

THE HILL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Updated February 8, 2021

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The City of Sugar Land published a community survey to measure the extent of support for or opposition to proposed design standards for The Hill neighborhood. The proposed design standards were developed in response to community input and feedback. The survey was published to the neighborhood through a letter and paper copy of the survey sent to each property owner, as well as door hangers and an additional reminder postcard. A virtual community meeting was held via Zoom on Wednesday, November 18, 2020; the City and consultant reviewed some of the concepts included in the survey, encouraged property owners to participate, and answered questions. The survey was also available on SurveyMonkey.com for property owners who wanted to respond online, and all responses submitted on paper were entered into SurveyMonkey for tabulation. This report contains a high-level summary of results.

RESPONDENTS

We received 79 responses to the survey. Four respondents did not include a UID.

- One respondent began the survey but did not answer any questions.
- One property owner provided their nine-digit ZIP code instead of the UID, but we were able to cross-reference their UID with the property street address they provided later in the survey, and match that with the owner's ZIP code provided, so we considered that sufficient verification and included this response in our analysis.
- One household appeared to have submitted two responses, which was not allowed, and we deleted the duplicate response (which also did not provide the UID).
- One respondent did not provide either a UID or a street address, and as we were therefore unable to verify the identity of the respondent, we did not include their response in our analysis. We did provide their comments to the City in a separate document.

That left 76 verified responses, or 38% of the 200 properties in The Hill. Statistically, that results in a 95% confidence level with an 8.9% margin of error, meaning that we can be sure that 95% of respondents would answer the same way our respondents did, at least 86% of the time.

Respondents who answered demographic questions generally:

- Were resident-owners (72% of 76 respondents)
- Have owned their property in The Hill for more than 10 years (61% of 71 respondents)
- Were 55 years of age or older (76% of 72 respondents)
- Reported owning a single property in The Hill (88% of 67 respondents)

CONCLUSIONS

All of the questions in this survey asked respondents to “indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement” using a seven-point Likert scale including the options Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. (We also included No Answer.) Using the survey data exported from SurveyMonkey, we created bar graphs showing the directionality of answers overall, which are shown on the following pages. Where needed, we also grouped all of the Agree answers vs. all of the Disagree answers, for clarity.

In summary, respondents mostly agreed with the following statements:

Q2. “The spacious feeling of The Hill neighborhood is important to preserve.”

Q3. “Limiting the width of a new house or an addition to an existing house, based on the width of its lot, is a good idea.”

Q4. “I am willing to limit the width of new construction and additions to existing houses using the proposed BTLW of 0.46.”

Q5. “Measuring the building width at the widest point in the BTLW Measurement Zone, as described above, is appropriate.”

Q9. “I am willing to limit existing houses plus additions or new construction to a Floor-to-Area Ratio (FAR) of no more than 0.45 for a two-story house.”

Q12. “I am willing to increase the mandatory 15-foot setback for garages to 25 feet (from the front façade of the house).”

Q15. “I am willing to require a minimum and maximum roof pitch for new construction.”

Q16. “I am willing to require garages to have a roof pitch equal to or less than the roof pitch of the house, as long as it meets other design standards for roof pitch.”

Q18. “I am willing to require that at least one mature tree be preserved during the construction of new houses or additions.”

Q23. “I am willing to require all new houses to have a covered front porch.”

Q24. “I am willing to require new front porches to be a minimum of 6 feet deep.”

Q25. “I am willing to require new houses in The Hill to have walkways between the front porch or front door and the street.”

Q26. “I am willing to limit exterior materials on new houses, additions, and garages in The Hill to horizontal siding and/or brick.”

Q27. “I am willing to limit exterior wall cladding materials to no more than two different materials on a single house.”

Q28. “I am willing to limit horizontal siding to either wood or fiber-cement (e.g., Hardieplank).”

Q29. “I am willing to prohibit fences in front of houses in The Hill.”

Respondents mostly disagreed with the following statements:

Q6. "I am willing to limit new home construction to one story."

Respondents were split fairly evenly on the following statements:

Q7. "I am willing to limit new home construction to one-and-a-half stories."

Q8. "I am willing to limit total square footage for existing houses plus new two-story additions or any new two-story construction to 3,000 square feet, not including detached garages (with or without living space above)."

Q17. "I am willing to require property owners to obtain a permit, which may require a report from a certified Master Arborist, before they remove a tree of a certain size."

Q21. "I am willing to require property owners to replace mature trees if removed (measuring at least 8-inch caliper) on a 1-to-1 basis, based on caliper inches, with replacement trees measuring at least 4-inch caliper."

More respondents agreed than disagreed with the following statements.

Q11. "I am willing to limit additions and garages to the same number of stories as the house."

Q13. "I am willing to require one-story additions to be set back at least 25 feet from the front façade of the house."

Q14. "I am willing to require two-story additions to be set back at least 25 feet from the front façade of the house."

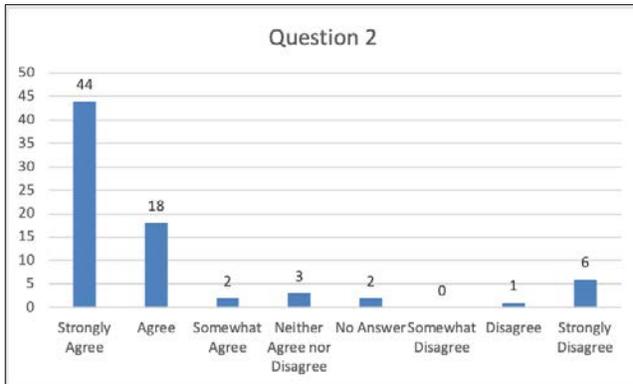
Q19. "I am willing to require more than one mature tree be preserved during the construction of new houses or additions."

Q20. "I am willing to require that property owners submit a tree survey and tree relocation or replacement plan as part of the demolition permit."

The ranking questions (10, 22, and 29) supported these conclusions.

