

Long Beach Listens

Community participation results
of the essential issues and values for
redeveloping the boardwalk

February 20, 2013



Long Beach, NY
The City By The Sea
Stronger, Smarter, Safer



SUSTAINABLE LONG ISLAND
rethink. rebuild. renew.



Agenda

- Welcome 6:00 – 6:10 p.m.
- Presentation of Survey Results 6:10 – 6:30 p.m.
- City’s Response & Outline of Next Steps 6:30 – 6:45 p.m.
- Public Participation via “Dot” Voting 6:45 – 7:00 p.m.
- Public Comment via Speaking
or Video Testimony 7:00 – 7:45 p.m.
- Results of “Dot” Voting
Defining Public Preferences 7:45 – 8:00 p.m.
- Adjourn





Introduction

- Long Beach Listens is an initiative by the City to provide an information hub and a systematic way to hear what the residents and businesses are thinking.
- Two programs from this initiative were implemented on February 1st to gather input on the boardwalk redevelopment:
 - Values survey, available online and on paper and in English and Spanish.
 - Four focus groups targeting various segments of the population.





Introduction

- Surveys, focus groups, and summary documents provided by Sustainable Long Island:
 - A non-profit organization whose mission is to promote economic development, environmental health, and social equity.
 - We are a catalyst and facilitator for community development activities, identifying resources and providing tools to promote sustainable development.





Importance of public input

- The boardwalk is a critical economic driver and it is a central gathering place for the community; it is important for the City to move the rebuilding process forward.
- Civic participation in the decision making process is critical for future community development.
- Residents actively voiced their concerns in the focus groups and the survey process, demonstrating a strong sense of civic awareness and willingness to become involved.
- Value results can be shared with decision makers and taken into consideration during the design.





Outreach methods

- To reach as broad a spectrum of participants as possible, the City & SLI:
 - Promoted via traditional media: local and regional press, radio and television.
 - Promoted through social media outlets such as Facebook, e-mail, etc.
 - Almost 15,000 residents were contacted by robo-calls to inform them about the meetings.
 - Outreached to various civic groups.
 - Promoted on the City's and SLI's websites.
 - Created the Long Beach Listens website.





Managing Participation

- With the assistance of the City Manager's Office, we designated sectors and zones of the city to ensure outreach was manageable and thorough.
- Three Sectors were created based on neighborhood classification.
- Five Zones were created to identify those closest to the boardwalk to those that were farther away.





Participation results

- Over 2,350 people completed the surveys, providing a statistically significant representative sample of the population.
- Over 250 individuals participated in four separate focus groups:
 - Chamber of Commerce (2/4)
 - Central District (2/6)
 - West End (2/11)
 - East End (2/13)



Designated Sectors & Zones

WEST END – Nevada Avenue to Grand Avenue

CENTRAL DISTRICT – Grand Avenue to Long Beach Blvd.

EAST END – Long Beach Blvd. to Maple Blvd.

