

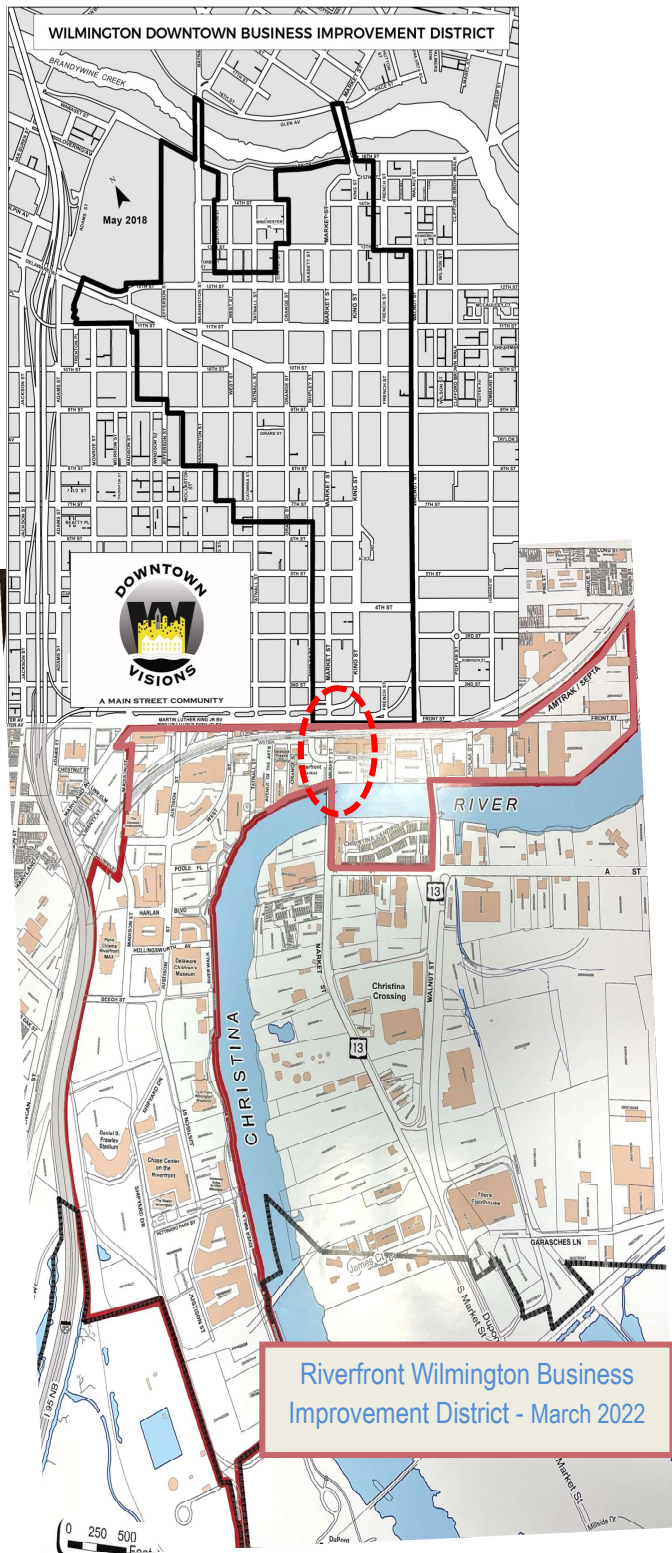
Riverfront Security & Walkability Resident Survey – Interim Report Spring 2022



Photo: Moonloop Photography LLC

The survey purpose is to provide a base data set and improvement ideas from several hundred residents to local organizations to take actions to increase the confidence, frequency, and safety for Pedestrians & Cyclists transiting in and between Downtown and the Riverfront.

A summary of findings from survey responses follows. It is anticipated that additional residents will be polled for their input shortly.



- The survey focused on resident’s perceptions of walkability and security of Market St at the intersections of MLK Blvd, the Amtrak railroad bridge, and the S Mkt St drawbridge (red oval).
- More generally, improvement ideas were solicited for the current Wilmington Business Improvement Districts are outlined for Downtown Visions (black) and Riverfront (red).
- Prior to the survey it was announced that \$3.25 million had been approved for the Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC) to “Light Up the Riverfront” by painting and installing LED lights along the railroad bridges surrounding the Wilmington Riverfront and installing lighting on trees, bushes and structures along the Riverwalk, with themed displays and projection art throughout the year.

Summary of Findings from Survey Responses

6/2/22

Purpose and Method

In support of the RDC/Amtrak Bridge Rejuvenation Project, a 10-question survey was developed to solicit input from Wilmington Riverfront communities. The survey was distributed to residents in the communities at Christina Landing including the townhomes, condos, and apartments. Respondents answered the survey via an on-line tool.

