

Town of Coeymans - Image Assessment Survey Results

What is an Image Assessment Survey?

An Image Assessment Survey is a planning exercise that uses images of places, spaces and land uses to provide the public with an opportunity to review, study, and express their preferences on the features visually depicted in the images. The exercise helps build consensus on the community's current physical character and the design style preferred for future development. Participants are asked to give a positive rating to those images they find visually appealing and would want to see in their community, while a negative rating is given to those images they do not like, and would not like to see in their community. The results of the Image Assessment Survey help define community preferences for architectural style, signs, building setbacks, landscaping, parking areas, size/scope of transportation facilities, and other design elements.

Why is it important?

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary tool used to define goals and objectives, land use and circulation patterns of the community. In order for the Comprehensive Plan to be effective, it must present a clear vision of the future appearance and character of the community. This vision, developed through community participation, is then used to shape future land use regulations. An Image Assessment Survey can help ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is unique to your community and illustrates the types of development that should be encouraged or avoided in the future.

The purpose of the exercise:

1. To identify and document the public's visual preferences for architectural styles, signs, building setbacks, landscaping, parking areas, particular land uses on landscapes in general.
2. To provide the public with an opportunity to participate and express their opinion on visual design, architecture, site layout, or landscape.
3. To provide insights and direction to the Town Board on the overall visual preferences of the community, acting as a catalyst for further discussions, ultimately leading to the Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives, and recommendations.

Methodology:

In order to identify and document the community's visual preferences, a public workshop was conducted. A total of thirty-seven residents, landowners, and business owners attended this public workshop. The participants were asked to rate 70 slides on a scale of -3 to +3 according to how each scene was aesthetically pleasing to them.

The slide show was divided into eight categories: commercial, housing, open space and recreation, parking lots, pedestrian realm, signs, streetscape, and waterfront. Each

image's average rating was calculated. Based on the average scores, each image was rated 'positive', 'negative' or 'neutral'. Preferred development styles or land uses correlate with positive ratings, while negative ratings indicate development styles or land uses that were met with disfavor. Below, is the summary of the 'likes' and 'dislikes' expressed by the community.

Overview of Positive Rated Slides:

Positively rated images represent the desired visual preferences of the community for future development. All the slides in the open space and recreation category were rated positively. These include images with an abundance of green space, mature trees, and shrubs. Participants rated those images with recreation elements such as playgrounds, basketball courts, football courts, swings etc. for children very high. Most of the images showing waterfront development were also highly rated.

In the commercial category, most of the images showing a balance between the green space and the built environment were rated positively. Images with small to mid-size signs that were in proportion with the building structure were rated positively. Most of the slides in the housing category from those of single-family homes to town houses were rated high. Houses with pleasing landscape elements such as lawns, yards, flowerbeds, and fences were liked by the community. Positive images in the parking lot category were those with an abundance of green space and defined pedestrian crossing areas. The images that portray the pedestrian realm were mostly rated positively when the image included wide sidewalks, defined crosswalks, trees, and/or green space.

Overview of Negative Rated Slides:

The negatively rated slides represent the overall dislikes of the participants, or those visual images that should be avoided in the future. The majority of the negatively rated slides were parking lots that contained excessive asphalt covering and limited or no green space. Scenes with overhead utility wires and poorly maintained parking lots were also given low scores. Many of the commercial structures with flat roofs and poorly maintained façade's were rated low. Disorderly strip mall development along commercial corridors received low scores. Images showing large urban centers with chain store developments that do not represent the local architectural style were also poorly rated. Overall, the images with limited or no landscaping received the lowest rating. Negative slides within the housing category were buildings with poorly kept façade's and without attractive landscaping.

Images with broken and insufficient sidewalks were not preferred. Slides lacking proper streetscape elements such as street lightings, landscaping (tree cover, shrubs, grass, flowerbeds) were also given low scores. Additionally, negative slides included images lacking proper signage. Cluttered signs and very large signs were also given low scores.

