

Mulberry Commons
Public Input Survey Results

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INTRODUCTION

Mulberry Commons, downtown Newark's newest park, is the proposed development of three (3) acres of open space. The proposed park will be located between Mulberry Street and McCarter Highway, over the Northeast Corridor, down to Peter Francisco Park, with connections to Penn Station.

The park is made possible through a public-private partnership between the City of Newark, the Newark Community and Economic Development Corporation, the Newark Downtown District, Edison Properties, J&L Companies, Inc., and the Prudential Center. Sage and Coombe Architects is the project lead for the design of the park, and Supermass Studio is the landscape architect.

Upon completion of the park, NDD will be the entity responsible for maintenance, operations, and programming.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

To ensure the park meets the desires and needs of the community, the Mulberry Commons Steering Committee has solicited feedback in the form of public outreach meetings as well as online and in-person surveys. In-person (paper) surveys were available in both Spanish and English and were distributed at the first public outreach meeting on January 17, 2017 and also at Mayor Ras Baraka's public announcement for the park on January 18, 2017. The NDD made available the same survey online via its website (downtownnewark.com/mulberry-commons) and various entities in the steering committee distributed this survey to its constituents. NDD collected and summarized responses on February 20, 2017, two days before the second public outreach meeting. The following report summarizes these surveys.

FINDINGS

There were 247 total responses, 58 paper responses and 189 online responses. Note that all responses may not add up to 247 as none of the questions were required and several respondents skipped questions.

Demographics of Respondents

The survey asked respondents to identify their age range, sex, location of work/residence, and whether they were visiting Newark. The age of responses was diverse, with little fluctuation between the ages of 25-65 (Figure 1). As the survey asked for a range rather than an exact age, the responses cannot determine a median age of respondents that is accurate. Second, the sex of respondents leaned more female (55%) than male (45%) (Figure 2). There was one respondent who listed their sex as "non-conforming". Finally, the vast majority of respondents either live or work or both live and work in Newark.

