

# North Carolina Center *for* Voter Education

## **Research Study of Local Voter Opinion in the 2001 NC Elections**

A Report from the NC Center for Voter Education

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## **I. INTRODUCTION - THE NC CENTER FOR VOTER EDUCATION**

### **An Organization Dedicated to Finding Solutions**

The NC Center for Voter Education is a 501(c)(3) non-partisan, non-profit organization. By examining our current system of campaign finance and election laws, and by promoting research and public discussion about the electoral process, the center hopes to raise citizen awareness and make the election process more inclusive, increasing participation in elections.

The Center believes we can improve the quality and responsiveness of our election process. Opinion research has been a key component in identifying areas of public dissatisfaction with the current system and in suggesting areas of change. In response to problems identified by voters, the Center has examined proposals designed to reduce the cost of running for office, restore people's faith in our electoral system, and increase the number of people participating in the election system.

A cross section of concerned educational, political, and community leaders from across North Carolina established the Center. Its work has been made possible primarily through a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Former U.S. Senator Robert Morgan chairs the Center's Board of Directors. The Executive Director is Chris Heagarty and its headquarters are in Raleigh.

### **The Genesis of this Study**

The Center conducted a Triangle Political Journalists Roundtable earlier in 2001, in conjunction with the Program on Southern Politics, Media, & Public Life at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. One of recommendations of the roundtable was to conduct a regional public opinion poll of voter attitudes, independent of any political or candidate organization, about local government issues prior to the 2001 local government elections. The resulting study, which you are reading, was produced with input from local print and broadcast reporters.

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## II. NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

The NC Center for Voter Education contracted with the Strategic Analysis & Messaging to conduct a regional poll on important issues of interest concerning the upcoming local government elections.

This report represents the results of a scientific survey of public opinion among 1274 likely voters in the municipalities of Raleigh, Durham, and Cary, North Carolina, the three most populous cities in the Research triangle region conducted between the dates of September 24 - 27, 2001 by Strategic Analysis & Messaging.

The poll was based upon telephone interviews with a sampling of 487 registered Raleigh voters, 403 registered Durham voters, and 384 Cary voters who are likely to vote in the 2001 local government elections. The sample population was scientifically selected to meet rigid criteria of random selection and geographical allocation. Survey results for a sample of 1274 provides a sampling error factor of plus or minus 2.75% at a .95 level of confidence. Results for various geographical areas and cross-tabulations contained in this report vary depending upon the number of respondents in each cell. Sampling error factors for the Raleigh, Durham and Cary subsample were, respectively +/- 4.44%, +/- 4.48%, and +/- 4.99%. . To obtain results across all three municipalities Strategic Analysis & Messaging weighted responses by respondents in each city by percentage of population represented by that municipality.

The telephone interviews were conducted by contractors who were trained and experienced in telephone interview techniques. Completed interviews were checked for compliance with sample specifications and interview instructions, coded, and computer processed using Strategic Analysis & Messaging's equipment and trained, experienced personnel.

The Data section of this report contains cross-tabulations of major items contained in the interview questionnaire. Data discussed in this report were taken from computerized tabulations.

Strategic Analysis & Messaging follows established and accepted procedures for sample selection, survey design, and analysis. All survey research, however, is subject to a margin of statistical error.

This report was prepared by the staff of the NC Center for Voter Education based on raw data and materials provided by Strategic Analysis & Messaging.

### III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study found that while voters in the three municipalities of Raleigh, Durham, and Cary shared common views on some issues, significant differences exist in how they view their cities, and in what issues are the most important to them. The study showed that the issue of growth has become the predominant issue to voters in Raleigh and Cary, though less so in Durham.

The study revealed a great deal about the voter-education process, such as a general satisfaction with the local media's coverage of election news, that most information about local elections is gathered from newspaper articles, and that there is no correlation between voters' like or dislike of a news source and their reliance upon it for information.

Further, the study revealed that the incumbent mayors of the three municipalities are well thought of by voters in their city, even though there is some public sentiment to replace incumbent council members in each city.

#### **Key Findings:**

##### *Growth*

- Voters in Raleigh and Cary generally agree that their cities are moving in the right direction, while voters in Durham are less confident.

- When asked what issue, more than any other, voters wanted to know about before making their decisions about which candidates to support, voters in Raleigh and Cary overwhelmingly said growth and the environment. In Durham, growth trailed such issues as education, taxes, and crime.

- Voters in all three cities believe that developers have too much influence in their community, and reject the argument that neighborhood groups have too much influence in their community. Further, there is strong agreement that developers should pay for a larger share of the costs to provide roads, schools, and city services to their developments.

- More voters in all three cities support a regional rail system as a way to reduce traffic than support building more roads. However, a majority of voters in all three cities support both a regional rail system and more road construction.

- Despite concerns over growth, a majority of voters in all three cities are pleased with the growth in their communities.

##### *Voter Education*

- An overwhelming number of voters in all three cities say they get the most information used to make choices about whom to vote for from newspaper articles, followed by television news.

- Most voters believe the media in their community provide enough information about candidates and issues in local elections.

- Despite voters' preference for newspapers as a news source, many voters had negative impressions of some local newspapers. The vast majority of people had very favorable impressions of news radio despite it being a third or fourth choice for news.

