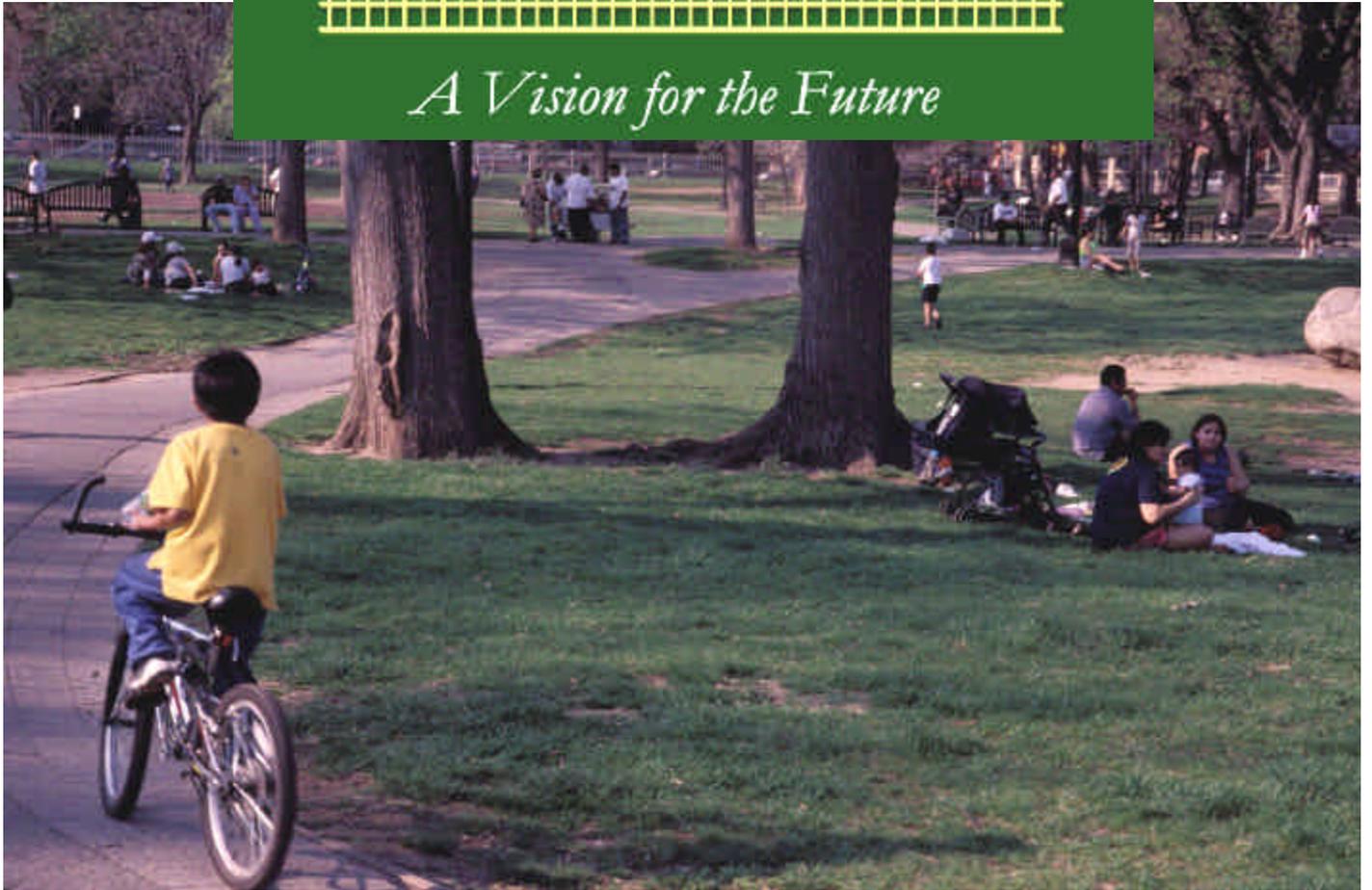


Rufus King Park

A Vision for the Future



Project for Public Spaces, Inc.
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Introduction

Rufus King Park could be one of the jewels of New York City and a major catalyst for change in downtown Jamaica. Its central location in the heart of Jamaica along Jamaica Avenue, adjacent to several important institutions, along with its historical significance, and the presence of the King Manor Museum as its focal point make the Park poised for success.

New York City already has some of the best models in the United States for a wide variety of urban parks. Central Park not only gives identity to the northern end of Manhattan but it also gives meaning to the lives of the estimated 20 million people who use it every year. Bryant Park may be the best small urban park in the country and from an economic perspective it has added millions of dollars to the bottom line of the properties adjacent to it. The recently completed Hudson River Park has brought reality to the fact that Manhattan is an island by providing new access to the waterfront. In Brooklyn, Prospect Park, along with the Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Public Library together form one of the most unique cultural destinations in the region.

In July 2001, Project for Public Spaces was retained through a grant from the J.M. Kaplan Fund to work in partnership with the Friends of King Park, Partnerships for Parks, New York City Parks & Recreation, and area institutions to identify strategies to improve the user experience, image and quality of place in King Park. This working partnership began to develop a vision for a better King Park by studying the existing activities and uses in the park and by listening closely to what people said about how the park currently serves their needs and how it could better serve the community in the future.

Historical Background of the Park

King Park has a fascinating and rich history that is significant not only to New York City, but part of our larger colonial and early American heritage. Our knowledge of this history has been considerably augmented with new research conducted by the Historic House Trust in 2002, which has been released in a Cultural Landscape Inventory. This Inventory will be an invaluable guide for planning future improvements to the park and Manor.

