



CAMBRIDGE  
FUTURES

# Survey Report

Revised October 1999

Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd  
Cambridge Media Lab Ltd

## MAIN FINDINGS

**As part of the Cambridge Futures exercise, the views of the public have been sought and analysed. They were asked what they thought of the seven Cambridge Futures planning options, and whether they agreed or disagreed with eight statements about the planning of the region. Some strong messages emerged – they are described below and overleaf.**

### Little support for the status quo

The planning options which won least support were those closest to present planning policies, that is, 'Minimum growth' for the city of Cambridge, and 'Necklace' development around Cambridge. The social consequences of minimising growth in Cambridge were unpopular, with strong support for the statement "It would be a bad thing if only wealthy people could afford to live in Cambridge".

### Shared values

There is a high degree of consensus about the planning of the region. The survey results were broken down by age of the participants, their place of residence, how long they had lived in the region and how long they planned to stay, and there was no evidence of opposing camps. The variations that did exist were differences of emphasis within a shared pattern of opinion.

### Backing for public transport

The dominant message is that public transport must take a leading role in the future of the region. The planning option 'Transport links' won far more support than any of the other options, and the statement "More money should be invested in railways and other public transport than in roads" was the most popular of the statements by a clear margin.

### Top priority for minimising congestion

The biggest problem in the region is seen to be traffic congestion. The planning options which reduce congestion were preferred over those that have less impact on congestion. There was moderate support for two statements describing alternative ways to tackle congestion, "The A14 should be widened to 3 lanes in each direction", and "Commuters should pay to drive their cars into Cambridge".

### Quality of life

People prefer growth away from where they live, indicating that quality of life is highly valued. Thus city residents give more support to some development of the green belt, whereas people outside the city are keener on densification in Cambridge. The new town option was significantly less popular in the north-west of the region, where the new town would be located.

### Support for competitiveness and economic growth

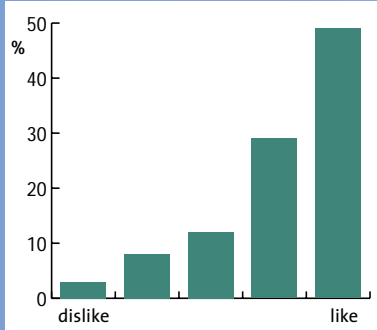
People are keen that prosperity and economic growth should be encouraged. It was not as high a priority as tackling congestion, but planning options which harm competitiveness were not supported. There was strong backing for the statement that "The region's high tech businesses must be allowed to grow".

### The popular view

People want a balance of development in Cambridge and in the region. The survey suggested that a planning strategy which aimed for some growth in Cambridge through densification and expansion, together with growth outside Cambridge based on public transport links, would be most likely to meet the aspirations of the people who live and work in the region.

# THE OPTIONS

## Option 5 Transport Links

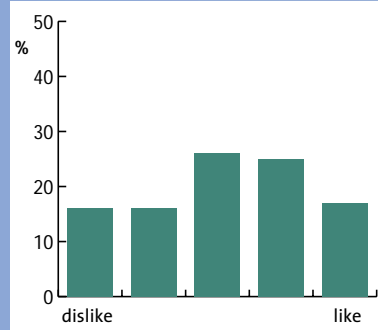


This is the clearly preferred option liked by 78% of all respondents. This option would reduce car use the most, minimising increased traffic congestion and pollution, and better protect the quality of life in the city and surrounding area.

### Inference

Two issues dominate people's choices: traffic congestion and quality of life.

## Option 6 Virtual Highway

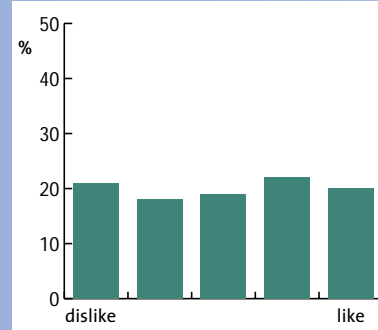


Liked by marginally more people than disliked but with a high proportion of people undecided in the middle.

### Inference

People may not fully understand this option. Since it might reduce traffic congestion it gets moderate support.

## Option 4 Green Swap

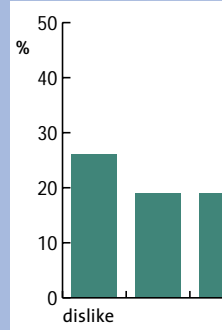


Marginally more people favour allowing development in selected areas of the green belt of less scenic value than dislike it. Interestingly these differences seem independent of where people live.

