

Wilmington Waterfront Park Community Engagement Project

2022



Background

Wilmington's largest park, Wilmington Waterfront Park, is a 30-acre landscaped area along Harry Bridges Boulevard, from Figueroa Street to Lagoon Avenue. A nine-block-long pedestrian and bicycle promenade connects the east to the west end, and the area's topography consists of a low landform (16 feet) above street level, with gentle grades, landscaping, paths and walkways, benches, water features, pedestrian bridges, restrooms, drinking fountains, lookout binoculars, a children's playground, and community buildings and public amphitheater. The park is a very popular space for family gatherings, sports, walking, bicycling, and community events.

Operated by the Port of Los Angeles, the Waterfront Park was built with the dual purpose of providing much-needed neighborhood benefits and to help protect the residential community from the adjacent Port's health and environmental impacts. According to the nonprofit Communities for a Better Environment, Wilmington has some of the highest exposure to air pollution in the L.A. region, which has significant impact on overall health for everyone in the surrounding area, and particularly children, the elderly, and people with existing illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. The exceptional proximity of the residential neighborhood to the Port makes the Waterfront Park's location unique in its ability to positively impact the health outcomes of local residents.

In partnership with the Office of City Council District 15, LANI met with Port officials, who expressed enthusiastic interest in adding amenities to the park in response to community requests, including adult fitness equipment, additional trees, and improving current turf areas to increase their usability for sports, picnics, and other recreation.

Although there was anecdotal information about community needs and desires, a formal community engagement plan and process is required before applying for municipal funding for capital improvements. Recent state and county park funding opportunities have required documentation showing substantive community engagement within the 18–36 months prior to submitting a funding proposal. With the completion of this Project, the Port of L.A. is positioned to seek design and construction funding for new amenities at the park at the next available opportunity.



Process

Collaboration created success



Working with a variety of partners, LANI was able to fund and execute this community engagement project to provide valuable, timely data about the Wilmington community's relationship to the Waterfront Park and what additional amenities local people would like added there.

The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation has funded other LANI projects in the past, and agreed to support this community engagement project because of its potential to have positive public health impacts, in alignment with the Foundation's commitment to "enhance community health through smart land use, park development, policy work and community engagement in under-resourced neighborhoods."

The Office of City Council District 15 under former Councilmember Joe Buscaino provided initial informal community input on additions to the park and a list of crucial community stakeholders.

Our community-based organization partner Los Angeles Walks provided additional project staffing through their Promotoras program, which allowed us to ultimately survey 970 Wilmington residents.



THE ROSALINDE AND ARTHUR
GILBERT FOUNDATION



Process

Project preparation began in Summer 2022, including compiling lists of stakeholders and drafting an online survey in English and Spanish to collect relevant data.

In September, LANI began the engagement process by attending events and meetings, and publicizing the online survey via email and social media. In addition to contacting our own network, we reached out to 33 individual and organizational stakeholder contacts provided by CD 15 staff, shared information about the project, flyers and links to the survey, and invited them to complete the survey and share with their networks. We also requested that the Port share the survey and flyers with their relevant community contact list, including past permit holders at the park itself.



Events & Meetings Attended

- Meeting with CA Congresswoman Nanette Diaz Barragán (44) on Sept. 19 to discuss the park, this project, and how her office could help
- Tabling at the 4th Annual Wilmington Farmer's Market Celebration at Providence Community Health Center in Wilmington on Sept. 20 to discuss the project and generate survey responses
- Tabling at CBO Mixer at Providence Community Health Center on Sept. 28
- Tabling at the Día De Los Muertos 5K Run and Walk at Waterfront Park on Nov. 5

Additional Outreach

LANI developed and led a training curriculum on the program in Spanish for 8 LA Walks Promotoras to provide background knowledge, a clear understanding of expectations of the program, and potential strategy points to yield a high number of survey responses.

The Promotoras, residents of the Wilmington community, were highly successful at engaging community members and returned 873 survey responses through one-on-one outreach, contributing to the overall 970 responses.

Summary of Findings

Data from the project survey was collected between September 15 and November 19, 2022. The survey was conducted online and in-person, in English and Spanish. Data collected from the survey is presented in the graphs on the following pages.



