



Freeway Park Improvements Project

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE TOPLINE SUMMARY

JULY 7 – AUGUST 5

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SUMMARY

Freeway Park is one of Seattle's most famous parks and is considered a groundbreaking masterpiece of landscape architecture. When it opened in 1976, it was the first park built over an interstate highway. It was designed by Lawrence Halprin & Associates to be an "exciting nature park" with an "adventurous atmosphere," reconnecting neighborhoods divided by the new Interstate 5. At 5.2 acres, it is the largest public park in downtown Seattle. Now more than 40 years old, the park needs significant infrastructure updates and other improvements.

The Freeway Park Improvements Project will repair, restore, and potentially enhance the park's original features in support of daily use, maintenance, and public programming. Seattle Parks & Recreation wants to welcome more people to the park and make the park accessible, comfortable, and inviting to a diverse community of all ages.

As part of the project, Seattle Parks and Recreation hosted an online open house from July 7 to August 5, 2020. Visitors to the online open house had the opportunity to share feedback on park-wide improvements, area-specific improvements, and their overarching priorities for selecting improvements within the park.

When visiting the online open house, participants could:

- Learn more about the project background, schedule, and challenges.
- Give feedback on the top priorities that should be considered when selecting which improvements to implement at Freeway Park.
- Share feedback on park-wide improvements and area-specific improvements at the Upper Lawns, Pigott Corridor, 8th Avenue Entrance, and Seneca Plaza.
- Share demographic information to help determine the effectiveness of Seattle Parks and Recreation outreach efforts.

Promotions

Seattle Parks and Recreation used multiple methods to reach audiences and promote the online open house, including a postcard that went out to 4,000 residential and business addresses within 0.25 miles of the project area. The team also emailed 500 postcards to people who have previously attended public meetings for nearby projects. The project team posted flyers around the neighborhood as well.

The project team also promoted the online open house through the project webpage, social media, and Freeway Park Association to spread the word to project partners, neighborhood organizations, and project stakeholders. Seattle Parks & Recreation sent out two email announcements to subscribers, posted two updates on the Parkways Blog and provided several social media updates throughout the month.

The project team sent out a press release to numerous media outlets and received press coverage from *The Stranger*, *The Daily Journal of Commerce*, *The Urbanist*, and *The Capitol Hill Blog* as well as other community news groups.

Lastly the project team worked with several nonprofit housing providers in the project area to gather feedback from residents. Participation residents received a \$10 Target gift card for completing the online open house survey.

SURVEY METHODS

The following report captures qualitative and quantitative data from survey respondents who visited the online open house. The online open house included a total of 21 questions that addressed the following:

- Overarching priorities
- Park-wide priorities
- Specific park area improvements
- Survey respondent demographics

All questions were optional. Not all respondents answered every question. Many questions allowed respondents to select more than one answer. Questions with more than one answer did not use percentage to calculate any total value or representation.

KEY FINDINGS

Use and Activity

Almost 1,400 people visited the online open house; 531 individuals completed a survey, including 371 responses to the “priorities” questions, 301 responses to the park-wide questions, 253 responses to the park area questions, and 255 responses to the demographic questions. Seventeen individuals submitted open comments by email or phone, and 126 individuals signed up to receive project updates by email.

Demographics

255 people responded to the demographic questions. Forty-two percent (42%) of respondents who provided a ZIP code listed 98122 or 98101, the two ZIP codes that surround Freeway Park.

Respondents who provided demographic information overwhelmingly identified as White or Caucasian and were English-speaking (97%). Most respondents were 30 years or older, with the largest represented age groups being those 30-39 years (30%) and those 60 years or older (26%).

Priorities

371 people responded to the “priorities” questions. Respondents prioritized new lighting and drainage and irrigation repairs throughout the park, as well as improvements at the four park entrances. Respondents identified clear views into and out of the park and better lighting as their top priorities for park entrances.

Park-Wide Improvements

301 people responded to the park-wide improvements questions. Ninety-two percent (92%) of respondents said new lighting should be a priority for park-wide improvements. Fifty-two percent (52%) said directional or informational signage should be a priority.

Sixty-two percent (62%) of participants preferred to see native and evergreen plants in the park, as opposed to seasonal beauty plantings. Respondents also prioritized improving tree health, addressing structural tree issues, and improving sight lines through the park.

Park-Area Improvements

253 people responded to questions about park area improvements. At the *Upper Lawns*, participants preferred improvements that encourage safe play and exploration of original concrete features and new family-friendly restrooms.

At *Seneca Plaza*, respondents prioritized modifications to the existing Cascade Fountain/Children's Fountain and a new staffed park building. At the *8th Avenue Entrance*, almost half of respondents prioritized a more visible and open entrance with views to Puget Sound.

At *Pigott Corridor*, respondents prioritized a new overlook with park bench and selective pruning or removal of some evergreen trees to restore views.

