surveys.

Over 300 completed surveys were provided by residents from each of the six zip codes within Pasadena (91101, 91103, 91104, 91105, 91106, 91107), with an overall household response rate between 4 and 9 percent for each zip code. Completed surveys from individuals who work in Pasadena but do not live in the City or who did not provide their zip code of residence only accounted for six percent of total responses.

### KEY FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the survey data, BW Research is pleased to present the following key findings. Please refer to the body of the report for a more comprehensive analysis of findings, including comparisons among sub-groups.

#### *Guiding Principles of the General Plan*

The majority of respondents rated five of the General Plan's seven guiding principles as a high priority, with two receiving an overwhelming percentage of high priority responses.

"Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena's historic character and environment" was rated as a high priority by 71 percent of respondents and "Pasadena will be

---

<sup>1</sup> For a further breakdown of this study's methodology, please refer to Appendix A.

promoted as a... safe, well-designed, accessible... area where people of all ages can live, work and play” was rated as a high priority by 70 percent of respondents.

Among the three additional themes that could be emphasized in the principles, two of the three themes were strongly supported by over 60 percent of respondents.

Seventy percent of respondents strongly supported integrating the theme “Pasadena will value and support a vibrant public education system” and 60 percent strongly supported “Pasadena will promote sustainability - a balance between social equity, a strong economy and a healthy environment”.

When asked to share any changes or revisions they might have to the existing or suggested principles, 24 percent of respondents provided a suggestion.

Themes derived from the written responses included improving the education system, providing more affordable housing, providing less affordable housing, improving the transit system, decreasing growth and reducing traffic congestion.

**Mobility Element of the General Plan**

The transportation section of the General Plan – the Mobility Element – includes four major objectives: promote a livable and economically strong community, encourage non-auto travel, protect neighborhoods and manage major corridors.

Over 70 percent of respondents agreed with the following two statements:

- “Target new housing, shopping and offices around transit stations to create transit oriented districts with a reduced need for auto use” (40% strongly agree and 33% agree) and
- “Modify streets so that they are safe and attractive places to walk, by reducing the speed of cars in some areas” (40% strongly agree and 30% agree).

**Land Use Alternatives**

<b>Alternative A</b>	Focuses on reducing future growth in the Central District and increasing capacity in East Pasadena and along major streets
<b>Alternative B</b>	Focuses on improving the City’s economic vitality by allowing new buildings and uses that would help create new jobs
<b>Alternative C</b>	Focuses future growth around Gold Line stations and along major streets where services, shopping, jobs and bus lines exist
<b>Alternative D</b>	Focuses on reducing future growth citywide

Alternative C was the most preferred alternative within each planning area, followed by Alternative B (except in the Central District, where Alternative D was second).

Across all 2,893 respondents, 58 percent chose Alternative C for at least one planning area, 55 percent selected Alternative B, 39 percent Alternative D, 37 percent chose Alternative A and six percent answered "None" or left the question blank.

Twenty-nine percent of respondents selected the same alternative for each of the six planning areas (Alternative A: 2% of respondents, Alternative B: 6%, Alternative C 10%, Alternative D, 11%). Similarly, one percent of respondents selected "None" for each planning area and five percent of respondents did not provide a selection for any of the planning areas.

After identifying an alternative for each planning area, respondents were asked to select up to two factors that guided their preferences. Jobs, shopping and housing close to transit was the top factor for all planning areas except Fair Oaks/ Orange Grove where increasing jobs was the top factor.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

BW Research offers the following conclusions from the City of Pasadena's general plan update survey.

### ***A Balanced Response to a Challenging Inquiry***

A census style survey to provide feedback on a general plan update is important because it gives all residents that want to have a voice in the City's planning process that opportunity. One of the challenges of an open, census-style survey process is ensuring that the surveyor has heard from a broad and diverse set of respondents. By all tracked indicators this survey has received a broad and diverse set of responses from

- Each zip code ( more than 300 completed surveys per zip code);
- Both online surveys (over 1,000 completed) and mail surveys (over 1,800 completed); and
- Spanish speaking members of the community (just over five percent of all mail surveys completed in Spanish).

It is also worth noting that 94 percent of the total sample lives within the City and 40 percent of the respondents indicated they either work or go to school in Pasadena.

### ***Guiding Principles are on Target***

One of the research objectives for the survey was to better understand residents support for the seven guiding existing principles and three additional themes to be included in the existing principles. The guiding principles act as the vision for Pasadena's future as the City plans the next 20 years.