The parkland and the house that still stands in it was once part of the 122-acre property of Rufus King, one of the five framers of the United States Constitution. During an illustrious career, King was a U.S. Senator from New York, a candidate for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States, Ambassador to Great Britain, and an outspoken critic of slavery. He bought the property in 1805, and described it in a letter to his son as “a place in the country...about twelve miles from town...” In 1854 his son, Charles King, wrote in some detail about the property as it looked in 1806, describing it as a house facing south, in a “bare field, about one hundred yards back from the road,” with a narrow gravel path leading “in a straight line from a little gate, down to the door of the house.”

King paid lavish attention to improving the grounds, and historical records suggest he was strongly influenced by the English picturesque landscape style, one of the first to introduce it to this country. He replaced the straight path to the Manor's front door with a circular drive and planted shrubs and trees along "a belt of from twenty to thirty feet in width along the whole front of the ground." An accomplished plantsman, King proceeded to plant the rest of the grounds with an enormous variety of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs, both acquired in the region and from abroad. He also established crops of wheat, barley, corn, potatoes, English hay, and the like, as well as fruit trees, strawberries, currants and other berries.

King's approach to farming seems to have been that of an innovator. As pointed out in the Inventory, "These farmers [agricultural innovators], usually large-scale wealthy planters, would experiment with various cropping practices and attempt to disseminate new knowledge about the most efficient farming methods. They formed organizations to share their findings and encouraged agricultural experimentation" (p. 58). It turns out that King was, indeed, President of the Queens Agricultural Society.

Under the ownership of King's son, John A. King, farming continued into the middle of the 19th century. By the time of John King's death in 1867, however, the farming activity was in rapid decline, with dwindling numbers of livestock and crops, and by the end of the century the property was solely in use as a country residence.

Unfortunately little is known of where the family's crops and orchards were located (crops were actually rotated into and out of use; only orchards would have been located with any permanence), but the Inventory has revealed a more detailed picture of the general approach King took toward his estate and grounds. For example, King took pains to separate the working farm from the house and its surrounding English-style landscaping, an approach that still suits the present-day dichotomy between the Manor and its grounds and the active sports going on in the park around it. King also built several outbuildings to support his agriculture, including a barn, stable, gardener's house, smoke house, and icehouse. Some of them survived into the early days of King Park, but only the main house survives to the present day. To date, no reliable evidence can indicate the exact location of any of the above uses, with the exception of "Building K," an outbuilding to the east of the Manor dating back at least to 1842 and probably earlier, which was converted by the Parks Department into a comfort station by 1903 and demolished no later than 1935. The location of this building was slightly south of where the present day park building is.

In 1897 King Manor, along with 11.5 acres of the surrounding property, was purchased by the Village of Jamaica which one year later became part of New York City. The park and King Manor have been open to the public since 1900. Under the New York City Parks Department, several facilities were built to convert the estate to public use. Between 1898 and 1904, drinking fountains, "settees," a baseball diamond and several lawn tennis courts were installed. Although we do not know where any of these facilities were located, a 1912 Annual Report of the Department of Parks indicates new courts "on the northerly side of the park." The report also stated that the courts would be

periodically moved to protect the turf from excess wear. By 1915, this north end of the park was being shared by different athletic groups: tennis in the spring and summer, and girls' field hockey in the fall. In this period a new iron picket perimeter fence and pathways of hexagonal asphalt tile were also installed.

In 1915, a bandstand was built in the center of the park, where it remained until 1995 when it was moved to its present location on the west side of the north playing field. The present-day comfort station, which was built to replace the old one described above, was built possibly as early as 1922. A Civil War monument, which was built in front of the house between 1914 and 1922, was removed in 1993 as part of the renovation.

A survey by the New York City Parks Department, dated 1935, shows the park organized as it appeared after this period of improvement. It also shows that the circular drive installed by Rufus King was altered so that entrances reached to the corners of the site. Little changed after this until 1957, when a new playground and basketball and handball courts were added, along with the service area with parking, all in the area adjacent to the comfort station. Starting in the mid-1980s, King Manor was restored and King Park was redesigned. The park was reopened in the early 1990s, with improved playgrounds, basketball and handball courts that were relocated to the north end, to help distinguish passive and active zones, in addition to lawns and paths. Other upgrades in this renovation included a kitchen garden, a new perimeter fence, new benches, and lampposts. King Manor Museum reopened to the public in 1993; a new fence was installed to surround it in 1996. It was very evident during our study that people do recognize that improvements to King Park over the last 15 – 20 years have made a tremendous positive impact, and many people in the community still remember the park when it was a haven for drug dealers and illegal activity of all kinds.

King Manor and King Park are designated New York City Landmarks and together comprise a largely undisturbed archeological site; the Manor is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

King Park Today

Easily accessible for pedestrians from the surrounding community as well as by transit, King Park is also one of the only green spots in Jamaica. It is heavily used, at times - so heavily used that on summer weekends and afternoons there is not enough space to accommodate the demand. King Manor Museum had over 14,000 visitors last year, and offers a variety of programs for school children, adults and families.

With nearby new developments like the Queens Family Courthouse, Social Security Administration building, Jamaica Mall on Jamaica Avenue, the Jamaica Farmers Market, the new retail/entertainment/office complex, and the new AirTrain, the Park represents a major opportunity to link with these neighborhood improvements and create a signature public space for residents, employees and visitors. As a recent Newsday article pointed out, Jamaica Avenue has recently become a major shopping destination, especially for African Americans, many of them traveling long distances from the suburbs for the

Avenue's urban feeling and specialized shops. The same article went on to say, "...several old churches, including Grace Episcopal and First Presbyterian, continue to draw members who moved to Long Island years ago, but come back to the neighborhood on Sundays."

Rufus King Park itself, along with the King Manor Museum, represents an important potential destination in this revitalizing area, especially since it is one of the very few examples in the city of a historic house with a part of its original grounds around it.