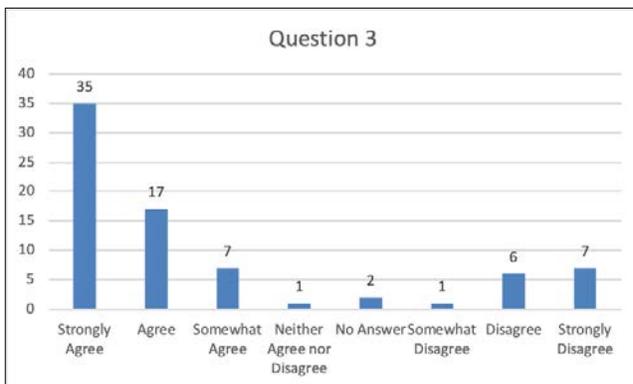
QUESTION 2

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“The spacious feeling of The Hill neighborhood is important to preserve.”



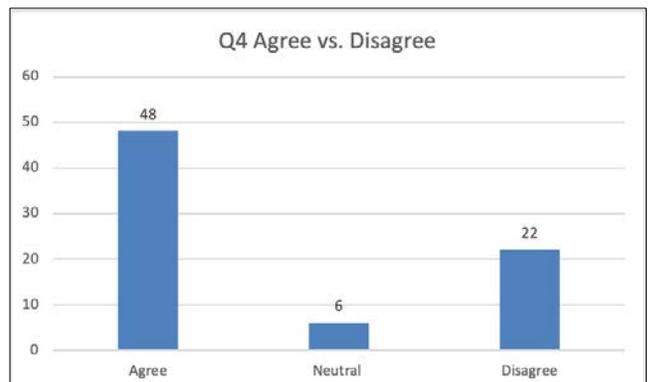
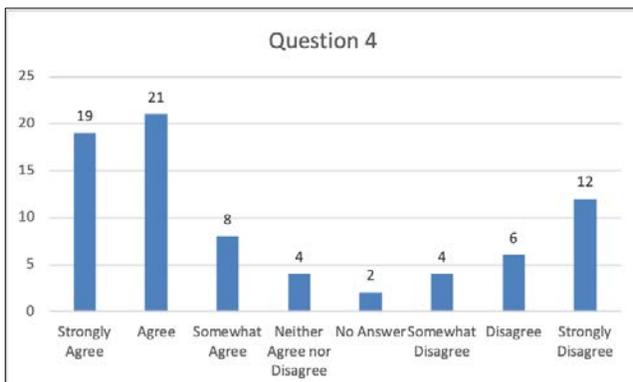
QUESTION 3

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“Limiting the width of a new house or an addition to an existing house, based on the width of its lot, is a good idea.”

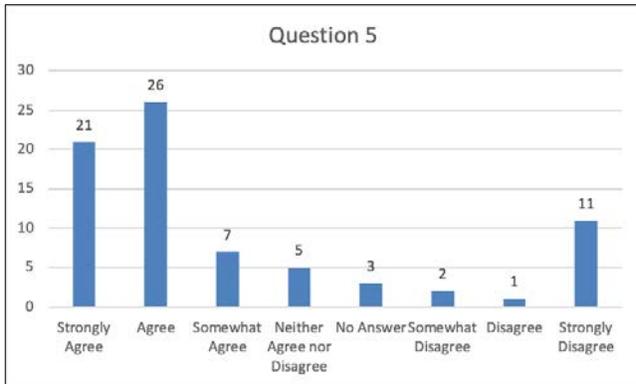


QUESTION 4

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“I am willing to limit the width of new construction and additions to existing houses using the proposed BTLW of 0.46.”

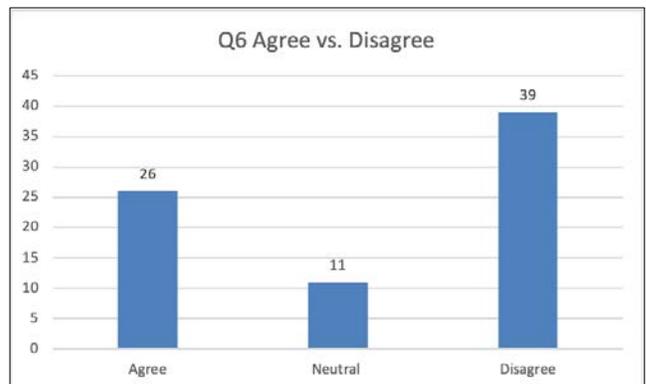
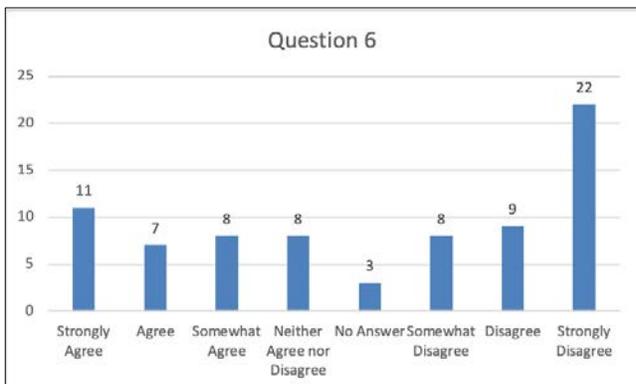


QUESTION 5. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“Measuring the building width at the widest point in the BTLW Measurement Zone, as described above, is appropriate.”



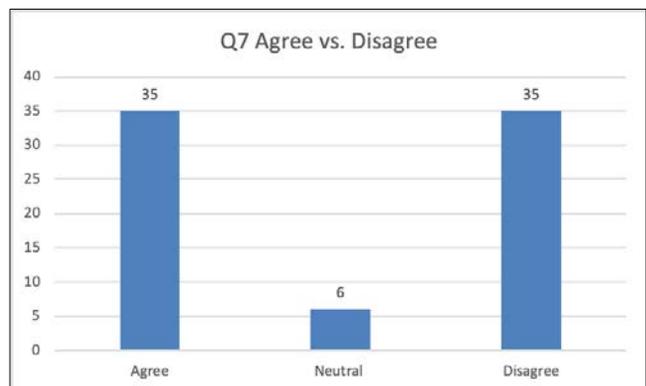
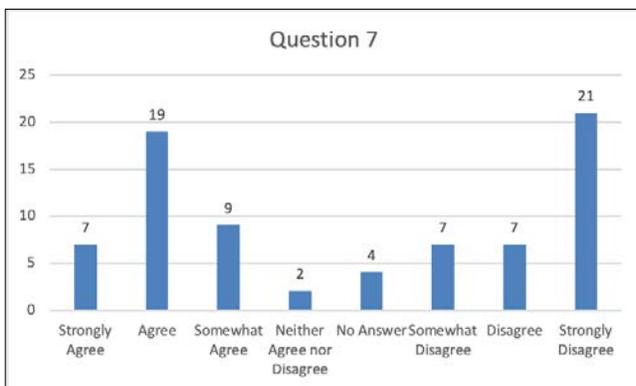
QUESTION 6

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“I am willing to limit new home construction to one story.”