### *Existing Principles*

Of the seven existing principles that were considered, six received nearly 50 percent of responses that indicated they were a high priority<sup>2</sup> and 70 percent of respondents listed all of them as either a high or medium priority. Five of the seven principles also received less than 15 percent of responses that indicated they were a low priority. From a survey response perspective this is a strong level of support compared with a relatively small amount of disagreement. These five principles, in order of agreement included:

- Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena's historic character and environment. (71% high priority)
- Pasadena will be promoted as a safe, well-designed, accessible area where people of all ages, can live, work and play. (70% high priority)
- Pasadena will be promoted as a cultural, scientific, corporate entertainment and educational center for the region. ( 59% high priority)
- Community participation will be a permanent part of achieving a great city. (58% high priority)
- Economic vitality will be promoted to provide jobs, services, revenues, and opportunities. (52% high priority)

These principles have received wide spread support from a majority of Pasadena residents and stakeholders. The two other existing principles still receive more support than opposition, despite that they are focused on issues in which there is less agreement.

Almost 50 percent of respondents rated "Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars" as a high priority; more than twice as many respondents indicated it is a high priority versus a low priority.

The existing principle with the least amount of agreement, "Growth will be targeted to serve community needs and...will be redirected away from neighborhoods and into our downtown" was focused on where growth should be targeted. This type of principle will typically receive less support because seeking agreement on a given strategy or tactic is typically more controversial than seeking agreement on a philosophical principle. It is still important to point out that both of these issues, circulating without cars and redirecting growth, had more supporters than those that opposed the principles.

### *Additional Themes for Consideration*

Sixty percent or more of respondents indicated strong support for two of the three additional themes. Furthermore, less than 15 percent of respondents indicated that they did not support these two themes. From a survey response perspective this is a strong level of support compared with a relatively small amount of disagreement. These two additional themes, in order of support included:

---

<sup>2</sup> "Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars" was considered a high priority by 48.3 percent of respondents.

- Pasadena will value and support a vibrant public education system. (70% strongly support)
- Pasadena will promote sustainability - a balance between social equity, a strong economy and a healthy environment. (60% strongly support)

These additional themes have received wide spread support from a majority of Pasadena residents and stakeholders. The one other additional theme that was considered still received more support than opposition, "Pasadena will work to provide diverse, affordable housing options" despite the fact the theme was focused on affordable housing, which is typically more controversial and less likely to receive broad support.

### ***Preferred Alternatives for Pasadena's Planning Areas***

The results of the survey show that alternative C was the preferred option of the four land use alternatives in each of the six planning areas. However, it would be a mistake to interpret those results as alternative C is the only option that should be considered in each planning area. Of the four land use alternatives considered in the survey, none of the alternatives received more than one-third of responses as the preferred option in any given planning area.

Preferences for the Central District were particularly diverse, where three of the four land use alternatives received between 30 and 20 percent support. Alternative A, which received the lowest level of support, still had 19 percent of respondents indicate that it was their preferred option. Moving forward, a hybrid approach, which builds off the strongest components of the more popular alternatives, makes the most sense for the general plan update.

For additional detail on the research findings and a complete assessment of the survey results, please proceed to the body of the report beginning on the next page.



