

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY

The following list represents the recollections of City staff persons who took part in the Visual Preference Survey process on February 16 and 17. More details will be available after we receive copies of the VPS slides and verify all of the scoring. (SL - 2/26/96)

1. Lots of good ideas came out of the VPS, but some of them are much more do-able than others. It is important to remember that Nelessen's approach is broad-brush and intended to apply nationwide. It should also be remembered that the group who returned for the second day of the VPS process and worked on the details agreed to a "planning horizon" of the year 2015. This means that, although some changes can be implemented immediately, others may take years and some will only come as existing structures begin to age and can be "redeveloped."
2. It is our job to take what came out of the VPS and work with it, including modifying it as necessary to fit local circumstances. The important things are that we "honor" the work that went into it and let all of the VPS participants know what we are doing with their ideas.
3. We don't yet have copies of the slides to verify the numbers, but based on Nelessen's quick review of the votes it looks as if the major patterns that emerged from the VPS included:
 - a. Acceptance of "car friendly" housing designs (garages in front). No clear preference for garages at the rear. Actually, the vote appeared to be about split between the two. It's worth noting that garages in the rear lend themselves to having "granny flats" above them in some locations.
 - b. Support for mixed use developments. These included 3, 4 and 5-story designs with commercial at the first level, offices or apartments on the 2nd or 3rd floor, with dwelling units above that. As with commercial developments, the voters preferred mixed use developments fronting directly on sidewalks (with no off-street parking between the building and the street).
 - c. Support for retail designs that showed on-street angle parking, wide sidewalks, interesting sidewalk surfaces, and varied storefront

architecture (including varied facade height) and the building directly behind the sidewalk and adjacent to the street. Preference for commercial developments which front on streets rather than on parking lots.

d. Support for landscaping along all streets and sidewalks. On busier streets this meant a parkway landscaping strip between the curb and sidewalk. This included a preference for fir trees along, and in the median strip of, I-5 -- rather than concrete sound walls. On Saturday, Nelessen did provide a drawing of a landscaped sound wall that could be used to mitigate noise without just an ugly concrete wall. It also included strict landscaping requirements for parking lots (one tree for every four parking spaces -- our current standard is one per 7 to 10 spaces).

e. Support for functional sidewalks and bikeways throughout the City.

f. A general acceptance that Wilsonville is in a transition from a suburban to an urban community. This included favorable ratings for large office buildings and well-designed, multi-story apartments with as many as 50 units/acre.

g. The need for a comfortable, centrally located, public space that people identify as the heart of the community.

h. Realization that community pride and civic concern are based in design. When people like their city they feel more responsible for it, take better care of it, have less crime, are generally healthier, etc.

i. Three important elements for improving multiple family housing are: a raised porch or stoop that adds to the separation of the building from the public pedestrian space; some sort of gate or entryway that further defines that separation; and usable balconies for upstairs units.

j. Scenes with the lowest overall ratings on Friday night included wide (5 or 6 lane) streets without mature landscaping or offset sidewalks.

k. Support for open spaces linked by trails or paths.

1. Support for limiting heavy truck industries to a certain portion of town , with designated truck routes.

4. The issue of the design of Wilsonville Road creates an immediate challenge. Nelessen urged those in attendance to consider Wilsonville Road as the community's "main street." Given all of the design effort and the agreements which are already in place (Thrifty-PayLess, ODOT, as well as Teufel approval vesting) for expanding Wilsonville Road through the interchange, it is not likely that it will take on the kind of appearance that many of the participants will anticipate.

Also, it should be noted that additional overpasses/underpasses will not provide access to I-5. Approximately 75% of the Wilsonville Road traffic at the interchange is getting on or off of the freeway. This means that only about 25% of the current traffic at the interchange could be diverted to an alternate overpass or underpass. Neither Nelessen nor the participants had that information available to them in the VPS process.

5. It is critical to remember that the VPS results are not based on consideration of factors such as cost. The participants did not have to make such trade-offs as "This road is attractive, but will it carry 30,000 vehicles a day ?" or "Would I vote for this road if it means an extra half-hour to drive from one side of the freeway to the other ?"