QUESTION 7

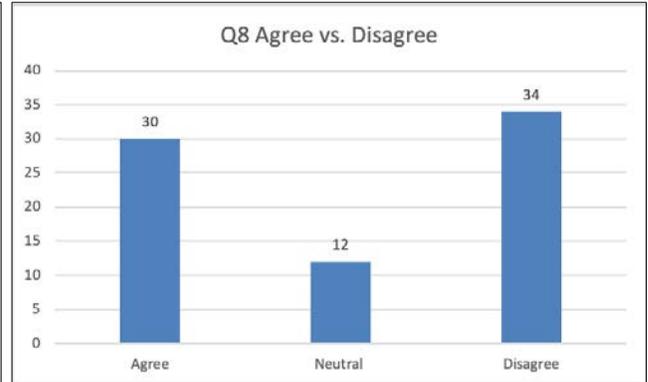
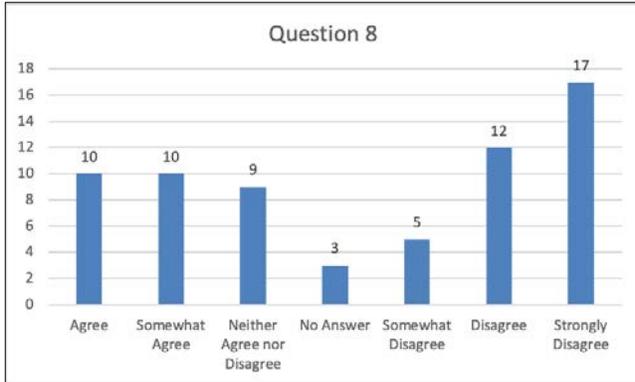
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“I am willing to limit new home construction to one-and-a-half stories.”



QUESTION 8

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

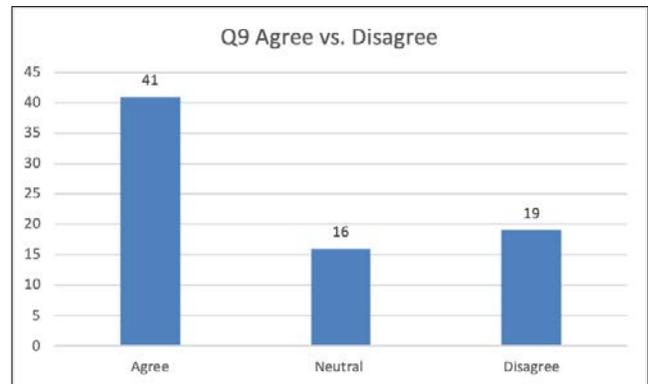
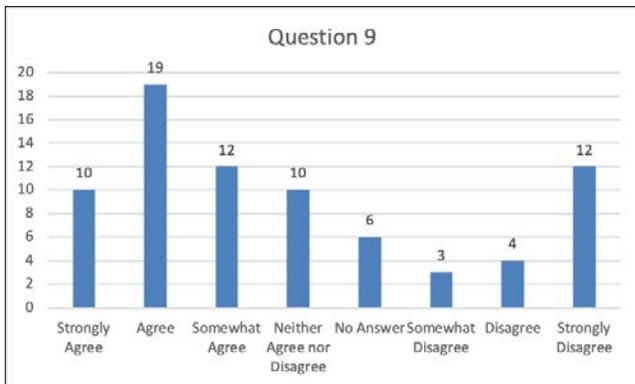
“I am willing to limit total square footage for existing houses plus new two-story additions or any new two-story construction to 3,000 square feet, not including detached garages (with or without living space above).”



QUESTION 9

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

“I am willing to limit existing houses plus additions or new construction to a Floor-to-Area Ratio (FAR) of no more than 0.45 for a two-story house.”



QUESTION 10

Please rank these options for either new construction or existing houses with additions, with 1 being your most preferred and 4 being your least preferred.

The options were:

- Limit building size to one story.
- Limit building size to no more than 1-1/2 stories.
- Limit building size to no more than 3,000 square feet.
- Limit building size to no more than 0.45 FAR.

The initial analysis (below) shows a preference for the 0.45 FAR rather than the 3,000-square-foot limit.

| | 1 story | 1 ½ stories | 3000 sq ft | 0.45 FAR |
|---------------|---------|-------------|------------|----------|
| #1 preference | 11 | 17 | 8 | 24 |
| #2 preference | 6 | 17 | 19 | 12 |
| #3 preference | 9 | 17 | 14 | 13 |
| #4 preference | 32 | 4 | 13 | 8 |

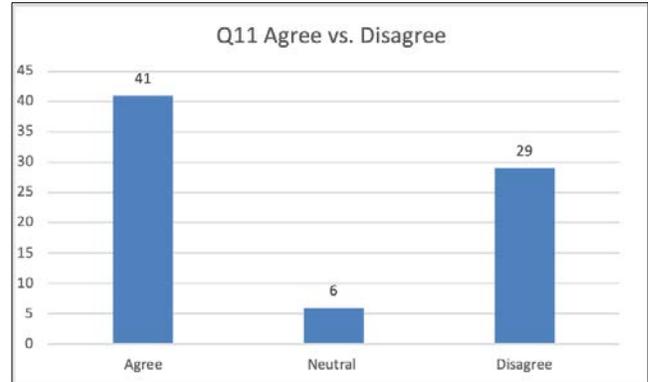
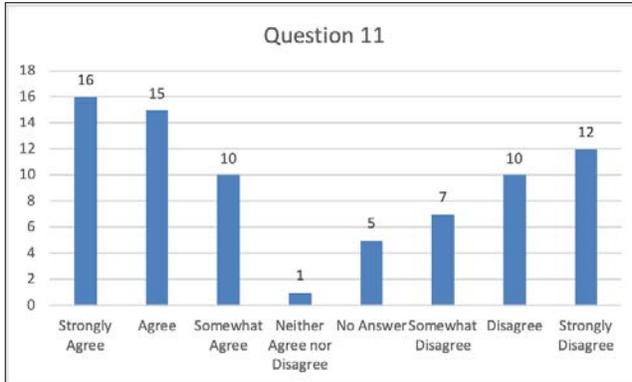
When we combine the 1 and 2 rankings (below), we can see a clear rejection of the one-story limit. The 1-1/2 story option was slightly preferred overall, although the even distribution of 1, 2, and 3 rankings (17 of each, as shown above) does not provide clear guidance. Similarly, the respondents were equally split about the 3,000-square-foot limit (as shown below). They again showed a slight preference for the 0.45 FAR option.

