

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

Parks, projects & programs to connect
communities in South Baltimore

The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan

Volume 3: Engagement Summary

February 2023

The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan is led by the City of Baltimore, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, and Parks & People, working alongside a team of expert consultants, local and regional stakeholders, and South Baltimore residents.



The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan was prepared by a collaborative team of consultants, including:

Planning, Landscape Architecture

James Corner Field Operations
Mahan Rykiel Associates
DesignJones LLC
Waldon Studio Architects
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Acknowledgments

- City of Baltimore**
 - Brandon M. Scott, Mayor
 - Justin Williams, Deputy Mayor for Community & Economic Development
 - *Ethan Cohen, Senior Advisor for Community & Economic Development
 - Chris Ryer, Director, Department of Planning
 - Reginald Moore, Director, Department of Recreation & Parks
 - *Jazmin Kimble, Southern District Planner, Department of Planning
 - *Kyle Leggs, Planning Supervisor, Department of Planning

- South Baltimore Gateway Partnership**
 - Brad Rogers, Executive Director
 - *Ethan Abbott, Transformational Projects Manager
 - *Nan Rohrer, Consultant
 - Geoffrey Washington, Chair, Board of Directors

- Parks & People**
 - Dr. Franklin Lance, President & CEO
 - John C. Woloszyn, Chair, Board of Directors

** Denotes Project Manager*

- Reimagine Middle Branch Working Group**
 - Ethan Abbott, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
 - Adam Boarman, Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks
 - Ethan Cohen, Baltimore City Mayor’s Office
 - Nicole A. Davis, Baltimore Development Corporation
 - Colline Emmanuelle, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
 - Chris Firehock, Baltimore City Mayor’s Office
 - Brenton Flickinger, (formerly) Baltimore City Department of Planning
 - Andrew Frank, (formerly) Parks & People
 - Jennifer Guthrie, Maryland Port Administration
 - *Jazmin Kimble, Baltimore City Department of Planning
 - *Kyle Leggs, Baltimore City Department of Planning
 - Jill Lemke, (formerly) Maryland Port Administration
 - Michael Middleton, SB7 Coalition
 - Brad Rogers, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
 - Nan Rohrer, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
 - Valerie Rupp, (formerly) Parks & People
 - Lindsay Staton, SB7 Coalition
 - Patrick Terranova, (formerly) Baltimore Development Corporation

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- Steering Committee

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- Community Advisory Committee

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- JEDI Advisory Committee

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 - Curtis Bay
 - Federal Hill
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 - Mount Winans
 - Otterbein
 - Pigtown
 - Ridgely’s Delight
 - Riverside
 - Saint Paul
 - Sharp-Leadenhall
 - Stadium Area
 - South Baltimore
 - Westport

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The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan was adopted by the Baltimore City Planning Commission on February 9, 2023

Reimagine Middle Branch Committee Members

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Del. Brooke Lierman
Michael Middleton
Reginald Moore
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Stephanie Smith

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Betty Bland-Thomas
Veronica Crosby
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Janet Eveland
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Bobby Goodfellow
Lisa Hodges-Hiken
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Bruna Attila
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Jeffrey Cornwell
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Sandy Hertz
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Seema Iyer
Marc Kantrowitz
Valorie LaCour
Jeff LaNoue
Jill Lemke
Allysha Lorber
Joe McAndrew
David Moore
Theo Ngongang
Wendy O’Sullivan
Sandra Olek
Kimberly Rubens
Natalia Sanchez Hernandez
Laurie Schwartz
Dominic Scurti

Aaron Shapiro
Renata Southard
Andrea van Wyk
Dick Williams

Youth Advisory Committee

Jalen (Mark) Byrd
Ruby Gifford
Deven Battish
Delonte Roberts
Percy Leeson
Titayna Franklin
Laila Williams
Jeremiah Sutter

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Chapter 1

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Reimagine Middle Branch is a community-driven initiative to reconnect South Baltimore to its 11+ miles of shoreline along the Patapsco River. The Reimagine Middle Branch (RMB) Plan envisions a network of world-class parks, trails, and programs, while fostering equitable economic opportunity in adjacent neighborhoods.

Creating this compelling vision to reimagine the Middle Branch was only possible with the creativity and expertise of its neighbors. What better way to reveal and celebrate shared values than through

the creative and inclusive conversation about shaping this future public treasure? For this reason, the team endeavored to perform outreach and engagement beyond standard models of public meetings and stakeholder sessions.

This report summarizes the engagement activities completed during the 12-month planning process, the feedback gathered through these activities, and how this feedback informed the Plan's Design Vision and Implementation Strategy.

REIMAGINE
MIDDLE BRANCH

THANK YOU
FOR ATTENDING!



A Community-Driven Plan

The community engagement timeline tracks all engagement activities performed by the Planning Team throughout the duration of the RMB Plan. In addition to regularly seeking guidance and input from city agencies and city leadership, the Planning Team engaged stakeholders and the public in meaningful, action-oriented engagement, including:

- RMB Advisory Committee workshops
- Presentations to City Commissions and City Leadership
- Public Outreach (Public Meetings, Surveys, Social Media, and a Project Website)
- Equity Initiatives

Engagement was iterative and structured around the following themes to best inform the Plan at each stage of development.

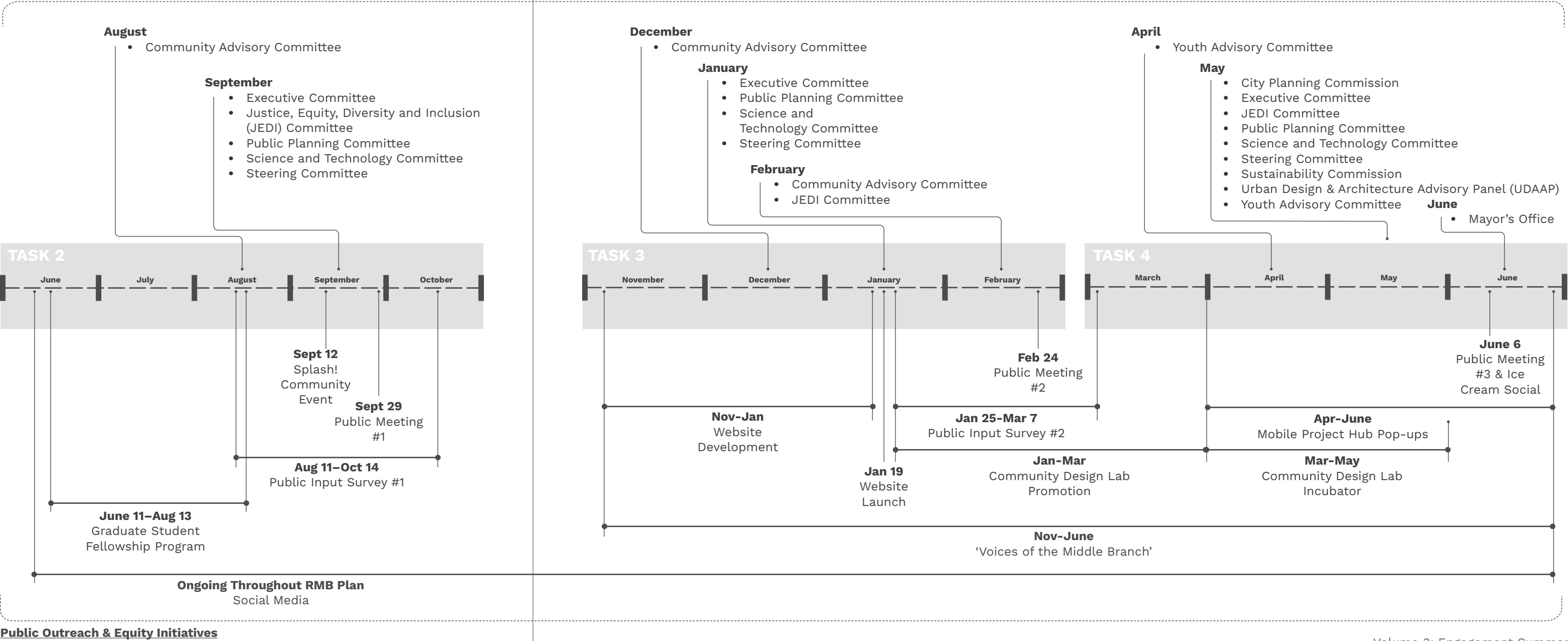
Task 2: Evaluate *June–October, 2021*
Initial outreach and engagement focused on evaluating existing conditions, generating initial design ideas, and defining priorities for future activity and use.

Task 3: Validate *October, 2021–February, 2022*
Continued outreach and engagement validated design direction and revealed key aspects of the Plan which needed additional attention.

Task 4: Demonstrate *March–June, 2022*
Continued outreach and engagement demonstrated how input had informed the Plan

In addition to these activities, members of the RMB Client team met with neighborhood associations and other community organizations in all neighborhoods in the RMB Plan study area.

RMB Committees, City Commissions & City Leadership



Public Outreach

Online engagement through social media and a project website helped to educate the community about the Plan and build interest in the process.

On **Facebook**, the team promoted events, solicited feedback on project activities, disseminated informational surveys, shared registration information, and shared project photos. On **Instagram**, the team promoted events and images from events, promoted and disseminated surveys, and shared registration information. On **LinkedIn**, the team shared Facebook and Instagram posts to extend the social media reach to local businesses and relevant professional organizations.

Team data showed consistent and steady progress on social media, with consistent gains in followers, impressions on single posts, and shares of posts. The goal was to build a strong following throughout the planning process, reaching more and more of the South Baltimore community on social media platforms.

In addition to the social media campaign, the team launched a full project website, **www.reimaginemb.com**, where the community can find information on the Plan's background and vision, projects and events, related resources, and ways to give feedback and get involved in the planning process.

The website was continuously updated throughout the planning process and will continue to remain active and updated to track future project implementation.

In-person Public Meetings



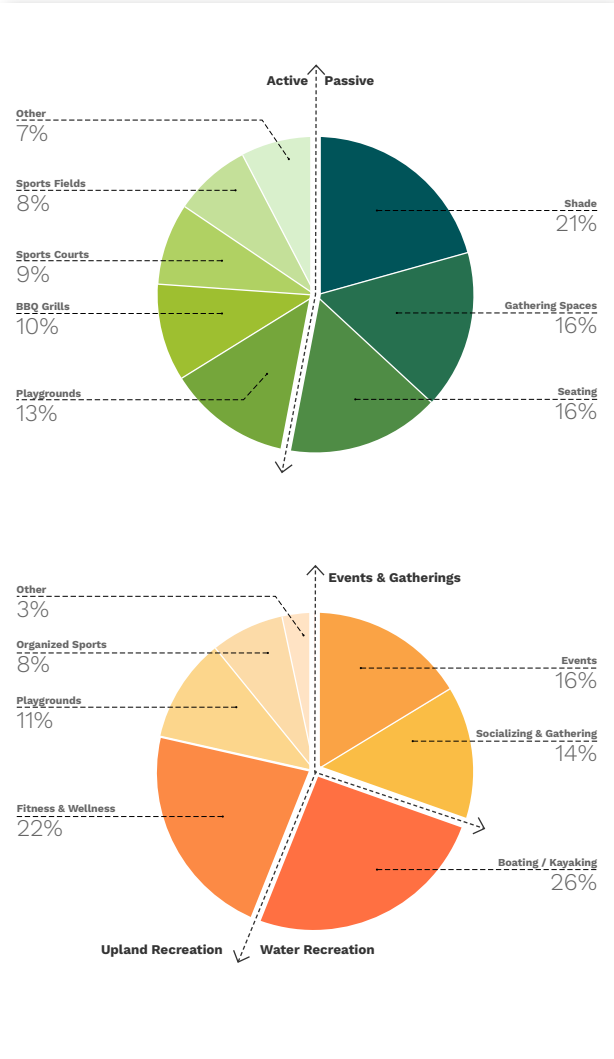
Virtual Public Meetings



In-person Public Meetings



Surveys



Website

REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

VISION

Reimagine Middle Branch is a community-driven initiative to reconnect South Baltimore to its shoreline

ENGLISH

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Within the project area are 19 neighborhoods, 30 parks, and more than 11 miles of shoreline.

Reimagine Middle Branch extends from Curtis Bay and Brooklyn in the south to Cherry Hill, Lakeland, Westport, Mt. Winans, and St. Paul west of the water; north to Carroll-Camden, Pigtown, Barre Circle, Ridgely's Delight, and the Entertainment District; and east to Sharp-Leadenhall, Otterbein, Federal Hill, Riverside, Locust Point, South Baltimore, and Port Covington.

Historically, the Middle Branch had a gradual, natural, and resilient shoreline edge typical of the Chesapeake Bay. Over time this edge was reshaped and hardened by industry and infrastructure, resulting in a shoreline that today is thin, fragmented, and impacted by trash, highways, vacancy, and erosion.

