

Salisbury North Prong Park Community Workshop Report
University of Maryland

Introduction

The North Prong Park for the City of Salisbury requires intensive thought in regards to site context and water edge engagement. The Senior Landscape Architecture Capstone Studio at the University of Maryland utilized Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG) as well as community engagement and feedback in the site analysis phase of their design thinking for the North Prong Park for the City of Salisbury. In collaboration with the Mayor's office, students organized a community workshop that allowed city hall visitors to engage in "design games." These various games were designed in such a way that allowed students to collect data about critical questions regarding the North Prong Park site while simultaneously allowing participants to think critically about the sites existing conditions and needs in a fun and interactive manner. Within this report, WEDG guidelines and the community engagement games listed below are summarized so as to highlight the resulting data that informed student designs.

1. Role of the River
2. Interesting Features
3. Recreation on the Wicomico
4. Reinventing the Wheel: Public Placemaking
5. Abstraction
6. Design Wish List Survey
7. Current Community Satisfaction with North Prong Site

Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines

The Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines were originally developed by the Waterfront Alliance, a project based division of The Municipal Art Society of New York. This voluntary rating system and set of guidelines helps to address the complexity of waterfront design from various points of view including ecosystem preservation and restoration, land use policies, design, and planning. According to the Waterfront Alliance, goals of WEDG include resilience, ecology and access. Resilience encompasses the "adaptation and reduction of risks related to sea level rise and increased coastal flooding through implementation of setbacks, structural protection, and other landscaping measures." A focus on ecology allows for the "protection of existing aquatic habitats and the use of design, materials, and shoreline configurations to improve the ecological function of the coastal zone, and a strive to be consistent with regional ecological goals." And finally, access that is "equitable and informed by the community, enhancing public access, supporting a diversity of uses for maritime, recreation, and commerce where appropriate, thereby maximizing the diversity of harbors and waterfronts." More information about WEDG can be found at wedg.waterfrontalliance.org.

Role of the River

The Role of the River game aimed to compare people's perceptions of what purposes the river serves in the present and in the future to consider how to best approach designing with the Wicomico River on site. In order to achieve this, two boards were presented, one posing the question "what is the role of the river as it is today?" and the other posing the question "what should the role of the river be tomorrow?" Both of these boards had imagery regarding recreation, community spaces, education, environmental benefits, therapeutic opportunities, industrial use, waste problems, and residential/retail benefits.

For each board, participants received two green stickers representing elements that are/should be present and one red sticker representing elements that aren't/shouldn't be present.

Twenty total people were surveyed resulting in a displacement of 80 green stickers and 60 red stickers. The displacement of the stickers are shown in images 1a and 1b.

Image 1a

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE RIVER AS IT IS TODAY?

.....


<p>Recreation</p>  <p>10 green stickers</p>	<p>Community Space</p>  <p>3 red stickers, 2 green stickers</p>
<p>Education</p>  <p>3 red stickers, 1 green sticker</p>	<p>Environmental Benefit</p>  <p>4 red stickers, 1 green sticker</p>
<p>Therapeutic Opportunity</p>  <p>2 red stickers, 4 green stickers</p>	<p>Industrial Use</p>  <p>10 green stickers</p>
<p>Waste Problem</p>  <p>10 green stickers, 5 red stickers</p>	<p>Residential/Retail Benefit</p>  <p>4 green stickers, 2 red stickers</p>
<p>Other- What did we miss?</p> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>	

Image 1b

WHAT SHOULD THE ROLE OF THE RIVER BE TOMORROW?

