

Springfield Wetland & Riparian Inventories/Assessments for Urban Growth Boundary Expansion Areas

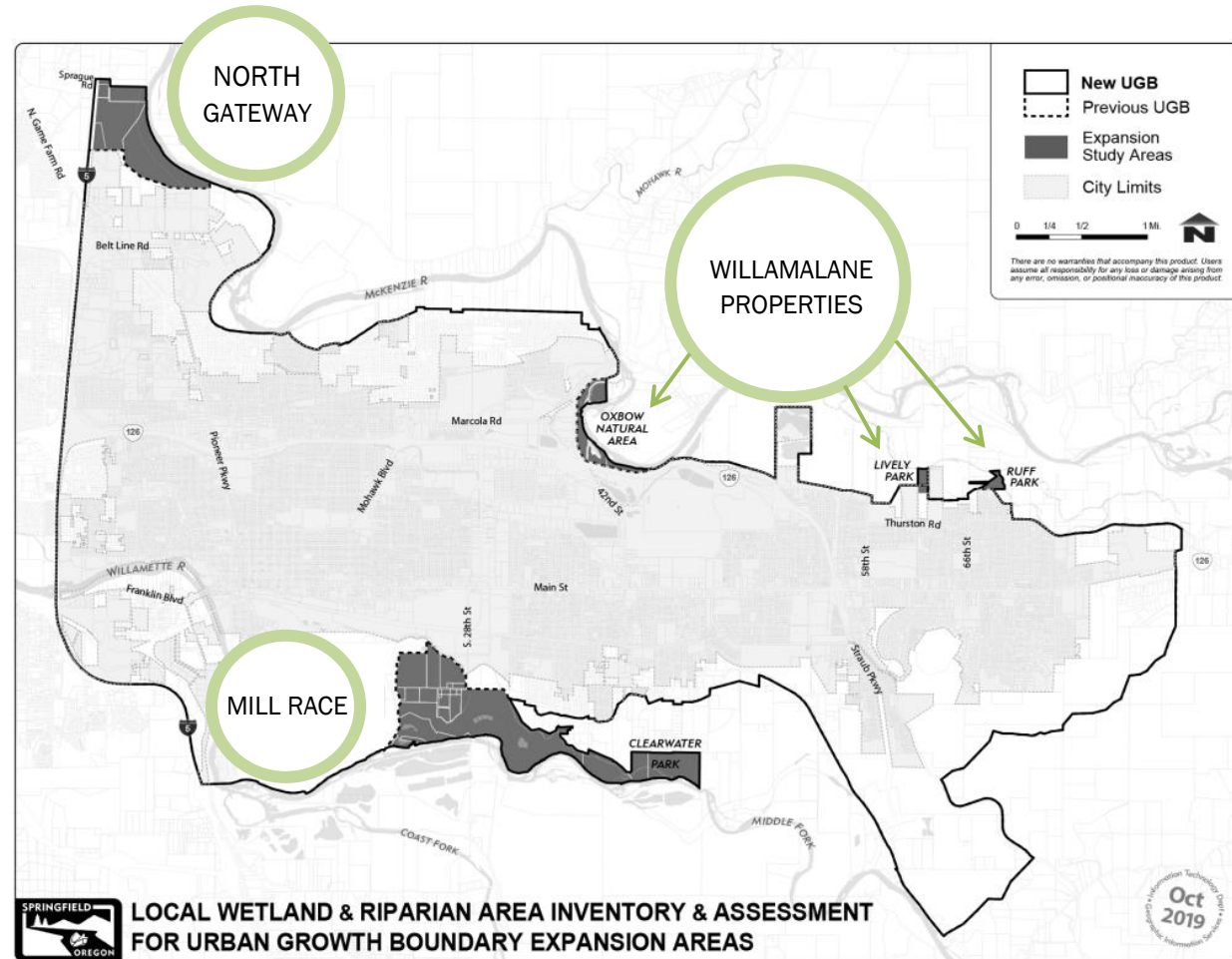
Winter 2021 Outreach Summary & Survey Results

Why do outreach?