Demographic Data Summary

- 970 total survey responses
- Stakeholders of all ages represented (see page 6)
- 84% of respondents are Wilmington residents
- 95% of respondents are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity
- 59% of respondents use the park at least once a week; 26% use the park daily

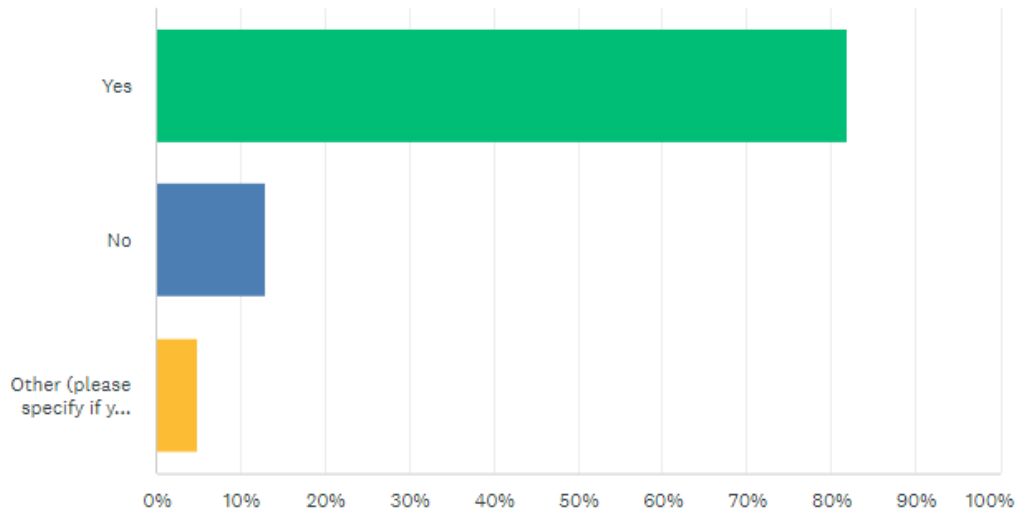


Summary of Findings

Are you a Wilmington Resident?

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Answered: 873 Skipped: 0



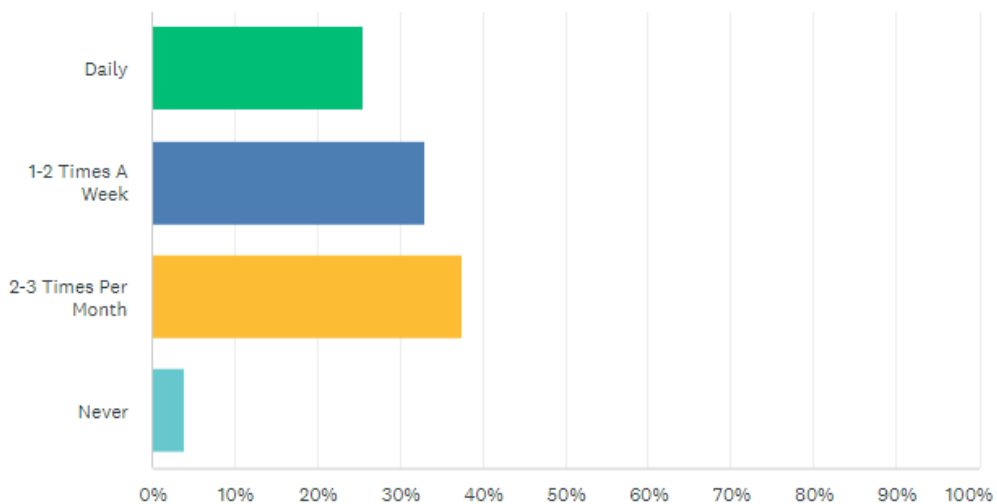
Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

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How often do you visit Waterfront Park?