Although Rufus King Park is already one of the most intensively used parks in the city, with an amazing diversity of users that reflects the fact that it is the *central park* of an important and resurging neighborhood, it faces many challenges. One of the biggest challenges is to determine how the park can more effectively meet the needs of its diverse users and balance competing uses by reaching out to involve the community in the park's improvement, welfare and maintenance and to develop an effective strategy for its ongoing management.

Today Rufus King Park lacks the beauty, amenities and level of attention needed for a park of its stature, in part because the way parts of the park is used no longer matches the park's design. For example, the lawns are badly deteriorated by people taking shortcuts and by unmanaged ball-playing. The parks building serves as a workspace rather than a public amenity, with the exception of the restrooms, which are often closed when the park is at its busiest. The building is mostly used as a station house and storage area for the parks department and its vehicles, which park inside a tall chain link fence contributing to the feeling that the building and its surroundings are impenetrable.

The Museum has great potential as well, and although a variety of complex issues have led to the need for the fence surrounding it, there is a desire by the Museum to reach out and become more involved in activities in the grounds around the building and in the park overall.

The Planning Process

In order to identify strategies to both improve the user experience as well as the image and quality of Rufus King Park, the following goals of the King Park project were established: (1) to determine what activities the park can support given current competing uses so that the park functions as an important center for the community; (2) to help define an appropriate “management” mechanism that will oversee programs in the park, help to maintain it, and raise outside money for events and improvements; and (3) to employ a process for involving the community in a meaningful way in the project.

A study of existing conditions in the Park was undertaken in which observations of the use of the park were made at different times and the community's opinions, perceptions, and suggestions for improvements were elicited. The process was designed both to gather needed information and to help build interest, cooperation, commitment, and understanding of the positive potential of the park among residents, businesses, institutions, and Parks & Recreation personnel.

This process included several components that are reported on in this memo:

- **A preliminary workshop** to identify problems and opportunities was attended by approximately 30 stakeholders representing institutions near the park. The workshop included the Place Performance Evaluation, in which participants rated park conditions on site and came up with ideas for improvements (Attachment F). A broad mix of key institutions participated, many of whom have continued to be involved with the Friends.
- **Surveys of local residents and park users** to determine perceptions, sensitivities and solutions to issues such as safety and security, programs and activities, and maintenance and appearance of the Park (see Attachments G and H). 228 surveys were conducted by PPS or distributed by the Friends of King Park and the Asociacion Vecinos del Parque Rufus King, and analyzed by PPS. Half of these were distributed to Spanish-speaking residents of Jamaica. Of those who participated in the survey, many people volunteered their name and address to become involved with future park projects
- **On site observations** to study and map user behavior on two separate days and analyze exactly how the park is currently being used at different times of day (see Attachments G and I). Factors that were considered included, What types of people were using the park? What were they doing? Which areas of the park were they using? Who were they with?, etc.
- **Interviews** with individuals and institutions identified at the brainstorming session including the Social Security Administration, the YMCA, Queens Family Court, New York City Parks & Recreation, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, Community Board 12, the Jamaica Soccer School, the King Manor Museum, and others.

- **Photographic documentation of existing conditions** in the Park, including open spaces, landscape features, popular uses and activities, pedestrian paths, lighting, etc.
- **A public workshop** to learn what areas and features were best liked, brainstorm ideas for improvement, and outline specific potential actions. PPS presented a slide show illustrating place-making examples from other cities to begin the brainstorming process.
- **Preparation of conceptual designs** developed from the observations, surveys and comments made in the public workshop. This also entailed the preparation of an accurate base map of King Park.

Current Use Patterns and Perceptions

King Park users tend to be loyal and frequent, with about a quarter of those people surveyed visiting the park daily (24%), weekly (38%), or several times per month (25%), according to surveys. People also stay in the park for long periods of time: the majority stay for 1 to 3 hours, and 21% stay in the park more than 3 hours; 6 % even stay for 6 hours or more!

Our observations showed that Rufus King Park is used on a regular basis by a cross-section of people but is far more popular among young people than old, and among men more than women. For example, on the days that we recorded the activities that were occurring in the park, approximately 68% of the people using it were men. (It is worth pointing out that a small presence of women is generally a signal that a place is in some way out of balance or lacking in a positive image, since women tend to be far more particular than men about their environment.) Very few older people use the Park – observers estimated only 2% of users were over 51 years of age on the days that we conducted our observations. The park is a very “social” place with the majority of people part of a group of family or friends - only 20% were in the park alone. The park is generally used more intensely in the afternoons and evenings than in the mornings, with peak time periods in the late afternoon and early evening. It should also be noted that King Manor Museum visitors – 14,000 children and adults per year – are also “park users,” although it was not possible to observe them during this study.

How different parts of the park are used

The most intensively used area of the park is the north end, which includes the large lawn, the path that people use to cross the park from east to west, and the ball courts. Over half the people who use the park use the north end, whereas the middle section of the park, including the playground, is used by about 1/3 of the people. The south end, which includes the King Manor Museum, the park building, the parking areas for the two buildings, the kitchen garden, and the lawns along Jamaica Avenue is the least used part of the park.

What do people do in the park? One of the most surprising findings, considering the seeming prevalence of ball-playing and other sports, was how many people are engaged in “passive” uses versus “active” uses. In the surveys people said that they came to the park to engage in passive uses (such as talking and socializing, sitting and relaxing, enjoying nature, people watching, etc.) much more than for active uses by a ratio of three to one. These survey results are similar to our records of the activities in the park. For a fuller picture of what goes on in the park, it is also necessary to consider what others have periodically observed over the years, including barbecuing under the trees, dumping coals at the bases of trees, drinking alcohol, religious rallies and proselytizing without a permit, a growing number of homeless people sleeping in the park, and cars that drive across the east-west park path as if it were a street.

Another finding was that only 4% of the people who answered the survey said that they came to the park to visit the King Manor Museum and a number of park users told us that they were unaware of the museum being in the park.

