

Lexington-Fayette Urban County
Greenspace Commission

2016 Greenspace Survey

Community Attitudes About Greenspace

*Final Summary Report
February 2017*



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1.1 Overview & Methodology

This project was initiated by the LFUCG Greenspace Commission to generate updated research of a sample of Fayette County residents covering the following topics:

- Perceptions about the importance, usage and support for greenspace
- Issues about greenspace

The questions for the survey instrument were initially proposed by The Matrix Group and were then modified and re-submitted based on input from various LFUCG Divisions and the Greenspace Commission.

Based on budget limitations and the availability of resources for outreach within LFUCG, a convenience sampling method was used. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in a study. Convenience sampling utilizes available primary data sources for the research without additional requirements nor inclusion criteria that is identified prior to the selection of subjects. The survey was intended to reach Fayette County residents who have opted to receive communication from LFUCG or by following on social media, therefore having some level of civic engagement and interest.

The study employed multiple modes of data collection in order to include and represent the targeted Fayette County residents in an unrestricted manner and consisted of the following:

- **Online survey** of Fayette County residents derived from email notices to LFUCG's databases and posting of the survey URL
 - Lexington-Fayette Urban County council members' mailing lists consisting of approximately 7,500 residents*
 - Emails sent to Neighborhood Associations
 - Emails sent to 2,200 on Fayette County Extension mailing list*
 - Survey URL posting to council members' Facebook pages and Next Door
 - Survey URL posting to the Mayor's Facebook page
 - Survey URL posting to LFUCG website
- **Online survey** of a representative sample of Fayette County residents in The Matrix Group's proprietary panel
 - Emails sent to approximately 2,000 Fayette County residents who are members of an opt-in research panel*
- **On-site paper survey** distribution/administration by LFUCG staff at targeted public venues throughout Fayette County with versions in Spanish and English.
 - Community centers
 - All branches of the public library
 - Bluegrass Community Health Center

*Estimated Email Response Rate	Emails sent	Total responding from email link	Percent responding from email link	Number of surveys tabulated from email link	Percent of tabulated surveys responding from email link
LFUCG & Fayette County Extension	9700	1053	10.9%	734	7.6%
The Matrix Group's Consumer panel	2000	246	12.3%	202	10.0%

The Matrix Group provided unique URLs to LFUCG that were then distributed to parties within the city government to include in their communication with citizens and postings. The online survey was initially launched by LFUCG on October 4th, 2016 with the survey link distributed by officials and organizations using the methods listed above over a four week period. The survey closed online on October 28th. The final paper copies of completed surveys were submitted on November 2nd, 2016.

Over the extended period the survey remained open, the total number of attempted survey takers was 2138. Upon conclusion of data collection, the data was cleaned, and examined for validity and to meet target quotas reflective of Fayette County's population by zip code and age cells. Some attempted responses were not included due to the following criteria:

Not residing in Fayette County = 85
 Incomplete/Not valid = 273
 Demographic over-representation= 246

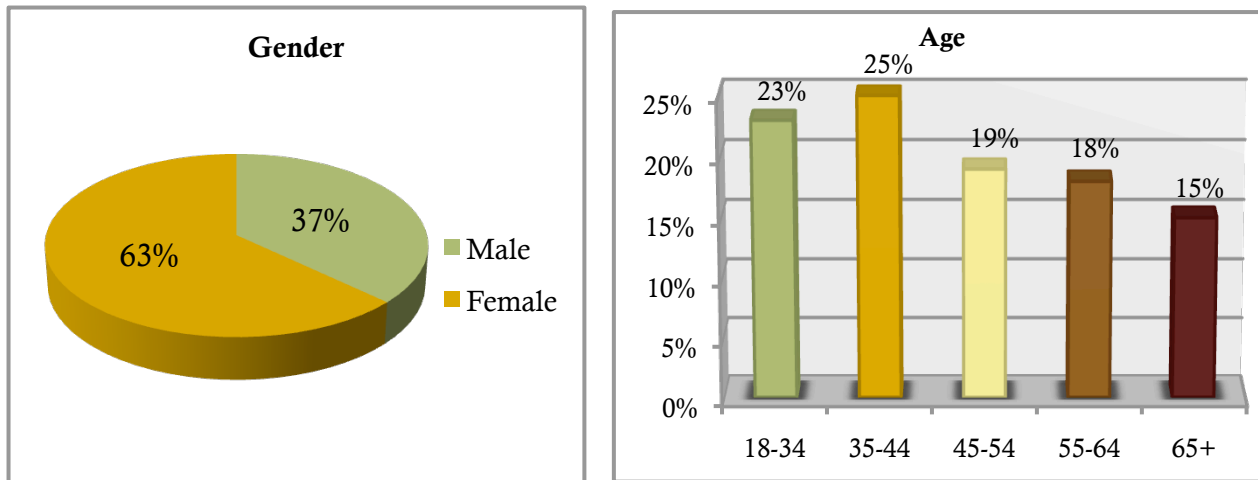
The data has been balanced to reflect as closely as possible the demographic composition of age groups and areas of residence of the Lexington-Fayette County population. Surveys that were overages where the total significantly exceeded the projected population by age group and geographic area of residence were not included. Data was sorted into groups and reviewed in order to provide representation that would be reflective of the population for each sub-segment (see 1.2 Profile of Respondents). A random and systematic method based solely on demographic criteria was used for inclusion in the tabulated data set.

The sample frame of tabulated surveys follows:

Source	Sample
LFUCG Mayor's & LFUCG Website Posting	558
Council Postings & Email Newsletter	703
LFUCG Distribution of Paper Surveys	71
The Matrix Group's Consumer Panel	202
Total Surveys Tabulated	1534

The tabulated results provide a non-probability sample based on the methods of data collection used. Because the sample is based on those who self-selected for participation, the results are not a generalization of the larger community population and the individuals who participated in the survey may not be an accurate nor projectable representation of the population. They do, however, comprise a universe of 1,534 individuals across Fayette County who voluntarily participated in the survey. Thus, any implications drawn from this research are based solely on these research respondents, with yet-to-be-determined implications for the entire Fayette County population. All surveys and polls are subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error.

