

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Raymond Turco & Associates was retained by the City of Round Rock Planning Department to conduct its periodic "Citizen Attitude Survey." The firm implemented a scientifically accurate telephone poll to examine resident attitudes as they related to issues being studied and considered by the department. The random survey was designed to examine the attitudes of residents with regard to quality of life issues such as neighborhood appearance, historic preservation, economic development, especially with regards to the downtown area, and other characteristics from which implementation could improve the community. The information gathered in this summary will allow elected officials, city staff, and concerned individuals to better understand how Round Rock residents view their city and the issues surrounding the municipality.

Recall that a survey is an attitudinal "snap-shot" of the community during the time of survey implementation and has not been influenced by either positive or negative publicity. So that all residents were equally represented, the city was divided into four subsectors, with each area assigned a quota proportional to the number of available households with available telephone numbers. More than 13,000 telephone contacts were attempted to complete the required number of surveys.

A primary evaluation technique utilized in this report is ratio comparisons. The ratios are determined by removing the no opinion response and dividing the combined positive comments into the combined negative answers. The resulting calculation brings about either a positive or negative number, indicating the direction toward which respondents leaned. For example, the questions about city characteristics showed the top quality to be "A place to raise children," in which 93% agreed and 4% did not, equating to a ratio of 23.3:1, which means that 23 people would agree with that statement before one person would dispute it. In the same manner, regarding the city's natural scenic beauty, the positive ratio was only 1.4:1, because agreement was 62% versus 36% disagreement. That ratio would imply that nearly as many people agree with it as dispute it, making it a much less positively perceived statement than the other. When ratios are described, both the positive and negative response will be included within the parentheses.

The telephone survey included the responses of 400 individuals, which equates to an overall error rate of +/- 5%, at a 95% confidence level. Below are listed the highlights from our analysis of the project:

GENERAL ATTITUDES ABOUT RESIDENTS OF ROUND ROCK

- **Over half the residents sampled (57%) said that prior to moving to their current address, they had moved from another city in Texas, with a follow-up question identifying Austin (50%) as most often their prior residence. More than one in four (27%) said they moved from another state, specifically Ohio (12%), New York (8%), and Minnesota (7%), as those were the most popular responses to that follow-up query. The remaining 16% of the sample said they had moved from another residence in Round Rock (14%), from another country (1%), or declined to respond to the question (1%). The five individuals who came from another country listed Panama, The Netherlands, Australia, or Egypt as their previous residences. The two western sectors of the city (Northwest and Southwest) had the highest incidence of prior Round Rock residents, as 16% and 24% said their previous residence was in the city. That compared with 3% and 11% of respondents from the eastern portions (Northeast and Southeast). In reviewing the four quadrants (Northeast-Southeast-Northwest-Southwest), the Southeast region had the highest percentage of people who moved to Round Rock from another city in Texas (56%-65%-52%-54%), while the Northeast was the area with the highest rate of current residents who had moved from another state (39%-23%-31%-21%). Other cities in which people relocated to Round Rock, from the list of 54 responses, included Houston (7%), Pflugerville (5%), and Georgetown (3%). And over half the states in the United States (35) were represented, among them Virginia and Georgia (both 6%) and Louisiana (5%). Prior inhabitants of the state of Ohio most frequently relocated to the eastern areas of Round Rock (24%-14%-5%-0%), while New Yorkers settled into the Northwest (19%, to 0% in Northeast) and Minnesotans, in the Southwest (31%, to 0% in Northeast and Northwest). (See Questions 1 – 3.)**
- **Sixty-four percent of people surveyed described their current employment status as employed. Additionally, 21% described themselves as retired, 13% not currently employed, or a college student (1%), either employed or not employed. Austin Community College and The University of Texas at Austin (both 40%) and Western Governors**