ZONE 5 – Bay Street to Hudson Street

ZONE 4 – Hudson Street to Park Avenue

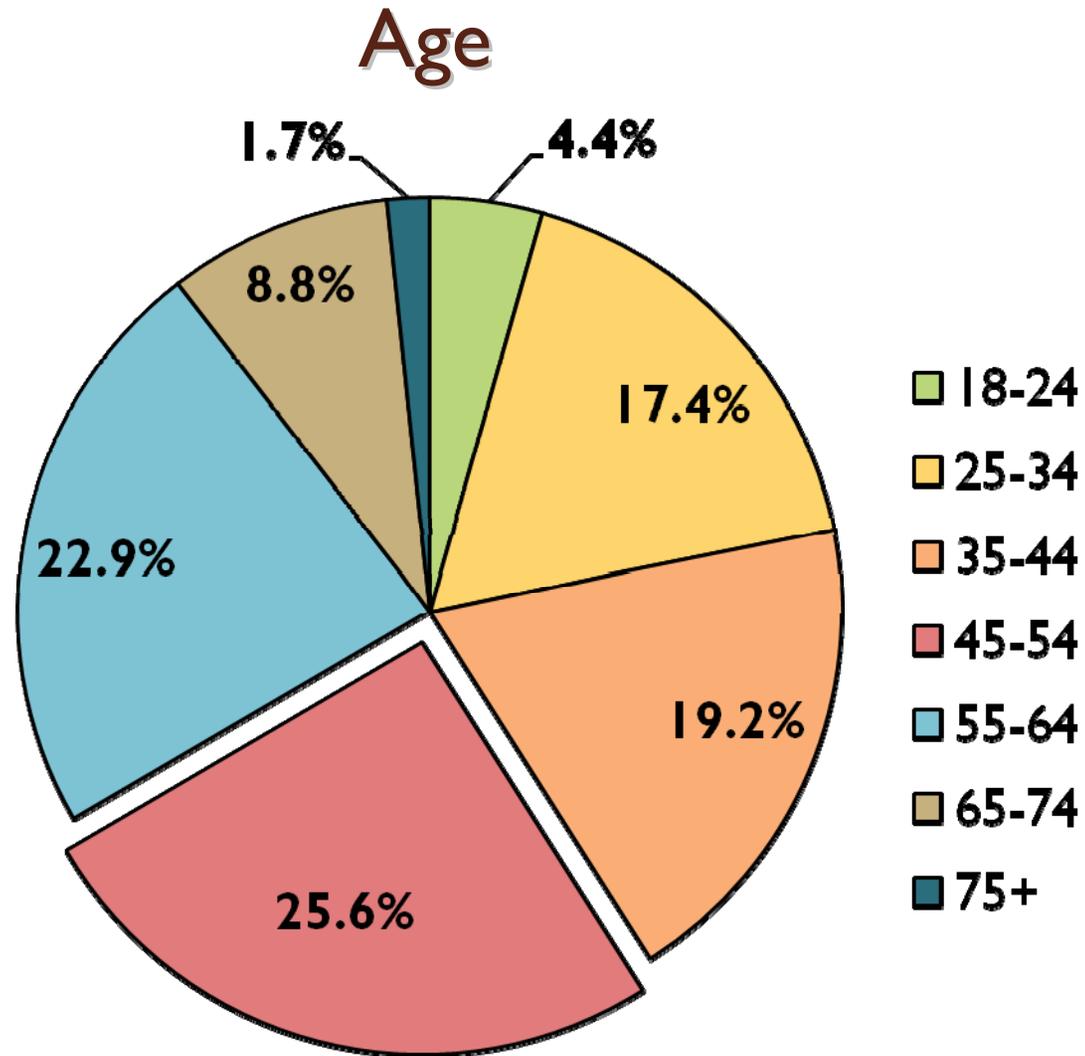
ZONE 3 – Park Avenue to Beech Street

ZONE 2 – Beech Street to Broadway

ZONE 1 – Broadway to Boardwalk

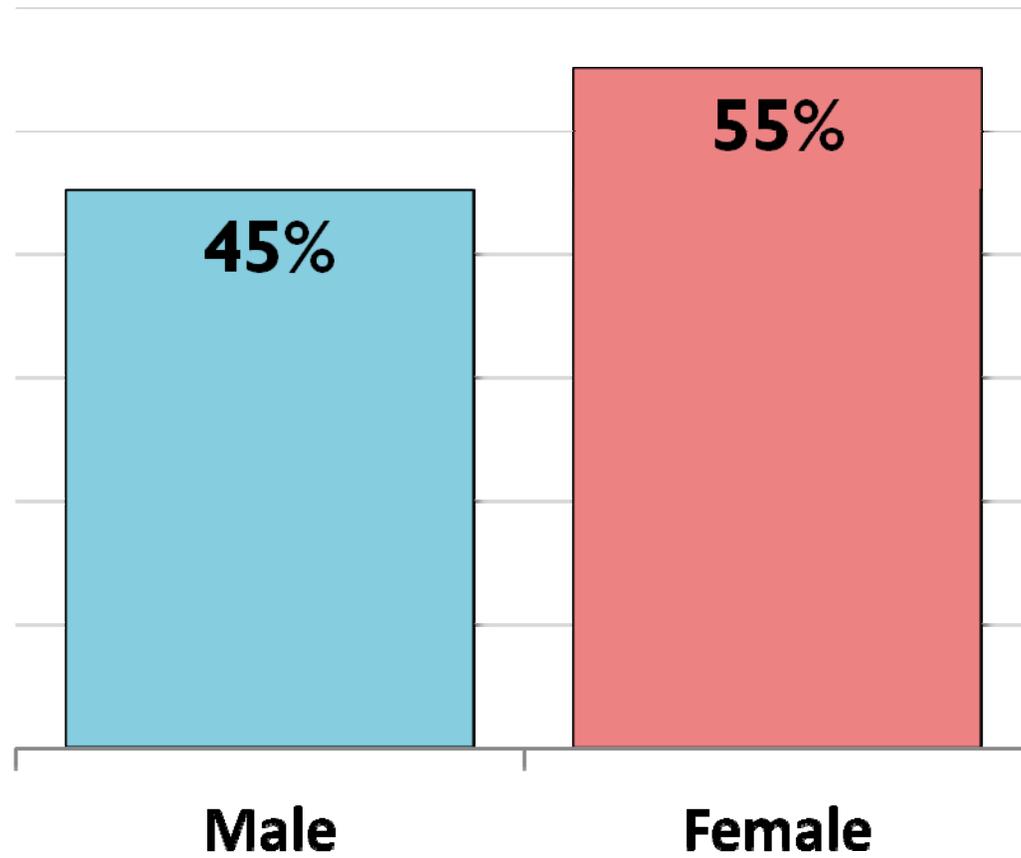


Survey participants...



