VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY
Summary of Results: Spring 2022

OVERVIEW

As part of the Envision Hanover planning process, the public was given an opportunity to respond to an online visual preference survey, which was live from April 25, 2022 through May 13, 2022. This survey allowed citizens and other stakeholders to provide their opinions regarding the design character of future neighborhoods, employment areas, and development within Hanover County. Participants were shown two photos of existing development and asked to identify which one they preferred (or if they had no preference). They also had the option of explaining why they chose a particular photo.

336 stakeholders responded to the online survey, which was administered via Survey Monkey. 291 respondents indicated that they live in Hanover County.

Open-ended responses that were provided were analyzed and categorized into general themes. Some responses addressed multiple issues/themes. Participants were not required to provide an explanation regarding their preferences.

KEY THEMES

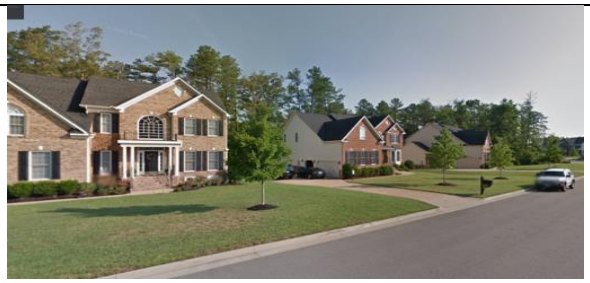
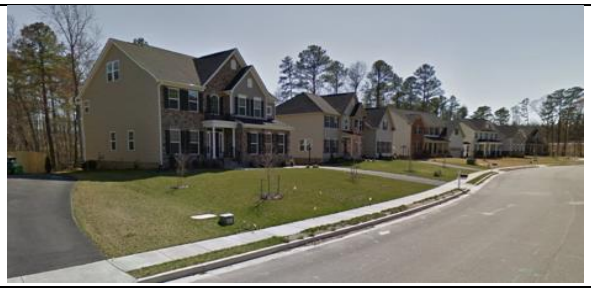
All of the feedback received was analyzed and categorized into different topic areas. Based on this analysis, key themes emerged:

- **Pedestrian/Bicycle Infrastructure:** Respondents expressed a preference for sidewalks along neighborhood streets and within commercial and mixed-use areas. They also preferred that sidewalks, shared-use paths, and/or bike lanes be incorporated into the design of major thoroughfares.
- **Street Trees:** Street trees were desired within residential neighborhoods.
- **Landscaped Buffers along Roadways:** Respondents preferred that residential and commercial development be buffered/screened from adjacent roadways by densely-planted trees and other landscaping. For residential projects, respondents showed some preference that facades facing major thoroughfares be architecturally appealing and that the use of privacy fences be minimized.
- **Open Space Design/Location:** Respondents showed some preference for open space areas that are landscaped and have amenities, including shade structures. They also showed some preference for larger, centrally-located open space areas that can be used for recreational purposes and are easily accessible to residents.
- **Clustering:** Respondents showed some preference for conventional subdivisions versus cluster subdivisions, suggesting that larger lots (and less common area) provide more privacy and space for individual homeowners.

- **Design for Single-Family Residential and Townhouse Uses:** Respondents showed some preference for homes having varied architecture within a neighborhood and high-quality materials. Respondents indicated that garages may face the street, but they should not be the prominent architectural feature (should align with the main façade and not protrude towards the street).
- **Design for Multi-Family Residential Uses:** Respondents showed some preference for multi-family buildings to be designed to resemble single-family homes, with smaller footprints, shorter heights, and unique architectural details. They preferred that multi-family residential development be screened from major thoroughfares by landscaped buffers.
- **Design for Mixed-Use Projects:** Respondents preferred smaller-scale buildings with traditional architecture/materials and wide sidewalks. Respondents showed some preference for vertically mixed-use buildings (over a horizontal mix of uses).
- **Design for Commercial Uses:** Respondents preferred that commercial buildings incorporate architectural details that reflect styles traditionally found in Hanover County, including pitched roofs and brick and/or stone facades. They showed preference for significant landscaping between commercial buildings and adjacent thoroughfares, with parking ideally located to the side or rear of the building. Shorter monument-style signs were preferred.

RESULTS

The following pages summarize responses received to each question. The full text to open-ended responses is included within the appendix.

Question #1	
Streetscape #1	Streetscape #2
	

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	14.24%	47
Streetscape #1	33.33%	110
Streetscape #2	52.42%	173
	Answered	**330**
	Skipped	**6**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Streetscape #2, since sidewalks are provided along the street.

Why did respondents say they chose Streetscape #1?