One of the key steps to determine where development may be appropriate in Springfield's urban growth boundary (UGB) expansion areas is to first understand where its natural resources are and how they function. The scientists who helped the City begin this next step, SummitWest Environmental and Terra Science, prepared a draft report that inventoried and assessed wetlands and riparian corridors in the UGB expansion areas (also known as "study areas").

In January 2021, the City released the draft for public review. Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 1 is in place to ensure all projects that involve decisions about land use in Oregon provide opportunities for meaningful public input on such projects. Additional State law requires this type of environmental project to seek review and comment on the draft from property owners within each study area.

Following Goal 1 and other requirements, the project's Community Engagement Plan informed outreach activities to experts with local and technical knowledge and to the broader community. The responses we received helped SummitWest Environmental and Terra Science edit the report. In the future, the results will help guide discussions with Springfield's and Lane County's appointed and elected officials who will ultimately decide how to protect these wetland and riparian resources while balancing other needs for land and services in these areas.





How did we spread the word?

Staying on track with the project schedule meant that the main event for community engagement would occur winter 2021. In response to COVID-19, the project team shifted the originally envisioned in-person events to a virtual format while being able to continue to use other formats such as phone, mail, and e-mail. This strategy resulted in a combination of:

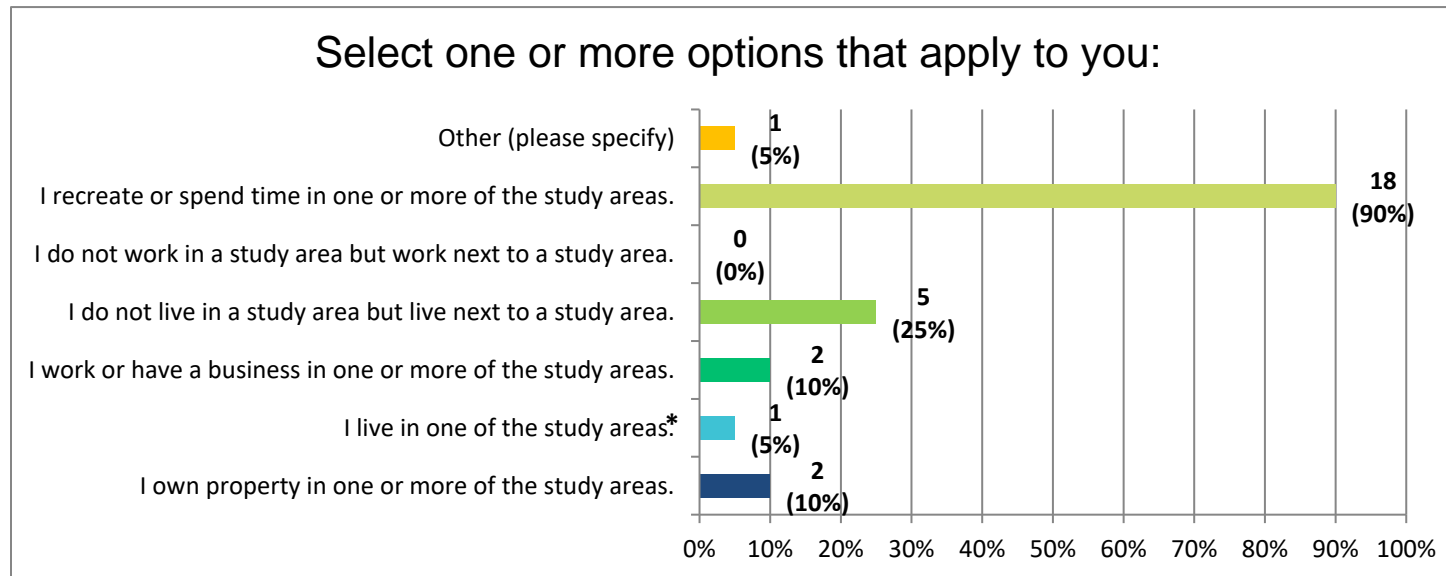
- The project webpage serving as a launching place for an online open house and including the Story Map, draft report, and survey
- Letters to affected property owners and neighbors within 300 feet of the study areas, which invited them to the project webpage and to contact staff with any questions or comments by e-mail and/or phone. Affected property owners could also:
 - request a one-on-one appointment with staff and the environmental consultants who conducted the inventories before sending a response
 - respond in writing on a copy of the draft inventory map for their properties by mailing back to staff with prepaid postage
- E-mail updates to an interested parties list with links to the project webpage and survey questions
- Posters throughout the parks and trails at or near the study areas: The posters shared a link to the project webpage, and park visitors with smartphones could scan a QR code for instant access to the webpage containing the survey
- Social media posts, also shared by Lane County and the Willamalane Park and Recreation District