-Durham voters generally have favorable impressions of the print media. Raleigh and Cary voters are slightly more skeptical.

#### *Head to Head Political Match-Ups*

- A plurality of Raleigh voters indicate that if city council elections were held today they would vote to retain the incumbent. A significant number would vote for someone else or are undecided.

- In Durham a plurality of voters indicated that if the election were held today, they would vote for someone other than the current council incumbents. A significant, though lower number, would support the incumbents and almost one third are undecided.

- In Cary, a plurality of the voters are undecided as to whether they would vote for the incumbents or challengers for city council. More say they would vote against incumbents than would retain them.

- In Raleigh, a majority of voters say they would re-elect mayor Paul Coble. He enjoys a favorability rating of 2.71 favorable impressions for every 1 unfavorable impression.

- In Durham, a large plurality of voters say they would re-elect mayor Nick Tennyson. He enjoys a favorability rating of 4.9 favorable impressions for every 1 unfavorable impression.

- Though the Mayor of Cary's election will not be held this year, the Center tested his support. A plurality of voters say they would re-elect Glen Lang mayor if the election were held today. He enjoys a favorability rating of 1.61 favorable impressions for every 1 unfavorable impression.

- In the Raleigh mayor's race, challenger Charles Meeker received the support of 23.4% of those polled. He received a favorability rating of 1.86 favorable impressions for every 1 unfavorable impression. Challenger Joel Cornette received the support of 5.7% of those polled. 15.4% of the Raleigh voters surveyed were undecided.

- In the Durham mayor's race, challenger Bill Bell received the support of 24.4% of those polled. He received a favorability rating of 1.88 favorable impressions for every 1 unfavorable impression. Challengers Brenda Burnette, Stephen Hopkins, and Ralph McKinney received much less support, 2.2%, 0.4%, and 4.1% respectively. 24.3% of the Durham voters surveyed were undecided.

- In Cary, where there is no mayor's race this year, the Center tested the support of Cary Town Council candidate and Glen Lang critic Nelson Dollar. He received a favorability rating of 1.87 negative impressions for every 1 favorable impression.

#### *Other Issues*

- A majority of the voters in each of the three cities believe that the \$4,000 limit per candidate placed on campaign contributors is about right. In Raleigh and Cary, those who said the limit was too high outnumbered those who said it was too low by 3:1. In Durham, those who said the limit was too high outnumbered those who said it was too low by 6:1.

- The use of "red-light cameras" at intersections was supported by a majority of the voters in Raleigh and in Cary. In Durham, a slight plurality favored their use.

- Among Cary voters, 40.6% of those surveyed supported the towns plan to provide public financing for political candidates who agreed to spending limits. 37.1% opposed spending tax dollars on campaigns. 22.3% were undecided.

## IV. GROWTH, TRAFFIC, & OTHER ISSUES

### *Growth, in general*

Growth, as a campaign issue, has not captured Triangle voters' attention in the past as it has this year. Only in the Cary local elections of 1999 did the issue of growth surpass such familiar campaign themes as lowering taxes, fighting crime, and the public funding of buildings, the arts, and roads.

This year, voter opinion reveals that in the cities of Raleigh and Cary, a candidate's position on managing growth is the issue most influential to voters. In Durham, fewer voters identified growth as being the central issue; they were more concerned about several other issues.

*QUESTION: What one issue, more than any other would you want to know about when you make your decisions on whom to vote for in local elections this year?*

*\*Short responses were recorded verbatim then grouped into the following categories.*

<b>Question 6</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Growth/Environment</i>	28.3%	12.4%	42.9%	25.8%
<i>Education/Kids</i>	19.1%	22.8%	18.5%	20.2%
<i>Taxes/Spending</i>	19.3%	18.2%	15.9%	18.3%
<i>Gov't/Ethics/Character</i>	6.7%	12.7%	5.8%	8.4%
<i>Traffic</i>	10.8%	1.4%	6.3%	7.1%
<i>Crime/Safety</i>	3.8%	14.1%	0.5%	6.5%
<i>Economy/Jobs</i>	2.7%	3.5%	2.1%	2.8%
<i>Social Issues</i>	1.6%	0.9%	1.1%	1.3%
<i>Healthcare/Seniors</i>	1.1%	1.7%	0.0%	1.1%
<i>Terrorism</i>	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%	0.4%
<i>Misc</i>	6.5%	11.5%	6.9%	8.2%

Many other issues identified by voters relate to managing growth, such as reducing traffic congestion, stimulating the local economy, and protecting air quality and the environment. Candidates in Raleigh and Cary have used the issue of managing growth to talk about other issues - for example, the impact of regulating growth on the local economy or the affect of growth over traffic congestion. When these issues are separated from growth they each rank highly, but growth continues to be an important issue.

This was illustrated later in the poll: voters were asked again about the issues that were important to them, this time being prompted with a series of issues and being asked to rank them on a ten-point scale.

*QUESTION: Now, still thinking about your community, Using a ten-point scale, with one being an extremely low priority and ten being an extremely high priority, please tell me how important the following issues are to you personally?*

The (first/next) issue is... On a scale of one to ten, with ten being AN EXTREMELY HIGH PRIORITY and ONE being AN EXTREMELY LOW PRIORITY, how important is that issue to you personally?)

