



Report on Survey Data for Restoration of Doan Brook Near Horseshoe Lake Park

Background

LAND studio (LAND), a nonprofit organization committed to the design and activation of public spaces in Cleveland, was engaged by Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) to develop, manage, compile, and share survey data related to the Doan Brook Restoration project near Horseshoe Lake Park, an area that occupies land in both the Cities of Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

LAND worked with STIMSON Landscape Architecture (STIMSON) to develop survey questions that addressed who visits the park, how they arrive, what they enjoy doing at the park, and what their visions are for the space once the necessary stream bank restoration project is completed.

The survey was open on SurveyMonkey from August 25 – October 31, 2022. It received responses from 846 people, who spent an average of nine minutes responding to survey questions.

Demographic Information

56% of survey respondents identified as female, 39% as male, 3% chose not to identify, and 1% identified as nonbinary, third gendered, or chose to self-describe.

2% of respondents were under 25 years and younger, 21% were 26-39, 21% were 40-49, 19% were 50-59, 22% were 60-69, 12% were 70-79, and 3% were over 80 years.

85% of respondents identified as white/Caucasian, 3% as Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American, 1% as East Asian, 1% Hispanic or Latin American, 3% chose to self-describe, and 8% chose not to answer.

32% of respondents lived in the zip code 44120, 30% in 44118, 24% in 44122, 7% in 44106, 3% in 44121, and a total of 10 respondents from 44124, 44112, and 44102 combined.

Mode of Transportation

To learn how people accessed the park, LAND asked multiple choice questions and allowed respondents to select more than one answer when applicable.

Most respondents use multiple modes of transportation to arrive at the parklands, with 68% of respondents drive to Horseshoe Lake Park, 65% walking, 44% riding bikes, and less than 2% accessing the parklands via public transportation.

For people arriving by car, 57% parallel park on Park Drive, 26% parallel park on South Park Blvd., 14% parallel park on North Park Blvd., and 3% use a handicap accessible spot in the parking lot. 22% of respondents answered that they do not drive to the park.

When arriving on foot or by assistive mobility device, 28% of respondents access the park at the corner of South Park and Park Drive, 25% access at North Park and Shelburne Road, 22% by crossing South Park by Attleboro Road, 21% at the corner of North Park and Lee Road, and 20% at the corner of South Park and Lee Road. 21% said they do not arrive by foot or assistive mobility device, and 5% answered “other.”

Open-Ended Questions

In order to understand what people were most excited and concerned about, LAND asked respondents to answer those questions without providing any prompts. It was important to us that the possible answers did not guide the answers we would receive.

In response to the question, “With regard to this project, I am most excited about _____,” the answers received ranged across a number of themes. These themes included:

Ecological Restoration (38% of respondents)

This category included respondents whose answers included things such as stream restoration, the creation of wetland, invasive species removal, use of native plants, habitat restoration, and dam removal.

Greenspace Improvements (18% of respondents)

This category included answers from respondents wanting to take advantage of under-utilized space, more/better spaces for children to play, having more activities within the space, and creating a larger greenspace overall.

Enhanced Trails & Access (17% of respondents)

This category included respondents whose answers related to more trails, trail improvements, accessibility of trails, and connectivity within and across the park as well as to the surrounding neighborhoods. Respondents were interested in walking, hiking, biking, and having spaces that were safe and accessible to children, the elderly, and people who use wheelchairs.

The Possibility of Restoring Horseshoe Lake (16% of respondents)

This category was comprised of respondents whose answers suggested they were in support of saving the lake and rebuilding the dam. It also included people whose answers said things such as “nothing” and derogatory language targeted at either NEORS or the project.

Other (11%)

The final category of responses to this question included answers that made up less than 2% of the responses, but were made more than once, such as sharing history, educational opportunities, sediment removal, being dog-friendly, and the STIMSON team in general.

In response to the questions, “With regards to this project, I’m most concerned about _____,” the answers also ranged across a number of themes, including:

Losing Horseshoe Lake (25%)

Respondents who expressed this being their largest concern also noted an interest in rebuilding the dam, building a smaller lake, and other answers that indicated their remorse over the stream restoration.

The Project *Not* Being Natural Enough (23%)

These respondents were concerned about invasive species taking over, native plantings not being used, not including enough trees, not rebuilding habitat, and over development of the greenspace. Several respondents specifically said they were not interested in a space such as the stream restoration at the Cleveland Museum of Art or spaces like the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

Neighbors Will Stop or Delay the Project (17%)

These respondents noted concern over “well-resourced” opposition, “NIMBYs,” “a small but vocal minority,” and other notes related to the efforts of the Friends of Horseshoe Lake. These respondents supported a more naturalized space and the removal of the Horseshoe Lake Dam.

Getting the Project Right (15%)

Respondents in this category wanted the project—whatever it is—to be completed, and done well. They want to ensure it is properly maintained, adequately budgeted, and doesn’t cause long-term disruption during construction.

Other (20%)

There were a number of answers that came up within this category, each one less than 3% of the total answers, but given by multiple people. These included not having enough parking, general safety, flooding, having too many dogs/a dog park, too many people/overuse, too much nature in a suburban area (such as coyotes and deer), and the division this project is creating within the community.

LAND asked people to share their fondest memories of Horseshoe Lake Park and the Doan Brook Parklands. Respondents’ answers were counted more than once and the number of times we saw the following responses are below:

- Trail Walking/Hiking (135)
- Time with Children/Play (130)
- Picnics/Birthday Parties/Gatherings (121)

- Observing Nature/Wildlife (96)
- Views of the Lake (65)
- Daily Interactions (41)
- Dog Walking (29)
- Regattas/Being on the Lake (24)
- First Dates/Proposals/Big Life Moments (22)

LAND asked a series of questions targeted at understanding the look, feel, and use of the park space around the Doan Brook. Overwhelmingly, people expressed their interest in a park space that provides natural amenities, peacefulness, and respite, along with opportunities for exercise, education, wellness, and play.

LAND asked people to use one word to describe Horseshoe Lake Park today and below is a graphic demonstrating the words shared, with larger size meaning increased frequency:



LAND asked how they would like to see these space in the future, again with larger words indicating increased frequency:



Conclusion

In summary, a highly engaged community provided detailed, thoughtful, nuanced responses to a variety of questions. LAND’s opinion is that there is a significant amount of common ground to be found in the use of natural and reclaimed materials and in honoring the deep connections that people have to this special place.