Social Media

Top 3 Facebook posts (Impressions)

Reimagine Middle Branch

Feb 04, 21:52

The Reimagine Middle Branch project is delighted to announce the call for applications for the inaugural Community Design Lab + Middle Branch - a paid, youth program! Applications are being accepted until February 11 at 11:59pm EST. Through this program, a cohort of high school-aged youth (16+ years old) will meet weekly to participate in the Design Lab's 10-week...

629 impressions

Reimagine Middle Branch

Feb 01, 16:02

The Reimagine Middle Branch team is interested in getting your feedback on our preliminary design and planning ideas. A new...

499 impressions

Top 3 Instagram posts (Impressions)

reimaginemiddlebranch

Nov 10, 21:26

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge - or Hanover Street bridge - is a key segment in the green boulevard system originally a...

389 impressions

reimaginemiddlebranch

Jan 21, 14:02

Within the Reimagine Middle Branch project area are 19 neighborhoods overall, 30 parks, and more than 11 miles of shoreline. Do you...

388 impressions

Top 3 LinkedIn posts (Impressions)

Reimagine Middle Branch

Nov 10, 21:01

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge - or Hanover Street bridge - is a key segment in the green boulevard system originally a...

94 impressions

Reimagine Middle Branch

Nov 09, 16:02

One street we seek to transform is Waterview Avenue, which today separates Cherry Hill from Middle Branch Park and the water with...

49 impressions

Equity Initiatives

To embrace and embody equity during the planning process, four action-oriented projects were conceived, produced, and completed:

- Splash! A Community Waterfront Event
- Morgan State University Fellowship Program
- The Community Design Lab
- The Mobile Project Hub

These Equity Initiatives were initial investments to promote equity, generate excitement, and help create an identity for the Reimagine Middle Branch during the planning process. While not traditionally included in large-scale master plans, these “catalysts” were critical to building an inclusive process and creating equitable outcomes, and were integral to the Plan’s experience-based engagement.

Splash!



Community Design Lab



Morgan State Fellowship



Mobile Project Hub



Splash! A Community Waterfront Event

In September of 2021, the Planning team hosted Splash! A Community Waterfront Event in Middle Branch Park. The purpose of the event was to build community comfort and a sense of belonging on and around the water. Over 250 people attended the event, participating in kayaking, canoeing, rowing, and fishing across 8 activity stations.

Along with welcoming the community to the water, Splash! invited organizations working in the realm of public parks, open space, sustainability, resiliency, and water resources, to attend and participate. Community partners included:

- MedStar Harbor Hospital
- Baltimore City Recreation and Parks
- Baltimore Aquatics
- Baltimore Community Rowing
- Fish Finders
- Youth Resiliency Institute
- Blue Water Baltimore
- Baltimore Office of Sustainability
- NPS and Chesapeake Conservancy
- MES/Masonville Cove/MPA

The Plan recommends growing Splash! from a one-time event into a recurring program.

Building on the success of the initial effort, Splash! could evolve into a sustained initiative that helps to activate Middle Branch Park, connects people to recreational opportunities, and develops strong relationships with local partners and stakeholders.

Whenever the community has been presented with the opportunity to enjoy the shoreline or get out on the water, they have turned out in the hundreds, or even thousands in the case of the Fourth of July. This demonstrates that the limiting factor is not community interest, but simply access and opportunity.

Rowing machines at Splash!



Kayaking and Canoeing at Splash!



Community members filling out survey at Splash!



Morgan State University Fellowship Program

Part internship and part individual study, the Reimagine Middle Branch Fellowship Program offered graduate students from Morgan State University a paid opportunity to pair professional practice with self-directed research and design work. The Fellows were hosted by members of the consultant team, who provided guidance on projects and mentorship.

Fellows were selected through an application process that prioritized students of color. Fellows’ individual research became integral to the Plan’s development, ranging from studying historic sites around the Middle Branch to developing program assessment tools for the Community Design Lab.

Beyond the 10-week fellowship, participants have continued to remain engaged in the Planning process, with some employed by consultant team members.

Morgan State University Fellows presenting individual projects for feedback



The Community Design Lab

The Community Design Lab is a project-based, career-discovery program to cultivate environmental education, community stewardship, and youth agency, intended to foster local empowerment and sustainable change. A cohort of six high school-aged local youth (16+ years old) was brought together for their shared connection to South Baltimore (residing in or attending school there, or as members of Baltimore Community Rowing).

In the spring of 2022, students met weekly after school at Digital Harbor High School for a Design Immersion Course. The course allowed students to explore themes of the Middle Branch, urban planning, and environmental design while developing proposals for individual site-based projects. Students earned a \$500 stipend for this time.

For 5 weeks in summer (July-August 2022) students participated for 25 hours per week in a program of mentorship, leadership training, and developing their individual projects, for which they received \$1,500 through the City’s YouthWorks program.

Community Design Lab field trip to the Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center



The Mobile Project Hub

The Mobile Project Hub served as an engagement tool, information bank, and community resource-repository for Reimagine Middle Branch. The Hub, housed in a cart, was designed in collaboration with local artist, Saba Hamidi. The Hub enables the engagement team to share up-to-date project information, collect feedback (both passively and actively), organize activities, and provide community resources.

During the spring of 2022, the Hub engaged in seven “pop-up” engagement sessions at events across South Baltimore. At each event, the community was invited to learn about the project and share feedback about what projects they would like to see happen first.

Mobile Project Hub Branding



Project Collateral and Cart



Mobile Project Hub in Carroll Park



Mobile Project Hub in Carroll Park

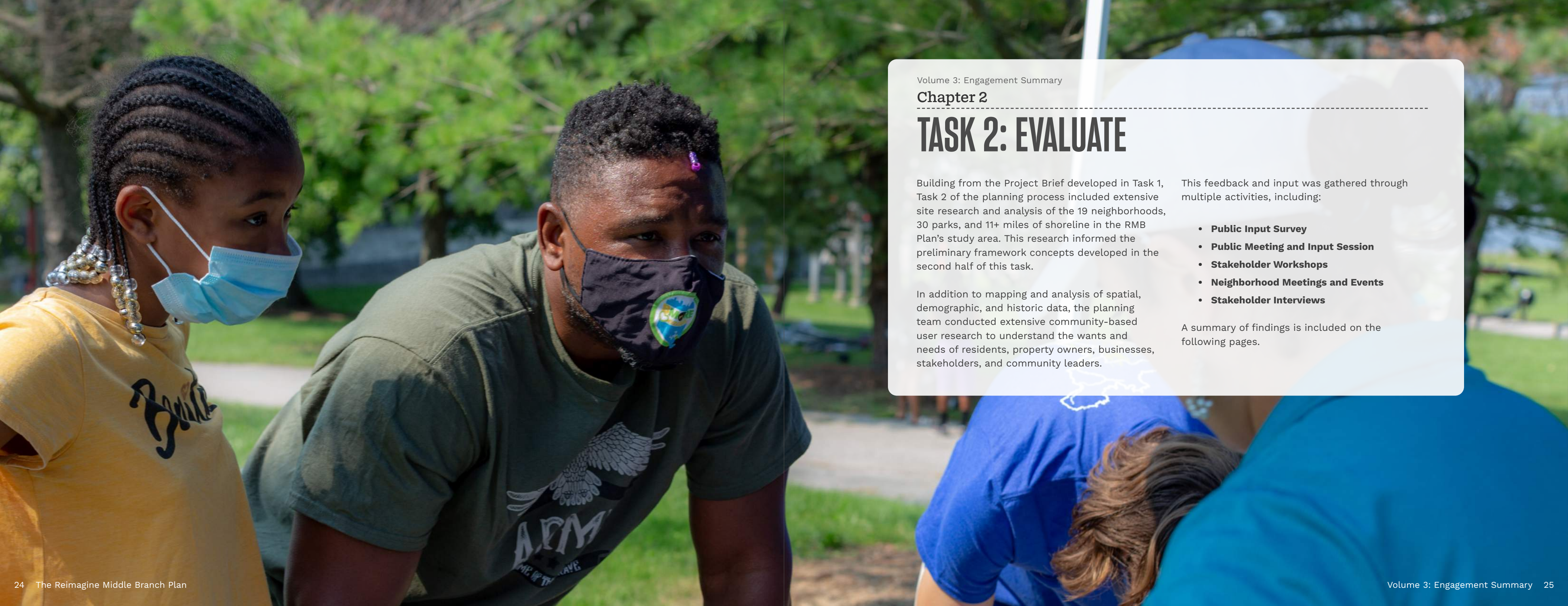


RMB team member talking to Middle Branch residents



Schedule of Events Attended

Event	Date	Location
Cyclovia	April 23, 2022	Carroll Park
Digital Harbor High School Spring Fling	April 30, 2022	Federal Hill
Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) Resource Fair	May 20, 2022	Westport
Baltimore Museum of Industry (BMI) Farmers Market	May 21, 2022	BMI
Reimagine Middle Branch Public Meeting	June 6, 2022	Middle Branch Park
Baltimore Community Rowing (BCR) Learn-to-Row Event	June 11, 2022	Middle Branch Park
AFRAM	June 18-19, 2022	Druid Hill Park



Chapter 2

TASK 2: EVALUATE

Building from the Project Brief developed in Task 1, Task 2 of the planning process included extensive site research and analysis of the 19 neighborhoods, 30 parks, and 11+ miles of shoreline in the RMB Plan’s study area. This research informed the preliminary framework concepts developed in the second half of this task.

In addition to mapping and analysis of spatial, demographic, and historic data, the planning team conducted extensive community-based user research to understand the wants and needs of residents, property owners, businesses, stakeholders, and community leaders.

This feedback and input was gathered through multiple activities, including:

- **Public Input Survey**
- **Public Meeting and Input Session**
- **Stakeholder Workshops**
- **Neighborhood Meetings and Events**
- **Stakeholder Interviews**

A summary of findings is included on the following pages.

Public Outreach Survey #1: Activities & Use

A short and targeted survey was conducted to understand how community members in South Baltimore experience parks, and what type of activities and uses they want to see in the future. The survey was open for 17 weeks and was promoted at community meetings and events, through the RMB email list, and on our social media platforms. **Over 270 community members took the survey.**

In addition to the three survey questions, respondents were asked about themselves: their age, race, and where they live. This data allowed the team to compare the demographics of survey responses to the demographics of the project’s study area. The responses shared here have been weighted to mirror the area’s racial demographics and better reflect the interest and priorities of all community members.

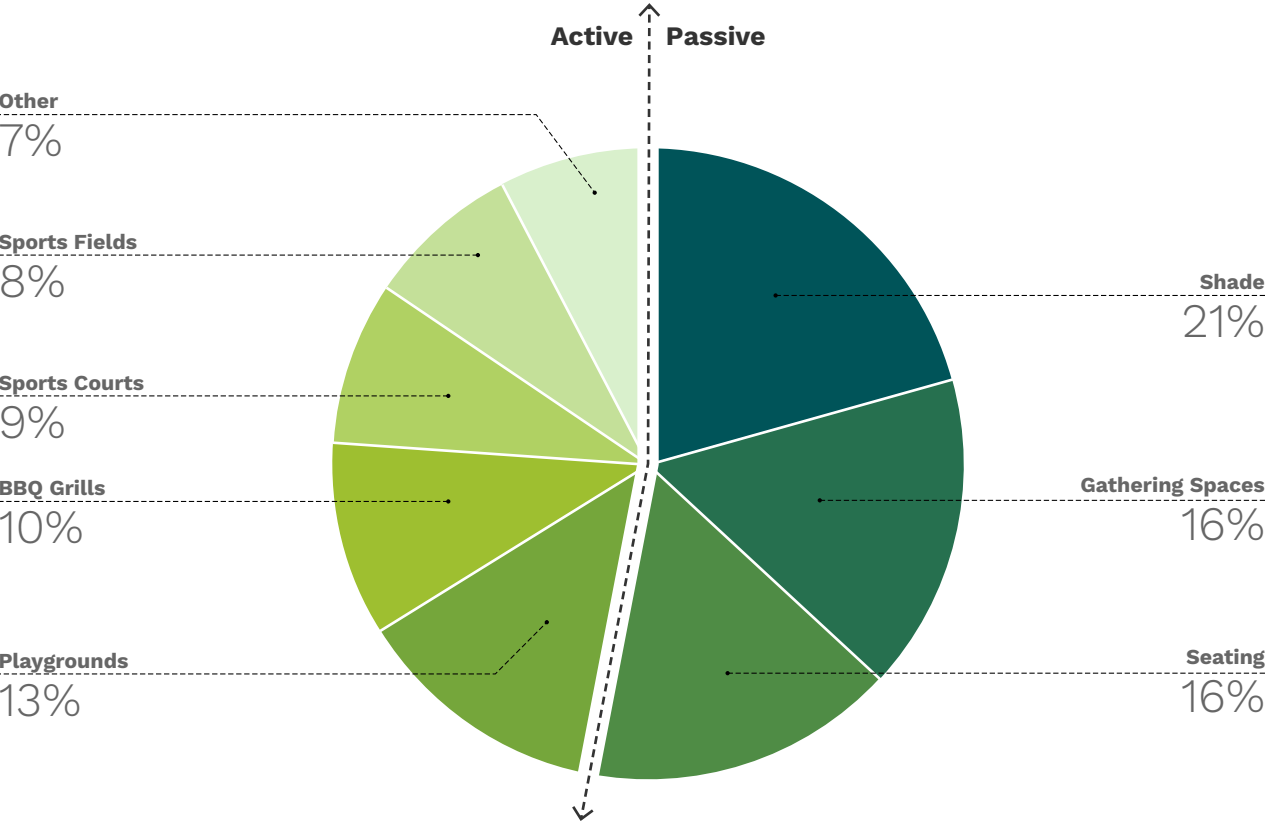


What Features Are Essential for Your Neighborhood Parks?