Analysis of results:

The survey results have been documented in a manner to provide the reader with a clear vision of the 'likes' and 'dislikes' of the respondents. The analysis of the results followed a three-step process. First, the average score of each individual category was calculated, indicating how respondents rated each category. Second, the highest and the lowest scores in each category were calculated representing the 'most liked' and 'most disliked' images in each category. The third and final step provided a detailed overview of each category, summarizing the common features in the positively and negatively rated slides in each category.

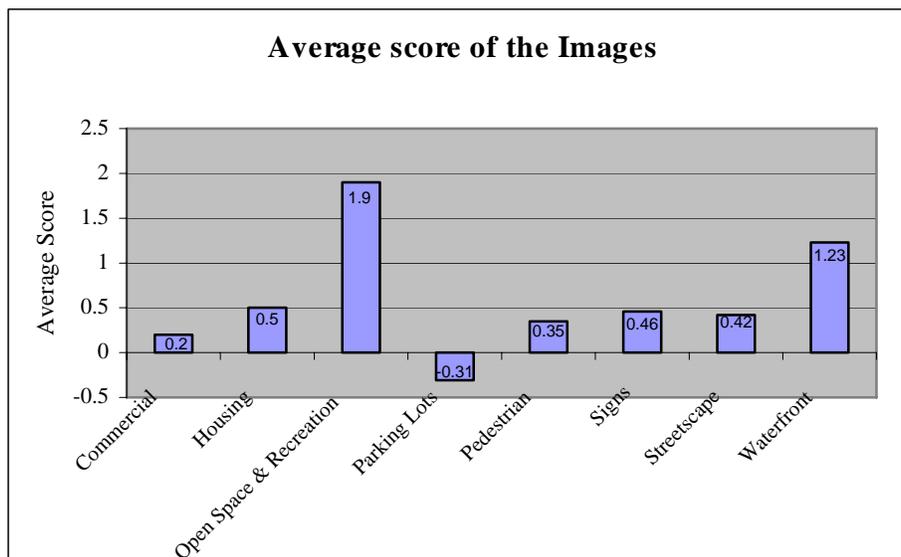
I. Average score of each category

As shown in table 1, out of the eight different image categories, open space and recreation was rated the highest, with a 1.9 average score. The waterfront slides were rated next with a 1.23 average score. Images in the housing and signs categories scored 0.5 and 0.46, respectively. The parking lot category was the most negatively rated category with an average score of (-0.31).

Table 1: Average score of each category

Categories	Average Score
Commercial	0.2
Housing	0.5
Open Space & Recreation	1.9
Parking Lots	-0.31
Pedestrian	0.35
Signs	0.46
Streetscape	0.42
Waterfront	1.23

Chart1: Average score of each category



II. Highest and Lowest score in each category

Chart 2 and table 3 highlights the highest and the lowest scores in each category. As shown in the chart below, the slide number 15 in the commercial category scored the highest (1.6). This image exhibits a commercial building with a pitched roof, pleasing facade and attractive landscaping. The image number 6 scored the lowest in this category with flat roof, poor façade treatment, and no landscaping.

The image number 24 in the housing category was rated the highest (2.2). This image represents a historic home with a peaked roof, large doors and windows, small porches and a columned entrance. The slide number 20 scored the lowest (-1.4) in the housing category with old, poor facades and disorderly landscaping.

The open space and recreation category overall scored the highest among all the images displayed in the survey. The image number 30 scored the highest (2.3) in open space and recreation category with lush green space and mature trees. The slide number 33 scored the lowest (1.4) in this category.

The slide number 39 in the parking lot category was given the highest rating (0.7). The image represents good landscaping with mature trees, sufficient green space, and good lighting facility in the parking lot. The image number 36 scored the lowest (-1.5) in this category with lack of defined parking slots and landscaping.

The image number 45 in the pedestrian category scored the highest (1.6) representing a well-maintained landscaped median. The image number 46 scored the lowest in this category with no proper distinction between the parking lot, sidewalk and main road. The image also lacked proper curbing and landscaping buffer.