### Inference

Despite increased traffic congestion in the city, 42% of people favour this option because it produces the lowest increase in the cost of living.

## Option 2 Densification



Like green swap, densification stabilises the cost of living, promotes regional productivity and like green swap, opinion is divided on its merits.

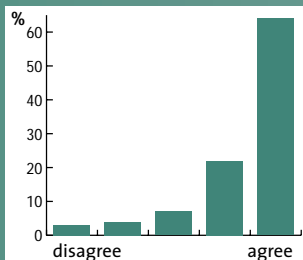
### Inference

Rising house prices are a concern and people are in favour of allowing development where demand is high. People are also concerned about the quality of life in the city.

# MOST LIKED

# THE STATEMENTS

## Public Transport



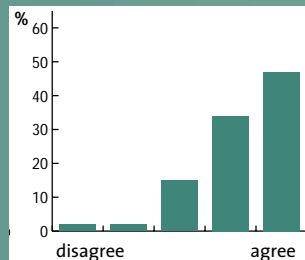
86% of people agree that:

"More money should be invested in public transport than in roads."

### Inference

Traffic congestion is people's biggest concern. Most people are in favour of more investment in public transport.

## Social Balance



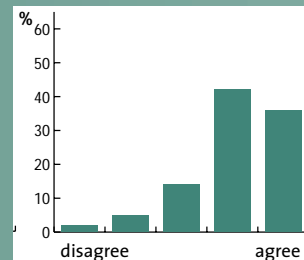
81% of people agree that:

"It would be a bad thing if only wealthy people could afford to live in Cambridge."

### Inference

People are concerned about rising house prices and the implications for social equity and the balance of the community.

## High Tech Growth



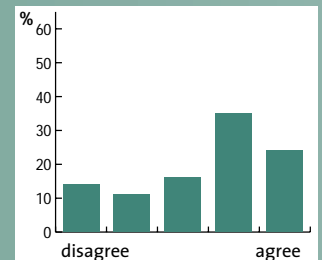
78% of people agree that:

"The region's high tech businesses must be allowed to grow."

### Inference

The large majority of people are concerned about economic prosperity and want to maintain the region's growth.

## Road Tolls into City

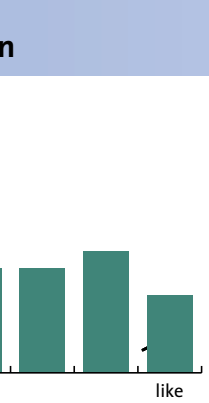


59% of people agree that:

"Commuters should pay to drive their cars into Cambridge."

### Inference

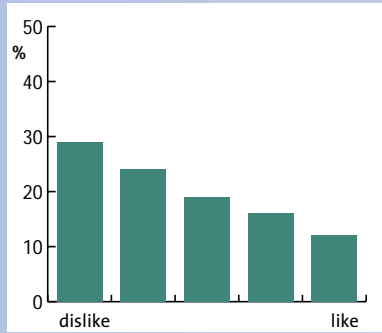
There is substantial support for road tolls but these would have to coincide with the provision of good public transport alternatives if they were to have impact on traffic congestion in the city.



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**Option 7  
New Town**

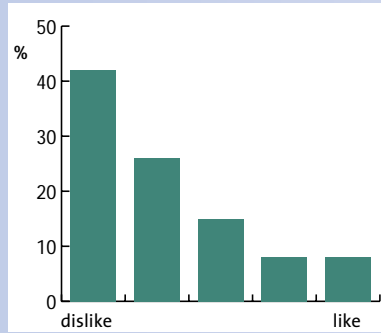


Liked by only 28% of people.  
Significantly more people living NW of the city, ie: those most affected by the proposed new town developments, dislike this option.

**Inference**

The substantial increase in traffic between the new town and the city puts most people off this option. But for some it offers lower house prices in the new town.

**Option 1  
Minimum Growth**

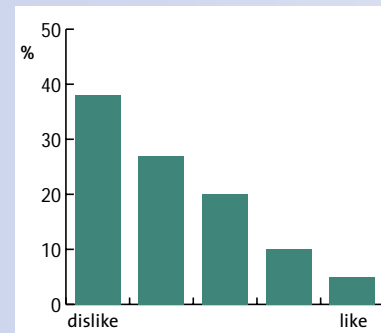


Only 16% of people favour this option since it would only preserve the city at the expense of congestion on access roads and regional stagnation.

