



Community Survey Results

Fort Dupont Redevelopment & Preservation Corporation Strategic Plan

July, 2023

Executive Summary

This report provides insights into a community-based survey deployed on behalf of Fort Dupont Redevelopment & Preservation Corporation (FDRPC) to gain input for the organization's strategic plan. Overall, the community believes they understand the organization's mission, but fewer understand its vision, particularly residents of Delaware City and Fort Dupont, and those survey respondents who have lived in the area less than 10 years. Those respondents who live 15 minutes or more away from Delaware City or have lived in the area two year or less more likely to agree they trusted FDRPC to develop the area in a manner that serves all Delaware City residents. Less than half of residents agreed with this statement.

Residents respondents were also less likely to agree that FDRPC had the right priorities than those who live further away, in particular Delaware City residents. Respondents who have been in the area from two to ten years also tended to be less likely to agree with FDRPC priorities.

Strategic outcomes that rose to the top for most respondents included:

- Historic Building preservation
- Transparent Communication
- Development that attracts new residents and businesses.

There were distinctions among the different subgroups analyzed. There also were write-in outcomes that were not ranked. Some for the Board to consider include investment in recreational and culture amenities, repairs, and water-related restoration (canal) and access.

Survey respondents were fairly consistent in ranking priority projects:

- Complete projects they have started/stabilize deteriorated buildings
- Environmental conservation and restoration
- Redevelop to create commercial opportunities
- Address access to the water

With these different perspectives, it is suggested the FDRPC board consider which audiences are its priority for its work, and clarify its identity and scope of responsibility in the redevelopment and the ongoing stewardship of the property.

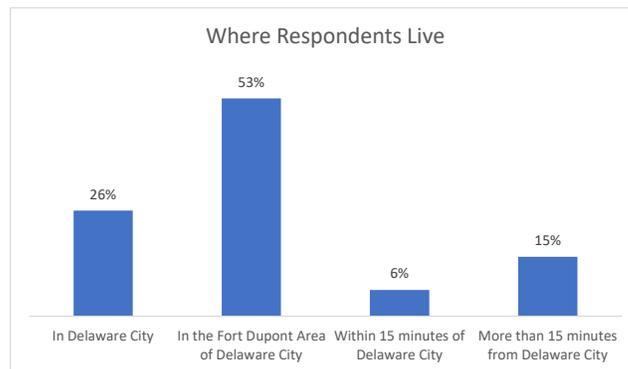
Methodology

An online survey was made available to the community for input on FDRPC’s strategic plan in June 2023. Emails with the survey were sent directly to those who had previously requested the link. FDRPC also sent the survey out through its network. Sixty-two completed surveys were used for the analysis. The analysis also looked at subgroups within the responses, to pull out differences in perspectives.

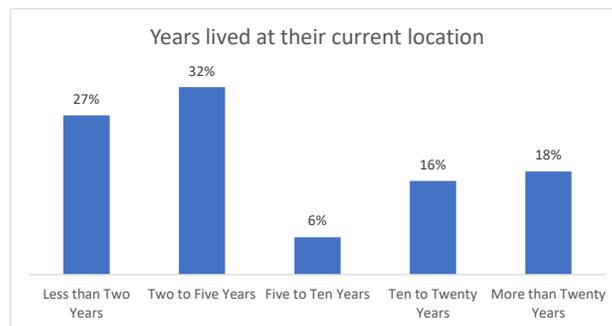
It should be noted there are limitations with this data. The number of responses is too little for the findings to be generalized to the whole population. It can provide insights into the perceptions of some groups and help to guide the FDRPC board’s decision-making. The main report provides a summary of the data collected and the appendix provides data tables for reference.

Who Responded

The majority of survey respondents lived in the Fort Dupont area of Delaware City (53%) followed by Delaware City (23%). The remaining 21% lived within 15 minutes of Delaware City (6%) or beyond (15%).



The survey asked respondents to share how long they have lived at their current location. Over half (59%) have lived here five years or less. 34% have lived here more than ten years.



The majority of respondents live in households with no children, either by themselves (11%) or with other adults (65%). The remaining respondents have households with children under the age of ten (14%) or over the age of 10 (10%). A fifth (21%) identified themselves as retired. Half of respondents work within a business or nonprofit, with the remaining working for themselves or in a family business (15%) or for a government agency (15%).

Attitudes about FDRPC

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement on FDRPC’s mission, priorities, and reputation. In analyzing different respondent profile segments, there were different perspectives based on where the respondent lived and the number of years they lived there. Almost all respondents who live more than 15 minutes away from Delaware City agreed with the statements, which differed greatly from those who are in or live close to the town. The tables below present insight into the different views.