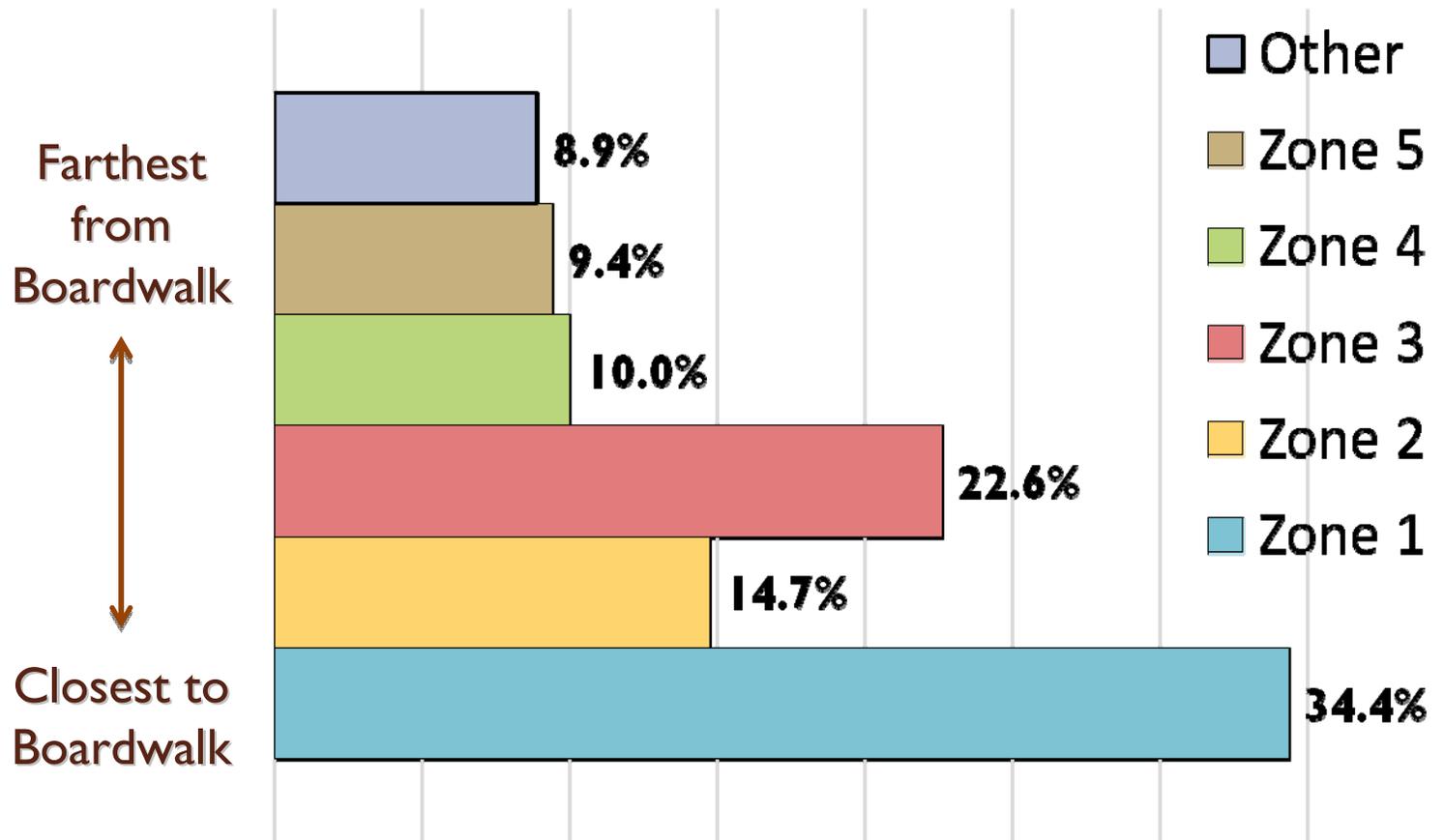
Survey participants...