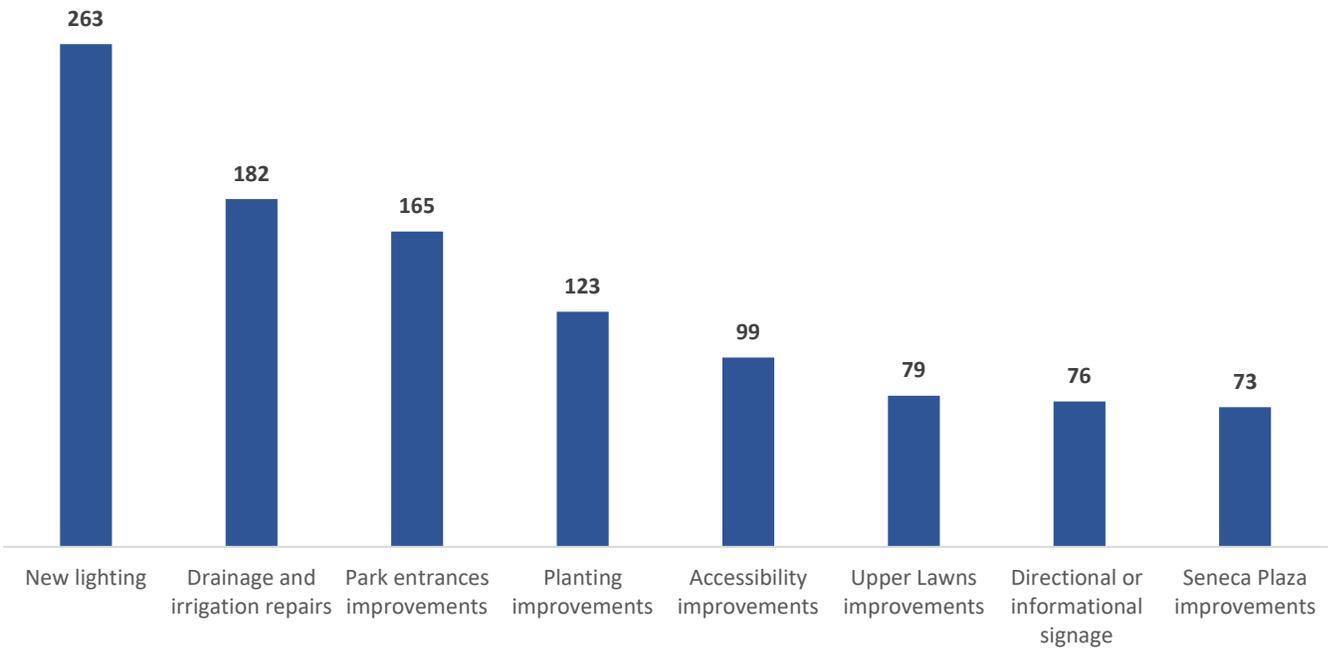
NEXT STEPS

Along with technical considerations, the public input from the online open house will help the project team identify which improvements will take place within the existing budget. Seattle Parks and Recreation will provide additional updates to the public and opportunities for feedback as the project progresses through design.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Priorities

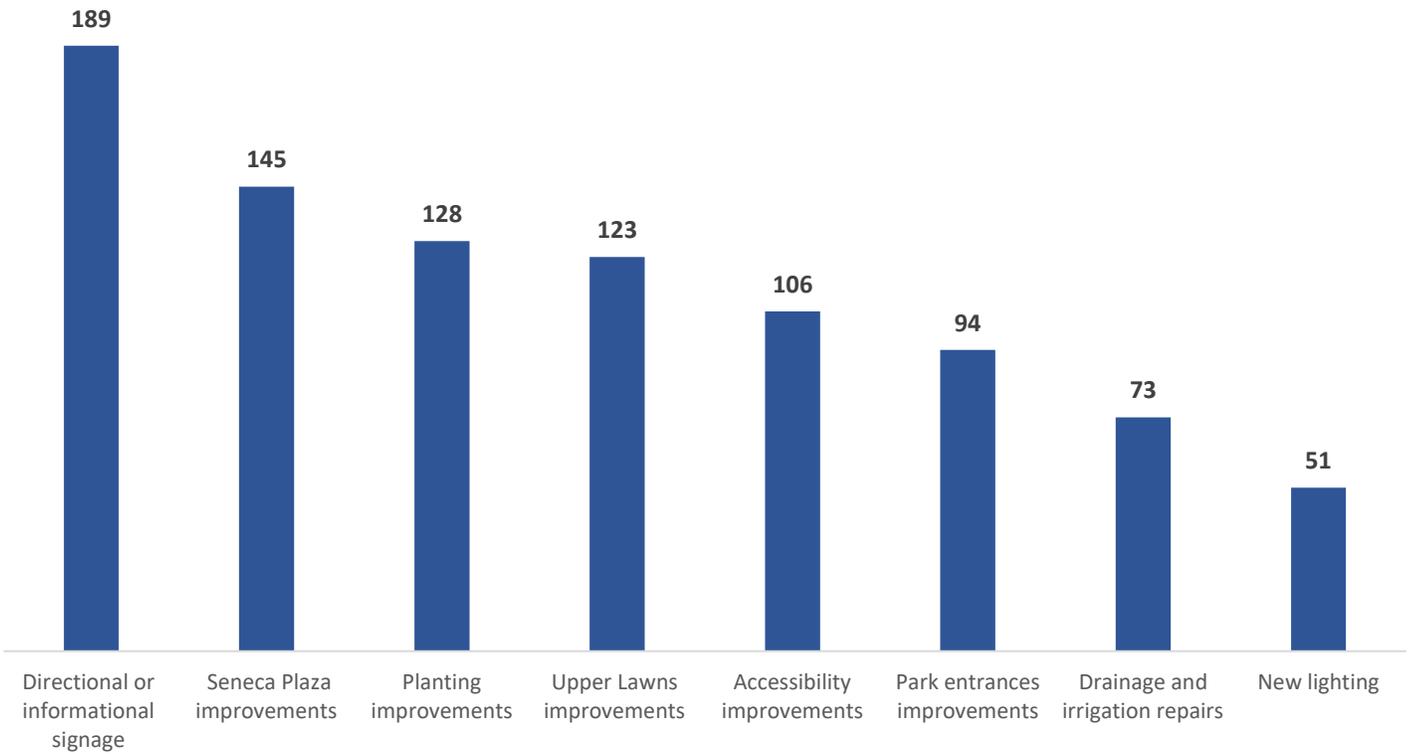
Question 1 | Which three priorities are most important to you? Select three.



Answers	Tally
New lighting throughout the park	263
Drainage and irrigation repairs throughout the park	182
Improvements at four park entrances: Pigott Corridor (9th Avenue), 8th Avenue, Hubbell Place & Seneca Street, and 6th Avenue & Seneca Street	165
Planting improvements in some areas	123
Accessibility improvements in some areas	99
Improvements at the Upper Lawns area	79
Directional or informational signage throughout the park	76
Improvements at Seneca Plaza	73

Total respondents | 364

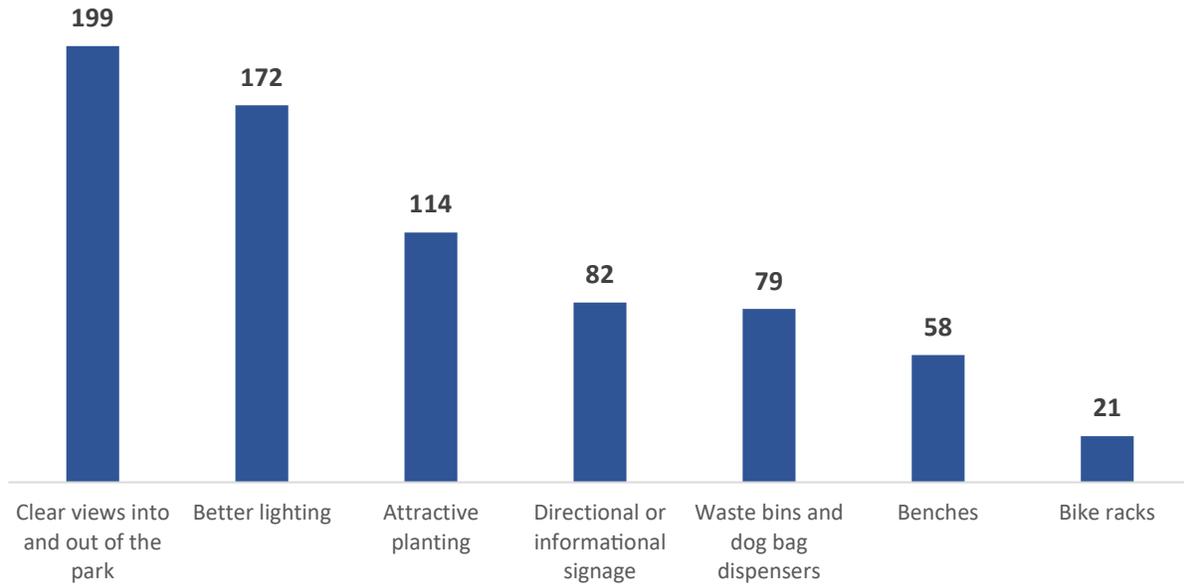
Question 2 | Which three priorities are least important to you? Select three.



