MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Facilities Planning, Design & Construction
Dan Goemann, Director
1250 West Broadway Ave. Mpls, MN 55411

Anishinabe Academy Facility Advisory Committee

Staff Report

To: The Board of Education
From: Dan Goemann, Director of Facilities - Planning, Design, and Construction
Date: 11/05/2026

Re: Board of Education Resolution No. 2026-0047

Executive Summary

Pursuant to Board Resolution 2026-0047 and the Transformation Proposal presented to the Board at the September 15, 2026 Work Session, the Anishinabe Academy Facility Advisory Committee evaluated the Wilder Complex site located at 3345 Chicago Ave as a potential alternate site option for the permanent home of Anishinabe Academy, should that site have become available as part of the School Transformation process. As the Board of Education Resolution 2026-0078 adopted on October 13, 2026 states that no school building or campus shall be closed, unprogrammed, merged, or consolidated for the 2027 -2028 school year, the Committee paused that exploration and returned their focus to continuing the development of the former Cooper School site on the established project timeline.

Introduction

Board Resolution 2026-0047 (June 9, 2026) stated (emphasis added) “NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of Special School District No. 1 (Minneapolis Public Schools) hereby authorizes the Superintendent to proceed to Gate Check B for this project, developing the design of the Steering recommended option of the construction of a new

PK-8 school on the site of the former Cooper Elementary School - **while also recognizing that potential alternate MPS sites may arise for consideration through the Transformation process**."

Taking direction from resolution 2026-0047, following the Transformation Proposal presented to the Board at the September 15, 2026 Work Session, the Committee reviewed the list of sites that were named as possibilities to become unprogrammed. One of these sites, the Wilder Complex at 3345 Chicago Avenue, met all of the desired criteria that the Committee identified for an ideal candidate during the initial Facility Advisory site evaluation process (December 2024). At the time when the desired criteria was established, the site was neither named or explored as an option as there was a commitment to not discuss sites with active programming.

There are many reasons why this location would be well suited for the permanent home of the program:

- The site is located near where many Anishinabe Academy students live (see Exhibit A)
- The site is located near many social service agencies that serve the Native community (see Exhibit B)
- Proximity to Powderhorn Park and the nature-based learning it affords
- Sufficient on-site green space for outdoor learning and play
- Access to public transportation

Community Engagement and Input

Immediately following the presentation of the School Transformation proposals on September 15th and recognizing the urgency to properly evaluate the Wilder site as a viable option in order to provide a recommendation to the Board in time to be considered with any Transformation decision, and for the need to receive community input as an important consideration, the committee and Department of American Indian Education immediately began identifying opportunities for community engagement and input.

The design team worked quickly to provide an initial analysis of the site and building to create diagrams and renderings that show how a project at Wilder could take form. This work was instrumental in helping the community envision possibilities at the Wilder site in order to provide informed feedback when comparing both of the Wilder and Cooper sites.

Feedback was gathered from the engagement opportunities through direct conversations between community members and the design team, using Post-it notes as a means for participants to document their preferred site choice and record specific comments. The Wilder site received overwhelmingly positive support as the preferred option. The following events were attended from September 24- October 7, with specific participation at each noted. A total of approximately 155 responses were received at in-person engagement events, approximately 35 responses collected from student feedback boards, and an additional 377 responses were submitted to the online survey (see Exhibit C).

- Wednesday, 09/23/2026: MPS Back to School Powwow at South High School. 768 people attended the powwow that collected 70 responses.
- Thursday, 09/24/2026: American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) at Southwest High School that collected 15 responses.
- Tuesday, 09/29/2026: Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID) Meeting at Minneapolis American Indian Center that collected 10 responses.
- Wednesday, 09/30/2026: Drum & Dance at Minneapolis American Indian Center that collected 13 responses.
- Thursday, 10/01/2026: Virtual Listening Q&A
- Friday, 10/02/2026: Virtual Listening Q&A
- Friday, 10/02/2026: Native American Community Clinic Open House that collected 34 responses.
- Monday, 10/05/2026: Virtual Listening Q&A
- 10/07/2026: Drum & Dance at Minneapolis American Indian Center that collected 13 responses.
- Feedback boards posted at Northeast, Andersen, Sanford, South, and Edison schools that collected approximately 35 student comments.
- Online Survey that collected 377 responses

Conclusion

Based on the feedback received, the Committee was prepared to recommend that the Board of Education support Anishinabe Academy's mission of integrating and reclaiming American Indian identities, cultures, and languages through authentic academic experience by creating a purposeful PK-8 school building through renovations to the Wilder Complex at 3345 Chicago Ave, contingent upon if the Wilder site became available in 2027-2028 as part of Transformation. If the Wilder site did not become available, or if a Board decision on Transformation were delayed beyond the November 10, 2026 Board Meeting, the Committee was recommending continuing development of the former Cooper site to see that through completion as it remains a desirable option, with the design effort advanced for school occupancy at the beginning of the 2029-2030 school year. Through the entire process, the Committee was adamant that their work and advocacy not be construed as a desire to impact another school community, so no recommendation would speak to a building that otherwise would have school programming in it.

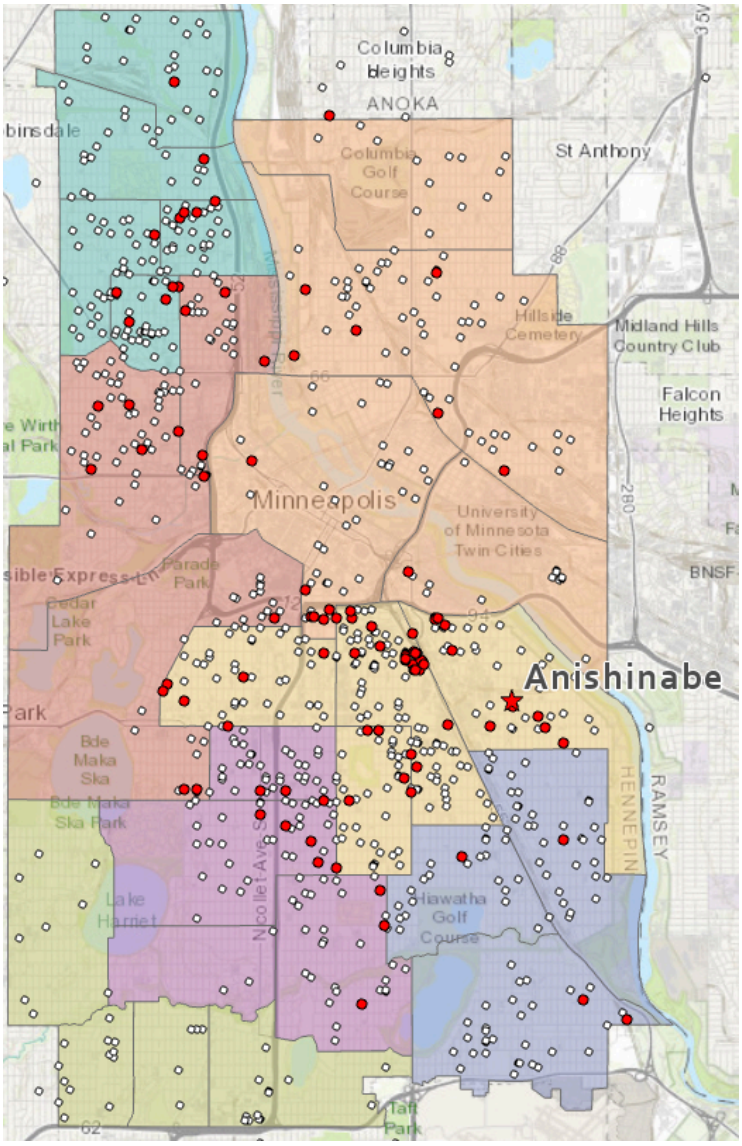
The Wilder building as it stands today would not be an appropriate home for Anishinabe Academy and would require significant alterations in order to serve students and honor the vision statement and guiding design principles to represent the same quality as what is envisioned at the former Cooper site. Based on the initial analysis completed by the design and construction team, this recommendation of the Wilder Complex would have likely represented an investment by the school district of approximately $80M - $100M in capital improvements, a similar overall investment as the Cooper site option ($90M - $105M). The development of this site would have represented a delay in the overall design process and occupancy of the site would be anticipated for sometime mid-school year 2029-2030.

