

Far Rockaway Beach

PlaNYC Survey Results



Capital Project

Thanks to Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC, the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) is developing plans to build new recreational facilities along Far Rockaway Beach between Beach 31st and Beach 9th streets. The \$36 million allocated provides for vast improvements to the beach infrastructure, boardwalk, and adjacent park. Potential amenities include new parks and playgrounds, boardwalks, concessions, and parking.

Surveying Methodology

Partnerships for Parks, a joint program of City Parks Foundation and DPR, led the development of the Far Rockaway Beach survey, working with DPR and design consultants hired to prepare plans for each site. Question and answer choices given were based on the scope of the project, available funding, and current and projected use patterns. A total of 297 valid surveys were collected in July and August 2007 at different times of the week and in different locations in the existing park. Partnerships for Parks staff administered 281 surveys in person at the beach, 15 surveys were completed online, and one survey was mailed in.ⁱ

Survey Respondents

70% of survey respondents indicated that they would like to participate in meetings to review plans for the park.

86% of survey respondents are Queens residents. Of these, 23% live in Far Rockaway; 7% live elsewhere in the Rockaways; and 57% live in other Queens neighborhoods. 9% live in another NYC borough, 2% are from Long Island or out of state, and 3% did not identify their place of residence. The majority of respondents (44%) are 40-59 years old, while 20% are between 25 and 39. Seniors comprise 19% of the total and 17% are under 24 years old. 23% of the respondents have children living at home with them.

Key Findings:

See accompanying graphs for information about desired improvements to the boardwalk, beach, and parkland. Highlighted here are some variations in preferences of respondents from different neighborhoods and age groups:

Boardwalk:

- People with children under 18 in their household strongly desire a water playground.
- Seniors preferred showers, shaded seating and benches over a bike path.
- Residents of other Queens neighborhoods want food vendors, but otherwise desired less amenities overall.

Beach:

- A shallow swim area is desired by all groups, but more strongly by local residents.
- Respondents with children under 18 desired a protected swim area and sand playground, while seniors desired fewer amenities overall at the beach.

Parkland:

- Respondents under 25 desired natural preservation and barbeque pits, but not a picnic area.
- Seniors desired a quiet seating area, shade structure, and parking.
- Local residents desired adult fitness stations.

Open-ended responses

192 of the 297 people surveyed responded to the open-ended questions on the surveys. The following table shows the number of times each issue was mentioned. Because multiple answers were allowed, 485 comments appear.

Issues Raised in Open-Ended Responses	
Environmental conservation issues	94
Enhance park facilities (public art, playgds., beach rentals, water fountains, art, fish cleaning stations, etc.)	68
Boardwalk restoration	61
Security, lighting, emergency call boxes, extended hrs and lifeguards	57
Ideas for specific local beaches	37
Improvements to bathrooms and showers	31
More food options and cultural events	30
Thank you/I love this park!	26
Other beaches as models	18
Accessibility	17
Transportation issues	14
Marine activities	9
Fear of commercialization	9
Fewer park facilities (no bikes, no dunes, no security)	8
Concern over PlaNYC	6
Total	485

“Love the beach!”

“There are too many dunes, and not enough beach area for the residents.”

“I would like nature interpretation signs explaining how dunes are formed and why they are beneficial.”

“Boardwalk boards are all uneven and broken and nails are coming up. It is not safe.”

“Bathrooms are either closed on weekends or need cleaning.”

“I like to swim in the evening. Perhaps a notification that swimming after 6:30 PM is at your own risk?”

“Handicapped people in wheelchairs or with walkers don’t have access to the ocean. This is unfair!”

“Kayaking and paddle boats would be a wonderful addition to the neighborhood.”

“We need more security and lighting at night.”

Special Places to Preserve or Enhance

Dune restoration, native plantings, bird sanctuary	36
Beach facilities: shade structures, picnic areas, etc.	21
Specific local beach areas (listed below)	11
Bathrooms and showers	7
Playgrounds and children’s accommodations	7
Boardwalk	6

“There is space available on Beach 9th Street for a restaurant/café with music, eating, and dancing. We should take advantage of it.”