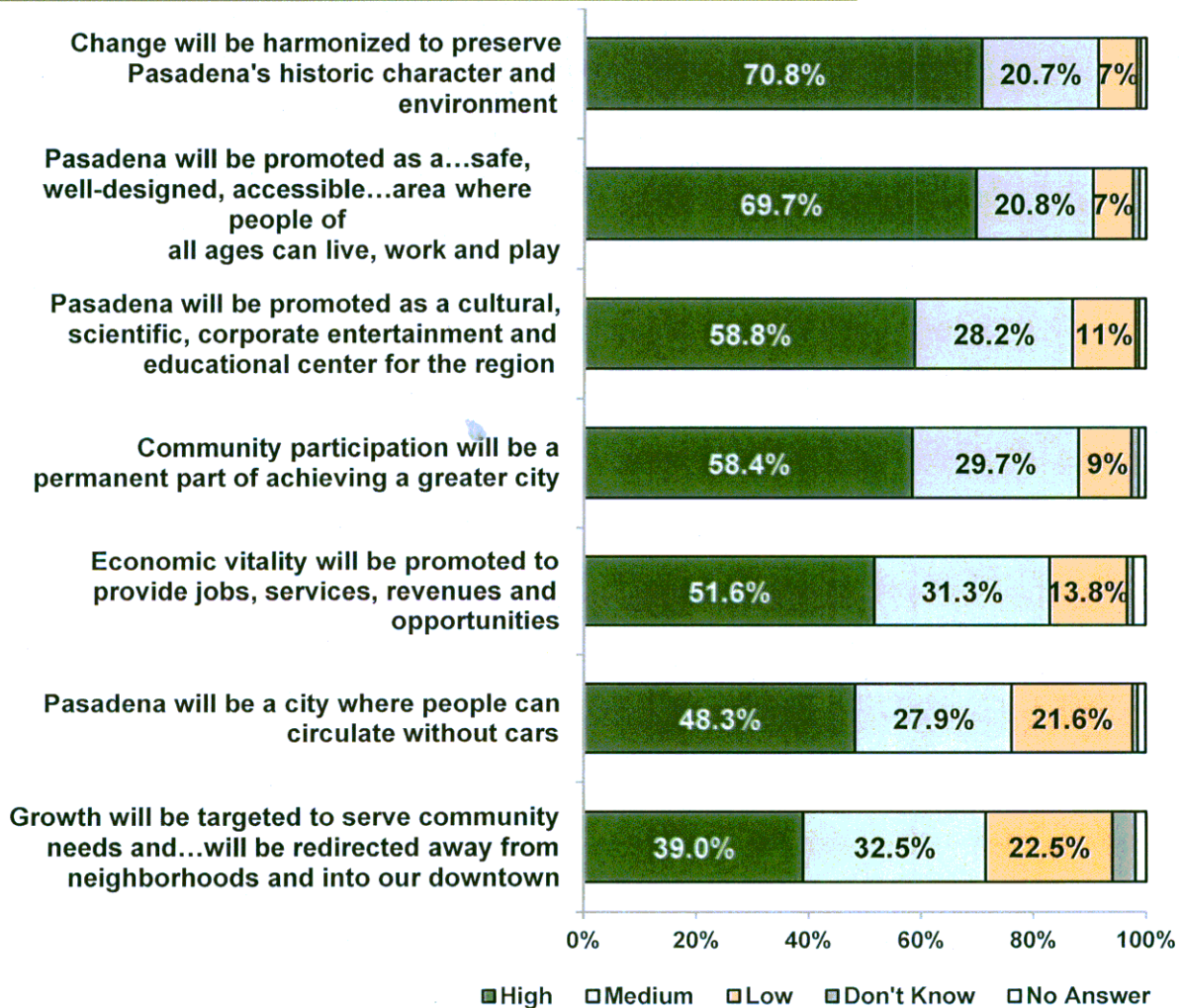
## THE PASADENA GENERAL PLAN'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Seven guiding principles were adopted as part of the City of Pasadena's 1994 land use element and confirmed in the 2004 update and provide the foundation for the General Plan. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they considered each a high priority, medium priority or low priority in planning Pasadena's future

The majority of respondents rated five of the seven guiding principles as a high priority, with two receiving an overwhelming percentage of high priority responses. Specifically, "Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena's historic character and environment" was rated as a high priority by 71 percent of respondents and "Pasadena will be promoted as a... safe, well-designed, accessible... area where people of all ages can live, work and play" was rated as a high priority by 70 percent of respondents.

Two hundred and thirty eight of the 2,893 total respondents (8%) selected all of the seven guiding principles as a high priority.

Figure 1: Prioritization of the Guiding Principles of Pasadena's General Plan



Below is an analysis of differences in high priority ratings among respondent sub-groups.

- Respondents who took the survey in Spanish provided a different prioritization for the seven principles than those who took the survey in English (either web or mail).
  - The top two principles among those who took the survey in Spanish were “Community participation will be a permanent part of achieving a greater city” (78% “High priority” vs. 58%) and “Economic vitality will be promoted to provide jobs, services, revenues and opportunities” (77% “High priority” vs. 51%).
- Respondents who lived outside of Pasadena (i.e., business respondents) or residents who did not live in one of Pasadena’s six main zip codes (91101, 91103, 91104, 91105, 91106 or 91107) provided a different prioritization than those who lived in one of the six main Pasadena zip codes.
  - Specifically, those living outside the six zip codes assigned the highest rating to “Economic vitality will be promoted to provide jobs, services, revenues and opportunities” (74% “High priority” vs. 50%). In contrast, those in one of the six main Pasadena zips assigned “Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena’s historic character and environment” the highest priority (71% vs. 60%).