Answers	Tally
Directional or informational signage throughout the park	189
Improvements at Seneca Plaza	145
Planting improvements in some areas	128
Improvements at the Upper Lawns area	123
Accessibility improvements in some areas	106
Improvements at four park entrances: Pigott Corridor (9th Avenue), 8th Avenue, Hubbell Place & Seneca Street, and 6th Avenue & Seneca Street	94
Drainage and irrigation repairs throughout the park	73
New lighting throughout the park	51

Total respondents | 343

**Question 3 | Which two improvements to park entrances are important to you as a park visitor?
Select two.**

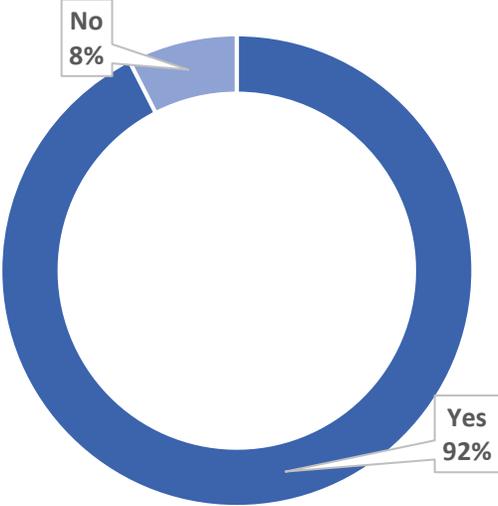


Answers	Tally
Clear views into and out of the park	199
Better lighting	172
Attractive planting	114
Waste bins and dog bag dispensers	79
Directional or informational signage	82
Benches	58
Bike racks	21

Total respondents | 368

Park-Wide Improvements

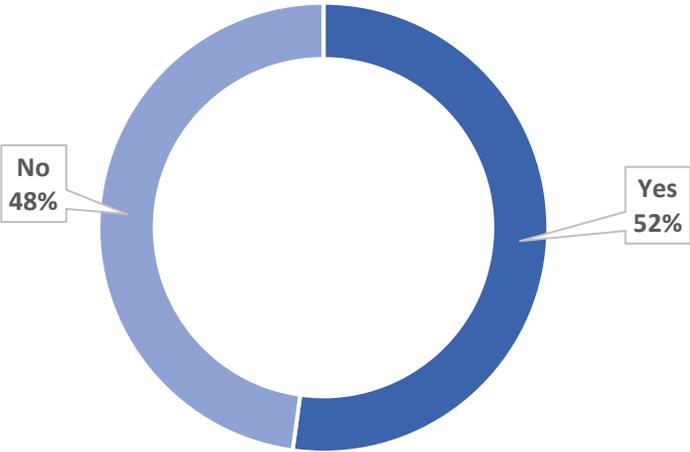
Question 1 | Should new lighting be a priority?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
Yes	270	92%
No	22	8%

Total respondents | 292

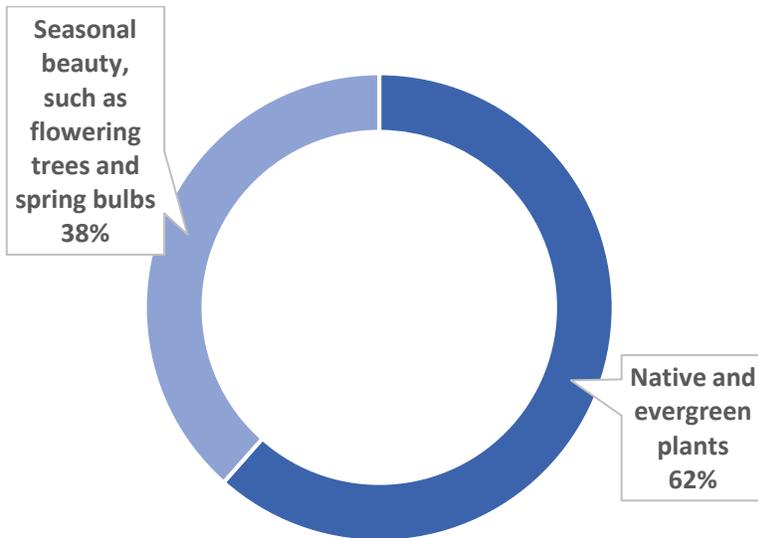
Question 2 | Should new directional or informational signage be a priority?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
Yes	143	52%
No	131	48%

Total respondents | 274

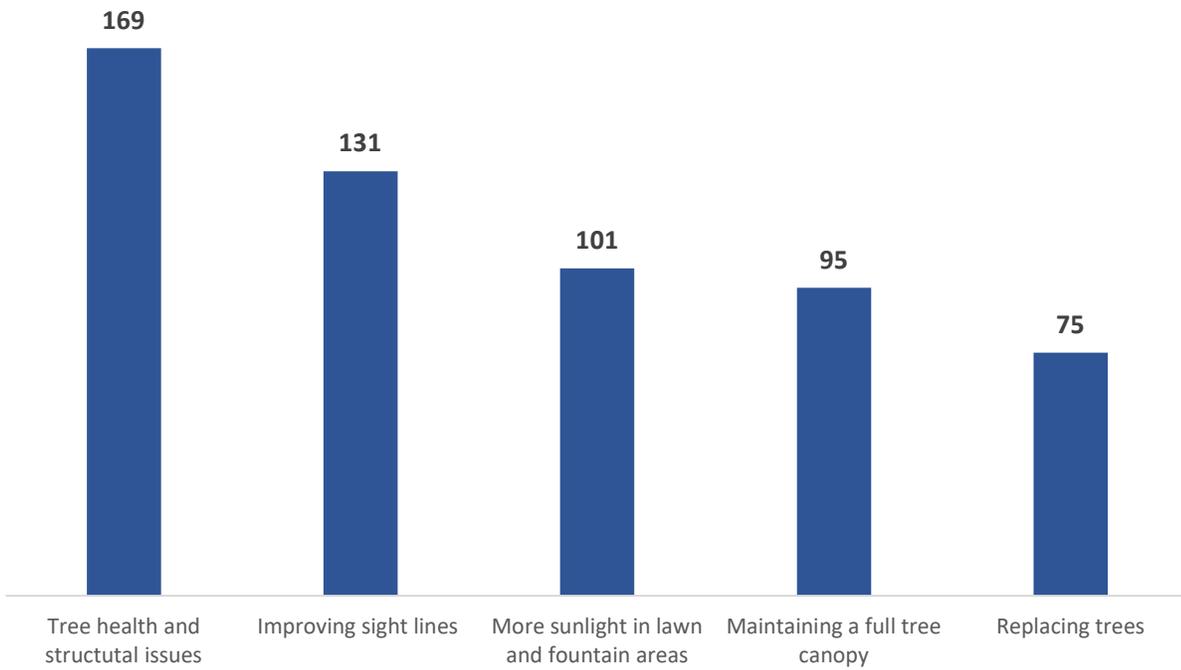
Question 3 | Which approach to plantings would you most like to see in Freeway Park?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
Native and evergreen plants	181	62%
Seasonal beauty, such as flowering trees and spring bulbs	113	38%

Total respondents | 294

Question 4 | To preserve the park's mature trees, and open up views and bring in more sunlight, which two are the most important to you? Select two.