In the sign category, the image number 48 scored the highest (2.0). This sign is low to ground, small scale and pedestrian oriented. The image number 49 scored the lowest (-2.0) in the sign category with too large and cluttered signs.

In the streetscape category, the image number 59 scored the highest (1.5). The image demonstrates a user-friendly pedestrian walkway with streetscape features such as street lightings and trash can facility. The image number 61 scored the lowest among all images in this category with overhead utility wires and poor landscaping.

The image number 70 in the waterfront category scored the highest (2.0). This image exhibits a pleasing landscaping with an abundance of green grass, lawn, trees and picnic benches. The image number 68 scored the lowest (-0.2) with an unpaved boat launch area.

Chart 2: Highest and Lowest Score in each category

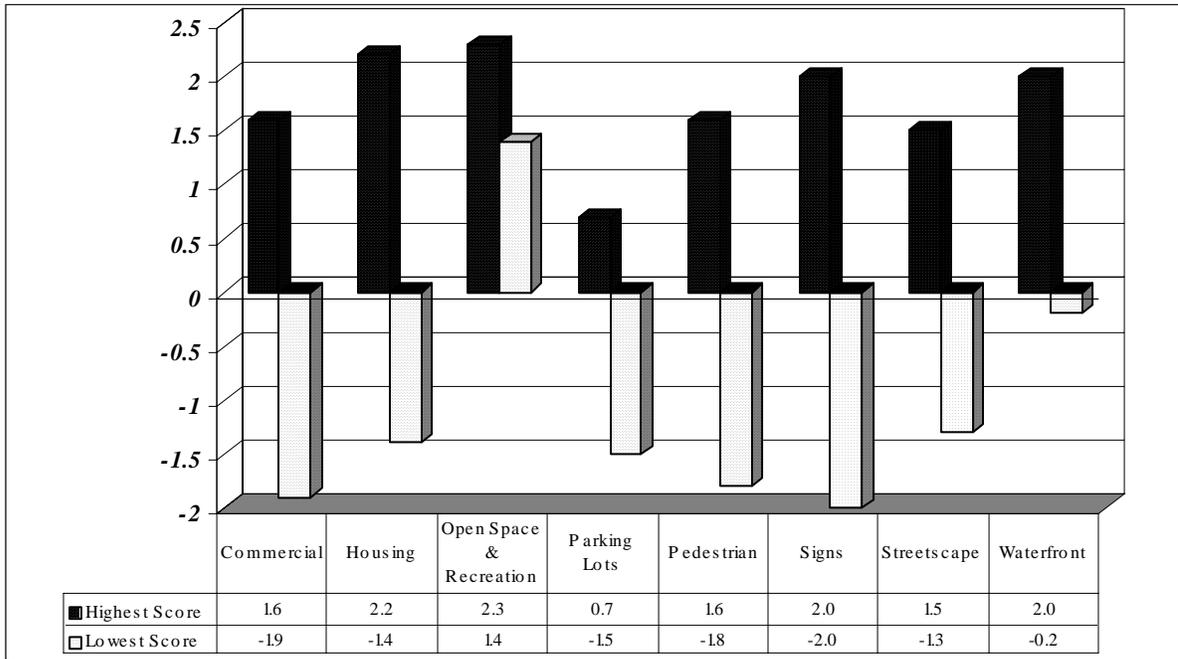


Table 3: Comparison of Highest and Lowest rated slides in each category

Category	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Commercial		
	Slide -15 Average Score: (1.6)	Slide -6 Average Score: (-1.9)
Housing		
	Slide -24 Average Score: (2.2)	Slide -20 Average Score: (-1.4)
Open Space and Recreation		
	Slide -30 Average Score: (2.3)	Slide -33 Average Score: (1.4)

<p>Parking Lots</p>		
	<p>Slide -39 Average Score: (0.7)</p>	<p>Slide -36 Average Score: (-1.5)</p>
<p>Pedestrian</p>		
	<p>Slide -45 Average Score: (1.6)</p>	<p>Slide -46 Average Score: (-1.8)</p>
<p>Signs</p>		
	<p>Slide -48 Average Score: (2.0)</p>	<p>Slide -49 Average Score: (-2.0)</p>