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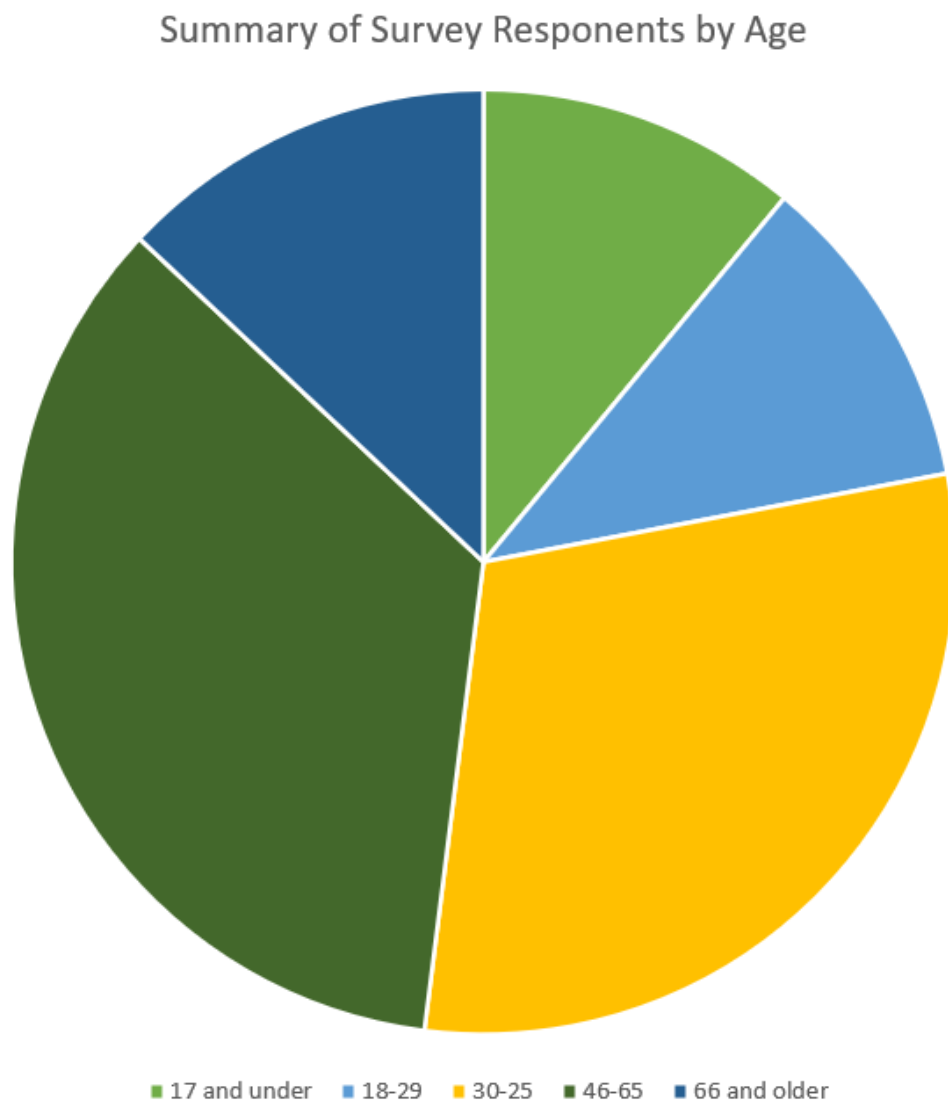
Answered: 873 Skipped: 0



Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

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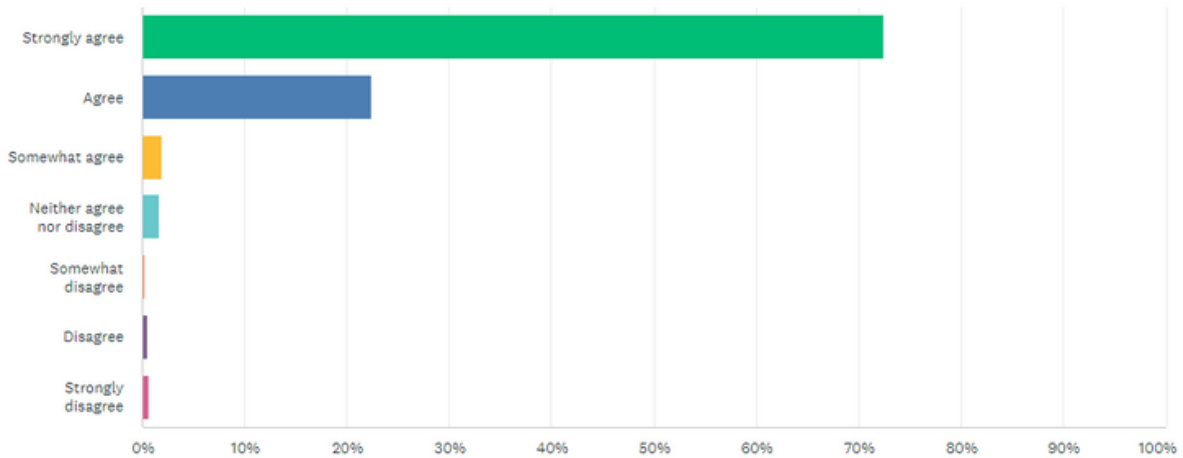
Summary of Findings