- More Attractive (Less Visual Clutter, Streamlined, Overall Attractiveness): 38 Respondents
- More Green Space: 27 Respondents
- More Trees: 21 Respondents
- Sidewalks Unnecessary on Low-Volume Neighborhood Streets: 9 Respondents
- Lower Maintenance without Sidewalk: 7 Respondents

Why did respondents say they choose Streetscape #2?

- Sidewalks Provided Along Street: 158 Respondents
- No Cars Parked on Street: 2 Respondents

Question #2	
Streetscape #1	Streetscape #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	27.13%	89
Streetscape #1	25.91%	85
Streetscape #2	46.95%	154
	Answered	**328**
	Skipped	**8**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Streetscape #2, preferring that garages face the street for aesthetics and functionality. A significant number of respondents had no preference.

Why did respondents say they chose Streetscape #1?

- Preferred Garage Doors Not Facing Street: 56 Respondents
- More Green Space: 9 Respondents
- Overall Appearance: 6 Respondents
- Architectural Features of Houses (More Windows, Larger Front Porch): 2 Respondents

Why did respondents say they choose Streetscape #2?

- Preferred Garages Facing the Street (Aesthetics, Functionality): 98 Respondents
- Preferred Number + Placement of Trees: 21 Respondents
- Overall Appearance: 11 Respondents
- Utility Boxes/Infrastructure Less Visible: 7 Respondents

Question #3	
Streetscape #1	Streetscape #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	8.21%	27
Streetscape #1	9.12%	30
Streetscape #2	82.67%	272
	Answered	**329**
	Skipped	**7**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Streetscape #2, since there are more trees and landscaping along the street and sidewalk.

Why did respondents say they chose Streetscape #1?

- Fewer Trees (Better Visibility, Less Maintenance): 14 Respondents
- No On-Street Parking: 3 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Streetscape #2?

- More Trees/Landscaping: 251 Respondents

Question #4	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	18.90%	62
Option #1	25.30%	83
Option #2	55.79%	183
	Answered	**328**
	Skipped	**8**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #2, primarily since the trees are larger. Respondents also preferred that houses face the major thoroughfare and/or that privacy fences not be constructed between houses and the major thoroughfare.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Preferred Wider Shared-Use Path Separated from Road: 27 Respondents
- Preferred Houses Backing to Major Thoroughfare/Facing Internal Street: 23 Respondents
- Preferred Solid Privacy Fence Between Houses and Road: 12 Respondents
- Preferred Landscaping/Planting Over Option #2: 7 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Preferred the Size and Number of Trees: 106 Respondents
- Preferred Houses Facing Major Thoroughfare/Disliked Views of Privacy Fence: 36 Respondents
- Preferred Major Thoroughfare with Bicycle Lanes and Sidewalks: 15 Respondents
- Preferred Major Thoroughfare with Turn Lanes: 4 Respondents

Question #5	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	18.60%	61
Option #1	68.60%	225
Option #2	12.80%	42
	Answered	**328**
	Skipped	**8**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, since there is more landscaping and there is a structure that provides shade and serves as a gathering area for community residents.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Structure Provides Shade and Serves as Community Gathering Area: 79 Respondents
- Overall Appearance: 69 Respondents
- More Landscaping (Compared to Option #2): 59 Respondents
- Houses Face Open Space: 2 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Lower Overall Maintenance (Compared to Option #1): 3 Respondents
- Larger Open Space (Compared to Option #1): 6 Respondents
- More Walking Trails (Comparted to Option #1): 15 Respondents
- Overall Appearance: 5 Respondents
- Preferred No Structures in Open Space (Concerns Regarding Structure Usefulness, Maintenance, and Possible Vandalism): 8 Respondents

Question #6	
Perimeter Buffers	Central Open Space

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	30.49%	100
Perimeter Buffers	26.83%	88
Central Open Space	42.68%	140
	Answered	**328**
	Skipped	**8**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer a community that has a larger central open space, since they felt it provides more usable space for recreational activities and is more accessible to the majority of residents. Many respondents had no preference. Some of those that had no preference indicated that developments should incorporate both options (17 respondents).

Why did respondents say they chose *perimeter buffers*?

- Buffers Houses from Adjacent Uses/Roadways (Reducing Noise and/or Providing Privacy for Residents): 17 Respondents
- Shields Houses from View from Adjacent Roadways: 13 Respondents
- Makes Development Seem Less Dense/Less Developed: 10 Respondents
- Provides Wildlife Habitat Area: 7 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose *central open space*?

- Provides More Usable Space for Recreation: 34 Respondents
- General Preference: 25 Respondents
- More Accessible to Community Residents (Community Gathering Space): 22 Respondents
- Makes Development Seem Less Dense/Less Developed: 13 Respondents
- Provides More Amenities: 12 Respondents
- Provides More Wildlife Habitat/Natural Areas: 4 Respondents

Question #7	
Cluster Subdivision	Conventional Subdivision

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	23.62%	77
Cluster Subdivision	28.22%	92
Conventional Subdivision	48.16%	157
	Answered	**326**
	Skipped	**10**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer a conventional subdivision, since they feel that the larger lots offer more privacy and personal space for the property owner.