| | 1 story | 1 ½ stories | 3000 sq ft | 0.45 FAR |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| #1 or #2 preference | (11+6) = 17 | (17+17) = 34 | (8+19) = 27 | (24+12) = 36 |
| #3 or #4 preference | (9+32) = 41 | (17+4) = 21 | (14+13) = 27 | (13+8) = 21 |

QUESTION 11

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

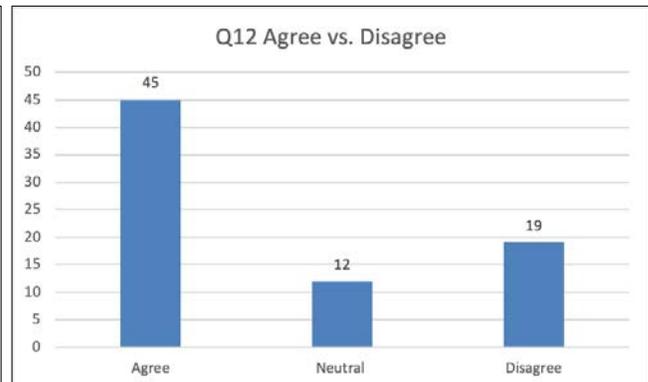
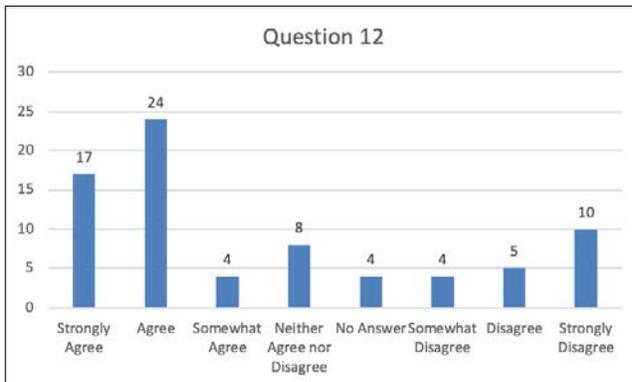
“I am willing to limit additions and garages to the same number of stories as the house.”



QUESTION 12

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

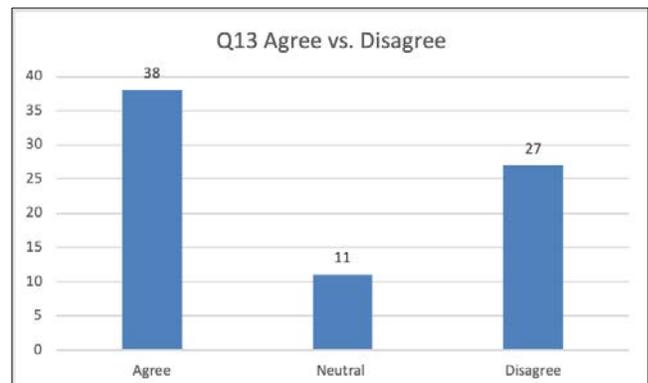
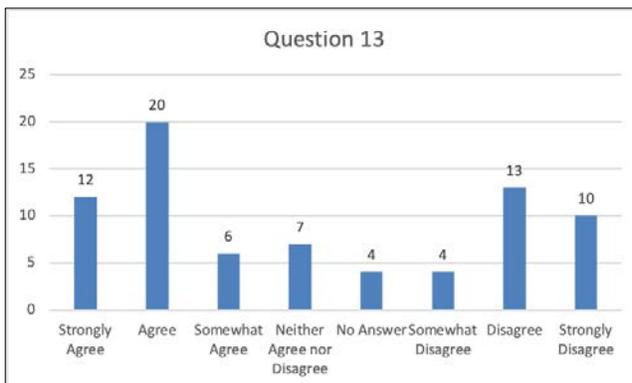
“I am willing to increase the mandatory 15-foot setback for garages to 25 feet (from the front façade of the house).”



QUESTION 13

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

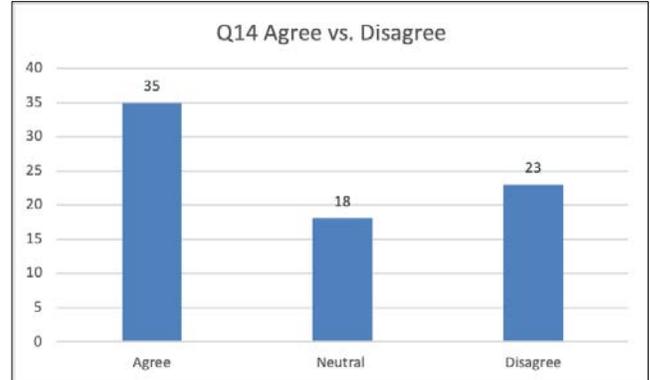
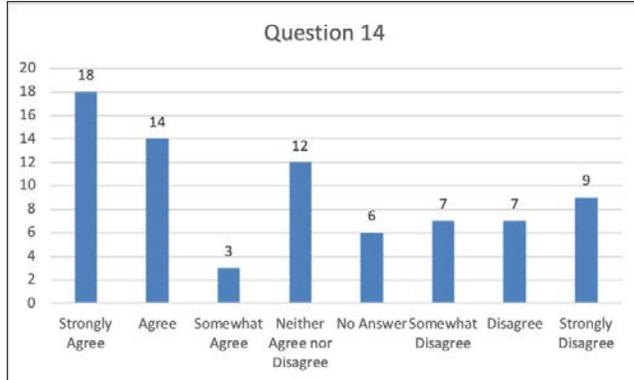
“I am willing to require one-story additions to be set back at least 25 feet from the front façade of the house.”