Recreation



Community Space



Education



Environmental Benefit



Therapeutic Opportunity



Industrial Use



Waste Problem



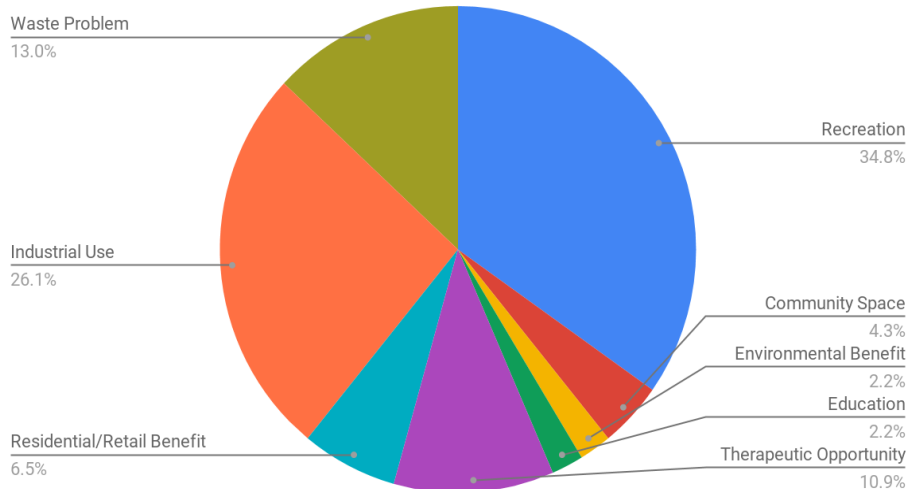
Residential/Retail Benefit



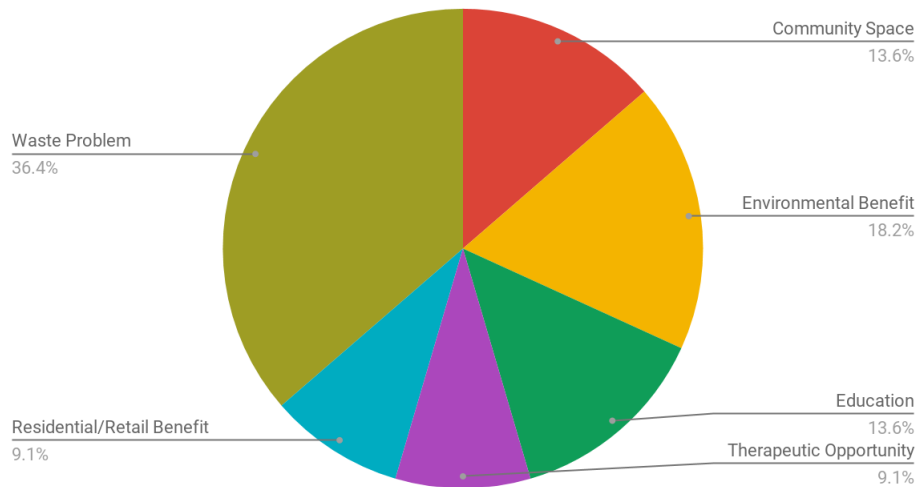
Other- What did we miss?

The Findings: "What is the Role of the River as it is Today?"