(ORDER OF ASKING ISSUES ROTATED TOP TO BOTTOM – BOTTOM TO TOP)

Question 16	Raleigh		Durham		Cary		Triangle	
	Mean	Std	Mean	Std	Mean	Std	Mean	Std
Increasing the numb. of parks & open spaces	6.17	2.6	5.79	2.8	6.34	2.6	6.07	2.7
Reducing traffic congestion	7.93	2.3	7.59	2.6	7.99	2.2	7.83	2.4
Improving our Schools	7.97	2.4	8.63	2.2	7.91	2.4	8.17	2.3
Improving the local economy & providing jobs	7.80	2.3	8.02	2.3	7.30	2.3	7.79	2.3
Reducing Local Taxes	6.78	2.9	7.51	2.7	6.45	2.8	6.96	2.8
Improving Air Quality	7.35	2.3	7.57	2.5	6.74	2.7	7.32	2.4
Managing our growth	7.62	2.5	7.68	2.6	7.27	2.9	7.58	2.6

In Raleigh and Cary, managing growth remained in the top four issues, surpassed only by improving schools (not a primary function of municipal government) and growth-related issues such as reducing traffic and improving the local economy. In Durham, growth, which had not been one of top issues mentioned by voters, compares favorably in priority to other issues.

Interestingly, two issues often associated with how cities manage growth, reducing taxes and increasing parks and open spaces, ranked near the bottom in terms of priority.

*The role of developers*

The issue of managing growth is often cast as a conflict between developers and neighborhood groups. Particularly in Raleigh and Cary, some candidates have campaigned on questioning the role of the real estate and development industry in local government.

Voters in all three municipalities were asked about the influence of developers and neighborhood groups within their community. In Raleigh and Cary, voters agreed by a ratio of 2:1 with the statement " Developers have too much influence in our community". In Durham, voters agreed with the same statement by a ratio of more than 3:1.

*QUESTION: Now I am going to read you several statements that people have made about your community. Please tell whether you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or whether you are undecided.*

*PROMPT: Do you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or are you are undecided about that statement?*

*“Developers have too much influence in our community.”*

Question 30	Raleigh	Durham	Cary	Triangle
Strongly Agree	28.3%	30.0%	25.8%	28.4%
Agree	34.3%	38.4%	34.3%	35.7%
Undecided	9.7%	11.5%	11.7%	10.6%
Disagree	21.6%	17.7%	24.4%	20.8%
Strongly Disagree	6.0%	2.4%	3.8%	4.4%

When asked the same the same question about the influence of neighborhood groups that are often in conflict with developers, voters disagreed with the statement that these groups had too much influence in their community. This disagreement was particularly strong in Raleigh and Durham.

*QUESTION: Now I am going to read you several statements that people have made about your community. Please tell whether you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or whether you are undecided.*

*PROMPT: Do you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or are you are undecided about that statement?*

*“Neighborhood groups have too much influence in our community.”*

<b>Question 31</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	8.3%	6.7%	10.2%	8.1%
<i>Agree</i>	16.9%	14.1%	20.8%	16.7%
<i>Undecided</i>	13.7%	10.1%	13.0%	12.4%
<i>Disagree</i>	50.5%	60.7%	47.7%	53.4%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	10.5%	8.4%	8.3%	9.5%

The perception that developers have unfair influence can be seen when voters were asked if they agreed with the statement that developers should pay a larger share of the costs to provide roads, schools, and city services to their developments. A large majority of voters in all three municipalities agreed with that statement. In fact, more voters said that developers should pay more of their costs than said developers had too much influence.

*QUESTION: Now I am going to read you several statements that people have made about your community. Please tell whether you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or whether you are undecided.*

*PROMPT: Do you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or are you are undecided about that statement?*

*“Developers should pay for a larger share of the costs to provide roads, schools, and city services to their developments”*

<b>Question 33</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	31.2%	34.4%	28.3%	31.8%
<i>Agree</i>	43.4%	45.9%	43.4%	44.3%
<i>Undecided</i>	9.8%	6.0%	8.0%	8.2%
<i>Disagree</i>	11.1%	11.2%	13.2%	11.5%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	4.4%	2.4%	7.1%	4.2%

Despite an impression that developers have too much influence and should pay more for services to their developments, a majority of voters in all three municipalities were pleased with the growth in their communities. About one-third of the voters in each municipality were not pleased.

*QUESTION: Now I am going to read you several statements that people have made about your community. Please tell whether you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or whether you are undecided.*

*PROMPT: Do you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or are you are undecided about that statement?*

*“I am pleased with the growth in our community.”*

<b>Question 34</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	11.1%	10.1%	9.8%	10.6%
<i>Agree</i>	44.8%	44.1%	43.9%	44.4%
<i>Undecided</i>	8.9%	13.7%	12.2%	11.0%
<i>Disagree</i>	25.2%	26.5%	22.9%	25.3%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	10.0%	5.5%	11.2%	8.7%

*Traffic: roads vs. mass transit*

Reducing traffic was one of the issues most often mentioned by Raleigh voters as influencing their vote, and was assigned a high priority among issues by voters in all three cities.