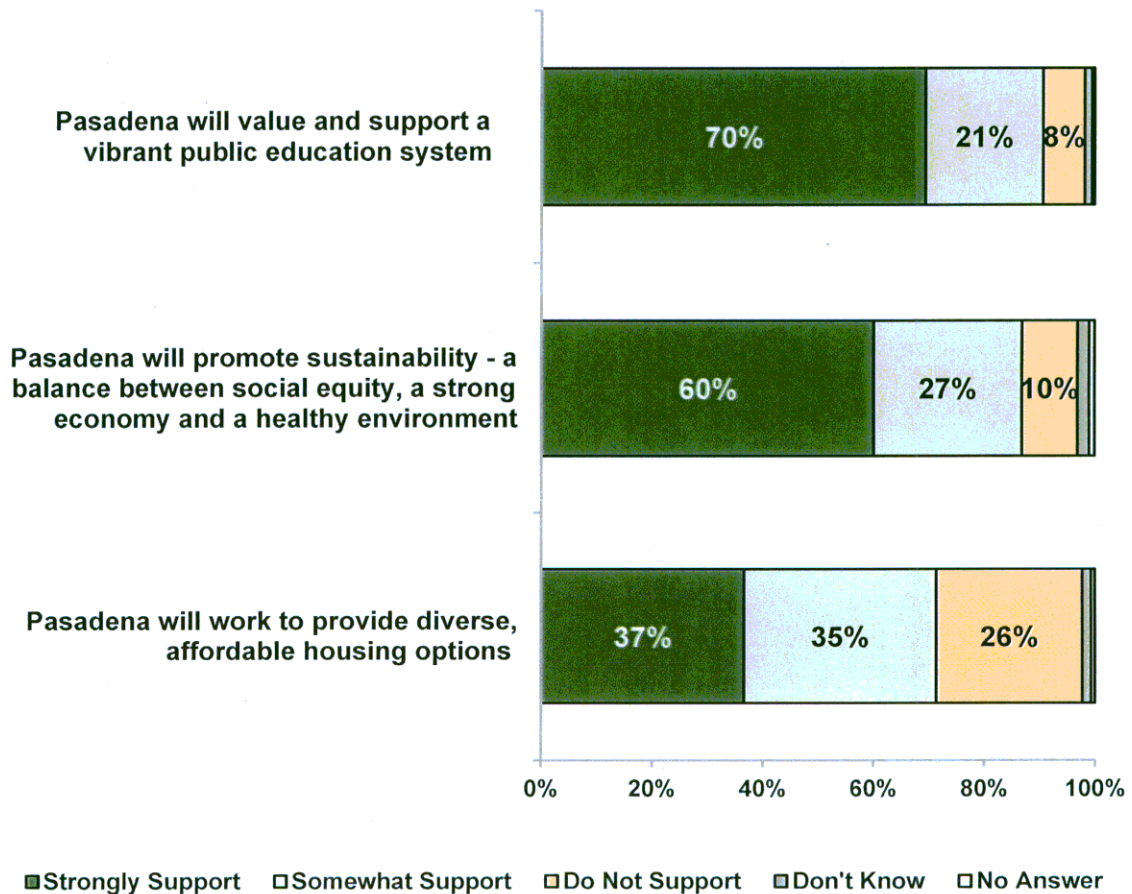
## SUPPORT FOR ADDITIONAL THEMES

Respondents were also presented with three additional themes that could be emphasized in the principles and were asked to provide their level of support for integrating one or more of the themes into the guiding principles.

Over 70 percent of respondents indicated a level of support (“Strongly support” plus “Somewhat support”) each of the three proposed additional themes, with two of the three themes being strongly supported by over 60 percent of respondents.

Seventy percent of respondents strongly supported emphasizing the theme “Pasadena will value and support a vibrant public education system” (91% level of support) and 60 percent strongly supported “Pasadena will promote sustainability - a balance between social equity, a strong economy and a healthy environment” (87% level of support). While the previously mentioned themes received high levels of support, over a quarter of respondents reported having no support for the theme “Pasadena will work to provide diverse, affordable housing options” (26%).

**Figure 2: Support for Additional Themes to the Guiding Principles**



When examined by zip code (home and work/ school), survey language and survey type (web or mail), the rankings for each of the alternative themes remained consistent with the overall results. However, certain subgroups reported a higher percentage of support than others. Specifically:

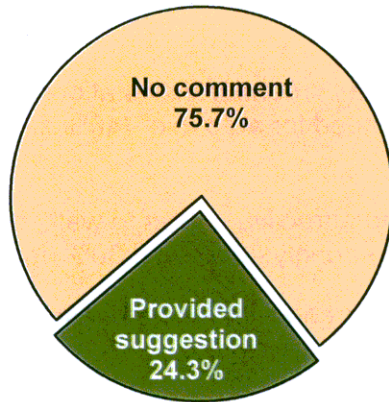
- Although still ranked third among each group, 78 percent of those who took the web version of the survey reported a level of support (“Strongly support” plus “Somewhat support”) for the theme “Pasadena will work to provide diverse, affordable housing options” compared with 68 percent of those who took the mail version of the survey.
- Residents who lived in zip code 91105 were 6 to 12 percent less likely to indicate they would strongly support "Pasadena will promote sustainability - a balance between social equity, a strong economy and a healthy environment" compared to Pasadena residents in other zip codes within the City.
- Respondents who took the survey in Spanish provided a support rating of 94 percent across all three themes compared with 83 percent among those who took the survey in English.

## RESPONDENTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPLES

Respondents were next asked to share any changes or revisions they might have to the existing or suggested principles. Just under a quarter of respondents (24%) provided a suggestion.

Themes derived from the written responses included improving the education system, providing more affordable housing, providing less affordable housing, improving the transit system, decreasing growth and reducing traffic congestion. To view all of the written responses, please visit the General Plan webpage at [www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan).