The project team received e-mail responses, one mailed response, spoke with several affected property owners, recorded 65 scans of the posters' QR codes, and received 45 responses to the survey. A key feature of the survey sought input on the draft's findings and general feedback on how to protect the wetland and riparian resources in the area where the UGB expanded. This document summarizes what we learned from the survey. ***Note***: Many of the questions were optional. As such, the total number of respondents to each question was fewer than 45 in some cases.



Who responded?

Of the 45 respondents, 25 shared their relationship to the study areas. This question provided an opportunity for respondents to select more than one option:



While most respondents (18) enjoy spending time in the study areas, none of the respondents live or own property in the study areas. However, seven (7) live and/or own property near them. (*Our analysis of responses found that respondents who indicated they live or own property in one of the study areas are instead very near, but not inside, the study areas.) Ten (10) respondents provided their zip codes, seven of which (70%) have Springfield addresses.

What did we hear?

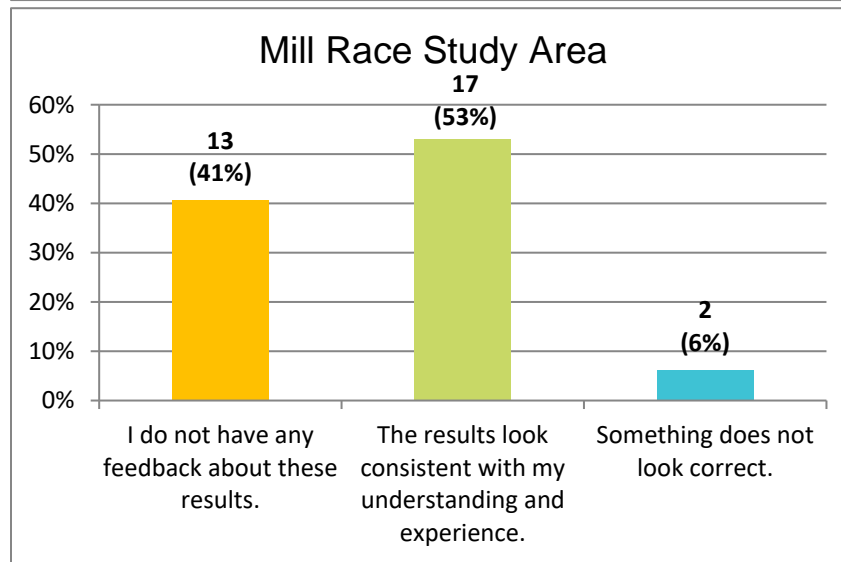
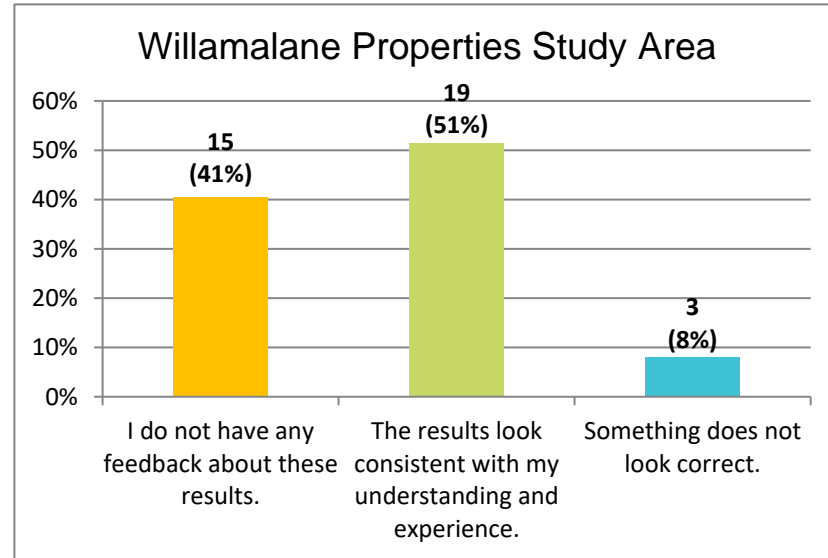
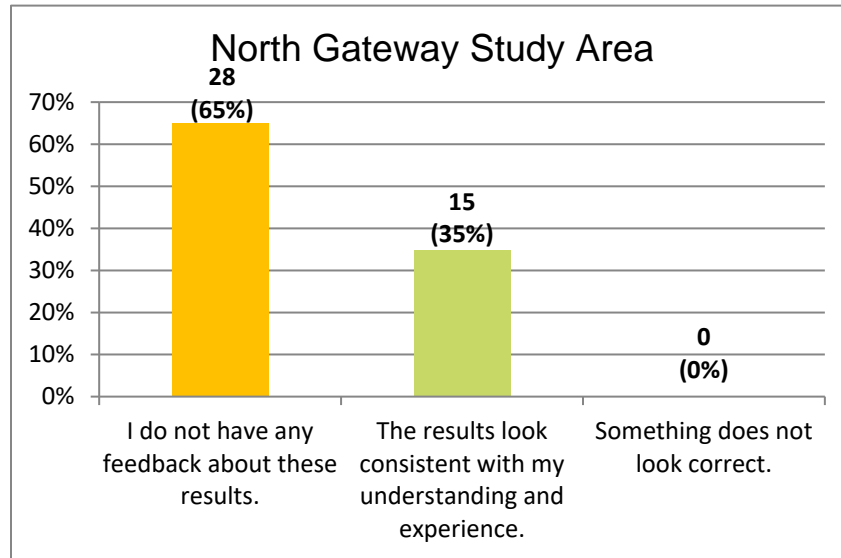
The survey focused on three key themes. We asked respondents about:

1. Whether the mapped locations of wetlands and riparian resources seemed accurate for each study area;
2. Their generally preferred level of protection for the resources in each study area; and,
3. Whether the approach to protecting resources in all of the study areas should be the same for each resource site (in other words, the same level of protection would apply equally throughout the study areas), or if we should consider each resource's unique characteristics before deciding on how to best protect them. While the decisions made for these last two themes can be complex, the general feedback we sought is helpful as a framing of overall values and interests.