<p>Streetscape</p>		
	<p>Slide -59 Average Score: (1.5)</p>	<p>Slide -61 Average Score: (-1.3)</p>
<p>Waterfront</p>		
	<p>Slide -70 Average Score: (2.0)</p>	<p>Slide -68 Average Score: (-0.2)</p>

III. Analysis of slides by category

1. Commercial Category

There were a total of sixteen slides displayed in the commercial category. Of the total images, seven were rated negatively indicating the style of commercial development disliked by the participants. Nine images were rated positively, indicating the desired type of commercial development by the participants. The highest image score in this category was 1.6, while the lowest average score was -1.9.

Images Rated Positively: Most of the positively rated slides in this group exhibit a balance between the green space and the built environment. Positively rated images display pleasing façades and peaked roofs. One of the most common characteristics of the preferred images is attractive landscaping. Some of the scenes exhibit wide inviting entrances to the building. Good façade treatments with brick cladding and/or light colors are preferred. Slides with well-buffered parking lots were rated higher. The participants liked commercial buildings in traditional downtown settings with large decorative doors and windows. New commercial buildings with sloping roofs, and proportionate doors and windows were also appreciated.

Images Rated Negatively: The most negatively rated images include limited or no landscaping, and exhibit an abundance of asphalt. Overall, negatively rated images include commercial buildings with flat roofs, a limited amount of landscaping and trees for shade. Images with more concrete and paved areas, and large area of asphalt parking and /or roads were highly disliked. Inadequate pedestrian amenities were also poorly rated. Some of the negatively rated slides exhibited commercial buildings with poorly maintained façade's. Images exhibiting strip malls with insufficient or oversized parking areas, overhead utility wires, and gas station with little or no landscaping were rated negatively by participants.



1. Average Score: (-0.2)



2. Average Score: (-1.4)



3. Average Score: (-0.7)



4. Average Score: (0.8)



5. Average Score: (1.2)



6. Average Score: (-1.9)



7. Average Score: (-0.5)



8. Average Score: (1.0)



9. Average Score: (0.6)



10. Average Score: (1.1)



11. Average Score: (-0.2)



12. Average Score: (1.2)



13. Average Score: (-1.1)



14. Average Score: (0.1)



15.

Average Score: (1.6)



16.

Average Score: (1.6)

2. Housing Category

There were a total of nine slides displayed in the housing category. Of these, seven were rated positively and only two were rated negatively. The respondents gave varying scores to different styles of residential development. The category included a variety of housing types: single-family, multi-family apartment complex, town houses, mobile homes, and historic houses. The highest image average score in this category was 2.2, and the lowest score was -1.4.

Images Rated Positively: Most of the residential images characterized by peaked roofs and attractive, light colored façades were rated highly. Many of the slides depicted an abundance of green space and large mature trees. The most highly rated image depicted a historic Greek-style home with a peaked roof, large windows and doors, small porches and a columned entranceway.

While most of the houses had peaked roofs, many of the positively rated images showed red brick or wood façade treatments. Residential developments with a lot of grass, large tree cover, shrubs, flowerbeds and fences were also considered visually pleasing. Many of the homes in the images had attached garages.

Images Rated Negatively: The two housing images that were rated negatively were those portraying a mobile home park and an apartment complex. The mobile home park appears disorderly and unkempt, and lacks neighborhood character. The two-story, flat-roofed apartment complex appears bulky and standalone. Although the complex has a nice lawn, it otherwise lacks character and aesthetic value.

	
17. Average Score: (0.9)	18. Average Score: (-1.3)



19. **Average Score: (0.9)**



20. **Average Score: (-1.4)**



21. **Average Score: (1.7)**



22. **Average Score: (0.6)**



23. **Average Score: (0.7)**



24. **Average Score: (2.2)**



25.

Average Score: (0.6)

3. Open Space and Recreation Category

There were a total of eight slides displayed in the open space and recreation category, and respondents rated all images positive. The category included images showing an abundance of green space, shade trees, and attractive landscaping. The highest image average score in this category was 2.3, and the lowest score was 1.4.