Figure 3: Suggested Changes or Revisions to Principles



## AGREEMENT WITH THE MOBILITY ELEMENT

After being asked about the General Plan’s guiding principles and themes, respondents were next introduced to the Mobility Element of the General Plan.

The transportation section of the General Plan – the Mobility Element – includes four major objectives: promote a livable and economically strong community, encourage non-auto travel, protect neighborhoods and manage major corridors.

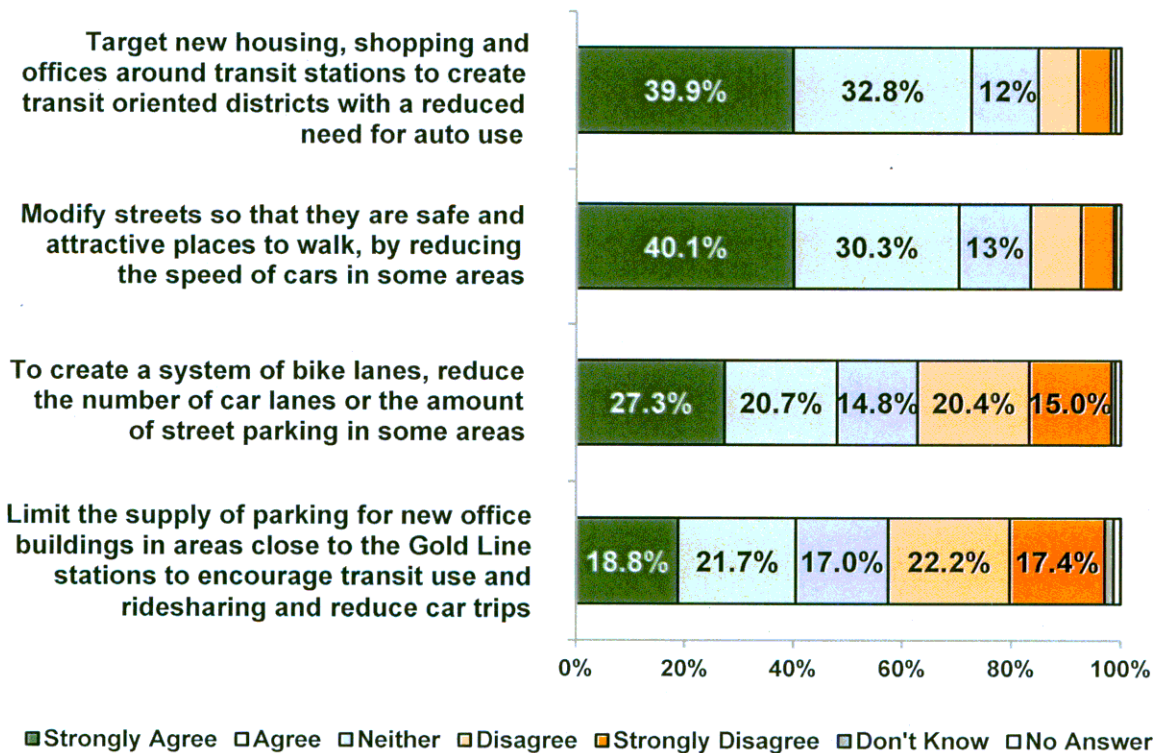
Respondents were presented with four statements related to the objectives of the transportation section of the general plan. Respondents were asked to provide their level of agreement with each statement.

Over 70 percent of respondents agreed (“Strongly agree” plus “Agree”) with the following two statements:

- “Target new housing, shopping and offices around transit stations to create transit oriented districts with a reduced need for auto use” (40% strongly agree and 33% agree) and
- “Modify streets so that they are safe and attractive places to walk, by reducing the speed of cars in some areas” (40% strongly agree and 30% agree).

Comparatively, fewer than half of respondents agreed with the other two statements.

**Figure 4: Agreement with Statements Related to the Four Objectives of the Mobility Element**



To follow is an analysis of agreement with each of the four Mobility Element statements by respondent sub-groups.

- Respondents who took the web version of the survey indicated a statistically higher level of agreement with each statement, with the exception of “Modify streets so that they are safe and attractive places to walk, by reducing the speed of cars in some areas,” which received a comparable agreement level among the two groups (71% agreement among web respondents and 70% among mail respondents).
- Respondents who took the survey in Spanish provided an agreement rating of 77 percent across the four statements compared with 57 percent among those who took the survey in English.
- Compared with those living in other zip codes, respondents who lived in zip code 91101 provided a higher than average level of agreement with each of the four statements (64% average compared with 58% among all respondents).
- Respondents who worked or went to school in zip code 91104 were more likely to agree with each statement than those who worked or went to school in a different zip code (64% vs. 58%).

## LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

Respondents were next presented with four land use alternatives for Pasadena's future. These four alternatives, as summarized in Table 1, were created by community members through the planning process described below.