QUESTION 14

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

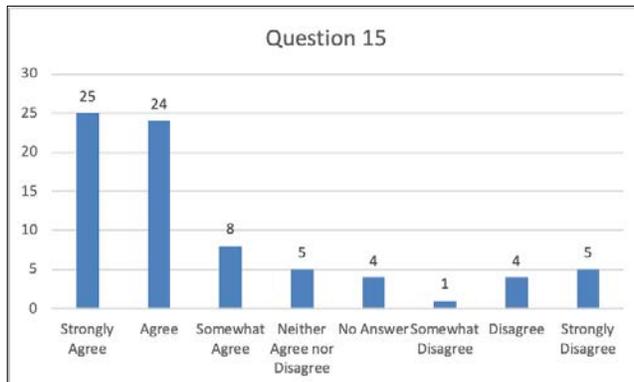
“I am willing to require two-story additions to be set back at least 25 feet from the front façade of the house.”



QUESTION 15

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

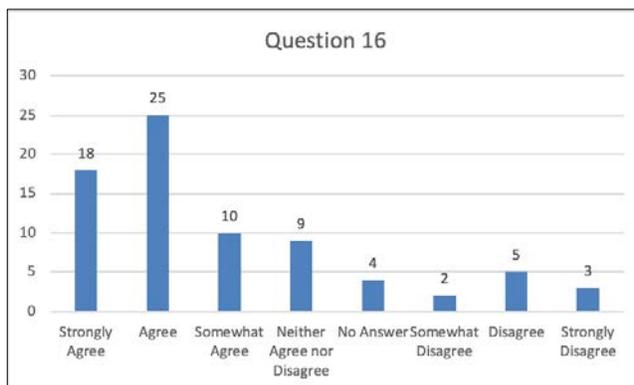
“I am willing to require a minimum and maximum roof pitch for new construction.”



QUESTION 16

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

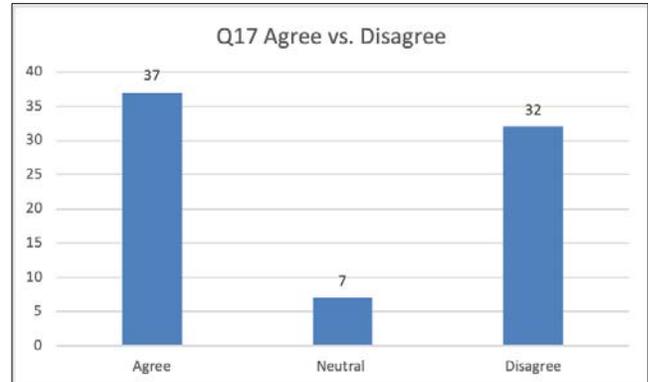
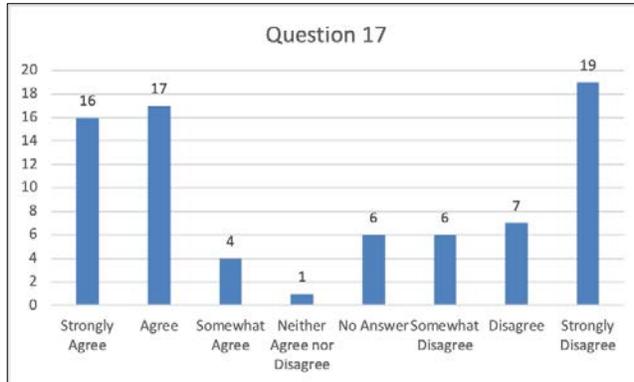
“I am willing to require garages to have a roof pitch equal to or less than the roof pitch of the house, as long as it meets other design standards for roof pitch.”



QUESTION 17

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

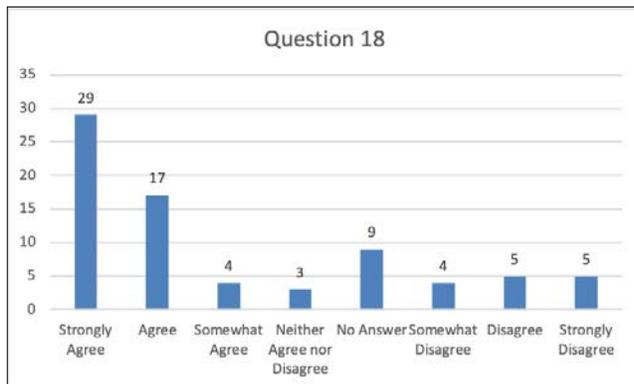
“I am willing to require property owners to obtain a permit, which may require a report from a certified Master Arborist, before they remove a tree of a certain size.”



QUESTION 18

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

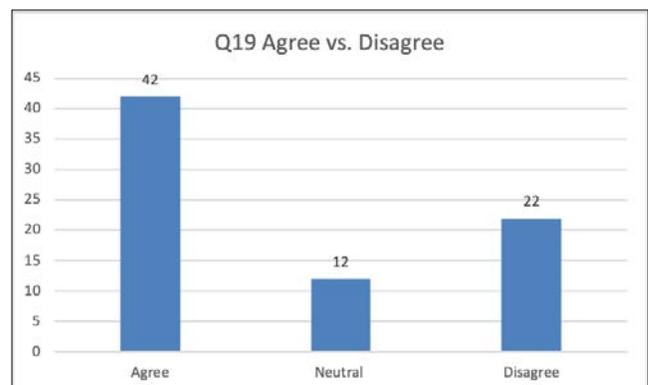
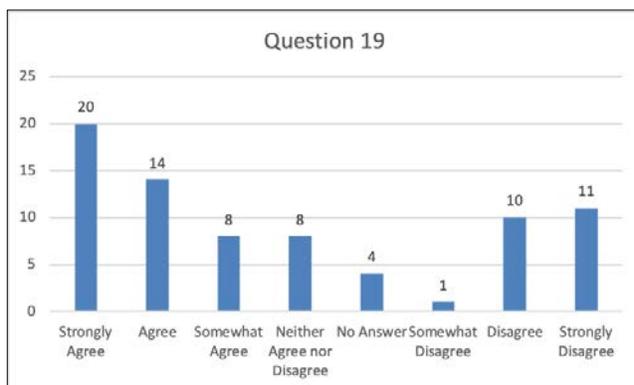
“I am willing to require that at least one mature tree be preserved during the construction of new houses or additions.”