Gender



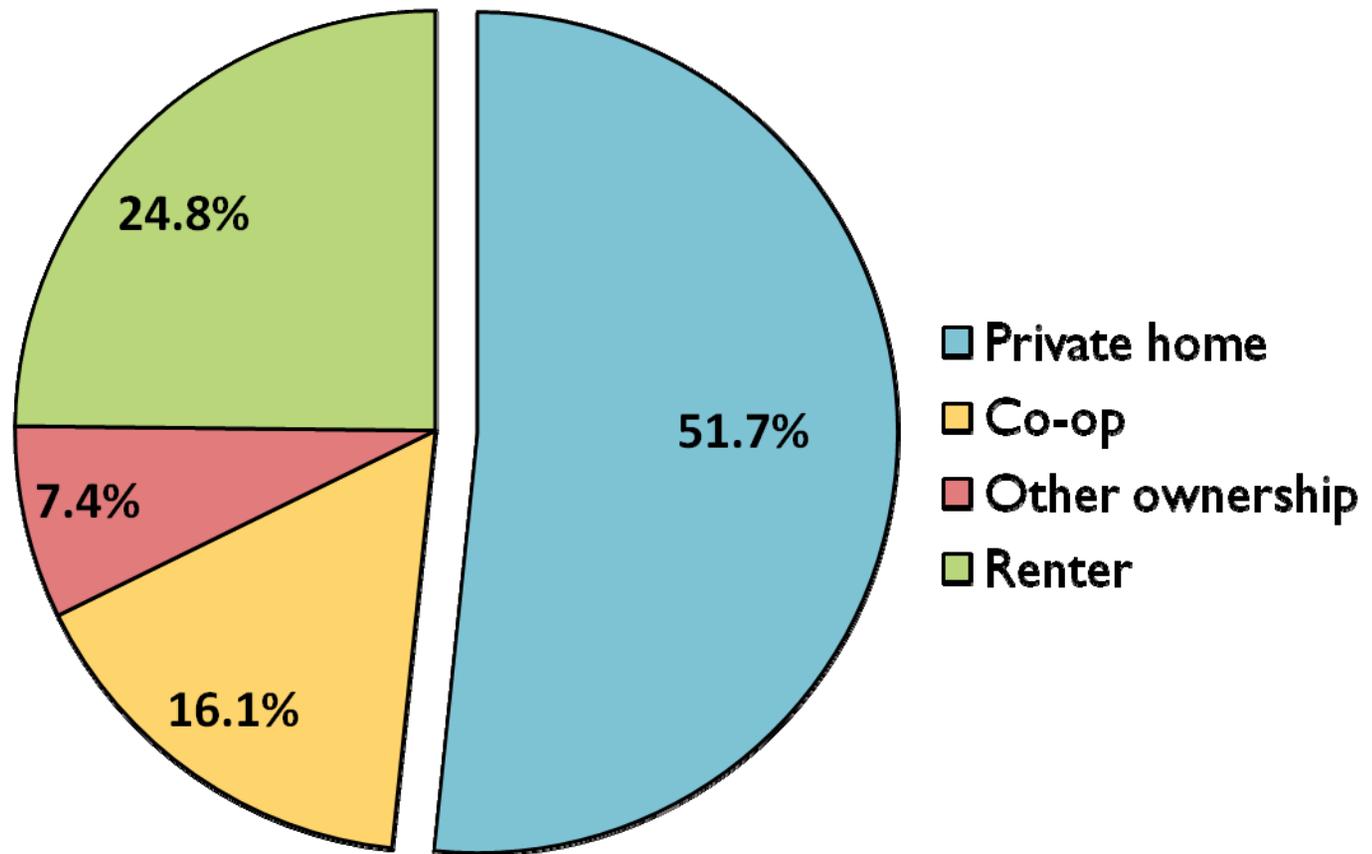
Survey participants...

Zones



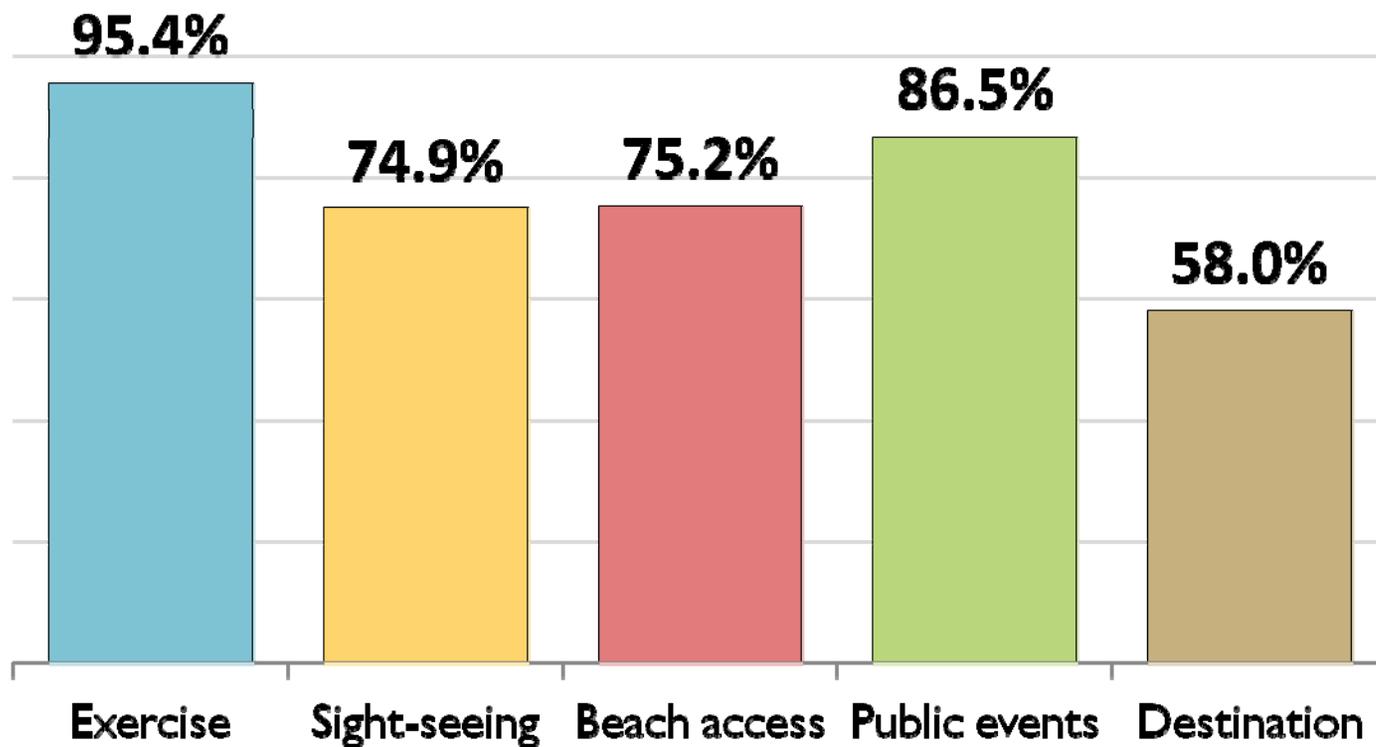
Survey participants...