While there was not clear consensus about how to deal with traffic congestion, there was agreement that it should be dealt with. In addition to being identified as a top issue, a majority of voters in each city endorsed different plans for fighting traffic.

Almost 2/3 of voters in each city endorse building a commuter rail system to reduce traffic. This response is higher than in previous surveys reviewed by the Center. A majority of voters in all three cities supported building more roads to reduce traffic congestion.

*QUESTION: Now I am going to read you several statements that people have made about your community. Please tell whether you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or whether you are undecided.*

*PROMPT: Do you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or are you are undecided about that statement?*

*“Our community needs a commuter rail system to reduce traffic.”*

<b>Question 28</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	24.8%	25.9%	24.6%	25.1%
<i>Agree</i>	42.3%	40.0%	38.9%	41.0%
<i>Undecided</i>	11.5%	9.4%	10.4%	10.6%
<i>Disagree</i>	15.2%	19.4%	21.8%	17.7%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	6.2%	5.3%	4.3%	5.6%

*“Our community needs to build more roads to reduce traffic congestion.”*

<b>Question 29</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	15.2%	13.9%	15.0%	14.7%
<i>Agree</i>	44.8%	38.1%	42.5%	42.2%
<i>Undecided</i>	10.4%	12.7%	9.3%	11.0%
<i>Disagree</i>	25.8%	28.8%	29.0%	27.3%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	3.8%	6.5%	4.2%	4.8%

Another traffic related question, not necessarily related to managing growth, concerned the use of automatic cameras positioned to take pictures of motorists running stoplights.

The use of these cameras was supported by a slim majority of voters in Raleigh and Cary. In Durham, support for using the cameras was almost evenly divided.

*QUESTION: Now I am going to read you several statements that people have made about your community. Please tell whether you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or whether you are undecided.*

*PROMPT: Do you strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or are you are undecided about that statement?*

*“Our community should use ‘red-light cameras’ at intersections to make our streets safer.”*

<b>Question 32</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	14.8%	13.2%	14.5%	14.2%
<i>Agree</i>	39.0%	31.5%	36.4%	36.1%
<i>Undecided</i>	9.2%	11.8%	11.2%	10.4%
<i>Disagree</i>	27.4%	28.8%	28.0%	28.0%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	9.6%	14.7%	9.8%	11.3%

*Other Issues*

The Center also employed several questions concerning campaign financing and reform.

In general, a majority of voters felt that campaign contributors' \$4,000 limit per candidate per election was about right. More than a quarter of those surveyed thought this limit was too high.

*Question: Campaign contributors can give up to \$4,000 per election to each local government candidate. Would you say this amount is too high, too low, about right.?*

<b>Question 26</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Too High</i>	25.9%	30.7%	29.5%	28.1%
<i>Too Low</i>	8.3%	4.4%	10.5%	7.4%
<i>About Right</i>	54.3%	51.1%	52.0%	52.8%
<i>Undecided (DO NOT READ)</i>	11.4%	13.8%	8.0%	11.6%

The Center has also been following the development of Cary's public financing program for council campaigns. We asked Cary voters what they thought of the plan, using the arguments put forward by supporters to describe what they claim it will do and using the arguments put forward by opponents to describe opposition to the program.

Cary voters were very divided on the issue with a slight plurality of voters supporting the program and almost a quarter of the voters undecided about the issue.

*QUESTION TO CARY SAMPLE ONLY: In the Cary elections, there is a plan to provide candidates with money from a public fund if the candidates agree to spending limits and if they do not take special interest contributions. Supporters say this will reduce the influence of special interests. Opponents believe tax dollars should not be spent on campaigns. Generally speaking, do you support this plan, oppose this plan, or do you not have an opinion?*

40.6% Support Plan  
37.1% Oppose Plan  
22.3% Undecided

## IV. THE VOTER EDUCATION PROCESS

The Center's study revealed many things about the decision-making process voters use to seek information about political candidates. The Center wanted to discover where voters get their information about local elections, their satisfaction with the information available, and how this information impacts their decision.

The conventional wisdom says that voters want better coverage of local government elections. The amount of time dedicated by the media to these stories has steadily declined over the years. However, on average, two-thirds of voters believe that the amount of information they receive is sufficient.

*QUESTION: Do you think that media based in your community provide enough information about candidates and issues in local elections?*

<b>Question 18</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Yes	69.0%	65.7%	65.3%	67.3%
No	25.9%	29.9%	29.1%	27.8%
Undecided/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	5.1%	4.4%	5.5%	4.9%

Voters in all three cities cited newspaper articles as their primary source of getting information about local elections. Television news was a distant second. Community organizations were a third source for information. Sources of opinion, such as newspaper endorsements and radio talk shows were lightly regarded by voters.