Green Dot Responses



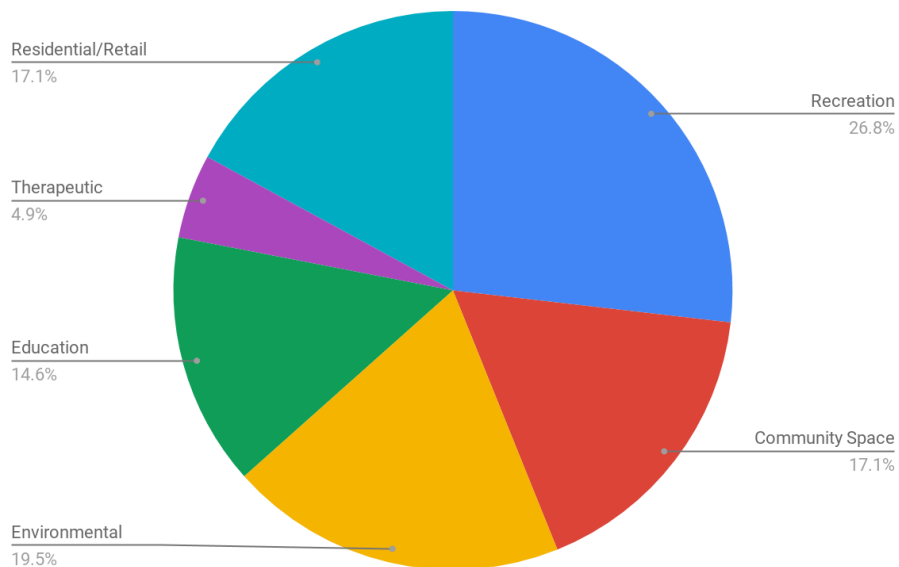
Red Dot Responses



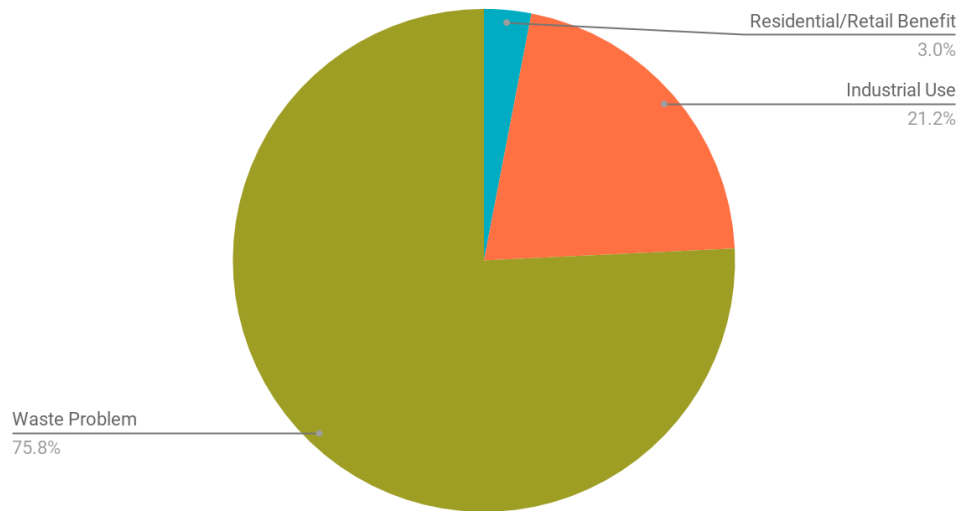
For the present conditions, the team found that currently the river primarily serves as a recreation opportunity for activities such as kayaking, walking, and running as well as an industrial purposes. However, the river definitely lacks opportunity for residential/retail benefit which the city is currently looking to improve.

The Findings: “What Should the Role of the River be Tomorrow?”

Green Dot Responses



Red Dot Responses



For the future conditions, the team found that there was a desire for more diverse recreation opportunities, environmental benefits, educational benefits, educational purposes, residential/retail benefits. While residents were adamant about not adding or allowing for waste issues and further industrial uses along the river.

Interesting Features



Interesting Features game was made to see what features in Salisbury that already exist should be kept and implemented into a new Riverwalk design. Students looked at interesting features that stood out in their visit and ask participants what features they liked and could see incorporated into a new design? Giving the features another use. Students gave the participants 3 dots and allowed them to pick the ones most interesting to them. If they felt strongly about a feature students allowed them to put all 3 dots on one spot if they wanted to. *Image 2a*

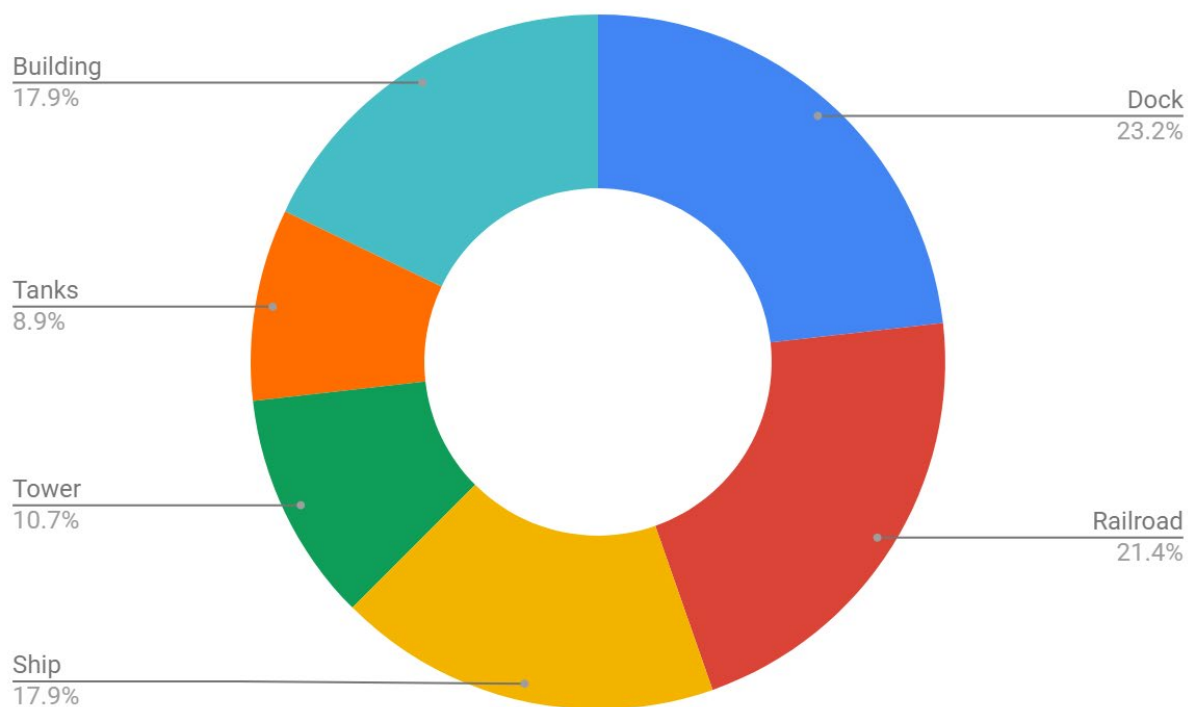
The places that students surveyed were the docks on Rose Street, The Railroads on Mill Street, The Tanks, Tower and Ship that can be accessed on Lake Street, and the Building on West Main street. *Image 2a* shows the board used in the community design games with images showing those features and where they are located.