The work of this committee has been driven by Anishinabe Academy's mission to engage urban American Indian students by integrating and reclaiming American Indian identities, cultures, and languages through authentic academic experience, providing a safe and positive learning environment that encourages the scholastic achievement of students, as well as the development of their culture and social lives.

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Exhibit A
Anishinabe Academy Student Residential Pattern



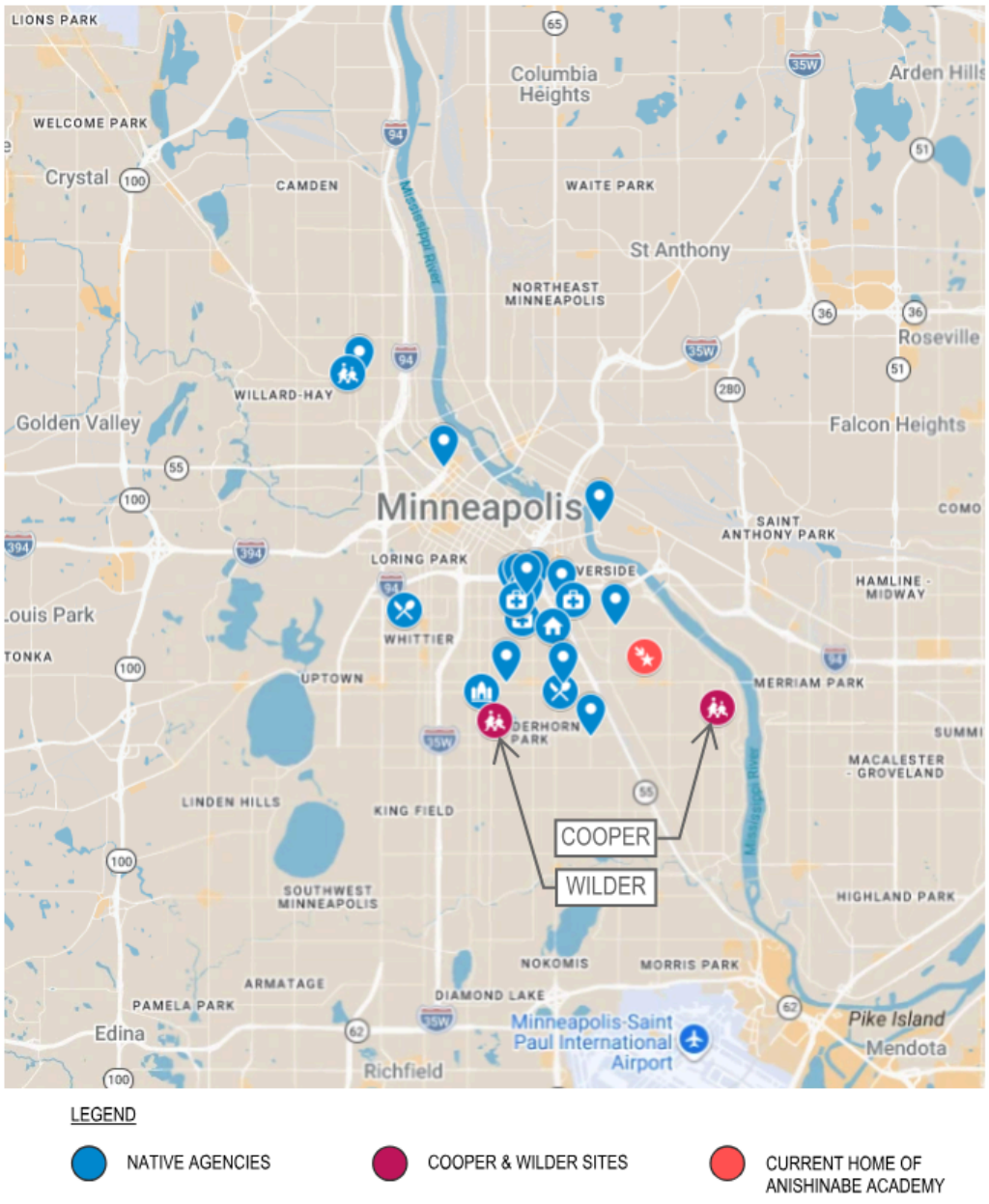
Red circles represent Anishinabe Academy students

White circles represent other MPS American Indian students

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Exhibit B
Map of Native Agencies



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Exhibit C
Community Feedback



ANISHINABE ACADEMY

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A Beacon of Hope for the Future

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERING ALTERNATE SITE OPTIONS