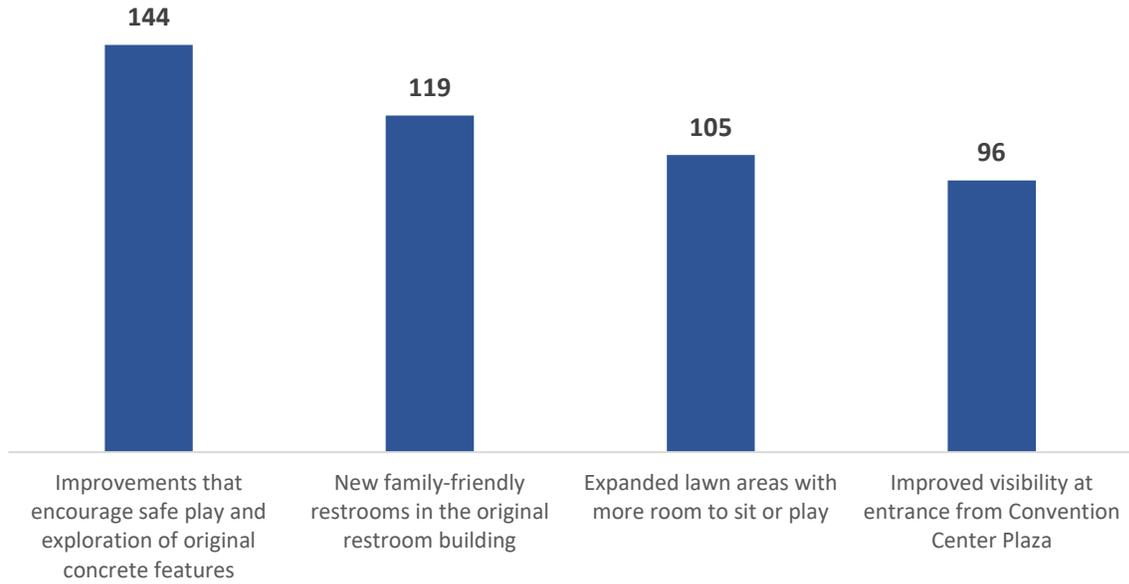


Answers	Tally
Addressing tree health and structural tree issues	169
Improving sight lines through the park, by pruning and/or removing select trees	131
Having more sunlight in lawn and fountain areas, by pruning and/or removing select trees	101
Maintaining a full tree canopy	95
Replacing trees that need to be removed with new trees	75

Total respondents | 297

Park Area Improvements

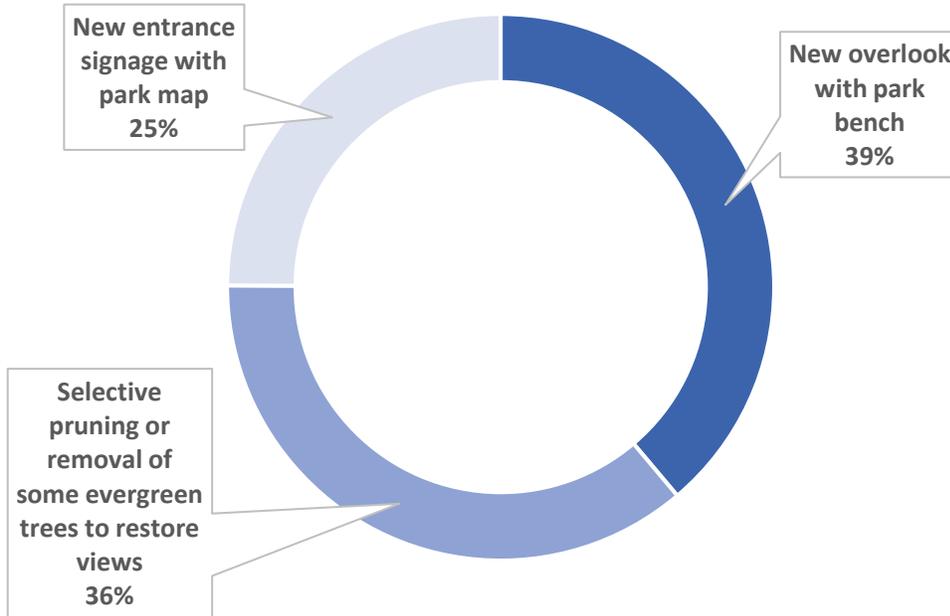
Question 1 | Which two improvements to the Upper Lawns do you like most? Select two.



Answers	Tally
Improvements that encourage safe play and exploration of original concrete features	144
New family-friendly restrooms in the original restroom building	119
Expanded lawn areas with more room to sit or play	105
Improved visibility at entrance from Convention Center Plaza	96

Total respondents | 241

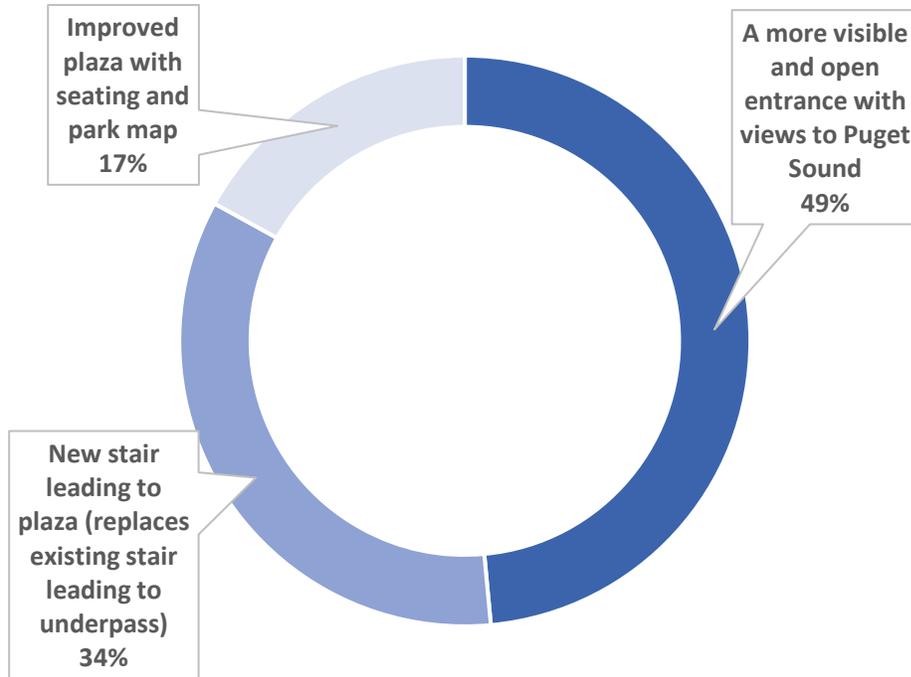
Question 2 | Which improvement to the Pigott Corridor do you like most?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
New overlook with park bench	92	39%
Selective pruning or removal of some evergreen trees to restore views	86	36%
New entrance signage with park map	59	25%