QUESTION 19

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

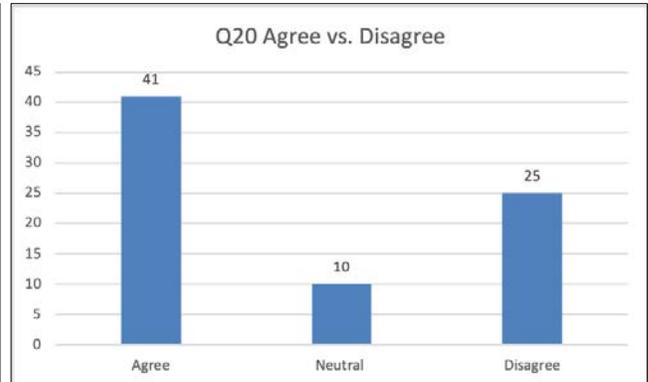
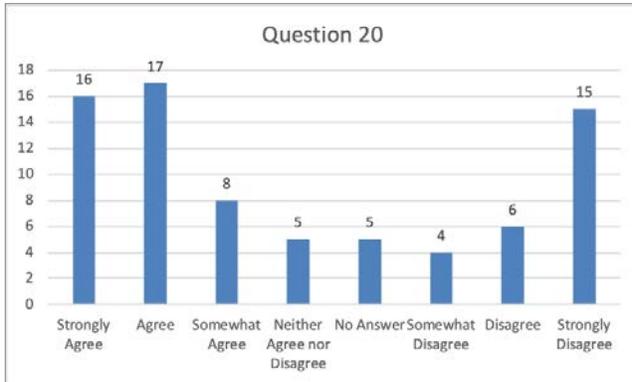
“I am willing to require more than one mature tree be preserved during the construction of new houses or additions.”



QUESTION 20

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

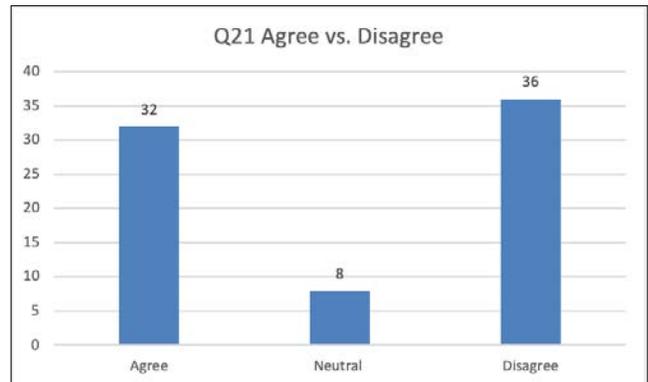
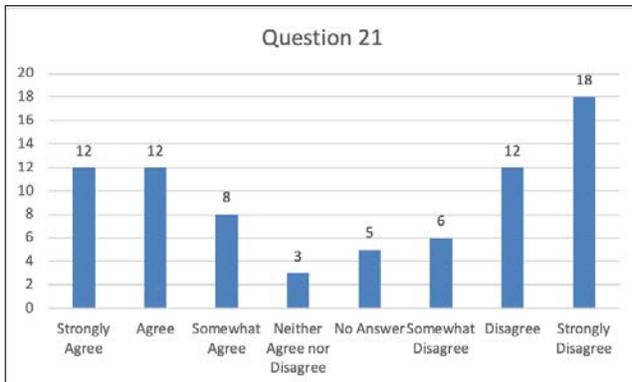
“I am willing to require that property owners submit a tree survey and tree relocation or replacement plan as part of the demolition permit.”



QUESTION 21

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

“I am willing to require property owners to replace mature trees if removed (measuring at least 8-inch caliper) on a 1-to-1 basis, based on caliper inches, with replacement trees measuring at least 4-inch caliper.”



QUESTION 22

Please rank these options for preserving mature trees in the neighborhood, with 1 being your most preferred and 4 being your least preferred.

The options were:

- Require a permit before removing trees of a certain size.
- Require construction projects to preserve at least one mature tree, preferably in the front yard.
- Require property owners to submit a tree survey and tree replanting plan as part of the demolition permit.
- Require property owners to replace any trees measuring at least 8-inch caliper on a 1-to-1 basis, based on caliper inches, with new trees measuring at least 4-inch caliper.

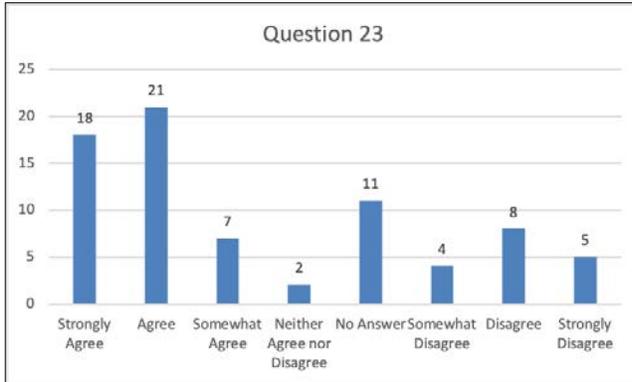
As before, we looked at the ranked preferences for each of these options. The respondents showed a clear preference for requiring property owners to preserve at least one mature tree during construction projects, but definitely not for requiring them to replace mature trees removed during construction on a 1-to-1 caliper-inch basis. Respondents were split on whether or not to require a tree permit or require owners to preserve more than one tree.

| | Require tree permit | Preserve at least 1 tree | Preserve more than 1 tree | Replace large trees |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| #1 preference | 13 | 29 | 10 | 5 |
| #2 preference | 19 | 14 | 14 | 6 |
| #3 preference | 13 | 8 | 19 | 13 |
| #4 preference | 13 | 6 | 10 | 31 |

| | Require tree permit | Preserve at least 1 tree | Preserve more than 1 tree | Replace large trees |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| #1 or #2 preference | (13+19) = 32 | (29+14) = 43 | (10+14) = 24 | (5+6) = 11 |
| #3 or #4 preference | (13+13) = 26 | (8+6) = 14 | (19+10) = 29 | (13+31) = 44 |

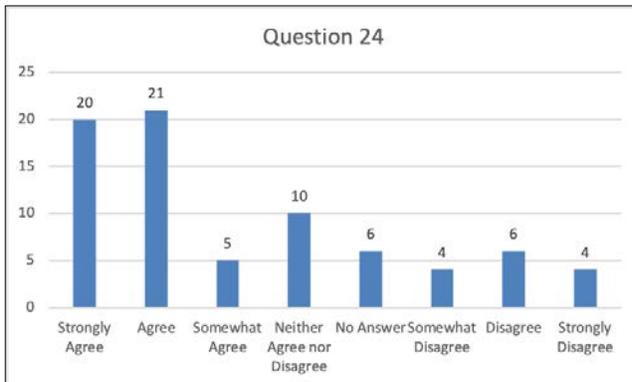
QUESTION 23

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“I am willing to require all new houses to have a covered front porch.”