University (20%) were the colleges the five students identified as attending. In follow-up questions, 90% of people employed said they worked primarily outside of their home, of which 45% named a Round Rock zip code and 31% an Austin destination in which they primarily worked. For those who could not name the zip code in which they worked, Austin (44%), all over/travels, or Round Rock (both 16%) were named as the cities in which they worked. The eastern subsectors had a higher percentage of people employed (70%-71%-67%-54%), especially when compared with the Southwest part of Round Rock. Conversely, that portion of the city had the highest level of respondents retired (11%-11%-18%-37%) and the lowest rates of people not currently employed (16%-18%-13%-8%). The most popular zip codes in Round Rock for workers to be employed were 78664 (25%) and 78681 (14%), compared with 78759 (7%), 78758 (5%), and 78750 (3%) being the most frequent Austin employment zip codes. Other zip codes, which represented 22% of the out-of-town workers, were no higher than the 78728 (4%) and 78729, 78626, and 78727 each with 2% of that subset. (See Questions 4 – 7.)

- **Dining out for a special occasion (67%), going out with friends (62%), enjoying nature (60%), and participating in my favorite recreational sport or activity (52%) were the activities that scored the highest incidence of “in city” participation. Of the 12 activities tested, those most likely to occur outside the city were attending a special event like a festival, craft show, or specialty convention (48% “outside city”), listening to a band or a concert (47%), and attending a cultural event like a play or go to the theater (46%). In terms of don’t participate, percentages were highest relative to participating in my child’s favorite recreational sport or activity (47%), participate in a service organization (44%), or hiking on a trail (40%).** Participating within the city varied significantly based on where the respondent lived, at least for nine of the 12 activities tested. The differences were most dramatic relative to participating in their child’s favorite recreational sport or activity (44% in the Southeast, to 19% in the Southwest, -25), attending their favorite sporting event (49% in the Southwest, to 30% in the Northeast, -19), going to church or worship service (54% in the Southwest, to 37% in the Southeast, -17), and enjoying nature (65% in the Northwest, to 49% in the Southwest). In terms of in-city ratings, the Southwest had the highest percentage of residents who attended a cultural event like a play or go to the theater, go to church or worship service, listen to a band or a concert, attend their favorite sporting event, dine out for a special occasion, or attend a special event like a festival, craft show, or specialty convention. Comparatively, the Southeast had the highest level of people who participated in their favorite recreational sport or

activity, their children's favorite recreational sport or activity, and hiking on a trail, while The Northwest had the highest frequency of participating in a service organization, enjoying nature, or going out with friends. (See Question 9.)

- **A place to raise children (93%-4%, 23.3:1), safe streets and neighborhoods (92%-8%, 11.5:1), a city in which I can generally find what I wish to purchase (84%-15%, 5.6:1), a place to be a teenager (71%-13%, 5.5:1), and a strong sense of community (82%-17%, 4.8:1)** were the characteristics of Round Rock graded most positively by survey participants, based on each receiving the highest ratios of positive to negative comments. Of the 15 themes tested, those graded lowest were the level of traffic congestion (32%-67%, 0.5:1), neighborhoods have interesting and unique historic or architectural character (47%-47%, 1.0:1), a place to be single (34%-32%, 1.1:1), and natural scenic beauty (62%-36%, 1.4:1). From the perspective of excellent ratings, residents were most proud in their evaluation of the city being a place to raise children (57%), having safe streets and neighborhoods (45%), strong sense of community (32%), and walkable streets and a city in which I can generally find what I wish to purchase (both 32%). Nearly nine of ten residents citywide were positive about the city as being a place to raise children (93%-89%-96%-95%) and having safe streets and neighborhoods (89%-90%-94%-95%). However, other statements were evaluated differently based on geographic influences. For example, residents in the Northeast assigned a much higher grade to Round Rock being a place to retire (84%, to 63% in the Southwest), but not necessarily a place to be a teenager (62%, to 82% in the Northwest). Other prominent variances included the Northwest being more positive about the city's strong sense of community (85%, to 72% in the Southeast), the Northeast being more complimentary of the its natural scenic beauty (70%, to 54% in the Southwest), and the Northwest being more positive about Round Rock's variety of housing options (84%, to 70% in Area IV). Additionally, the two eastern subsectors were more positive regarding the level of traffic congestion (both 39%) then elsewhere, and especially the Southwest (24%). Three other statements varied by between 10 and 13 percent. (See Question 10.)