What do people like about the park? People felt that the *physical condition* of the park was relatively good, in terms of benches, entrances, the museum, the playground, and the ball courts. The exceptions were the condition of restrooms, drinking fountains and lighting, which got quite low ratings. *Management*-related issues did less well, with only average ratings for “general cleanliness” and “grass-cutting” and below average ratings for “safety” and “general condition of the park.” However the worst ratings went to “flowers and landscaping.”

What changes do people want to see in the park? The most common recommendations for physical improvements were: chess and other game tables (26% of respondents); an outdoor café (18%); and additional ball/sports courts (13%). Other important suggestions were to improve the management of the restrooms, expand the playground, and plant more flowers. A smaller number of respondents (10% or less) mentioned a soccer field, better gardens, new grass, trashcans, lights, snack vendors, swings, a picnic area, and more water fountains.

In terms of new activities, *concerts* were mentioned most frequently – by 16% of survey respondents overall, and by an even higher proportion among English-speaking responses (25%). [It has been observed that the Cultural Collaborative Jamaica and the JAMS Festival have never had a large audience for their annual summer concerts, despite substantial publicity and top performers, and that only until the park sees better maintenance will such events be a real success.] Exercise classes were mentioned by 11% overall, but by a much higher percent (27%) of Spanish-speaking respondents. Other events mentioned included children’s games and programs, martial arts classes, soccer classes, and a community center.

What are people willing to do to help and what would they like to learn?

One question on the survey was to ask people if they had special skills that they would be interested in either teaching others, to try to identify creative new community programming opportunities, or that they would like to learn. The response to both of these questions was very positive: 28 people offered to teach baseball, 21 offered chess lessons, 20 said they would coach soccer, and 18 would help supervise children. Other people offered their talents in crafts classes (17), job skills (17), music and painting (16 each), life skills (15) and English (12). These results present truly exciting programming opportunities to any group that wishes to organize these potential volunteers in the future.

In terms of the skills they’d like to *learn*, the most popular answers were chess (28 people), music instruction (22), yoga (17), basketball (17 people), aerobics (15), and gardening (14). A few mentioned learning English, painting, salsa and tango dancing, and even auto-mechanic’s skills.

Key Issues and Opportunities

The information gathered from the process described above is summarized below in an attempt to encourage specific actions that will help transform the park in both the short and long term. It is not meant to be an all-encompassing list of problems in the park, but rather a summation of the major issues, which, if addressed, could bring about noticeable improvements to the park and its surroundings.

Access to and within the park

The accessibility of a place can be judged by the effectiveness by which it connects to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful place is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a space are important as well: For instance, a row of shops along a street is more interesting (and safer) to walk by than a blank wall or empty lot. Accessible places are convenient to public transit, and have good information so that it is clear how to use them. Some of the issues that were identified and solutions that were suggested by people as part of this project include the following:

Signage and Information

Issue: There is almost no information or signage about the park, its history, programs and events, and other institutions in Jamaica at entrances to the park or on the streets surrounding it. [One delightful exception: the words to the Preamble of the Constitution are affixed to the front of the Manor fence, making a direct connection to King Manor and Rufus King, signer of that document.] This may be a contributing factor to the fact that the park and Manor are both under-appreciated assets in the neighborhood.

Opportunities: Clearly there is a need for better directional signage and interpretive signage about the history of the site, including making an 18th and 19th century historic house relevant to a 21st century community largely made up of recent immigrants. Making this connection could include programs for children and adults to interpret both the Manor and its surrounding landscape. King Manor will be initiating a multi-year interpretive planning project in 2003, which will depend in large part on re-introducing elements of the historic landscape.

The idea of creating a Jamaica Visitors Center in the park is a possibility to provide information about the other attractions in the area, including the Manor Museum. Conceived as just one stop within a larger neighborhood destination – along a walking tour that includes Grace Church and other points of interest -- people could be enticed to stay far longer in Jamaica. The need for a community Visitors Center was also identified by the Cultural Collaborative Jamaica, and it is being considered as one function of the church rehabilitation for a performing arts center space across the street on Jamaica Avenue.

Park Entrances

Issue: The entrances to the park do not provide an opportunity for people to use the park without having to come into the interior area. This may be one reason why there are few older people or people from the hospital, courts or other nearby institutions who use the park. There are no benches, flowerbeds or other amenities at any of the entrances.

Opportunity: Create entrance areas to the park at the major points including both entrances on Jamaica Avenue and all three on 89th Avenue. Benches should be located at these entrances, flowerbeds, in some locations signage welcoming people to the park etc. A small seating plaza could be created across from the hospital for hospital residents and employees who want to use the park or view the activities that are occurring on the lawn.

Issue: There is no pedestrian crosswalk to the entrance across from the hospital. This poor access is aggravated by speeding traffic, which is especially troublesome in front of the hospital and at 153rd Street.

Opportunity: Add crosswalks at all intersections where they are currently lacking around the park as well as midblock in front of the hospital, the school and opposite the 153rd Street entrance. The midblock crosswalks would be better if placed on speed tables and the hospital crossing might also be reinforced by a stop sign.

Pathways through the park

Issue: Although many people follow the existing paved paths through the park, it is clear that not all of the paths reflect the current routes that people need to use. In taking the shortest route, people cut through the grass to get to where they are trying to go, inadvertently contributing to the deterioration of the lawns and the unkempt appearance of the park overall.

The plan that was developed for the park in the early 1900's showed paths that led from the northeast and northwest corners of the park toward the center where the bandstand was located at the time. Although the bandstand has been moved to the western edge of the north lawn, and the paths removed, we observed many people creating paths where the old ones had been (see Attachment A). We feel that certain of these desire lines reflect the most logical and appropriate places for people to walk, based not only on the fact that people are walking there now, but also on the fact that they are a logical shortcut through the park.