Vision Statement: presented March 11, 2025

Vision – A Beacon of Hope for the Future

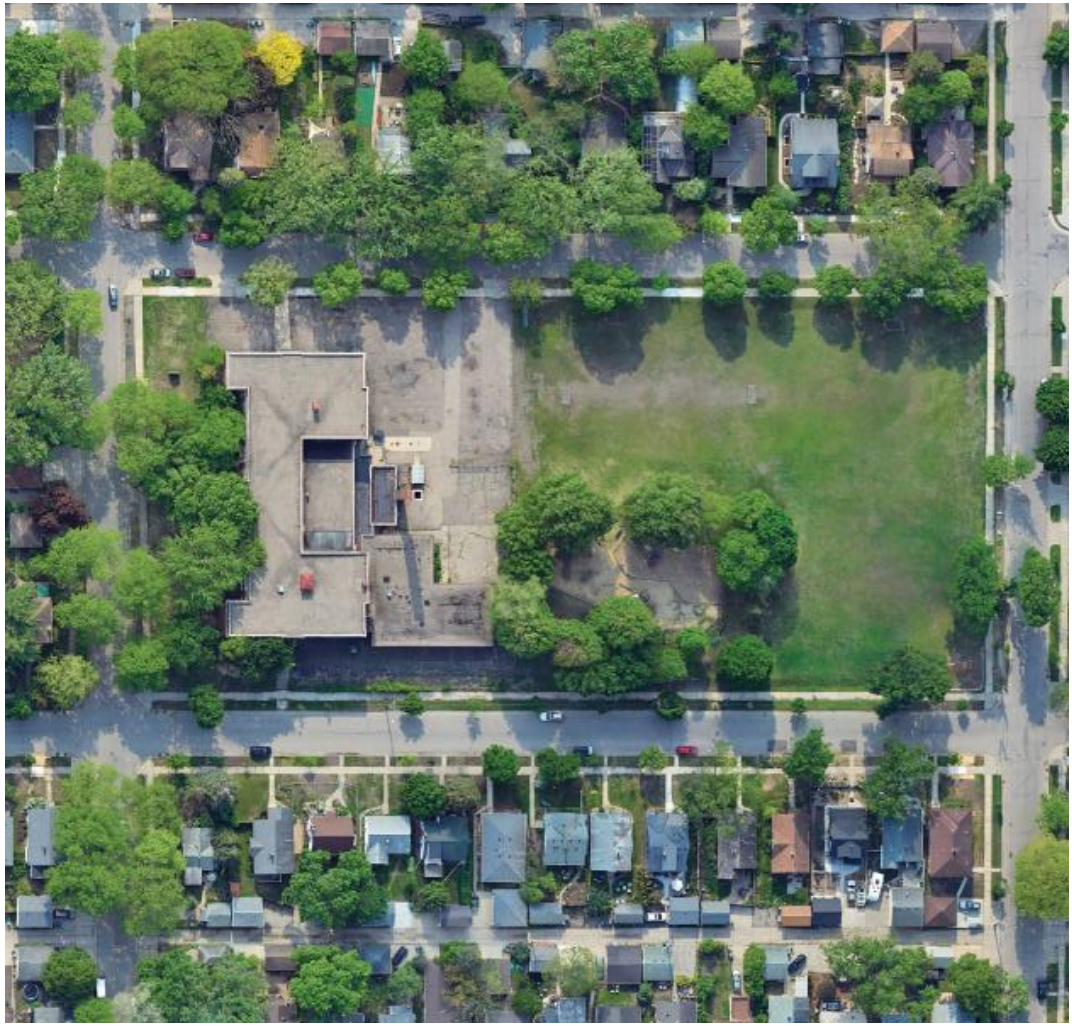
Rooted in the founding vision of Four Winds, this school is a beacon of hope, reclaiming and revitalizing American Indian identities, cultures, and languages through authentic academic experiences.

A place where:

- **Children see themselves reflected in their education.**
- **Culture is woven into learning, not separate from it.**
- **Language is honored and reclaimed as a living connection to identity.**
- **Families feel valued, seen, and supported by MPS.**

MPS reaffirms its commitment to American Indian students—not just acknowledging their heritage, but uplifting and celebrating it for future generations.

Recommendation: presented March 11, 2025



Anishinabe Academy

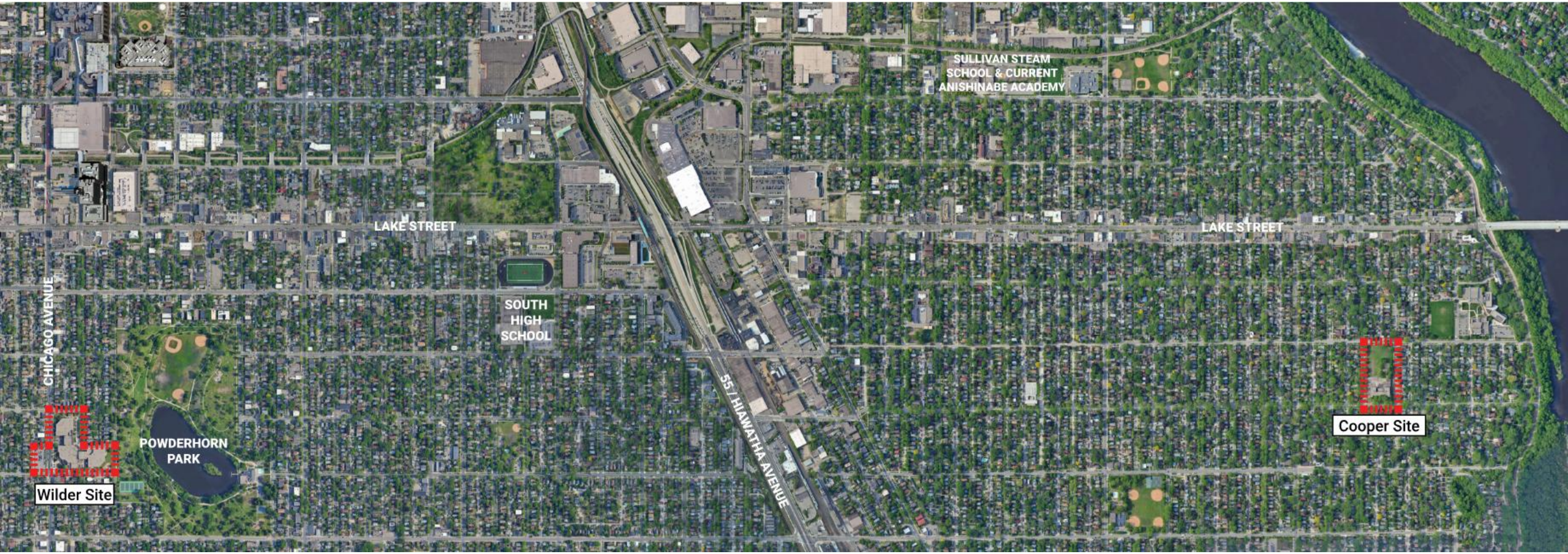
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Construct a newly built PK-8 school on the former Cooper Elementary School site.

Board Resolution 2026-0047 June 9, 2026:

"NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of Special School District No. 1 (Minneapolis Public Schools) hereby authorizes the Superintendent to proceed to Gate Check B for this project, developing the design of the Steering recommended option of the construction of a new PK-8 school on the site of the former Cooper Elementary School - **while also recognizing that potential alternate MPS sites may arise for consideration through the Transformation process.**"

Two Location Options:



Two Location Options:



Wilder site (3345 Chicago Avenue)

5.26 acres

GREEN SPACE ON SITE (PROPOSED DESIGN): 121,813 SQFT



Cooper site (3239 44th Avenue S.)

3.68 acres

GREEN SPACE ON SITE (PROPOSED DESIGN): 67,139 SQFT

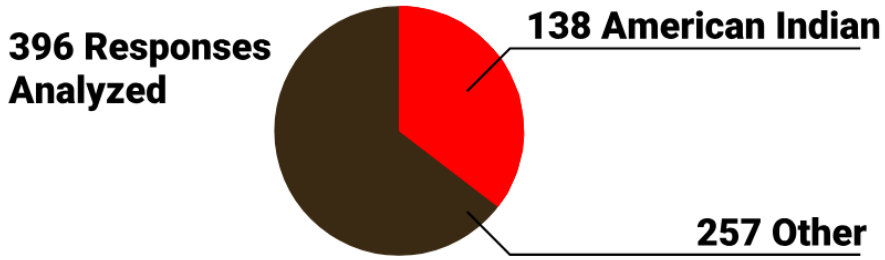
Engagements with Design team:

Saturday, September 19, 2026	Listening Session at Full Circle Indigenous Planning + Design
Wednesday, September 23, 2026:	Powwow at South HS
Thursday, September 24, 2026:	AIPAC Meeting
Tuesday, September 29, 2026:	Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID) Meeting **2:30-4:30 pm** @ Minneapolis American Indian Center
Wednesday, September 30, 2026:	Table at scheduled Drum & Dance **6:00-7:30 pm** @ Minneapolis American Indian Center
Thursday, October 1, 2026:	VIRTUAL Listening and Q&A
Friday, October 2, 2026:	VIRTUAL Listening and Q&A
Friday, October 2, 2026	Native American Community Clinic Open House **2:00-5:00pm**
Monday, October 5, 2026:	VIRTUAL Listening and Q&A
Wednesday, October 7, 2026	Table at scheduled Drum and Dance

