

Barriers to Citizen Involvement

The survey included a new set of questions designed to examine nine barriers to the respondent's involvement in Town government. The scaling utilized ranged from not a barrier at all (1) to very significant barrier (9). Table 43 shows that the most significant barrier type was *too busy, don't have time* with a mean of 4.63 and 41.7 % of the responses above the midpoint of 5 on the "barriers" side. Even though it was the most important barrier, note that 50.0% of the responses were on the side of "not a barrier" (below 5). There were two other key barriers including *don't know about the opportunities* (3.84 with 26.1% above the midpoint) and *timing is inconvenient* (3.73 with 26.7% above the midpoint). One other barrier that had some level of impact was *topics don't interest me* (2.59 with 12.3% above the midpoint). The other potential barriers did not hinder citizen involvement and were not significant barriers included *issues don't affect me* (2.21), *don't understand government processes* (1.93), *waste of time – one person cannot make a difference* (1.78), *don't feel qualified to offer input* (1.76), and *don't have transportation* (1.25).

Table 43. Barriers to Involvement in Town Government (In Descending Order).

Barrier Type	Mean	Not a Barrier at All 1	2	3	4	Average 5	6	7	8	Very Significant Barrier 9	% Above 5
Too busy; don't have time	4.63	29.0	6.6	9.3	5.1	8.3	6.8	7.6	8.6	18.7	41.7
Don't know about opportunities	3.84	39.5	3.6	7.5	3.1	20.2	5.2	7.0	4.1	9.8	26.1
Timing is inconvenient	3.73	36.0	9.3	9.1	6.5	12.4	5.2	8.0	5.7	7.8	26.7
Topics don't interest me	2.59	55.8	11.8	4.1	3.3	12.6	4.6	2.8	1.0	3.9	12.3
Issues don't affect me	2.21	63.0	10.0	4.6	3.1	12.3	2.6	2.1	0.8	1.5	7.0
Don't understand government processes	1.93	64.8	12.9	5.9	4.4	8.2	2.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.8
Waste of time - one person can't make a difference	1.78	72.8	6.4	6.9	4.4	6.4	1.5	0.8	0.0	0.8	3.1
Don't feel qualified to offer input	1.76	68.6	13.6	6.9	2.3	4.9	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.5	3.6
Don't have transportation	1.25	91.0	3.9	1.5	0.5	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.8	1.3

Barriers to Involvement Crosstabulations

Crosstabulations for the barriers to involvement in Town government were conducted on age, housing type, income, race, and years in Cary shown in Tables B301-B305 of Appendix B. Instead of examining each demographic variable separately, it would be more informative to examine where each barrier type served as the highest barrier to involvement. To accomplish this, each barrier type was rated as very high, high, medium, or low barrier to involvement. If the barrier type finished in the 1st or 2nd spot within a subgroup, then it rated very high, 3rd or 4th rated high, 5th or 6th rated medium, and 7th through 9th rated low. Only subgroups with sample sizes over 10 will be considered which resulted in 21 viable

subgroups.

Too busy was the most significant barrier rating very high in 19 subgroups (first in 15) and high in 2 others. *Don't know about the opportunities* rated very high in 16 (first in 56-65 ages, townhouse/ condo dwellers, \$30,001-\$50,000 income level, African-Americans) subgroups and high in 5 others. *Timing is inconvenient* rated very high in 6 subgroups (first in over 65 age group) and high in 15 others. *Topics don't interest me* rated very high in 1 subgroup (first in \$20,001-\$30,000 income level), high in 16, medium in 3, and low in 1 subgroup. These are the only four barrier types that ranked in the very high barrier categories. *Issues don't affect me* rated high in 1 subgroup (Asians), medium in 15, and low in 5 subgroups. *Don't understand government processes* rated high in 1 subgroup (Hispanics), medium in 15, and low in 5 subgroups. *Waste of time – one person cannot make a difference* rated medium in 4 subgroups (26-55 age group, townhouse/condo dwellers, over \$100,000 income level, 2-5 year residents) and low in 17 others. *Don't feel qualified to offer input* rated medium in 4 subgroups (\$20,001-\$30,000 income level, apartment dwellers, 56-65 age group, other races) and low in 17 others. Finally, *don't have transportation* rated high in 2 subgroups (townhouse/condo dwellers, other races), medium in 1 subgroup, and low in 18 others.