Table 1: Mission & Vision

	In DC/FD	<15 Min	15 Min +	% Agree			HH w/o Kids	HH w/Kids
				2 years or less	two to ten years	more than 10 years		
I understand the mission of Fort Dupont Redevelopment & Preservation Corporation (FDRPC)	67%	68%	92%	59%	71%	81%	70%	80%
I understand the development and preservation vision that FDRPC has for the Fort Dupont Site	56%	57%	92%	47%	63%	76%	63%	67%

Overall, most respondents believe they understand the mission and vision of FDRPC; those opinions shift based on where they live and how long they have lived there. Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed (combined strongly agree/agree) with the statements. A fewer percent of those who have lived in the area two years or less agreed, while most of those who have been in the area more than ten years agreed with statements.

Reputation

Table 2 indicates a similar difference when it comes to trusting FDRPC in serving Delaware City. Less than half of those who live in Delaware City, or the Fort Dupont site agree with this statement. Slightly more than a third of individuals who have lived in the area between two and ten years agree.

Table 2: Reputation

	In DC/FD	<15 Min	15 Min +	% Agree			HH w/o Kids	HH w/Kids
				2 years or less	two to ten years	more than 10 years		
I trust FDRPC to develop Fort Dupont in a manner that serves all Delaware City residents	47%	59%	92%	76%	38%	62%	57%	53%

Priorities

When it comes to agreeing on FDRPC’s priorities, Table 3 reveals there is a noticeable difference in perspective based on geography and number of years living there. Most Respondents that live further away from the City agree that FDRPC has the right priorities.

Table 2: Priorities

	In DC/FD	<15 Min	15 Min +	% Agree			HH w/o Kids	HH w/Kids
				2 years or less	two to ten years	more than 10 years		
I believe FDRPC prioritizes our community interests	40%	51%	92%	59%	33%	62%	52%	47%
I believe FDRPC has the right priorities for living on the Fort Dupont site	38%	51%	92%	65%	29%	57%	48%	53%
I believe FDRPC has the right priorities for historic preservation	58%	65%	92%	71%	50%	76%	65%	67%
I believe FDRPC has the right priorities for protection of the natural environment	60%	78%	85%	88%	54%	57%	65%	67%
I believe FDRPC has the right priorities for commercial development on the Fort Dupont site	36%	42%	92%	47%	30%	70%	47%	53%

This is not the case with those who live in and near Delaware City. Less than half of these respondents agreed that FDRPC prioritizes community interests. And within those responses, only a quarter of Delaware City residents agreed (Table 2A). Delaware city residents were less in agreement than Fort Dupont residents regarding FDRPC having the right priorities for living on Fort Dupont, protection of the natural environment, and developing Fort Dupont in a manner that serves all Delaware City residents.

Table 2A:

Areas where % who agree differs by Delaware City residents and those that live on the Fort Dupont site.	DC Residents	FD Residents	Point Difference
I believe FDRPC prioritizes our community interests	27%	45%	19
I believe FDRPC has the right priorities for living on the Fort Dupont site	20%	45%	25
I believe FDRPC has the right priorities for protection of the natural environment	27%	76%	49
I trust FDRPC to develop Fort Dupont in a manner that serves all Delaware City residents	31%	55%	23

Respondents who have lived in the area less than two years tended to have a higher degree of agreement on the priority statements. Though less than half agreed FDRPC had the right priorities for commercial development. A majority of those who have lived in the area 10 or more years agreed with the statements. Only a third of those who have lived here between two and ten years agreed with these statements. There was little difference among respondents who live in households with adults only compared to those with youth in their homes.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the change that one will see based upon the initiatives of the organization. Respondents were asked to first provide the degree of importance they felt FDRPC should place on these priorities, offer additional outcomes, and then rank them.

There was alignment across all respondent profile groups related to importance on these outcomes:

- Transparent decision-making and open communication with FDRP Board and Community (80% or greater rated this high importance)
- Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use (70% or greater rated this high importance)
- Other outcomes where more than 65% of some respondent profile groups indicated high importance:
 - Ability to engage with and enjoy the natural environment (DC/FD Residents, lived 2+ years)
 - Access to and view of the water (DC/FD Residents, those <15 minutes away, lived there <2 years, HH without kids)
 - Decisions about the Fort Dupont Property are made with the residents’ needs in mind (DC/FD Residents, those <15 minutes away, lived there <10 years, HH with kids)
 - Fort Dupont has the financial resources necessary to remain sustainable (non-DC/FD residents, lived there <10 years, households without kids)
 - Fort Dupont’s redevelopment is an attraction for new residents and businesses (those who live 15+ min away, lived there < 2 years).