Summary of Findings

Would you agree or disagree to adding Playground equipment to the opposite end of the park? ***

Answered: 873 Skipped: 0



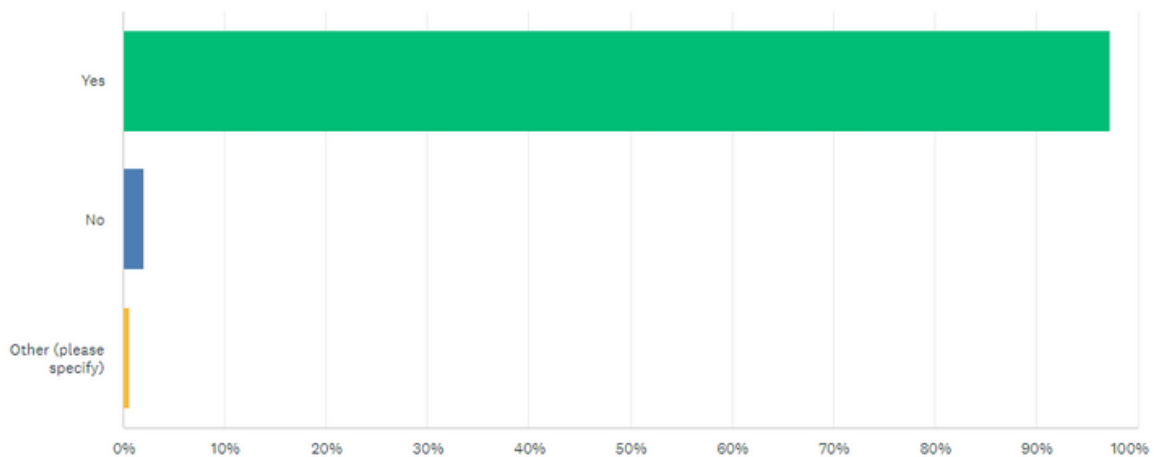
Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

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NOTE: "Opposite end" being the west end of the park opposite the current playground equipment

Would you like to see a circuit of adult fitness equipment added to the park? ***

Answered: 873 Skipped: 0



Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

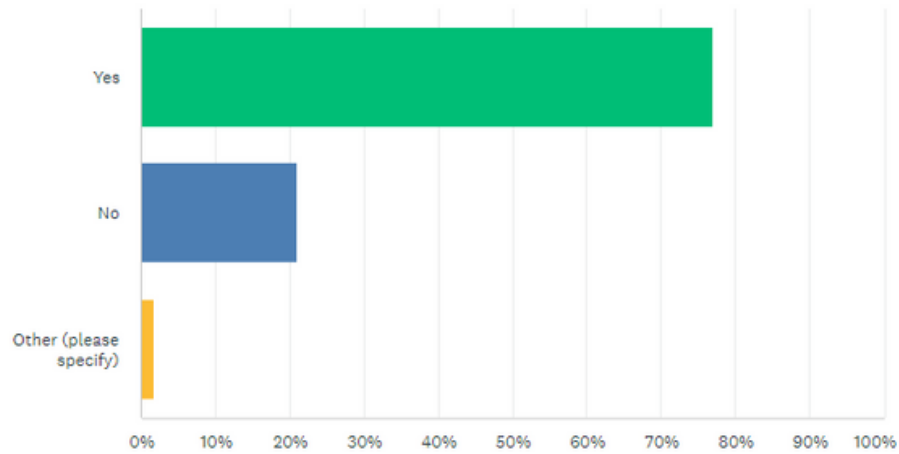
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Summary of Findings

Would you like to see more artificial turf added to Waterfront Park?