**Inference**

Surprisingly, and most encouragingly in terms of this whole exercise, most people appreciate that minimum growth will not keep things the same.

**Option 3  
Necklace**



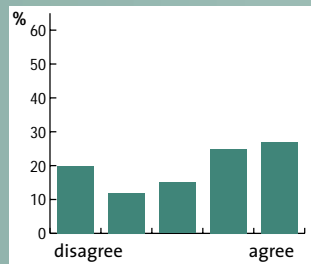
The current planning policy is the least favoured option, disliked by two-thirds of people.

**Inference**

People agree that things cannot continue as they are and that we need new policies to reduce traffic congestion whilst maintaining regional prosperity.

LEAST LIKED

**Widen A14**

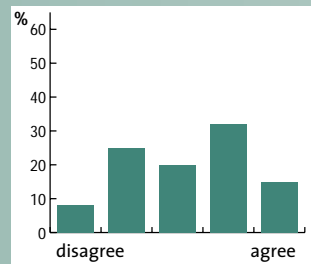


52% of people agree that:  
"The A14 should be widened to 3 lanes in each direction."

**Inference**

Traffic congestion is the key issue and some people think that road building will reduce the problem.

**Cambridge Full**

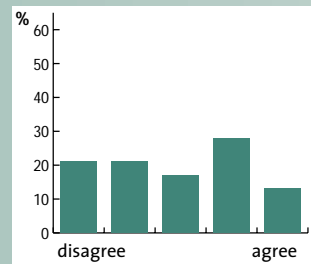


47% of people agree that:  
"Cambridge is full."

**Inference**

Over half the people are either undecided or think that Cambridge could take more people by densification or expansion.

**Green Belt Released**

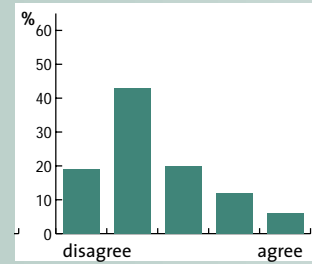


41% of people agree that:  
"Some of the Green Belt should be released for development."

**Inference**

This is a contentious issue on which opinions are fairly evenly divided with a similar proportion of people agreeing as are in favour of Option 4 Green Swap.

**Cambridge Kept Same**



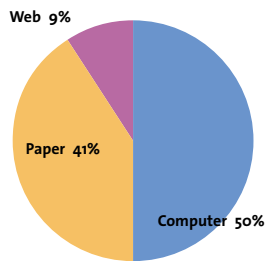
18% of people agree that:  
"Cambridge and its surroundings should be kept just as they are."

**Inference**

Most people accept that it is not possible to keep things as they are.

# RESPONDENTS TO THE SURVEY

## Method of Response



The survey formed part of an exhibition, which was launched at the Senate House in the University before going to the Grafton Centre and other venues in the region. Using panels, a video and a brochure sheet, the exhibition explained the purpose of Cambridge Futures and described the seven development options in detail.

People were offered the opportunity to comment on the proposals by filling in a tear-off slip on the brochure or by using a computer-based interactive questionnaire devised by Cambridge Architectural Research.

Cambridge Futures also created a web site and, as part of the site, Cambridge Media Lab devised a web-based survey. A total of 650 people answered the survey. Half (50%) of

the responses were from the computer version of the survey; just over a third (41%) from the paper version and 9% from the web.

About 457 people voted on the Options section and 419 answered the Statements. Over 500 gave their age and told us where they lived.

Although people self-selected themselves to answer the survey, the indications are that they reflect the average shopper in the Grafton Centre rather than any sectional interest or pressure group.

We conclude therefore that this is a sufficiently good sample to have confidence that it accurately reflects general public opinion of the region in and around the city.

## Effects of Residence

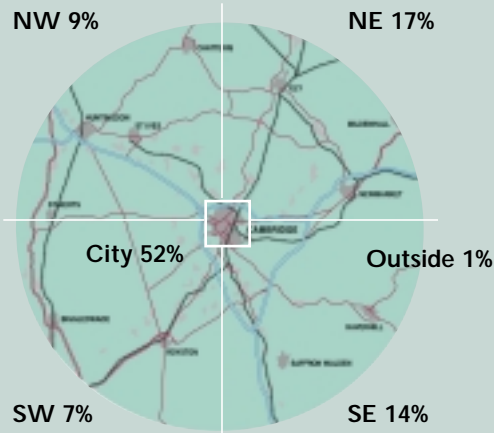
There is a small effect of people voting in terms of self interest, but less than one might have expected.