1.2 Profile of Respondents

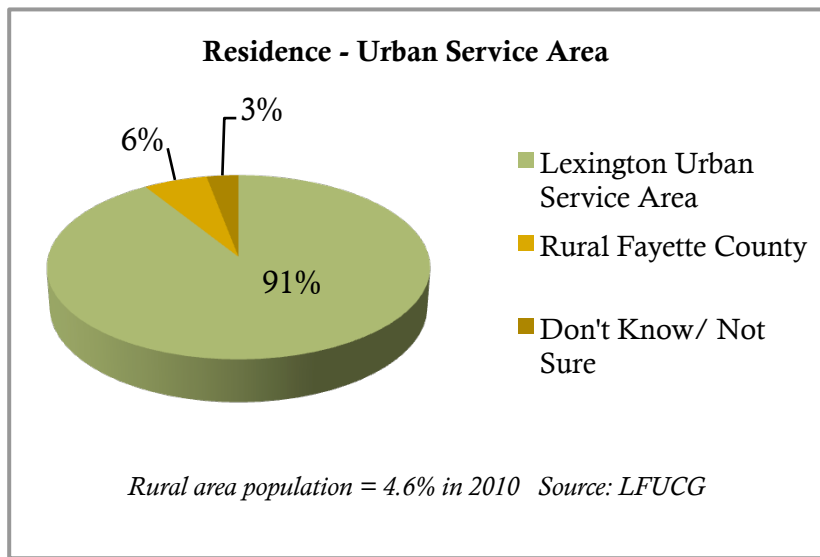


Fayette County Sample & Population Comparison

Gender	Sample	Fayette Population*
Male	37%	49%
Female	63%	51%
Age Group	Sample	Fayette Population*
18-34	23%	39%
35-44	25%	17%
45-54	19%	17%
55-64	18%	14%
64+	15%	13%

*Fayette Population Source: 2015 American Community Survey, US Census

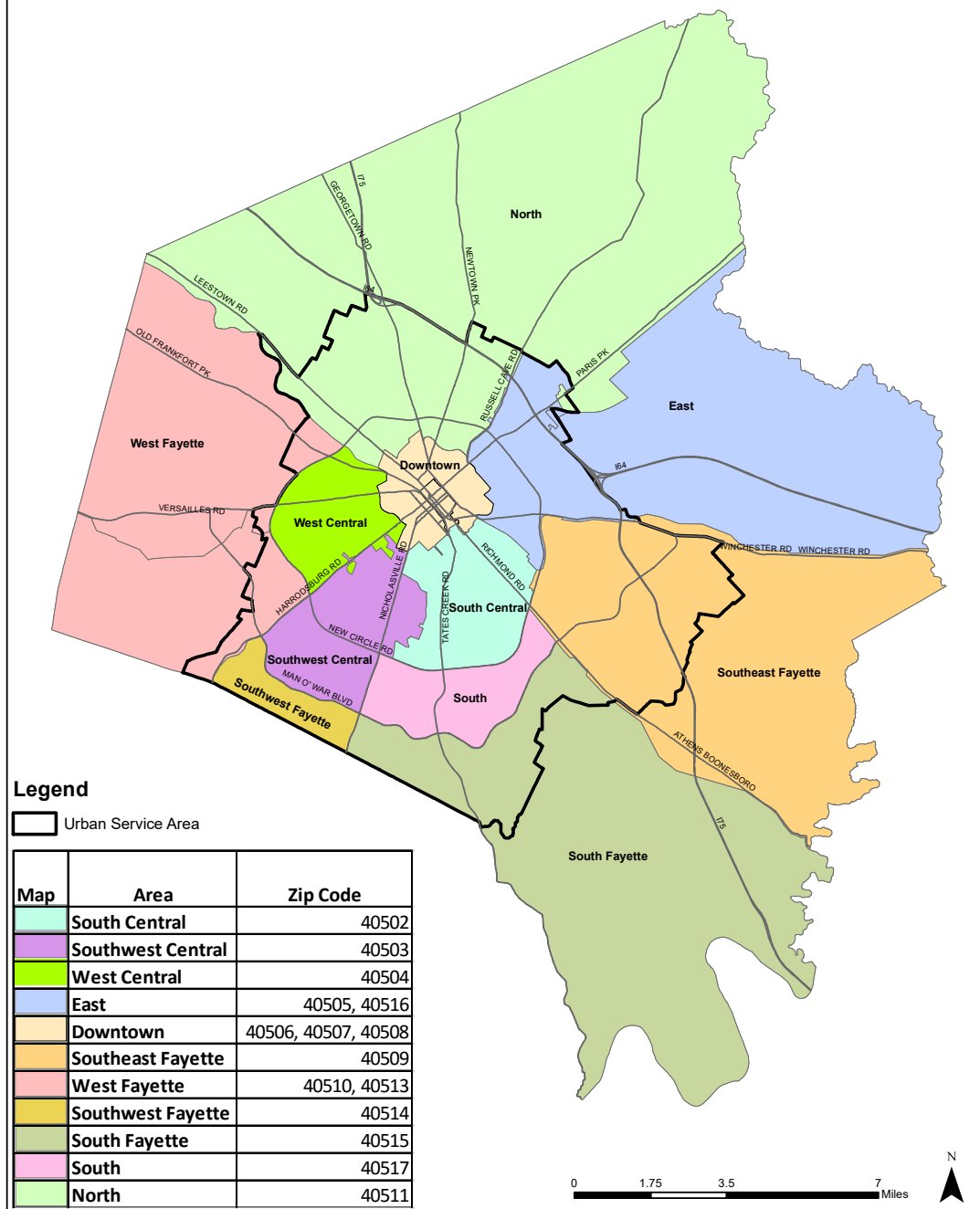
Race	Percent	Base	Fayette Population*
White/Caucasian	91%	1,395	72%
Black/African American	4%	61	14%
Hispanic/Latino	1%	13	7%
Asian	1%	15	3%
Other/Refused	3%	43	3%



Area & Zip Code	Sample %	Base	Fayette Population %
South Central 40502	10%	158	9%
Southwest Central 40503	11%	173	9%
West Central 40504	7%	109	8%
East 40505 40516	7%	102	9%
Downtown 40506 40507 40508	9%	144	9%

Area & Zip Code	Sample %	Base	Fayette Population %
Southeast Fayette 40509	12%	184	11%
West Fayette 40510 40513	6%	86	4%
Southwest Fayette 40514	6%	90	5%
South Fayette 40515	12%	182	11%
South 40517	7%	113	11%
North 40511	12%	188	10%