Attitudes About Improving The City

- **I believe Round Rock needs more good paying job opportunities (80%-12%, 6.7:1), more locally-owned businesses (76%-19%, 4.0:1), more**

gathering places like cafes, plazas, live performance areas, outdoor markets, and street fairs (75%-23%, 3.3:1), and more small, neighborhood-oriented businesses like drug stores, grocery stores, and restaurants (65%-33%, 3.0:1) were the statements about various business and recreational features of the city that generated the highest ratios of agreement to disagreement from survey participants. Comparatively, statements that tended to be called into question by residents were the city needing more nightlife, including bars, nightclubs, and music venues (43%-47%, 0.9:1), more retail businesses (48%-49%, 1.0:1), and more restaurants (52%-46%, 1.1:1), although there was some degree of interest. The statements that generated the most excitement from city residents focused on more good paying job opportunities (25%), art and cultural venues, such as a symphony, ballet, theater and museum and gathering places like cafes, plazas, live performance areas, outdoor markets, and street fairs (both 23%), and trail system and parks for running, cycling, roller blading and hiking (21%). When comparing the findings by subsector, several differences were evident. One was the higher level of agreement in the eastern half of the city for more art and cultural venues (76% and 75%, to 65% and 60%), compared to the western half being more attuned to Round Rock needing more good paying job opportunities (85% and 80%, to 77% and 77%). Residents in the Northeast and Southwest viewed several needs differently, with the Northeast being more agreeable to Round Rock needing more small, neighborhood-oriented businesses (78%, to 54%), gathering places (79%, to 65%), and restaurants (60%, to 48%). The Southeast was also the area least likely to agree that the city needed more variety of goods and services (60%, to 74% in the Southeast). Everywhere but in the Northeast, the top rated statement was more good paying job opportunities. Comparatively, they were most agreeable to the city needing more locally-owned businesses. (See Question 11.)

- **Clothing/shoes and furniture/specialty bedding (both 13%), along with car/motorcycle/auto-related items (11%), hardware/plumbing/paint (7%), and specialty groceries/organic/health, computer/computer-related, and household items/drapes/faucets (both 6%) were the types of items most frequently listed as being unable to be purchased because of not being available in Round Rock. A list of 17 types of goods were listed as being unable to be purchased, among them electronics (5%), lawn/garden supplies (4%), fabric/sewing supplies (3%), and guns (2%).** Less than one-half of respondents sampled responded to this question (N=192), indicating that a significant portion of the sample were unable to list a particular good that they were unable to purchase in Round Rock. In addition, the limited number of respondents hinders the statistical reliability of the findings when viewed

by some of the subset results. Women were more frequently unable to purchase clothing/shoes (19%-6%), furniture/specialty bedding (16%-9%), and specialty groceries/organic/health (10%-3%), compared with men saying they couldn't buy car/motorcycle/auto-related items (15%-6%), hardware/plumbing/paint (10%-4%), computer/computer-related (9%-2%), or electronics (9%-1%). (See Question 12.)

- **Round Rock residents were slightly more positive about the appearance of city neighborhoods as a whole (89%-8%, 11.1:1) than their neighborhood (88-11%, 8.0:1). However, what stood out was the level of pride people had for the appearance of their neighborhood when compared with city neighborhoods as a whole (37%-22%).** Intensity ratings for neighborhood appearance were much higher in the eastern portion of the city (48% and 42%) than the western half (35%-22%), with Northeast and Southwest residents expressing the two most contrasting viewpoints. The overall variance was not as great, from 91% in the Northwest to 82% in the Southwest. Individuals in the Southwest were also least passionate about the appearance of city neighborhoods as a whole (11%), eighteen points less than the high, 29% in the Northeast. The other two percentages were 22% (Southeast) and 23% (Northwest). (See Question 13.)