*QUESTION: Where do you get most of the information you use to make your choices about whom to vote for in local elections?*

<b>Question17</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Newspaper Articles	48.4%	58.7%	58.1%	53.4%
Newspaper Endorsements	4.3%	6.3%	3.7%	4.8%
Television News	16.3%	11.5%	10.7%	13.8%
Radio Talk Shows	2.1%	1.0%	0.9%	1.5%
Radio News	3.5%	2.2%	2.3%	2.9%
Internet	5.5%	1.7%	5.6%	4.3%
Candidate Mailers	2.8%	1.4%	2.8%	2.4%
Candidate TV or Radio Commercials	3.3%	2.6%	3.3%	3.1%
Community Groups	6.5%	7.5%	6.0%	6.7%
Other	7.3%	7.2%	6.5%	7.1%

If newspaper articles are the most often cited source for information, it would follow that most voters should have a moderately favorable view of them. Conversely, if radio news is lightly cited as a source for news, one could assume that voters regarded it unfavorably. This did not prove to be the case at all. In fact, in many cases, voters gave favorable marks to news radio and unfavorable marks to newspapers.

Voters were asked to rank a number of news organizations on a ten-point scale. This first set of numbers , based on a three city average, shows a generally positive "favorable to unfavorable" (F/U) ratio for each news source listed.

**Average Name Identification & Favorable/Unfavorable Ratings**

	Very Unfavorable		Very Favorable			No Rate	Never Heard	Mean*	Total Unfav	Total Fav	F/U Ratio	Total Recog	Effective Recog
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10								
News & Observer	12.5	10.6	24.0	27.8	17.7	3.4	4.0	6.07	23.2	45.4	1.96:1	96.0	92.5
The Herald-Sun	8.6	7.2	16.0	14.7	9.8	15.1	28.1	5.77	15.8	24.5	1.55:1	72.0	56.5
The Independent	11.5	6.4	16.4	12.5	5.8	17.2	30.1	5.17	18.0	18.3	1.02:1	69.9	52.7
680 WPTF Radio	6.1	4.5	13.7	19.2	18.6	15.6	22.3	6.81	10.6	37.8	3.57:1	77.7	62.1
The Spectator	8.9	9.3	22.4	18.7	7.3	15.1	18.3	5.62	18.1	26.1	1.44:1	81.7	66.6

\*Standard Deviations: N&O 2.7, H-Sun 2.7, Independent 2.7, WPTF 2.6, Spectator 2.4.

However, when these numbers are broken down by city, we see that Durham voters tend to hold each source in very high regard, skewing the average. Voters in Raleigh and Cary, however, are much more skeptical of the print media.

**Raleigh Name Identification & Favorable/Unfavorable Ratings**

	Very Unfavorable		Very Favorable			No Rate	Never Heard	Mean*	Total Unfav	Total Fav	F/U Ratio	Total Recog	Effective Recog
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10								
News & Observer	13.5	11.9	27.6	27.1	18.7	0.3	1.0	5.94	25.5	45.6	1.78:1	99.0	98.7
The Herald-Sun	8.3	5.9	10.8	9.3	2.9	21.0	41.8	4.91	14.2	12.2	-1.16:1	58.3	37.3
The Independent	12.6	6.8	17.1	12.5	5.5	13.1	32.3	5.02	19.5	17.8	-1.10:1	67.7	54.6
680 WPTF Radio	6.2	5.0	14.1	21.9	23.4	11.9	17.5	6.98	11.2	45.3	4.04:1	82.5	70.6
The Spectator	8.5	11.6	23.7	20.9	6.9	12.1	16.5	5.61	20.1	27.7	1.38:1	83.6	71.5

\*Standard Deviations: N&O 2.7, H-Sun 2.7, Independent 2.7, WPTF 2.6, Spectator 2.4.

**Durham Name Identification & Favorable/Unfavorable Ratings**

	Very Unfavorable		Very Favorable			No Rate	Never Heard	Mean*	Total Unfav	Total Fav	F/U Ratio	Total Recog	Effective Recog
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10								
News & Observer	10.1	7.4	18.0	27.8	18.0	8.9	9.8	6.44	17.5	45.8	2.62:1	90.2	81.3
The Herald-Sun	8.8	10.3	25.5	26.3	23.6	2.1	3.3	6.45	19.1	49.9	2.61:1	96.7	94.7
The Independent	10.4	5.3	15.5	12.8	7.5	21.8	26.6	5.51	15.8	20.4	1.29:1	73.4	51.6
680 WPTF Radio	6.4	4.2	12.7	12.5	13.0	21.6	29.7	6.44	10.5	25.5	2.43:1	70.3	48.6
The Spectator	7.7	7.0	21.1	13.3	8.7	20.8	21.3	5.71	14.6	22.1	1.51:1	78.6	57.8

\*Standard Deviations: N&O 2.7, H-Sun 2.6, Independent 2.7, WPTF 2.8, Spectator 2.5.

### Cary Name Identification & Favorable/Unfavorable Ratings

	Very Unfavorable		Very Favorable			No Rate	Never Heard	Mean*	Total Unfav	Total Fav	F/U Ratio	Total Recog	Effective Recog
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10								
News & Observer	14.4	13.0	25.5	29.6	14.4	1.9	1.4	5.85	27.4	44.2	1.61:1	98.6	96.7
The Herald-Sun	9.3	4.4	11.7	6.8	1.5	27.3	39.0	4.58	13.7	8.3	-1.65:1	61.4	34.0
The Independent	10.6	7.2	16.3	12.0	3.4	19.7	30.8	4.95	18.2	15.3	-1.19:1	69.4	49.8
680 WPTF Radio	5.2	3.8	14.3	24.3	15.7	14.8	21.9	6.84	9.1	39.7	4.36:1	78.0	63.2
The Spectator	12.2	7.0	21.6	23.0	5.6	12.7	17.8	5.47	19.3	28.8	1.49:1	82.2	69.5

\*Standard Deviations: N&O 2.6, H-Sun 2.5, Independent 2.5, WPTF 2.5, Spectator 2.5.