Area of Residence



1.3 Executive Summary of the Findings

- Survey respondents are overwhelmingly likely to have visited open land areas with lawn & trees such as parks, dog parks, arboretum, school & church yards than any other types of greenspace at 95%. The next most frequent greenspace area visited were neighborhood or park trails with 78% saying they had visited that type of greenspace in the past 12 months.
- Respondents utilize greenspace most often to relax, socialize, picnic, exercise the dog, fly a kite, etc. (86%) or to appreciate nature (85%)
- 65% of respondents visit a public greenspace once a week or more.
- 84% indicate that there is a greenspace accessible within walking or biking distance.
- The types of greenspace rated highest in importance are open land (84%), nature park or sanctuary (83%), neighborhood and park trail (83%) and farms and scenic rural roads (80%).
- Just 12% favor expansion of the urban service area, while 72% majority are opposed to it. 16% don't know if they are in favor or opposed to expansion.
- 81% support using public funds to permanently protect 50,000 acres in the rural area for agriculture, food security and environmental protection.
- Just over a third feel local funding for farmland conservation should not be restricted based on citizenship or income. 28% believe there should be restrictions based on income level and 22% believe local funding should be limited to U.S. citizens.
- 86% support cost sharing and grants for community projects such as rain gardens, community gardens, landscaping and tree planting.
- 92% feel developers should be responsible for greenspace creation as basic infrastructure.
- 56% feel that the responsibility for street tree maintenance should be shared by the property owner and the local government. 28% feel the government should be responsible and 16% feel the responsibility should fall on the property owner.
- 78% feel that there should be additional protection for trees of significant species, size and condition.
- Interest is highest for participation in the rural area in nature recreation (76%), Events and festivals (74%), farm, winery & botanical garden tours (74%), homegrown restaurants (73%) and biking, hiking and equestrian trails (73%).

Summary of Survey Findings

2.1 Visits to Greenspace & Reasons for Visiting

Which of the following types of greenspace have you or a member of your household visited in the past 12 months?

Greenspace Type Visited	Percent	Base
Open land areas with lawn & trees such as parks, dog parks, arboretum, school & church yards	95%	1449
Neighborhood and park trail (bike, walk)	78%	1195
Farms, scenic rural roads and stone fences	70%	1071
Nature park or sanctuary	60%	912
Ballfield, tennis, volleyball or basketball court, disc golf course, skate park, archery range, swimming pool	53%	813
Playground, tot lot or splash pad	42%	638
Legacy trail	41%	622
Cemetery	41%	621
Kentucky River & palisades	33%	506
Greenway (natural area along streams)	29%	443
Community garden	20%	309

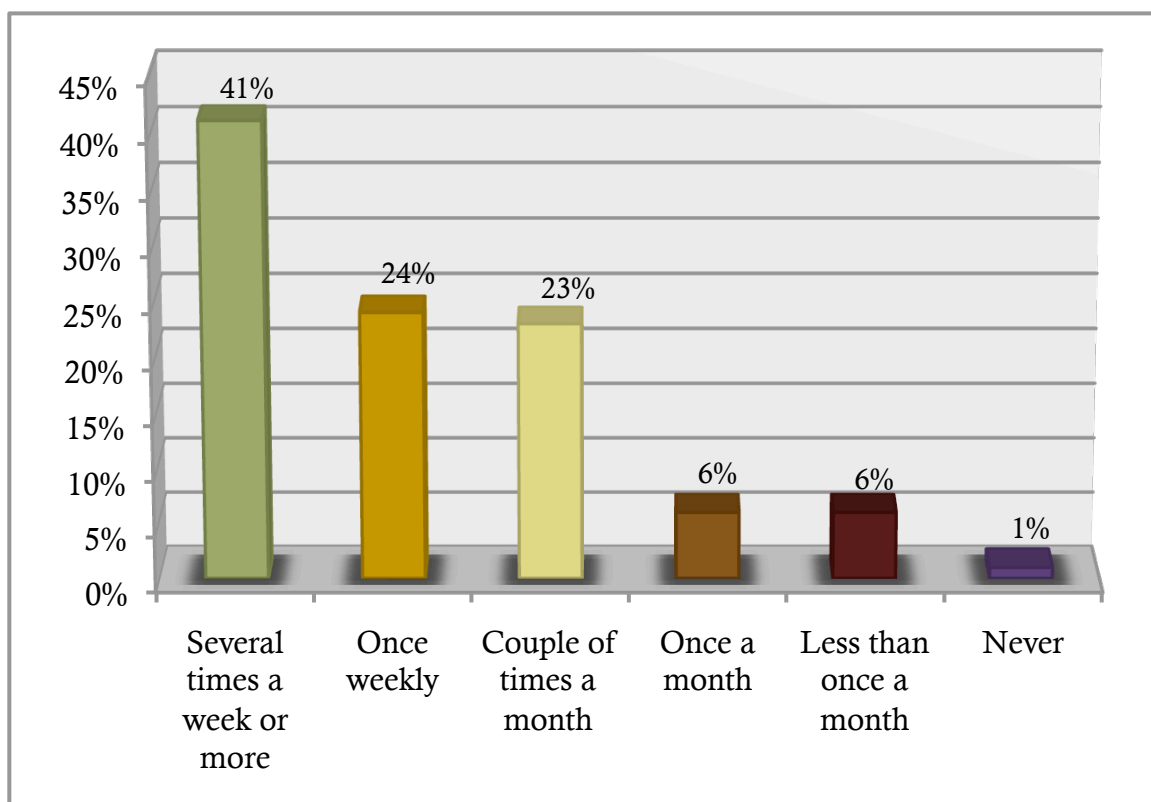
Why do, you or a member of your household, visit greenspaces?

Reasons for Visiting	Percent	Base
To relax, socialize, picnic/eating, exercise the dog, fly a kite, etc.	86%	1323
To appreciate nature	85%	1302
To exercise; self-leading individual or family activity (walking, biking, playing, swimming, boating riding horses, participating in pick-up games, etc)	77%	1179
To tour the scenic countryside	63%	959
To attend an outdoor community/special event, tour, or participate in a program at a park, greenway or arboretum, etc.	56%	859
To exercise: organized sports	34%	514
To bike/walk on a trail for transportation (e.g. to work or school, run errands, etc.)	30%	466
Other	8%	122
Don't visit greenspaces	1%	7

- Respondents under 45 are significantly more likely to visit greenspace for relaxation and socialization, as well as for exercise.