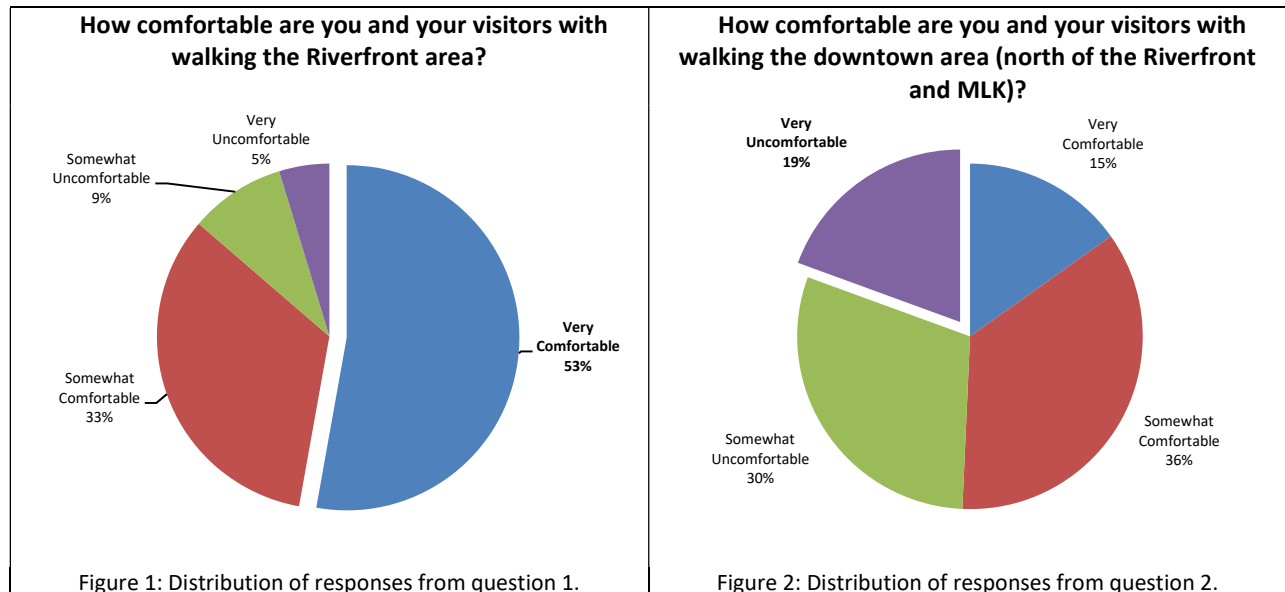
There were a total of 212 responses to the survey. They were reviewed and analyzed and are documented in this report.

Summary of Findings

The majority of respondents are comfortable walking the Riverfront area. However, walking from the Riverfront to downtown Wilmington is much less likely. Given proposed improvements in lighting and security, the likelihood of walking between the Riverfront and downtown area greatly increases.

Detail Findings

Most of the respondents are either very comfortable or somewhat comfortable walking the Riverfront area. However, this shifts to a higher level of discomfort when walking the downtown area.



49% of respondents were uncomfortable walking the downtown area (either very uncomfortable or somewhat uncomfortable).

Accessing the Downtown Area

When comparing the mode of transportation used for accessing downtown, there are variations from daytime to evening access.

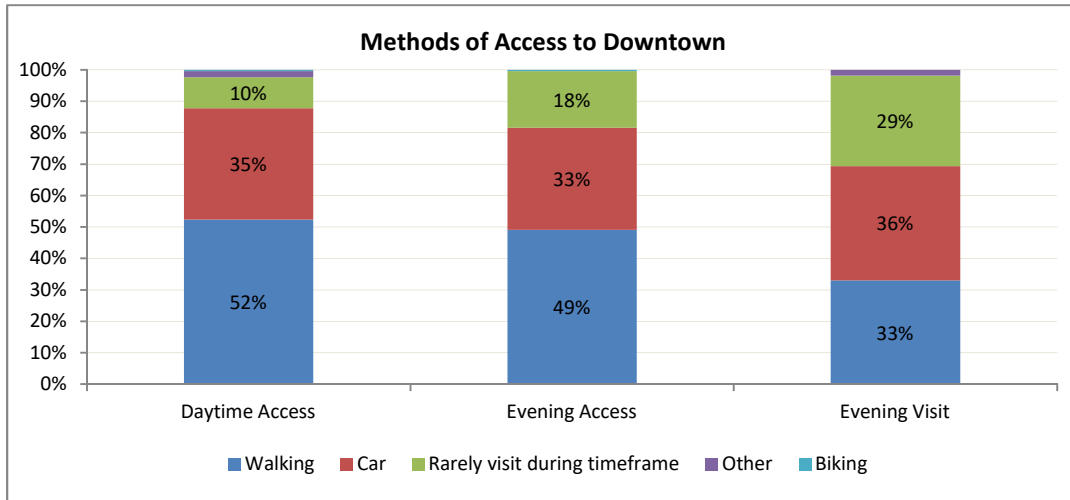


Figure 3: Modes of Transportation accessing downtime at different times (questions 3, 4, and 5).