Opportunities: Realign and/or adjust the location of certain paths to reflect the desired routes. The three most important of these are:

- The north / south route from Jamaica Avenue to 150th Street, between the Manor and the park building, for which there is no asphalt path because it has been blocked off by the Manor fence. We recommend this route become part of a general area that is a wide walking area surfaced with an attractive hard, non-asphalt material, since maintaining grass here may not ever be possible. Such a surface should also be appropriate and attractive in light of the historic setting.
- Two diagonal paths beaten into lawns north and west of King Manor. One is from the corner of 150th street and 89th Avenue, interestingly resembling the layout of the early 1900's path. The second one, connecting the park's Northeast corner to the Southwest corner, creates a more direct route for pedestrian. We recommend these two segments be integrated better into the existing path system.
- Re-establish the link in the circular path system on the Northeast side of the park, which was removed in the most recent layout of the park. The 1900's plan showed a continuous path around the park that allowed people to not only walk through the park diagonally in all directions but also to leisurely stroll around it. By reinstating the old portion of the path, the park will be able to be used for exercise by adult residents, hospital residents, and employees at lunchtime.

Issue: The black wrought iron fence that is located around the perimeter of King Manor has cut off certain key pedestrian pathways such as the east west connection through the park as well as the North /South path. Because of its location the circulation flow is interrupted and pedestrians need to wind their way between the Manor and the park building in what is now a fairly unattractive route.

Opportunity: Discussion needs to occur concerning the relationship of the fence to the existing paths and as the park is restored, whether it is more productive to adjust the location of the fence or the paths so that the park not only functions better for pedestrians but also so that the historic landscape can be restored.

Park Activities

Activities are the basic building blocks of a place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come to a place - and return. When there is nothing to do, a space will be empty and that generally means that something is wrong. Rufus King Park is sometimes relatively empty but at other times, it is so heavily used that the use can hardly be accommodated.

Balancing types of park use

Issue: On the one hand the continual use of the park for ball-playing is destroying the lawns, on the other hand there are few “places” where people can sit and socialize, eat lunch, and so on – activities which have a larger constituency than athletics (in terms of numbers). There are also very few older people in the park which suggests that if there were more convenient sitting places, a better image, and better overall management, they might be drawn to the park as well. The key challenge is to make the needed physical and managerial changes so that the park appears and functions well during both situations.

Opportunities: Redesign key areas to relate better to desired uses:

- One key area, behind the museum and adjacent to the playground, is functionally the center of the park. It is where all paths cross and adjoins several existing nodes of activity (e.g. the playground, the basketball courts, the east-west pathway at 90th Ave.). But this area has yet to be developed with amenities to support existing and potential uses. For example, people who are watching the basketball or playground activity indicated that they would appreciate an opportunity to buy something to eat, others indicated that they would value an opportunity to play (and teach) chess. We recommend that a “focal area” be considered for this area and that it be designed to accommodate seating (alone and in groups), activities such as chess, and possibly an outdoor café or food kiosk, at least on a seasonal basis. A café should be well designed so that it complements the historic nature of the park; the café contract should contain a provision that the operator must maintain the grounds around it, and a portion of the revenues should be contributed to King Park maintenance and/or improvements. It was also suggested that the café work with the Manor to develop some historic dishes from Rufus King’s time – unique offerings that would only be available in King Park.
- Another key area is the adjacent lawn that we have proposed be treated as a “forest floor” rather than lawn. In terms of use, this area is currently ill defined, strewn with boulders, and sometimes used for volleyball. However it is a perfect location for family activities such as picnicking and should be off-limits to soccer or other athletics. It should be enhanced with a few picnic tables and additional trees as specified in the Walcavage plan from the mid 1980s.

- A third area, which is already very successful as a node of sociable activity, is the east-west path lining up with 90th Street. Minor enhancements, such as border plantings and a repaving of the path, are all that's necessary to turn this into one of the most memorable spaces in Jamaica.

Lawns

Issue: The lawns of the park have so deteriorated from ball-playing and lack of management that the park landscape looks like it has been forsaken. It should also be noted that the extensive use is not due to solely to the impact of soccer leagues using the park, but the lawns are in constant use by teens and young adults playing pick-up soccer games, baseball games, and other sports. And although a mobile crew is stationed here and staff is in the park every day, their focus is litter pick-up and maintenance rather than horticulture or on lawn use management.

Opportunities: In the future, given the demands on the park, the current uniform lawn treatment throughout the park may be impossible to ever maintain and manage effectively. Some of the lawn areas are so actively used as travel corridors that they would be easier to maintain as broad areas for walking on. In other areas, additional passive uses could be developed, with gardens and seating areas, to better develop quiet uses of King Park and enhance the image of the park and Manor. Some of the active uses need much better controls and management, while other uses should be developed so there is a broader user public, not dominated by one or two user groups.

Therefore, a multifaceted approach should be considered in the future that includes an agreement about which areas should continue to be lawn and which areas would be better as some other use and surface, (e.g. packed earth, bark mulch or pea gravel, as well as gardens and flower beds, etc.) along with the introduction of new types of uses into the park that people would be interested in and would have a less severe impact on the park (e.g. smaller, temporary games as have been recently introduced in some parks in Manhattan such as chess, checkers, backgammon, ping pong, bocce, etc.) This multifaceted approach would include the following components:

- 1. Within the context of the historic landscape, designate certain areas as playing lawns and other areas for other purposes.**
 - The existing lawns directly to the south, west and north of the Manor should be designed to become Museum "grounds" accessible to the public. In addition to the benefits described above, it is clear that there is a large unsatisfied public that would use the park if only there were more appealing areas to sit and/or enjoy an urban park experience.
 - The center lawn area north of the Manor and west of the playground, which is very heavily trafficked and used for a variety of activities will always be a nexus of walking routes, and consideration should be given to used a hard packed or mulch surface, possibly evoking a forest floor under the large trees. Small fenced off areas with flowerbeds should be developed around certain features such as the trees.