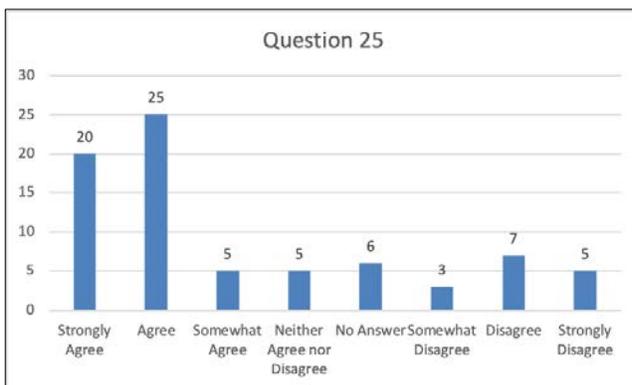
QUESTION 24

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“I am willing to require new front porches to be a minimum of 6 feet deep.”



QUESTION 25

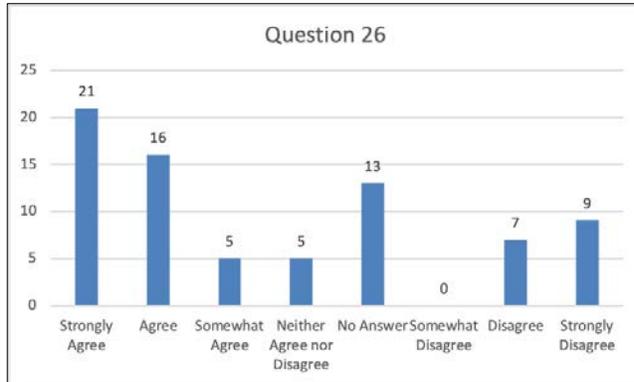
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“I am willing to require new houses in The Hill to have walkways between the front porch or front door and the street.”



QUESTION 26

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

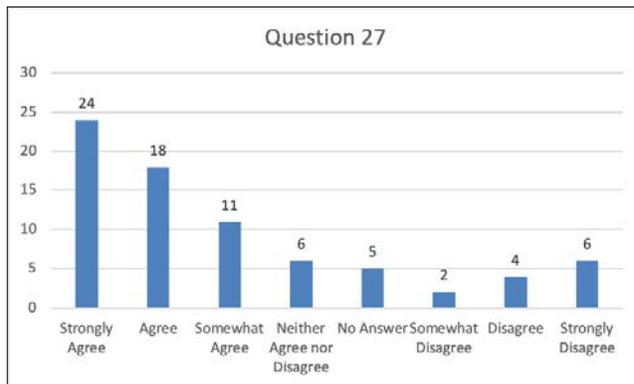
“I am willing to limit exterior materials on new houses, additions, and garages in The Hill to horizontal siding and/or brick.”



QUESTION 27

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

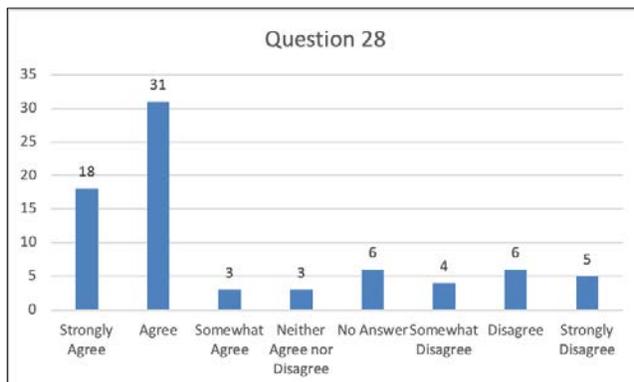
“I am willing to limit exterior wall cladding materials to no more than two different materials on a single house.”



QUESTION 28

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:

“I am willing to limit horizontal siding to either wood or fiber-cement (e.g., Hardieplank).”



QUESTION 29

Which of these proposed building materials standards is most important to you? Please rank them in order, between 1 and 3, where 1 is the most important and 3 is the least important.

Options included:

- Limit exterior materials to horizontal siding and/or brick.
- Limit to no more than two different exterior wall materials on a single house.
- Limit horizontal siding to wood or fiber-cement.

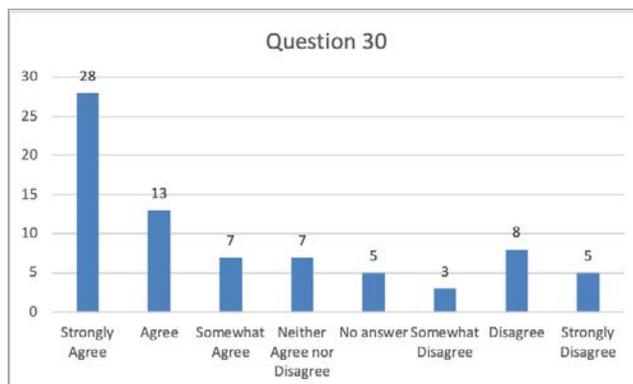
Respondents showed a clear preference for limiting exterior wall materials to horizontal siding and/or brick, with a maximum of two different exterior wall materials on a single house. They slightly preferred limiting siding to only wood or fiber-cement.

| | Siding and Brick Only | Max. 2 Wall Materials | Siding Only Wood or FC |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| #1 preference | 21 | 21 | 17 |
| #2 preference | 19 | 22 | 14 |
| #3 preference | 19 | 16 | 26 |
| #4 preference | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | Siding and Brick Only | Max. 2 Wall Materials | Siding Only Wood or FC |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| #1 or #2 preference | (21+19) = 38 | (22+22) = 33 | (17+14) = 31 |
| #3 or #4 preference | (19+0) = 19 | (16+0) = 16 | (26+0) = 26 |

QUESTION 30

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with this statement:
“I am willing to prohibit fences in front of houses in The Hill.”



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were invited to submit additional comments for each question.