- **Sense of community/good neighbors/family-oriented (17%) and big/lots of trees/mature and well kept/landscaped/appearance (both 13%), and quiet/peaceful (12%) were the most appealing qualities of one's neighborhood or subdivision, as these responses generated the highest frequency among respondents. In a follow-up open-ended question, unkempt/run-down/trashy (16%), too much traffic (12%), and streets needing repair/widening/clean, unfriendly/bad neighbors/people/unsupervised youth, and rentals/apartments/low income housing (each 6%) were most frequently described as their neighborhoods least appealing quality. Overall, 15 positive and 18 negative comments were generated relative to one's neighborhood.** Sense of community was an overriding theme in the Northwest, as more than one in four (28%) mentioned it. It was also very popular in the other northern sector, with a 19%. In the Southeast and Southwest, just 9% and 10%, respectively, offered this comment. The number one quality to people in the Southeast was well kept/landscaped (19%), while in the Southwest, it was close to everything/convenient (16%). Among the more popular qualities, variances revolved around well-kept/landscaped (19% in the Southeast, to 7% in the Southwest), quiet/peaceful (17% in the Northwest, to 6% in the Northeast), close to everything/convenient (16% in the Southwest, to 5% in the Northeast), safe (13% in Southwest, to 3% in the Southeast), and

parks/pool/greenbelt (15% in Southeast, to 2% in the Southwest). Regarding the negative qualities, the southern half of the city most often criticized neighborhoods for unkempt/rundown/trashy (21% and 19%), compared to percentages of 11% and 15% in the northern subsectors. The western half more often mentioned too much traffic as being unappealing (14% and 13%, to 11% and 9%), while the eastern subsectors more frequently complained about unfriendly/bad neighbors (8% and 10%, to 2% and 4%). (See Questions 14 and 15.)

- **Sixty five percent of residents sampled agreed, including 31% intensely, that specific areas for new development in which residential and neighborhood commercial uses are mixed together in the same building, or block so that it's easy to walk or bicycle to shop for everyday needs was a type of development that was a good item for Round Rock. Comparatively, 31% called this concept into question, including 10% who strongly disputed this type of development. The ratio of agreement to disagreement was 2.1 to one, with it being higher in terms of intense comments (3.1:1). However, in a follow-up question, respondents were hesitant to live in this type of development with more being unlikely (50%) than likely (47%). And in comparing intensity ratings, (25%-22%), very likely ratings were only three points higher, not a show of enthusiasm. In terms of the concept, the Northeast was most enthusiastic about it (40%), followed by people in the Southeast (32%), Northwest (29%), and Southwest (22%). Additionally, the findings showed people in the eastern half of the city more pro this type of development (71% and 69%) than their neighbors in the west (62% and 63%), although percentages did not vary significantly. Regarding the follow-up question, the only part of the city in which a majority said they would likely live in this type of development was the Northeast (51%-46%). Comparatively, residents in the Northwest (48%-49%) and Southwest (46%-48%) were split in their likelihood, while in the Southeast (44%-56%), more would be unlikely. (See Questions 16 and 17.)**
- **Historic, older properties are a significant benefit to the city (90%-7%, 12.9:1) and the city should use city ordinances and regulations to encourage historic preservation and maintenance (87%-10%, 8.7:1) were the statements about older, historic buildings in Round Rock that generated the highest ratios of agreement to disagreement. Of the five statements tested, the only other one to achieve majority agreement was that the city should provide tax dollars to assist property owners with maintaining historic properties (54%-37%), although a significant percentage of residents called this statement into question. The other two items, both anti-historic properties, were strongly disputed. Less than one in five agreed that we don't need ordinances and regulations**

