

The Visual Preference Survey (VPS)

Presented by the
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware



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What is a Visual Preference Survey?

- **A visualization technique that allows:**
 - Citizens and decision-makers to determine preferences for various types of community design, architectural styles, land/streetscaping, and/or built-environment options.
 - Stakeholders to determine which components of a plan or project environment contribute positively to a community's overall image or features.
- **A public engagement technique/tool that provides for:**
 - Citizen-based land-use planning
 - Visualization in land-use and transportation planning
 - Visioning and consensus-building

VPS and Community Engagement

A VPS allows citizens and decision-makers to:

- Understand land-use and transportation concepts/information instantly or intuitively.
- View and rate visual aspects of and preferences for community design images (both existing or proposed).
- Actively participate and provide public input as a factor in decision-making on design components that impact:
 - Community land-use patterns,
 - Scope/size/type of transportation facilities,
 - Architectural style,
 - The built and human environment, and
 - Site design features.

VPS Benefits to Governments/Agencies



Promotes public understanding of and involvement in:

- Community and urban design features
- Transportation sub-area or corridor studies
- Transportation alternatives development and analysis
- Large-scale regional planning efforts
- Visioning exercises
- Design charrettes

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Benefits of Using a VPS in Community Planning:

- **Cost effective** – costs vary based on:
 - Whether the VPS is conducted in-house, using existing personnel and resources, or with assistance of consulting services.
 - The range of visual options to be displayed, the desired sample size, and the method(s) of collecting and analyzing public preferences.
- **Flexible** – may be administered in a variety of formats and settings.
- **User friendly** – may be used by all citizens and stakeholders that wish to express community design preferences.
- **Builds consensus** – participants can express judgments and possibly reach a consensus about a visual preferences.
- **Visual** – provides a systematic approach for participants to rate or assess each visual depiction on a preference scale.

Steps of VPS Implementation

1. Determine type of VPS
2. Collect images
3. Develop the survey tool
4. Administer the survey
5. Analyze the results
6. Apply findings to a planning process



1. Determine Type of VPS

Community Specific

Conceptual

Generic



Community Specific: Photographs of actual design options within a specific community

Conceptual: Images that provide visual/graphic representations of conceptual design options

Generic: Photographs/images of design options in another community, which could be applied in another context or community

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2. Collect Images



Streetscaping
Aug 28, 2013



Larger Parks and Walking Trails



Public and Civic Buildings
Sep 9, 2013
photos: 25



Highway Commercial
Sep 9, 2013
photos: 62

2.

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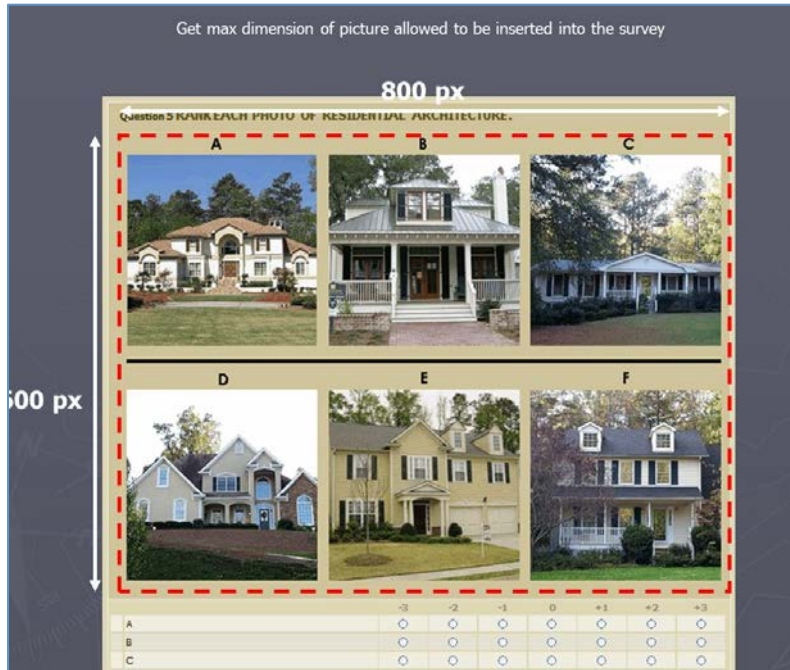
1. Take photos during community field work, and/or
2. Collect images from online web album site

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3. Develop the Survey Tool

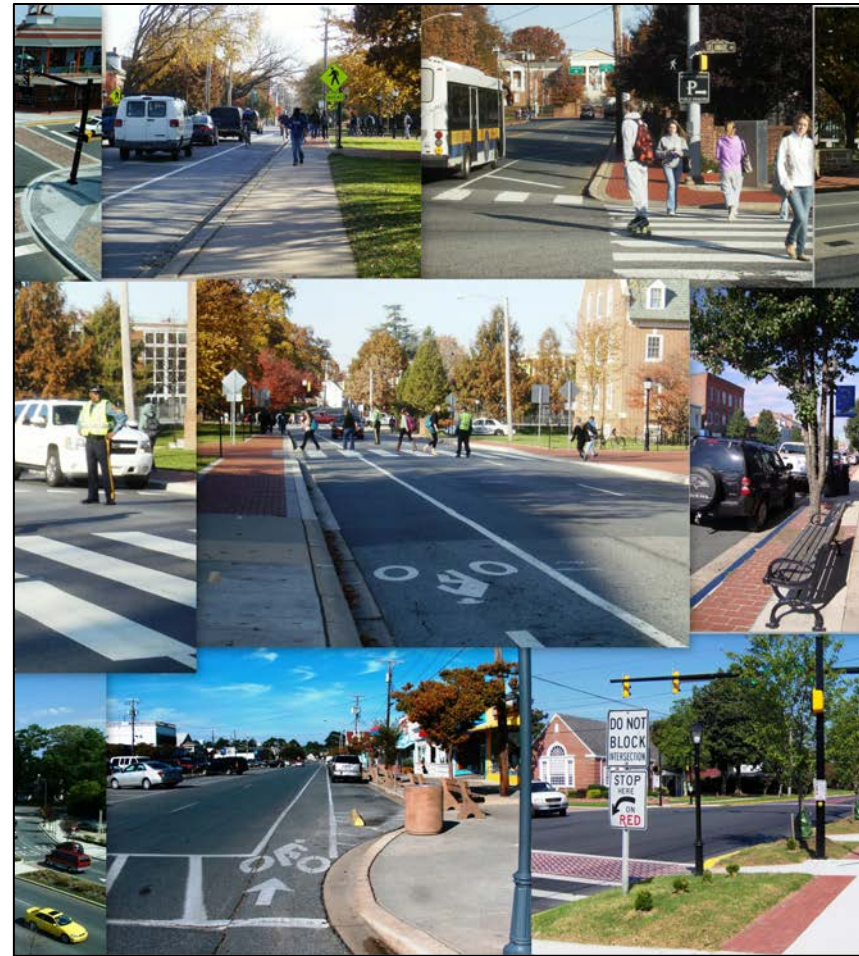
Determine Format(s):

- Written ballot
- A structured set of self-administered questions
- A facilitated discussion
- A focus group format
- An open semi-structured forum
- Hand-held automated response system (ARS)
- On-line survey, OR a Combination of several formats



Survey Components - Images

- Gather and organize a series of images by broad themes (e.g., five elements of a complete community)
- Further categorize by topic area (e.g., gateways)
- Provide four- to six- image options for survey respondents to rate



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Survey Component – Rating System

- Develop a rating scale to measure the appeal of each photo
- Provide directions to explain the rating system to respondents
- Provide an electronic or hard-copy response sheet to collect data

DIRECTIONS:
 Photos are rated from a possible low of -3 to a possible high of 3.

- Negative numbers indicate how **unappealing** you feel the photo is.
- Positive numbers indicate how **appealing** you feel the photo is.
- "0" means that you have no opinion or think the image is **neutral**.

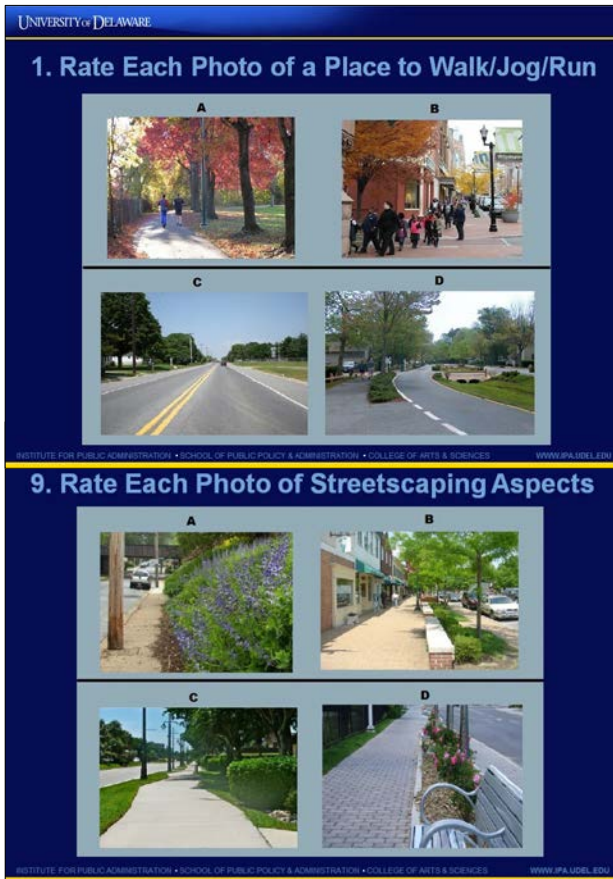
(-3)	(-2)	(-1)	(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Strongly Unappealing	Unappealing	Somewhat Unappealing	Neutral	Somewhat Appealing	Appealing	Strongly Appealing

For each photo please place an (X) under the rating that best reflects the appeal of each photo

Rate Each Photo of...

	(-3)	(-2)	(-1)	(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)
A							
B							
C							
D							

Survey Components - Questionnaire



Organize questionnaire by:

- Informed Consent Statement
 - Purpose of survey
 - Assurance of voluntary participation and anonymity
- Demographic Questions
- Ratings
 - Bulk of survey
 - Assesses appeal of each image
- Open-ended questions

4. Administer the Survey



Strive for a representative sample of the stakeholders and/or community's population

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High-Touch (In-Person) Approach:

- Invite diverse stakeholders
- Issue press releases; publicize event
- Administer VPS in a public form or other specialized public gathering
- Provide an opportunity to review, study and comment on visual preferences

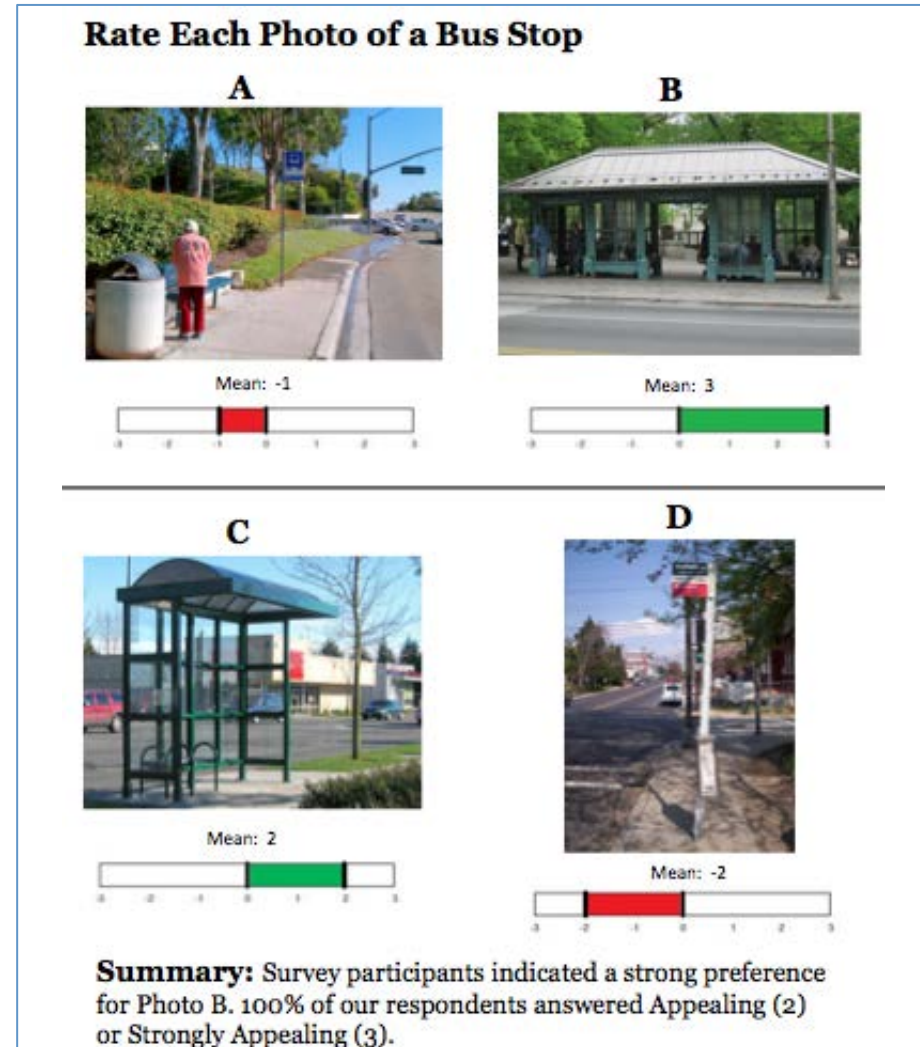
High-Tech (Electronic Survey) Approach:

- Issue press releases to notify public
- Provide links to survey on websites
- Circulate flyers to community groups

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5. Analyze the Results

- Find the mode (numerical ranking) or mean (average rating) for each image.
- Use the rating system to determine negative, positive, or neutral preferences for each image.
- Quantify the public's collective opinion for each visual image.
- Assess significant visual preferences and summarize outcomes.

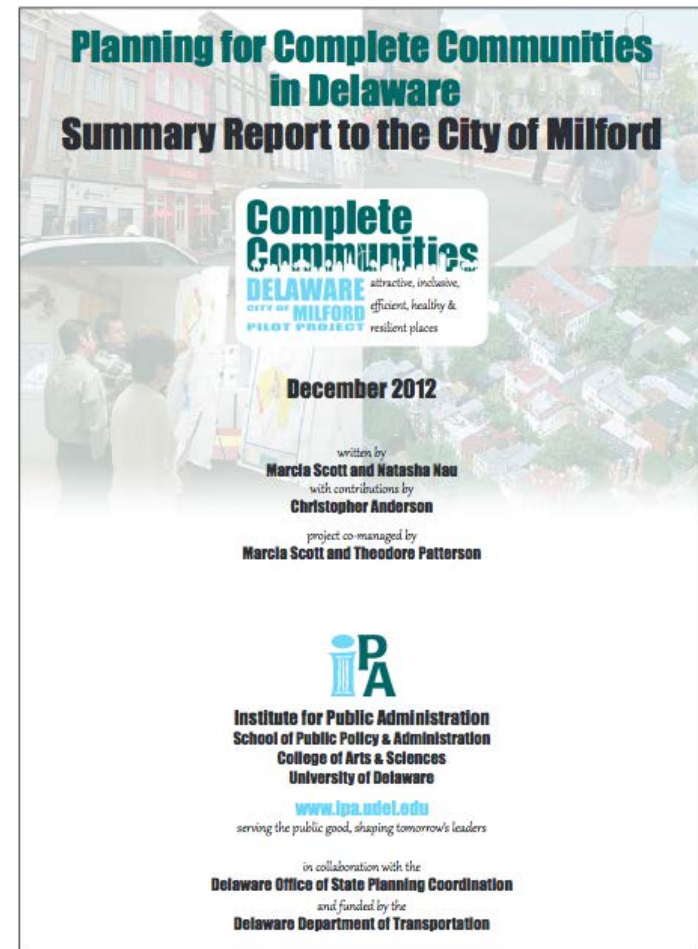


6. Apply Findings to a Planning Process

As a community visioning exercise, VPS results may be used in a planning context, such as:

- Comprehensive or master plans
- Zoning and subdivision amendments
- Community design standards
- Determining priorities for:
 - Capital improvement projects
 - Transportation investments

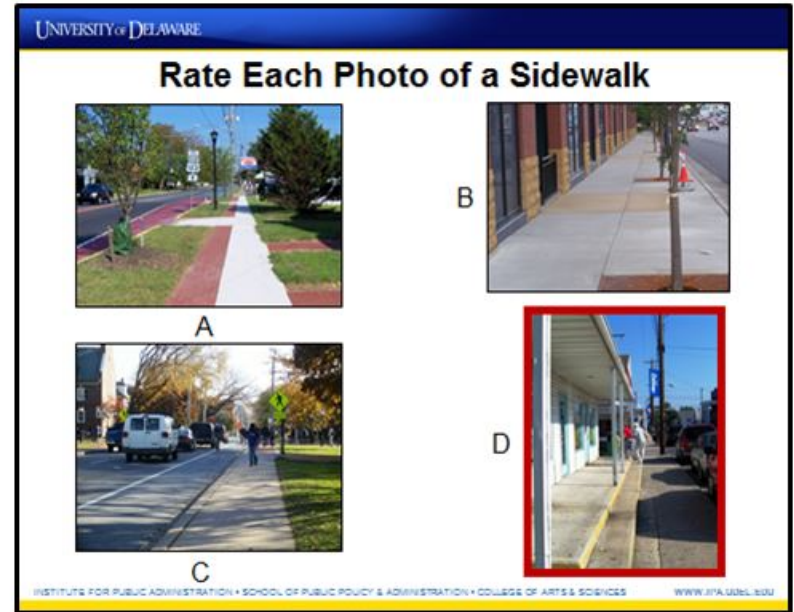
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Need Technical Assistance?

- Need help to develop and conduct a VPS? Contact:
Marcia Scott, msscott@udel.edu or
Ted Patterson, theodore@udel.edu
- Need photos to develop your own VPS?
 - View the “CC Delaware IPA” Picasa Web Album:
www.picasaweb.google.com



Question #2 required respondents to rate different photos of sidewalks. 75% of respondents indicated that Photo D was unappealing answering either Unappealing (2) or Strongly Appealing (3).

Credit Slide

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Citations

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