First, the survey asked community members about neighborhood parks along with waterfront parks, knowing people typically use these two types of parks differently, and Reimagine Middle Branch seeks to improve both.

In surveys conducted during previous planning efforts, trash and maintenance were identified as the number one priority. This survey acknowledged that safety, maintenance, and cleanliness remain essential, while seeking input on what else people wanted to see and do in their neighborhood parks.

Over half the respondents identified **passive features and activities** as preferred neighborhood park essentials.



Other Responses:

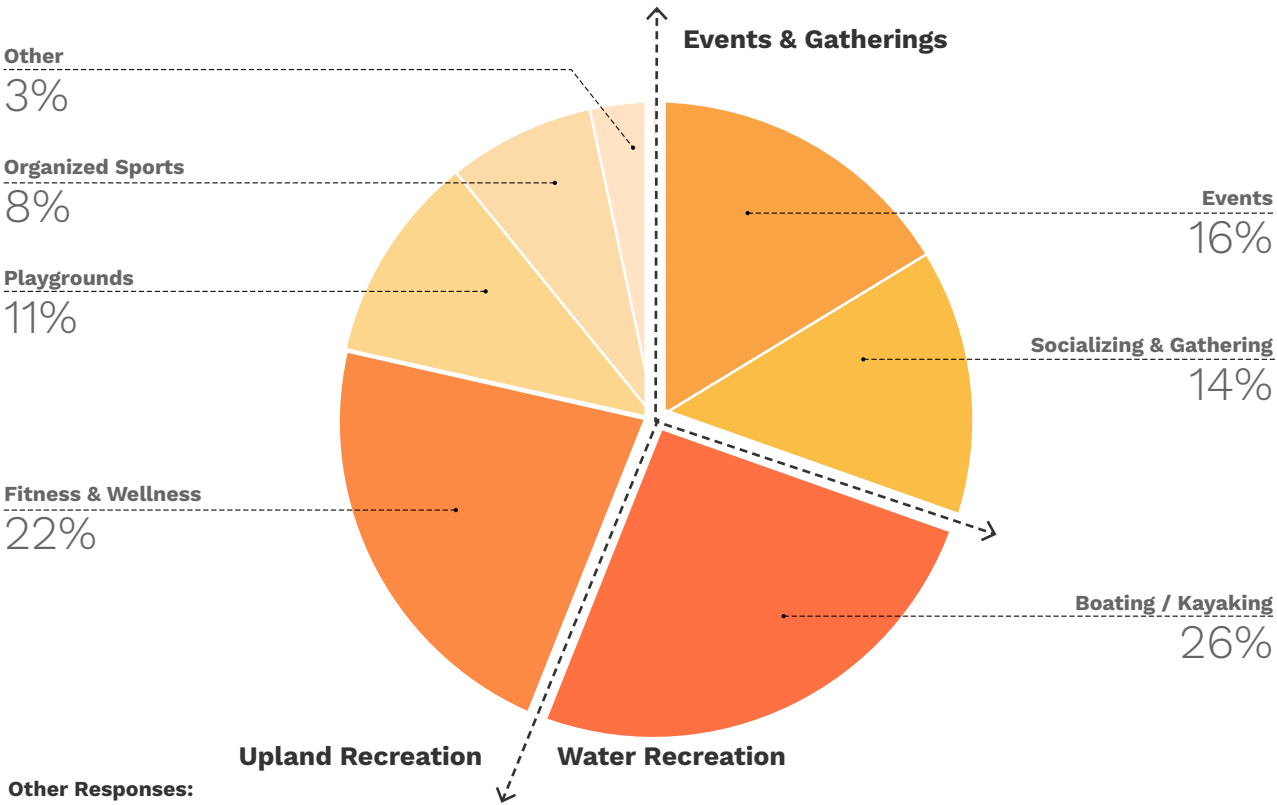


**Responses weighted to reflect demographics of South Baltimore*

What Would You Like to See and/or Do in Waterfront Parks?

In waterfront parks, survey responses were split fairly evenly between three types of uses: events & gatherings, water-based recreation, and upland recreation.

This data instructed the team to include a variety and mix of programs and activities in waterfront parks.

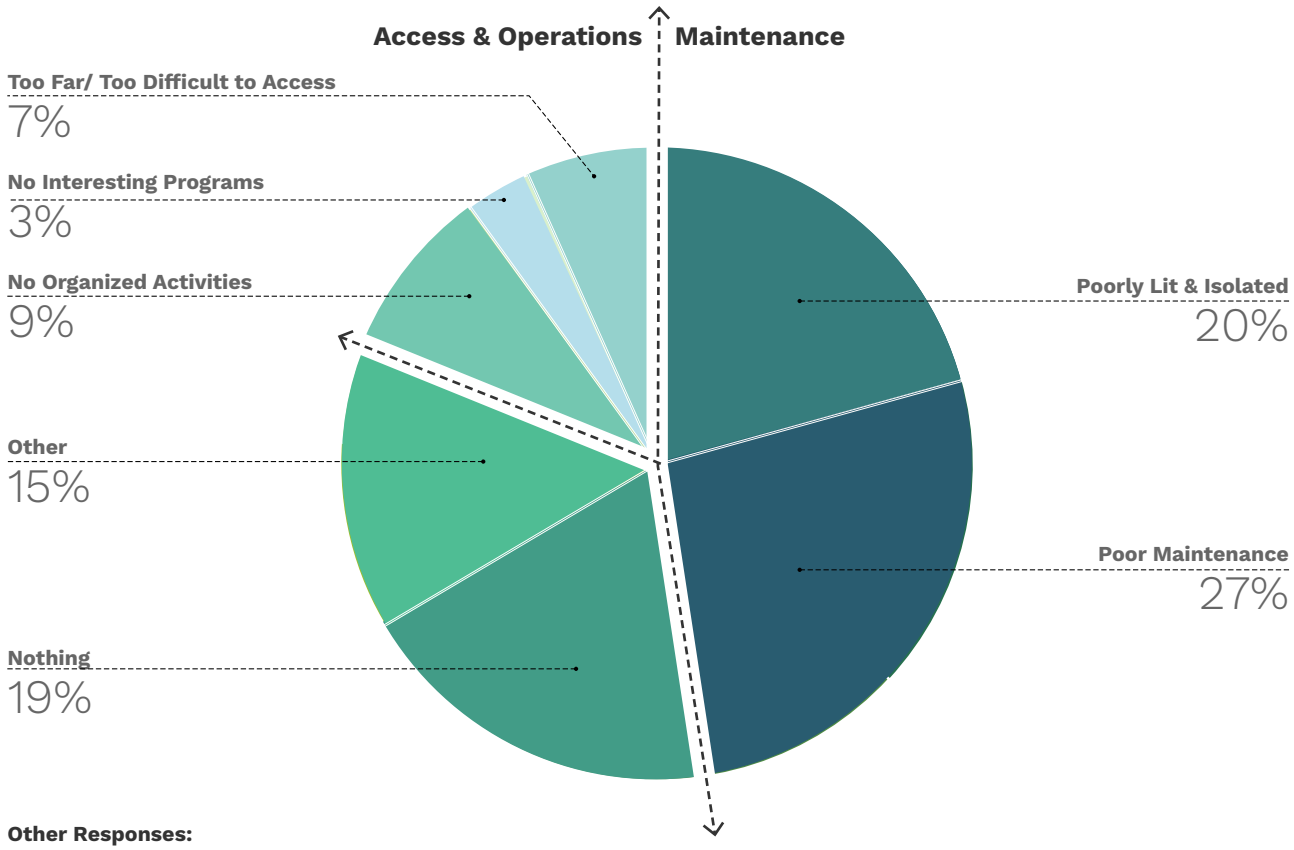


*Responses weighted to reflect demographics of South Baltimore

What Prevents You From Using And Enjoying Your Parks?

Last, the survey asked about barriers to use. Close to half of the responses noted physical conditions such as poor maintenance, a lack of lighting, and trash as primary obstacles. Programming and operations were far less popular responses. It is also important to note, close to 20% of respondents found nothing prevents them from using their parks.

This data instructed the team to prioritize park maintenance in future operations and development plans.



*Responses weighted to reflect demographics of South Baltimore

Public Meeting #1 and Advisory Committee Workshops

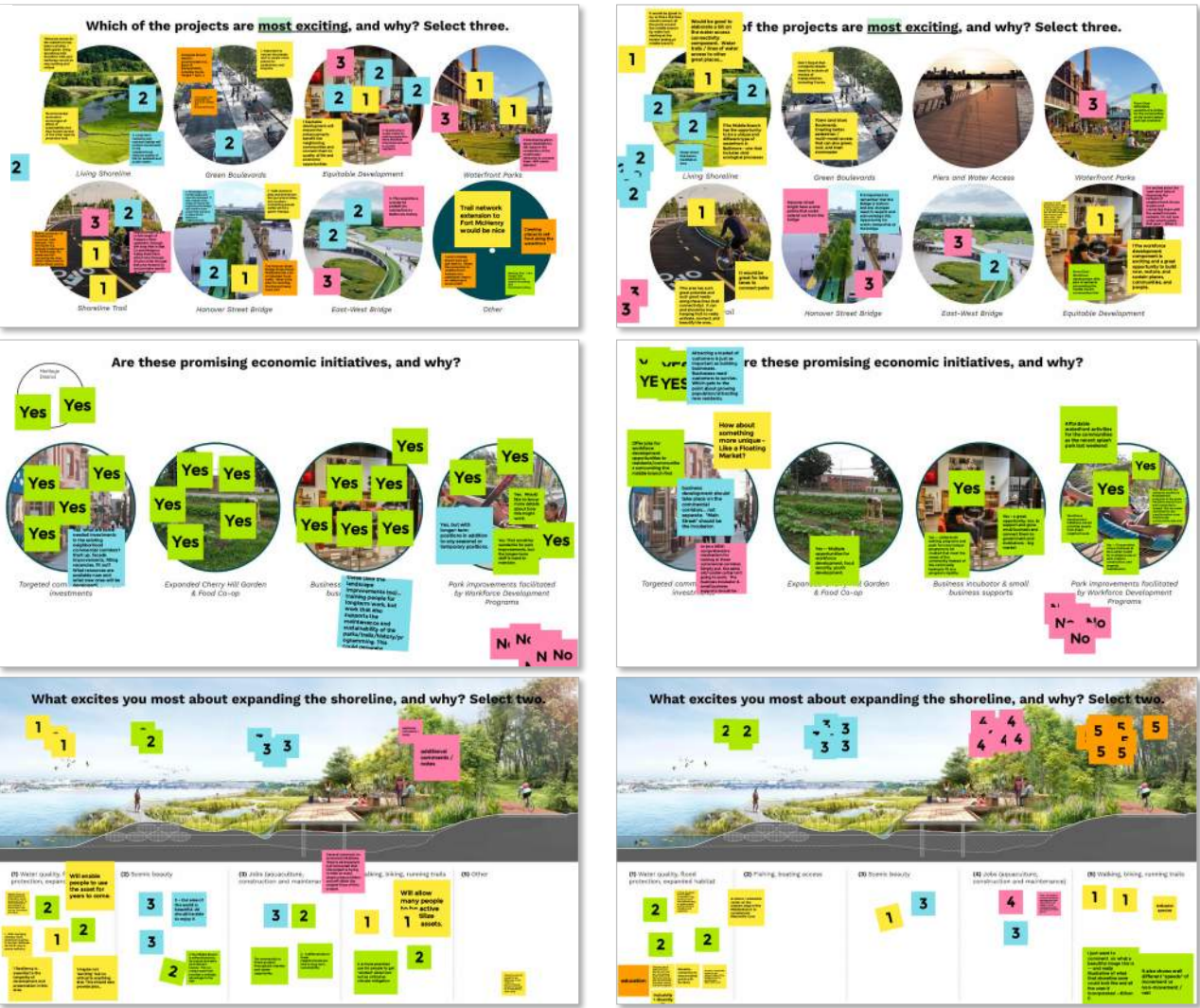
Due to COVID health protocols, all meetings during Task 2 were held virtually. At stakeholder workshops, the team presented materials in slide deck format. At the public meeting, the team presented the same material in a video, which can be viewed on the RMB YouTube channel, which allowed for less time sharing and more time listening to feedback.

Following the presentations, the team engaged in active listening sessions with meeting attendees. The sessions were structured around three questions. These questions address the three frameworks and associated projects:

- Which projects are most exciting and why?
- What is most exciting about the shoreline and why?
- What are the most promising economic development initiatives and why?