Figure 1

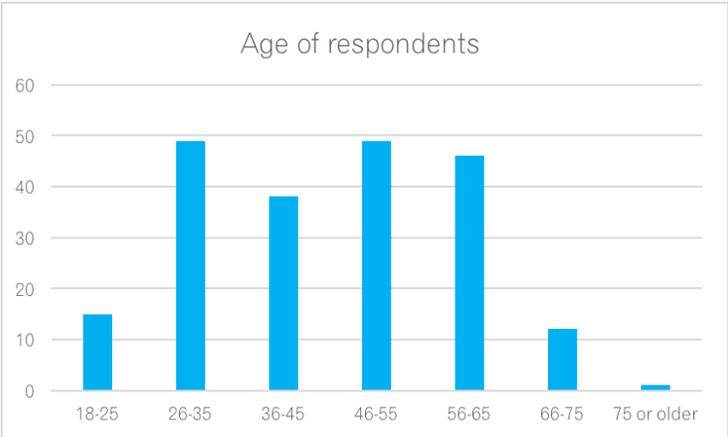


Figure 2

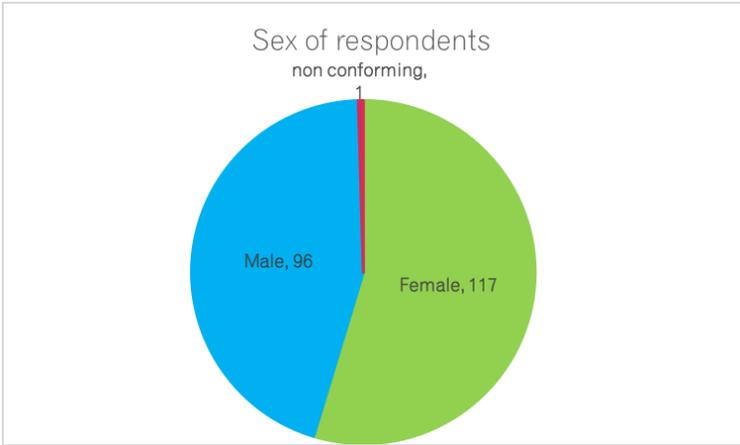
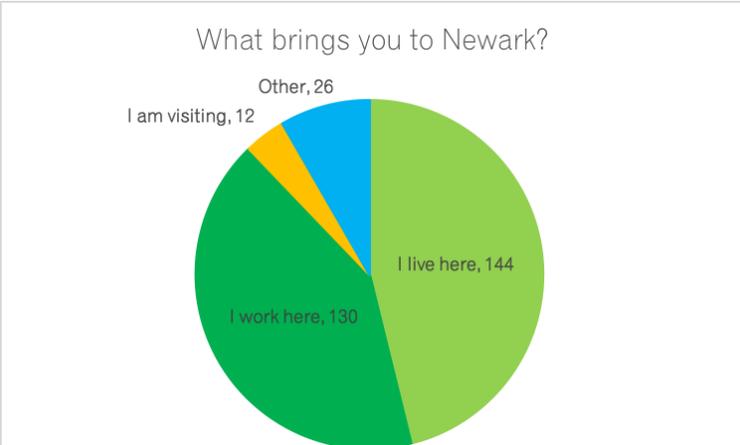


Figure 3