2.2 Frequency of Visits to Greenspace

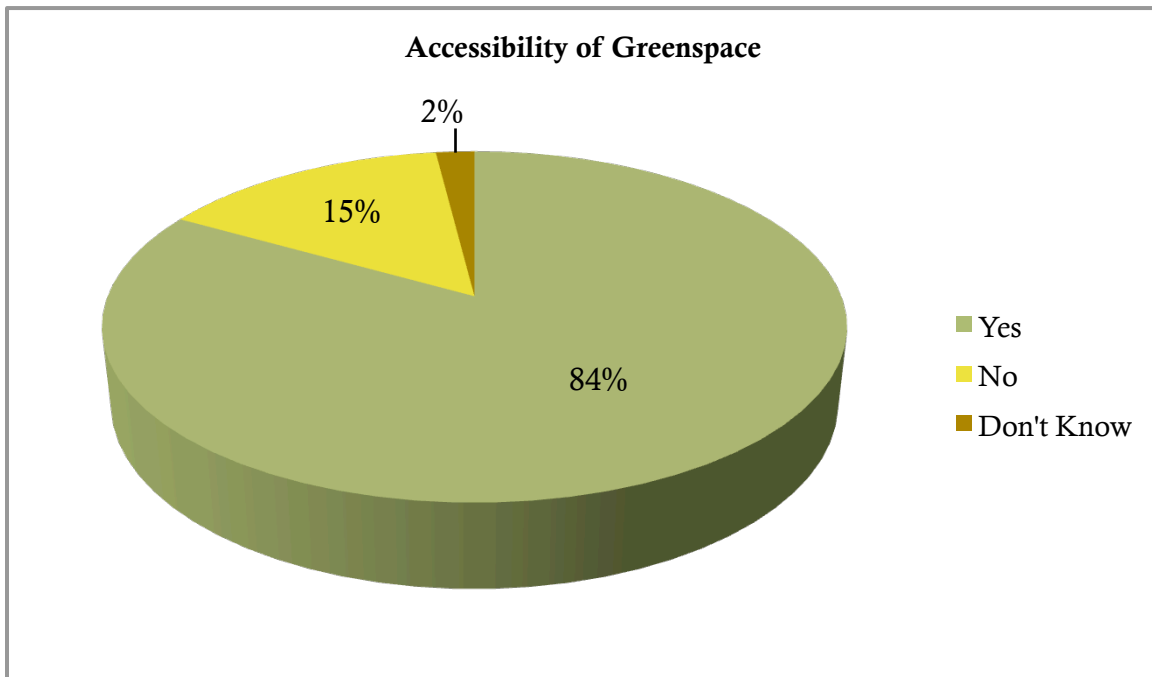
How often do you, or a member of your household, generally visit a public greenspace?



- Frequent greenspace usage (several times a week or more) was cited more often than the average by respondents who are:
 - Age 35-44 (46%)
 - Residing in South Central (51%) and Downtown (53%) areas

2.3 Accessibility of Greenspace

Is there a greenspace area accessible to you within walking or biking distance?



- Respondents who were more likely than the average (84%) to say there was greenspace accessible within walking or biking distance included those residing in the following areas:
 - South Central 91%
 - Southwest Central 90%
 - Downtown 89%
- Respondent more likely than the average (15%) to say there was not accessible greenspace near them included those residing in the following areas:
 - East 21%
 - Southeast Fayette 18%
 - South 27%
- Almost one-quarter of respondents age 65+ said there was not a greenspace accessible to them within walking or biking distance.

2.4 Importance Ratings

On a scale of 7 to 1 with 7 being HIGH in importance and 1 being LOW in importance, rate the following types of greenspace as contributing to our unique identity and quality of life in Lexington-Fayette County.

	Top 2 Box*	Bottom 2 Box*	Average
Open land areas with lawn & trees such as parks, dog parks, arboretum, school & church yards	84%	.3%	6.43
Nature park or sanctuary	83%	1%	6.33
Neighborhood and park trail (bike, walk)	83%	1.5%	6.30
Farms, scenic rural roads and stone fences	80%	2%	6.26
Traditional neighborhoods (older neighborhoods reflect local character; typically have civic squares or parks, tree-lined streets, front porches and are pedestrian-friendly) or downtown landscaped plazas	78%	2%	6.15
Trees, forests and tree stands	75%	2%	6.12
Kentucky River & palisades	73%	3%	6.05
Community wide & regional trails (bike, hike, equestrian)	73%	4%	6.01
Green Streets (may include wide grass medians; rain gardens, landscaping and tree-lined streets)	72%	3%	5.99
Greenway (natural area along streams)	67%	3%	5.87
Agricultural production land (fertile soils)	60%	7%	5.52
Cemeteries	48%	9%	5.17
Playgrounds, tot lots and splash pads	53%	11%	5.16
Ballfields, tennis & basketball courts, disc golf, skate parks, volleyball, archery, pools	47%	10%	5.08
Community gardens	46%	11%	5.02

* Top 2 box is the combined percentage rating of 6 + 7 on the 7 to 1 importance rating scale. Bottom 2 box is the combined percentage rating of 1 + 2 on the 7 to 1 importance rating scale.

- Females consistently gave significantly higher average importance ratings to each area than did their male counterparts.

2.5 Sample Comments on Needed Greenspace Improvements

If any of the areas in the previous question need improvement or attention, please note and provide a description of what is needed

See Appendix B for more information about needs and other comments

I would love for more of the bike trails in Lexington to be linked and accessible without riding on primary roads or sidewalks.

Every neighborhood should be within walking distance of a park.

Neighborhoods need more trees! Replace poor growing or dying trees with street appropriate trees.

All passive and active recreational areas need better upkeep, better promotion and availability for everyone.

Walking or biking access. While it's getting better, there are still gaps where you have to walk or bike on the road.

Availability and accessibility of greenspace is essential for human growth and development