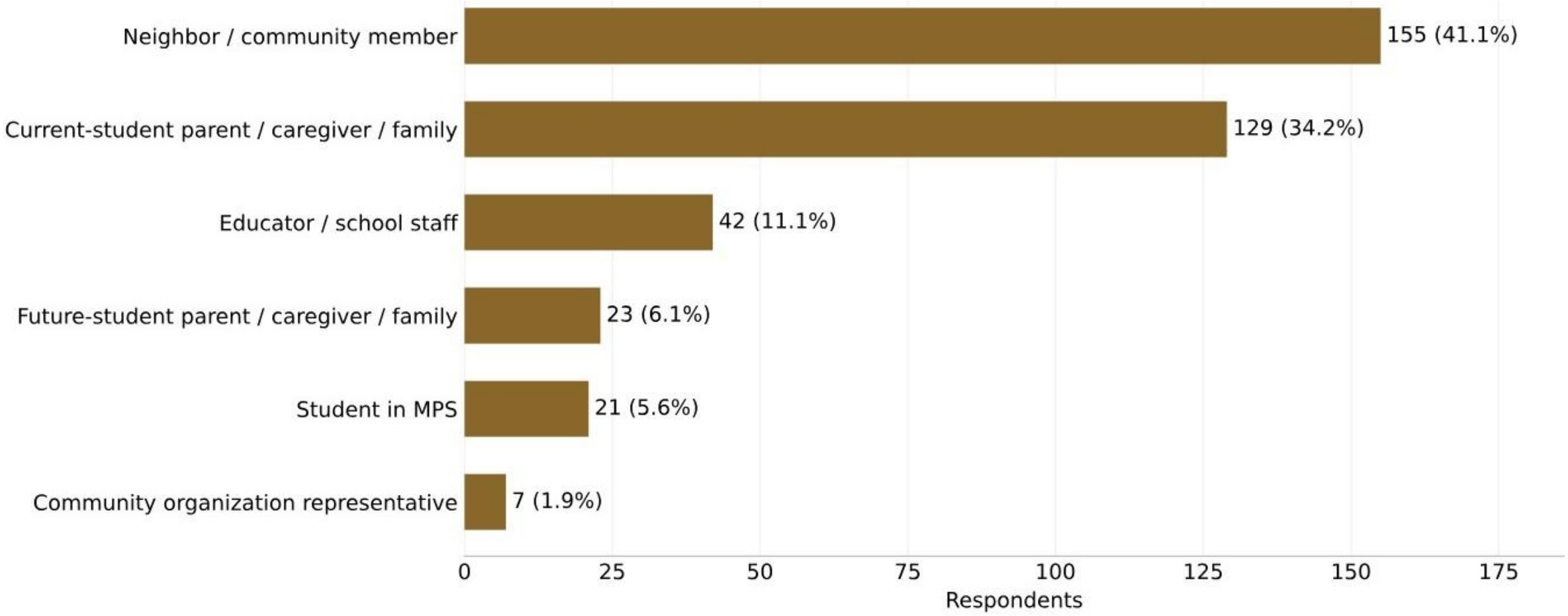
Other Engagements:

- Digital Survey
- Door Knocking
- Phone calls
- Boards at Sanford MS, NE, Anderson, South, Edison

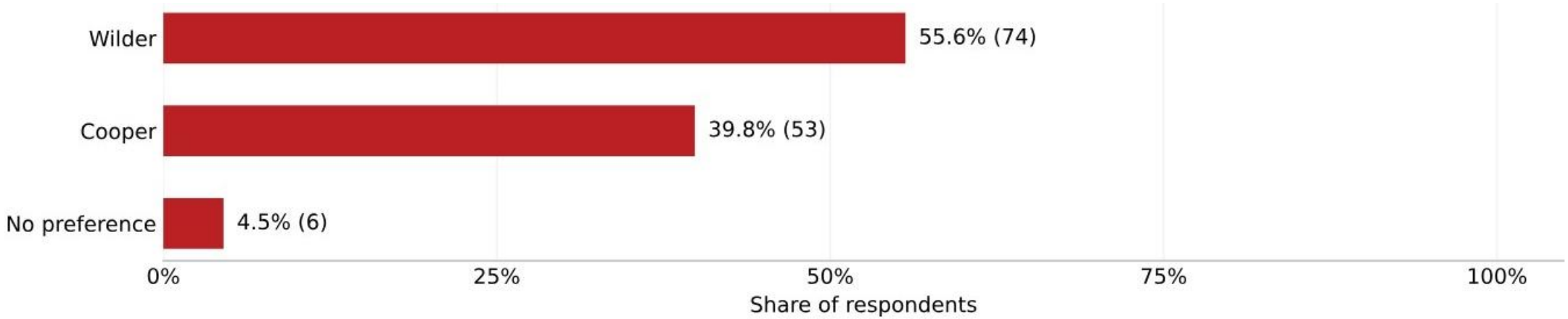
Feedback Received – Survey:



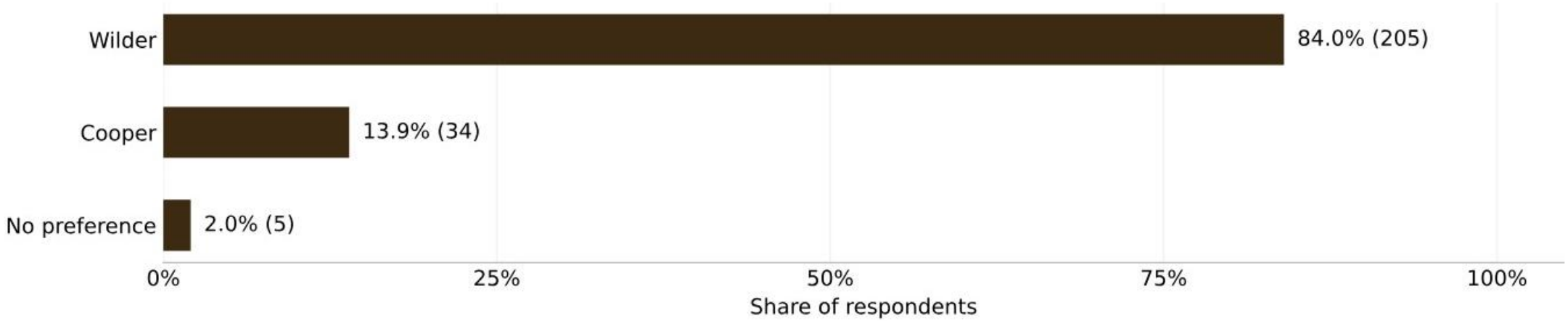
Relationship to the community (overall) – 377 responses