A final question in regards to the voters' decision-making process was when do voters actually make up their minds about whom to support. This question could help answer when are the best times for news outlets to begin their local election coverage. It would also be useful in evaluating the various strategies candidates use in running for office.

The data, however, does not give us a clear answer to the question, with the majority of voters responding that the timing of their decisions varies from year to year.

The data does suggest that different voters make up their minds at different paces. Most opinions are not solid four weeks before the election, nor are vast numbers of undecided voters available to be persuaded by last-ditch campaign efforts.

*QUESTION: When do you usually make your mind up about whom to vote for in local elections or does it vary from year to year?*

Question 16	Raleigh	Durham	Cary	Triangle
Have already decided	9.2%	7.2%	7.1%	8.2%
Decide two days or less before the election	9.8%	7.9%	8.6%	9.0%
Decide within one week before the election	16.0%	15.8%	18.6%	16.4%
Decide within one month before the election	10.6%	9.1%	11.0%	10.2%
Decide within six weeks before the election	4.1%	3.3%	6.2%	4.2%
Varies From Year to Year	47.5%	53.3%	48.1%	49.2%
Don't Know/Refused (DO NOT READ)	2.7%	3.3%	0.5%	2.5%

## IV. HEAD TO HEAD POLITICAL MATCHUPS

### *About polling support for candidates*

It is often debated as a "chicken or the egg" question: Do surveys reporting which candidate leads in a campaign reflect news of the match-up or do they make the match-up? That is, do horse-race polls directly affect the outcome of the race?

The survey questions that follow ask voters for their opinions on candidates running for elective office. This information should be regarded as a snap-shot of voter attitude at the time the survey was conducted and should not be construed as a prediction of candidate victory or an endorsement of any campaign.

Specifically, asking this information has allowed the Center to match up responses to issue questions to voters supporting specific candidates. This is a useful tool in determining if candidates have effectively conveyed their positions to the voters.

### *Direction of the city*

There was a substantial difference in opinion between voters in Raleigh and Cary from those in Durham. Voters in Raleigh and Cary overwhelmingly agreed that their city was moving in the right direction. A majority of voters in Durham stated that things in Durham were on the right track, but far fewer than those in the other two cities.

The question is useful in measuring overall satisfaction with elected officials and their policies. Even if a city's condition is not directly attributable to its elected officials, they will often get the blame if conditions are bad.

*QUESTION: Would you say that things in your community are moving in the right direction or are off on the wrong track?*

<b>Question 5</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Right Direction</i>	71.5%	58.5%	74.8%	67.8%
<i>Wrong Track</i>	16.3%	22.7%	16.8%	18.5%
<i>No Opinion</i>	12.2%	18.8%	8.4%	13.7%
<i>Refused</i>	*	*	*	*

### *Attitude toward incumbents*

Despite most voters feeling positively about the direction of their city, respondents in Durham and Cary expressed a notable anti-incumbent sentiment. Voters in Raleigh tended to be more supportive of council members already in office.

The plurality of voters in Raleigh (37%) preferred re-electing current office holders for ity council. The plurality of voters in Durham (38.2%) preferred voting for non-incumbents, while the plurality of voters in Cary were undecided (41.7%)

*QUESTION: If the election for City Council of your community were being held today, would you vote to re-elect the current office holders or would you vote for someone else? Would you say:*

<b>Question 15</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
<i>Definitely vote for current office holders</i>	15.7%	14.4%	11.4%	14.5%
<i>Probably vote for current office holders</i>	21.3%	16.8%	15.2%	18.7%
<i>Probably vote for Someone Else</i>	19.3%	19.7%	17.5%	19.2%
<i>Definitely vote for Someone Else</i>	10.4%	18.5%	14.2%	13.8%
<i>Undecided (DO NOT READ)</i>	33.2%	30.7%	41.7%	33.8%

The data seems to suggest that even although most voters feel positively about the direction their city is going, support for incumbents does not seem overwhelming. However, this can be misleading. Just as the Center evaluated various news organizations, the Center surveyed voters about the incumbent mayors in each of the three cities as well as their most notable opponents or critics. Only voters living in the same city as each mayor or opponent, and therefore allowed to vote for or against that person, were allowed to comment on that individual.

Two mayors, Paul Coble of Raleigh and Nick Tennyson of Durham will face a vote for re-election this year. Cary Mayor Glen Lang is not up for re-election this year. Rather than a candidate opposing him in an election, a candidate for another Cary council office who has been an outspoken critic of Lang was chosen for purposes of comparison.