### *Origin of the Four Land Use Alternatives*

The foundation of the alternatives was the community discussion that began in summer 2009, when over 3,000 people participated in a variety of outreach events to identify what the community likes about Pasadena and what issues the city faces. The comments were organized into an Outreach Summary Report, which was approved by the City Council in May 2010.

The four land use alternatives were created through a three-day intensive workshop, known as a charrette, in November 2010. At the charrette, the community, the General Plan Update Advisory Committee (GPUAC), city commissioners, and staff worked collaboratively to transform key themes from the outreach report into the four land use alternatives. The alternatives were further refined by the GPAUC and City commissioners at two follow-up workshops in January and March 2011. The alternatives were then evaluated for impacts on a variety of factors including the number of housing units, non-residential square footage, traffic, jobs, and greenhouse gas emissions.

**Table 1: City of Pasadena Land Use Alternatives**

<b>Alternative A</b>	Focuses on reducing future growth in the Central District and increasing capacity in East Pasadena and along major streets
<b>Alternative B</b>	Focuses on improving the City's economic vitality by allowing new buildings and uses that would help create new jobs
<b>Alternative C</b>	Focuses future growth around Gold Line stations and along major streets where services, shopping, jobs and bus lines exist
<b>Alternative D</b>	Focuses on reducing future growth citywide



Respondents were asked to review the alternatives and identify which they would prefer for each of Pasadena's six planning areas (shown in Figure 5 below).