Why did respondents say they chose *cluster subdivision*?

- Preserves More Open Space for Farming and/or Wildlife Habitat: 61 Respondents
- Protects Views from Adjacent Roadways and Properties: 11 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose *conventional subdivision*?

- Offers Larger Lots (Greater Setbacks, Greater Privacy, More Privately-Owned Space): 94 Respondents
- Concern with Long-Term Maintenance and/or Future Development Potential of Open Space in Cluster Subdivision: 5 Respondents

Question #8	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	23.24%	76
Option #1	50.15%	164
Option #2	26.61%	87
	Answered	**327**
	Skipped	**9**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, due to the quality of the architecture, the varied architectural designs, and the lack of garage doors facing the street.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Architectural Style and/or Varied Architecture: 65 Respondents
- Dislike Front-Loading Garages: 48 Respondents
- Better Landscaping (Including Trees between Sidewalk and Curb): 11 Respondents
- Prefer Smaller Front Setbacks: 8 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Front-Loading Garages and Driveways: 32 Respondents
- Prefer Greater Setbacks (Particularly Front Setbacks): 21 Respondents
- Prefer Architectural Style: 11 Respondents

Question #9	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	28.03%	88
Option #1	44.90%	141
Option #2	27.07%	85
	Answered	**314**
	Skipped	**22**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, due to the smaller-scale buildings and architectural style. A significant number of responses had no preference. 21 of those that answered "no preference" indicated they do not want multi-family residential development in Hanover County at all.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Smaller-Scale Buildings (Building Footprint and/or Height): 54 Respondents
- Prefer Architectural Style: 41 Respondents
- Appears Less Dense: 14 Respondents
- Prefer Less Prominent Parking Areas: 2 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Architectural Style: 25 Respondents
- More Efficient Use of Land: 17 Respondents
- Prefer Parking Location/Number of Parking Areas: 15 Respondents

Question #10	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	20.77%	65
Option #1	8.31%	26
Option #2	70.93%	222
	Answered	**313**
	Skipped	**23**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #2, due to the smaller-scale buildings and architectural style, which many felt looked more like single-family units.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Architectural Style: 7 Respondents
- Prefer Outdoor Balconies: 4 Respondents
- Prefer Parking Location/Number of Parking Areas: 2 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Architectural Style: 80 Respondents
- Prefer Smaller-Scale Buildings (Building Footprint and/or Height and/or Reminiscent of Single-Family Homes): 65 Respondents
- Appears Less Dense: 10 Respondents

Question #11	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	14.24%	45
Option #1	9.81%	31
Option #2	75.95%	240
	Answered	**316**
	Skipped	**20**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #2, due to the wider landscaped buffer between the buildings and the road.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Sidewalk Design/Location: 10 Respondents
- Prefer Shorter Setbacks/Building Closer to Street: 8 Respondents
- Prefer Architectural Style: 4 Respondents
- Prefer Parking Behind Building: 2 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Greater Setbacks from Road and/or Landscaped Buffer along Road: 158 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance: 22 Respondents

Question #12	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	19.74%	60
Option #1	8.22%	25
Option #2	72.04%	219
	Answered	**304**
	Skipped	**32**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #2, since the garages are less prominent. Respondents also preferred the architectural style and/or details, such as the varied roof lines and greater number of street-facing windows.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- More Space Between Buildings/Privacy: 6 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Design: 10 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Garage in Line with Façade/Less Prominent: 79 Respondents
- Prefer Architectural Style/Details: 73 Respondents
- Provides Sidewalks: 17 Respondents

Question #13	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	34.11%	103
Option #1	47.02%	142
Option #2	18.87%	57
	Answered	302
	Skipped	34

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, due to the landscaping along the external roadway and more green space between the buildings and the external roadway. More than a third of respondents had no preference, citing that both options looked similar/were equally attractive (27 responses) or that they did not want townhouses anywhere in Hanover County (13 Respondents).