Feedback, collected on virtual whiteboards, is summarized on the following pages.

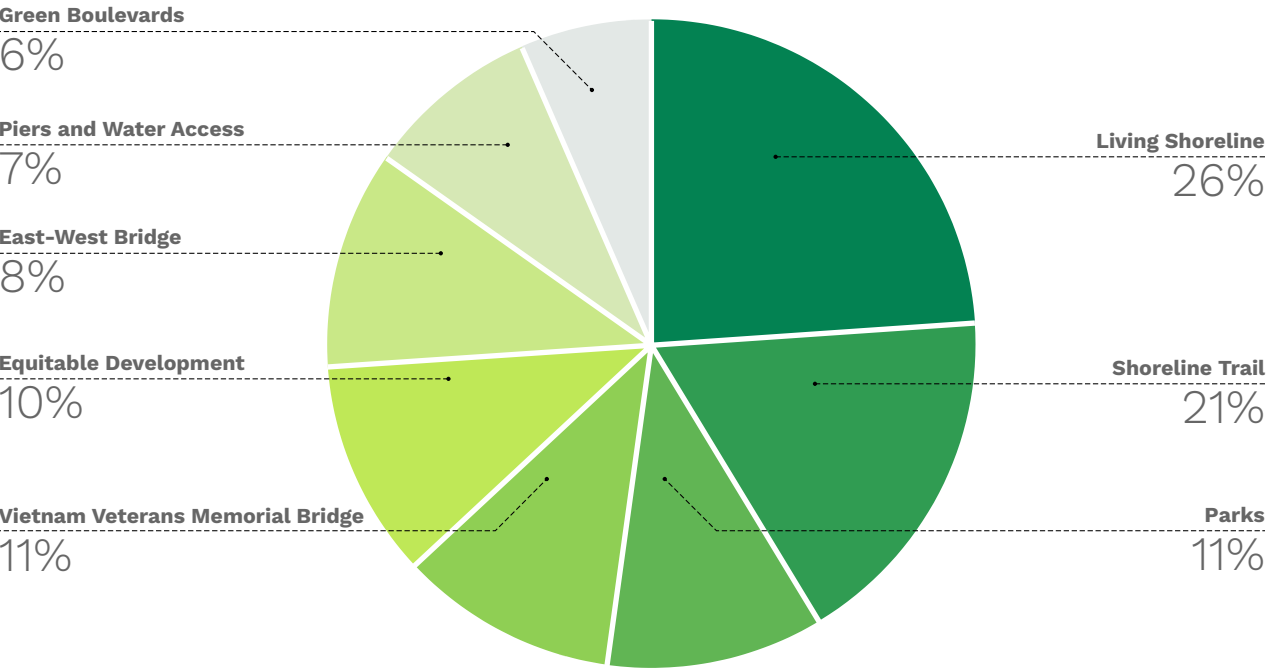
Feedback on Virtual Whiteboards



Which Projects Are Most Exciting?

The eight projects included in this question comprise the primary design and development initiatives included in the Task 2 Preliminary Frameworks.

This feedback told the team that projects which address the shoreline - both its ecological health and its connectivity - need to be foregrounded and prioritized in future phases of work.



Example Feedback from the Task 2 Public Meeting

“I am excited about water access for fishing, kayaking, maybe someday swimming!”

“The loop trail will allow many people to be active, and utilize the assets.”

“Long-term resiliency and restored habitat will protect investments in the neighborhood.”

What We Learned

An analysis of the data collected revealed **four key takeaways**, which together provide direction on how to further develop and refine the Plan in Task 3:

- 1. The community wants improvements to **passive recreation in neighborhood parks:** more shade, seating, and gathering spaces in their neighborhood parks;
- 2. The community wants **water-based recreation and spaces for events in waterfront parks.**
- 3. The community is **discouraged from using their parks today due to their lack of maintenance, lighting, and connectivity.**
- 4. The **Living Shoreline and Loop Trail were the most exciting projects** shared in the plan’s long-term vision for the Middle Branch.



Chapter 3

TASK 3: VALIDATE

In response to feedback received during Task 2, Task 3 of the planning process synthesized feedback with analysis and initial design ideas into a cohesive, long-term vision for the Middle Branch, and initiated the development of three priority project areas: 1) The Loop Trail; 2) Middle Branch Park; and 3) Ridgely's Cove.

Engagement efforts during Task 3 sought to validate the work performed to date, confirm

direction, and guide the design of the three priority project areas through the following activities:

- **Public Input Survey**
- **Public Meeting**
- **Neighborhood and Community Meetings**
- **Stakeholder Committee Workshops**
- **Partner Meetings**
- **Interviews**

Public Input Survey #2: Equity Frameworks

As a follow-up to the Task 2 input survey and public meeting, a second survey sought to confirm support for the Plan's initial planning approach and measure support for key improvements in the three priority project areas.

The survey was open for 17 weeks and was promoted at community meetings and events, through the Reimagine Middle Branch email list, and on the project's social media channels. **Over 230 community members completed the survey.**

Similar to the Task 2 survey, the team collected the demographic data of respondents. Data shared in this summary has been weighted to mirror the area's racial demographics and better reflect the interest and priorities of all community members.

Instagram Posts promoting the Public Survey

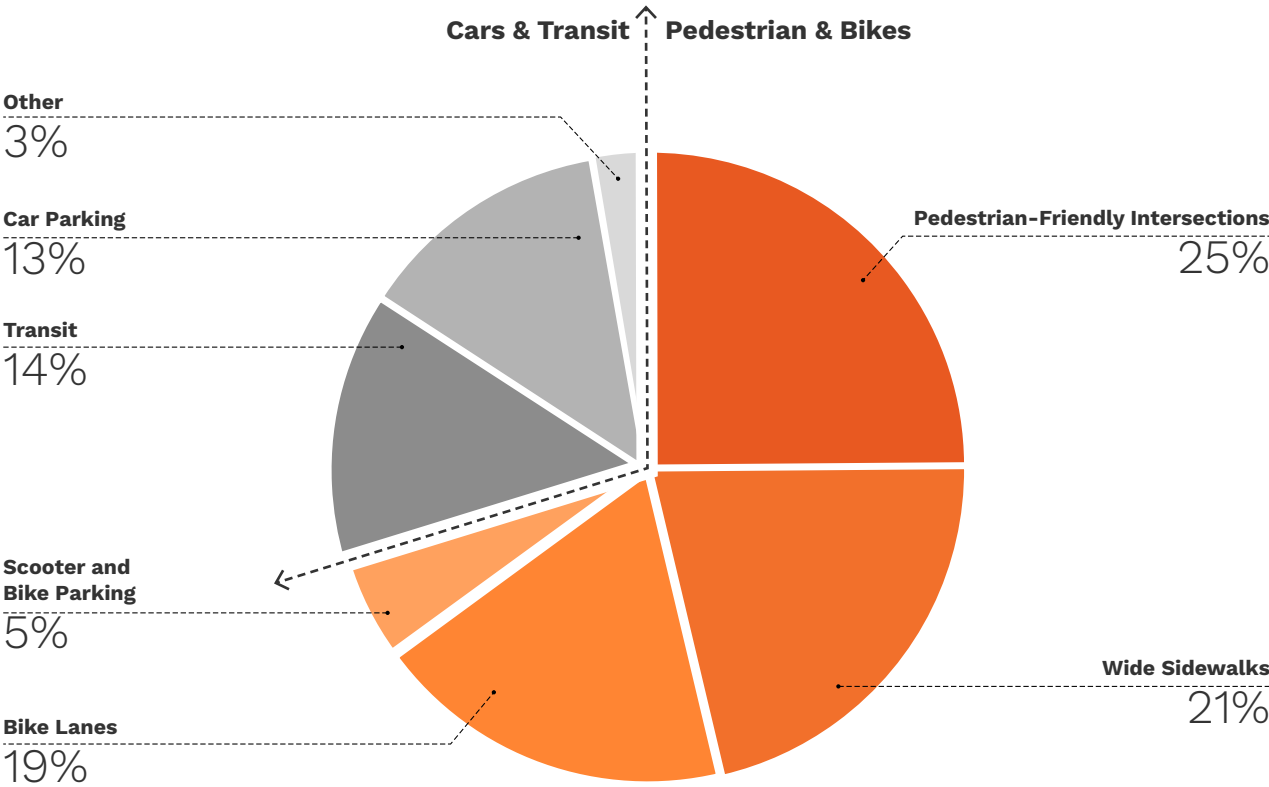


What Will Help You Connect to Nearby Neighborhoods, Parks, and the Waterfront?

The Plan proposes to “Transform Barriers into Connections,” improving connectivity with an extensive trail network around the shoreline and through parkland, and a network of Complete Streets to link neighborhoods to one another and the water.

To confirm this pedestrian and bike-oriented approach to circulation and mobility, the team asked the public to identify what improvements will help connect to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and the waterfront.

Survey responses illustrate the desire for pedestrian and bike improvements, validating the Plan's connectivity framework.



Other Responses:

Protected Paths



Crime Mitigation/ Safety



Neighborhood Shuttle Service



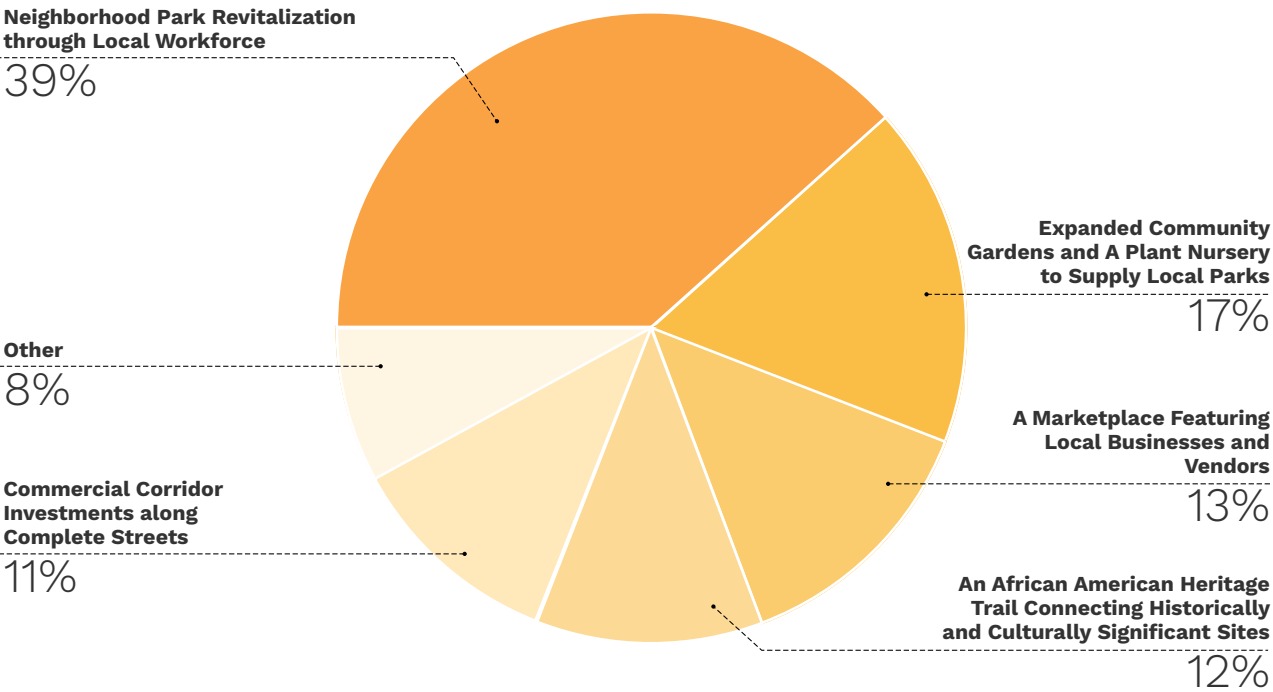
**Responses weighted to reflect demographics of South Baltimore*

Which Development Initiative is the Most Exciting to You?

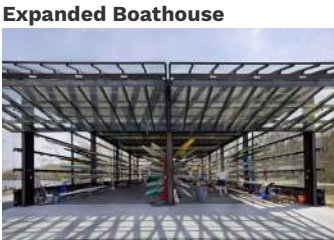
The Plan proposes several “Equitable Development” initiatives intended to be relevant, beneficial, and inclusive to South Baltimore communities.

To confirm this programming and activity-centered approach, the team asked the public to identify what proposed ideas were most exciting.

Survey responses illustrate broad support for development initiatives, with significant interest in connecting job opportunities to park maintenance and revitalization.