**Figure 5: Map of the City of Pasadena's Planning Areas**

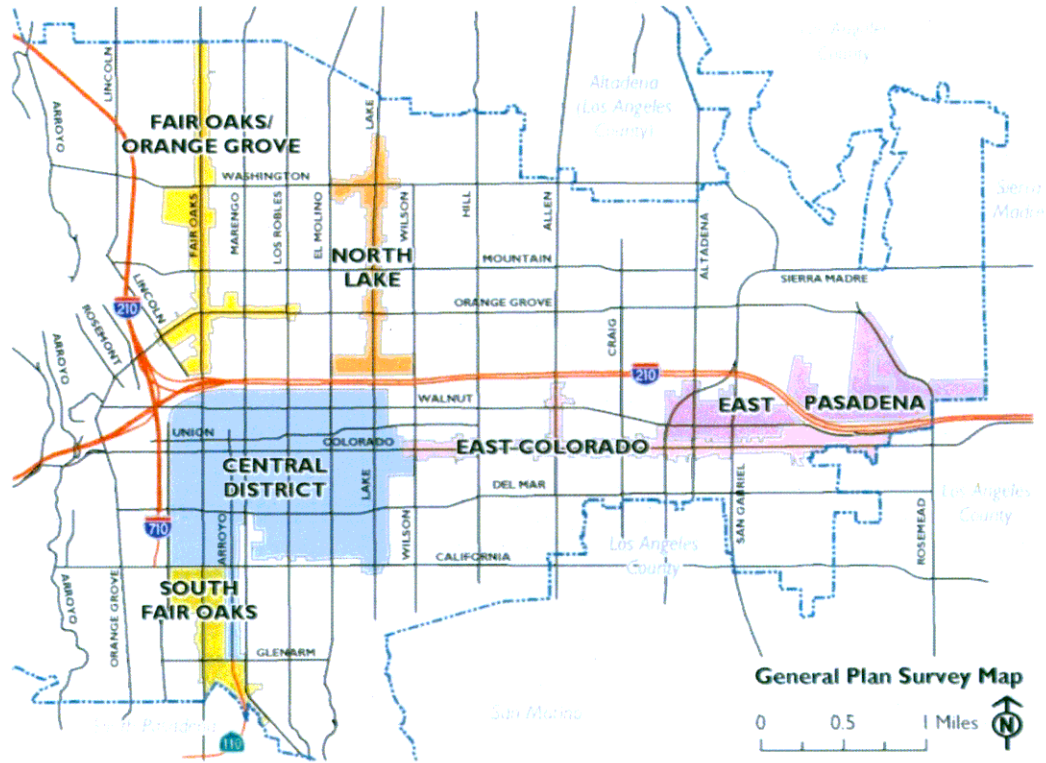
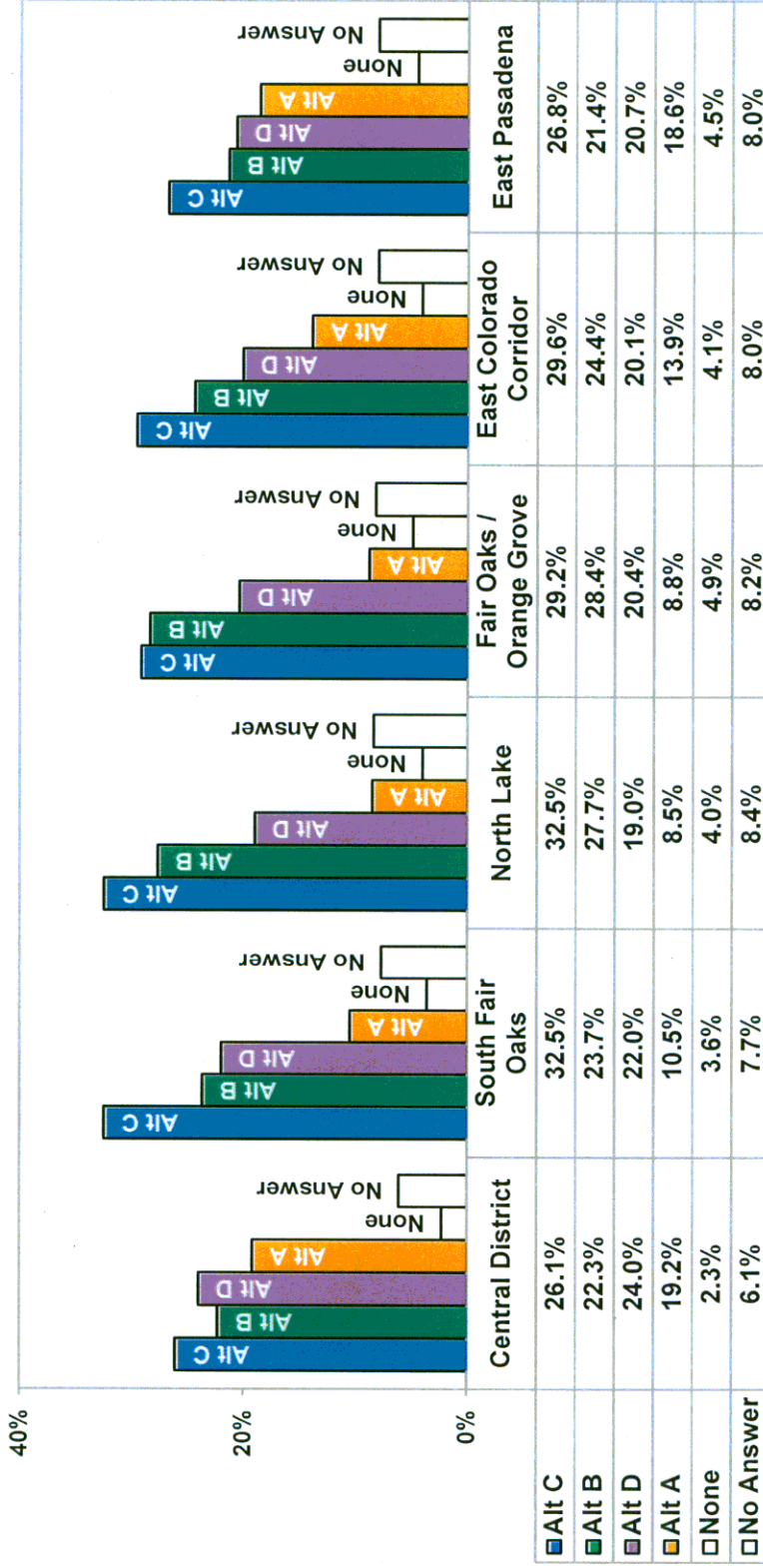


Figure 6 displays the land use alternative preferences by each of the six planning areas. Alternative C was the most preferred alternative within each planning area, followed by Alternative B (except in the Central District, where Alternative D was second).