More open / natural spaces

2.6 Interest in Rural Area Activities

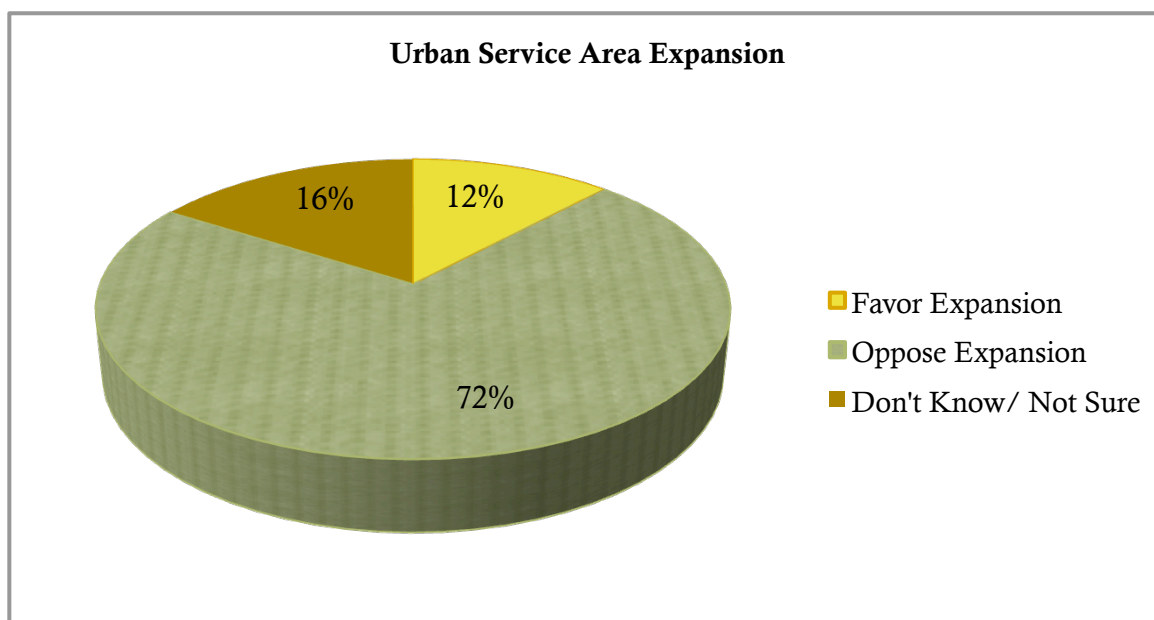
Which activities in rural Fayette County would you, or a member of your household, be interested in participating?

	Percent	Base
Nature recreation, such as hiking, tree canopy tours, fishing, boating, climbing, camping, mountain biking, bird watching	76%	<i>1171</i>
Events, festivals	74%	<i>1131</i>
Farm & winery tours, botanical garden tours	74%	<i>1130</i>
Homegrown restaurants	73%	<i>1113</i>
Biking, hiking & equestrian trails	73%	<i>1112</i>
Hayrides, petting zoos, corn mazes, farm stands	48%	<i>742</i>
Educational programs, workshops	47%	<i>726</i>
Self-guided auto tours	43%	<i>651</i>
Receptions, weddings, party venues, concerts	39%	<i>604</i>
Zip lines	36%	<i>545</i>
Equestrian-oriented venues, parks & museums, racetracks	35%	<i>535</i>
Native game preserves	30%	<i>457</i>
Afterschool & summer youth programs, youth camps	29%	<i>451</i>
Shooting, hunting, trapping	16%	<i>244</i>
Outdoor rodeos	11%	<i>168</i>

- 18-44 year old respondents were significantly more likely to be interested in nature recreation in the rural areas with with 80% or higher indicating interest. This age group was also highly likely to indicate interest in hiking, biking and equestrian trails at 78%.
- Residents in the South Central and Southwest Central areas have a higher interest in nature recreation at 80% and 86% respectively.
- The areas within the urban core of Lexington, South Central and Downtown, indicated a higher than average interest in homegrown restaurants (over 80%).

2.7 Urban Service Area Expansion

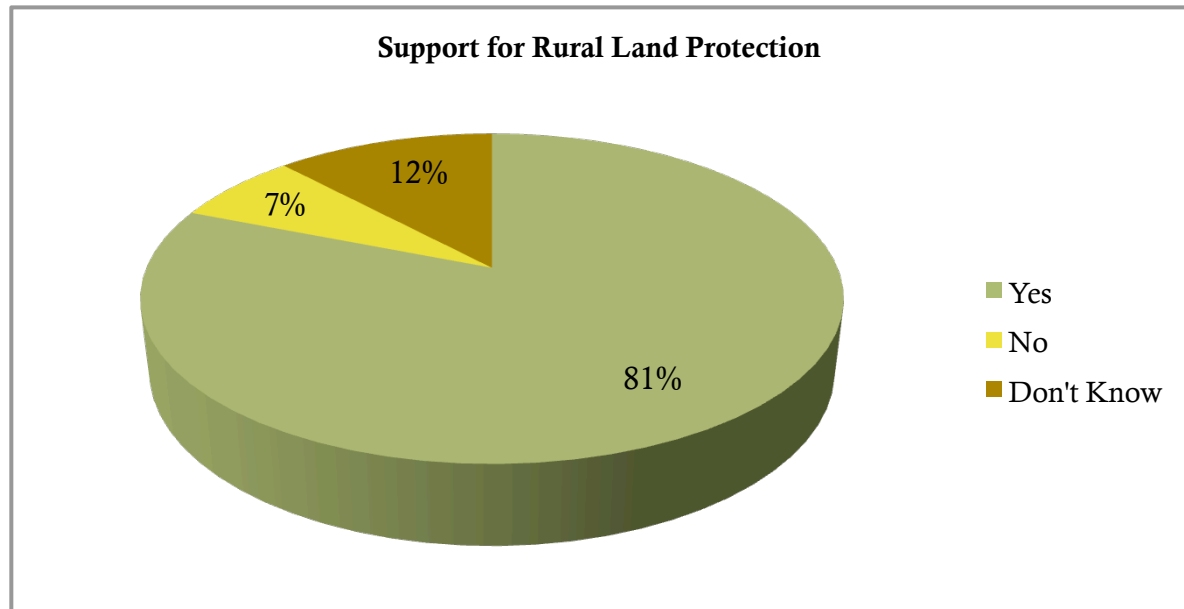
Lexington has a growth boundary that separates urban and rural land in Fayette County. Every 5 years, through community input, the Planning Commission must decide whether or not to expand the urban service boundary onto rural farmland, to accommodate more subdivisions, places of business and industrial sites. Do you FAVOR expansion of the urban services boundary or OPPOSE expansion of the urban services boundary.