Total respondents | 237

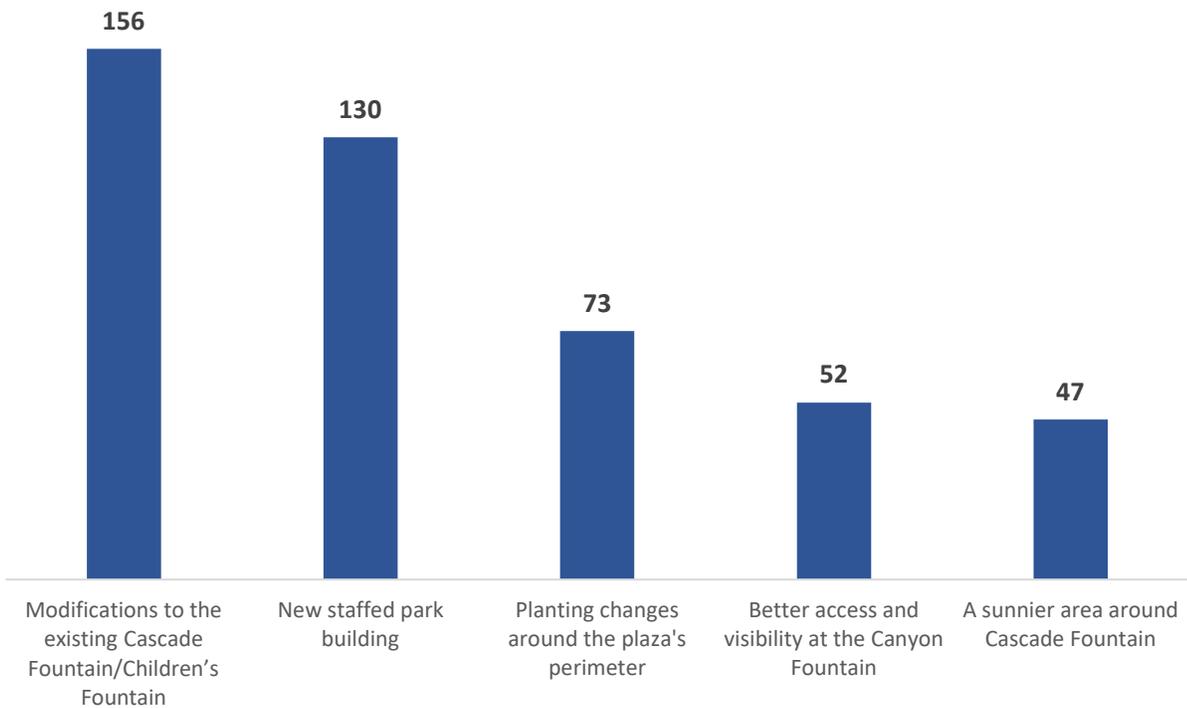
Question 3 | Which improvement to the 8th Avenue Entrance do you like most?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
A more visible and open entrance with views to Puget Sound	117	49%
New stair leading to plaza (replaces existing stair leading to underpass)	83	34%
Improved plaza with seating and park map	41	17%

Total respondents | 241

Question 4 | Which two improvements to Seneca Plaza do you like most? Select two.

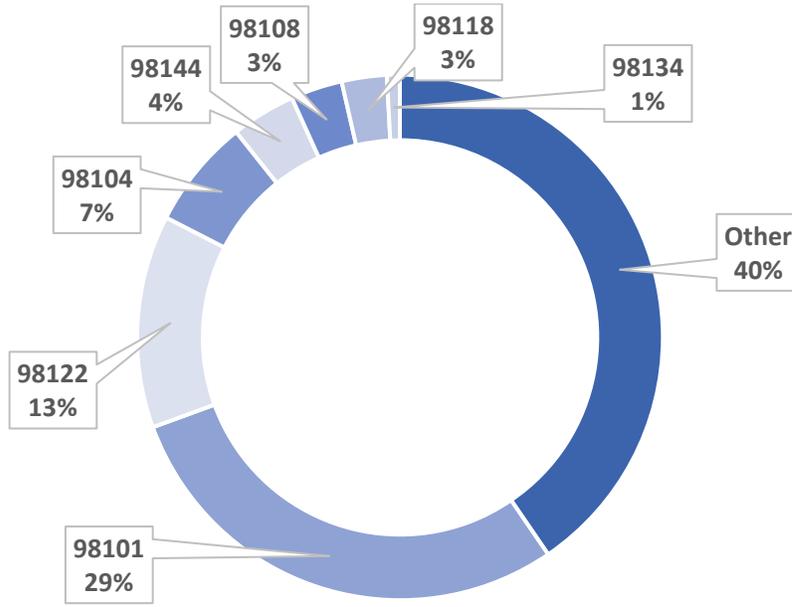


Answers	Tally
Modifications to the existing Cascade Fountain/Children's Fountain to make it clean, safe, and accessible to play in	156
New staffed park building, with park concierge, public restrooms, and storage	130
Planting changes around the plaza's perimeter for better visibility and maintenance of the historic fountains	73
Better access and visibility at the Canyon Fountain	52
A sunnier area around Cascade Fountain	47

