



First Report of the
Bernadette
Watkins Park
Feedback Project:

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Table of Contents

Summary	4
Project Background.....	5
Methods: Details about the Survey	5
Participants: Who Responded to the Survey?.....	5
Feedback on the Plan for Bernadette Watkins Park.....	7
Feedback on the Bioswale	8
Conclusion	10
Appendix: Survey Questions	11

Summary

446 Newport residents gave feedback on the park concept plan that emerged from Phase 1 of the Strategic Depaving Project via an online survey. The responses are not randomized (not statistically representative of Newport residents), and Latinos are likely overrepresented in the sample. Rather, the responses indicate feedback from residents of Newport who are invested in the parks.

Response to the concept plan was overwhelmingly positive. Respondents generally agreed that the proposed trees would both beautify the park and add safety for children who play there. They also responded that they would enjoy spending time in the park pictured in the plan. Moreover, they believe that the proposed bioswale will help address issues with rainwater and are in favor of eco-friendly or “green” additions to parks. They also would be interested in an educational element that would teach about the bioswale and ground water.

These data support the findings of Phase 1 of the Strategic Depaving Project. The park concept plan that emerged from that research was generally received positively by those who took this online survey.

Project Background

This project builds upon Phase 1 of the Strategic Depaving Project, led by Dr. Kirsten Schwarz as part of NKU's Ecological Stewardship Institute. Dr. Schwarz and her students worked closely with residents of the westside of Newport, Kentucky in their project. Through open-ended surveys and design charettes in the community, they found that access to greenspace and water quality were concerns in this area. They also learned what residents wanted for Bernadette Watkins Park in particular. Chris Manning of Human Nature, LLC consulted on the project and produced a concept plan for improvements to Bernadette Watkins Park that incorporated community goals for the space, including green space and water quality concerns.

This project, The Bernadette Watkins Park Feedback Project, can be understood as the next phase of the Strategic Depaving Project. I led this research project and included students in my Spring 2021 Applied Anthropology class at Northern Kentucky University in the research process. This project took the map that emerged from Phase 1 back to the residents of Newport for feedback. Additionally, we sought to learn how residents of Newport would like to use the city's parks and what equipment they wanted to see in the parks. We partnered with some of the same community groups as the first phase of the project: ReNewport and Westside Citizens Coalition.

This is the first of two reports. This report summarizes community feedback on the concept plan for Bernadette Watkins Park. The second report will detail general feedback on how residents of Newport, KY would like to utilize parks and what improvements they would like to see at Bernadette Watkins Park and parks in Newport, KY generally.

Methods: Details about the Survey

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Education and Income

95% of respondents indicated that they held a high school degree (or equivalent) or higher, while 16% held at least a bachelor's degree. Almost all of the respondents reported an estimated household income within the range of \$20,000 to \$99,000. 61% of respondents placed themselves in the middle two categories, ranging from \$35,000 and \$74,999.

Language

Most respondents grew up in an English-speaking household (75%), with Spanish (9%) and German (11%) as the next largest groups. Similarly, 83% of respondents primarily speak English in their current homes, with Spanish (9%) and German (6%) as the next largest groups. Since this survey was written in English, it likely does not represent the linguistic diversity in Newport, but it does indicate that it may be helpful to include Spanish translations in further research or as part of materials that may be distributed.

Race and Ethnicity

Interestingly, 45% of respondents self-reported as of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.² The 2019 US Census³ lists Newport, Kentucky as 5% Latino, so responses in this project over-represent Latinos by quite a bit. Because this number is so much larger than found in the Census, it is possible that there is issue with this data point that I have been unable to identify.

Almost half (48%) of those who identified themselves as Hispanic were recruited via postcard, while the post on Facebook was the most effective recruitment method for those who reported that they were not Latino (60%). This suggests that if the City of Newport wants to reach Latino residents, a mailing might be an effective way to do so.

There was also a higher-than-expected response for several other categories of identification: American Indian (11% compared to .1% on the Census), Asian (5% compared to .2%), Native Hawaiian (4% compared to 0%).⁴

Age

Most of the respondents (75%) were between 25 and 44 years old, though the total reported age range was 18-74 years old.

between 25 and 44 years of age. There are fairly even splits in response rates among parts of Newport, those who have children or do not, and those who are Latino or not.

Feedback on the Plan for Bernadette Watkins Park

The key findings for this report come from survey responses that ask respondents to consider a map or infographic relating to the park and then rate their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements (Appendix).

Diagram of Proposed Park Changes Presented in Survey

A primary challenge in use of surveys is that every item must be self-explanatory; a researcher is not present with the respondent to clarify or to answer questions. With this in mind, students created a diagram that showed the components of the concept plan put together by Human Nature, LLC that we asked about in the survey in a format that could be easily read. Our goal was a map that was approachable and a clear written description (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Drawing and Description of Proposed Changes to Bernadette Watkins Park Used in the Survey



“Based on community feedback the Strategic Depaving Project has developed a layout for a potential addition to the current Bernadette Watkins Park in the city of Newport, Kentucky, represented in the map above. The park is located on 6th and Patterson Street and currently consists of a small playground along 6th Street joined by a small collection of trees.”

Figure 2: Infographic and Description of Bioswale

Image modified from [NACTO](#)

want to learn more about it.” 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.¹¹ This indicates that community members would likely appreciate an educational water feature illustrating how a bioswale works and its goals.

Conclusion

Appendix: Survey Questions Used in this Report

Under the diagram of the plan for Bernadette Watkins Park improvements:

- x Is there anything else missing in this park? Please list what you would like to see added to the park (equipment, features, etc.) in the space below.
- x For each of the following statements, please pick the choice that most closely matches your opinion. Options given: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 - o This plan features enough trees and plants
 - o It is important to have open, grassy areas in this park.
 - o The tree barrier between the park and Lowell Street/KY-9 will make the park a safer place for children to play.
 - o I would like to spend time in this park.

Under the infographic and description of bioswales:

- x For each of the following statements, please pick the choice that most closely matches your opinion. Options given: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 - o The bioswale will help manage rainwater
 - o If I saw this feature in a park, I would want to learn more about it.
 - o I like eco-friend/green additions to parks.
 - x How did you hear about this survey?
 - o A postcard in the mail
 - o A post on Facebook
 - o Word of Mouth
 - x What part of Newport do you live in?*
- o *This is the only required question on the survey
- o West Newport
- o East Newport
- o South Newport
- o I do not live in Newport
- x What is your highest level of education?
 - o Some high school
 - o High school degree or equivalent (for example: GED)
 - o Some college
 - o Associates degree
 - o Bachelors degree
 - o Graduate degree (for example: Masters, PhD, MD, JD)

- x What language(s) did you speak in your household growing up? (Check all that apply)
 - English
 - Spanish
 - German
 - Hindi
 - Arabic
 - Other (space to enter language)
- x What language(s) do you speak most often at home now? (Check all that apply)
 - English
 - Spanish
 - German
 - Hindi
 - Arabic
 - Other (space to enter language)
- x Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
- x How would you describe yourself? (select all that apply)*
 - *Due to an error in settings, participants were unfortunately only able to select one.
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Prefer not to answer
- x What would you estimate as your annual household income?
 - Less than \$20,000
 - \$20,000 to \$34,999
 - \$35,000 to \$49,999
 - \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - \$100,000 to \$149,000
 - \$150,000 or more
 - Prefer not to say

- x What is your age? (please select range below that best fits)
 - o 18-24 years old