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Better Landscaping/More Green Space: 57 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 28 Respondents
- Prefer Garage Doors and Parking Areas Not Visible from External Roadways: 15 Respondents
- Dedicated Bike Lane: 8 Respondents
- Variation of Building Roofline: 4 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Buildings Face External Roadways: 14 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 10 Respondents
- Prefer Landscape Design: 9 Respondents

Question #14	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	17.88%	54
Option #1	57.95%	175
Option #2	24.17%	73
	Answered	**302**
	Skipped	**34**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, due to the design and location of the open space. They seemed to like the visibility of the open space (with the single-loaded street), the townhouses facing the open space, and the lack of privacy fences around the open space.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Open Space Design and Location (Townhouses Facing Open Space, Accessibility/Visibility with Single-Loaded Street, Landscape Design, Lack of Fences): 78 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 36 Respondents
- Prefer Architectural Design of Townhouses (Exterior Materials, Variation in Facades): 7 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Seems to Provide More Space and/or Privacy for Individual Units: 29 Respondents
- Prefer Not Having to Cross Street to Access Open Space: 12 Respondents
- Greater Amenities within Open Space (Walking Trail, Playground, Dog Station): 3 Respondents

Question #15	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	17.22%	52
Option #1	57.95%	175
Option #2	24.83%	75
	Answered	**302**
	Skipped	**34**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, due to the smaller scale of the buildings and the overall appearance/design of the development, with many stating that it has a "small-town feel."

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design (Traditional Small-Town Feel): 62 Respondents
- Prefer Smaller-Scale Buildings (Shorter): 52 Respondents
- Wider Sidewalks: 20 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 31 Respondents
- More Efficient Use of Land: 18 Respondents

Question #16	
Uses Mixed Vertically (on Floors)	Uses Mixed Horizontally (on Lots)

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	30.23%	91
Uses Mixed Vertically (on Floors)	40.53%	122
Uses Mixed Horizontally (on Lots)	29.24%	88
	Answered	301
	Skipped	35

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer uses mixed vertically, indicating that they felt that it was a more efficient use of land. Many respondents also preferred the overall design/appearance of the vertically mixed-use project. A significant number of respondents had no preference.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- More Efficient Use of Land: 32 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design (Traditional Small-Town Feel): 30 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Separation of Uses: 17 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 15 Respondents
- Seems Less Dense: 7 Respondents

Question #17	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	8.97%	27
Option #1	4.65%	14
Option #2	86.38%	260
	Answered	**301**
	Skipped	**35**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents overwhelmingly preferred Option #2, preferring the architectural style over Option #1. Many respondents felt it better reflected the character of Hanover County.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design (Traditional Architecture, Pitched Roof, Porch, Dormers, Gable, Materials): 197 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Commercial Buildings Not Look Residential in Character: 5 Respondents

Question #18	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	8.67%	26
Option #1	3.33%	10
Option #2	88.00%	264
	Answered	**300**
	Skipped	**36**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents overwhelmingly preferred Option #2, preferring the architectural style over Option #1. Many respondents felt it better reflected the character of Hanover County.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design (Traditional Architecture, Pitched Roof, Quality/Type of Materials, Offsets/Change in Materials): 196 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 2 Respondents

Question #19	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	16.94%	51
Option #1	65.12%	196
Option #2	17.94%	54
	Answered	301
	Skipped	35

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, since there is more landscaping between the building and the adjacent street and the parking is located behind the building.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- More Landscaping in Front of Building: 76 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: Respondents: 56 Respondents
- Parking Located to Rear of Building: 20 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 10 Respondents
- Prefer Smaller-Scale Building (Fewer Levels, Lower Roofline) : 5 Respondents
- Prefer Parking in Front of Building: 4 Respondents
- Building More Accessible than Option #1: 3 Respondents

Question #20	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	8.28%	25
Option #1	67.55%	204
Option #2	24.17%	73
	Answered	**302**
	Skipped	**34**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, due to the natural buffer between the main building and the adjacent thoroughfare.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Buffer of Existing Trees/Vegetation along Roadway: 135 Respondents
- Building Scale and/or Architecture: 7 Respondents
- Parking Located to the Rear of the Building: 5 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Visibility of Building and/or Parking Areas: 26 Respondents
- Wide Sidewalks: 9 Respondents
- Greater Setbacks from the Road: 4 Respondents
- Prefer Overall Appearance/Design: 13 Respondents

Question #21	
Option #1	Option #2

Answer Choices	Respondents	
No Preference	11.88%	36
Option #1	68.65%	208
Option #2	19.47%	59
	Answered	**303**
	Skipped	**33**

Summary of Open-Response Feedback Received

Respondents seem to prefer Option #1, since the sign is shorter and smaller than Option #2.

Why did respondents say they chose Option #1?

- Prefer Shorter/Smaller Signs: 64 Respondents
- Overall Appearance: 64 Respondents
- More Landscaping around Sign: 21 Respondents

Why did respondents say they chose Option #2?

- Greater Visibility: 37 Respondents

Question #22

If you are a resident of Hanover County, what magisterial district do you live in?

Answer Choices	Respondents	
Beaverdam	16.50%	50
South Anna	10.56%	32
Ashland	16.50%	50
Chickahominy	18.48%	56
Mechanicsville	19.47%	59
Henry	7.92%	24
Cold Harbor	4.62%	14
Unsure	1.98%	6
Do not live in Hanover County	3.96%	12
	Answered	**303**
	Skipped	**33**