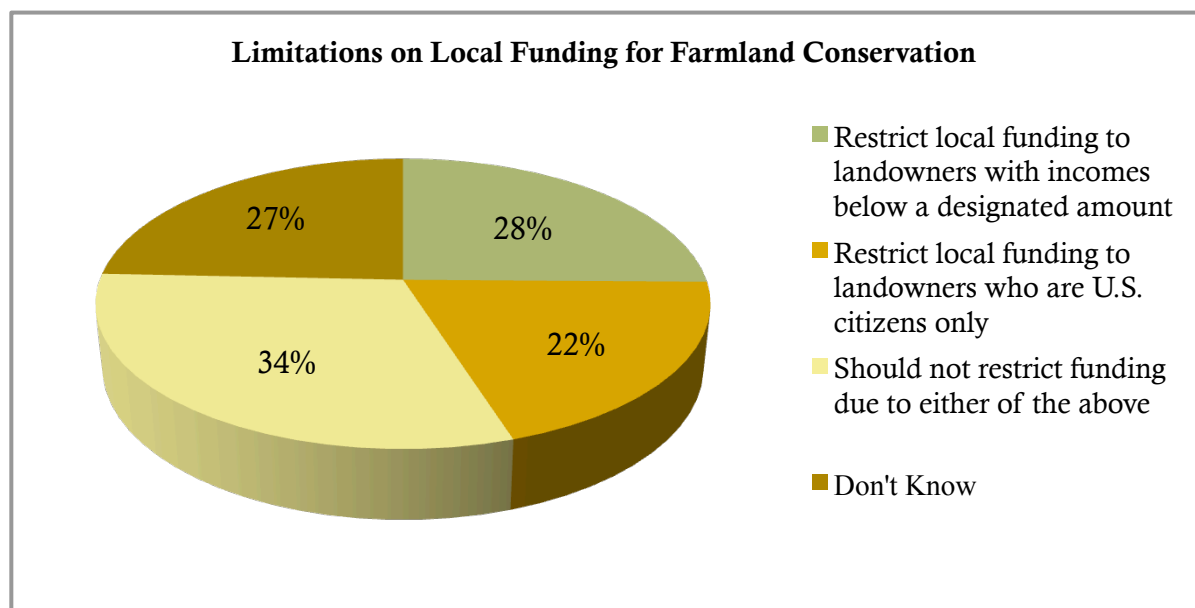
- Respondents more likely than average (72%) to oppose expansion include the following segments:
 - Age 55-64 78%
 - Residents of the following areas:
 - South Central 78%
 - Southwest Central 76%
 - West Central 76%
 - East 78%
 - Downtown 77%
 - West Fayette 76%
- Those who are more likely than the average (12%) to favor expansion include:
 - Males 15%
 - Residents of the following areas:
 - Southeast Fayette 20%
 - North 16%

2.8 Support for Rural Land Protection & Limitations on Local Funding for Farmland Conservation

Do you support utilizing public funds for the permanent protection of 50,000 acres in the rural area for agriculture, food security and environmental protection only?



Do you believe Lexington should limit local funds for farmland conservation according to any of the following restrictions?

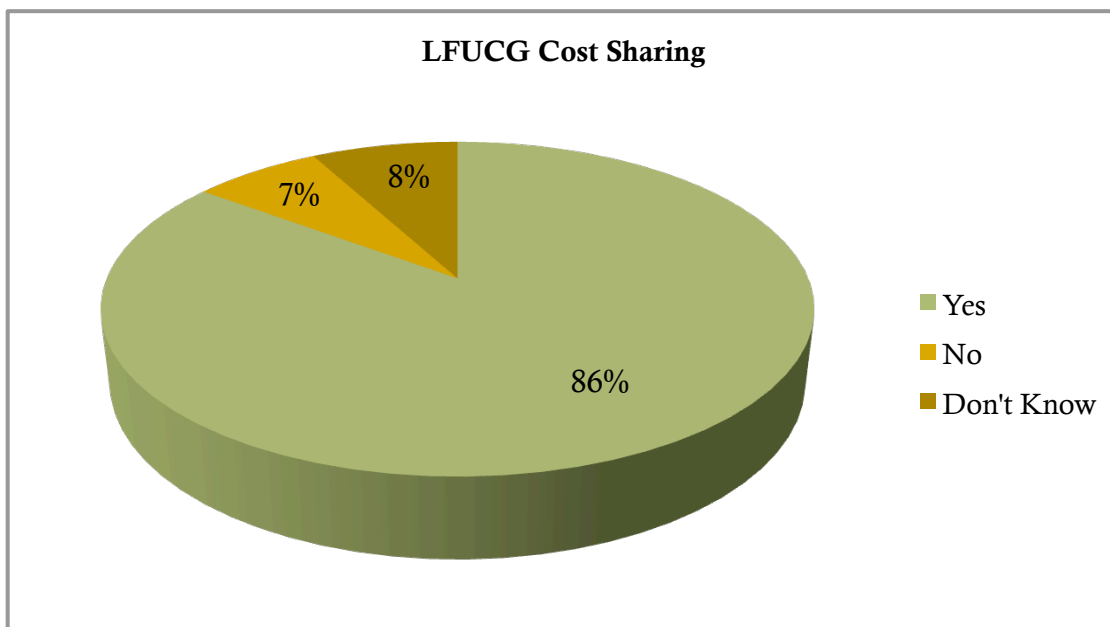


2.8.1 Support for Rural Land Protection

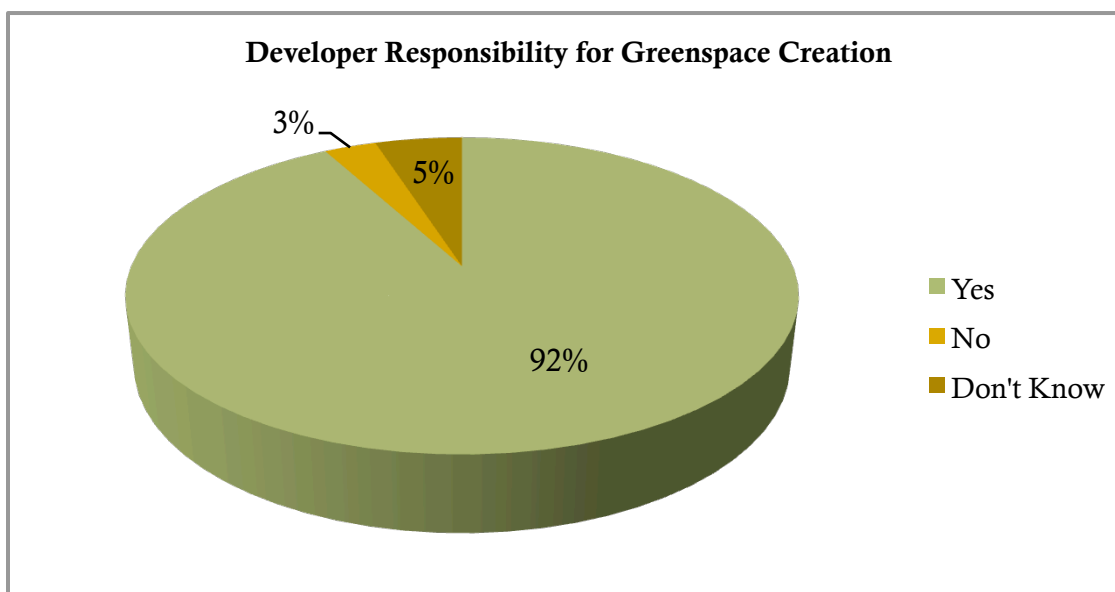
- Respondents more likely than the average (81%) to support the use of public funds for farmland conservation include:
 - Females 83%
 - 18-34 age group 84%
 - 55-64 age group 85%
 - Those residing outside the urban service area 88%
 - Residents of the following areas:
 - South Central 86%
 - Southwest Central 83%
 - West Central 84%
 - East 83%
 - Downtown 89%
 - West Fayette 86%
 - South 85%

