



Waco Area Connect

a project by the Center for Community Research & Development
at Baylor University

Report On the WAC Spring 2017 Survey

By Jake Kane and Jasmine Wise

The arrival of spring brings a sense of optimism as wildflowers bloom along interstates and temperatures rise away from our mild-mannered, central Texas winter weather. It also marks the beginning of a new year for the Waco Area Connect (WAC) as we continually seek to grow and inform the Waco community on various social issues through survey research. On April 21st, after three weeks on-line, our survey instrument closed and your 176 responses entered the analysis phase of our project.

Because WAC respondents are quite different from the rest of McLennan County, we built a complex system of weighting algorithms, allowing our researchers a more representative view of McLennan County citizens.¹ As promised, we are now sharing these weighted survey results with you.

Landfill Expansion

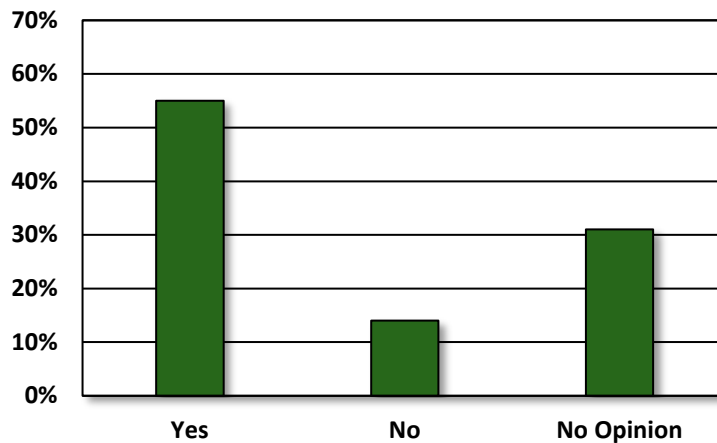
The City of Waco's proposal to place a new landfill adjacent to the one that currently exists has been a topic of contentious debate over the past year – so contentious that a lawsuit was recently filed against the City that alleges violations of a 1992 settlement claiming the landfill would never expand past its existing boundaries. The WAC survey included the following question: Are you in favor of a new landfill adjacent to the current one?

Your responses tell an interesting story that could help inform the decisions regarding waste disposal for McLennan County in the near future. Slightly over half (55%) of our respondents reported being in favor of the landfill expansion while only 14% disapproved of the initiative. The other 31% held no opinion on the topic. From this perspective, it seems that most residents are willing to support the construction of a new landfill on Old Lorena Road.

¹ We take the United States Census Bureau's estimates for county level population and build a set of code that gives every demographic category a certain percentage that must be met by our actual survey responses. When our sample responses do not match Census data, we apply this algorithm that shapes the data into a closer representation of what McLennan County represents.

Do you favor landfill initiative?

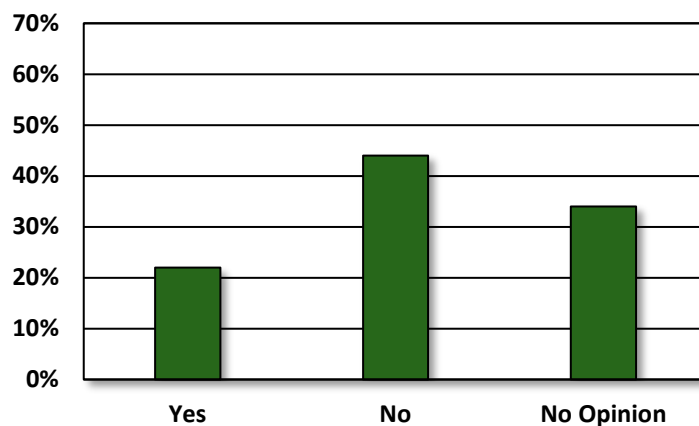
(Entire Sample)



However, when focusing on certain geographic areas of the McLennan County, a different narrative emerges. When separating out respondents in the area codes that are near the proposed landfill (76712, 76643, 76657 and 76555), the results change dramatically. Of the respondents occupying these four zip codes, only 22% approve of the expansion while 44% disapprove. This is a common phenomenon in the social sciences known as NIMBY (not in my backyard) that results when respondents who are directly affected by a given initiative are most vocal against its implementation.

Do you favor landfill initiative?