Question 2: “The spacious feeling of The Hill neighborhood is important to preserve.”

We received a total of 13 comments; slightly more than half indicated agreement.

Question 3: “Limiting the width of a new house or an addition to an existing house, based on the width of its lot, is a good idea.”

Of the 12 comments received, four indicated agreement unconditionally, three agreed with the general concept but disagreed about the specific proposed approach, and five indicated disagreement.

Question 4: “I am willing to limit the width of new construction and additions to existing houses using the proposed BTLW of 0.46.”

Of the 14 comments received, the majority (9) agreed with the general concept but disagreed about the specific proposed approach. The remaining comments were split evenly, with two each disagreeing or agreeing, and one unrelated comment.

Question 5:

“Measuring the building width at the widest point in the BTLW Measurement Zone, as described above, is appropriate.”

We received 10 comments, of which four indicated agreement (in some cases, with conditions). Three disagreed, and we received another five comments: one discussed concerns about ranch homes and another proposed a different approach.

Question 6: “I am willing to limit new home construction to one story.”

Seventeen of the 19 comments received indicated disagreement with this statement.

Question 7: “I am willing to limit new home construction to one-and-a-half stories.”

Nine of the 13 comments on this statement indicating disagreement.

Question 8: “I am willing to limit total square footage for existing houses plus new two-story additions or any new two-story construction to 3,000 square feet, not including detached garages (with or without living space above).”

Most of the thoughtful comments submitted for this statement included questions, concerns about how this would be implemented, and otherwise indicated that the commenter needed more information before making a decision. A few more commenters disagreed than agreed.

Question 9: “I am willing to limit existing houses plus additions or new construction to a Floor-to-Area Ratio (FAR) of no more than 0.45 for a two-story house.”

As in the previous question, many comments indicated that respondents wanted or needed more information or examples before they could answer this question. A few more commenters disagreed outright with this statement than agreed, in some cases suggesting that the concept was not unpalatable but they were concerned about the specific numbers proposed.

Question 10: Please rank these options for either new construction or existing houses. Limit building size to one story; Limit building size to no more than 1-1/2 stories; Limit building size to no more than 3,000 square feet; or Limit building size to no more than 0.45 FAR.

No comments were collected.

Question 11: “I am willing to limit additions and garages to the same number of stories as the house.”

About twice as many commenters expressed disagreement than agreed; several comments indicated that other factors, such as total height of the house or setback from the front façade would also need to be considered.

Question 12: “I am willing to increase the mandatory 15-foot setback for garages to 25 feet (from the front façade of the house).”

While we received 10 comments on this question, respondents generally agreed or had no opinion on this topic.

Question 13: “I am willing to require one-story additions to be set back at least 25 feet from the front façade of the house.”

Most of the 14 comments on this question disagreed or otherwise expressed questions or concerns.

Question 14: “I am willing to require two-story additions to be set back at least 25 feet from the front façade of the house.”

Many of the 10 commenters agreed with the idea of setting back additions but did not necessarily agree on 25 feet as the setback distance.

Question 15: “I am willing to require a minimum and maximum roof pitch for new construction.”

Most commenters said that they did not want flat roofs.

Question 16: “I am willing to require garages to have a roof pitch equal to or less than the roof pitch of the house, as long as it meets other design standards for roof pitch.”

Several commenters agreed that the pitch of the garage roof should not be flat or less than the pitch of the house roof.

Question 17: “I am willing to require property owners to obtain a permit, which may require a report from a certified Master Arborist, before they remove a tree of a certain size.”

The 19 comments received for this question were split fairly evenly between agreement, disagreement, and other questions or concerns about how this would be implemented.

Question 18:

“I am willing to require that at least one mature tree be preserved during the construction of new houses or additions.”

Four out of five commenters agreed with this statement, and the fifth person stated that new construction should be required to plant two new trees in the front yard.

Question 19: “I am willing to require more than one mature tree be preserved during the construction of new houses or additions.”

Most commenters agreed with this statement. A few people had questions about how this would be implemented or proposed other considerations to be taken into account.

Question 20: “I am willing to require that property owners submit a tree survey and tree relocation or replacement plan as part of the demolition permit.”

Most of the 10 comments received asked questions or provided other information, rather than indicating agreement or disagreement.

Question 21: “I am willing to require property owners to replace mature trees if removed (measuring at least 8-inch caliper) on a 1-to-1 basis, based on caliper inches, with replacement trees measuring at least 4-inch caliper.”

Most people disagreed with some or all of this statement, although some agreed with the intention behind the proposal.

Question 22: Please rank these options for preserving mature trees in the neighborhood.

Require a permit before removing trees of a certain size; Require construction projects to preserve at least one mature tree, preferably in the front yard; Require property owners to submit a tree survey and tree replanting plan as part of the demolition permit; or Require property owners to replace any trees measuring at least 8-inch caliper on a 1-to-1 basis, based on caliper inches, with new trees measuring at least 4-inch caliper.

No comments were collected.

Question 23: “I am willing to require all new houses to have a covered front porch.”

We received only five comments, which were mixed; one person suggested also allowing a stoop.

Question 24: “I am willing to require new front porches to be a minimum of 6 feet deep.”

Comments on this question were split.

Question 25: “I am willing to require new houses in The Hill to have walkways between the front porch or front door and the street.”

Comments on this question were split.

Question 26: “I am willing to limit exterior materials on new houses, additions, and garages in The Hill to horizontal siding and/or brick.”

Comments on this question were split or proposed additional options for whether/how to manage exterior siding options.

Question 27: “I am willing to limit exterior wall cladding materials to no more than two different materials on a single house.”

Comments on this question were split or proposed additional options for whether/how to manage exterior siding options.

Question 28: “I am willing to limit horizontal siding to either wood or fiber-cement (e.g., Hardieplank).”

Comments on this question were split or proposed additional options for whether/how to manage exterior siding options.

Question 29: Which of these proposed building materials standards is most important to you?

Limit exterior materials to horizontal siding and/or brick; Limit to no more than two different exterior wall materials on a single house; or Limit horizontal siding to wood or fiber-cement.

No comments collected:

Question 30: “I am willing to prohibit fences in front of houses in The Hill.”

Most people who provided comments agreed with this statement. A few people mentioned making an exception for houses on Main Street.

Question 31: Other Comments

We received an additional 26 comments, most of which responded to the survey topics or the character of The Hill in a general way.