Question 1: On a scale of 1-5, please rank the importance of the following project goals, 5 being the most important.

Figure 4

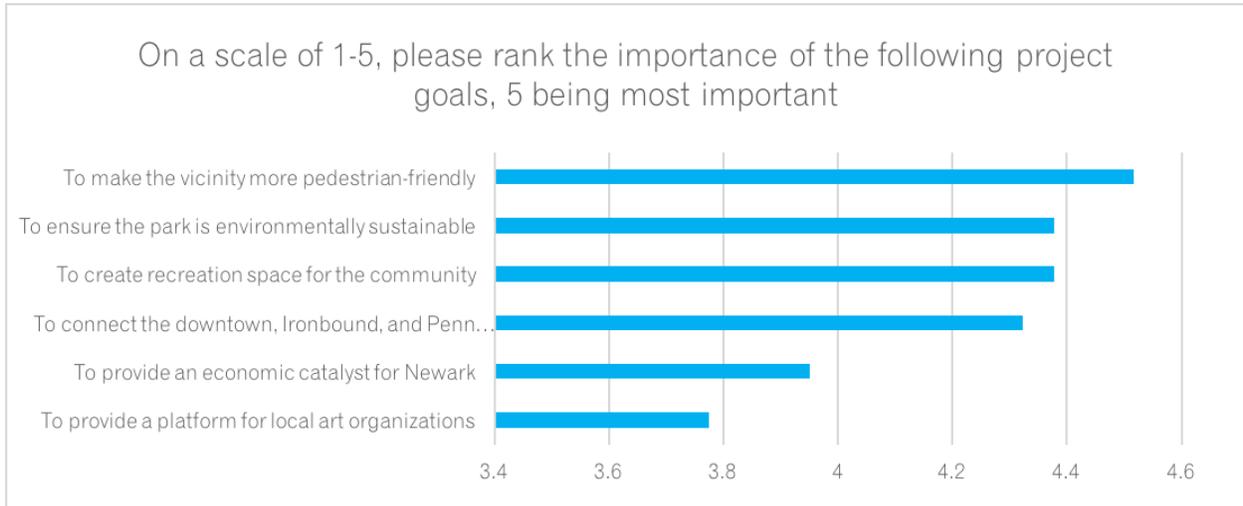
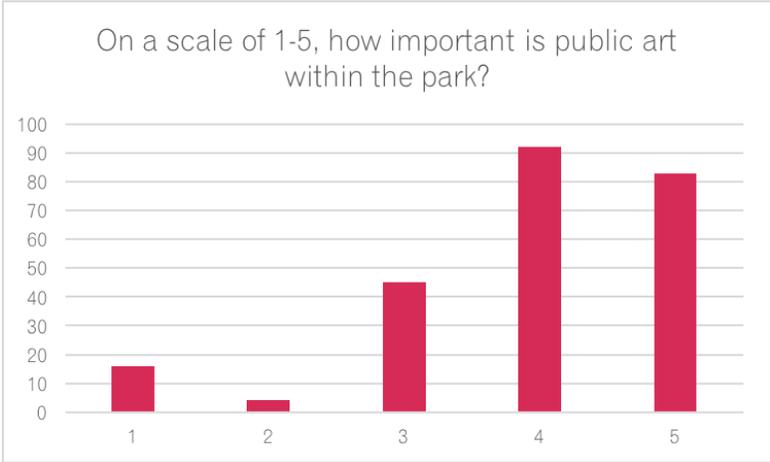