Homeowner or Renter



Survey participants...

How participants used the boardwalk...





Survey participants

- Other information
 - More than 35% reported residing in Long Beach for 21 or more years, with another 27% residing between 11-20 years.
 - Less than 3.4% reported residing in Long Beach for less than 1 year.
 - Approximately 68.5% stated that they do not live with children.
 - Almost 90% reported not having any physical limitations to accessing the boardwalk.

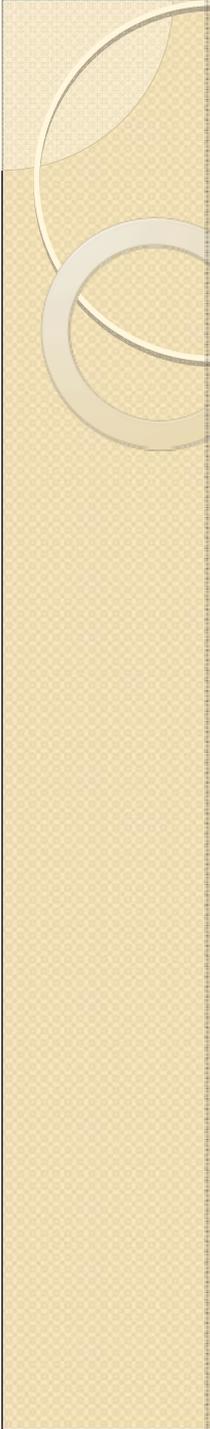




Survey participants

- **Business information**
 - 6.4% of respondents reported operating a business in Long Beach and more than 65% owned their business for 6 or more years.
 - Approximately 62.5% of respondents own very small businesses (income < \$500k), and operate year-round (70%).
 - Most respondents are professionals (17.6%), service-oriented (16%), or own another type of business (23.7%).





Issues and Values

- Respondents were asked sixteen (16) questions about issues and values they ranked in importance considering the planned development of the boardwalk.
- Asked to rate these issues and values on a scale of one to five (1-5), with “1” as the “Most Important” and “5” as the “Least Important”.





Issues and Values

- Respondents most frequently ranked “Durability and resistance to future storms” as the most important issue (87%)
- Rounding up the top five responses frequently rated as the most important issues are:
 - Protection of the environment (78.6%)
 - Public safety/quality of life (77.6%)
 - Safe and comfortable for joggers/walkers (72.3%)
 - Safe and comfortable for bicyclist (67.4%)