- 2. Develop a management plan with guidelines and assign responsibility to one entity for managing ball playing in the large lawn at the north part of the park.** This management plan is critical to ensuring that this central lawn can also be enjoyed by other people, such as those who wish to sit and enjoy concerts at the bandstand, for example. The plan will require that the lawn is re-seeded on a regular basis and that portions of it may need to be closed while the grass grows.

Guidelines for appropriate use should be developed and enforced both to manage the impact and to control the erosion that results from ball-playing and other sports. (Sample guidelines used in other parks are attached in the appendix to the report)

- 3. Add or relocate some paths in order to accommodate existing circulation routes.** The paths that are recommended above both reflect the desired lines between neighborhood destinations and the paths that were introduced in the park in the first quarter of the 20th century, prior to the last Park Department's renovation. This new circulation will allow people to use the park conveniently and will protect mainly the central north lawn.
- 4. Develop a variety of alternative uses in the park to accommodate the large demand for green space in this part of Queens.** In several other parks both in New York and elsewhere, interesting temporary uses are being used as a way of encouraging diversity in the park users and also to accommodate peak versus off-peak use. For example in Bryant Park, a small vending cart with various board games is being used under the trees in an area not unlike what is being recommended for the central area of King Manor Park. In Battery Park City, park managers have introduced ping-pong, board games and other smaller scale "sports" as part of experiments to accommodate increasingly heavy use during peak times. To implement either of the above obviously requires regular on-site management, something that is being strongly recommended in this report for Rufus King Park. Managing games is something that could be done either by the parks department or by a friends-type group.

Many ideas for activities that people were either interested in either teaching or learning came out of the workshops and from the surveys. These ideas should be the basis of a plan for developing new activities in the park.

- 5. Identify new neighborhood spaces where the demand for soccer can be met, and continue to use the grounds of nearby educational institutions for League Soccer play.** Elected officials and the parks department should be responsible for finding alternative space for soccer in the neighborhood. League play should continue to occur, or expand if possible, on athletic fields of neighboring educational institutions where the proper facilities can be provided. Additional thought should be given to how to better accommodate the families, friends and spectators in the areas around these fields.

Image and Identity of the park

Whether a space is comfortable and presents itself well - has a good image - is key to its success. Comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit - the importance of giving people the choice to use a place in the way that they want to (e.g. to sit where they want to sit) is generally underestimated.

The Park Building

Issue: The park building is not used for public use and it has the general appearance of being closed; restroom hours do not coincide with peak use times in the park.

Opportunity: The building needs to become part of an overall concept for activating the park with programs for children as well as adults. It should be enhanced with public areas around it where activities could occur, such as a paved terrace and managed lawns. Its interior spaces should be given over to programming space, offices for a playground associate or, better, a park manager, and storage of games, tables and chairs, balls, and other “loose parts” that will vastly broaden the audience of park users to encompass the young and the old and a wide spectrum of cultural and other groups. A patio could be developed outside the building for both children’s and adults’ activities. The chain link fence and the parking lot for vehicles should be removed and relocated elsewhere. Restrooms should be open later in the day – even into the evening, along with the building.

King Manor Museum

Issue: As it is, King Manor Museum looks more like a closed building rather than the important cultural institution that it represents. The reasons for this are many including: the closed shutters on the windows when the museum is closed to the public; the fence, which was positioned in such a way that it prevents access from the park and cuts off the circulation route on the south and east sides; a scarcity of signage or information; and the absence of “grounds” around the Manor that would help to give it a stronger presence both in the park and in the neighborhood.

Opportunities: A variety of improvements should be undertaken in the area around the Museum to increase its presence in the park:

- Adjust the location of either the fence or the circular drive through the park so that the fence no longer cuts off park user circulation through the park; create a small central opening in the fence (aligned with the front door) providing access to the gardens.

- Develop a stronger presence for the Museum by developing “grounds” around it as a garden, inside the fence as well. These gardens could include flowerbeds, and spaces for small programs including concerts and other cultural events, weddings, and other Museum activities. The gardens could be designed to extend through the Manor fence so that the fence visually recedes from view, and to envelop the park building to strengthen the visual (and programmatic) relationship between the two buildings. Designing these grounds is an enormous opportunity to interpret the historical landscape of Rufus King’s time, tempered with a realistic design that accommodates today’s users.
- Improve the visual accessibility of the Museum by opening the shutters of the Museum more often – at least during the day, especially once transparent window glass protection is installed in the next year.
- Continue to develop community programs and uses within and around the Manor.

Conclusion

It is vital that the efforts to renew King Park, and Jamaica in general, spring from many places. No one should be given the opportunity to say that they were waiting for some other agency to act. Thus, while leadership from the public sector is essential, success is dependent on others to take action in coordination with the city. The private and nonprofit sectors, specifically, need to be catalyzed into making the most of the opportunities at hand.

Around the country we have seen great success stories when local leaders from the private sector develop a relationship with the public sector to make park improvements because they have a vision for a better park that the public sector may not be able to deliver by itself. There are several compelling reasons for public/private partnerships including:

Efficiency and Flexibility: Private groups are often better able to experiment with new or innovative park programs in an effort to be more responsive to park users. In addition, some private groups have the ability to be more flexible with staff and budget lines--being able to reconfigure them more easily in response to changing needs of the park.

Advocacy: A nonprofit has the freedom and political will to speak out for budget increases, for increased security, or in favor of acquiring new parkland, while a parks department is constrained by and allied to the city's priorities.