Figure 5



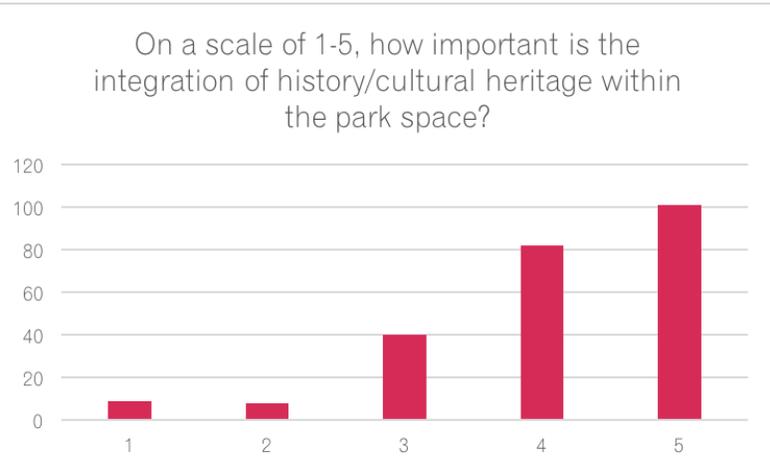
Question 2: On a scale of 1-5, how important is public art within the park?

Figure 6



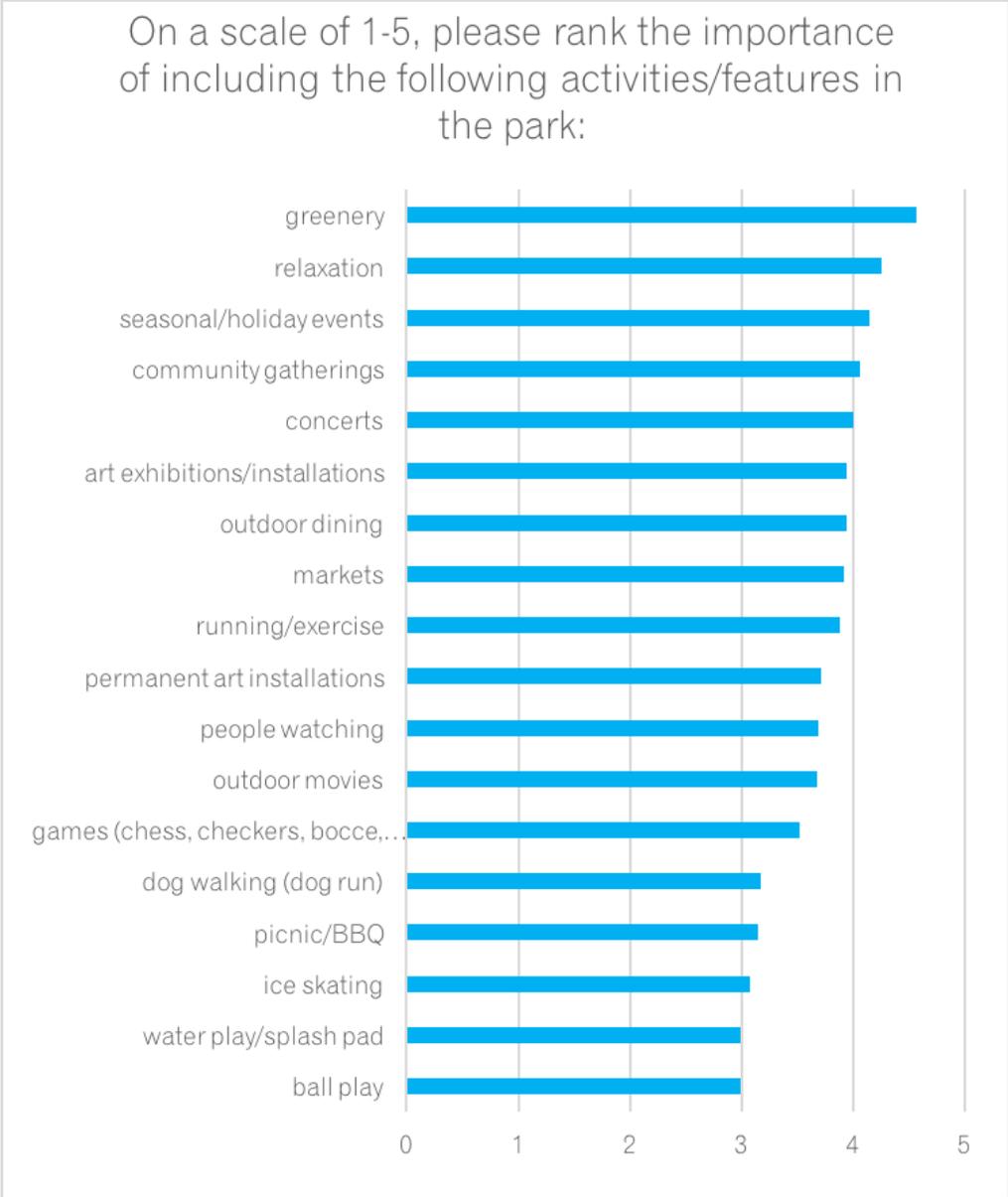
Question 3: On a scale of 1-5, how important is public art within the park?

Figure 7



Question 4: On a scale of 1-5, please rank the importance of including the following activities/features in the park:

Figure 8: Average of responses for each activity/feature



Question 4a: Are there any other activities/features you would like to see in the park?

Answers included: music concerts, outside vendors, farmers’ market, safe shaded areas, running trails, restaurants, bike paths, murals, infrastructure for families with children, bicycling infrastructure, a police booth, playground, fountains, waterfall, Wi-Fi, bike path, green infrastructure to capture stormwater run-off, community garden, child-friendly spaces, playgrounds, rollerskating, public chalkboard, native plants, Zen Garden, dog park, adult jungle gym, garbage cans, electronic message board, dancing

Question 5: On a scale of 1-5, please rank the importance of including the following structures in the park:

Figure 9

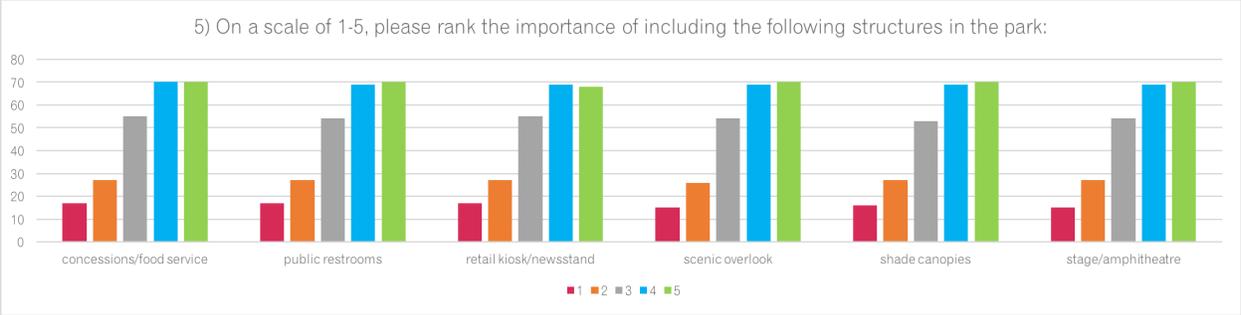
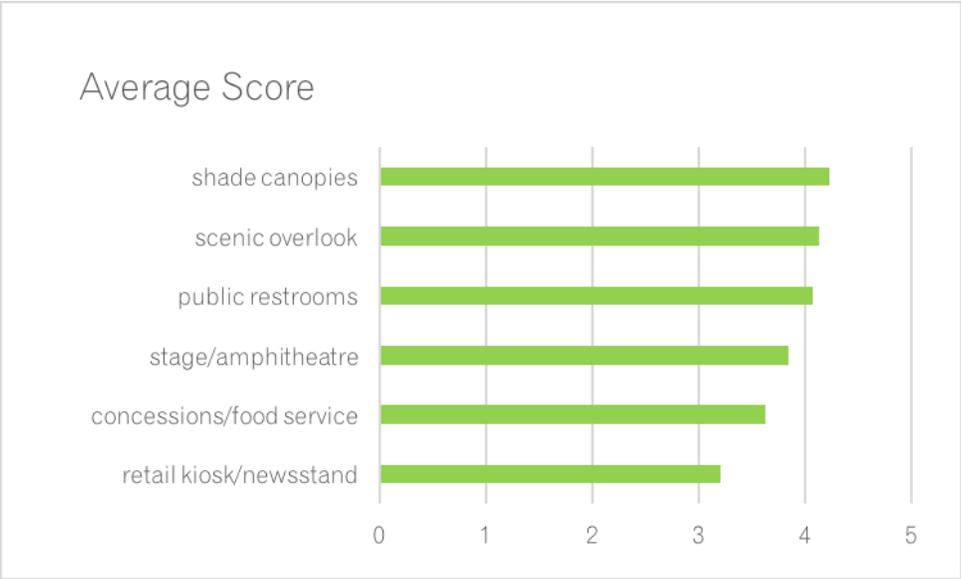


Figure 10

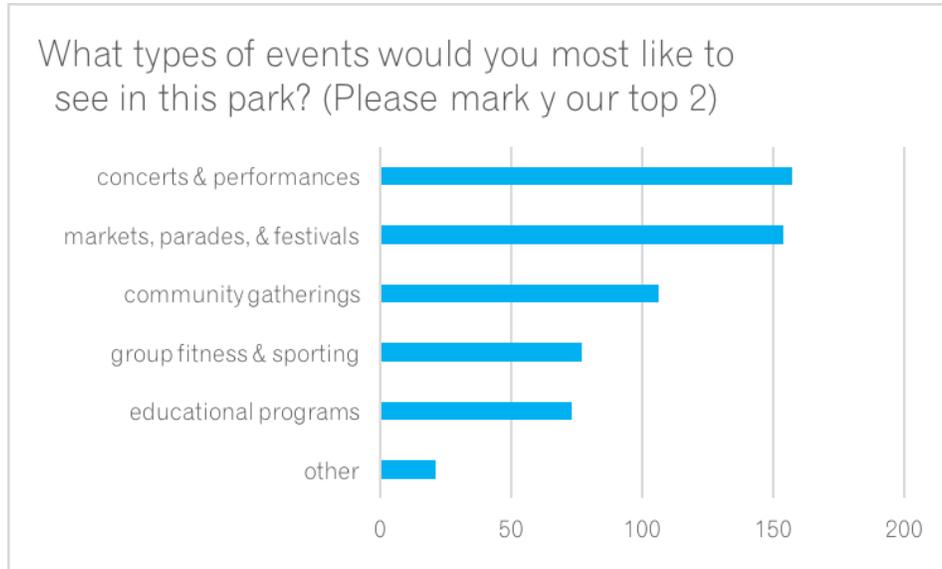


Question 5a: Are there any other structures you would like to see in the park?