The Findings

After the design game concluded students gathered that the majority of the community wanted to see the docks, railroads, building, and ship incorporated into a new design. The post industrial area where the tanks and tower were located was least popular because it had a reputation of polluting the nearby water. *Image 2b* shows these findings. During the interesting features game the participants also mentioned that water quality was a major issue that needed to be fixed. They also mentioned that the area should be more pedestrian friendly and that traffic on West Salisbury Pkwy was very heavy.

Image 2b

Dock	Railroad	Ship	Tower	Tanks	Building
13	12	10	6	5	10



Recreation on the Wicomico

The Recreation on the Wicomico game aimed to see where and how often Salisbury community members interact with the North Prong of the Wicomico River. During this game participants were asked to put dots on a map to represent what activities they do and where they do these

activities. Walking was represented by green dots, Bird watching was represented by purple dots, fishing was represented by yellow dots, swimming was represented by blue dots and Boating was represented by red dots.

Image 3a



The Findings

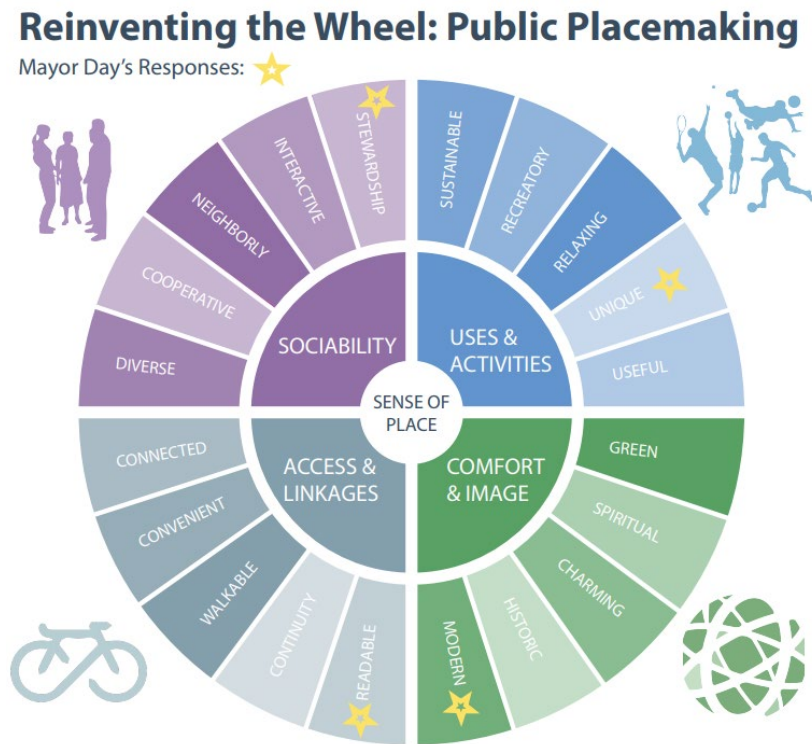
The data gathered shows that the community member mostly interacts with the river by walking near it and they do that on average once a week. The data also showed that bird watching is something that the community participate in as well but not as often as walking. More than 50% of the participants don't fish or boat in the river. And more than 75% do not swim in the river. Most of these activities were being done in the Southeast area of the river which you can see in *Image 3a*.

Reinventing the Wheel: Public Placemaking

This community engagement game goal was to see what the community wanted out of the space. The game focuses on Sociability, Uses & Activities, Access and Linkages, and Comfort & Images. Different adjectives were selected to see how the community could envision that space.

The participants of the game were asked to put dots on one adjective in each category. *Image 4a* shows these categories and adjectives use in the game.

Image 4a



The Findings

Findings from the game showed that the following were the most popular adjectives for each category.