Total respondents | 250

Demographic Questions

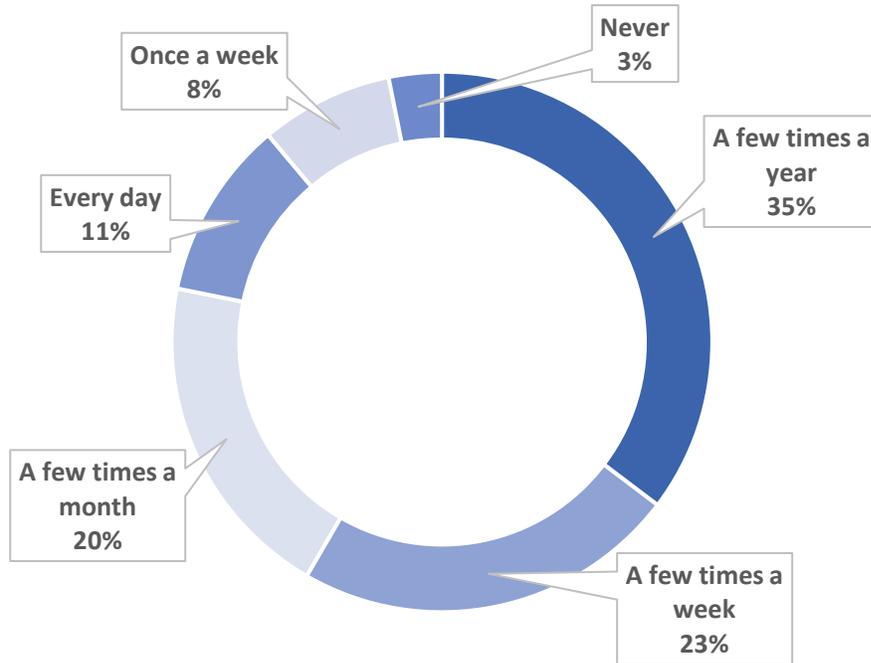
Question 1 | Please tell us the zip code you live in.



Answers	Tally	Percentage
Other	102	40%
98101	73	29%
98122	33	13%
98104	17	7%
98144	10	4%
98108	8	3%
98118	7	3%
98134	2	1%

Total respondents | 252

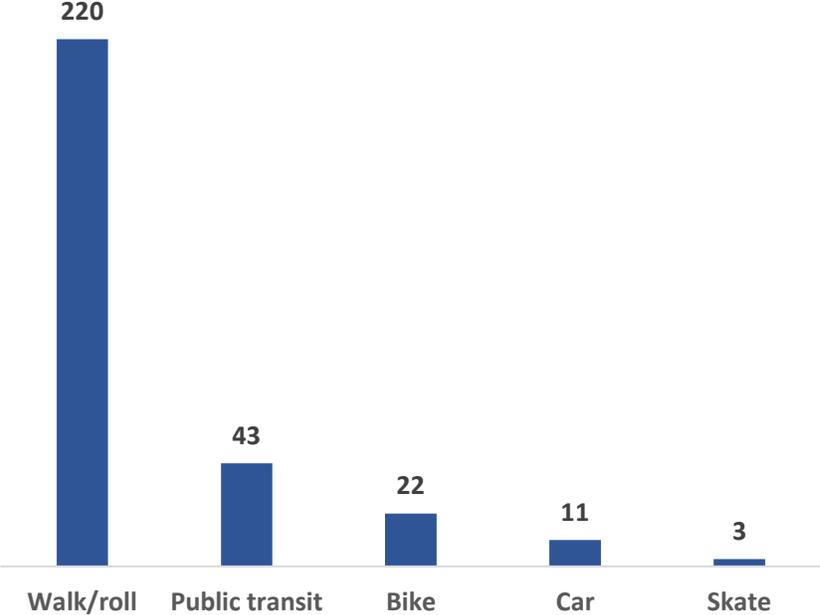
Question 2 | How often do you visit Freeway Park?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
A few times a year	89	35%
A few times a week	58	23%
A few times a month	50	20%
Every day	27	11%
Once a week	20	8%
Never	8	3%

Total respondents | 252

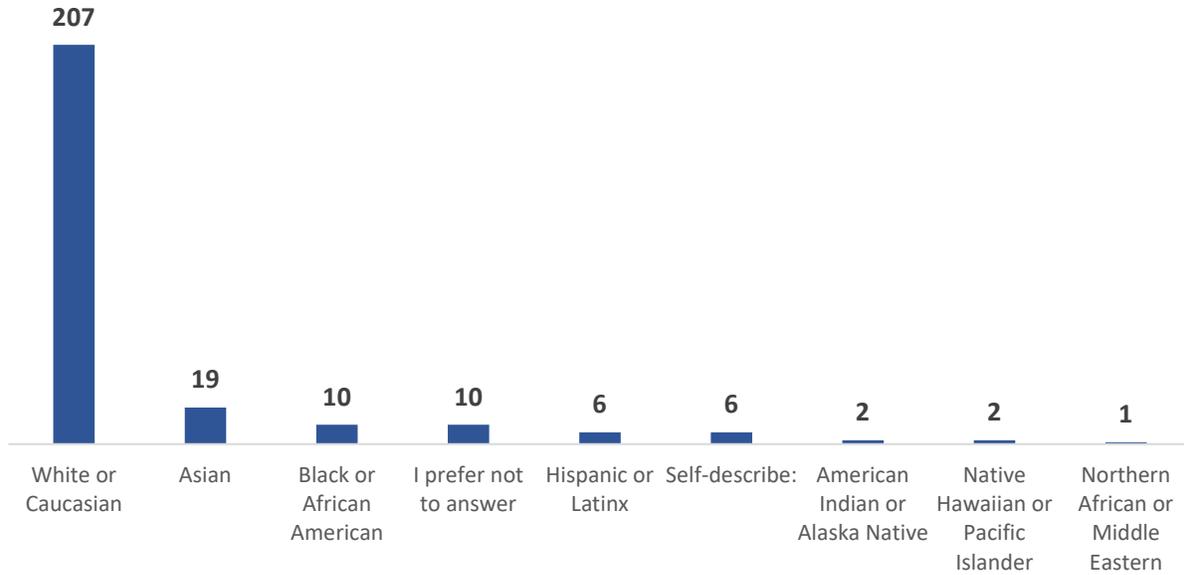
Question 3 | How do you usually get to Freeway Park? Select all that apply.



Answers	Tally
Walk/roll	220
Public transit	43
Bike	22
Car	11
Skate	3

Total respondents | 250

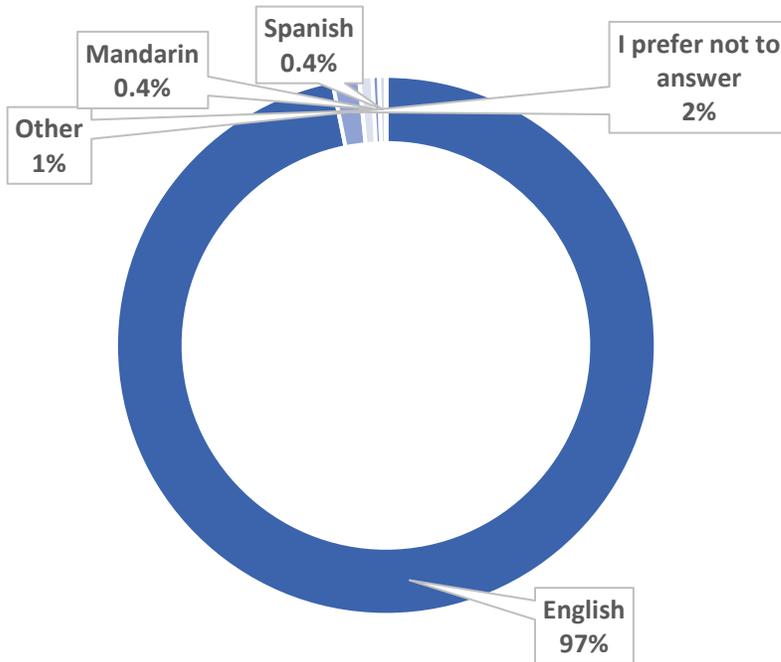
Question 4 | What ethnicity best describes you? Select all that apply.