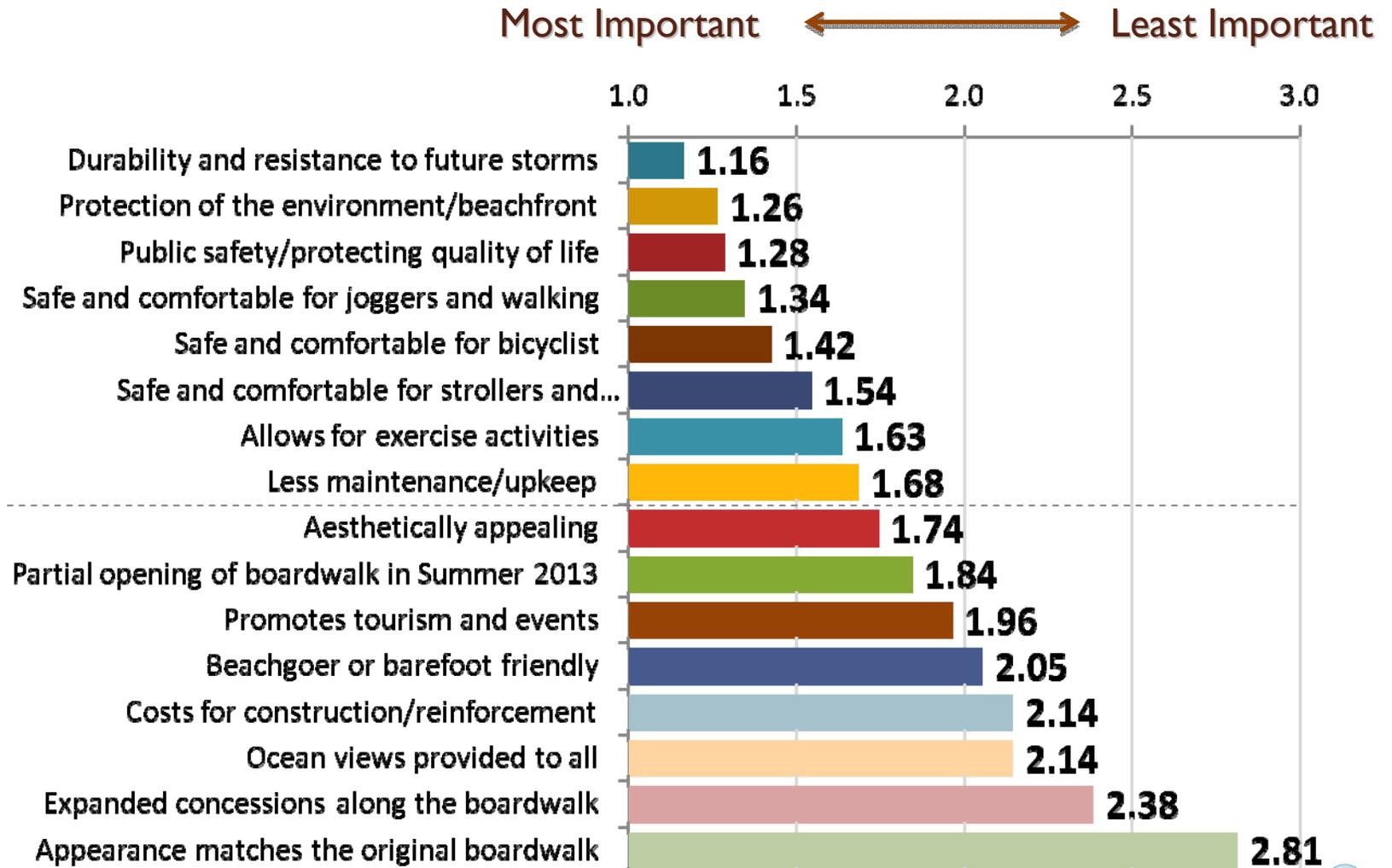


Issues and Values

- A weighted average is provided for all the responses to show where they ranked in level of importance.
- Lower values represent the issue is most important, and vice-versa.
- A weighted average provides decision makers a better sense as to how to rank the community's priorities when considering the boardwalk construction.



Issues and Values Results





Issues and Values Results

- As demonstrated from the results, different materials may need to be considered in the boardwalk design:
 - Durability → strong, hard materials
 - Protect environment → green materials
 - Jogging & walking → flexible materials
 - Bicycling, rollerblading → smooth materials
 - Strollers and wheelchairs → safe materials