Fundraising and Accepting Donations: Private donors often don't like to give to the public sector because they can't control how their money will be spent. In addition, there is often a distrust of giving money to any government bureaucracy, especially one that already has taxing power. Parks departments and other public entities with a public sector parks portfolio are, as a result, powerfully motivated to participate in or initiate a public/private partnership that can raise money. For their part, nonprofits often benefit from formal ties to a public agency, since it gives them added credentials to assure donors of long-term commitment and accountability to the public.

Focus: A nonprofit group that focuses specifically on one park may view that space more holistically than a parks department that has a responsibility to provide basic service to all the parks in a city or metropolitan area. While it is the usual practice of the parks department to treat a park as part of a larger open space system, a nonprofit may see it as part of a neighborhood--a perspective that can be reflected in its role in planning for park improvements. Additionally, public agencies often can't or don't want to manage small discreet projects, such as restorations of historic buildings, whereas private groups can devote the necessary attention to detail.

Community Ties: A private group sometimes has better credibility with residents and local institutions than the local government does, allowing the nonprofit to facilitate meetings better, and tap key leaders for support and active engagement in the park.

Consistent Leadership: A mature nonprofit conservancy or friends group sometimes can even provide more continuous leadership in a park or open space amenity than public officials can, as they are subject to politics and elections.

Immediate, visible changes are paramount to building a sense that something exciting is happening in King Park...and that it is just a beginning on which to build. However, no partner can initiate actions without a conversation with the other partners. To achieve these changes within the necessary rubric of consensus and agreement, an Implementation Committee is needed, made up of the major power players of the Jamaica neighborhood, key city agencies, and representatives of Jamaica residents. Cooperation will be the hallmark of this committee as it coordinates the good intentions of all those who wish to improve King Park, from the people who live and work around the park to those who protect and interpret its historical legacy, to those who have the final authority of approval.

The role of the committee will be a new one in King Park: to come to mutual agreement around *what* actions to take in King Park and *how* those actions should move forward. The committee is about the process of working together and finding common ground between all those who have an interest in the park. It will be the place where each member organization discusses their ideas for King Park, proposes plans for improvements, and airs their grievances, in an open and problem-solving environment. It will seek to move King Park into a new era, based on consensus and mutual support, rather than unilateral decision-making on the part of any member.

Once change has begun, there will be a diversity of opportunities to continue the conversation about what steps will make the best possible King Park of the future. These opportunities are the crux of making change happen: when people express an interest in the changes that are occurring, they must be harnessed for their excitement and their involvement.

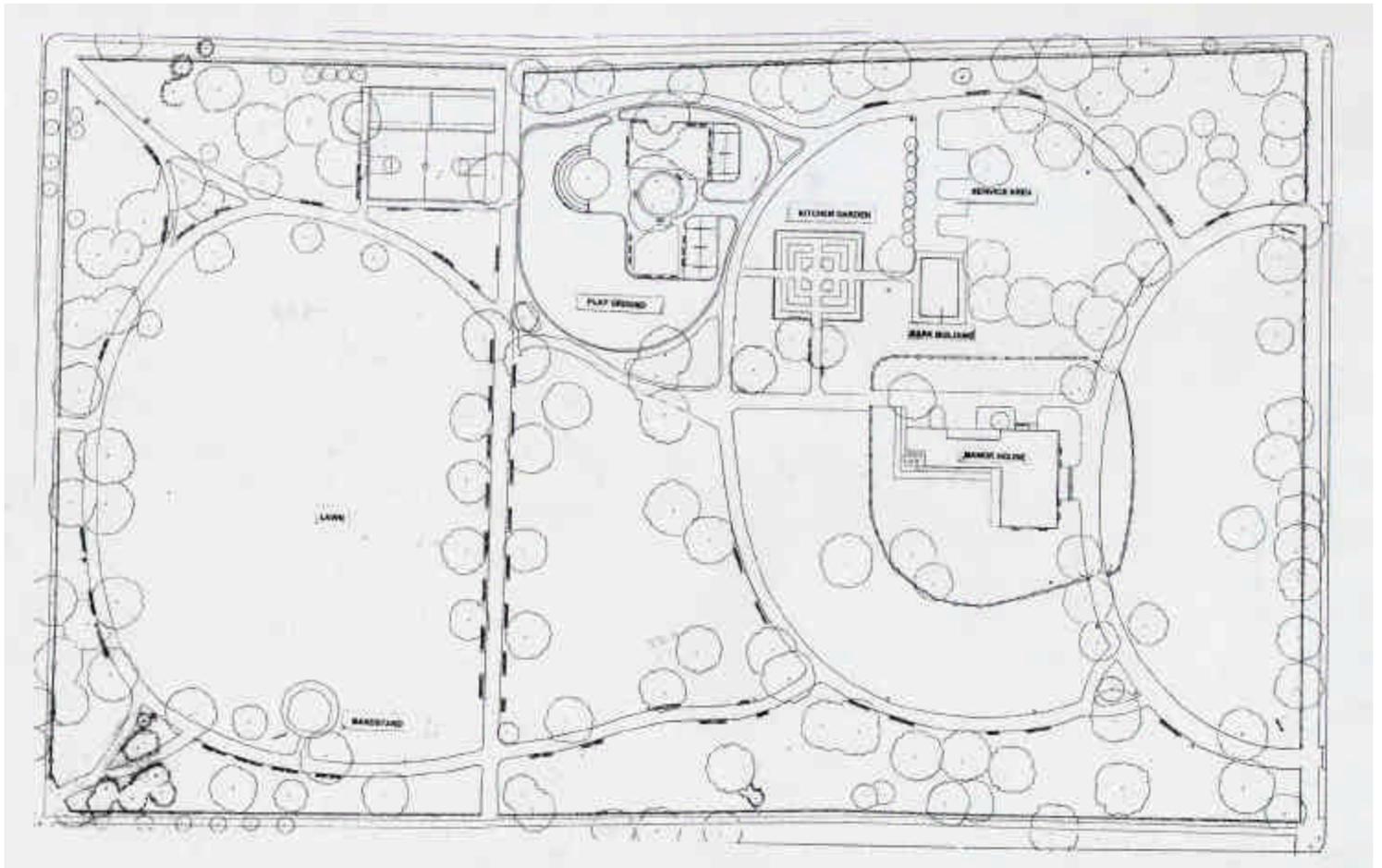
As Margaret Wheatley writes in a recent Utne Reader, “There is no more powerful way to initiate significant social change than to start a conversation. When a group of people discovers that they share a common concern, that’s when the process of change begins.... Change doesn’t happen from a leader announcing the plan. Change begins from deep inside a system, when a few people notice something they will no longer tolerate, or when they respond to someone’s dream of what’s possible.”¹