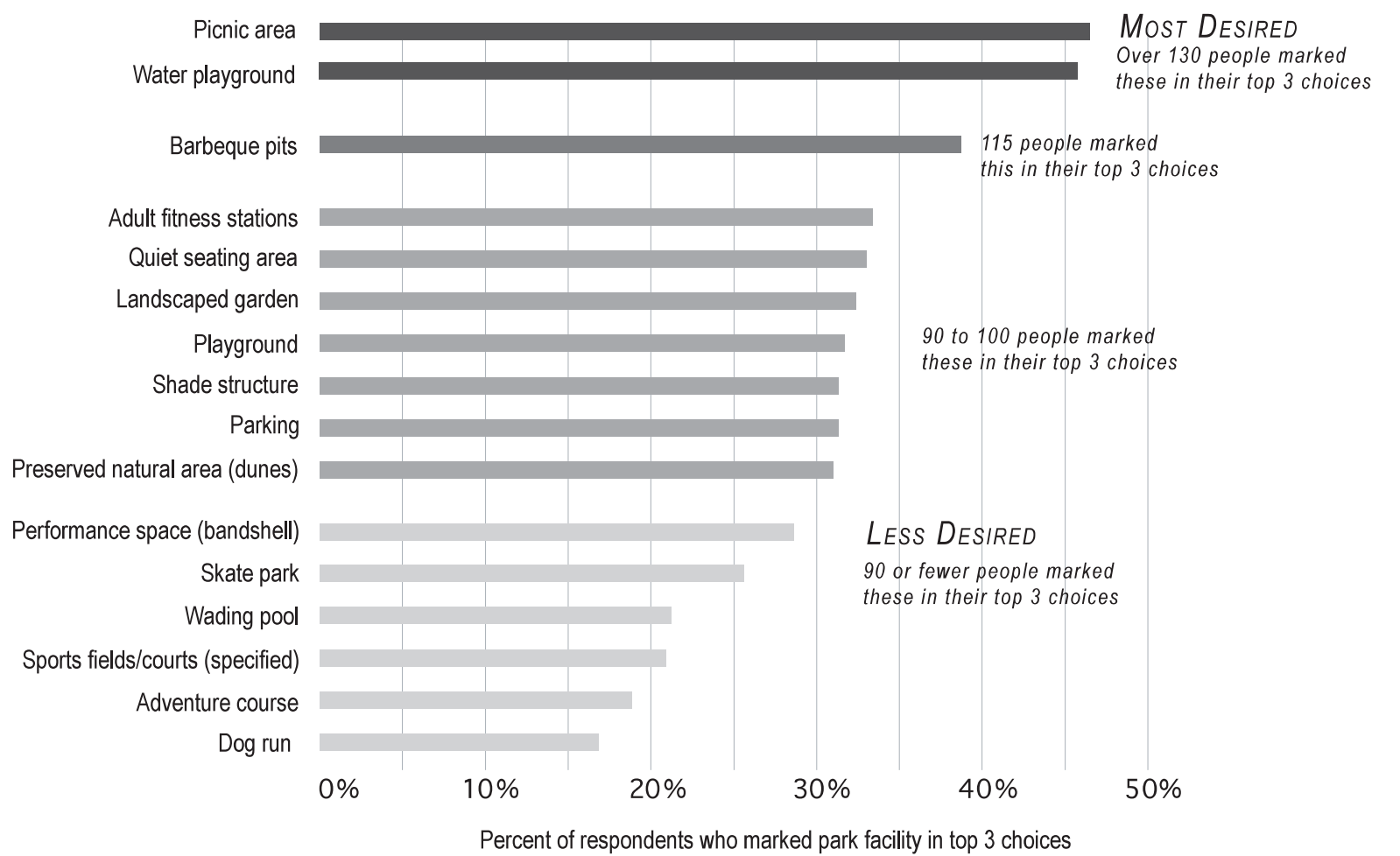
“I want to keep the tranquility - no commercialism!”

“You should enhance all Far Rockaway beach parks.”