Answers included: benches, statues, water retention cisterns to hold stormwater runoff, dance floor, indoor area that would support park events, picnic infrastructure, mini botanical features or areas dedicated to wildlife, recycling receptacles, playground with swings, solar charging stations, greenery, ADA compliance, bike paths, pavilions/follies, greenhouse or notable character statue, bandstand, evening lighting, fountains, fitness classes, atrium similar to Battery Park in NYC, engaging permanent structures, cover for bad weather, seating, bike racks, interpretive signage explaining sustainable design, benches, way-finding signs, playground, pond, interactive maps, solar and green energy, winter skating, movies on pru center, luxury residential housing, continuous bicycle lane/path, space should be created to make women feel safe, views that are not obstructed, secured public restroom with attendant to clean them, playground equipment, chess tables, mini golf, water feature, large fountain, police house, waterfall, vending machine

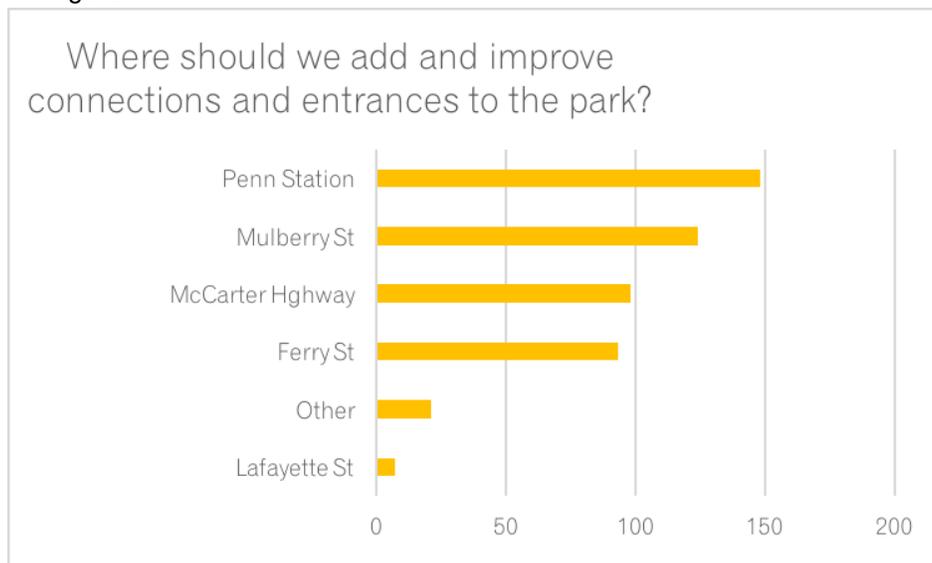
Question 6: What types of events would you most like to see in this park? (Please mark your top 2)

Figure 11



Question 7: Where should we add and improve connections and entrances to the park?

Figure 12



Question 8: How do you plan on getting to the park?

Figure 13



Additional Comments: (some comments are abbreviated and paraphrased)

The commons should recycle stormwater to irrigate horticulture, work to address issue of homelessness in Newark, don't ruin facade of historical Penn Station and don't build on top of public streets, I am concerned about parking, affordable monthly parking, thank you for asking the public for their input; that is currently a big issue amongst the citizens of Newark, strategize programming so as to not compete with other open space programming, take note of kids and families in infrastructure, provide appropriate infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to coexist, this is great!, collaborate with NJIT students and Newark residents, I can't wait to see the design happen, coordinate with Military Park so as not to duplicate events, surrounding areas need to be improved to make the park more inviting, please incorporate permanent play structures, commission young local artists for public art design, I am concerned about this park becoming a gathering area for the homeless, adequate lighting is needed in and around the park, congratulations Mayor Baraka, Newark on the Rise!, Congratulations, what a hard won victory, Parking is KEY, vendors should have same licensing as local business owners, please build skate accessible environments, park for children, great job, need Zen section of park, excellent, please make sure access to the park is easy, much needed project, policing/security is key along with sanitation, reach out to Newark DIG and RBH group re: incorporating stormwater and green infrastructure features, security, include as much greenery as possible