1. Accuracy of Resource Locations

Wetlands

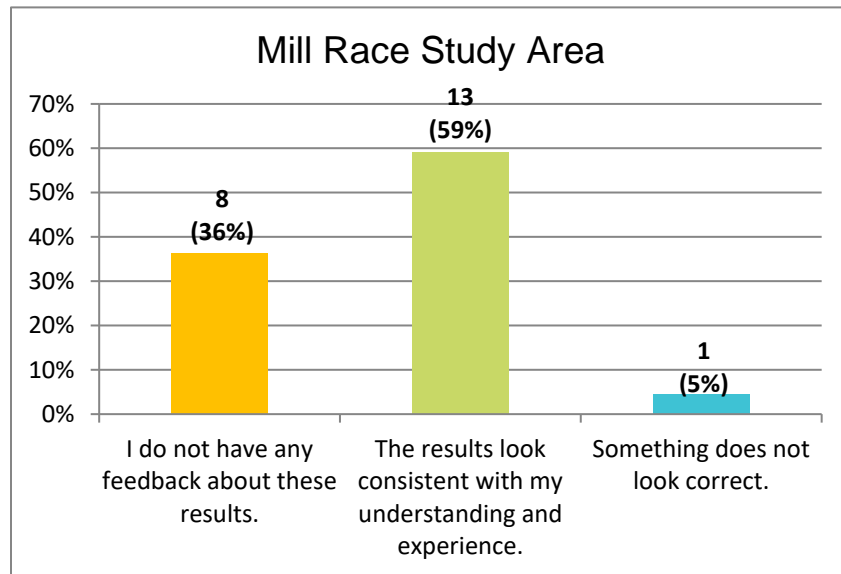
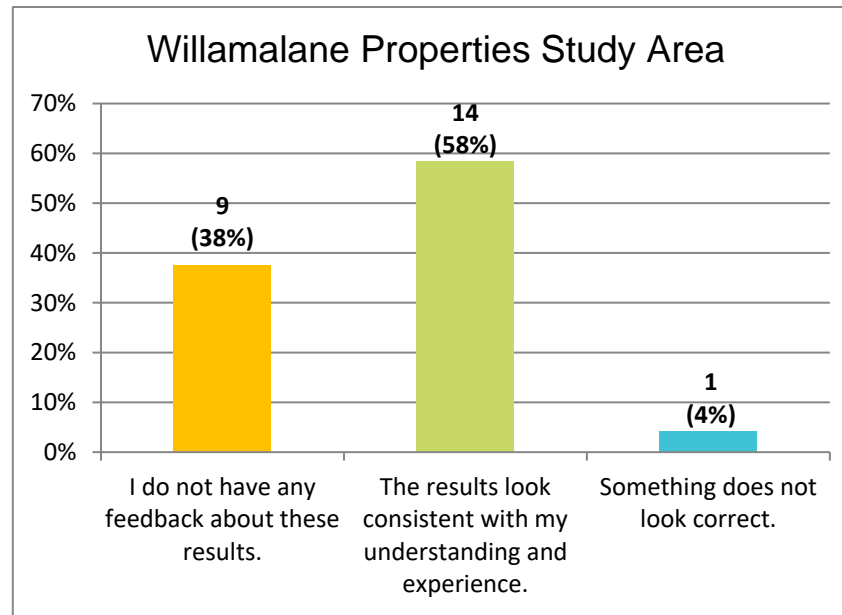
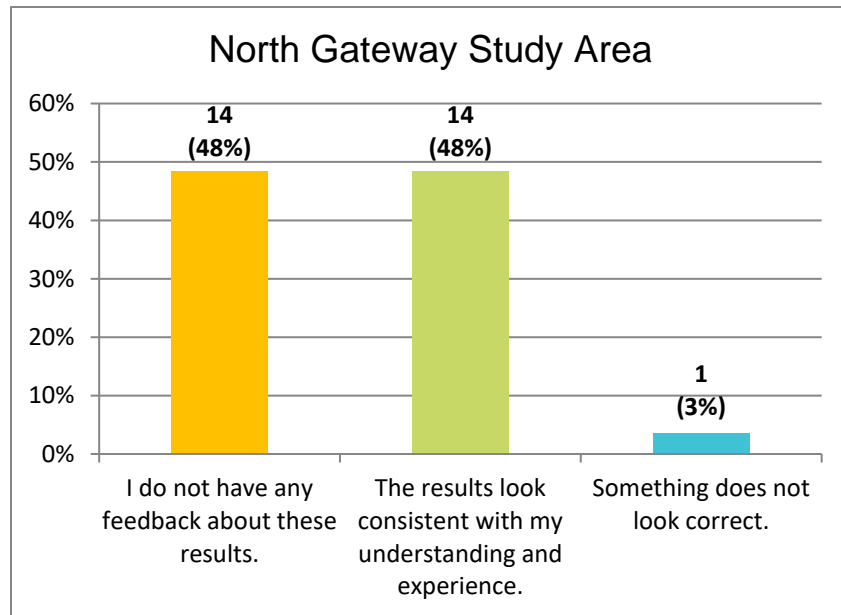


Key Takeaways

- For **all study areas**, most respondents either noted no feedback about the results or agreed with the results.
- In response to the **North Gateway Study Area**, most respondents did not have feedback about the results, though over 1/3 of respondents (15) agreed with the results.
- In response to the **Willamalane Properties and Mill Race Study Areas**, most respondents selected the option: "The results look consistent with my understanding and experience".
- **Answers in response to something not looking correct:** (a) helped us clarify activities at Ruff Park and surrounding areas which informed report edits; (b) suggested improvements for showing locational context on the maps; or (c) were invalid (for example, a typo or "n/a" entered).



Riparian Corridors



Key Takeaways

- For **all study areas**, most respondents either noted no feedback about the results or agreed with the results.
- In response to the **North Gateway Study Area**, an equal number of respondents (14) did not have feedback about the results or agreed with the results.
- In response to the **Willamalane Properties and Mill Race Study Areas**, most respondents selected the option: “The results look consistent with my understanding and experience”.
- **Answers in response to something not looking correct:** (a) suggested improvements for showing context on the maps, whether locational or related to the broader purpose of the project; or, (b) were invalid (“n/a” entered).



Written Comments

The last question in this section asked: “Do you have any other comments about a particular map, study area, or the results in general? If so, please provide them here:”. Nine people wrote in response to this open-ended question. Themes of the comments were:

- Support for protection overall **(6 respondents)**
- Support for protection efforts at Lively and Ruff Parks and the areas in between—particularly for riparian resources. **(2 respondents*)**
- Interest in learning more about bird species present in and around Lively and Ruff Parks (for example, possibilities for educational signage). **(1 respondent)**
- Desire for integrated consideration, planning, and management of adjacent sites and their effect on the inventoried wetlands and riparian resources in the study areas. Adjacent sites of particular interest are those that already have protections. Considering these connections may improve the natural resources and their protections in the study area as well as ensure the viability threatened/endangered, sensitive, and rare species. **(3 respondents)**
- Desire to continue allowing bike paths, trails, and other recreational opportunities in protected areas (provided required permits are obtained as necessary), but to not allow more intense development. **(2 respondents)**

***Note*:** Numbers for all comments summarized on this page represent responses that clearly stated an interest. They do not infer interests based on general responses. Accordingly, the number reflected is conservative and could be higher depending on the intent of others’ responses which were not as explicit.

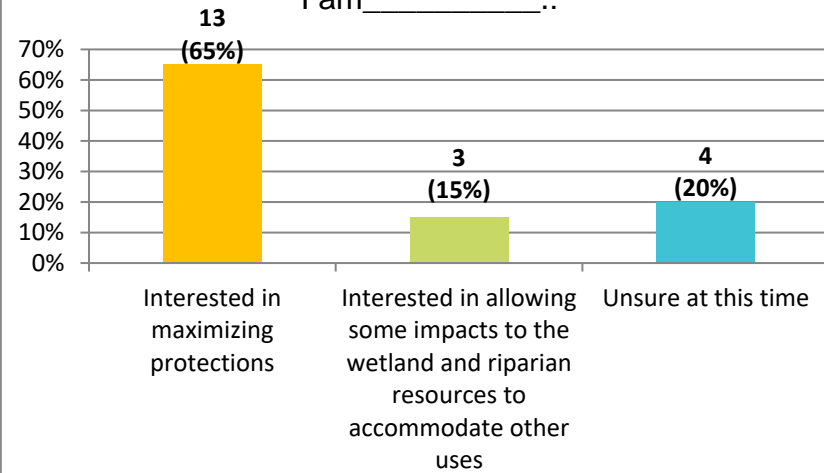


2. Level of Protection Desired

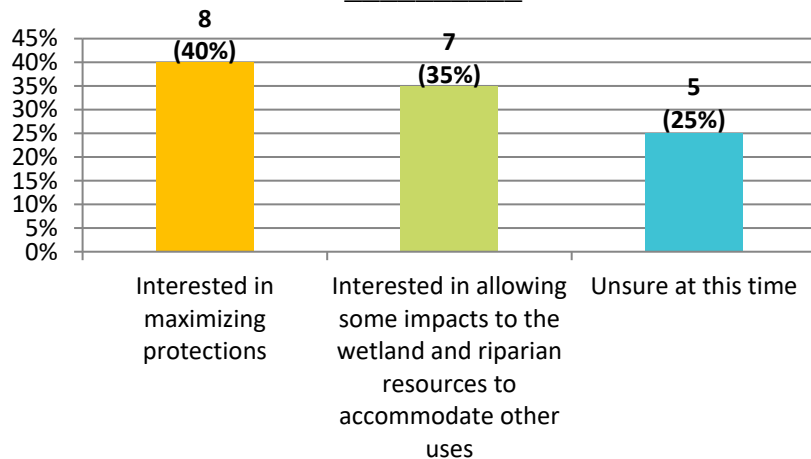
Key Takeaways

- For **all study areas**, most respondents stated that maximizing protections is the most supported approach.
- The results for the **North Gateway Study Area** are almost evenly split, with the difference between a preference for the most protections or allowing some impacts being only one response. Eight (8) respondents preferred minimal impacts, while seven (7) respondents preferred to allow some impacts.
- In response to the **Willamalane Properties and Mill Race Study Areas**, the range between preferences for maximizing protections and allowing impacts for other uses was greater. This range differed by at least nine (9) responses, with the option to maximize protections as the most preferred option.
- Up to 1/4 of respondents (range was 3-5 respondents) stated that they were unsure of their preference.

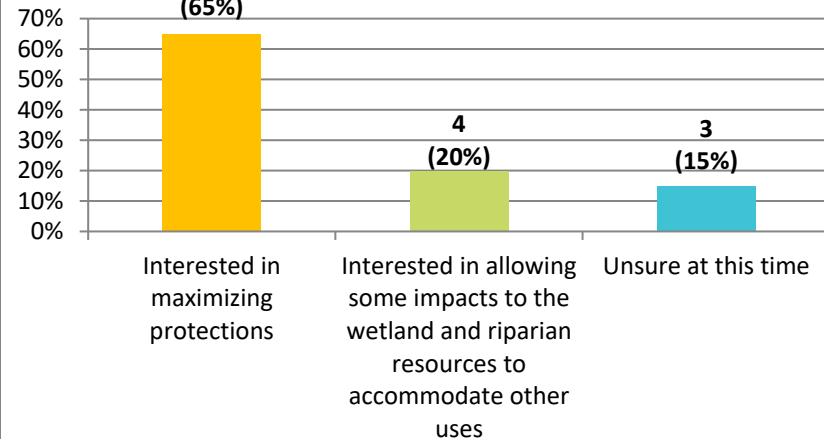
For the Willamalane areas in North Springfield, I am _____:



For the North Gateway area, I am _____:



For the Springfield Mill Race area, I am _____:





Written Comments

The last part of this section was open-ended, which stated: “If you’d like, please provide reasoning for your above answers:”. Nine people opted to elaborate in writing on their previous multiple-choice answers. Themes of the comments were desire for:

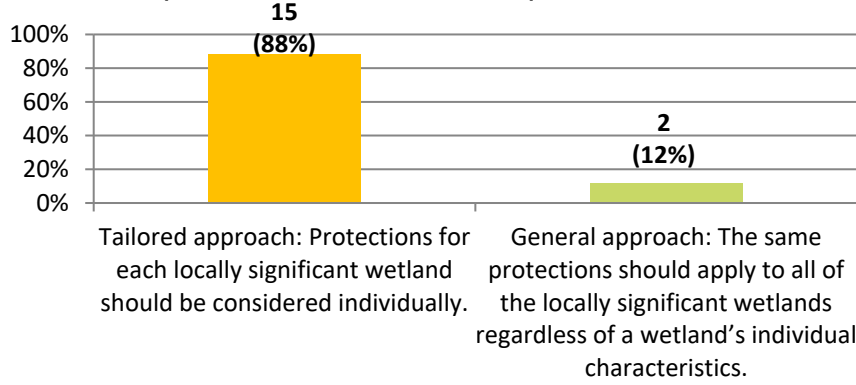
- Protections at high-use public areas (for example, the Mill Race Study Area). **(2 respondents*)**
- Protecting wildlife and their habitats. **(5 respondents)**
- Protecting plant species. **(2 respondents)**
- Protecting water quality. Ruff and Lively Park within the Willamalane Properties Study Area and along the Willamette River in the Mill Race Study Area were noted as specific areas of concern. **(3 respondents)**
- Protecting large tracts of land to preserve ecosystems by considering whether to allow conflicting uses on a case-by-case basis. **(2 respondents)**
- Continuing to allow public recreational amenities such as paths as long as they meet the requirements of the Springfield Development Code and preserve greenways. **(3 respondents)**
- Consideration of crime-related safety at night along recreational trails (existing compared to possibilities for future trails unspecified). **(1 respondent)**

***Note*:** Numbers for all comments summarized on this page represent responses that clearly stated an interest. They do not infer interests based on general responses. Accordingly, the number reflected is conservative and could be higher depending on the intent of others’ responses which were not as explicit.



3. Approach to Determining Protections

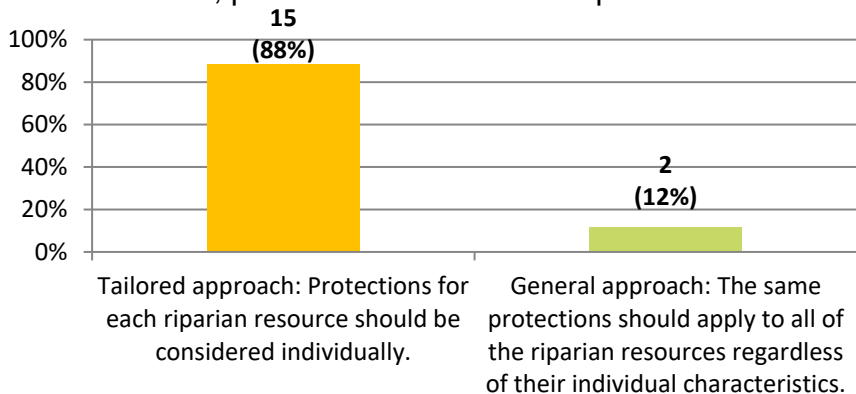
Do you have an opinion about the following protection approaches Springfield can pursue for **wetlands**? If you have a preference at this time, please select one of the options below:



Key Takeaways

- For **wetlands**, most respondents (15) supported the approach to determining appropriate protections for wetlands on a case-by-case, site-specific basis. Two (2) respondents prefer to see all wetlands protected in the same way.
- The split between preferences for approaches to protecting **riparian resources** was the same as wetlands. (15 supported case-by-case protections; 2 supported a uniform approach.)
- Greater support for a site-specific protection approach is consistent with some open-ended responses to the previous question about level of protection desired.

Do you have an opinion about the following protection approaches Springfield can pursue for **riparian resources**? If you have a preference at this time, please select one of the options below:



And Finally

Providing specific examples to orient respondents to the sets of questions in the second and third sections of the survey might have encouraged a higher response rate. As the project continues, we will be able to create maps to show the spatial relationships of protection options and will be able to connect the mapped locations (the “where”) to the uses allowed in these locations depending on each protection option (the “what”).

We appreciate the time and insights contributed so far!

Thank you!