Images Rated Positively: Most of the open space and recreation images having green space, lawns, mature trees, and grass were given high scores. Images with recreation elements such as playgrounds, ball fields, football courts, children's swing sets etc., were all rated highly by workshop participants. Other positively rated images depicted bike paths, pedestrian walkways, and picnic benches.



26.

Average Score: (2.0)



27.

Average Score: (2.2)



28. **Average Score: (2.1)**



29. **Average Score: (1.9)**



30. **Average Score: (2.3)**



31. **Average Score: (1.6)**



32. **Average Score: (1.5)**



33. **Average Score: (1.4)**

4. Parking Lot Category

There were a total of six images displayed in the parking lot category. Of these, it was a 50/50 split between those found favorable with workshop participants and those found unfavorable. This category's highest image score was 0.7, while the lowest was -1.5.

Images Rated Positively: Participants rated slides with well-defined parking spaces positively. These include images with well-defined pedestrian crossing areas, landscaping, and appropriate lighting fixtures. Parking lots with sufficient green space and mature shade trees were given high scores. Parking lots that maintained a balance between the concrete/asphalt area and green space were also rated highly. Also, images with appropriate signage were given high scores.

Images Rated Negatively: Most of the negatively rated slides in the parking lot category were of areas with limited or no vegetation cover or landscaping. Images lacking well-defined parking areas were poorly rated. Images with insufficient or oversized parking, relative to the size of the structure, were given low scores. Participants disliked large areas of asphalt parking and/or roads with little or no vegetation cover. Images of older, poorly designed and poorly maintained parking lots, with overhead utility wires further detracting from their visual appeal, were also rated very low.



34. **Average Score: (-0.4)**



35. **Average Score: (-1.3)**



36.	Average Score: (-1.5)
	
38.	Average Score: (0.3)
39.	Average Score: (0.7)

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5. Pedestrian Realm Category

There were a total of seven slides displayed in the pedestrian realm category. Of the total images, five images were rated positively, while only two were rated negatively. The highest image score in this category was 1.6, and the lowest score was -1.8.

Images Rated Positively: Most of the positively rated slides in this category included images showing large mature trees, green grass, well-maintained sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, and attractive landscaping. These images exhibited streetscape elements such as street lamps, grass, shrubs and trees, flowerbeds, trash receptacles, benches etc. making a user-friendlier pedestrian realm.

Images Rated Negatively: The most negatively rated image in this category showed no proper distinction between the parking lot, the sidewalk and the main road, and lacked curbing and landscaping buffer. Most of this category's images lacked properly maintained pathways or sidewalks for walking. Images with old, disorderly, and not well-kept pedestrian walkways were rated very low. The participants did not appreciate the slides exhibiting unfriendly pedestrian walkways. Images with overhead utility wires were also disliked and given low scores. Images with no or limited landscaping were also regarded unfavorably. Images lacking pedestrian features such as streetlamps, trees, flowerbeds, benches also rated very low.



40.

Average Score: (1.5)



41.

Average Score: (-1.5)



42. **Average Score: (1.3)**



43. **Average Score: (0.6)**



44. **Average Score: (0.8)**



45. **Average Score: (1.6)**



46. **Average Score: (-1.8)**

6. Signs Category

There were a total of nine slides displayed in the signs category. Of the total images, five were rated positively, while two were rated negatively. Only one image was placed in the no opinion category with a zero score. This category included signs with varying scores. The highest image score in this category was 2.0, and the lowest score was -2.0.

Images Rated Positively:

Most of the positively rated images in this category included signs that are low to ground (such as monument signs) and pedestrian oriented. Images with small to mid-size signs and that are in scale with the building structure were highly rated by the participants.

Images Rated Negatively:

Most of the negatively rated sign slides included images lacking proper signage. The lowest rated image in this category exhibited signs that were excessively large and cluttered. The out of place signs and signs displayed on poor facades were also rated low by the respondents.

	
<p>47. Average Score: (1.1)</p>	<p>48. Average Score: (2.0)</p>
	
<p>49. Average Score: (-2.0)</p>	<p>50. Average Score: (-1.1)</p>



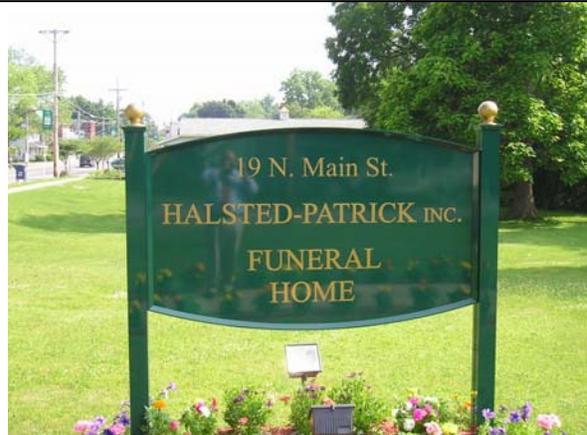
51. Average Score: (0.0)



52. Average Score: (1.3)



53. Average Score: (-0.3)



54. Average Score: (1.6)



55. Average Score: (1.6)

7. Streetscape Category

There were a total of eight images displayed in the streetscape category. Of the total images, five rated positively and four rated negatively. The highest image score in this category was 1.5, and the lowest score was -1.3.

Images Rated Positively: Most of this category's positively rated images displayed friendly pedestrian sidewalks with large mature shade trees. Positive images displayed a variety of streetscape elements such as wide pathways, street lighting, grass cover, trash receptacles, and benches etc. that survey participants responded favorably to.

Images Rated Negatively: Images with broken and insufficient sidewalks were not preferred. Images lacking streetscape elements such as street lighting, landscaping (trees, shrubs, grass) were also given low scores. The image with the lowest score in this category exhibited overhead utility wires and poor landscaping.



56. Average Score: (0.7)



57. Average Score: (-1.0)



58. Average Score: (1.1)



59. Average Score: (1.5)

	
<p>60. Average Score: (1.5)</p>	<p>61. Average Score: (-1.3)</p>
	
<p>62. Average Score: (1.3)</p>	<p>63. Average Score: (-0.4)</p>

8. Waterfront Category

There were a total of seven images displayed in the waterfront category. Of the total, six images rated positively and only one rated negatively. The highest image score in this category was 2.0, and the lowest score was -2.0.

Images Rated Positively: Mostly the images in the waterfront category displaying a lot of green cover and landscaping rated positively. Positively rated images included well-defined pedestrian areas and pedestrian paths along the riverfront. The images exhibiting natural scenic beauty were also well regarded.

Images Rated Negatively: Images with no sidewalks and poorly maintained waterfronts rated negatively. Waterfronts lacking attractive landscaping scored low. Images of waterfronts lacking trees and lawns were also given low scores. The most negatively rated waterfront image showed an unpaved boat launch area devoid of sufficient landscaping.



64. **Average Score: (1.5)**



65. **Average Score: (1.6)**



66. **Average Score: (1.4)**



67. **Average Score: (1.9)**



68. **Average Score: (-0.2)**



69. **Average Score: (0.5)**



70.

Average Score: (2.0)