2.9 LFUCG Cost Sharing & Developer Responsibility for Greenspace Creation

Do you support LFUCG providing cost sharing and environmental grants to nonprofit organizations and property owners for projects such as installing rain gardens, community gardens, landscaping and tree planting?



Should developers be responsible for creating greenspaces and building neighborhood trails as basic infrastructure, as they do sidewalks and streets?



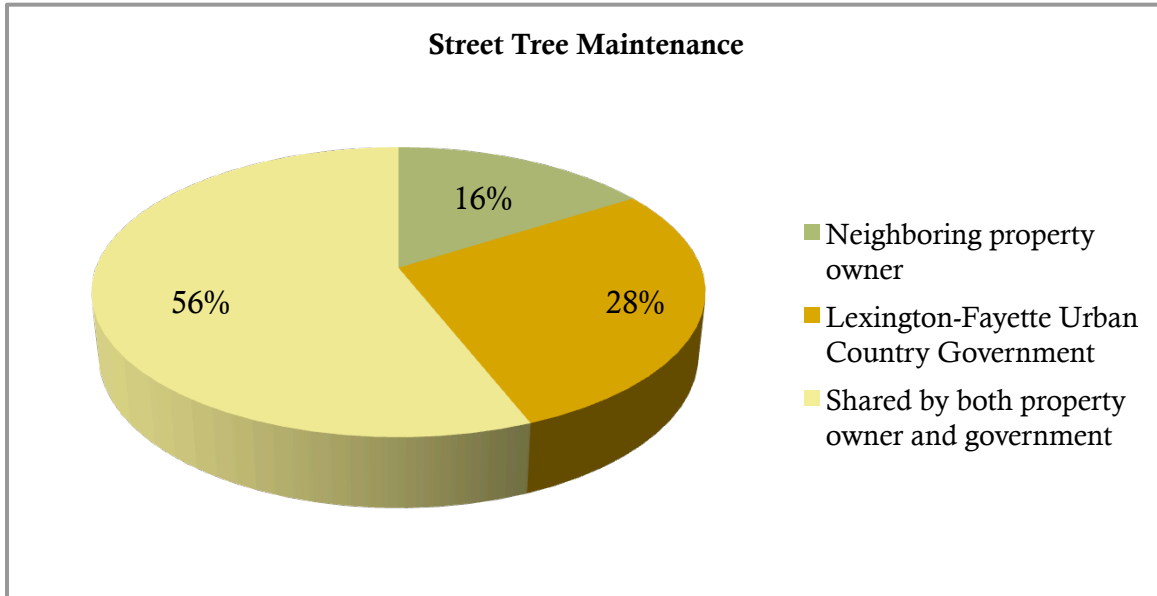
2.9.1 LFUCG Cost Sharing & Developer Responsibility for Greenspace Creation

- Respondents more likely than the average (86%) to support cost sharing and grants for green community projects include:
 - Females 88%
 - 18-34 age group 88%
 - Residents of the following areas:
 - South Central 89%
 - Southwest Central 91%
 - West Central 88%
 - Downtown 94%

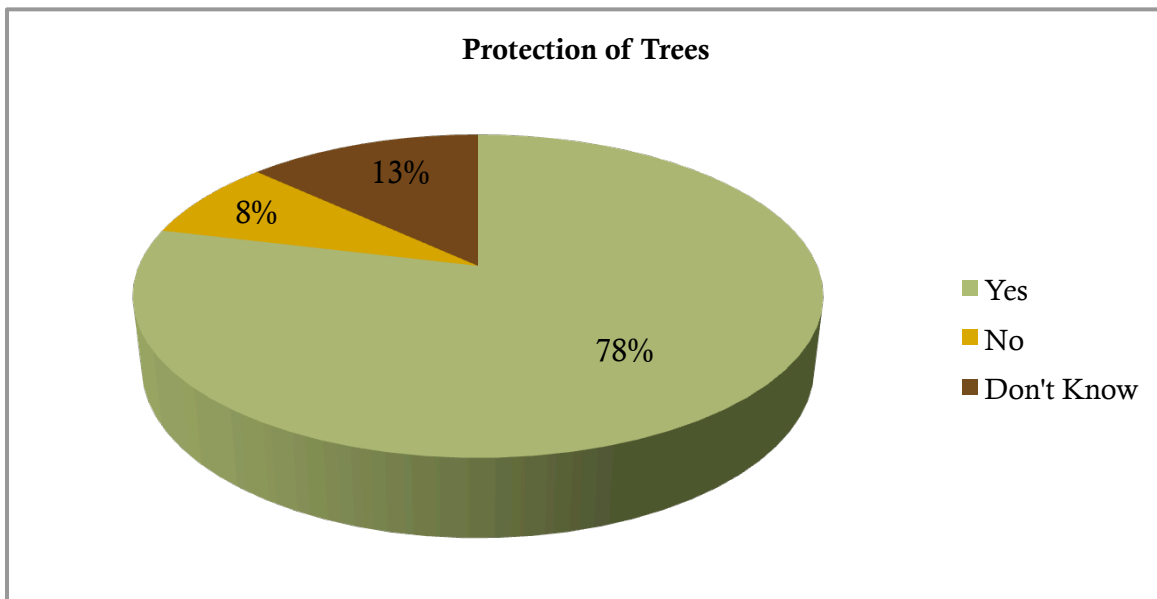
- Those more likely than the average (92%) to believe that developers should be responsible for creating greenspaces as part of basic infrastructure include:
 - 45-54 age group 95%
 - 55-64 age group 94%
 - Residents of the following areas:
 - South Central 94%
 - Southwest Central 94%
 - Downtown 94%
 - Southeast Fayette 94%

2.10 Street Tree Maintenance & Protection of Trees

The maintenance of street trees located in the public right-of-way between the curb and sidewalk is the responsibility of the neighboring property owner. Who should be responsible for the maintenance of street trees?