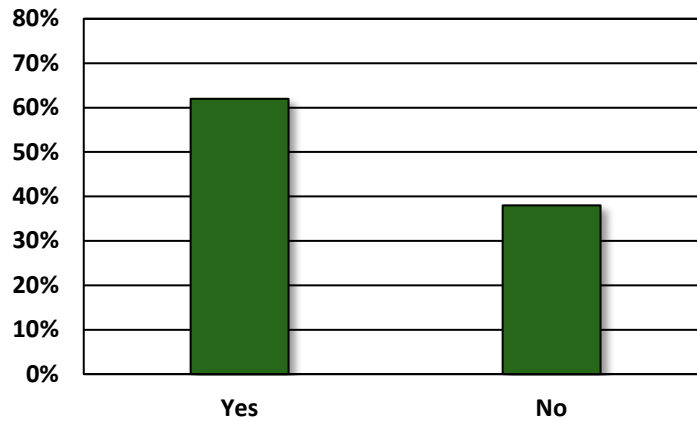
(76712, 76643, 76657 and 76555 area codes)



Airport Travel

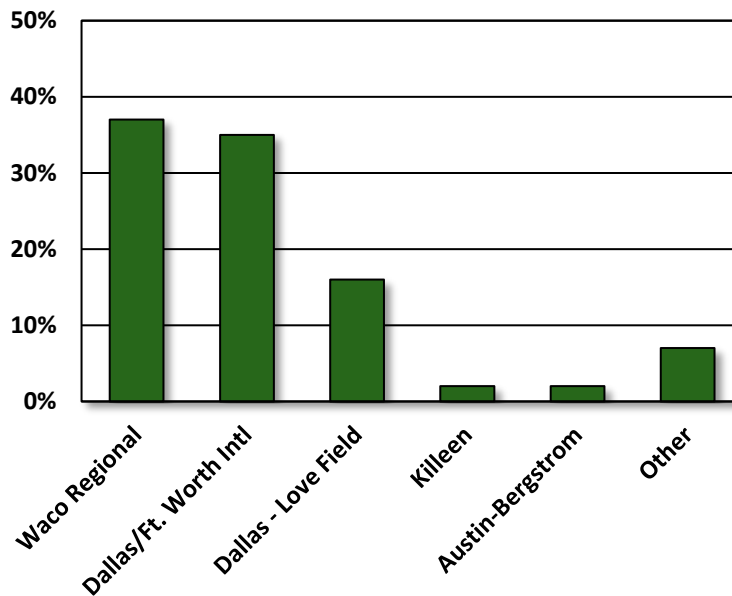
As Waco continues to expand, air transportation grows in salience as a topic of public concern as well. We asked our respondents to provide us with basic information regarding their most recent commercial flight (if they had flown in the last 3 years). A majority (62%) of our respondents reported having flown commercially in the past 3 years.

Have you flown in past 3 years?



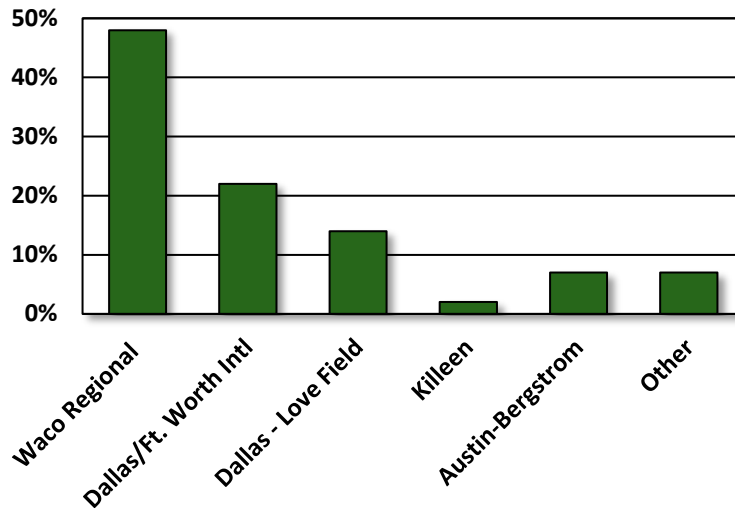
Of those respondents who have flown, 38% used Waco Regional Airport for their most recent flight while Dallas/Fort Worth International came in a close second with 35%. In fact, DFW and Love Field combined show more travelers beginning in Dallas than Waco.

Airport Usage



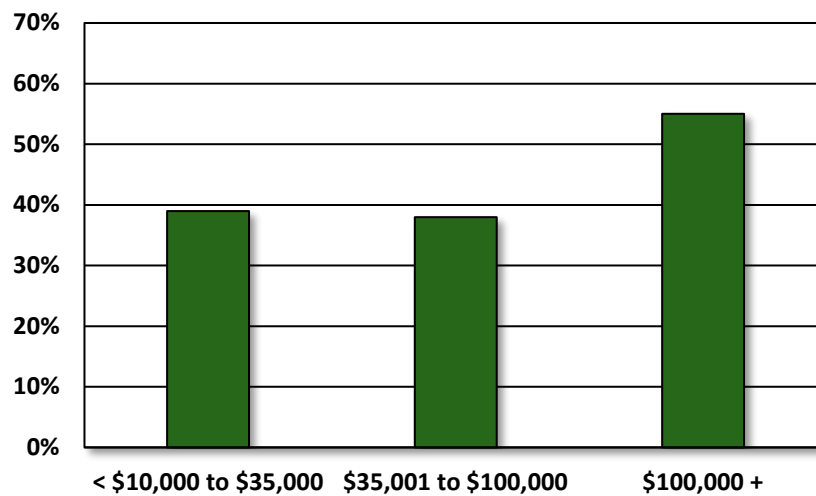
However, those respondents who traveled within the past two months used Waco Regional more frequently with our local airport accounting for almost half (48%) of the flights. This suggests that frequent flyers, possibly business travelers, are more likely to use Waco than the more occasional, perhaps leisure, traveler.

