

Open Houses (June and July, 2021)

Design Preferences

The listening sessions provided an understanding of what the project partners and the public stakeholders valued. They also established indicators of success by which how well any development would incorporate those values into the design of the site could be judged. Although the listening sessions provided a general direction for the development, they weren't meant to provide a definitive direction for the design of specific features. Consequently, another round of public meetings was held to determine the community's design preferences.

DESIGN PREFERENCE SURVEY

A design preference survey was conducted online and during two public open houses, a virtual event held on Wednesday evening, June 30, 2021 and an in-person event at Cottageville Park held on Wednesday evening, July 7, 2021 (see *Figure 5.1: Public Open House*).



Figure 5.1: Public Open House. During a public open house held in Cottageville Park in early July 2021, dozens of participants used dot voting to indicate their design preferences for the public spaces in the proposed development.

Using sets of precedent images, people were asked to rate their preferences for specific design features that could be used to support the values established from the listening sessions. Using a scale of 1 through 5, with 5 indicating their strongest preference, people were shown precedent images and asked if they would like to see a similar design feature incorporated into

the development of the project site (see *Figure 5.2 Survey Results* for an example of this procedure).

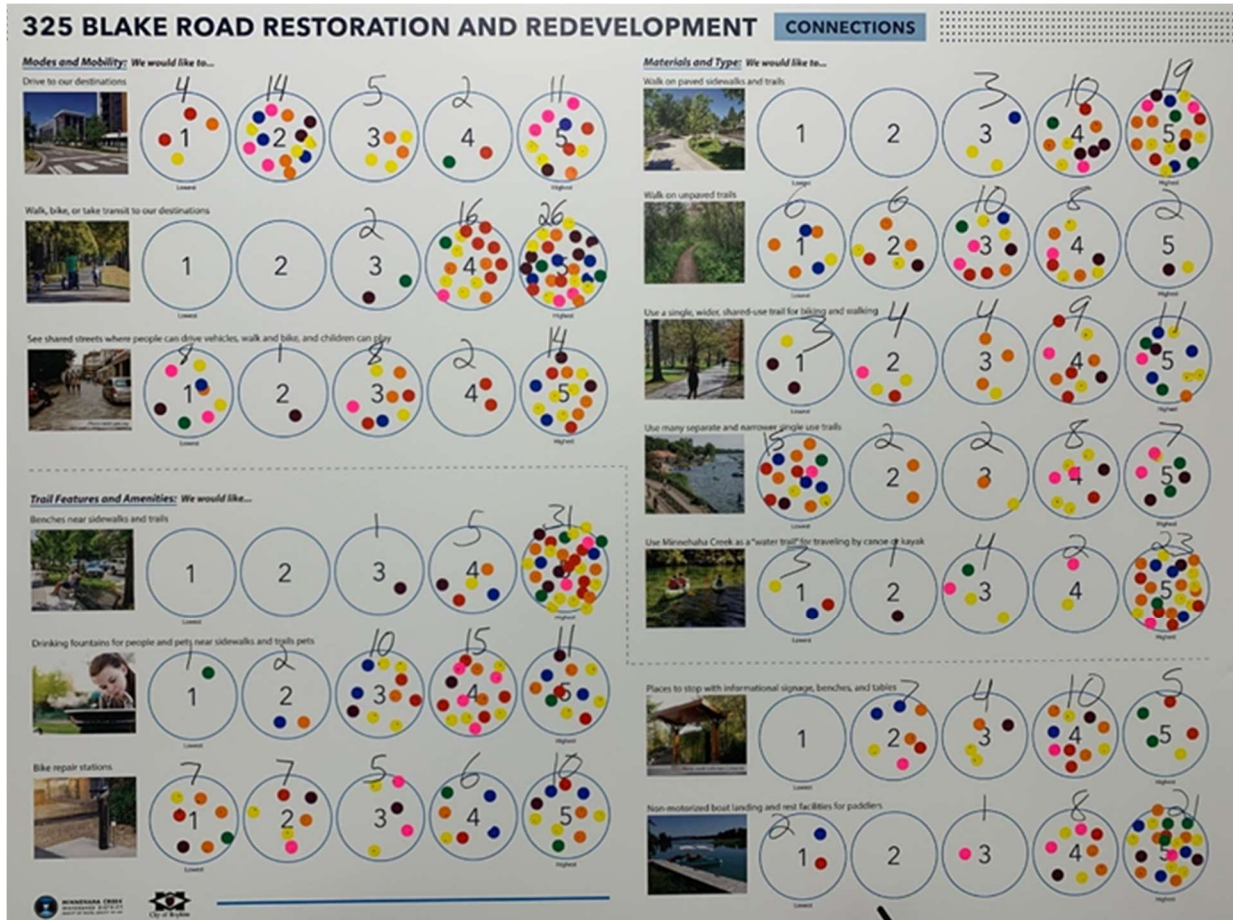


Figure 5.2: Survey Results. Using dots to record their preferences on boards such as this example, an understanding of what design features the public would like to see in the proposed development's public spaces began to emerge.

The survey was framed into four categories and for each category a series of questions were asked, such as:

Preferences related to Nature

- Would you prefer to recreate in, on, or next to water?
- Do you prefer to see moving, falling, or still water?
- Would you prefer the landscape to be formal, informal, or naturalized?
- Would you like to see trees planted along streets, sidewalks, and trails?
- Would prefer lawns of mowed grass or fields of native grasses?
- Would you like to experience large trees in park-like settings?
- Would you like flowers or flowering trees and shrubs?

Preferences related to Stormwater Treatment

- Would you like to observe and learn about stormwater treatment?
- Would you like to use stormwater for recreation or entertainment?
- Would you prefer to see stormwater above ground or should it be hidden underground?
- Would you like to see and understand unconventional stormwater management techniques?