Site preference (American Indian)
133 respondents

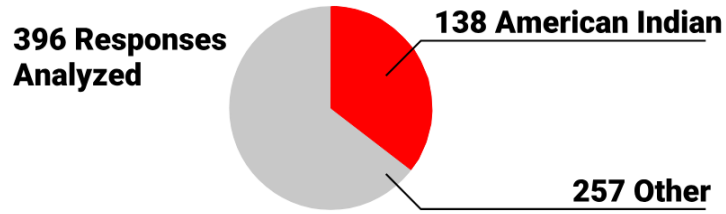


Site preference (Non - American Indian)
244 respondents

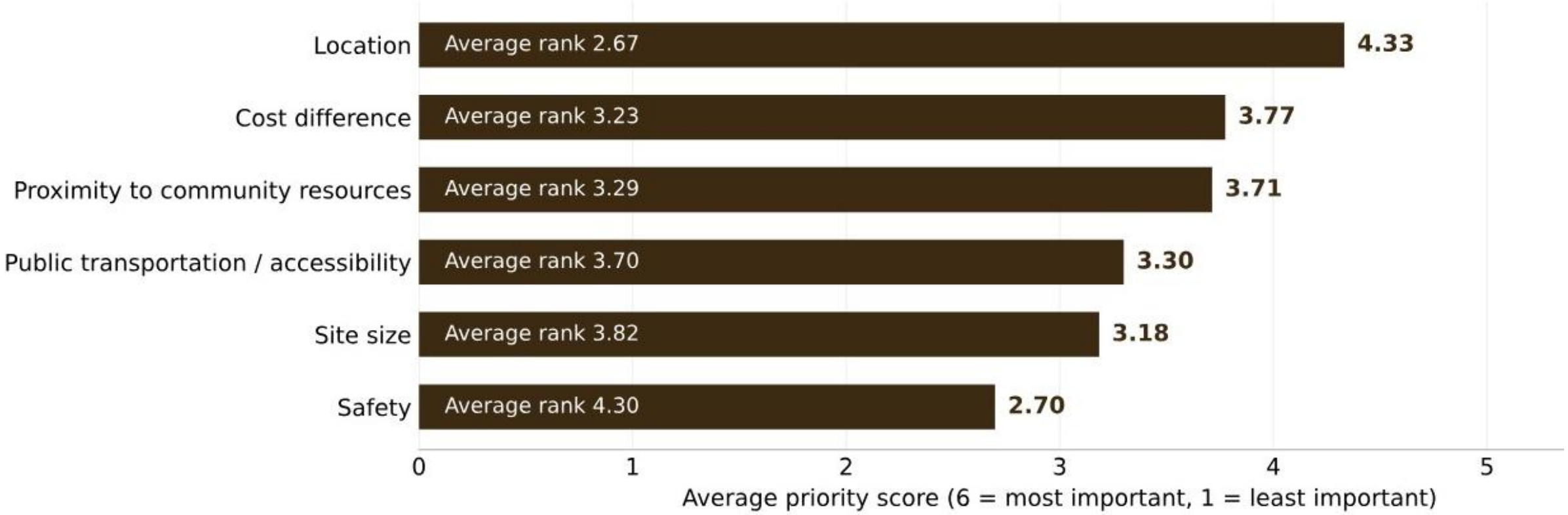


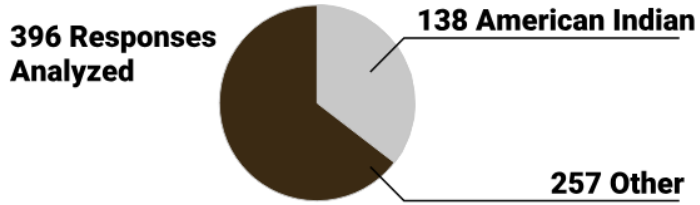
What matters most in choosing a site?
(American Indian) 133 respondents



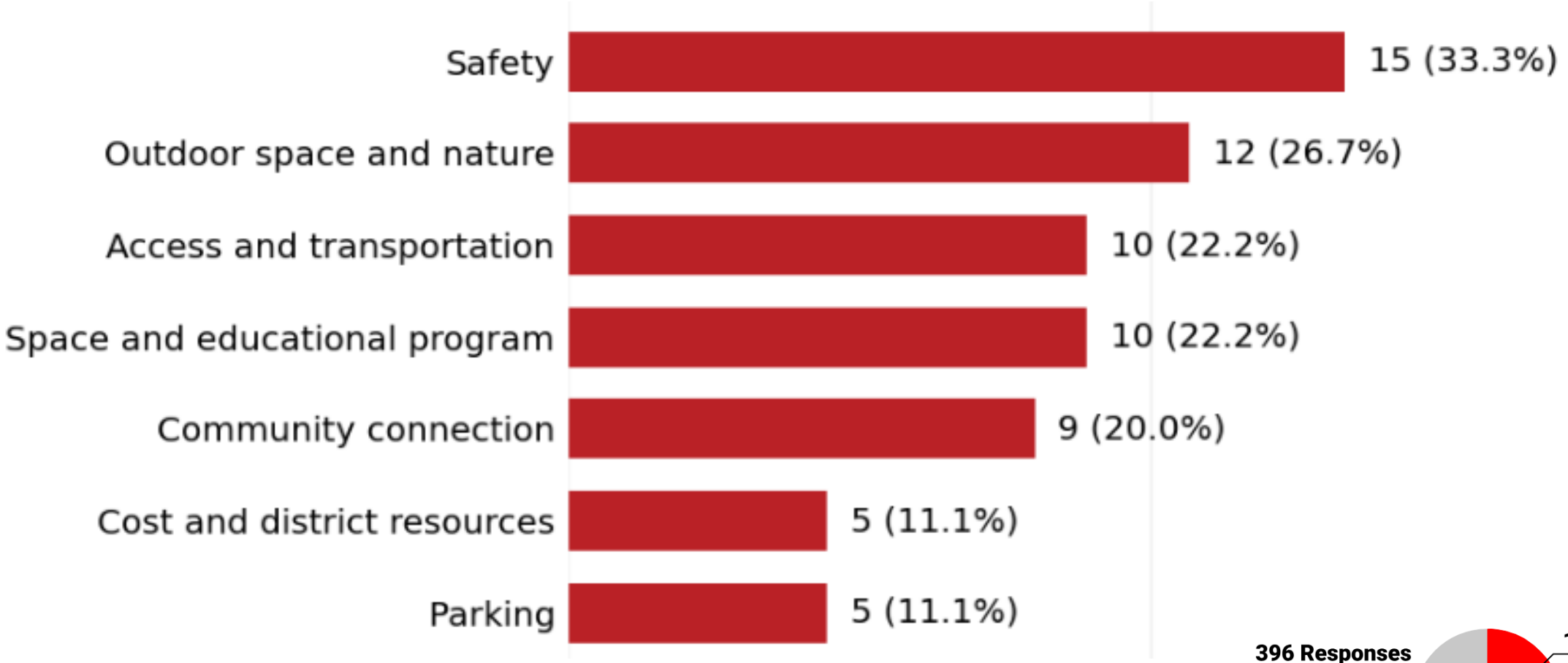


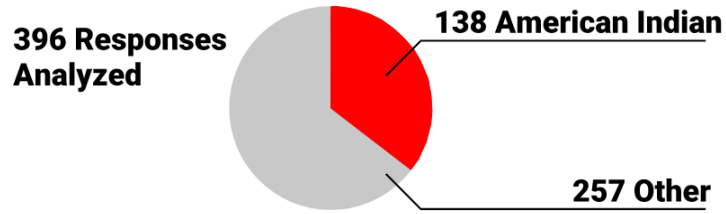
What matters most in choosing a site?
(Non - American Indian) 244 respondents