Of note, there were some distinctions in what Fort Dupont Residents and Delaware City Residents considered to be of **low importance**. Outcomes that a fifth to one-quarter DC residents (compared to few Fort Dupont residents) felt were low importance:

- Access to and view of the water
- Residents can easily get to and from Fort Dupont and Delaware City
- Fort Dupont’s redevelopment is an attraction for new residents and businesses
- Fort Dupont as the financial resources necessary to remain sustainable

Respondents were invited to add other outcomes they believe are important. Several themes emerged:

- Enhanced water-related activities – this includes a marina, shoring up parts of the canal shoreline that have deteriorated, access to water (swimming)
- Resident Control and Impact – comments about being able to decide on priorities that impact quality of life of residents (sink holes), or abating concerns that the residents who live on the former Fort DuPont site have the financial burden of paying for the amenities that all of Delaware City (and visitors) benefit from.
- Recreational activities - opportunities for play, some mentioned the tennis courts, basketball, area for small kids
- Values that align with the historical integrity of Fort Dupont/Delaware City – some expressed dismay over the deterioration of the relationships, the buildings, and use of property.
- Community events – where FDRPC is hosting or creating space for the community to connect and engage with each other.

Ranking Outcomes

The survey then asked respondents to rank the top three outcomes. There was some alignment, with slight differences. The table below features the top three outcomes for total respondent participants, and then those respondent profile groups that were slightly different.

Top Three Desired Outcomes by Respondent Profile

Total Survey Respondents	DC/FD Residents	2 Years or Less	10 years or More	Households with Kids
Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use	Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use	Access to and view of the water	Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use	Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use

Transparent decision-making and open communication with Board and Community	Transparent decision-making and open communication with Board and Community	Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use	Ability to engage with and enjoy nature and the natural environment	Transparent decision-making and open communication with Board and Community
Fort Dupont's redevelopment is an attraction for new residents and businesses	Access to and view of the water	Transparent decision-making and open communication with Board and Community/ FDRPC has financial resources		Ability to engage with and enjoy nature and the natural environment

Projects

The next section of the survey listed specific initiatives FDRPC is considering, or opportunities identified through the interviews, focus groups, and town hall. Initiatives where more than two-thirds of the respondent profile groups highlighted as a high priority:

- Finish what has already been started (all profile groups except those living her less than 2 years (59%)and those living 10 or more years (57%))
- Stabilize deteriorating buildings until ready to work on them (those living more than 15 min, lived in the area 10+ years, both types of households)
- Create open/honest two-way communication (DC/FD, those living two to ten years in the area, households without kids)
- Create Commercial opportunities. Farmers market/health clinic/ restaurants (those living outside of DC/FD, lived less than 2 years in area, households without kids)

There were some projects that were identified as low priority by more than a fifth of DC and FD residents and are highlighted below.

High % Low Priority by DC residents and FD residents	% Low Priority	
	DC Residents	FD Residents
Finish what has already been started	20%	3%
Focus on uniting the community (not Delaware City vs Fort Dupont)	0%	30%
Create commercial opportunities: Farmers market/ health clinic/restaurants	25%	6%
Enhance walking trails/other outdoor amenities	25%	3%
Address the ability to easily connect between Delaware City proper and Fort Dupont	25%	48%
Address access to the water	27%	15%

Survey participants were invited to share any other projects they believed were important the following themes arose:

- Restoration/protection of the canal and its shoreline, cutting trees to see the water
- Community events/cultural programs

- Use of Governor Bacon building – repurpose the space but also remember the history, don’t forget those who lived there
- Keep promises made (marina)
- Give Fort Dupont residents more voice in decision-making

Ranking Projects

The survey asked respondents to rank the top three projects. There was some alignment, with slight differences. The table below features the top three projects for total respondent participants, and then those respondent profile groups that were different.

Top Three Priority Projects by Respondent Profile

Total Survey Respondents	2 Years or Less	10 years or More
Finish what has already been started	Create commercial opportunities: Farmers market/ health clinic/ restaurants	Stabilize deteriorating buildings until they are ready to work on them
Environmental Restoration and Conservation	Environmental Restoration and Conservation	Environmental Restoration and Conservation
Create commercial opportunities: Farmers market/ health clinic/ restaurants	Address access to the water	Finish what has already been started/ address ability to easily connect between DC and FD

Conclusions & Recommendations

Survey respondents believe they understand FDRPC’s mission, and some understand the vision. The perspectives and preferences for FDRPC’s priorities vary depending on whether one lives within Delaware City or Fort Dupont and the number of years living there. Some differences in perspective emerged based on household composition. It is suggested that the FDRPC Board clarify and rank its target audience. This can help in prioritizing its intended outcomes and priority projects.

This also may help to shape the desired brand identity and reputation of the organization. Some of the desired outcomes and projects may be outside of FDRPC’s scope or control. Which could be contributing to the perception of FDRPC not meeting expectations or keeping promises. For example, are the residential street repairs the responsibility of FDRPC or Delaware City? To what degree does FDRPC have responsibility with canal or park restoration if it is in the prevue of DNREC and the Army Corp of Engineers?

Clarifying its identity and role today and how it will evolve in the future may help residents better understand what they can expect. Is it a redevelopment corporation whose priority is to clean up and

repurpose for economic / community benefit, and once it is done it goes away? Is it a historic and environmental preservation institution charged with stewarding the historic and cultural assets of Fort Dupont in perpetuity? Is it a community organization that has responsibility for ensuring quality of life and community assets are maintained for those who live there? Though it may be all three, does the organization have the resources and capacity to do all three well.

Articulating the above will help the board confirm what intended outcomes they wish to prioritize for the five-year strategic plan. Though there were distinctions among respondent profile groups, the following outcomes and projects rose to the top:

Top Outcomes and Projects that rose to the top from survey respondents included:

Top Outcomes	Top Projects	Write In Considerations
Historic Building Restoration & in use	Finish what has been started/ Stabilize to prevent further deterioration	Plans for Governor Bacon building
Transparent Decision-making and open communication between community & FDRPC board	N/A	Give Fort Dupont residents more voice/ keep promises/ repair sinkholes
Redevelopment attracts new residents and businesses	Create commercial opportunities	Recreational Opportunities and Cultural events/ move the sewer plant
Ability to engage with and enjoy nature and the natural environment	Environmental Restoration and Conservation	
Access to and view of the water	access to the water	Build Marina/ repair canal/ access to water

Resident input was brought up by several individuals in the comment sections. In general, those who live in Delaware City and on the Fort Dupont site were aligned on many things. For example, nearly half of Fort Dupont Residents and a quarter of Delaware city residents consider connecting the two parts of the city to of low importance. There were areas where the residents differed on what was NOT important. For example, Delaware City residents are less concerned about creating commercial opportunities on the property. Fort Dupont residents are concerned that they will be saddled with the costs for maintaining the public areas (such as the parade grounds) with no voice in who can use them, the events, and costs. They desire more recreational activities, and repairs to be made promptly.

Some comments reflected on what Fort Dupont used to be, and bemoaned the perceived lack of stewardship on the property. An opportunity may exist for FDRPC to show what work has been done on property restoration. Simple before/after images may help to shape the story, along with progress images on current initiatives.

The issue about water access/water-related use rose to the top in this survey as well. The building of a marina and the repairs of the canal were specific projects identified. This may be another area that is outside of the scope of FDRPC.

Appendix: Data Tables

Outcome Importance by Respondent Profile

	In DC/FD	<15 Min	15 Min +	% High Importance			HH w/o Kids	HH w/Kids
				2 years or less	two to ten years	more than 10 years		
Ability to engage with and enjoy nature & the natural environment	65%	65%	77%	59%	75%	67%	68%	67%
Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use	80%	73%	77%	71%	83%	81%	81%	73%
Access to and view of the water	73%	73%	46%	82%	63%	62%	72%	53%
Residents can easily get to and from Fort Dupont and downtown Delaware City	35%	30%	62%	35%	25%	62%	38%	47%
Fort Dupont's redevelopment is an attraction for new residents and businesses	55%	62%	85%	71%	54%	62%	64%	53%
Fort Dupont Residents feel a part of Delaware City – overall community-feel is retained	55%	49%	54%	47%	54%	62%	57%	47%
Decisions about the Fort Dupont property are made with the residents' needs in mind	73%	76%	38%	76%	75%	48%	64%	73%
Transparent decision-making and open communication with FDRP Board and Community	88%	81%	69%	88%	83%	81%	83%	87%
Fort Dupont has the financial resources necessary to remain sustainable	61%	70%	77%	71%	71%	52%	68%	53%

High % Low importance by DC residents and FD residents	% Low Importance	
	DC Residents	FD Residents
Access to and view of the water	25%	0%
Residents can easily get to and from Fort Dupont and downtown Delaware City	19%	15%
Fort Dupont's redevelopment is an attraction for new residents and businesses	19%	3%
Fort Dupont Residents feel a part of Delaware City – overall community-feel is retained	6%	15%
Fort Dupont has the financial resources necessary to remain sustainable	19%	3%

Rankings of all Outcomes by Respondent Profile

	Ranked in Top 3						
	Total	In DC/FD	2 years or less	two to ten years	more than 10 years	HH w/o Kids	HH w/Kids
Ability to engage with and enjoy nature & the natural environment	29%	29%	18%	25%	43%	23%	47%
Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use	56%	55%	35%	63%	67%	53%	67%
Access to and view of the water	37%	43%	65%	25%	29%	40%	27%
Residents can easily get to and from Fort Dupont and downtown Delaware City	15%	10%	0%	8%	33%	13%	20%
Fort Dupont's redevelopment is an attraction for new residents and businesses	40%	35%	53%	38%	33%	45%	27%
Fort Dupont Residents feel a part of Delaware City – overall community-feel is retained	15%	14%	12%	4%	29%	15%	13%
Decisions about the Fort Dupont property are made with the residents' needs in mind	29%	37%	41%	38%	10%	32%	20%
Transparent decision-making and open communication with FDRP Board and Community	44%	47%	47%	50%	33%	40%	53%
Fort Dupont has the financial resources necessary to remain sustainable	35%	31%	29%	50%	24%	38%	27%

Project Priority

	In DC/FD	<15 Min	15 Min +	% High Priority			HH w/o Kids	HH w/Kids
				2 years or less	two to ten years	more than 10 years		
Finish what has already been started	67%	73%	85%	59%	88%	57%	68%	79%
Create open/honest two-way communication	73%	57%	46%	59%	79%	62%	70%	60%
Focus on uniting the community (not Delaware City vs Fort Dupont)	33%	16%	38%	18%	21%	62%	34%	33%
Environmental Restoration and Conservation	45%	35%	46%	35%	50%	48%	45%	47%
Restore Theatre & Chapel	56%	49%	77%	18%	21%	62%	60%	64%
Create commercial opportunities: Farmers market/ health clinic/restaurants	63%	70%	69%	76%	58%	62%	68%	53%
Enhance walking trails/other outdoor amenities	53%	51%	46%	59%	54%	43%	55%	40%
Address the ability to easily connect between Delaware City proper and Fort Dupont	20%	16%	31%	12%	13%	43%	21%	27%
Address access to the water	54%	46%	15%	59%	33%	48%	53%	21%
Stabilize deteriorating buildings until ready to work on them	59%	51%	92%	59%	54%	86%	64%	73%

High % Low Priority by DC residents and FD residents	% Low Priority	
	DC Residents	FD Residents
Finish what has already been started	20%	3%
Focus on uniting the community (not Delaware City vs Fort Dupont)	0%	30%
Environmental Restoration and Conservation	0%	12%
Create commercial opportunities: Farmers market/ health clinic/restaurants	25%	6%
Enhance walking trails/other outdoor amenities	25%	3%
Address the ability to easily connect between Delaware City proper and Fort Dupont	25%	48%
Address access to the water	27%	15%

Project Rankings

	Ranked in Top 3						
	Total	In DC/FD	2 years or less	two to ten years	more than 10 years	HH w/o Kids	HH w/Kids
Finish what has already been started	45%	43%	24%	67%	38%	45%	47%
Create open/honest two-way communication	23%	29%	29%	29%	10%	23%	20%
Focus on uniting the community (not Delaware City vs Fort Dupont)	6%	6%	0%	0%	19%	4%	13%
Environmental Restoration and Conservation	45%	43%	53%	42%	43%	45%	47%
Restore Theatre & Chapel	19%	22%	18%	21%	19%	19%	20%
Create commercial opportunities: Farmers market/ health clinic/restaurants	42%	41%	59%	38%	33%	43%	40%
Enhance walking trails/other outdoor amenities	24%	24%	35%	21%	19%	21%	33%
Address the ability to easily connect between Delaware City proper and Fort Dupont	16%	10%	0%	8%	38%	13%	27%
Address access to the water	26%	29%	47%	17%	19%	30%	13%
Stabilize deteriorating buildings until ready to work on them	37%	33%	12%	38%	57%	36%	40%