

Singing Fountain Restoration and Reimagination

Likes, Dislikes, and Dreams Survey Report



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Likes, Dislikes, and Dreams Survey

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About PARC

Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation (PARC) has a dual mission as both a non-profit real estate development/ management company and a public space maintenance and enhancement organization.

Project Introduction

Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation (PARC) launched the Singing Fountain Restoration and Reimagination project to make the Singing Fountain the best it can be for the East Passyunk Community. The Singing Fountain is accompanied by a small triangular plaza with benches and greenery along an important commercial corridor in a residential neighborhood and is owned and maintained by PARC. It has hosted important community events and served as a landmark since 2004. The organization is a nonprofit 501c3 with a dual mission as both a real estate development/management company and a public space maintenance and enhancement organization.

While PARC spends \$20,000 per year on maintenance, in 2020 it was time for more extensive repairs to drainage, tiles, and base. Initial estimates were between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Additionally, the COVID 19 pandemic created an increased need for public spaces. More community members were using the space spontaneously and for longer periods of time. Unfortunately, the limited amount of seating could no longer accommodate all those who wished to use the space. Because of space restrictions during social distancing, regular events were relocated or canceled. The Restoration and Reimagination project aimed to explore and carry out community wishes for the space. The first step was a short survey to gather general feedback from the community.

Survey Design

PARC began the Singing Fountain Restoration and Reimagining project by collecting community feedback via a survey. The survey opened on October 5th, 2020 and closed on December 10th, 2020 and was available via QR code or link to Survey Monkey. The short and open-ended survey was designed to solicit as many ideas from as many residents as possible. In addition to contact information for following up and to discern between residents and nonresidents, the survey asked four main questions:

1. What do you like about the Singing Fountain?
2. What do you dislike about the Singing Fountain?
3. What are your dreams for the Singing Fountain?
4. While the mermaid sits on top of the fountain and enjoys the best view of East Passyunk Avenue, she has no name. What would you like to name her?

Survey Collection

The project and survey were unveiled at the civic association meetings who represent the catchment area, in October 2020. PARC shared the project with East Passyunk Crossing at their October 5th monthly meeting, and Passyunk Square on October 6th. PARC also solicited feedback in person during two sessions at the Singing Fountain on October 22nd and 23rd. The survey was advertised via newsletters, social media and through flyers with links and QR codes at two local retail establishments adjacent to the fountain. East Passyunk Civic Association also integrated the survey into a tabling event at the fountain on October 28th, 2020. Further, local residents who responded to the email were encouraged to share the link with neighbors via email. The survey closed the first week of December 2020.

Results

Question 1: What do you like about the Singing Fountain?

Most frequently, residents responded that they liked the Singing Fountain's function as a community gathering space. Nearly one third of respondents (31.3%) mentioned this aspect in their response. Respondents expressed this benefit in various ways, including:

"Congregating plaza"

"Home base"

"Community gathering spot"

"A nice space for people to gather"

Seating was also seen as a top benefit of the fountain plaza. While 25% of respondents mentioned sitting, others also mentioned relaxing (12.3%), doing activities such as reading, people watching, coffee drinking, eating, hanging out (8.4%) that would include using seating.

The location of the plaza near businesses and central to the Passyunk neighborhood was important to residents. Residents see the Singing Fountain as a landmark in their neighborhood. Many residents reported liking "everything" about the Singing Fountain. Events hosted on the plaza, music from speakers, greenery, children's ability to use the space, and the openness and ambiance of the plaza round out the top 15 attributes.

Question 1: What do you like about the Singing Fountain?		
Theme Grouping	Quantity	Percentage
Community gathering place	104	31.3%
Seating	83	25.0%
Fountain	47	14.2%
Relaxing	41	12.3%
Location	37	11.1%
Beautiful	32	9.6%
Events	30	9.0%
Activities: read, people watch, coffee, eating, hanging out	28	8.4%
Landmark	27	8.1%
Music	22	6.6%
Everything	20	6.0%
Plants	19	5.7%
Children can use it	18	5.4%
Open space	16	4.8%
Atmosphere, ambience	13	3.9%
Total Responses	332	100%

Question 2: What do you dislike about the Singing Fountain?

There were a wide variety of responses to this question, with 74 response themes out of 239 respondents. The top two responses were therefore illustrative of the community's attitudes.

As residents stated enjoying seating in question one (What do you like about the Singing Fountain), they believe there is not enough seating (22.9%). While some responded simply that there were not enough seats, others stated that there was nowhere for them to sit when they looked for one. Similarly, others stated that there were not enough tables (2.4%). Some did not like the fixed nature of seating, and noted that they are difficult or impossible to maneuver with a wheelchair or stroller. The next most frequent response was "nothing," at 19.5% of all respondents.