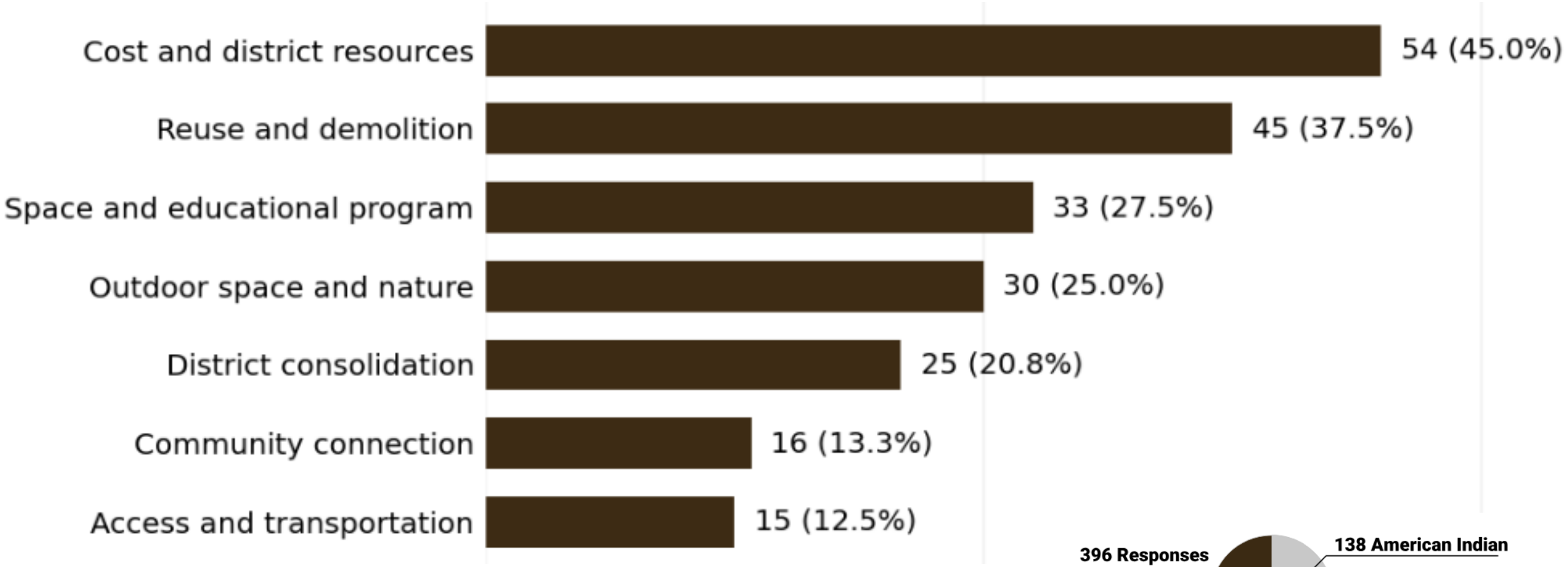


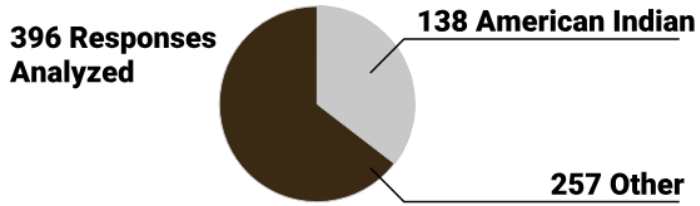
Information requests and concerns (American Indian) 45 responses