Sociability: Neighborly and Diverse

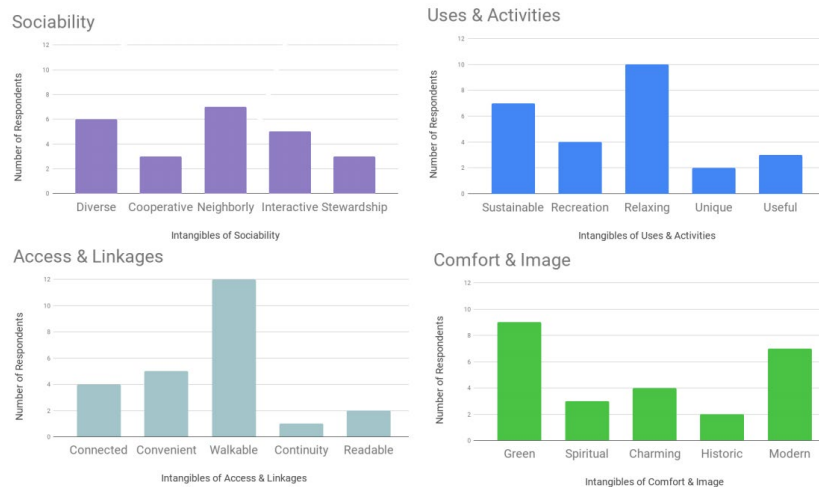
Uses & Activities: Relaxing and Sustainable

Access & Linkages: Walkable and Convenient

Comfort & Image : Green and Modern

Image 4b shows the overall data results.