Pedestrian safety was seen as a big issue with respondents (13.1%). Many specifically stated that excessive traffic, confusing crossings on the north end of plaza, and hidden stop signs were the problems.

Some stated that the fountain is too big for the plaza (7.3%), needs repairs (5.8%), wished that the spray were contained within the fountain's pool (4.3%).

There was conflict over the music normally playing from the speakers, with some stating they wanted to hear music (3.6%) and others stating that they did not want to hear music (1.8%).

Finishing up the top 15 responses were excessive trash (7.6%), not enough greenery (4.0%), too many bugs (3.0%), and the absence of shade (3.0%).

Question 2: What do you dislike about the Singing Fountain?		
Theme Grouping	Quantity	Percentage
Seating: not enough	75	22.8%
Nothing	64	19.5%
Pedestrian safety is lacking, excessive traffic	43	13.1%
Plaza: not big enough, cramped	36	10.9%
Trash: excessive & cleanliness, lacking	25	7.6%
Fountain: too larger for the space	24	7.3%
Fountain: needs repairs	19	5.8%
Fountain: water sprays outside	14	4.3%
Greenery: not enough	13	4.0%
Music: want to hear music	12	3.6%
Bugs	10	3.0%
Shade/Shelter: absence of	10	3.0%
Tables: not enough	8	2.4%
Music: do not want any	6	1.8%
Seating: not accessible for wheelchair or stroller	5	1.5%
Total Responses	329	100%

Question 3: What are your dreams for the Singing Fountain?

Respondents' dreams for the Singing Fountain followed the same perspectives as their likes and dislikes. Again, responses to this question were varied, this time with over 100 unique themes.

The most popular "dream" for the Singing Fountain was the extension of the plaza (20.6%). Many people suggested absorbing parking lanes or driving lanes. Some envisioned extending the plaza to the sidewalks of adjoining surrounding businesses and allowing restaurants to utilize the plaza for seating. Lane closures were also mentioned for the sake of pedestrian safety, along with traffic calming (6.4%). Others wished for temporary street closures on weekends or for events (3.7%). Many people stated they wanted more of what they already enjoy about the space such as more events (3.7%), and that the space remains a gathering place for the community (4.0%).

The second most popular was that the plaza should be left unchanged (16.3%) for historic value or "prosperity." Again, more seating (15.6%) and tables (4.3%) were also popular responses. Others said they hoped for the plaza to remain a gathering place (4.0%).

The remaining top results included adding performances (10.4%) and more music (5.8%). Some residents wanted physical improvements such as more greenery (10.1%), maintenance of the plaza (5.5%) and fountain (1.8%), shade (2.1%), more lighting (1.5%), and to update the look for the fountain (1.5%).

Question 3: What are your dreams for the Singing Fountain?		
Theme Grouping	Quantity	Percentage
Extend plaza: permanent lane closures	67	20.6%
Nothing, keep same	53	16.3%
Seating: more	51	15.6%
Performances	34	10.4%
Greenery: more, better maintained	33	10.1%
Pedestrian: traffic calming, road closures	21	6.4%
Music: more	19	5.8%
Well maintained	18	5.5%
Tables: more or bigger	14	4.3%
Gathering space: remains	13	4.0%
Events: more	12	3.7%
Temporary street closures	12	3.7%
Shade	7	2.1%
Fountain: repaired	6	1.8%
Fountain: change look	5	1.5%
Lighting: more	5	1.5%
Total Responses	326	100%

Question 4: While the mermaid sits on top of the fountain and enjoys the best view of East Passyunk Avenue, she has no name. What would you like to name her?

PARC received almost as many unique responses as there were survey responses, at 185. Many respondents suggested a theme, rather than a particular name, and many specific name suggestions followed larger themes. The first were Lenape names or words to honor the historic inhabitants of the neighborhood (21 responses). Names to match the Philadelphia Flyers’ hockey mascot, Gritty, was also a popular theme (7 responses). Because the fountain sits on Passyunk Avenue, many respondents suggested names to match the avenue (21 responses). The most popular theme was Greek and Italian names to match the style of the fountain (63 responses). An additionally 48 respondents stated that they do not have a suggestion, do not care, or that the mermaid does not need a name.

Question 4: Top Names		
Theme Grouping	Unique Responses	Total Responses
Greek/Italian	42	63
Lenape (historic representation)	10	21
Passyunk	13	20
Gritty	3	6
No response / responded do not name	-	48

Location Analysis of Respondents

PARC’s goal for Singing Fountain Restoration and Reimagination is that the Singing Fountain and plaza continue to evolve in order to serve the local community in the best way possible. Therefore, one survey question collected respondent’s addresses. Responses demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of the respondents were local residents. Of those who felt comfortable sharing their address (279), only 20 people (6.7%) were not residents of the surrounding two ZIP codes (19147 and 19148).

Survey Respondent Residential Analysis