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Answered: 873 Skipped: 0



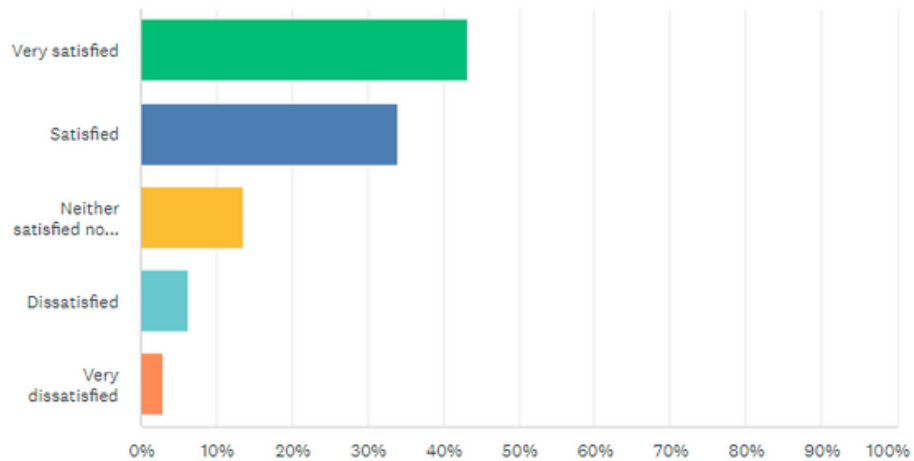
Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

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How satisfied are you with the current artificial turf?

...

Answered: 873 Skipped: 0



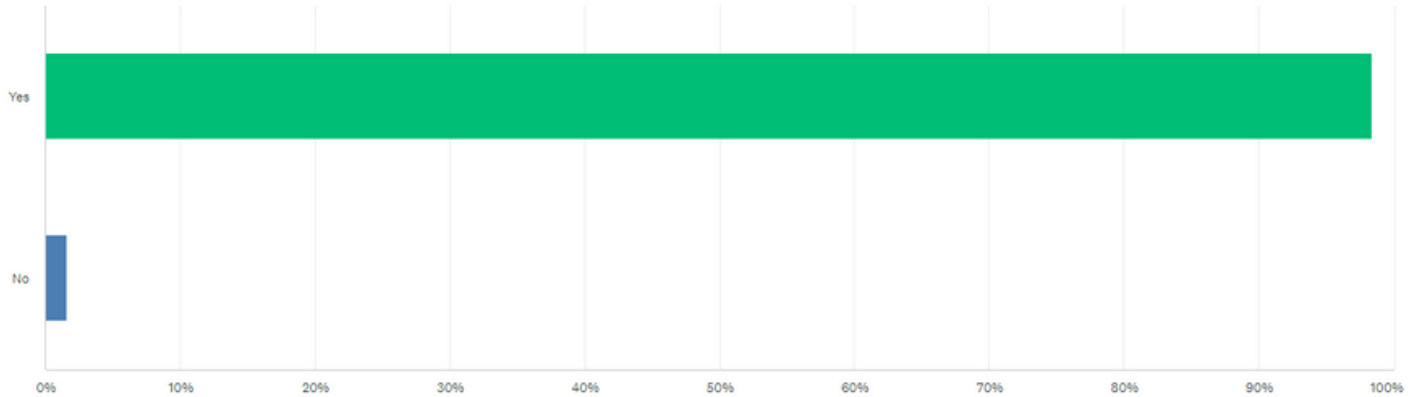
Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

🔍 (0)