*QUESTION: Now I am going to read you a list of organizations and people in public life, and ask you to rate how you feel about them. Please rate each on a ten-point scale where one means you have a very unfavorable impression of them and ten means you have a very favorable impression. If you haven't heard of someone, or don't know enough to rate them, just say so.*

### **Average Name Identification & Favorable/Unfavorable Ratings**

	Very Unfavorable					Very Favorable					No Rate	Never Heard	Mean*	Total Unfav	Total Fav	F/U Ratio	Total Recog	Effective Recog
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	Rate	Heard											
Paul Coble	9.7	7.6	25.1	24.0	23.0	4.8	5.8	6.45	17.3	47.1	2.72:1	94.2	89.5					
Charles Meeker	9.2	7.6	23.0	20.5	10.6	14.2	15.0	5.84	16.7	31.1	1.86:1	85.0	70.9					
Nick Tennyson	3.1	7.7	21.4	35.3	17.8	5.3	9.4	6.85	10.8	52.9	4.90:1	90.6	85.3					
Bill Bell	10.0	10.8	17.0	19.1	20.1	7.7	15.3	6.20	20.8	39.2	1.88:1	84.7	77.0					
Glen Lang	17.4	8.0	26.3	28.6	11.7	3.8	4.2	5.68	25.1	40.5	1.61:1	95.8	91.6					
Nelson Dollar	10.0	3.3	12.4	4.3	2.9	23.9	43.1	4.55	13.3	7.1	-1.87:1	57.1	33.2					

These results show that the incumbent mayors are quite well known and are generally thought of favorably by the voters. Nick Tennyson receives a very high favorability ranking with extremely few voters holding very unfavorable opinions of him. Paul Coble also scores highly with most results evenly spread between a rating of 5 to 10. Glen Lang is shown to be a more divisive figure with the majority of voters giving him marks between a 5 and 8, but a significant number giving him a low rating of 1 or 2 on a 10 point scale.

It is also interesting to note that challengers Meeker and Bell enjoy fairly good rankings as well. Voters who know each challenger generally think favorably of him. However, a significant number of voters claim not to have heard of Meeker or Bell or cite an inability to rate them.

When both candidates in a race are thought of favorably, and are actively campaigning for re-election, it becomes difficult for a challenger to assert why he or she should replace the incumbent. In the cases where the incumbent mayors faced election this year and have been actively campaigning, each is favored by the voters of his city. In Cary, where Glen Lang is not up for election and has not been campaigning, only a narrow plurality of voters say they would return him to office if the election were held today. Lang may be suffering from the generally anti-incumbent sentiment expressed by Cary voters.

*QUESTION: (RALEIGH SAMPLE ONLY) If the election for Mayor of Raleigh were being held today, would you vote for Paul Coble, Charles Meeker, or Joel Cornette? (IF UNDECIDED...) Which one would you lean towards?*

46.1% Paul Coble	55.5% Total Coble	
9.4% Lean Towards Paul Coble		2.37:1 Coble/Meeker Ratio
21.9% Charles Meeker	23.4% Total Meeker	
1.5% Lean Towards Charles Meeker		
3.3% Joel Cornette	5.7% Total Cornette	
2.4% Lean Towards Joel Cornette		
15.4% Undecided	15.4% Undecided	

*(DURHAM SAMPLE ONLY) If the election for Mayor of Durham were being held today, would you vote for Nick Tennyson, Bill Bell, Brenda Burnette, Stephen Hopkins, or Ralph McKinney? (IF UNDECIDED...) Which one would you lean towards?*

41.1% Nick Tennyson	43.1% Total Tennyson	
3.0% Lean Towards Nick Tennyson		1.77:1 Tennyson/Bell Ratio
22.1% Bill Bell	24.4% Total Bell	
2.3% Lean Towards Bill Bell		
2.0% Brenda Burnette	2.2% Total Burnette	
0.2% Lean Towards Brenda Burnette		
0.2% Stephen Hopkins	0.4% Total Hopkins	
0.2% Lean Towards Stephen Hopkins		
4.1% Ralph McKinney	4.1% Total McKinney	
0.6% Lean Towards Ralph McKinney		
24.3% Undecided/Refused	24.3% Undecided	

*(CARY SAMPLE ONLY) If the election for Mayor of Cary were being held today, would you vote to re-elect Glen Lang or would you vote for someone else? Would you say:*

23.1% Definitely vote for Glen Lang	41.5% Lang	
18.4% Probably vote for Glen Lang		1.06:1 Lang/Else Ratio
12.9% Probably vote for Someone Else	39.1% Someone Else	
26.2% Definitely vote for Someone Else		
19.4% Undecided (DO NOT READ)	19.4% Undecided	

*Cross tabulation of Data*

By sorting survey responses for answers to issue questions by the above responses for candidate preference, several interesting insights are gained as to how a voter selects a candidate.

Statistical support for the following observations can be found in the cross tabulation tables included in the appendix to this report.

For example, Raleigh Mayor Paul Coble has stated his support for reducing traffic congestion by building new roads. It then comes as no surprise that among those voters that expressed support for Coble, 65% agreed that we need to build more roads. (23% disagreed, 11.2% were undecided). Coble's opponent, Charles Meeker has stated that he thinks developers have too much influence over the City Council's decisions. Among his supporters, to no surprise, 79.1% agree that developers have too much influence. (15.7% disagree, 5.2% are undecided).

However there are other areas where statements of support for issue and support for candidates appear incongruous.

For example, Raleigh Mayor Paul Coble has stated his reservations about building a commuter rail system. Among those voters surveyed whom support Coble, however, 65.8% favor a commuter rail system (23.3% do not favor it, 11.2% are undecided).