to preserve historic properties (18%-78%, 0.2:1), with similar levels disputing that it's all right to remove historic properties if the site can be redeveloped more profitably (12%-79%, 0.2:1). In terms of intensity ratings, residents were most passionate that historic, older properties are a significant benefit to the city (47%) and that the city should use city ordinances and regulations to encourage historic preservation and maintenance (37%). After that, only 1% strongly agreed that we don't need ordinances to preserve historic properties or that it's all right to remove historic properties if the site can be redeveloped more profitably, compared with 17% and 25% who strongly disputed them. The final statement, that the city should provide tax dollars to assist property owners with maintaining historic properties generated very little in the way of intensity ratings, either positively or negatively (8%-5%). The Northeast subsector was the only part of the city clearly pro the city providing tax dollars to assist property owners (64%), as percentages elsewhere were 54% (Southwest) or 51% (Southeast and Northwest). There was very little difference within the city relative to the two popular statements of historic properties being a significant benefit (91% of Northeast, to 88% of Southeast and Northwest) and the city should use ordinances and regulations to encourage historic preservation (88% in Northeast, to 84% in Southeast). (See Question 18.)

- **Change city ordinances to encourage developers to make their subdivisions more bicycle and pedestrian oriented (90%-7%, 12.9:1), adopt ordinances to encourage water conservation (82%-14%, 5.9:1), and spend public money to build sidewalks and other types of multi-use trails in neighborhoods that don't have them (80%-17%, 4.7:1) were the conservation measures in Round Rock that generated the highest support for implementing, based on ratios of support to opposition. The two remaining measures tested were also popularly supported, but at lower ratios of three to one, for spending public funds to purchase open space to protect habitat and open space even if not for recreational use (70%-23%) or changing city ordinances to allow for wind turbines on appropriately sized private property (69%-23%).** Twenty-nine percent strongly supported changing city ordinances to encourage developers to make subdivisions more bicycle and pedestrian oriented, making it tops in both ratio and intensity rankings. Interestingly, wind turbines generated the second highest strong support rating, at 29%, indicating a constituency above and beyond what the general community thought of this item. Spending public money to build sidewalks and other types of multi-use trails in neighborhoods that didn't have them was a more popular concept in the northern part of the city, as percentages were 81% and 86%, compared with 75% and 76% in the two southern quadrants. The same was true relative to the wind

turbine statement (70% and 72%, to 67% and 66%). It should also be noted that the concept of spending public funds to purchase open space was deemed to be more beneficial by people in the eastern part of the city (79% and 76%) than the west (67% and 56%), and especially when compared with respondents from the Southwest. (See Question 19.)

- **Decreasing traffic congestion throughout the city (92%-6%, 15.3:1) was overwhelmingly the most important major planning challenge facing Round Rock in which residents felt the city should seek solutions, based on this statement garnering the highest ratio of important to unimportant ratings. The next most important issues for which respondents felt the city should seek solutions were providing alternative modes of transportation to increase travel options (81%-18%, 4.5:1) and creating a stronger identity or sense of community (77%-18%, 4.3:1). The four remaining issues were all graded more important than unimportant in terms of the city seeking solutions, but to less of a degree than the prior ones. Of least importance was requiring higher quality designs for commercial buildings (61%-31%, 2.1:1), followed by creating more outdoor public space such as plazas or parks (74%-23%, 3.4:1), creating a more walkable city (76%-21%, 3.6:1), and upgrading street appearances with items such as trees, benches or lighting (77%-20%, 3.9:1). Decreasing traffic congestion throughout the city (58%), providing alternative modes of transportation (40%), and creating a more walkable city (27%) were the top three issues in terms of intensity ratings. Nine of ten residents, regardless of where they lived, felt it was important for the city to seek solutions to decreasing traffic congestion throughout the city (93% and 90% in the east, to 92% and 95% in the west). Two statements generated different levels of importance, as the Northeast assigned a greater level of importance to providing alternative modes of transportation to increase travel options (89%, to 76% in the Southeast) and the Northwest residents, to requiring higher quality designs for commercial buildings (69%, to 52% in the Southwest). (See Question 20.)**