Trees are currently protected only in historic districts or during the new development process. Do you think that trees of a significant species, size and condition should have additional protections?



2.10.1 Street Tree Maintenance & Protection of Trees

- Survey respondents who are more likely than the average (56%) to feel that street tree maintenance should be a shared responsibility include:
 - Males 58%
 - 55-64 age group 61%
 - 65+ age group 59%
 - Residents of the following areas:
 - South Central 62%
 - West Central 62%
 - West Fayette 58%
 - North 59%

- Respondents who are more likely than the average (78%) to feel that there should be additional protection for significant species of trees include:
 - Females 80%
 - 45-54 age group 80%
 - Residents of the following areas:
 - West Central 86%
 - Downtown 85%
 - Southwest Fayette 81%
 - South 82%

Appendix A

LFUCG Comparison to the 1996 Greenspace Survey

In 1996, the Greenspace Commission funded a Greenspace Survey to measure Fayette County citizens' perception of greenspace. The survey revealed their opinions on the importance, types, needs, use, availability and funding of greenspace.

While the subject matter was similar, a direct comparison between the 1996 Survey and this 2016 Survey cannot be performed since the methodology and questions differed and the significant gap in time. Differences include:

- The 1996 Survey was conducted completely by random telephone calls within specified zip codes; the 2016 Survey was a digital format (plus a few hard copies) where participants were notified through email listservs, websites and social media.
- Analysis from 1996 Survey showed that people rated greenspaces relative to how they perceived the greenspace's public access/use. To avoid this issue, the 2016 Survey asked respondents to rate types of greenspace based on their contribution to Lexington's unique identity and quality of life.
- The 2016 Survey described the different types of greenspace, and groupings of greenspaces and/or activities within greenspaces were not consistent between the two surveys.
- Issue questions changed from one survey to the next. The 1996 Survey asked about official attention to greenspace, funding mechanisms, how well services were provided, and the conflict between growth and preservation. The 2016 Survey asked about expansion of the Urban Service Area, PDR funding, the role of developers in providing greenspace, rural recreation and responsibility for street trees.
- The 1996 Survey asked about usage only for parks. Specific questions about parks were not included in the 2016 Survey since the Division of Parks and Recreation was conducting its own survey at the same time. However, respondents wrote many comments in the 2016 Survey about park needs.

Despite the inability to compare directly, there are similar results from both surveys, including:

- Greenspace and horse farm preservation are considered by the respondents as important components to our culture, and the loss of them would be detrimental to the community's identity, quality of life or the respondents' lives.
- Respondents desire more large, open areas of greenspace. Analysis from the 1996 Survey determined that the importance was due to the ability of open space to serve more people than specialized spaces such as ball fields (access).
- A high percentage of the participants visit greenspaces, specifically parks
- The 2016 Survey results indicate respondents placing a greater importance on trails, nature areas and green streets (1996 called landscaping roadways).

- It appears that support for funding rural preservation increased dramatically in the 2016 Survey (Note: 1996 was prior to the creation of the PDR Program)
- The availability of trails and passive recreation was considered low in 1996. From the 2016 written comments, numerous respondents also remarked that there is a need for trails and more open space.

Appendix B

LFUCG Greenspace Survey Written Comments Summary

The 2016 Greenspace Survey included two questions in which respondents could write in their answers. They included:

- #6. If any of the areas need improvement or attention, please note and provide a description of what is needed.
- #15. Please provide any other comments or suggestions you have about greenspace in Fayette County.

For both questions combined, there were 618 comments submitted. LFUCG performed analysis on the open-ended comments.

Many of the 618 comments covered multiple types of greenspace. Therefore, the comments were divided among the different types for analysis. After re-organizing by type, LFUCG counted 957 comments made.

Type of Greenspace	# Times Mentioned
Greenspace, General	126
Parks	160
Trails, Bike/Ped, Access	122
Greenways/Natural Areas	69
Trees	172
Corridors	68
Cemeteries	4
Gardens/Food	6
Downtown	16
Landscaping	9
Traditional Neighborhoods	79
Urban-Rural	93
Misc, Non-Greenspace	33

For each type of greenspace, comments were grouped accordingly for the following categories:

Category	# Comments	Description
More/protect	252	Increase size, acreage, number; protect existing
Facility	228	Features, activities, user groups, design, type, improve
Policy	151	Specific policy, funding, regulation
Benefit	59	Benefits of greenspace or type of greenspace
Access/Connectivity	52	Accessibility; connect to system
Program / Education	58	Programs, incentives or education needed
Maintenance	91	Maintenance issues
Opinion/Other Place	92	An opinion or reference to another city
Development	86	Problems with development or how to improve
Urban-Rural only	205	Expand, Scenic, Ag, Natural, Landscape, Recreation
Specific location	24	Specific location of a greenspace
Bike lanes/routes	9	Bike facilities within ROW

Some keywords include:

Greenspace: protect, enjoy, neighborhoods, losing to development, beauty,

Facilities: atmosphere, amenities, options, signage, light, vibrant, singles, families, low impact features and activities, safety.

Benefit: runoff, beauty, unique, offset pollution, character, great place to live, essential, equity, health, offset technology, air quality, quality of life, attracts young new companies, very important for future, create “community”, reduce obesity, enjoy, shade, habitat, water quality, tourism

Policy: Northside neglected, economic classes, older neighborhoods neglected, less privileged, accessibility, infill, better development, priorities, neighborhoods

Urban-Rural: no expansion, infill, protect agriculture, natural areas, scenic/rural landscape, identity, character, recreation, support PDR

Sample Quotes:

You cannot underestimate the value of a city that is green.

More places to walk/hike and open/natural spaces.

Availability and accessibility of greenspace is essential for human growth and development.

Incorporate parks in new development areas

The city should NOT expand the urban service boundary onto rural farmland to accommodate more subdivisions.

Better walking/biking trails to connect all urban areas are desperately needed.

Need more equestrian trails

Fayette County is severely lacking in outdoor/nature recreation opportunities

More natural landscapes with native plants

Plant more biodiverse native trees and shrubs

Require developers to work around standing trees

Focus on treelined streets

More usable, family friendly greenspace in the center of downtown

New neighborhood do not reflect the values of traditional neighborhoods, and should be required to maintain at least some feature of that subset