One of the many things that can be surmised from this cross tabulation data is the opinion of the voters who identify themselves as undecided in their cities' upcoming elections. A profile of these voters is listed below for each city.

*Raleigh Mayor's Race "Undecided" Voters*

<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Need more roads?	60.5%	10.2%	29.3%
Need commuter rail?	73.7%	8.4%	17.9%
Developers too powerful?	66.3%	15.8%	17.9%
Neighborhoods too powerful?	20.2%	20.2%	59.6%
Need red-light cameras?	45.3%	13.7%	41.1%
Developers pay impact fees?	71.7%	17.4%	10.9%
Pleased with growth?	50.0%	12.8%	37.2%

*Durham Mayor's Race "Undecided" Voters*

<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Need more roads?	52.0%	13.0%	35.0%
Need commuter rail?	63.0%	9.0%	28.0%
Developers too powerful?	69.3%	18.8%	11.9%
Neighborhoods too powerful?	21.8%	14.9%	63.4%
Need red-light cameras?	41.6%	14.9%	43.6%
Developers pay impact fees?	78.2%	7.9%	13.9%
Pleased with growth?	43.0%	20.0%	37.0%

Cary Mayor Satisfaction "Undecided" Voter

ISSUE	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Need more roads?	61.5%	10.3%	28.2%
Need commuter rail?	60.5%	13.2%	26.3%
Developers too powerful?	60.2%	17.5%	22.5%
Neighborhoods too powerful?	28.2%	15.4%	56.4%
Need red-light cameras?	41.0%	12.8%	46.2%
Developers pay impact fees?	56.4%	10.3%	33.3%
Pleased with growth?	58.3%	10.5%	35.6%

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## VIII. DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic voter characteristics are important in survey research for two principal reasons. First, demographic characteristics enable survey researchers to confirm the accuracy and validity of the sampling process. Second, demographic characteristics provide an excellent means for describing voter opinion for specific population groups.

A number of demographic factors, including geographical location, age, record of voting, political party preference, ethnic background, gender, and employment status were included in the survey of 1274 North Carolina voters in Raleigh, Durham, and Cary.

### 1. How do you usually vote? (READ CATEGORIES)

<b>Question 35</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Always for Democrats	6.9%	17.4%	8.9%	10.8%
Usually for Democrats	21.5%	23.0%	22.2%	22.1%
Always for Republicans	9.3%	2.9%	8.9%	7.1%
Usually for Republicans	19.2%	9.8%	21.7%	16.4%
Some of Both	41.5%	42.4%	35.0%	40.7%
Don't Know/Refused (DO NOT READ)	1.7%	4.4%	3.4%	2.9%

### 2. What is your age? -- just stop me when I get to the category that describes you. (READ CATEGORIES)

<b>Question 36</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
18-30	12.6%	9.2%	19.2%	12.6%
31-40	15.9%	11.2%	21.5%	15.3%
41-50	28.9%	22.8%	26.2%	26.5%
51-60	18.0%	20.6%	15.0%	18.3%
>60	24.6%	36.2%	18.2%	27.3%

### 3. How many years have you lived in your community? (DO NOT READ CATEGORIES)

<b>Question 35</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Zero to Four	9.6%	9.8%	18.9%	11.2%
Five to Nine	20.8%	14.9%	28.6%	20.1%
Ten to Fourteen	10.5%	10.8%	17.5%	11.7%
Fifteen to Nineteen	7.2%	10.3%	14.6%	9.5%
Twenty or More	50.3%	53.1%	18.0%	45.8%
Refused/Don't Know	1.6%	1.2%	2.4%	1.6%

### 4. Do you work outside the home?

<b>Question 38</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Working Outside Home	53.2%	49.6%	43.0%	50.3%
Not Working Outside Home	44.0%	47.9%	52.0%	46.6%
Refused (DO NOT READ)	2.8%	2.5%	5.0%	3.1%

5. What is your marital status?

<b>Question 39</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Not Married	30.4%	39.5%	23.9%	32.3%
Married	69.6%	60.5%	76.1%	67.7%

6. And just to make sure we have a representative sample, please tell me your race? (DO NOT READ CATEGORIES)

<b>Question 39</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
African American	19.8%	39.9%	9.7%	24.7%
Caucasian/Other	80.2%	60.1%	90.3%	75.3%

<b>Gender/Marital Status</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Single Women	16.6%	24.4%	11.4%	18.3%
Married Women	35.7%	28.5%	40.3%	34.1%
Single Men	13.8%	15.2%	12.3%	14.0%
Married Men	33.9%	31.9%	36.0%	33.6%

<b>Gender/Work Status</b>	<b>Raleigh</b>	<b>Durham</b>	<b>Cary</b>	<b>Triangle</b>
Male Working Outside Home	29.0%	28.6%	23.7%	28.0%
Male Not Working Outside Home	17.4%	19.0%	24.2%	19.0%
Female Working Outside Home	25.6%	22.3%	21.6%	23.9%
Female Not Working Outside Home	28.0%	30.1%	30.5%	29.1%

CROSS TABULATION DATA WILL FOLLOW IN APPENDIX