Summary of Findings

Would you like to see improvements made to the current pedestrian lighting? ***

Answered: 868 Skipped: 5

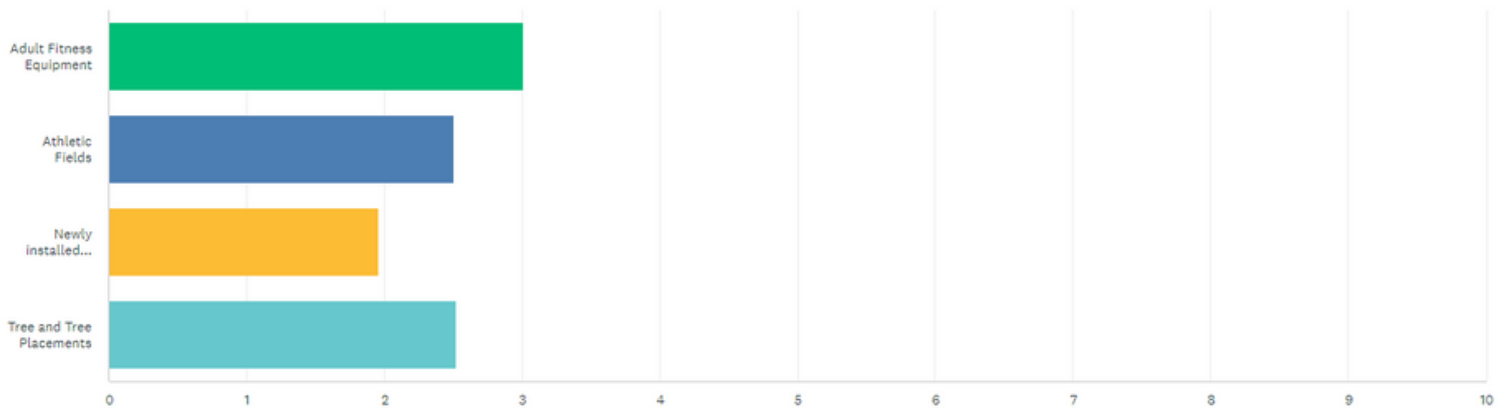


Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

▼ (0)

Please rank the potential improvement in order of your personal priority/desire to see added to Waterfront Park ***

Answered: 873 Skipped: 0



Waterfront Park-Community Outreach

▼ (0)

Summary of Findings

Additional Community Comments

(representative comments that address issues raised by multiple survey respondents)

Security & Lighting (overwhelmingly the most commented on issues)

- It should be more accessible for those of us who like to do work outs, and add more lights for our safety
- More safety, and better, cleaner landscaping
- I would like to see more security at the park to make it a safer place for my children
- Add security lighting inside the park and at the skate park
- I'd like to feel safer, meaning more security, especially in the night. I'd like more light
- More lighting would be huge with some additional security
- Secure BBQ area and bathrooms
- More security with police checking on the site more frequent

Additional Sports & Play Amenities

- A park [playground] for kids 1-5, another for adolescents
- Basketball and volleyball courts would be good for kids and adults
- Please add a lighted baseball field
- More play equipment for kids

Cleanliness, Shade & Other Concerns

- Clean, accessible bathrooms where I can take my kids
- Community/information office that is clean and open regularly
- Open the water spigots and keep them clean
- Plant more trees for shade
- Add more places to sit with umbrellas

Next Steps



Identify Funding Opportunities

Potential funding sources include California State Park's Prop 68, Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District's competitive grant programs, and private foundation and/or corporate funding, among others. Funding that seeks to increase parks/open space/green space, mitigate pollution impacts, improve public health, serve disadvantaged communities, and/or save water would be prospective resources.

Adding amenities to the Waterfront Park could also be included in related funding proposals for other phases of the Port's overall Waterfront development project.



Prepare and Submit Proposals

Proposals could be prepared and submitted by the Port directly. LANI is also available as a partner to prepare and submit proposals on behalf of the Port. We have submitted many successful funding proposals to LA County and the State for parks and other infrastructure. Our most recent success was a \$38m Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant on behalf of the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services/StreetsLA.

Acknowledgements

LANI is grateful to the many partners who helped us connect with the people of Wilmington and give them an opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions about future amenities for the Wilmington Waterfront Park:

- The Port of Los Angeles
- The Office of City Council District 15 (Buscaino)
 - Jacob Haik
 - Fernando Navarette
- The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
- Los Angeles Walks
- Congresswoman Nanette Diaz Barragán (CA 44)
- Providence Community Health Center–Wilmington

Pictures in this report are courtesy of Sasaki Associates (cover, pages 4 & 11)

We thank you for your support of this project and of our efforts to contribute to the wellbeing of the Wilmington community.



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