Other Responses:



*Responses weighted to reflect demographics of South Baltimore

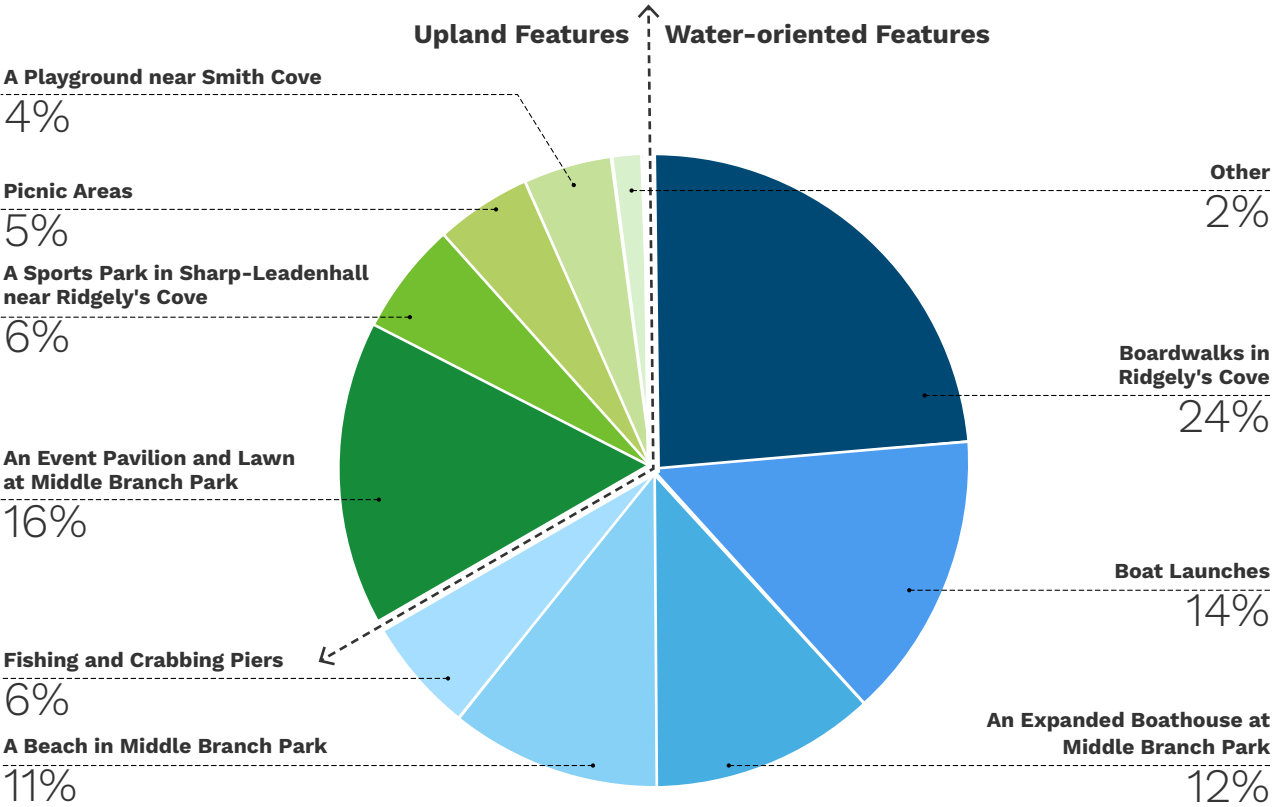
Which Park Features are the Most Exciting to You?

The Plan proposes a network of “Activated and Inclusive Parks” across South Baltimore, and specific improvements in two priority areas: Middle Branch Park and Ridgely’s Cove.

The final question asked what features would be most exciting to see included in the conceptual designs for these zones.

Responses illustrated strong support for water-oriented features and event spaces. This feedback aligns with the Task 2 survey results, which highlighted boating, fishing, and events as the most popular activities in waterfront parks.

This feedback informed the preliminary design concepts for Middle Branch Park which include a new boathouse, event pavilion, and kiosks for small family gatherings; and Ridgely’s Cove, which includes boardwalks and water access for kayaks and canoes.



Other Responses:



*Responses weighted to reflect demographics of South Baltimore

Public Meeting #2

To finish Task 3, the team hosted a virtual public meeting to share the Plan's synthesized equity frameworks and preliminary conceptual designs for the priority project areas, and solicit feedback for continued development and refinement of the Plan in Task 4.

The meeting was held on Thursday, February 24, 2022, and attended by over 125 members of the community.

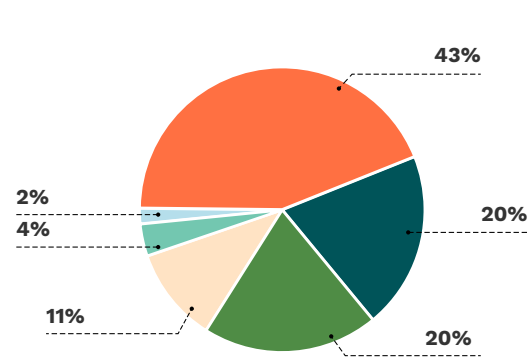
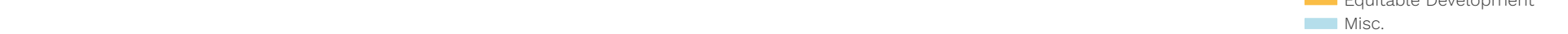
After an introductory slide deck presentation and viewing of a 10-minute video outlining Plan development, meeting attendees gathered in virtual breakout rooms to give input. Three questions and associated visual aids were presented on virtual whiteboards:

- **What are your first impressions of the plans?**
- **What do you like and dislike about the plans for Ridgely's Cove?**
- **What do you like and dislike about the plans for Middle Branch Park?**

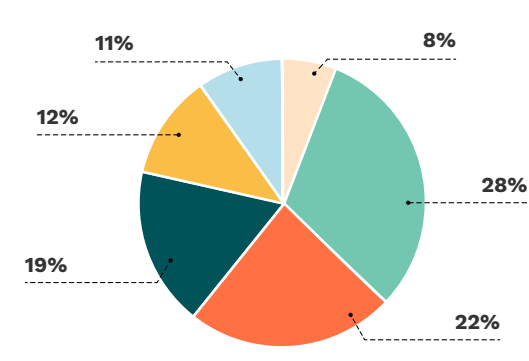
Example of Virtual Whiteboards capturing public meeting feedback



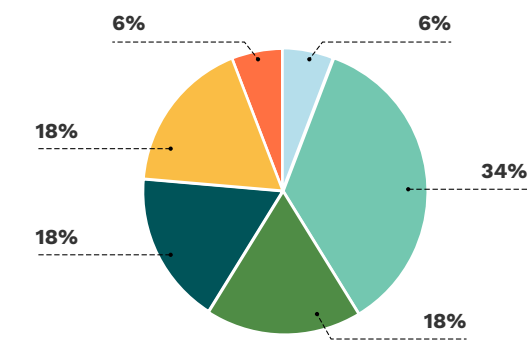
What are Your First Impressions of the Plans?



- “The emphasis on connectivity in between neighborhoods and the waterfront.”
- “Responsive to community feedback for gathering spaces”
- “Wetland restoration, native plants and storm mitigation”
- “Celebrating and educating about Black history and heritage”

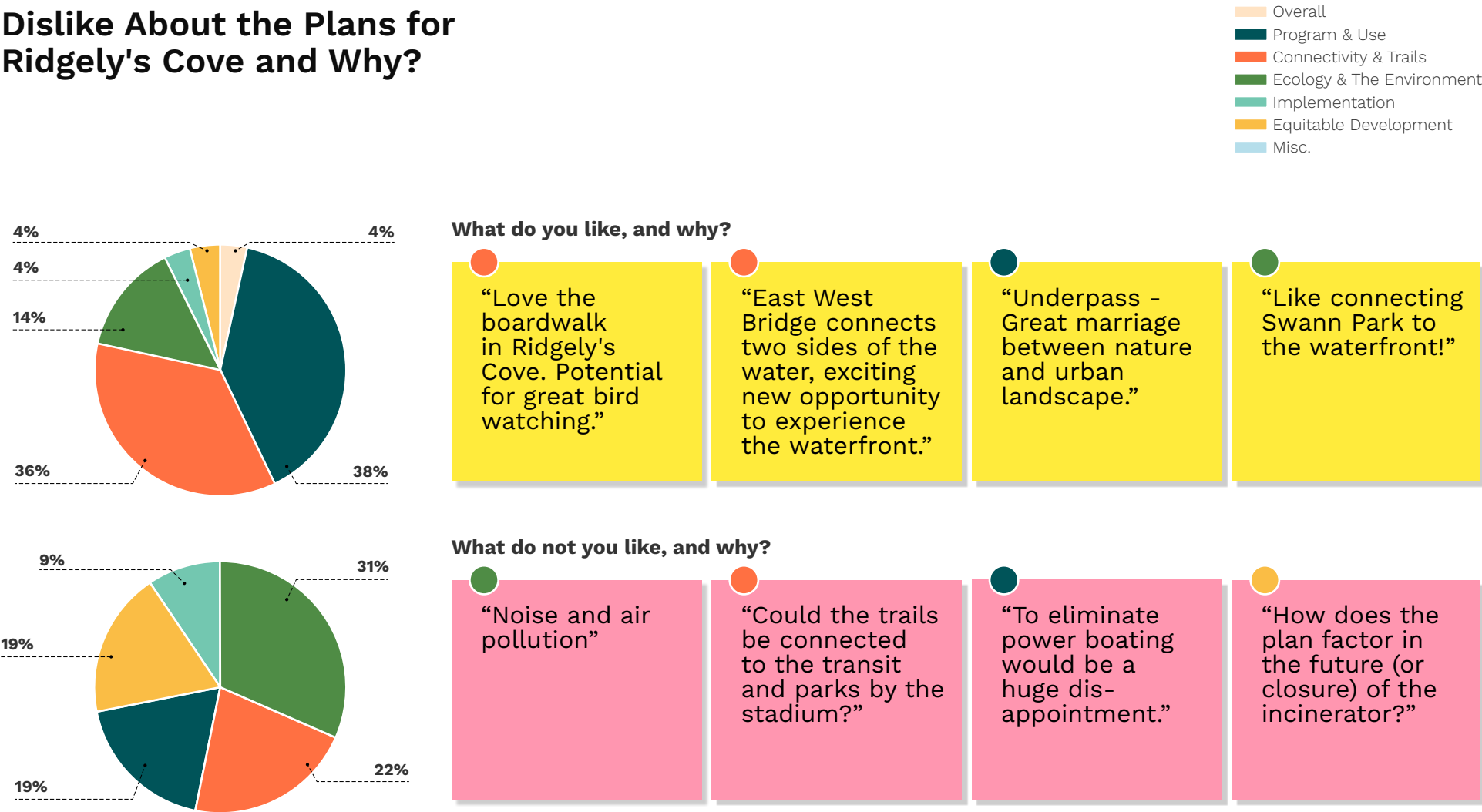


- “Dates, timelines, and projected costs that will make the impact concrete”
- “Public transit by land and water”
- “How will we address pollution?”
- “Details about workforce development & retention”

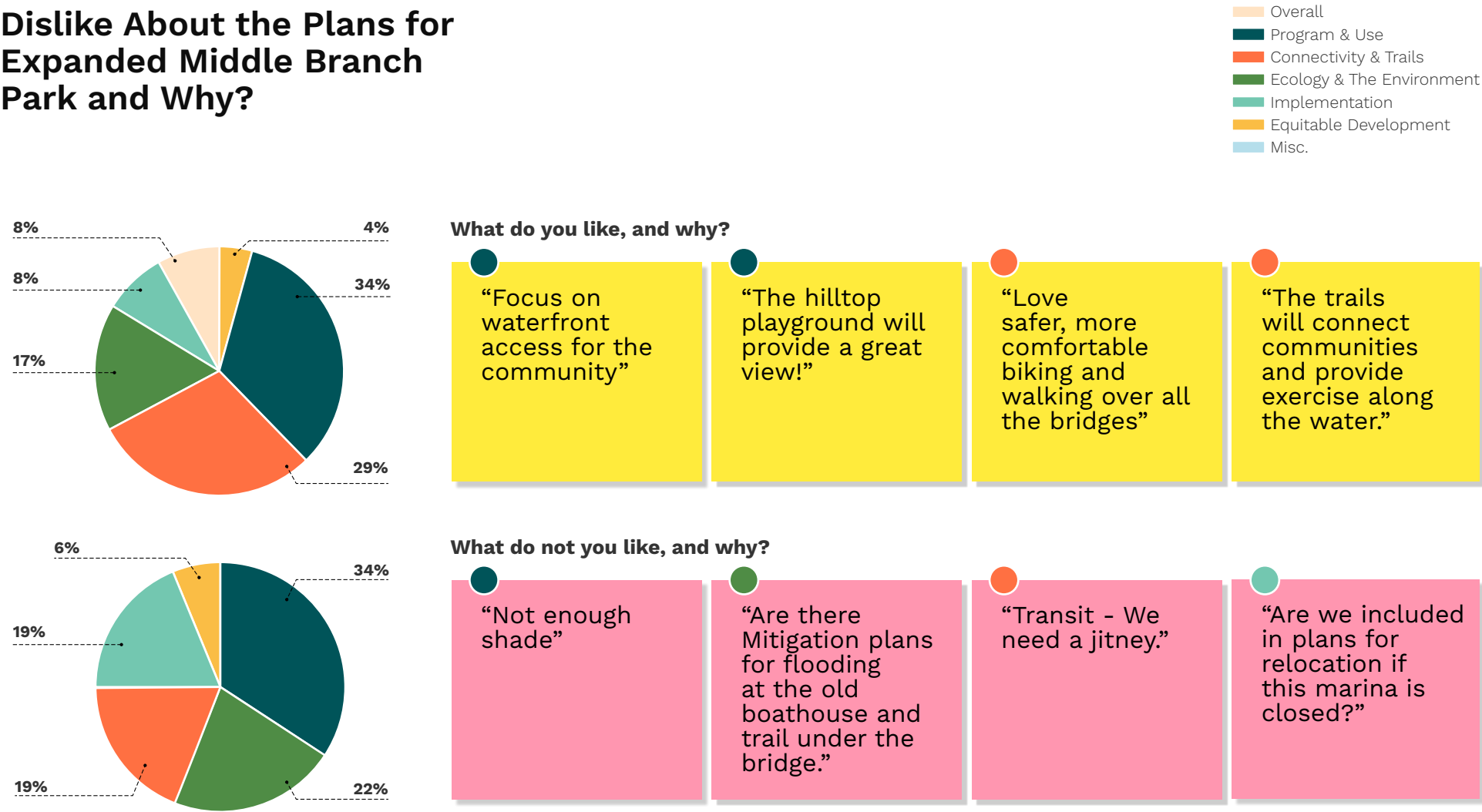


- “What is the maintenance and upkeep plan for all of this?”
- “How is the Water Quality actually being improved?”
- “Will local communities be edged out as amenities and connectivity improve?”
- “But the incinerator is still there...”