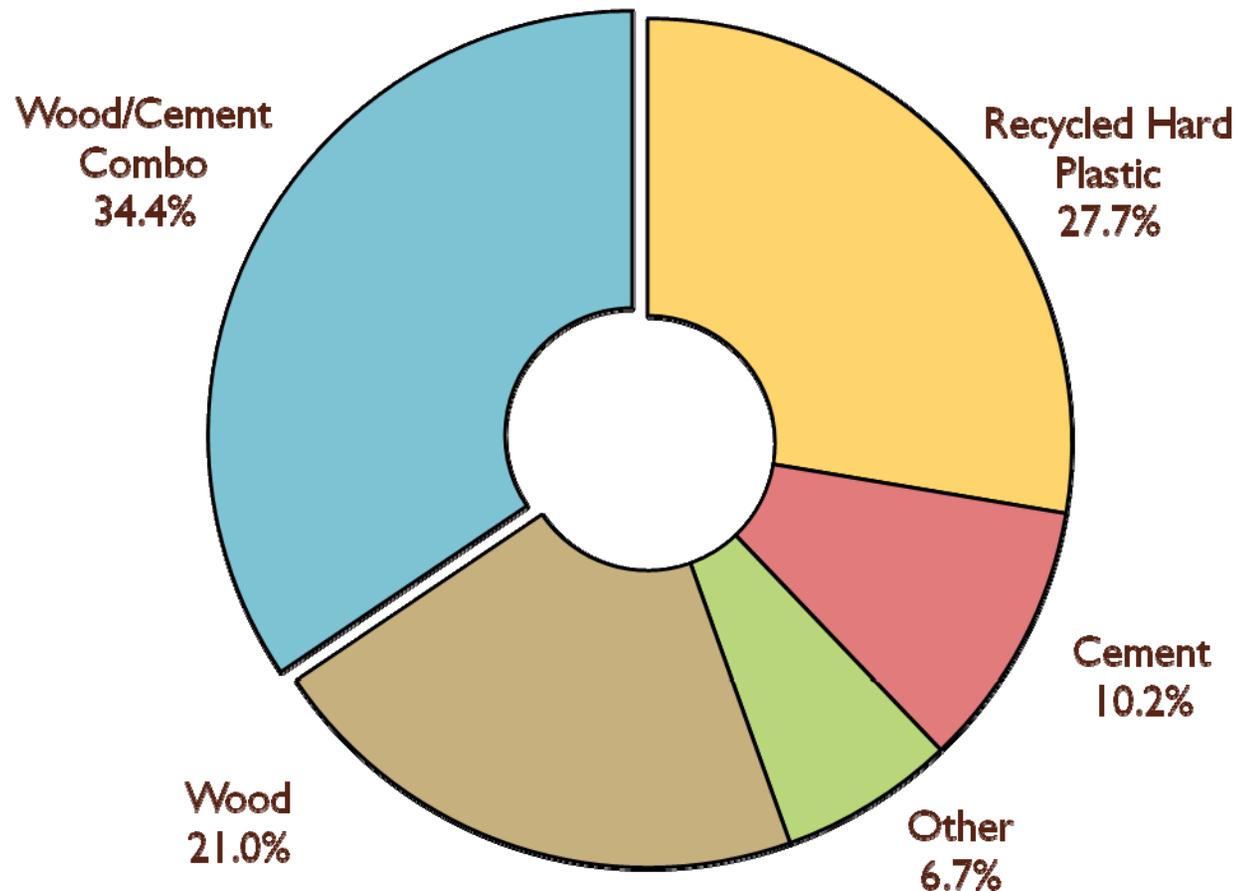
Material Types

- In addition to issues and values, respondents were asked to provide feedback regarding what type of material should be used for the construction of the new boardwalk.
- Were asked to pick one of five available choices: Wood, Cement, Wood/Cement Combo, Recycled Hard Plastic, or Other.
- Comment box was provided to elaborate.



Material Types

What type of material would you prefer for the construction of the boardwalk?





Material Types

- Over 300 comments were made about the material type. Some of the most frequent comments were:
 - Durability to withstand future storms
 - Using “Trex” material for runners/joggers
 - Different combinations of materials, such as the recycled hard plastic with cement, different wood types, and other composites.
 - Low maintenance and avoid previous issues such as rusty nails, lifted or broken planks, etc.

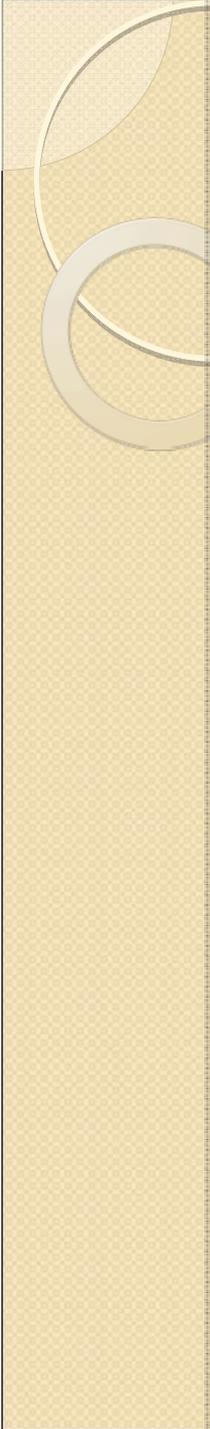




Other Feedback

- Over 1000 people completed the comments sections, where respondents were asked to provide feedback about the boardwalk, the process, and other issues and values.
- Many of the responses were similar to the results of the focus groups.
- While some responses conflicted with one another, they all represented a viewpoint that the Boardwalk should be built in the best interest of the residents.





Other Feedback

Topics discussed in the comments section include the following:

- Community asset appreciation and issues most appreciated by residents.
- Safety and storm protection, especially incorporating a sea wall as part of the rebuilding of the boardwalk.
- Construction and long-term maintenance.
- Economic development, community activities, and neighborhood preservation.
- Green and environmentally friendly considerations.