Into the evening hours, less people are likely to walk, as the access via car increases. Those indicating they rarely visit downtown increases after dark, especially for a visit.

More than half of the respondents indicated they were unlikely to walk between downtown and the Riverfront.

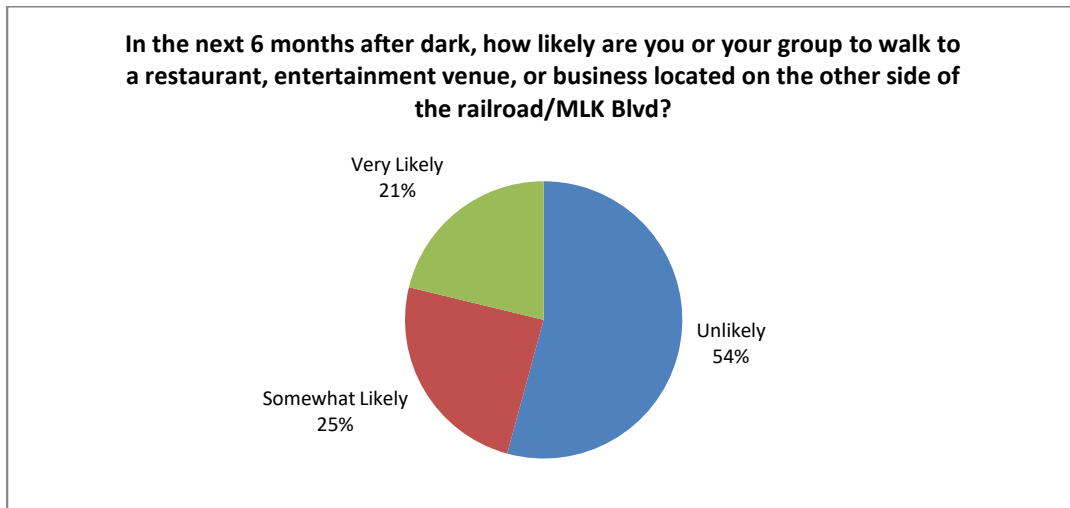


Figure 4: Likelihood of walking between riverfront and downtown (distribution of responses to question 6).

Only 126 of the 212 respondents indicated their willingness to walk between downtown and the Riverfront with the majority doing some very infrequently.



Figure 5: Frequency of walking between riverfront and downtown (distribution of responses to question 7).

Based on responses, certain proposed improvements would increase the likelihood of walking between downtown and the Riverfront, with increased security presence in the evenings and improved lighting having the best responses.

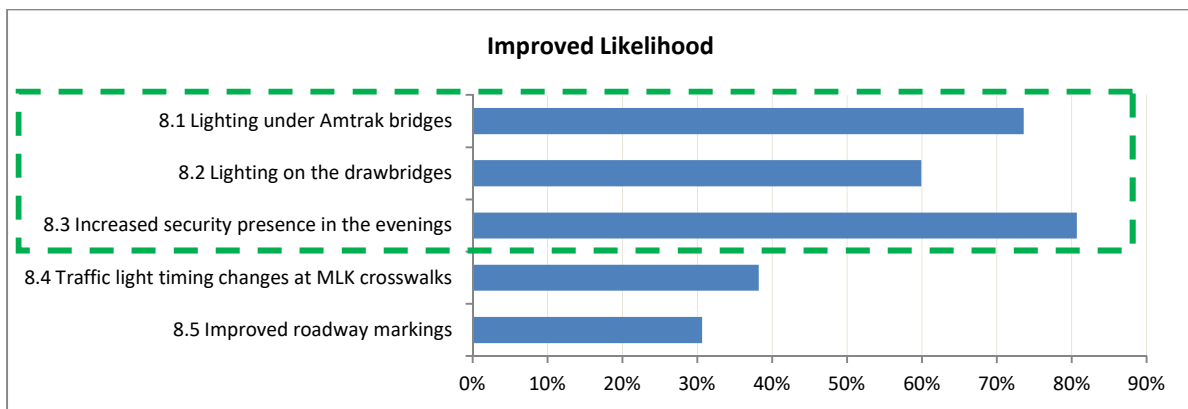


Figure 6: Proposed improvements to increase likelihood of walking (questions 8.1-8.5).