Information requests and concerns (Non-American Indian) 113 responses

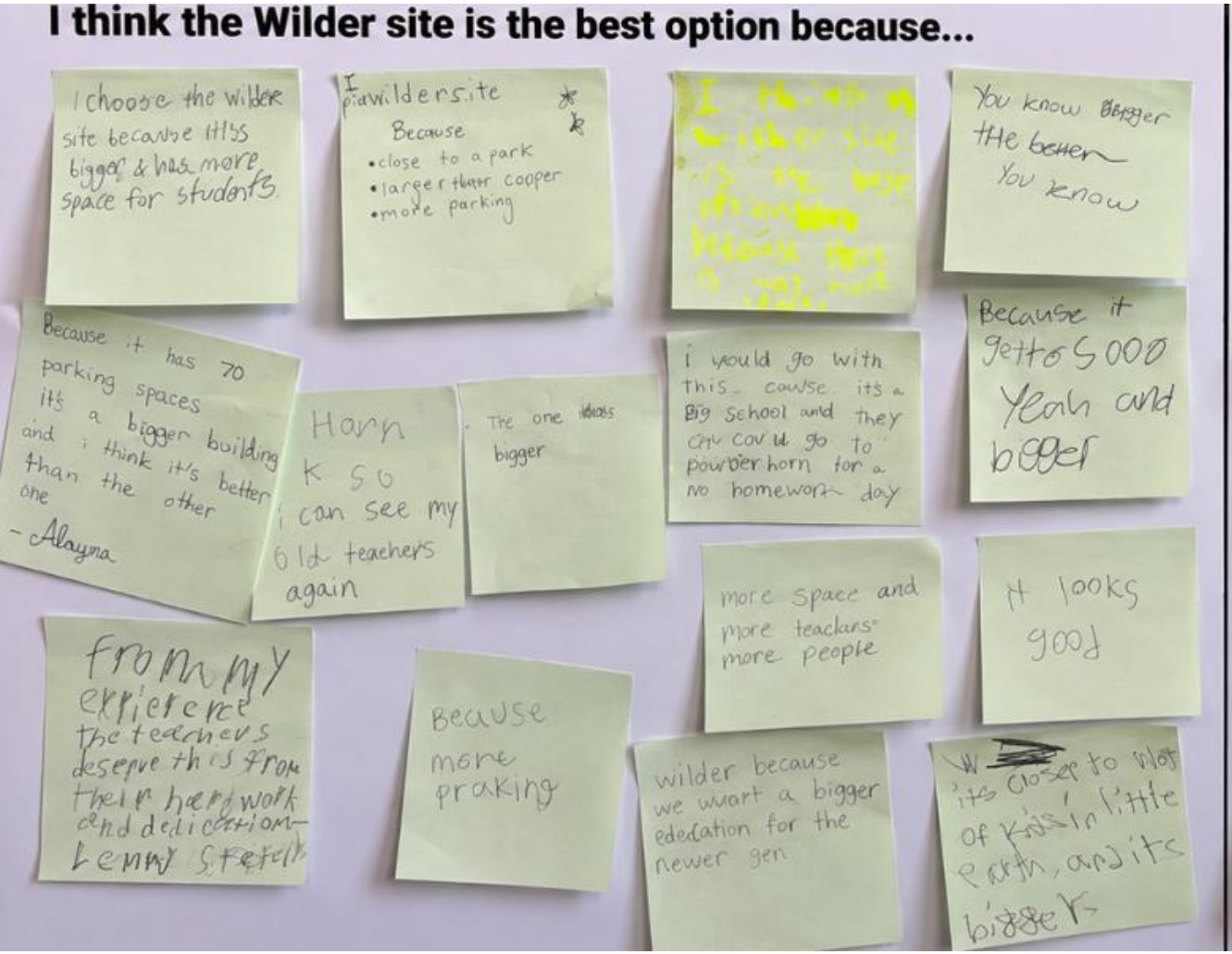


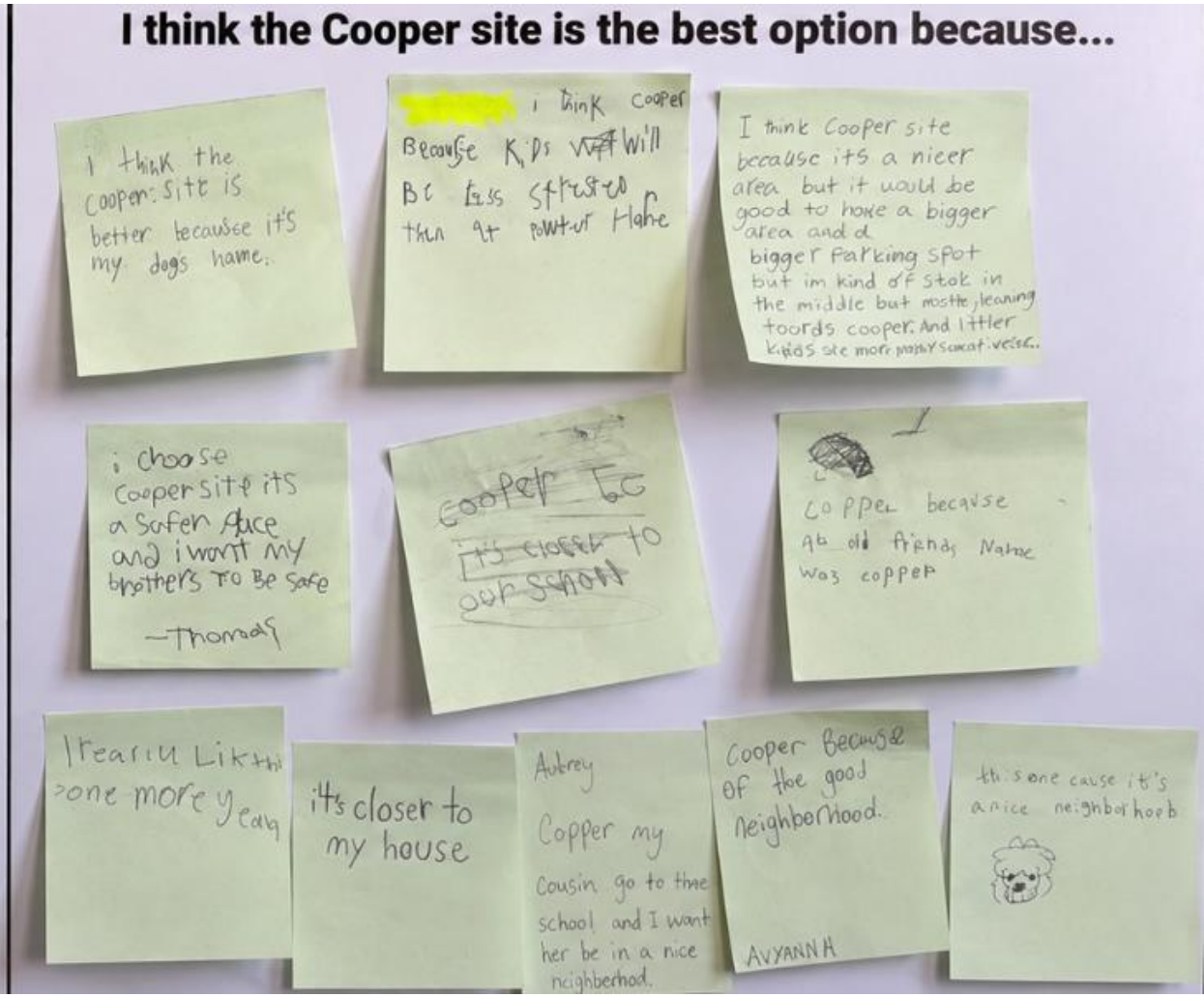


Feedback Received - In Person + Virtual Listening Sessions (10):
> 150 Responses Analyzed – American Indian Community