Table 4: Average score calculation and analysis of all slides

	Images	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Total Value	Total Respondents	Average Score
COMMERCIAL	1	3	2	12	8	9	3	1	-7	38	-0.2
	2	6	15	8	2	3	2	0	-49	36	-1.4
	3	6	9	7	4	9	4	0	-26	39	-0.7
	4	2	3	4	3	11	13	3	30	39	0.8
	5	4	1	1	2	10	15	7	46	40	1.2
	6	23	6	3	3	1	4	0	-75	40	-1.9
	7	3	11	4	10	7	3	1	-19	39	-0.5
	8	2	1	4	7	6	14	6	40	40	1.0
	9	4	5	3	2	13	12	4	24	43	0.6
	10	3	1	1	7	8	12	7	41	39	1.1
	11	3	3	14	7	12	3	1	-8	43	-0.2
	12	2	2	2	1	12	18	5	51	42	1.2
	13	12	8	11	5	3	5	0	-50	44	-1.1
	14	3	6	8	7	10	8	2	3	44	0.1
	15	1	0	4	1	12	12	13	68	43	1.6
	16	0	3	1	2	8	19	10	69	43	1.6
HOUSING	17	4	1	2	9	6	17	5	39	44	0.9
	18	17	7	6	6	5	2	1	-59	44	-1.3
	19	2	4	3	4	13	8	8	36	42	0.9
	20	20	7	3	4	5	4	1	-61	44	-1.4
	21	1	0	2	4	7	16	13	73	43	1.7
	22	4	2	6	5	10	13	4	26	44	0.6
	23	4	2	7	1	10	14	5	30	43	0.7
	24	0	1	2	1	3	13	24	97	44	2.2
	25	3	2	4	5	18	9	2	25	43	0.6
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION	26	3	0	0	0	4	15	21	88	43	2.0
	27	2	0	0	0	8	6	27	95	43	2.2
	28	1	2	0	2	3	10	25	91	43	2.1
	29	0	0	0	4	10	16	14	84	44	1.9
	30	0	0	0	1	9	8	26	103	44	2.3
	31	1	1	1	3	9	18	11	72	44	1.6
	32	1	1		5	12	13	10	63	42	1.5
	33	0	1	4	3	15	11	10	61	44	1.4
PARKING LOTS	34	5	5	11	10	8	3	2	-16	44	-0.4
	35	13	9	8	6	5	2	0	-56	43	-1.3
	36	16	9	9	2	5	3	0	-64	44	-1.5
	37	6	6	3	5	7	13	4	12	44	0.3
	38	2	4	8	8	12	8	2	12	44	0.3
	39	0	2	6	11	11	10	3	30	43	0.7
PEDESTRIAN	40	2	1	1	2	13	15	10	64	44	1.5
	41	15	8	12	3	5	1	0	-66	44	-1.5
	42	2	2	3	4	7	15	11	57	44	1.3
	43	7	2	5	1	9	13	7	26	44	0.6
	44	1	4	4	4	13	14	3	35	43	0.8
	45	0	0	3	4	14	12	12	71	45	1.6
	46	21	10	4	5	2	1	1	-80	44	-1.8

Table 4: Continued

	Images	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Total Value	Total Respondents	Average Score
SIGNS	47	1	1	5	4	13	14	6	49	44	1.1
	48	0	0	0	2	13	11	17	86	43	2.0
	49	23	11	4	4	3	0	0	-92	45	-2.0
	50	13	4	12	8	1	5	0	-48	43	-1.1
	51	4	5	12	4	12	7	2	-2	46	0.0
	52	2	1	2	4	12	10	12	58	43	1.3
	53	6	6	6	8	13	4	0	-15	43	-0.3
	54	1	0	1	4	12	15	12	74	45	1.6
STREETSCAPE	55	0	0	1	4	17	13	10	72	45	1.6
	56	3	2	8	3	12	11	6	31	45	0.7
	57	8	10	9	9	4	3	0	-43	43	-1.0
	58	2	5	3	1	11	11	11	47	44	1.1
	59	2	0	1	4	13	13	11	65	44	1.5
	60	1	1	2	3	11	15	10	64	43	1.5
	61	10	12	9	7	3	2	0	-56	43	-1.3
	62	1	3	2	1	9	22	5	57	43	1.3
WATERFRONT	63	4	7	10	9	9	4	1	-16	44	-0.4
	64	1	0	3	2	15	12	10	63	43	1.5
	65	2	2	1	1	11	14	14	70	45	1.6
	66	0	2	3	3	13	15	8	60	44	1.4
	67	1	0	0	3	10	11	18	83	43	1.9
	68	8	7	7	3	7	12	1	-11	45	-0.2
	69	3	2	6	4	18	6	4	23	43	0.5
	70	0	2	0	1	6	17	18	90	44	2.0