- **Retail-related/more/small shops/better/locally owned (28%), more/improved parking (13%), and preservation/maintenance of buildings (10%) were the most popular suggestions made by respondents in an open-ended format to positively affect downtown Round Rock over the next ten years. Secondary suggestions included more festivals/entertainment/events and less traffic/public transportation (both 8%) and pedestrian/bicycle friendly (7%), and beautification/green space/trees and more restaurants (both 6%). Retail-related suggestions were more popular in the western subsectors,**

with percentages of 36% and 30%, compared to 19% in the Northeast and 22% in the Southeast. And more/improved parking was a more frequent comment among individuals in the Southwest (21%, to 11% in the Northeast), as too less traffic/public transportation (12%, to 6% in the Northwest). Preservation/maintenance of buildings was most popular in the northern sectors (11% and 10%) then in the south (5% and 9%), especially the Southeast). One other suggestion more popular in the Southeast than elsewhere was being pedestrian/bicycle friendly (12%, to 2% in the Northwest). (See Question 21.)

- **More special events (79%-17%, 4.7:1), wider variety of shopping opportunities (77%-20%, 3.9:1), and more restaurants (73%-25%, 2.9:1) were the most popularly accepted recommendations among the eight tested for increasing visitation to downtown Round Rock, based on these receiving the highest ratios of agreement to disagreement. Comparatively, respondents were less likely to agree with the following recommendations: more directional signage (33%-61%, 0.5:1); construction of multi-use developments, with retail on the ground floor and housing on the second floor (46%-49%, 0.9:1); and more late night entertainment venues (54%-40%, 1.4:1).** Three recommendations captured the attention of respondents: restaurants (31%), ranked lower in terms of its overall ratio; wider variety of shopping opportunities (30%); and more parking areas (29%), another item lower on the overall priority ranking. Ratings varied relative to several of the recommendations, namely more restaurants (78% in Northeast, to 65% in Southeast), construction of multi-use developments (52% in Southwest, to 35% in Northwest), more gathering places, such as plazas (75% in Northeast, to 62% in Southwest), and more special events (88% in Northeast, to 74% in the Southwest). Five of the eight options garnered their highest rating in the Northeast. What was not was more parking (Southeast), shopping opportunities (Northwest), and multi-use developments (Southwest). (See Question 22.)
- **Sixty-three percent of respondents planned to live in Round Rock more than ten years, At the bottom end of the response scale, one in ten planned on 0-3 more years. In a follow-up question, likes Round Rock/happy (19%), live here till I die/no plans to move (18%), and retirement (10%) were the most frequent reasons given by residents for choosing that period of time. Secondary reasons included business/job factor (7%), kids in school/raising kids/family oriented and kids will have graduated/downsize to smaller home (both 5%), and owns home/buying home and family/friends live here (both 4%).** Residents in the Northeast portion of the city appeared to be more temporary than others in terms of how long they planned on living in Round Rock. They

had the highest under 5 years (32%, to 13% in Northwest and Southwest), as well as the lowest more than 10 years (49%, to 68% in Northwest) levels. Those planning on living in Round Rock for the longest period of time were retired people (77%), more so than people employed (61%) or not employed (54%). As to why they chose that period of time, the range of certain responses was interesting. For example, living here till they die/no plans to move, the low was 7% for people in the Northeast, compared to a high of 27% in the Southwest. And liking Round Rock/happy was a more popular position in the Northwest (23%), compared to 14% in the Northeast and 16% in the Southeast). Retirement was a more popular comment from the Southwest (15%, to 7% in the Northeast) and business/job factor in the Southeast (11%, to 2% in the Southwest). (See Questions 23 and 24.)