Answers	Tally
White or Caucasian	207
Asian	19
Black or African American	10
I prefer not to answer	10
Hispanic or Latinx	6
Self-describe:	6
American Indian or Alaska Native	2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2
Northern African or Middle Eastern	1

Total respondents | 255

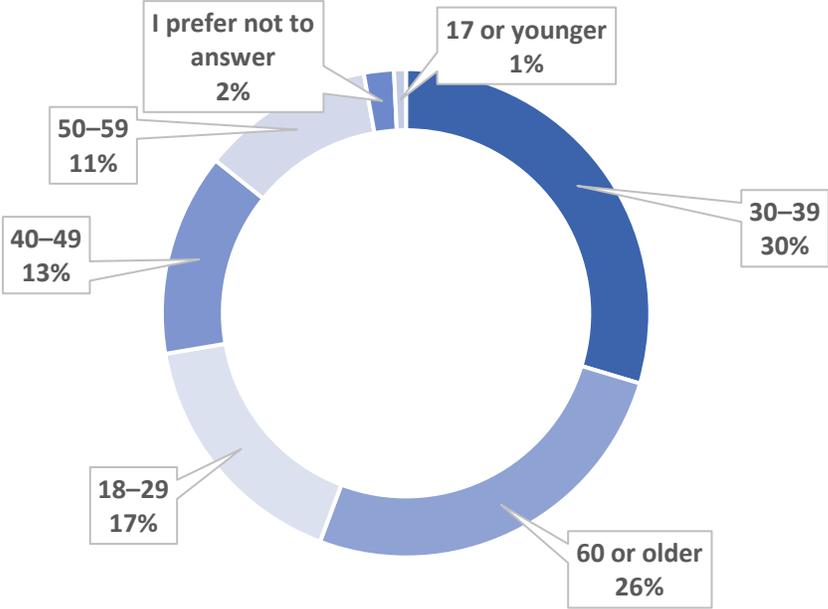
Question 5 | What is the primary language spoken in your home?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
English	242	97%
I prefer not to answer	4	2%
Other	2	1%
Mandarin	1	0.4%
Spanish	1	0.4%
Amharic	0	0%
Cantonese	0	0%
Korean	0	0%
Somali	0	0%
Tagalog	0	0%
Vietnamese	0	0%

Total respondents | 250

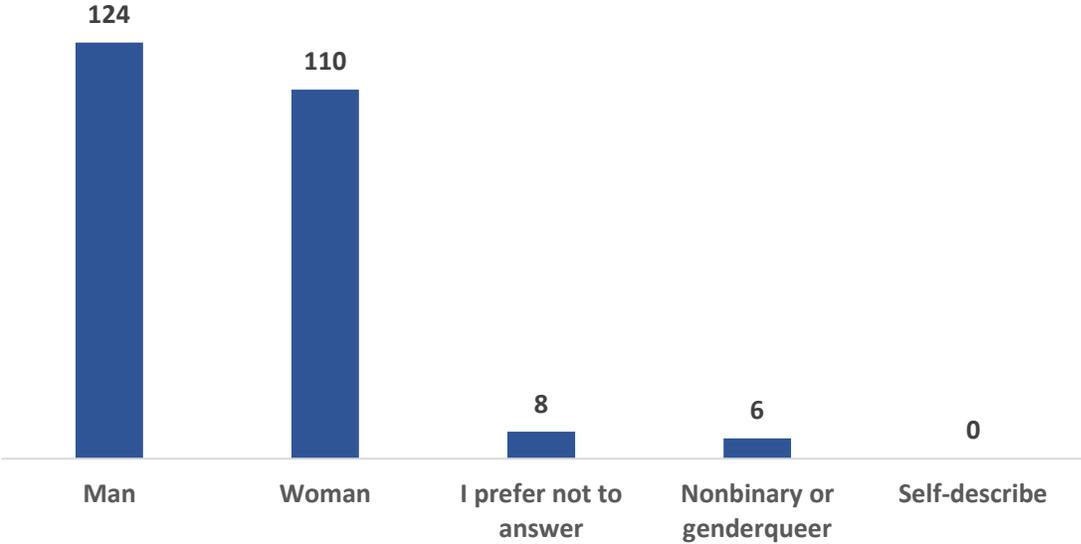
Question 6 | What is your age?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
17 or younger	1	1%
18-29	42	17%
30-39	75	30%
40-49	34	13%
50-59	29	12%
60 or older	66	26%
I prefer not to answer	5	2%

Total respondents | 252

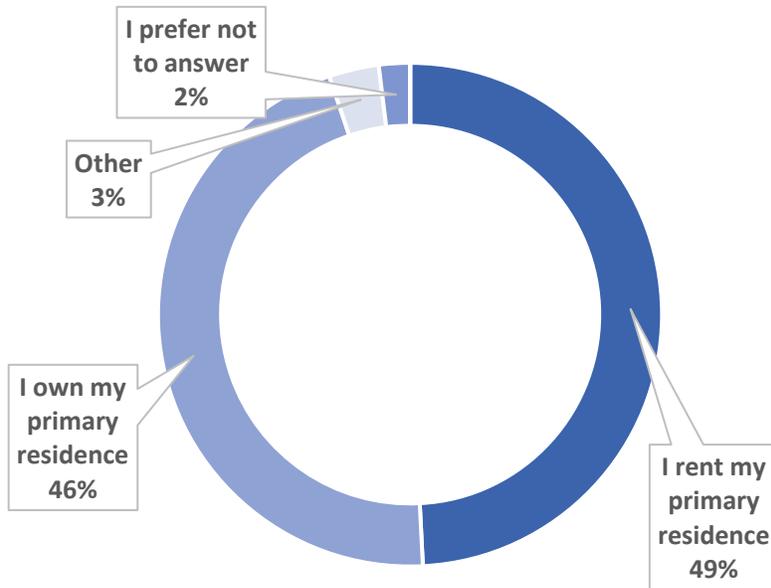
Question 7 | What gender do you identify as? Select all that apply.