Airport Usage
(By those having flown in past 2 months)



When breaking down our income question into three categories (< \$10,00 to \$35,000; \$35,001 to \$100,000; \$100,00 +) and comparing them against the type of airports people used, we found that those flyers who are situated in the highest income bracket were using the Waco Regional airport considerably more than middle and lower income respondents. Most upper income respondents used Waco Regional Airport as their main means of flying whereas those with lower and middle incomes each used Waco Regional Airport only 38% of the time. These middle and lower income respondents also used Dallas/Fort Worth International airport at a much more frequent rate than those in the upper income bracket. This suggests airfare costs offered in larger markets may be appealing to those for whom cost is of high importance.

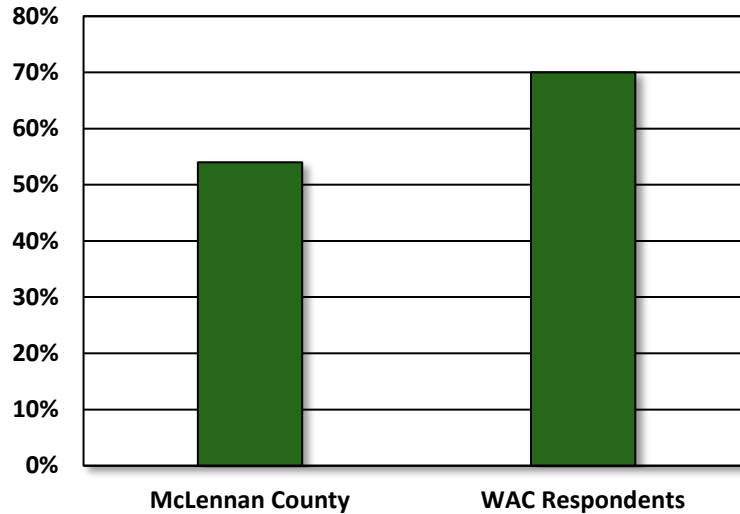
Waco Regional Airport Usage
(By Income Level)



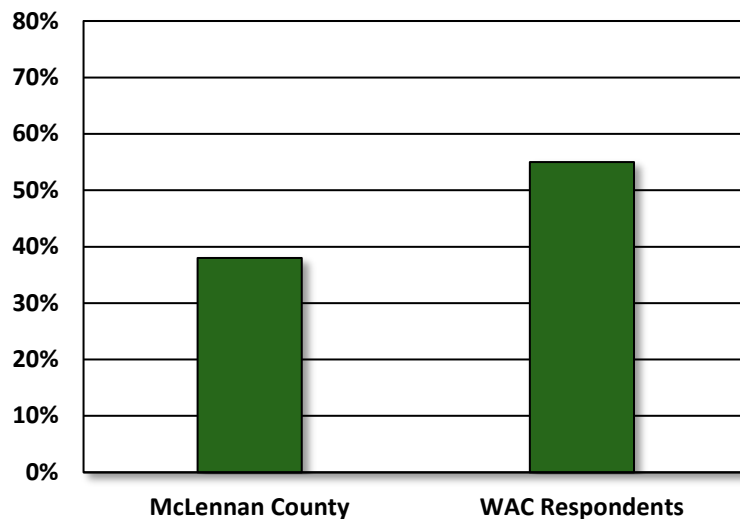
A Few Good (Suburban) Men?

As mentioned earlier, our sampling distributions proved to be a problem this time around for the Waco Area Connect. If you know any males who are willing to participate in our bi-annual survey who also live outside the Waco city limits, we would like to sign them up before our next survey. Both females and Waco city residents were overrepresented in our sample when compared to the overall populations of these groups in McLennan County. While that can be corrected with weighting, samples closer to the Census distributions are better.

% Waco Residents



% Female



Of course, we still welcome everyone to participate in the WAC survey. So please recommend us to all of your family and friends. Our next point of contact with you will be in the fall where we plan to disperse our survey over multiple modes of communication i.e. cell phones, landlines while

continuing the use of online questionnaires. Our intended topic for the next survey will be to assess public health outcomes ranging from individual level problems to those that may be broader issues facing the city of Waco and McLennan County. In the meantime, feel free to refer friends and family (especially males outside of Waco city limits) to our project by having them email CCRD@baylor.edu where we will add their email to our existing database of respondents. We strive to be a voice for the people of Waco and its surrounding communities in order to enhance the quality of life we all share.