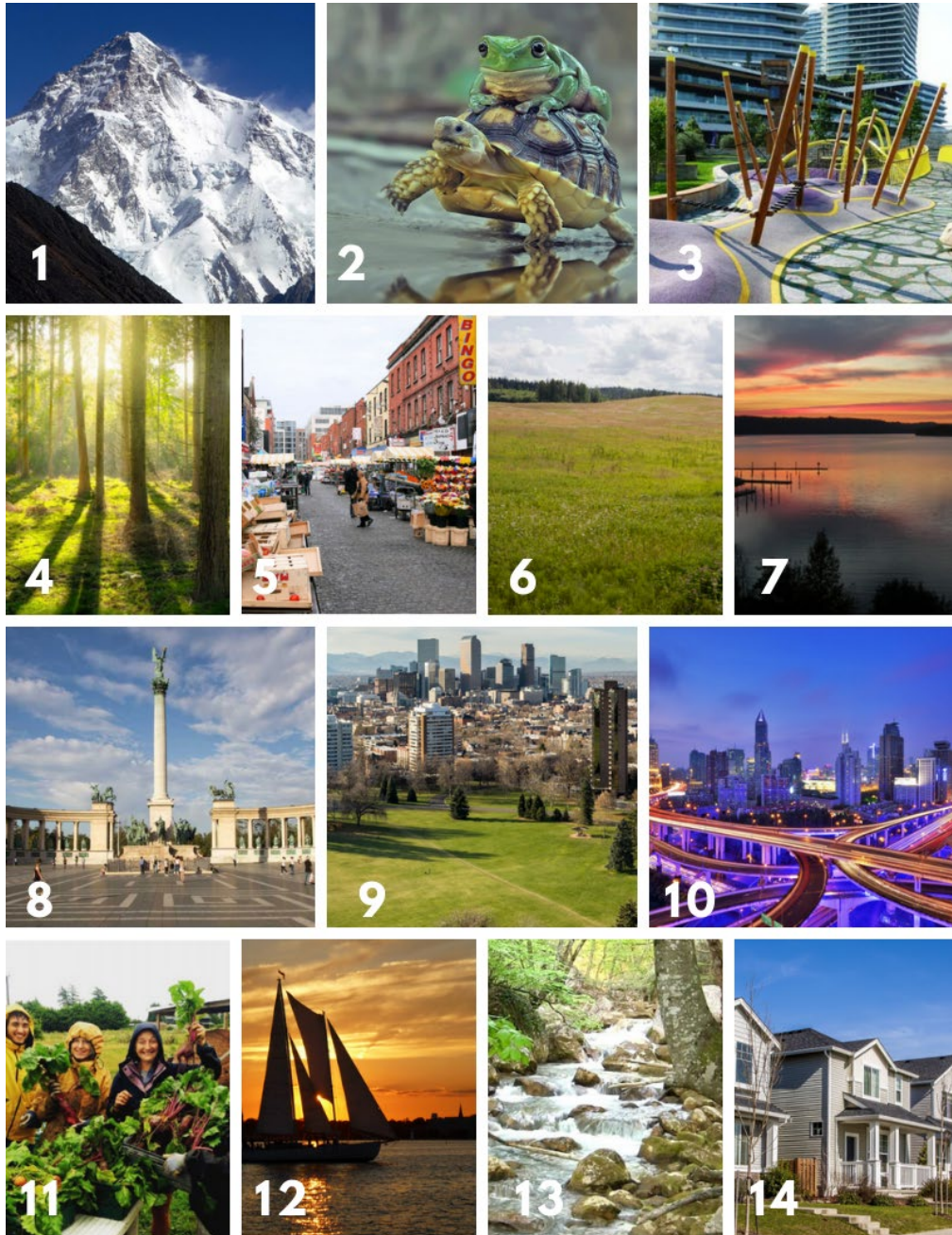
Image 4b



Abstraction

Abstraction game aimed to have participants pick the three images that they like best based on abstract qualities and feelings. These images were intended to be taken into account when designing the riverwalk and show how the designers would interpret those abstract images into the design. *Image 5a* shows the images the participants were able to choose from.

Image 5a



The Findings

The high vote images were 5 (market picture) with 13%, 7 (dock picture) with 15%, 12(sailboat picture) with 11% and 13 (creek picture) with 11% also. *Images 5b and 5a* show these results.

Image 5b

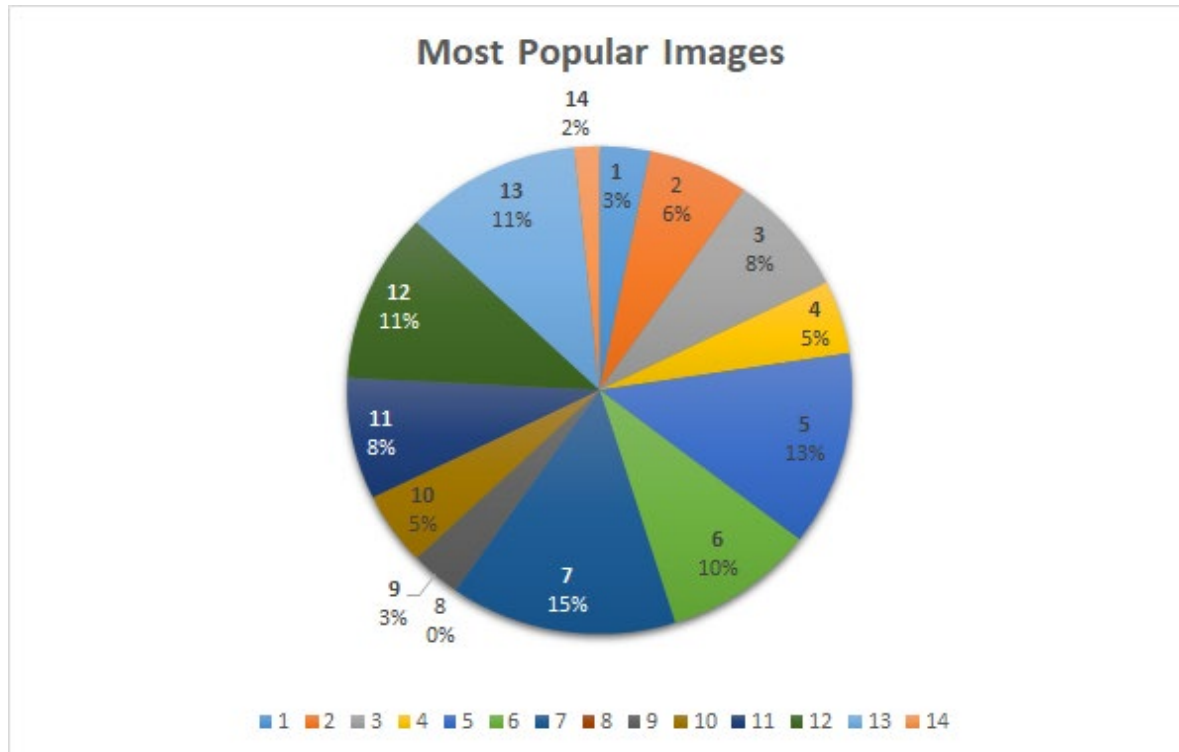
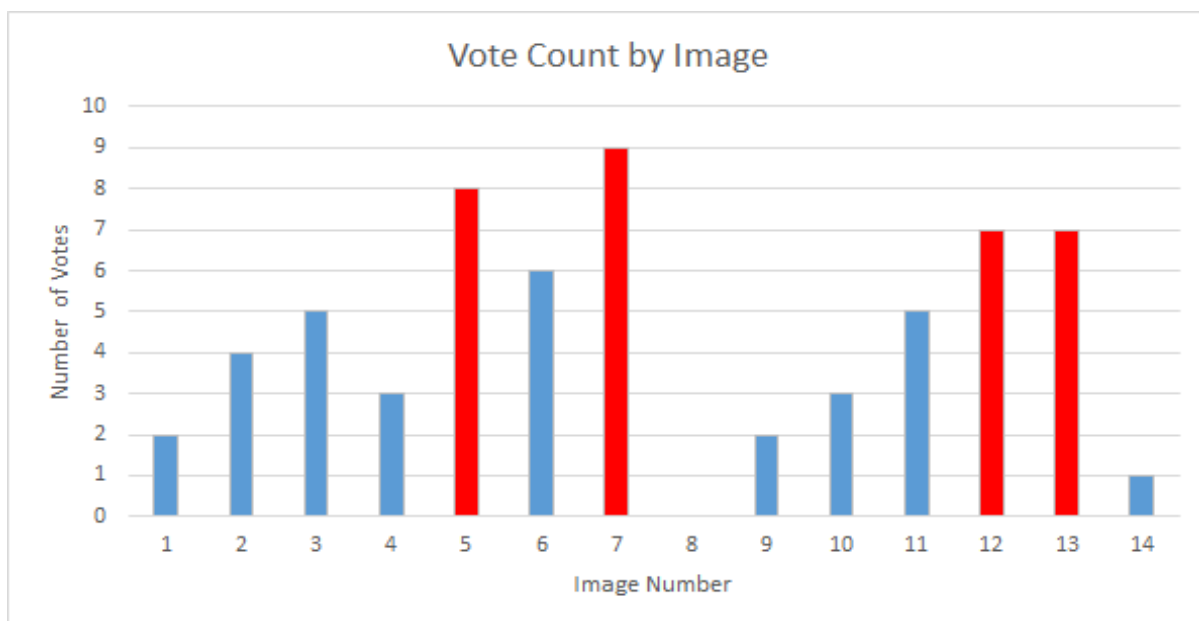


Image 5c



Design Wish List Survey

This survey was intended to help the team get a better understanding of the programming and design aesthetic the community was seeking from the North Prong Park.

Participants were allowed to choose their top seven desired programming elements from the following list (ranked in order from highest desire):

1. Water activities: kayaking, etc. (19 responses)
2. Picnic/eating areas (18 responses)
3. Fishing (13 responses)
4. Nature play space (13 responses)
5. Seating along the river (12 responses)
6. Pavillion/gathering space (11 responses)
7. Bike trail (11 responses)
8. Traditional playground structure (10 responses)
9. Water features (10 responses)
10. Bio-retention such as rain gardens (9 responses)
11. Food truck area for occasional use (8 responses)
12. Sports fields (6 responses)
13. Pet park (6 responses)
14. Bird watching (5 responses)
15. Educational signage (3 responses)
16. Built shade structures (3 responses)
17. Fitness structures (2 responses)
18. Memorials/monuments (1 response)

In addition to the initial programming wish list, the team asked a series of questions to try and gauge the desired design aesthetic the community was looking for as well as basic demographic information.

1. Out of these three examples, which riverwalk do you prefer?



9

1



3

2



13

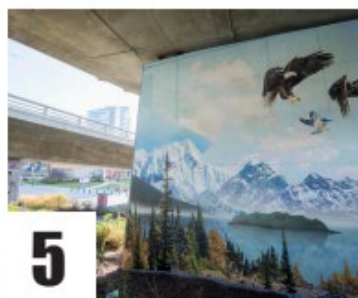
3

2. Which of these interests you the most?



5

Historic site features



5

Art installations



15

Environmental learning

3. Which of these activities would you rather do when visiting the riverwalk?



4

Biking



6

Fishing



10

Playground/Family play



5

Kayaking



8

Picnic



8

Market Shopping

4. How much access to the water do you think the riverwalk should include?



1

None



17

Some



7

A lot

5. Which of these would you prioritize more for the riverwalk project?



4

Sports Recreation



6

Wildlife Recreation



15

Aquatic Recreation

6. When visiting the riverwalk, who would you expect to come with?



1

By myself



9

With a partner



15

With a group of friends/family

7. Would you visit the North Prong at night if it was well lit?



21

Yes



2

No



2

Written in Maybes

8. When visiting the North Prong Riverwalk, how would you expect to get there?



9. Do you think an amphitheater space would be a good addition to the riverwalk for hosting events/live music?



10. Currently, which aspect of the project are you most concerned about?



11. Are there any aspects of the riverwalk you feel still have not been addressed? If so, please comment in the space provided below.