Feedback Received: Students at Sanford MS American Indian Pathway

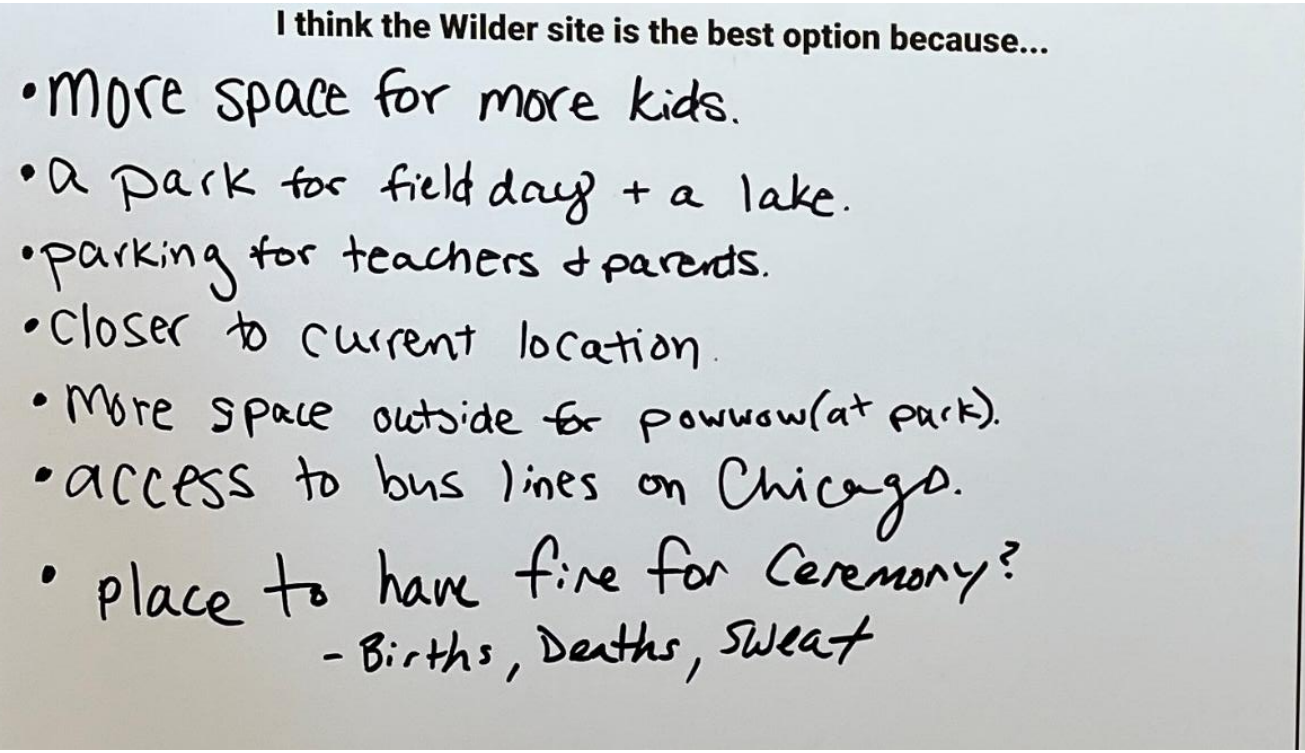


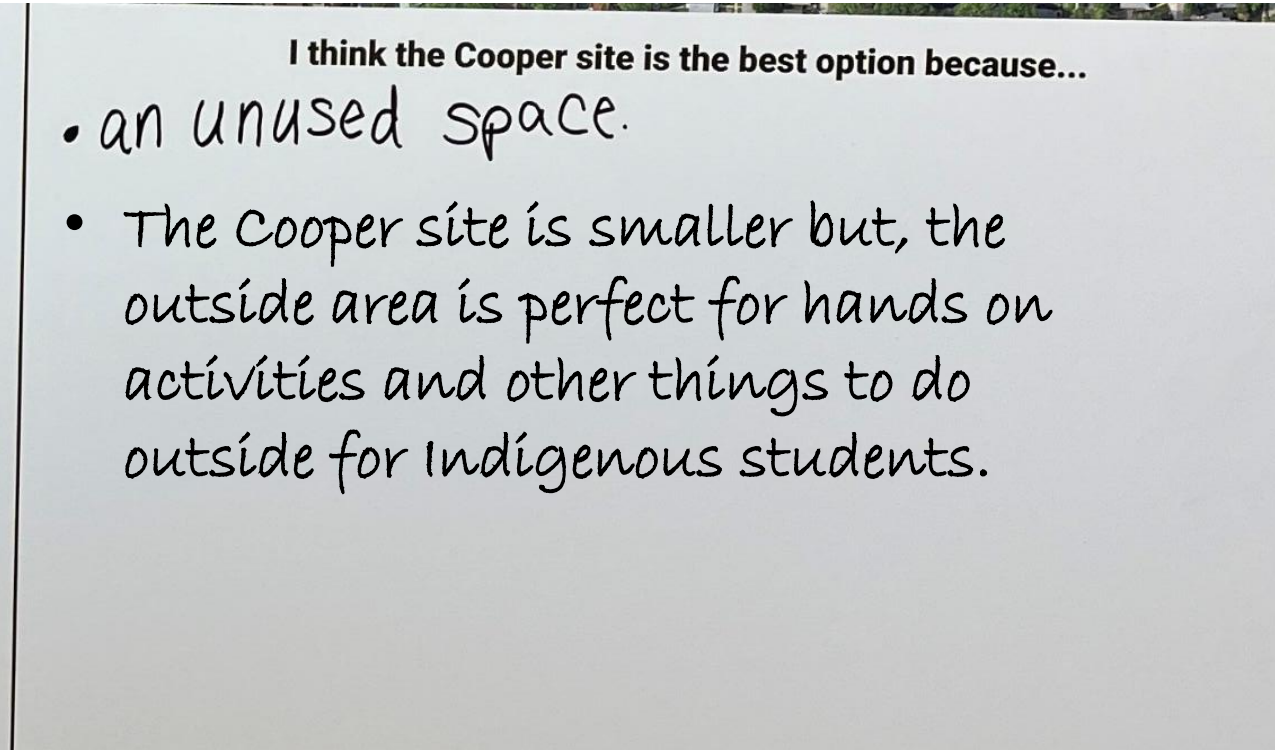


“Wilder because we want a bigger education for the newer gen.”

“I choose Cooper site it’s a safer place and I want my brothers to be safe.”

Feedback Received: Additional Student Feedback





“More space for more kids.”

“It’s an unused space.”

Feedback Received - In Person + Virtual Listening Sessions: Key Themes

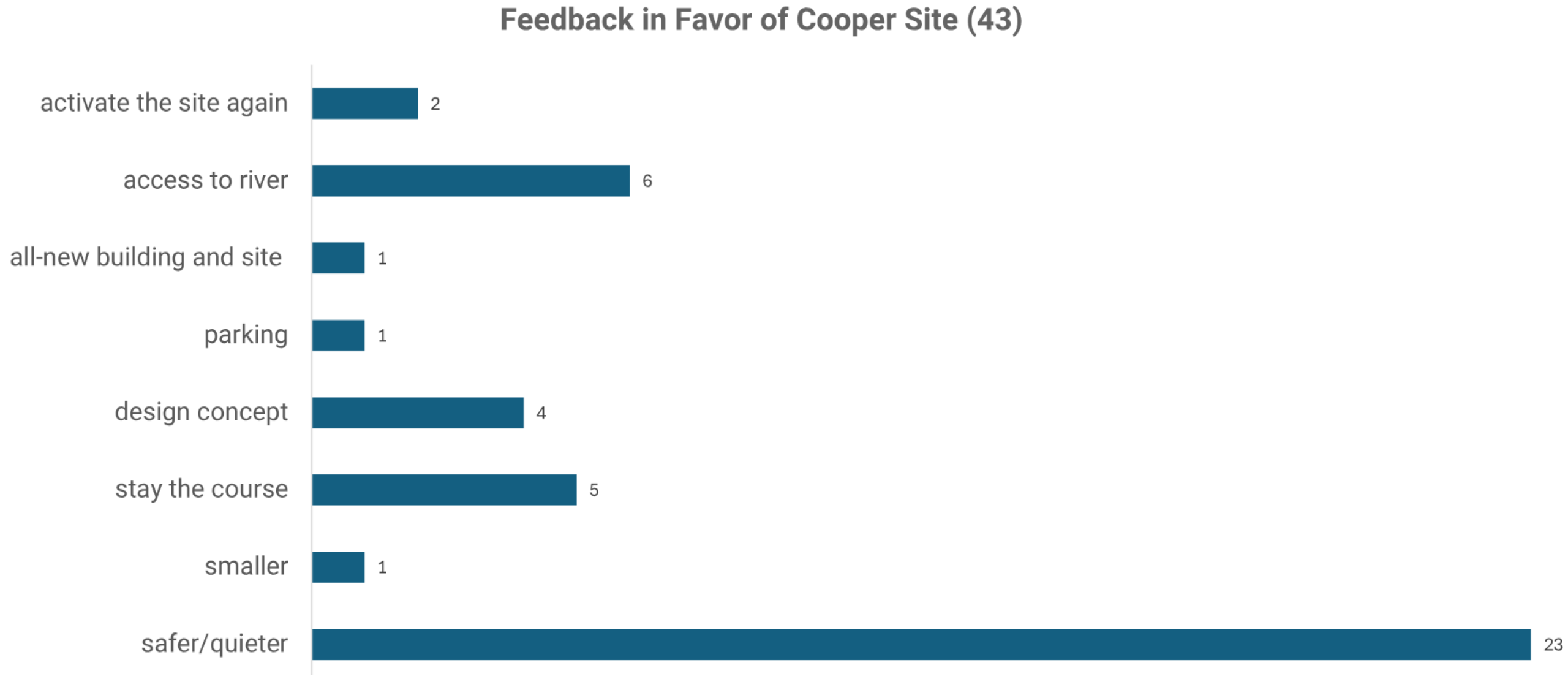


Feedback Received - In Person + Virtual Listening Sessions: Key Themes

Concerns shared about Wilder Site:

- Safety – would like to see commitment to security beyond school teachers and administrative staff
- How will changing site benefit the kids?
- How will the transformation plan affect the project?
    - Feel like we're being pitted against Heritage Academy Families / Community
- The neighborhood is too dense
- The existing building is confusing
- Would prefer a smaller school
- Chicago Ave. is a busy street
- Concerned about the quality of the existing infrastructure, how much will be replaced?
- Lake is a safety concern

Feedback Received - In Person + Virtual Listening Sessions: Key Themes



Feedback Received - In Person + Virtual Listening Sessions: Key Themes

Concerns shared about Cooper Site:

- We don't feel welcome



Wopida Taka
Chi Miigwech
Thank you

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Minneapolis Public Schools

Full Circle
Indigenous Planning + Design

Cuningham

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URBAN ECOSYSTEMS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS