



## 2. EXPLANATION OF THE PROCESS

## Visualizing A Positive Future

This Visual Preference Exercise helped determine the most positive future visual and spatial characteristics for Fire Island as well as those that are positive and are more controversial.

The goal of this Visual Preference Exercise was to understand what visual and spatial character constitutes the positive character of Fire Island and what might jeopardize that character. ANA has conducted hundreds of these exercises to thousands of people who provide a unique insight as to the feelings they have about the places and spaces where they live, work and recreate. This community involvement process has led to their understanding of what constitutes the “soul” of a place, what needs to be applauded, encouraged, preserved and enhanced as well as generating recommendations for improvement to the visual and spatial quality of place thereby contributing to the improvement in value and quality of life.

A total of 545 people participated in the Community Character Study using the Internet from November 2009 to January 15, 2010. This is one of the smaller studies that ANA has conducted, but given the time and the nature of the community, this was an extraordinary response.

The images that have been assembled in this volume are considered to be “non-controversial” in that there appears to be complete agreement among project participants based on how positively or how negatively they viewed each image. In other words, there was very little ambiguity about how participants felt about these images. By contrast, for images considered “controversial” these are often evenly split with some positive ratings and some negative ones.

## Visioning Statement

Determining the character of the natural and built environment that people identify as Fire Island...

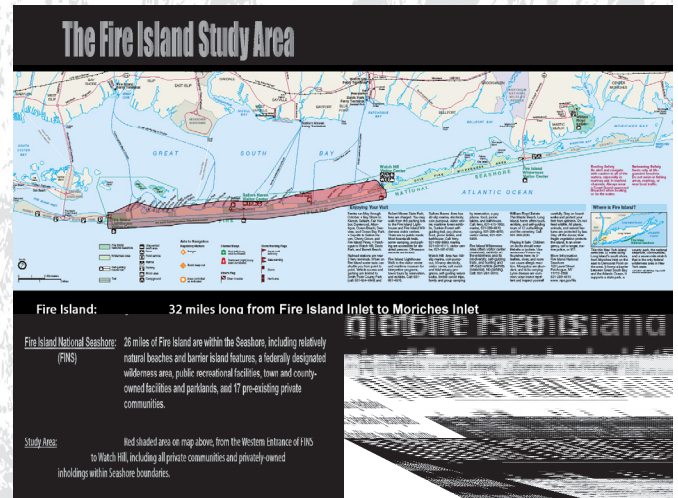
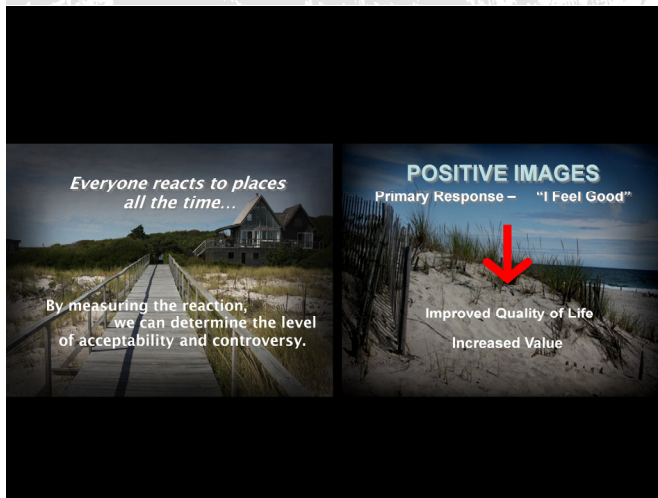
...to protect what makes Fire Island special, now and in the future.

The exercise asked people to give us their feelings regarding the buildings, the spaces these created, the landscaping, public spaces and the natural environment.

**Every image of place generates a reaction that can be measured...**

Human beings are constantly responding emotionally to their environment. Those places which constantly receive a positive response are those for which people are very protective. Finding out the intensity of the reaction allows an analysis of the images for those physical and spatial qualities which can generate recommendations and policy for preservation and change.



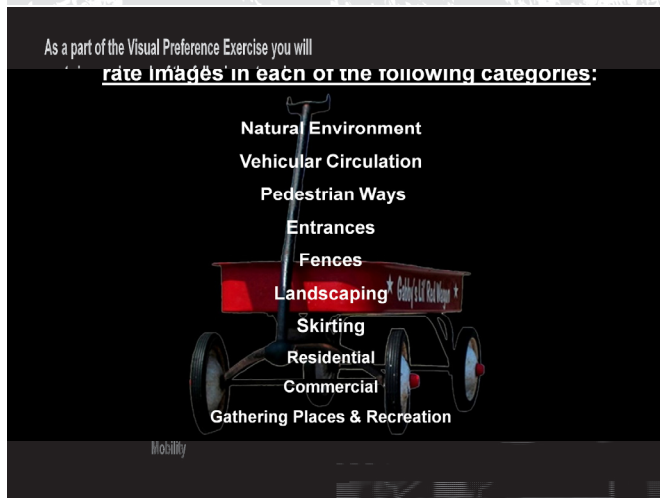


The ANA process of image evaluation generates a numerical measurement of positive and negative reactions to place. Nothing is more important than people's feeling about place.

The higher the positive response to an image the more intense the feelings. The analysis of the physical, spatial and environmental components of an image can assist in understanding how the combination of imposed and natural characteristics can best work together.

Images with higher rated values make a person feel emotionally positive and therefore influence their perception. If many positive or highly rated images are viewed adjacent to one another or in sequence, the more typical response is "the place shown in this image makes me feel good," "it improves my quality of life and my worth as a human being."

Fire Island is a barrier island with a dynamic physical environment affected by ever changing winds, tidal fluctuations and other coastal processes. It is a fragile landscape that could be seriously affected by a major hurricane at some point in the future. None the less the character of the communities and the shared values of its humanism balanced with nature is a model of a place that stirs strong reactions. It is a cherished and unique place.

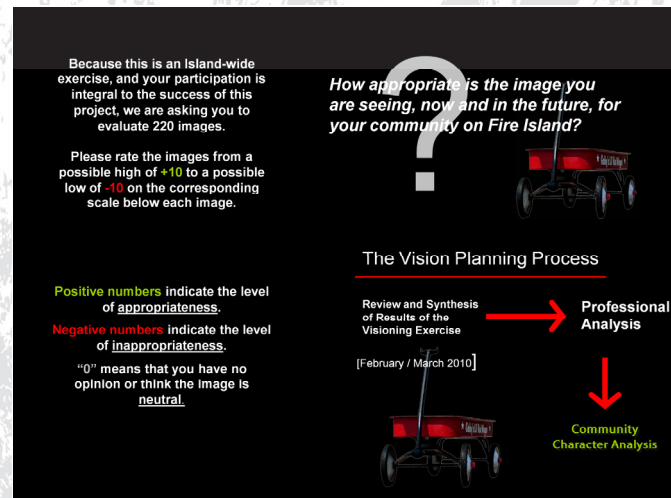


This was a large visual analysis with 210 images in 11 categories including images from the 17 Fire Island communities. A visual and spatial analysis of any place requires a holistic vision. Project participants were asked to evaluate a broad range of images representing a range of categories that contained the essence of the visual and spatial qualities of place. Because of its complexity, this was a large exercise that required participants to spend some extra time to complete it. The 210 images were culled with great difficulty from a total of the thousands of images accumulated during the “photo safari.” We wish to thank all of you who participated in the Visioning Exercise as well as those who shared their Island photographs.

Human beings have the ability to scan, absorb and process multiple images simultaneously. This is compounded when movement [sequence of moving through a place] is considered. The sequence of experiences, as well as the pure diversity of experiences becomes part of the perception and generates the attitude towards place.

There are certain visual and spatial features that are unique to each of the 17 communities. Because of location, they all share specific characteristics. No two of these communities are alike yet they all share specific and unique attributes that make Fire Island unique. Of all the above categories, the strongest positive reaction was to Mobility, Gathering Places and Recreation, Pedestrian Ways, the Natural Environment and Residential.

Every place we see and experience generates an emotional and physical reaction. Participants were asked to rate the images from a +10 to a -10 based on their personal reaction to the image. In this context, by most appropriate, we meant something a participant “likes or does not object to.” By least appropriate, we meant something a participant “dislikes or



The values placed on each image by participants were summed and two primary results, the average value by all participants and the standard deviation were calculated. The standard deviation shown in the brackets on each image, can best be understood as the value spread or the range of values on either side of the average or median value. As an example, if an image received an average value of +4 and has a standard deviation of [2] this can be interpreted as a value range between a +6 and a+2, adding or subtracting 2 to the average value.

With these values stamped on each image, the analysis of each image was completed through various arraying procedures (e.g. isolating the highest valued images with a consistently positive range in a given category).

This meant that because many people gave an image an overall positive value, there were a few who considered this same image to be negative. In images with positive average value and a low standard deviation, if the lowest value on the range was not lower than a +1, that image was considered to be non-controversial. In this context, “non-controversial” simply means that there was a consensus about the whether the image was positive or negative.

While many people gave many images an overall positive value, there were a few participants who considered them to be a negative. In images with positive values only, those images with a positive value and a standard deviation over 1 were considered to be non-controversial. In this context, “non-controversial” simply means that there was basically a consensus around the whether the image was positive or negative – mostly positive.



## DEMOGRAPHIC, MARKET & POLICY QUESTIONNAIRE

There were 59 demographic, policy, and market questions included in the Visual Preference exercise. The responses to all the questions are listed in an appendix at the end of this volume. These results will be further analyzed and incorporated into the project report.

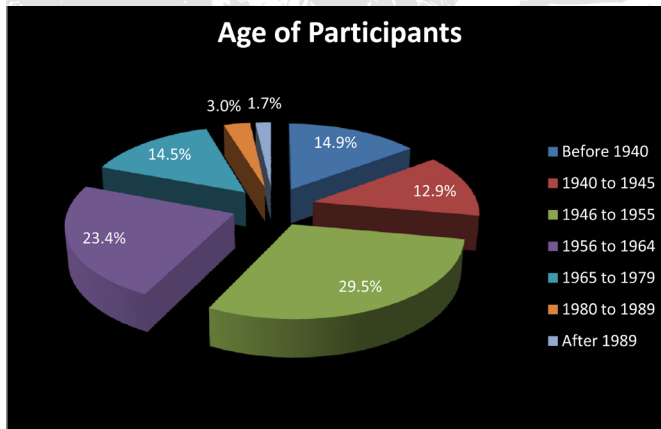
This Demographic, Market and Policy Questionnaire accompanies the Visual Preference Survey™ (VPS™) and is applicable to the Study Area and its Environs. Your responses are critical to assure that your thoughts regarding policies for future development and preservation are incorporated into a Community Character Analysis Report for Fire Island.

The Visual Preference Survey™ (VPS™) and the Demographic and Policy Questionnaire have been developed specifically for the Community Character Analysis of Fire Island. This survey is intended to gauge citizens' perceptions and preferences. A. Nelessen Associates, Inc., will analyze results of the VPS and the questionnaire and use them as the foundation for the Community Character Analysis Report to which you are contributing with your participation.

Participants were not required to provide their name or any other identifiers. The responses and answers are anonymous and confidential. The responses to these demographic questions at the beginning of the Visual Preference Exercise were critical to assure that your thoughts regarding policies for the future preservation and development are incorporated into the Community Character Analysis for Fire Island.

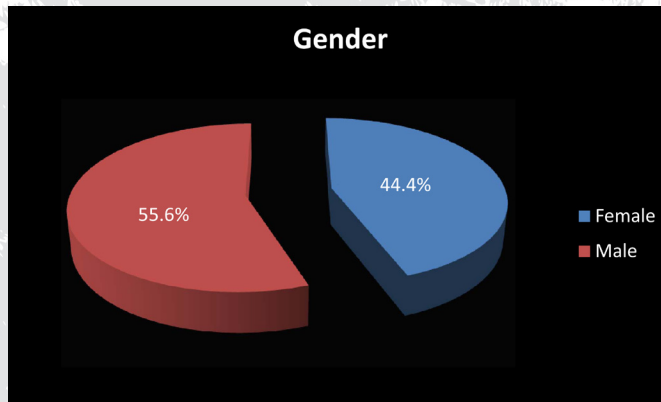
## DEMOGRAPHICS

|   |                                 | # of responses | 572 |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------|-----|
| 1 | <b>What year were you born?</b> |                |     |
| 1 | Before 1940                     | 14.9%          | 85  |
| 2 | 1940 to 1945                    | 12.9%          | 74  |
| 3 | 1946 to 1955                    | 29.5%          | 169 |
| 4 | 1956 to 1964                    | 23.4%          | 134 |
| 5 | 1965 to 1979                    | 14.5%          | 83  |
| 6 | 1980 to 1989                    | 3.0%           | 17  |
| 7 | After 1989                      | 1.7%           | 10  |
|   |                                 | 100.0%         | 572 |



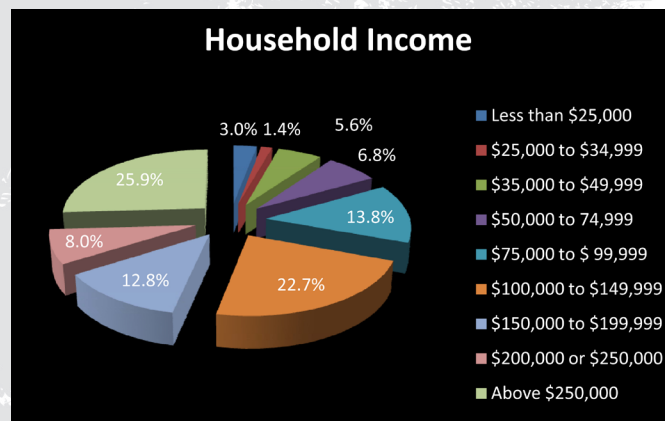
2 What is your gender?

|   |        |        |     |
|---|--------|--------|-----|
| 1 | Female | 44.4%  | 254 |
| 2 | Male   | 55.6%  | 318 |
|   |        | 100.0% | 572 |



3 Which category best represents your annual household income?

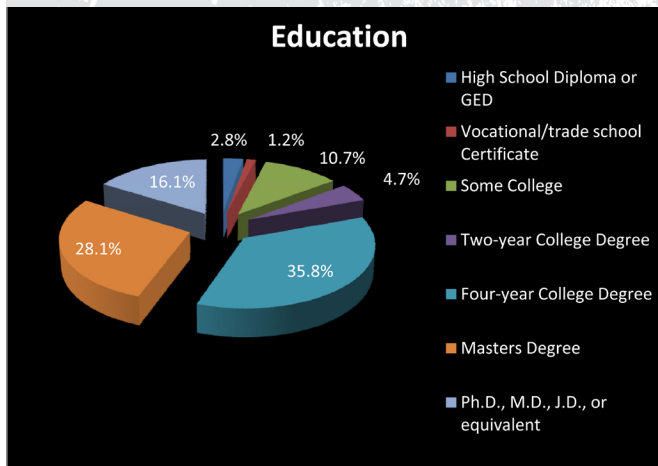
|   |                        |        |     |
|---|------------------------|--------|-----|
| 1 | Less than \$25,000     | 3.0%   | 17  |
| 2 | \$25,000 to \$34,999   | 1.4%   | 8   |
| 3 | \$35,000 to \$49,999   | 5.6%   | 32  |
| 4 | \$50,000 to \$74,999   | 6.8%   | 39  |
| 5 | \$75,000 to \$99,999   | 13.8%  | 79  |
| 6 | \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 22.7%  | 130 |
| 7 | \$150,000 to \$199,999 | 12.8%  | 73  |
| 8 | \$200,000 or \$250,000 | 8.0%   | 46  |
| 9 | Above \$250,000        | 25.9%  | 148 |
|   |                        | 100.0% | 572 |





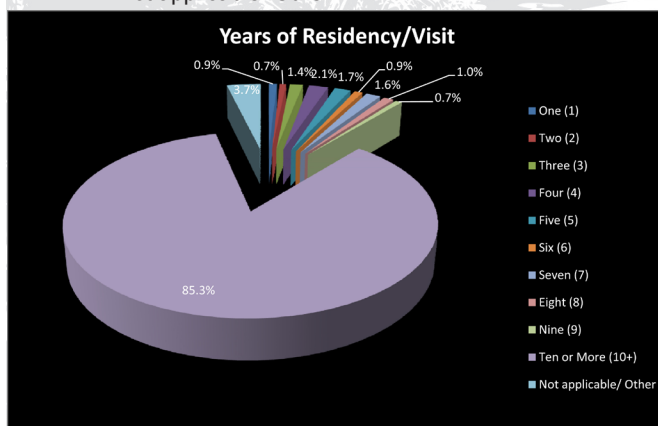
## 4 What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

|   |                                     |        |     |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| 1 | Less than High School               | 0.5%   | 3   |
| 2 | Some High School                    | 0.0%   | 0   |
| 3 | High School Diploma or GED          | 2.8%   | 16  |
| 4 | Vocational/trade school Certificate | 1.2%   | 7   |
| 5 | Some College                        | 10.7%  | 61  |
| 6 | Two-year College Degree             | 4.7%   | 27  |
| 7 | Four-year College Degree            | 35.8%  | 205 |
| 8 | Masters Degree                      | 28.1%  | 161 |
| 9 | Ph.D., M.D., J.D., or equivalent    | 16.1%  | 92  |
|   |                                     | 100.0% | 572 |



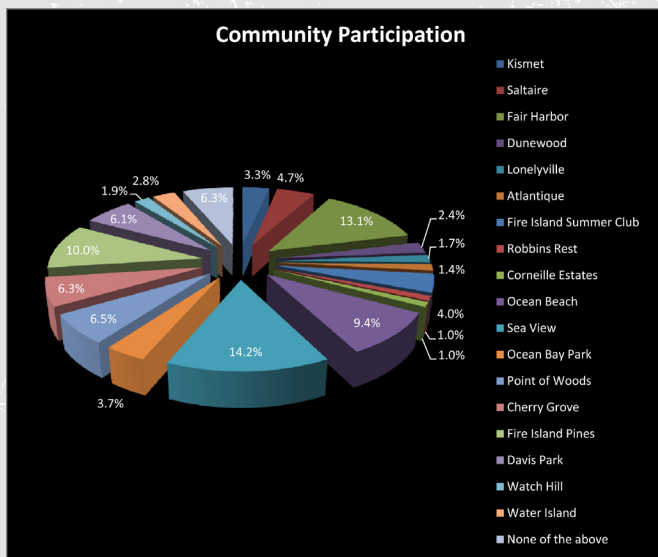
## 9 How many years have you been a resident/been visiting Fire Island?

|    |                       |       |     |
|----|-----------------------|-------|-----|
| 1  | One (1)               | 0.9%  | 5   |
| 2  | Two (2)               | 0.7%  | 4   |
| 3  | Three (3)             | 1.4%  | 8   |
| 4  | Four (4)              | 2.1%  | 12  |
| 5  | Five (5)              | 1.7%  | 10  |
| 6  | Six (6)               | 0.9%  | 5   |
| 7  | Seven (7)             | 1.6%  | 9   |
| 8  | Eight (8)             | 1.0%  | 6   |
| 9  | Nine (9)              | 0.7%  | 4   |
| 10 | Ten or More (10+)     | 85.3% | 488 |
| 11 | Not applicable/ Other | 3.7%  | 21  |



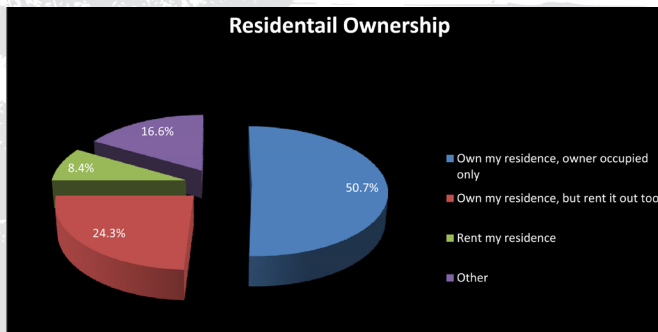
**5 Which community do you reside in while on Fire Island?**

|    |                         |        |     |
|----|-------------------------|--------|-----|
| 1  | Kismet                  | 3.3%   | 19  |
| 2  | Saltaire                | 4.7%   | 27  |
| 3  | Fair Harbor             | 13.1%  | 75  |
| 4  | Dunewood                | 2.4%   | 14  |
| 5  | Lonelyville             | 1.7%   | 10  |
| 6  | Atlantique              | 1.4%   | 8   |
| 7  | Fire Island Summer Club | 4.0%   | 23  |
| 8  | Robbins Rest            | 1.0%   | 6   |
| 9  | Corneille Estates       | 1.0%   | 6   |
| 10 | Ocean Beach             | 9.4%   | 54  |
| 11 | Sea View                | 14.2%  | 81  |
| 12 | Ocean Bay Park          | 3.7%   | 21  |
| 13 | Point of Woods          | 6.5%   | 37  |
| 14 | Oakleyville             | 0.0%   | 0   |
| 15 | Cherry Grove            | 6.3%   | 36  |
| 16 | Fire Island Pines       | 10.0%  | 57  |
| 17 | Davis Park              | 6.1%   | 35  |
| 18 | Watch Hill              | 1.9%   | 11  |
| 19 | Water Island            | 2.8%   | 16  |
| 20 | Blue Point Beach        | 0.0%   | 0   |
| 21 | None of the above       | 6.3%   | 36  |
|    |                         | 100.0% | 572 |



**6 Do you own or rent your residence on Fire Island?**

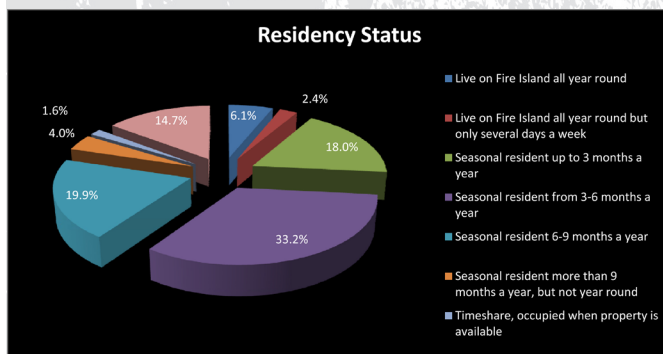
|   |                                       |        |     |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| 1 | Own my residence, owner occupied only | 50.7%  | 290 |
| 2 | Own my residence, but rent it out too | 24.3%  | 139 |
| 3 | Rent my residence                     | 8.4%   | 48  |
| 4 | Other (Specify on the Line Below)     | 16.6%  | 95  |
|   |                                       | 100.0% | 572 |





## 7 What is your residency status on Fire Island?

|   |                                                                 |        |     |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| 1 | Live on Fire Island all year round                              | 6.1%   | 35  |
| 2 | Live on Fire Island all year round but only several days a week | 2.4%   | 14  |
| 3 | Seasonal resident up to 3 months a year                         | 18.0%  | 103 |
| 4 | Seasonal resident from 3-6 months a year                        | 33.2%  | 190 |
| 5 | Seasonal resident 6-9 months a year                             | 19.9%  | 114 |
| 6 | Seasonal resident more than 9 months a year, but not year round | 4.0%   | 23  |
| 7 | Timeshare, occupied when property is available                  | 1.6%   | 9   |
| 8 | other                                                           | 14.7%  | 84  |
|   |                                                                 | 100.0% | 572 |



## General Opinions

# of responses 554

## 16 Which statement below best describes your satisfaction with the general Quality of Life on Fire Island?

|   |                       |        |     |
|---|-----------------------|--------|-----|
| 1 | Highly Satisfied      | 53.4%  | 296 |
| 2 | Satisfied             | 41.7%  | 231 |
| 3 | Neutral or Don't know | 2.5%   | 14  |
| 4 | Unsatisfied           | 1.8%   | 10  |
| 5 | Highly Unsatisfied    | 0.5%   | 3   |
|   |                       | 100.0% | 554 |