Preferences related to Connectivity

- Do you prefer to drive, bicycle, or walk to your destinations?
- Would you prefer to have shared streets where people can drive vehicles, walk or bike and children can play at the same time?
- Would you prefer to have exclusive and separate routes for pedestrians and bicyclists?
- Would you prefer a trail for the joint use of pedestrians and bicyclists?
- Should trails have fountains for people and pets?
- Should there be a rest area or bike repair stations for bicyclists?
- Would you use benches? Or tables?
- Should the creek be considered a “water trail?”
- Should there be a rest area for creek paddlers?

Preferences related to Community Diversity

- Would you use large spaces for gatherings and performances?
- Would you like to gather in large groups near water?
- Would you like to have spaces for large families? Small families? Individuals?
- Should there be public toilets? Public art? Picnic spaces?
- Would you like to see interpretive history or public art that reflects the diversity of the community?
- Should signs be in multiple languages?
- Should areas for children to play be featured?
- Should universal access be promoted?

Moving into the Design Charrette, the survey articulated a fuller vision of the features that should be included in the site’s design. Sixteen design features were identified as being preferred with an average rating of 4.0 or above. In descending order of preference, these features (and their average score) were:

- Benches near sidewalks and trails (4.7)
- All trails and open space amenities to be ADA accessible (4.5)
- Large canopy trees along streets, sidewalks, and trails (4.5)
- Moving water (4.4)
- Walk, bike, or take transit to our destinations (4.4)
- Public restroom facilities (4.4)
- Falling water (4.3)
- See stormwater being managed through innovative design (4.2)

- Walk on paved sidewalks and trails (4.2)
- Use Minnehaha Creek as a "water trail" for traveling by canoe or kayak (4.1)
- Outdoor recreation and entertainment opportunities throughout the year for people of various abilities and ages (4.1)
- Elements which engage children to play or learn (4.1)
- Actively recreate ON water (4.1)
- Spaces for Couples or Individuals (4.1)
- Non-motorized boat landing and rest facilities for paddlers (4.0)
- Informal landscapes that look like city parks (4.0)

CONCLUSION

Conducting a design preference survey as part of a public open house allowed MCWD to identify the public's preferences of what design features they would like to see in the proposed development. The summary of these preferences as listed was provided to the participants of the Design Charrette to serve as a check on how well the emerging alternatives may satisfy the preferences of the public.