What Do You Like and Dislike About the Plans for Ridgely's Cove and Why?



What Do You Like and Dislike About the Plans for Expanded Middle Branch Park and Why?



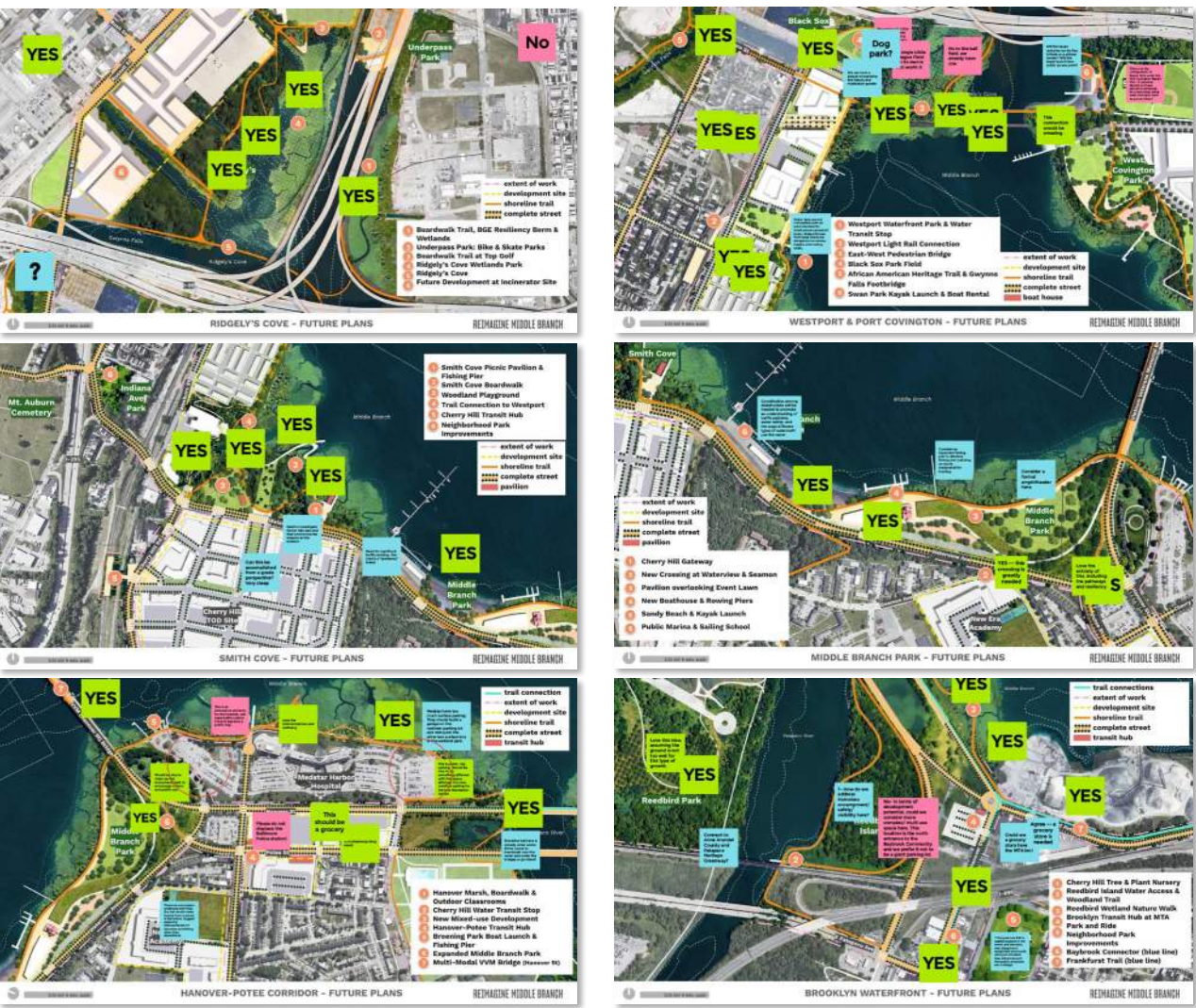
Advisory Committee Workshops #2

During Task 3, the team convened workshops with each of the six stakeholder committees. The committees were presented with a summary of the Equity Frameworks and a detailed “Walk Around the Middle Branch” that included scaled plans and renderings of the Middle Branch from Brooklyn and Curtis Bay to Ridgely's Cove.

Committee members were asked to share feedback on the plans, including what they liked, what was missing, and any red flags. This feedback complemented input from the public, and took advantage of the wide-ranging expertise, priorities, and perspectives of the stakeholder committee members.

Analysis of the feedback is shared on the following pages, and a detailed list of questions and responses is included in an appendix to this report.

Example of virtual whiteboards capturing public meeting feedback



Plans for Ridgely's Cove



What do you like, and why?

“This East-West Pedestrian Bridge connection would be amazing.”

“YES - Need more ways to connect neighborhoods”

“Resiliency berm can be constructed as a cap for historic contamination.”

“First choice would be to honor the Negro League history at the incinerator site”

What's missing?

“Consider using iNaturalist etc. to collect community science observations.”

“Would soccer and basketball courts see more regular pick-up game usage?”

“Mitigating inputs will be important to longterm successful ecological restoration”

“Need another clear and visible pedestrian connection to Florence Cummins Park in Westport.”

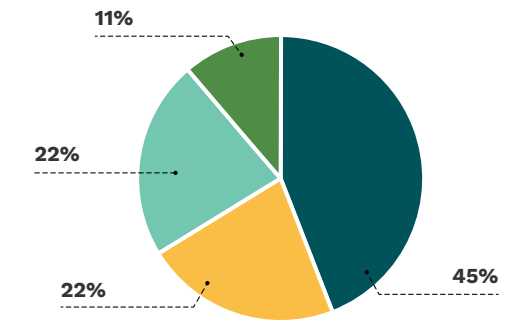
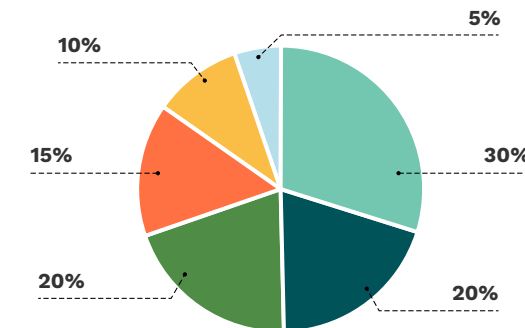
Any red flags?

“Perception of a little field "stuck" in this location when it is meant to celebrate Black History.”

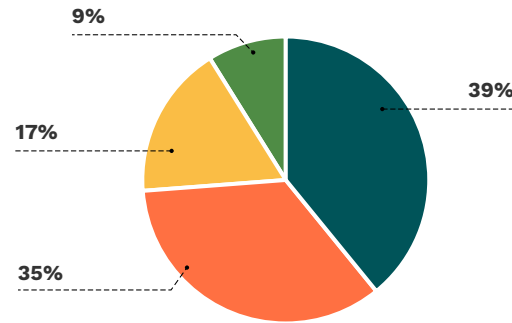
“Water taxis are not compatible with an area intended for small person-powered boats.”

“Private property owners (i.e. incinerators).”

“Swann park seems remote. Is parking planned? Who would maintain?”



Plans for Expanded Middle Branch Park



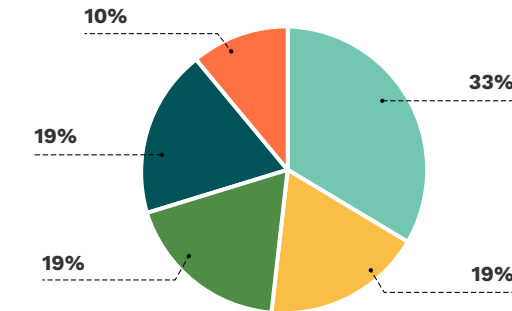
What do you like, and why?

(Smith Cove Boardwalk)
“YES”

(Sandy Beach & Kayak Launch)
“YES”

“Getting over this elevation/topo/road barrier from Cherry Hill to park is critical”

“YES - Total believer in TOD.”



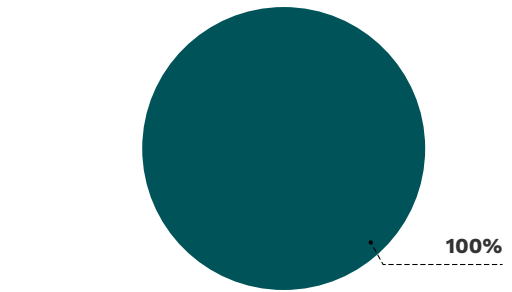
What's missing?

“The Marina is still independently owned?”

“Need to investigate former site uses and their environmental impacts at this TOD location”

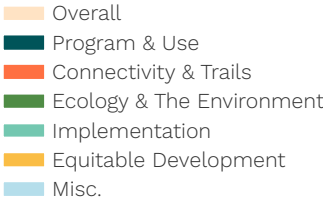
“Much work has been done in forecasting bacteria. Opportunities to link with NPS/Ft McHenry.”

“Consider an expanded fishing pier designated for fishing and crabbing.”

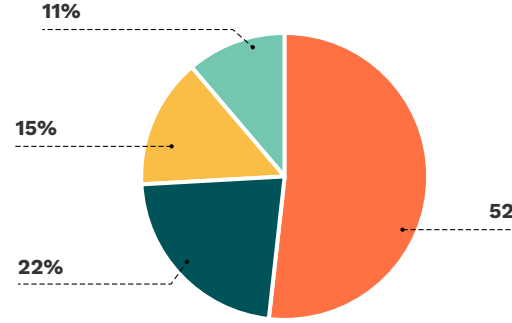


Any red flags?

“Does the boathouse create a wall between cherry hill and the water?”



Plans for the Hanover-Potee Corridor



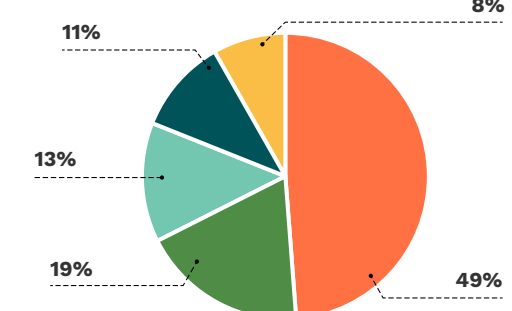
What do you like, and why?

“Separate trails for biking versus walking/jogging”

“Greenway on Potee because it is closest to the community.”

(Hanover Marsh, Boardwalk & Outdoor Classrooms)
“YES”

“The new mixed-use development should be a grocery and a pharmacy/drug store!”



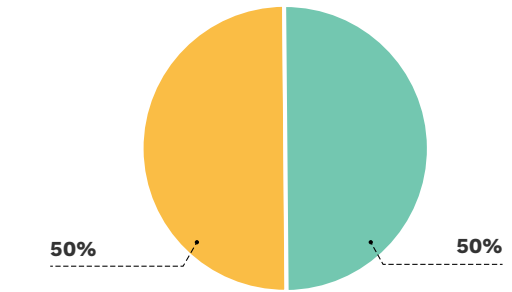
What's missing?

“Both greenways - Potee for community closeness and Hanover for water views and trail connections.”

“Please continue to include connections to Masonville Cove Urban Wildlife Refuge (1000 Frankfurt Ave.)”

“In urban areas contaminants make installation of constructed wetlands challenging.”

“How do we address Homeless encampment/ safety/ visibility at Reedbird Island?”



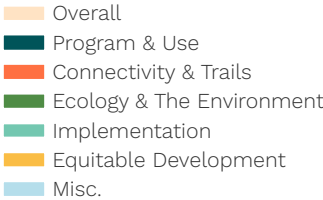
Any red flags?

“This Cherry Hill water transit stop location is an ambulance entrance for the hospital.”

“This Cherry Hill water transit stop seems to be lesser priority compared to other specific measures.”

“Please do not displace the Baltimore Police station!”

“Could we consider more complex/ multi use space at the Brooklyn Transit hub at MTA Park and Ride?”



Example Feedback from the Task 3 Stakeholder Workshops and Public Meeting

“How is the Water Quality actually being improved?”

“Will local communities be edged out as amenities and connectivity improve?”

“Need to investigate former site uses and their environmental impacts on former industrial sites.”

“What is the maintenance and upkeep plan for all of this? ”

What We Learned

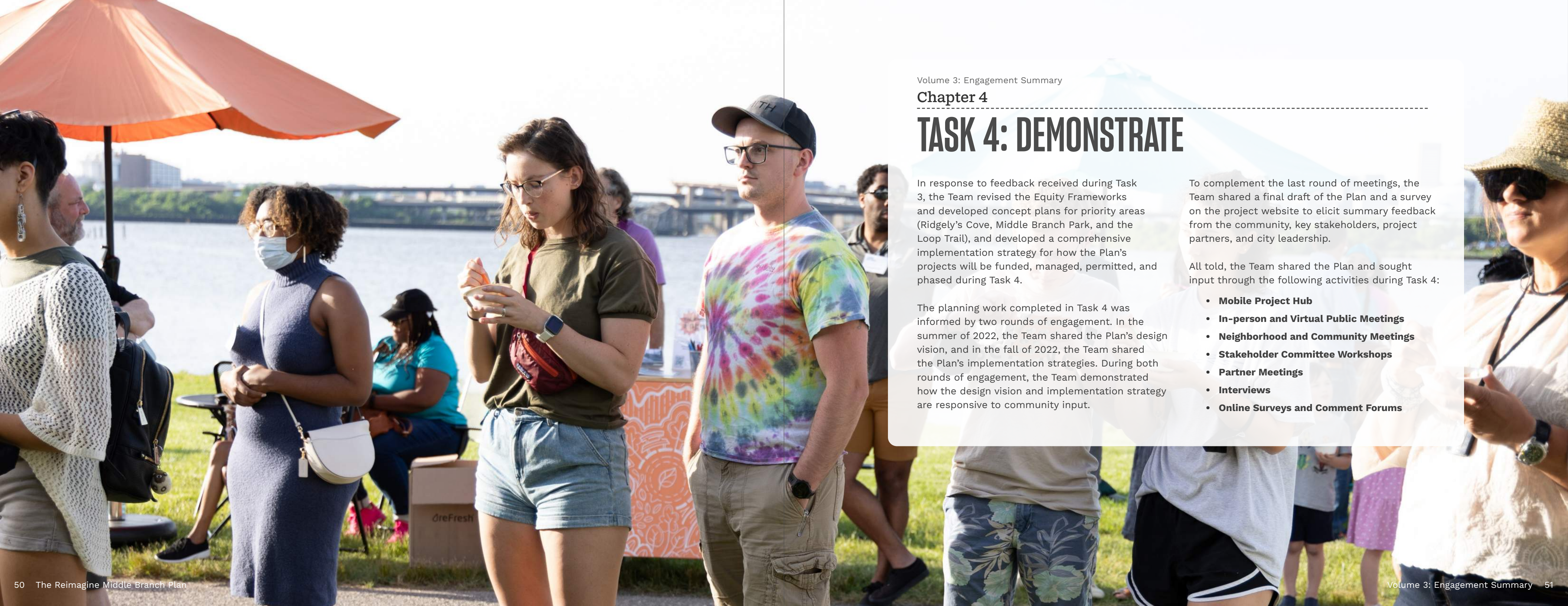
Engagement during Task 3 both confirmed the direction of the Plan's Frameworks and revealed key issues and questions to address in the fourth and final task:

Support and Confirmation

- Strong support for **park improvements and features**, all of which were developed based on feedback and survey data collected during Task 3
- Continued excitement about **trails and Complete Streets** connecting neighborhoods to each other and to the waterfront
- Enthusiasm for features that **celebrate Black history and culture**, including Black Sox Park and the Heritage Trail

Questions and Key Issues

- Topics concerning **environmental justice**: Water quality, air pollution, and resiliency
- **Displacement** of existing communities;
- Details and specifics for **economic development** initiatives
- **Implementation**: how will the work be phased, paid for, and maintained?



Chapter 4

TASK 4: DEMONSTRATE

In response to feedback received during Task 3, the Team revised the Equity Frameworks and developed concept plans for priority areas (Ridgely’s Cove, Middle Branch Park, and the Loop Trail), and developed a comprehensive implementation strategy for how the Plan’s projects will be funded, managed, permitted, and phased during Task 4.

The planning work completed in Task 4 was informed by two rounds of engagement. In the summer of 2022, the Team shared the Plan’s design vision, and in the fall of 2022, the Team shared the Plan’s implementation strategies. During both rounds of engagement, the Team demonstrated how the design vision and implementation strategy are responsive to community input.

To complement the last round of meetings, the Team shared a final draft of the Plan and a survey on the project website to elicit summary feedback from the community, key stakeholders, project partners, and city leadership.

All told, the Team shared the Plan and sought input through the following activities during Task 4:

- **Mobile Project Hub**
- **In-person and Virtual Public Meetings**
- **Neighborhood and Community Meetings**
- **Stakeholder Committee Workshops**
- **Partner Meetings**
- **Interviews**
- **Online Surveys and Comment Forums**

Public Meeting #3 and Ice Cream Social

The team hosted a public meeting and ice cream social in Middle Branch Park on Monday, June 6, 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to gather together in person on the water, and to celebrate the culmination of the planning process.

The team shared the latest planning and project implementation materials on large-format boards and in fly-through animations.

The event was attended by over 100 community members on a beautiful summer evening.



Record of Meetings and Interviews

Throughout the planning process, with a particular emphasis during Task 4, the Planning and Client Teams met with a wide array of community members and stakeholders including community groups, public agencies, private businesses, property owners, and local and national advocacy groups to gain a deep knowledge and understanding of the Middle Branch community, relevant issues, opportunities, and best practices. All of these conversations have helped to shape the Plan’s outcomes and recommendations. A full list of meetings and events attended and organizations contacted is included here.

Meetings & Events Attended

Community Meetings

- Action Baybrook
- Barre Circle Community Association
- Carroll-Camden Business Association
- Cherry Hill Community Coalition
- Cherry Hill Community Development Corporation
- Cherry Hill Strong
- Citizens of Pigtown
- Concerned Citizens for a Better Brooklyn
- Curtis Bay Community Association
- Federal Hill Main Street
- Federal Hill Neighborhood Association
- Federal Hill South Neighborhood Association
- Friends of Carroll Park

- Greater Baybrook Alliance
- Harbor West Collaborative
- Lakeland Community Association Partnership
- Locust Point Civic Association
- Mount Winans Community Association
- Otterbein Neighborhood Association
- Pigtown Main Street
- Ridgely’s Delight Neighborhood Association
- Riverside Neighborhood Association
- SB7 Coalition
- Sharp Leadenhall Improvement Association
- South Baltimore Neighborhood Association
- South Baltimore Partnership
- Southern District & Community Relations Council Monthly Crime and Community Meeting
- Saint Paul Neighborhood Association
- Westport Community Economic Development Corporation
- Westport Neighborhood Association

Community Events

- AFRAM
- Baltimore Museum of Industry Farmers Market
- BGE Open House at Westport Academy
- 1st Annual Baltimore Cyclovia
- Digital Harbor High School Spring Fling
- Housing Authority of Baltimore City Resource Fair

- Learn-to-Row (Baltimore Community Rowing) June 2022 Event
- Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center Grand Opening
- Our Baltimore Comprehensive Plan South Baltimore Workshop

Public Review and Advisory Bodies

- Baltimore City Planning Commission
- Baltimore Commission on Sustainability
- Maryland and US Army Corps of Engineers Joint Evaluation Meeting
- Baltimore Urban Design and Architecture Advisory Panel (UDAAP)

Meetings & Events Hosted

Reimagine Middle Branch Public Meetings

- Throughout all tasks

Stakeholder and Advisory Committee Meetings

- Throughout all tasks

Splash! A Community Event on the Water

Baltimore City Agencies

- Department of Planning
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Recreation & Parks
- Department of Transportation
- Housing Authority of Baltimore City
- Mayor’s Office

Partner Meeting: Ridgely’s Cove

- Baltimore Development Corporation
- Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE)

- Horseshoe Casino Baltimore
- Department of Planning
- Department of Recreation & Parks
- Department of Transportation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Stonewall Capital

Partner Meeting: Trails

- Department of Planning
- Department of Recreation & Parks
- Department of Transportation
- Friends of Carroll Park
- Greater Baybrook Alliance
- Gwynns Falls Trail Advocates
- National Park Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
- Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore

Partner Meeting: Middle Branch Park

- Baltimore Community Rowing
- Department of Planning
- Department of Recreation & Parks
- Department of Transportation
- Fish Finders
- Middle Branch Marina
- The Nature Conservancy
- University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- Robert “Bob” Wall
- Youth Resiliency Institute

Partner Meeting: Community Development

- Cherry Hill Development Corporation
- Harbor West Collaborative
- Pigtown Main Street
- Southwest Partnership

Interviews and Focus Groups

City and State Agencies and Advisory Groups

- Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Employment Development
- Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture
- Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs
- Maryland Conservation Corps
- Maryland Park Service

Local Non-profits and Advocacy Groups

- Baltimore Industrial Group
- Baltimore American Indian Center
- Black Yield Institute
- Catholic Charities of Baltimore
- Cherry Hill Development Corporation
- Civic Works
- Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative
- Elev8 Baltimore
- Greater Baybrook Alliance
- Harbor West Collaborative
- Lakeland Community Association Partnership
- Maryland Motor Trucking Association
- Morgan State University
- Native American LifeLines

- South Baltimore Business Alliance
- Southwest Partnership
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore
- Youth Resiliency Institute

Developers and Property Owners

- BGE
- Catholic Charities of Baltimore
- Continental Realty
- Himmelrich Associates, Inc.
- Horseshoe Casino Baltimore
- MedStar Harbor Hospital
- MAG Partners / Baltimore Peninsula
- Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center
- Port Covington
- Stonewall Capital
- Under Armour
- Weller Development

Waterfront and Open Space Organizations

- Anacostia Waterfront, DC
- Bartram’s Garden, Philadelphia
- Friends of Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park, Philadelphia
- Delaware River Waterfront Corporation, Philadelphia
- Friends of Waterfront Seattle
- Rebuild, Philadelphia
- Riverlife, Pittsburgh
- Schuylkill River Development Corporation, Philadelphia



APPENDIX: ENGAGEMENT DATA

Included is raw data from the surveys distributed in Tasks 2 and 3, and the methodology for weighting survey data to more accurately reflect the desires and priorities of all Middle Branch communities.

Survey Data

1.1 Task 2 Raw Survey Data

What features are essential for your neighborhood park?									
	Shade	Seating	Playgrounds	Sports Courts	Sports Fields	BBQ Grills	Gathering Spaces	None	Other
TOTALS	150	113	85	56	52	38	111	3	61
Black/African-Am.	26	25	21	13	13	26	25	0	5
Asian/Asian Am.	4	3	3	2	2	1	4	0	1
Hispanic/Latine	8	4	5	3	3	2	5	0	4
White	108	71	49	34	31	14	69	3	49
Two or more	4	10	7	4	3	4	8	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

What would you like to see and/or do there?								
	Boating/ Kayaking	Organized Sports	Fitness and Wellness	Socializing and Gathering	Events	Playgrounds	None	Other
TOTALS	166	52	148	86	118	72	1	22
Black/African-Am.	41	12	33	27	23	19	0	5
Asian/Asian Am.	3	0	5	1	6	5	0	1
Hispanic/Latine	13	2	14	4	4	0	0	1
White	100	34	88	47	77	45	1	13
Two or more	8	4	8	6	7	3	0	2
Other	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0

What prevents you from using and/or enjoying your parks?							
	Nothing	Too far	No organized activities	No interesting programs	Poor Maintenance	Poorly lit and isolated	Other
TOTALS	75	34	37	16	117	84	64
Black/African-Am.	17	4	7	0	18	16	10
Asian/Asian Am.	0	0	2	1	5	2	5
Hispanic/Latine	4	0	0	2	7	6	4
White	50	29	27	13	81	56	41
Two or more	4	1	1	0	5	4	4
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

1.2 Middle Branch Study Area Demographics

	Middle Branch	
Area (sqmi)	7.78	
Source	ESRI Community Profile / Demographic & Income Profile / ACS Key Population and Household Facts (2019)	
Population		
Total	51,537	
Race and Ethnicity		
White alone	23,005	45%
Black/African-American alone	20,650	40%
Asian alone	1,493	3%
Latine	4,554	9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	270	1%
Pacific Islander alone	37	0%
Some other race alone	157	0%
Two or more races	1,370	3%

1.3.2 Weighting Methodology

	Black/African-American	Asian/Asian-American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latine
Survey Respondents	52	7	0	15
Survey Respondents %	19%	3%	0%	5%
Demographics %	40%	3%	0%	9%
Scale Factor	2.12	1.00	1.00	1.73
Weighted Total	110	7	0	26
Weighted %	40%	3%	0%	9%
	White/Caucasian	American Indian and Alaska Native	Two or more	Other
Survey Respondents	185	0	0	15
Survey Respondents %	67%	0%	6%	<1%
Demographics %	45%	0%	3%	N/A
Scale Factor	0.67	1.00	0.50	1.00
Weighted Total	124	0	8	1
Weighted %	45%	0%	3%	<1%

1.3.1 Weighting Methodology Summary

In order to equitably represent the communities of the Middle Branch we applied a scale factor to our raw survey data (figure 1.3.2). This scale factor gave us a new, weighted amount of respondent answers that was directly proportionate to the reported demographics of the Middle Branch.

Survey Respondents

X

=

Survey Respondent %

Demographics %

Where X = Weighted Total

Y

=

Weighted Total

Survey Respondents

Where Y = Scale Factor

Survey Data

1.4 Task 2 Weighted Survey Data

What features are essential for your neighborhood park?									
	Shade	Seating	Playgrounds	Sports Courts	Sports Fields	BBQ Grills	Gathering Spaces	None	Other
ORIGINAL TOTALS	150	113	85	56	52	38	111	3	61
Black/African-Am.	55	53	45	28	28	55	53	0	11
Asian/Asian Am.	4	3	3	2	3	1	4	0	1
Hispanic/Latine	14	7	9	5	3	3	9	0	7
White	72	48	33	23	21	9	46	2	33
Two or more	2	5	4	2	2	2	4	0	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEIGHTED TOTALS	147	115	93	60	56	71	116	2	52

What would you like to see and/or do there?									
	Boating/ Kayaking	Organized Sports	Fitness and Wellness	Socializing and Gathering	Events	Playgrounds	None	Other	
TOTALS	166	52	148	86	118	72	1	22	
Black/African-Am.	87	25	70	57	49	40	0	11	
Asian/Asian Am.	3	0	5	1	6	5	0	1	
Hispanic/Latine	22	3	24	7	7	0	0	2	
White	67	23	59	31	52	30	1	9	
Two or more	4	2	4	3	4	2	0	1	
Other	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	
WEIGHTED TOTALS	184	54	162	101	118	77	1	23	

What prevents you from using and/or enjoying your parks?									
	Nothing	Too far	No organized activities	No interesting programs	Poor Maintenance	Poorly lit and isolated	Other		
TOTALS	75	34	37	16	117	84	64		
Black/African-Am.	36	8	15	0	38	34	21		
Asian/Asian Am.	0	0	2	1	5	2	5		
Hispanic/Latine	7	0	0	3	12	10	7		
White	34	19	18	9	54	38	27		
Two or more	2	1	1	0	3	2	2		
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		
WEIGHTED TOTALS	78	28	35	13	113	86	63		

1.5 Task 2 Survey Data - Percentages

What features are essential for your neighborhood park?									
	Shade	Seating	Playgrounds	Sports Courts	Sports Fields	BBQ Grills	Gathering Spaces	None	Other
ORIGINAL TOTALS	22.4%	16.9%	12.7%	8.4%	7.8%	5.7%	16.6%	0.4%	9.1%
WEIGHTED TOTALS	20.7%	16.2%	13.0%	8.4%	7.9%	10.0%	16.3%	0.3%	7.3%

What would you like to see and/or do there?									
	Boating/ Kayaking	Organized Sports	Fitness and Wellness	Socializing and Gathering	Events	Playgrounds	None	Other	
TOTALS	25.0%	7.8%	22.3%	12.9%	17.7%	10.8%	0.2%	3.3%	
WEIGHTED TOTALS	25.6%	7.5%	22.5%	14.0%	16.4%	10.7%	0.1%	3.2%	

What prevents you from using and/or enjoying your parks?									
	Nothing	Too far	No organized activities	No interesting programs	Poor Maintenance	Poorly lit and isolated	Other		
TOTALS	17.6%	8.0%	8.7%	3.7%	27.4%	19.7%	15.0%		
WEIGHTED TOTALS	18.8%	6.8%	8.5%	3.2%	27.1%	20.6%	15.0%		

Survey Data

1.6.1 Task 3 Raw Survey Data

Which of the following initiatives is the most exciting to you? (Select one)							
	Neighborhood park revitalization through local work-force	An African-American heritage trail connecting historically and culturally significant sites	Commercial Corridor investments along the Complete Streets	Expanded community gardens and a plant nursery to supply parks with plants and trees	A marketplace featuring local businesses and vendors	Other	Skipped
TOTALS	75	23	21	34	26	16	36
Black/African-Am.	11	9	2	3	4	1	11
Asian/Asian Am.	1	0	0	0	2	0	1
Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latine	2	0	0	2	1	0	0
White/Caucasian	50	9	16	27	16	13	15
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Two or more	4	3	2	0	2	1	2
Prefer not to say	6	2	1	1	1	1	7

Which are the most exciting to you? (Select up to three)										
	An expanded boathouse at Middle Branch Park	An event pavilion and lawn at Middle Branch Park	Picnic areas with BBQs in several locations around the Middle Branch	A beach in Middle Branch Park	A Playground near Smith Cove	Fishing and crabbing piers in several locations around the Middle Branch	Boat launches for kayaks and canoes in Middle Branch Park, Swann Park, and Reedbird Park	A sports park including skating and biking in Sharp-Leadenhall at Ridgely's Cove	Boardwalks for biking, running,. walking, and bird watching in Ridgely's Cove	Other (please specify)
TOTALS	65	65	29	49	19	34	77	29	126	4
Black/African-Am.	5	12	3	8	4	5	8	5	14	4
Asian/Asian Am.	1	13	1	2	1	0	2	2	1	0
Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latine	2	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	4	0
White/Caucasian	49	31	19	31	13	26	55	17	91	0
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0
Two or more	5	3	3	1	0	2	5	2	6	0
Prefer not to say	2	4	3	4	0	1	5	1	7	0

1.6.2 Task 3 Raw Survey Data

What is most exciting to you about expanding the shoreline? (Rank from most to least exciting, with 1 being the most and 4 being the least)				
	Improving the environment: water quality, flood protection, and expanded habitat areas	Scenic beauty	Creating jobs to build and maintain the new shoreline	Adding and connecting trails for walking, running, and biking
TOTALS	3.2	2.1	2.1	2.6
Black/African-Am.	1.90	2.33	2.60	3.17
Asian/Asian Am.	1.00	3.33	3.33	2.33
Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latine	2.00	3.20	2.40	2.40
White/Caucasian	1.79	3.07	3.01	2.14
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	1.00	2.50	2.50	4.00
Two or more	1.27	3.18	2.73	2.91
Prefer not to say	NA	NA	NA	NA

What improvements will most help you connect to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and the waterfront? (Select three)							
	Bike Lanes	Wide Sidewalks	Pedestrian Friendly Intersections	Transit	Scooter and Bike Parking	Car Parking	Other (please specify)
TOTALS	117	119	139	71	30	64	18
Black/African-Am.	7	18	23	14	5	20	1
Asian/Asian Am.	2	2	1	3	0	1	0
Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latine	4	4	4	2	1	0	0
White/Caucasian	88	88	101	46	21	38	14
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	1	1	2	1	0	1	0
Two or more	7	6	8	5	3	0	1
Prefer not to say	8	0	0	0	0	4	2

Survey Data

1.7 Middle Branch Study Area Demographics

	Middle Branch	
Area (sqmi)	7.78	
Source	ESRI Community Profile / Demographic & Income Profile / ACS Key Population and Household Facts (2019)	
Population		
Total	51,537	
Race and Ethnicity		
White alone	23,005	45%
Black/African-American alone	20,650	40%
Asian alone	1,493	3%
Latine	4,554	9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	270	1%
Pacific Islander alone	37	0%
Some other race alone	157	0%
Two or more races	1,370	3%

	Black/African-American	Asian/Asian-American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latine
Survey Respondents	41	4	0	5
Survey Respondents %	18%	2%	0%	2%
Demographics %	40%	3%	0%	9%
Scale Factor	2.26	1.67	0.00	4.4
Weighted Total	93	7	0	20
Weighted %	37%	3%	0%	8%
	White/Caucasian	American Indian and Alaska Native	Two or more	Prefer not to say
Survey Respondents	147	2	13	19
Survey Respondents %	64%	1%	6%	8%
Demographics %	45%	1%	3%	N/A
Scale Factor	0.70	1.00	0.53	1.00
Weighted Total	103	2	7	19
Weighted %	41%	1%	3%	7%

1.8.1 Weighting Methodology Summary

In order to equitably represent the communities of the Middle Branch we applied a scale factor to our raw survey data (figure 1.3.2). This scale factor gave us a new, weighted amount of respondent answers that was directly proportionate to the reported demographics of the Middle Branch.

Survey Respondents

X

=

Survey Respondent %

Demographics %

Where X = Weighted Total

Y

=

Weighted Total

Survey Respondents

Where Y = Scale Factor

1.9.1 Task 3 Weighted Survey Data

Which of the following initiatives is the most exciting to you? (Select one)							
	Neighborhood park revitalization through local work-force	An African-American heritage trail connecting historically and culturally significant sites	Commercial Corridor investments along the Complete Streets	Expanded community gardens and a plant nursery to supply parks with plants and trees	A marketplace featuring local businesses and vendors	Other	Skipped
WEIGHTED TOTALS	79	30	18	36	30	13	45
Black/African-Am.	25	20	5	7	9	2	25
Asian/Asian Am.	2	0	0	0	3	0	2
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latine	8	0	0	8	4	0	0
White/Caucasian	35	6	11	19	11	9	11
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Two or more	2	2	1	0	1	1	1
Prefer not to say	6	2	1	1	1	1	7

Which are the most exciting to you? (Select up to three)										
	An expanded boathouse at Middle Branch Park	An event pavilion and lawn at Middle Branch Park	Picnic areas with BBQs in several locations around the Middle Branch	A beach in Middle Branch Park	A Playground near Smith Cove	Fishing and crabbing piers in several locations around the Middle Branch	Boat launches for kayaks and canoes in Middle Branch Park, Swann Park, and Reedbird Park	A sports park including skating and biking in Sharp-Leadenhall at Ridgely's Cove	Boardwalks for biking, running, walking, and bird watching in Ridgely's Cove	Other (please specify)
TOTALS	61	84	26	57	24	32	76	31	127	9
Black/African-Am.	11	27	7	18	9	11	18	11	32	9
Asian/Asian Am.	2	22	2	3	2	0	3	3	2	0
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latine	8	8	0	8	4	0	8	0	16	0
White/Caucasian	34	22	13	22	9	18	39	12	64	0
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0
Two or more	3	2	2	1	0	1	3	2	3	0
Prefer not to say	2	4	3	4	0	1	5	1	7	0

Survey Data

1.9.2 Task 3 Weighted Survey Data

What is most exciting to you about expanding the shoreline? (Rank from most to least exciting, with 1 being the most exciting)				
	Improving the environment: water quality, flood protection, and expanded habitat areas	Scenic beauty	Creating jobs to build and maintain the new shoreline	Adding and connecting trails for walking, running, and biking
TOTALS	1.7	2.9	2.6	2.8
Black/African-Am.	0.38	0.47	0.52	0.64
Asian/Asian Am.	0.15	0.50	0.50	0.35
Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latine	0.73	1.16	0.87	.087
White/Caucasian	0.11	0.19	0.19	0.13
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	0.09	0.22	0.22	0.36
Two or more	0.06	0.15	0.13	0.14
Prefer not to say	0.14	0.21	0.19	0.27

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What improvements will most help you connect to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and the waterfront? (Select three)							
	Bike Lanes	Wide Sidewalks	Pedestrian Friendly Intersections	Transit	Scooter and Bike Parking	Car Parking	Other (please specify)
TOTALS	110	126	147	81	32	78	15
Black/African-Am.	16	41	52	32	11	45	2
Asian/Asian Am.	3	3	2	5	0	2	0
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latine	16	16	16	8	4	0	0
White/Caucasian	62	62	71	32	15	27	10
Am. Indian and Alaska Native	1	1	2	1	0	1	0
Two or more	4	3	4	3	2	0	1
Prefer not to say	8	0	0	0	0	4	2

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REIMAGINE MIDDLE BRANCH

An aerial, top-down view of a large, dense crowd of people gathered in a park-like setting. The people are seen from above, scattered across a green lawn with some trees and pathways visible. The overall color palette is dominated by greens and earthy tones, with the text at the bottom in a contrasting dark color.

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