Answers	Tally
Man	124
Woman	110
I prefer not to answer	8
Nonbinary or genderqueer	6
Self-describe	0

Total respondents | 255

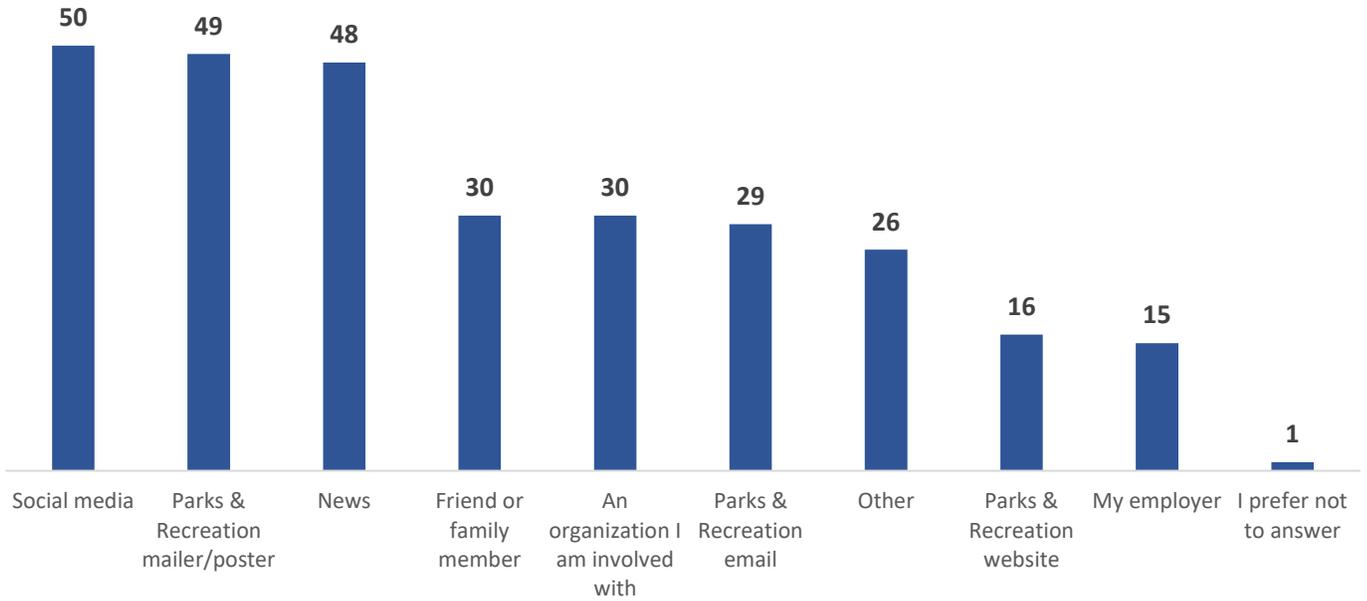
Question 8 | Which of the following best describes your current living condition?



Answers	Tally	Percentage
I rent my primary residence	123	49%
I own my primary residence	114	46%
Other	8	3%
I prefer not to answer	5	2%
I am in temporary housing (for example, staying with friends, shelter, or hotel)	0	0%
I am without shelter	0	0%

Total respondents | 250

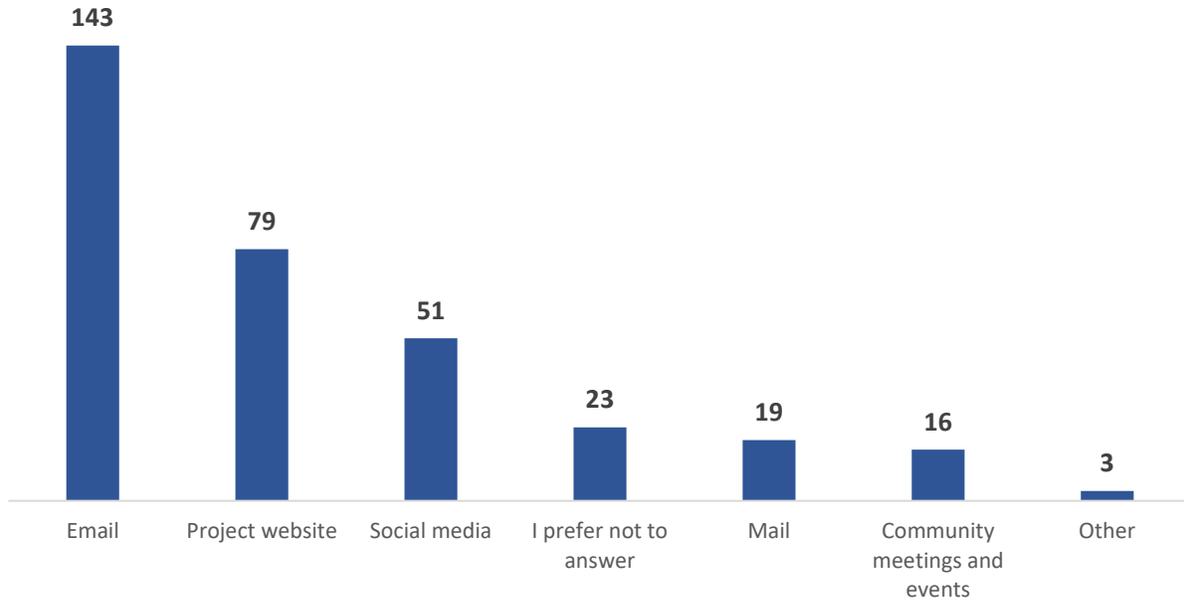
Question 9 | How did you learn about this project? Select all that apply.



Answers	Tally
Social media	50
Seattle Parks & Recreation mailer or poster	49
News	48
Friend or family member	30
An organization I am involved with	30
Seattle Parks & Recreation email	29
Other	26
Seattle Parks & Recreation website	16
My employer	15
I prefer not to answer	1

Total respondents | 255

Question 10 | What is the best way to stay in touch with you about this project? Select all that apply.



Answers	Tally
Email	397
Project website	207
Social media	150
I prefer not to answer	75
Community meetings and events	53
Mail	52
Other	14

Total respondents | 255

WEB ACTIVITY REPORT

URL | freewaypark.infocommunity.org

Users | 1,396

Total number of people that visited the online open house at least once.

Sessions | 1,719

The number of times a user visited with the online open house.

Total pageviews | 5,721

The total number of times all pages within the online open house were viewed.

Unique pageviews | 4,838

This number aggregates multiple visits to a page within a single browsing session. Example: if a user viewed the Home page five times within one browsing session, the total number of unique views of that page would be one. If a user viewed the online open house on a Thursday and then came back to view again on a Friday, those visits are counted as multiple pageviews.

Pages visited per session | 3.33

The average number of pages a user visited during a session.

Session duration | 4 minutes, 14 seconds

The average time a user spent viewing the online open house during a session.

Device use

Desktop | 65%

Mobile | 31%

Tablet | 4%

Top 5 traffic sources

Direct entry of URL | 70%

TheStranger.com | 13%

Facebook | 4 %

TheUrbanist.org | 4%

Twitter | 3%

ATTACHMENTS

APPENDIX A: Public comments delivered by email or phone

APPENDIX B: Email sign-ups

APPENDIX C: Raw survey data