

Focus Group Session 2 Summary of Findings

Site Selection

List of Priority Sites

Participants voiced that the site list looks appropriate considering the site selection criteria presented along with the geology, land use, land ownership. There was some discussion on breaking up Zone 5A and clarifying if it includes the river mouth and inland areas of the river. It was noted that the lagoon and river mouth may require different strategies than the rest of 5A. The name “Cowell’s” was brought up as misleading for 5A since the surf break called Cowell’s is actually in 4A. Because of comments on the call about combining zones, one participant said it seems like 4A should be also be included. There were no sites mentioned that should be excluded using the criteria listed.

Other Site Selection Feedback

Participants appreciated that some zones will be combined, or connectivity will be considered when developing adaptation concepts.

One participant noted that the short list of sites have very high visibility and public-use, the prospect of unexpected adverse outcomes could be very public and socially consequential. There were multiple comments on Lighthouse Point, including thoughts that it may be the most challenging for project success, it being a critical place, and curious for what NBS options are being considered there. One participant left a comment regarding whether there were already any NBS options being considered or included in the ongoing repairs to West Cliff Drive.

They would like surf breaks to be kept in mind for certain sites and understand how the future expansion of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) will affect the site selection. They would also like to understand how native plant restoration would work for flood and erosion mitigation. Some found that it was difficult to comment on site selection without knowing which NBS options would be proposed for those sites, or without a more detailed overview of the ecological concerns throughout the study area. One participant expressed that using sand in littoral cell that falls into submarine canyon annually would be a win-win situation. Another was surprised at the limited number of sites where hybrid reefs were considered.

Evaluation Criteria

What are the most important criteria to you?

The following criteria were mentioned as the most important criteria for the focus group participants listed in order of number of mentions:

1. Coastal Access and Recreation
 - Safety and Public Access to Ocean, Beaches, Surf Breaks
 - Beach access with ramps: More beach access with ramps for wheelchair users and others would be great. There are experimental ones now being evaluated at Cowell's Beach.
2. Flood and Erosion
3. Ecosystems and Habitat
 - Marine habitat sensitivity to beach and/or sand movement (e.g. tidepools being covered by sand)
 - It was noted how hard it may be to evaluate ecosystem impacts for our sites
4. Adaptability
5. Tribal Knowledge/ Identity
6. Underserved communities
7. Feasibility
 - Regulation and Permitting (don't pursue ideas that have no hope of being permitted)
 - Cost

What are the least important criteria to you?

The following criteria were mentioned as the least important criteria for the focus group participants:

1. Feasibility
 - a. Technical: we need to implement something that lasts longest as soon as we can
 - b. Cost: spend more now rather than wait and it cost more
 - c. Policy/Permitting: these need to change if we need to do the right thing
2. Sense of Place
 - a. The project objectives were protection and improve habitat so sense of place may be the least important

Other Evaluation Criteria Feedback

Participants noted that we should be using consistent language for risk, hazard, exposure, and vulnerability for clarity in evaluation criteria framework. One comment focused on the need to define what success looks and to whom does it matter most because we can't have it all. (Project objectives are to provide protection and improve habitat.) Another called out the differences between flood, erosion and social, economic criteria with flood and erosion being impacts while social and economic are the consequences, querying why underrepresented communities was in same category as flood and erosion.

Suggestions for additional criteria: Participants suggested the following as additional criteria:

- Political feasibility/social buy-in
- Materials management/regional impacts to supply (different than sourcing),
- Economic risk/benefit
- Availability of funding
- Public visibility.

Ranking/scoring comments: Many participants agreed that the scoring definitions should be applied consistently because the potential for negative impacts should be considered (like causing harm to underserved communities). Another comment raised the idea that no impact on underserved communities may actually be considered a negative.

It was noted that it will be important to be able to explain how each criteria has a positive improvement or negative one when scoring.

One participant commented that it would helpful to clarify how beaches and surf breaks would be altered during different seasons, negatively or positively during summer and winter with consideration of current seasonality variation.

If weighting is implemented, one participant noted that the marine habitat is much more natural than the terrestrial one, so it could be weighted higher. Another potential weighting factor could be erosion over flood. One participant also noted that some criteria don't naturally seem to fit into the negative/neutral/positive scoring framework (Flood, Underserved, Constructability, Expected Project Life, Adaptability).