Other Feedback

Examples of comments

Assets	Safety	Construction	Econ. Dev. & Activities	Green Considerations
Peaceful	Seawall	Longevity	Concessions	Greenery
Meditate	Protect Homes	Screws, not nails for boards	Tourism vs. not a tourist trap	Self-sustaining
Relaxation	Access	Bump Outs	Restaurants	Solar panels
Sunsets		Cement Lane	Arcade	Promote recycling
Ocean views		Comfort Stations	Attractions	Green construction
Spirit		Maintenance	Concerts	Eco-friendly



Focus Groups





Focus Groups

- Each of the focus groups participated in two exercises:
 - The first exercise was designed to capture individual visions for the boardwalk and issues they believe may affect its redevelopment.
 - The second exercise was designed for groups to share experiences they had at the boardwalk pre-Sandy, what they appreciated about the boardwalk, and shared concerns that can make the new boardwalk better.





Focus Groups

Exercise #1

- On index cards, participants were asked to answer the following questions:
 - Ten years from now, the boardwalk will _____ to/for Long Beach (provide a word or phrase).
 - What is the most important issue facing the future of the boardwalk?
- The results were tabulated to determine what responses were more frequent and what concerns resonate with them.





Focus Groups

- Word clouds were designed to present the results of this exercise to express the ideas and wants of the residents.
- Larger words represent the frequency of that word or phrase used as a response to the questions.
- This assists decision makers with the visualization of the concerns or ideas of participants.





Focus Groups

For the second exercise, each table nominated a note taker and a presenter for the group and asked the following:

- Last summer, I used to _____ on/at the boardwalk.
- Three things you appreciated about the boardwalk.
- Three things you wish were better about the boardwalk.





Focus Groups

- The first question was for residents to share with one another activities that made the boardwalk a part of their lives.
- The second question was designed to invoke positive memories that they each cherished about the boardwalk.
- The third question was to identify common issues that they now have the opportunity to address in the boardwalk redevelopment.





Exercise #2 Summaries

What did residents do at the boardwalk?

- Physical Activities: bicycling, surfing, walking, jogging, and running.
 - Social Activities: meet friends, watch the races and events, photography, attend concerts, arts & crafts, and eat/dine.
 - Passive Activities: watch wildlife, see the sunrise/sunset, people watching, reading, listen to music, sunbathe, meditate and watch the fireworks.
- 



Exercise #2 Summaries

What did residents appreciate?

- Qualitative: Safe, clean, convenient, plenty of seating, open space, peaceful, pedestrian friendly, protective and free.
 - Social: events, activities, exercising, meet friends and people, enjoy views, destination, rent bicycles, inclusive
 - Civic: community feeling, unity, historic, economic generator, and kid-friendly.
- 



Exercise #2 Summaries

What did residents wish was better?

- Infrastructure: permanent surface, storm protection, dunes, easy beach access, low maintenance, eco-friendly, durability, public spaces, ramps, bump-outs.
- Commercial: concessions, restaurants, vendors, amusement park, and wider boardwalk.
- Amenities: bathrooms, shaded areas, security cameras, cabanas, dedicated lanes for bicycles and rollerblading, showers, lighting, greenery, ADA accessible, gazebos, artistic, lockers, pet accessible, call boxes, fountains, visitors center.

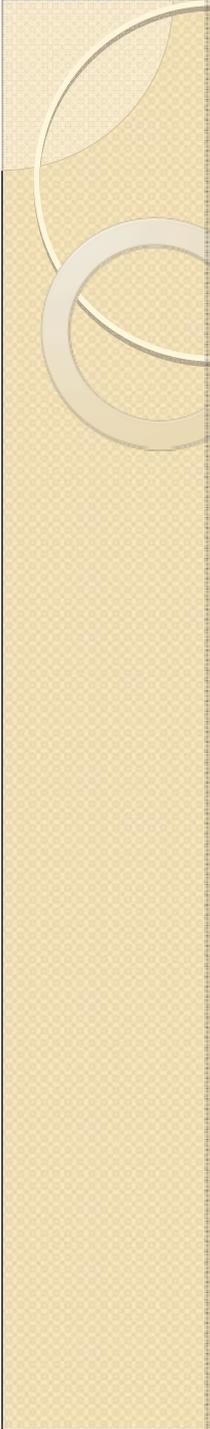




In Closing...

- **Public input in the redevelopment process has proven itself vital by:**
 - Providing a wealth of new information that brings clarity to what residents needs are.
 - Pushing past previously conceived notions to present important and organized data.
- **Decision makers and contractors can use this new information to make informed choices in the design phase.**





Thank you!

- To the City Council, city government officials, and staff for their support and allowing Sustainable Long Island to assist them in this process.
- And to the hundreds of residents who gave of their time to participate in these activities, who deeply care about their city.
- We understand that communities need the best tools to navigate an environment of rapid change and hope that these tools have been of value to everyone.
- We look forward to the new boardwalk and a better and brighter Long Beach!