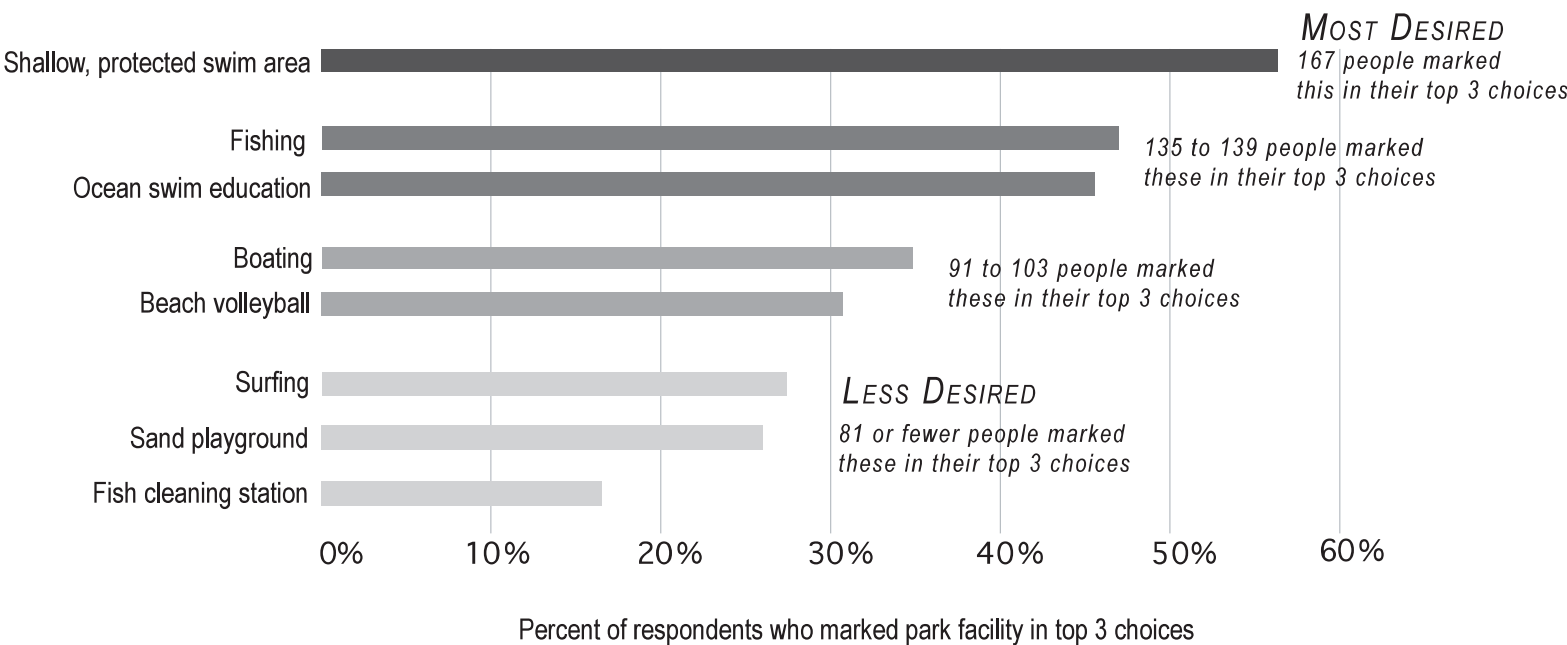
Parks and beaches with interesting or beautiful elements that respondents suggested as inspiration include: Beach 9th to 31st Street (especially the bay area at Beach 9th - 18th Street), the park at Beach 71st –79th Street, Jacob Riis Park, Beach 25th Street, Coney Island, Jones Beach, California beaches (Long Beach, Santa Monica), and New Jersey shore beaches.

ⁱ Because the survey did not use a random selection of the population, a margin of error cannot be computed for the data. Because a significant number of respondents answered with “x”s instead of numbers for questions three, five and six, these responses have been reclassified as third choice for analysis purposes. Third choice was the average response for these questions and therefore sufficiently represents the intent of survey respondents.

Far Rockaway Park Facilities



Far Rockaway Beach Facilities



Far Rockaway Boardwalk Facilities