Responses included: flooding, funding, honoring of the industrial past, continuity with existing designs (i.e. how does it fit with the city's long-term plans)

The Findings

Overall, the community seemed to be enthusiastic about utilizing the river for recreational uses such as kayaking, fishing and water side activities such as walking, running and picnicking. In terms of design aesthetic, the community gave the team feedback that suggested a balanced

design that incorporated both natural and built systems that took into account the proximity to the river as a critical area. As such the team aimed to follow Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG) that would allow for the creation of a resilient, ecological, and accessible waterfront while paying homage to the industrial past of the site. It was also evident that the community desired a site that could be utilized by a wide range of people groups and ages.

Current Community Satisfaction with North Prong Site

In addition to the design games presented at the community workshop, an online survey was distributed amongst the community for the team to better understand the current levels of community satisfaction with the North Prong Site.

The Findings

1. *In general, how do you feel about the North Prong section of the Wicomico River?*

The community responses indicated that the feeling toward the site was negative. People commented with adjectives such as “dirty, industrial, unattractive, polluted, dangerous, undesirable and unsafe.” Many respondents however also commented that the site had a lot of potential to be a more desirable space.

2. *Which types of spaces would you be interested in seeing by the waterfront? Select all that apply.*

The results for this question correlated closely with the results of the design wish list survey and highlighted nature spaces, active recreational spaces, community gathering and leisure spaces.

3. *Which types of spaces would you be less interested in seeing by the waterfront? Select all that apply.*

The highest responses for this question highlighted less of a need for pet friendliness, water features, and food services.

4. *How much recreational types of spaces would you like to see near this part of the waterfront?*

In terms of recreation, the resounding consensus was that the North Prong Park site needed to increase recreational space and include a variety of program types.

5. *If you are interested in increased types of recreational spaces, please select all activities that you are interested in.*

The highest voted types of recreation included walking/running, biking, leisure space, boating and fishing.

6. *How easy or difficult is it for you to get to this part of the river? If helpful, please describe which parts of the site are easiest to access.*

The community seemed to think that it was relatively easy to access the river through the North Prong area. However, there was consensus that pedestrian and vehicular access

needed to be improved and that infrastructure needed revitalization.

7. *Which mode of transportation do you use to get to this point of the river?*

The vast majority of community members seem to access the site through vehicular access with only a few walkers and bikers.

8. *How satisfied are you with availability of public parking near the waterfront?*

As a response to the previous question, community members believe that there is not enough public parking in the area.

9. *In your opinion, which types of transportation are need to provide better access to this part of the river?*

As a response to this question, community members call for an increase in better pedestrian and vehicular access with some emphasis on bike routes and little emphasis on public transportation.

10. *How satisfied are you with your accessibility to pedestrian and bike paths in this part of the river?*

Community members are currently dissatisfied with accessibility to pedestrian and bike paths and would like to see an increase in access.

11. *Which types of planting material would you like to see by the waterfront?*

The vast majority of community members call for an increase in ornamental trees with an emphasis on large canopy trees and groundcover.

12. *Which types of building materials would you like to see by this part of the river?*

The community would like to see a much natural material as possible with some traditional aspects intertwined.

13. *Which types of food options would you like to see by this part of the river?*

The most popular food option was a marketplace with some emphasis on food trucks.

14. *Would you be more likely to visit this part of the river at night if there was more adequate lighting?*

The resounding answer to this question was an adamant yes! Most likely due to current safety concerns on the North Prong section of the river.

15. *How satisfied are you with the amount of artistic displays in this part of town?*

Community members are currently dissatisfied with the amount of artistic displays and believe the area could benefit from more such displays.

16. *Currently, which aspect of the North Prong section of the river are you most concerned about?*

Safety is by far the most prominent concern for the community as the area is covered in dangerous industrial elements and lacks proper infrastructure such as lighting for night time safety. Environmental concerns were the second most voted due to the aforementioned industrial uses.

Resources

Waterfront Alliance. (2019). Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines. Retrieved from wedg.waterfrontalliance.org.

Waterfront Alliance. (2018). Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines Brochure. Retrieved from http://wedg.waterfrontalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/delightful-downloads/2018/07/WEDG-Handout_Print_2018_web.pdf.

Waterfront Alliance. (2018). Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines Extended Manual. Retrieved from http://wedg.waterfrontalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/delightful-downloads/2018/07/WEDG-Manual-FULL-EXTENDED_2018_small.pdf.

Waterfront Alliance. (2018). Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines Projects. Retrieved from <http://wedg.waterfrontalliance.org/projects/#projects>.