## Options

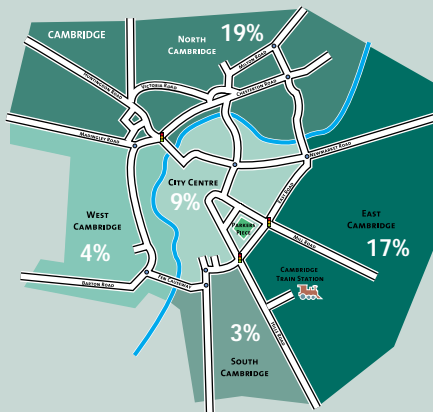
Fewer people living on the south and west sides of the city, the areas that would be most affected by increased density, favour Option 2 Densification. Fewer people NW of the region, the areas most affected, favour Option 6 Virtual Highway and Option 7 New Town. In contrast, relatively more people in the NE like Option 7 New Town, perhaps because they are unaffected by this option.

## Statements

More people living outside Cambridge think Cambridge is full than people living in the city. More people living in the NW of the region agree that some of the green belt should be released for development. Fewer people living on the east side of the city think commuters should pay to drive their cars into Cambridge.

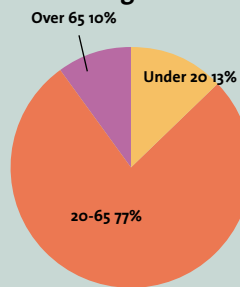


About half of the respondents live in the city and half in the county. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are well represented but the rest of the region less so. But there is a sufficient geographical spread to be confident in the representativeness of the sample as reflecting public opinion in the region.



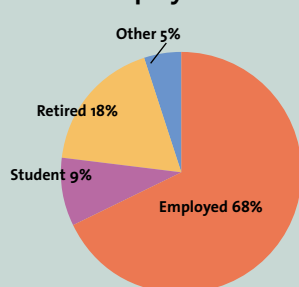
Residents of parts of the city are over-represented by the sample, whilst the south side of the city is under-represented. This most probably reflects the patronage of the Grafton Centre, where most of the respondents completed the survey.

## Age

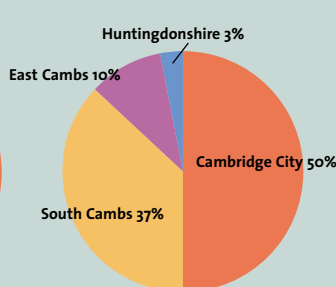


The majority of respondents are working adults. 77% are aged 20-65 and 68% have jobs.

## Employment

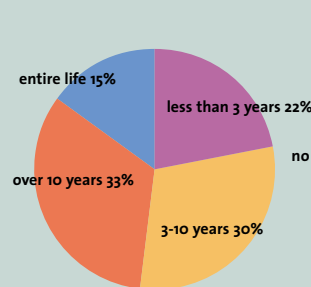


## Home District



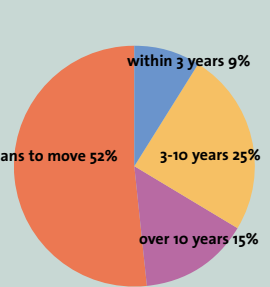
Half of respondents live in the city and 38% in South Cams.

## Residence



About half the respondents have been in the region less than 10 years.

## Plans to move



Nearly half respondents plan to move.

## Cambridge Futures

Cambridge Futures is a group of local business leaders, politicians, government officers, professionals and academics who have been looking at options for growth in and around Cambridge. The intention has been to demonstrate the possibilities open to society- and in so doing, to generate informed debate. Established in 1996, it is coming to the end of its first phase of activity and is now reporting on the views of people living in the region.

## Cambridge Architectural Research

CAR is an independent consultancy which provides specialist advice for the construction industry and design professions and undertakes a broad range of research for policy-making institutions. Founded in 1987 by architects, engineers, software developers and researchers, CAR has established an international reputation for consultancy in Energy and Environment, Building Design and Use, New Media Applications and Risk Management.

## Cambridge Media Lab

CML is a digital media production company that specialises in database driven web sites and kiosk based surveys. Specifically, the company has a proven track record working with educational and scientific/technical groups. CML is well used to generating ideas and initiating projects. Client organisations include BBC Education, Cambridge University Press and Reuters.