When asked about frequency of walking between downtown and the Riverfront if proposed improvements were implemented, there was a marked increase in the number of respondents (126 to 205) willing to walk between downtown and the Riverfront.

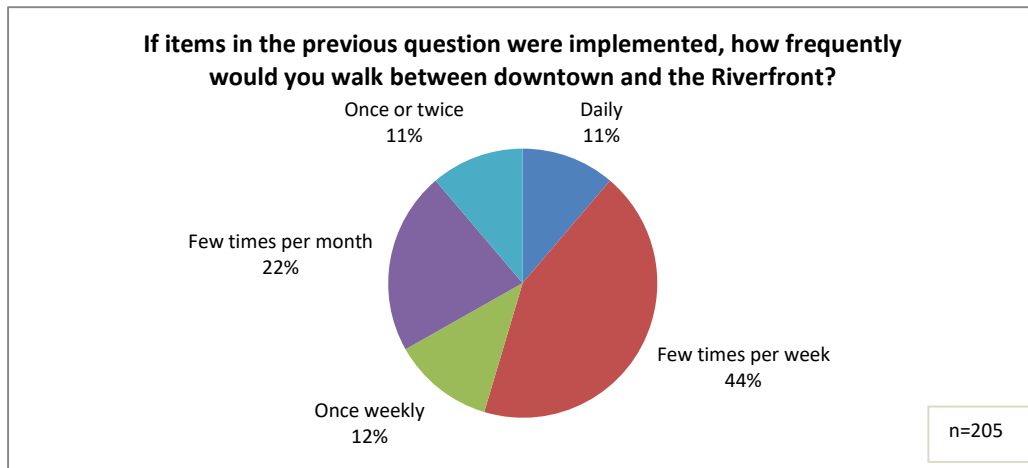


Figure 7: Change in frequency of walking between riverfront and downtown after improvements (questions 9).

The distribution of respondents walking daily increased from only 4% to 11%. Those walking a few times a week increased from 25% to 44%.

The conclusion from this survey is that the proposed improvements, specifically increased security and lighting, would increase the foot traffic between downtown and the Riverfront.

Insights from responses regarding additional improvements, ideas, or concerns

The survey also asked respondents to provide any additional improvements, ideas, or concerns. Of the 86 responses to this question, 2 were extremely positive about the city, 43 were negative, and 41 had suggestions for improvements. The top responses were specifically regarding improvements to pedestrian accessibility, security and/or police presence, and lighting. Other concerns were raised that may be worth studying in a future effort including, but not limited to, mental health/homeless population, speeding, and bikers.



Figure 8: Distribution of responses by topic.

Examples of specific suggestions from respondents

Pedestrian Pathways / Accessibility

Multiple suggestions included the specific recommendation for a pedestrian bridge over MLK at the intersection with Market Street. Yet others did not mention a bridge, but the need for improvements. This may be worth future consideration by the city of Wilmington.

- “...In an ideal world MLK wouldn't be that wide, or there would be a pedestrian bridge.”
- “Given the traffic volume on MLK blvd, I would find it difficult to try and cross...”
- “Specialized walkway for direct to riverfront for bikes etc...”
- “A more designated walking path from the riverfront to downtown would make navigating there easier and safer for us that live here. “

Security / Police Presence

Numerous responses included information and/or concerns regarding the lack of appropriate security or police presence.

- “I would walk more than a few times per week between downtown and the Riverfront with ... increased security presence after 10:00 pm”
- “I am new here and I AM VERY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE LACK OF POLICE PRESENCE AND LIGHTING...”
- “Needs to be constant police presence on MLK for me to go to Market Street by foot...”
- “Security personnel need to be positioned along the entire Market St route from Rodney Square to the drawbridges...”

Lighting

Suggestions about lighting were the 2nd top category of responses. Some of the suggestions expanded beyond the bridges.

- “More lighting is needed and monitor the park/open area on other side of the water/behind Amtrak garage”
- “More lighting but also events happening in the side streets to light them up and make the city more alive.”
- “Poor lighting ... for walking to ShopRite and riverfront attractions. Lighting would be a big step in the right direction”
- “The best train bridges to walk under are ones where there is ongoing safe activity underneath, like stores or vendors. This is common in Europe and makes the areas much safer and nicer”
- “The areas that seem most concerning are the pedestrian tunnel on the south side of the riverfront walk (going toward the nature center) and the tunnels under the railroad going toward downtown. Better lighting might help with both areas”
- “Major concern is the lighting under the bridges and the area around Opera Del. Easy to walk to from Christina Landing but I won’t”
- “Having a clean well lit road that has other pedestrians or security around will make a huge difference! “