Figure 6: Alternative Preferences by Planning Area

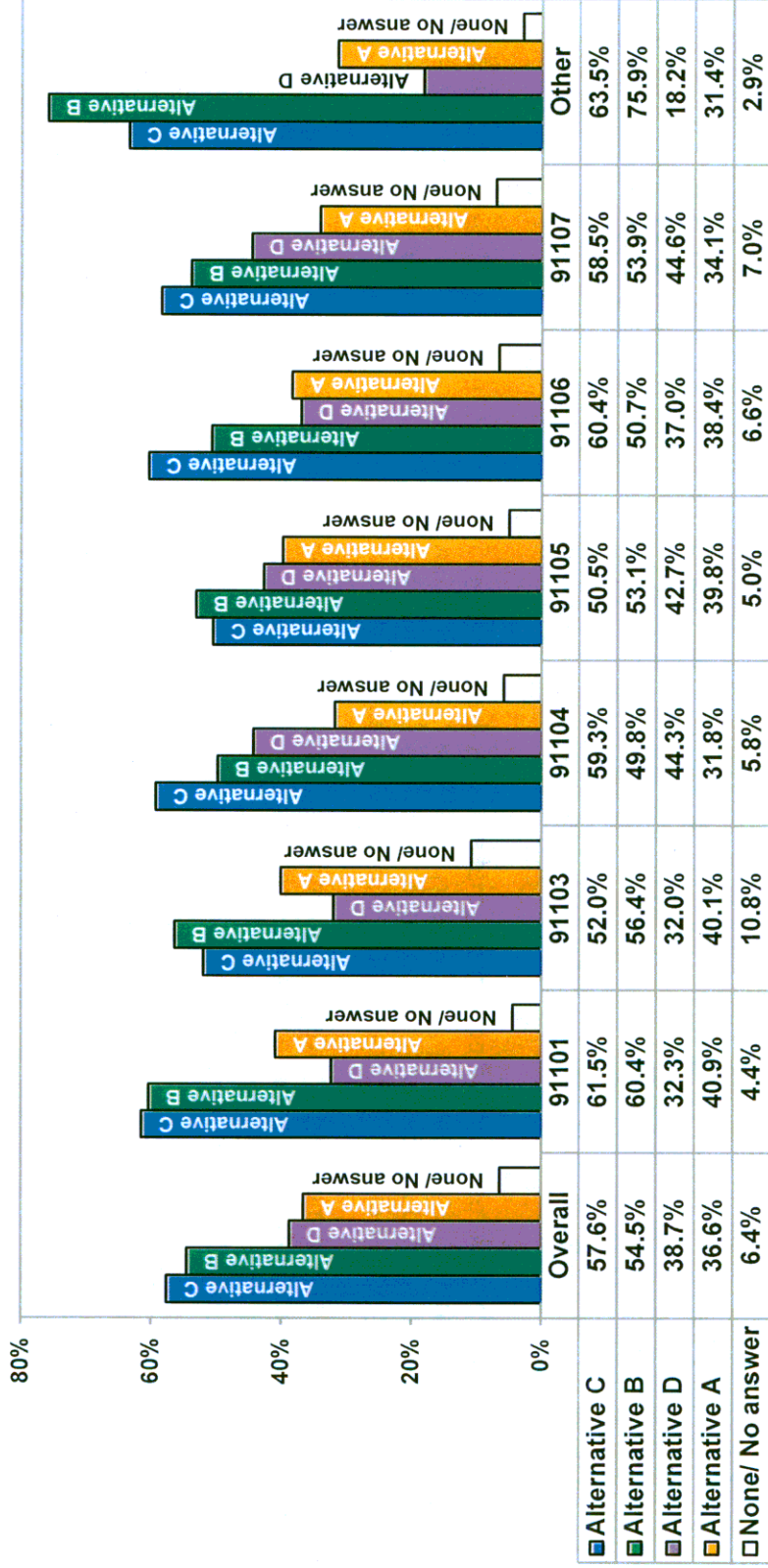


To follow is an analysis of respondents preferences of the four land use alternatives.

- Across all 2,893 respondents, 58 percent chose Alternative C for at least one planning area, 55 percent selected Alternative B, 39 percent Alternative D, 37 percent chose Alternative A, and six percent answered “None” or left the question blank.
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents selected the same alternative for each of the six planning areas (Alternative A: 2% of respondents, Alternative B: 6%, Alternative C 10%, Alternative D, 11%). Similarly, one percent of respondents selected “None” for each planning area and five percent of respondents did not provide a selection for any of the planning areas.
- Alternative C and Alternative B were the most preferred among those who rated each of the seven guiding principles as a high priority.
- There were some differences in the percentage that supported each alternative. For example, 69 percent of respondents who indicated that “Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars” was a high priority selected Alternative C compared with 55 percent who rated “Growth will be targeted to serve community needs and... will be redirected away from neighborhoods and into our downtown” as a high priority.
- Examining the data in more detail revealed the strongest correlation between respondents’ level of support for “Pasadena will promote sustainability - a balance between social equity, a strong economy and a healthy environment” and their selection of Alternative C (66% preference for Alternative C among those who strongly supported, 51% among those who somewhat supported and 30% among those who did not support that additional theme).
- Respondents who lived in a zip code other than one of the six main Pasadena zip codes indicated the strongest preference for Alternative B (76% Alternative B vs. 54% across the six Pasadena zip codes).

Figure 7 displays the results of land use alternative preferences by those respondents that chose the land use alternative for at least one planning area, for each of the resident zip codes within Pasadena. See the next page for a detailed map of Pasadena's zip codes. Alternatives C and B were the top two choices by respondents from each of Pasadena's 6 zip codes. The preference for Alternative C over B was most pronounced among those who lived in zip codes 91104 (59% vs. 50%) and 91106 (60% vs. 51%).

Figure 7: Alternative Preferences by Home Zip Code<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> The sum of the percentages for alternative preferences by respondents' home zip codes may be over 100 percent as they are derived from multiple responses. Frequencies for each alternative included respondents that selected an alternative in at least one of the six planning areas.