With some physical modifications and the creation of an effective management structure, Rufus King Park could become a showcase of how a park can be transformed to accommodate many different types of uses. It could indeed become the jewel of Jamaica and add significant value to the properties around it. The park and manor together could be central players, along with other nearby historic places and new developments, in the revitalization of downtown Jamaica Queens.

¹ “Some Friends and I Started Talking...” Utne Reader, July/August 2002

Attachments

Attachment A: King Park diagrams



King Park Existing Conditions (2002)



1805: Rufus King Purchase



Around 1806: Rufus King Interventions



1935: Park and Recreation Department Interventions t



1957: Park and Recreation Department Interventions

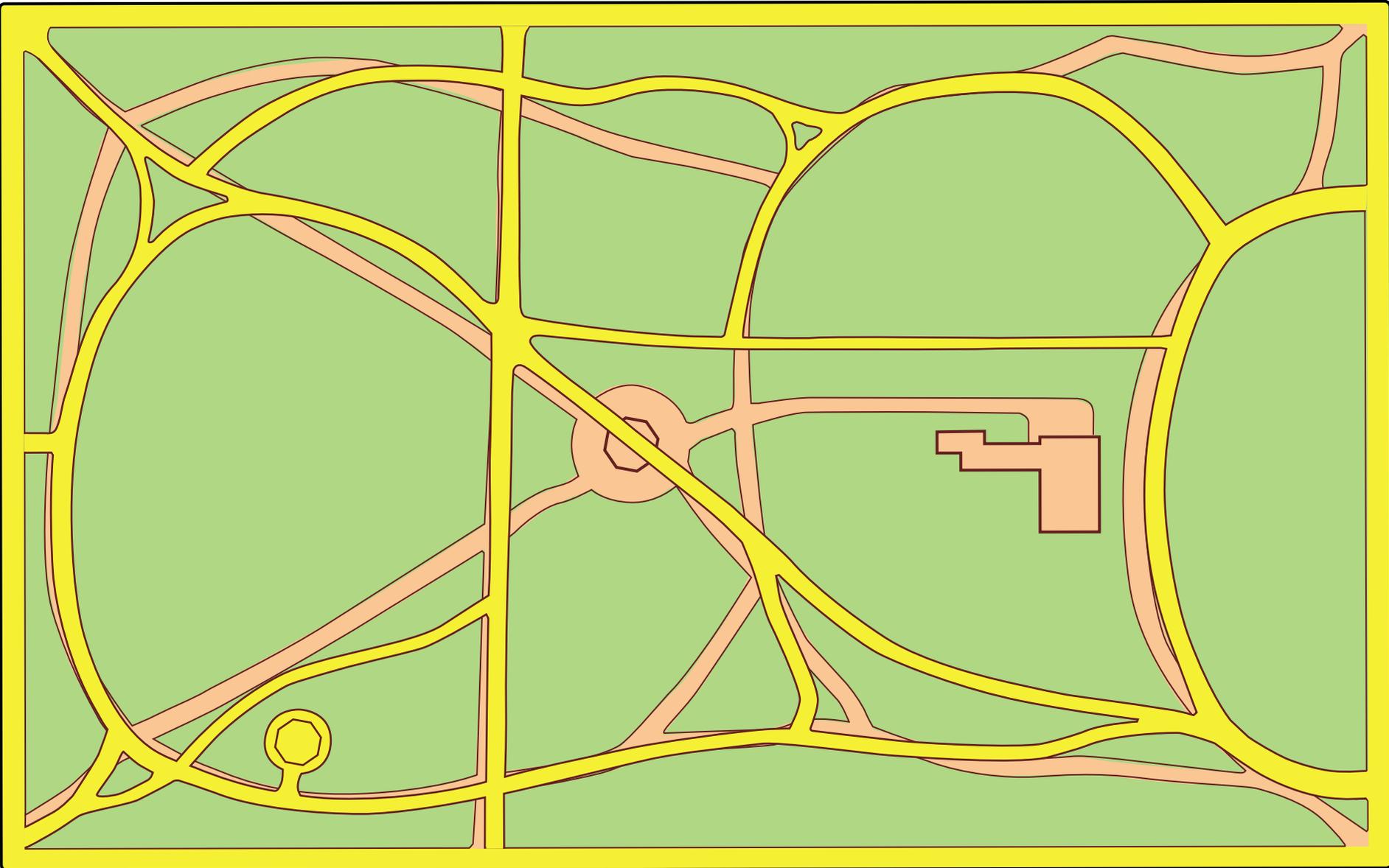
The Map of the Village of Jamaica, Queens Co., Long Island. Martin G. Johnson, 1842, documents that the King Manor house was surrounded by eleven outbuildings of varying sizes. Information found in letters and account books identify these as farm buildings: barns, stables, carriage house, gardener's house, granary, icehouse, dairy, smokehouse, and even a bath house. These buildings were not located on the above diagrams because their location has not been determined.

KING PARK - history

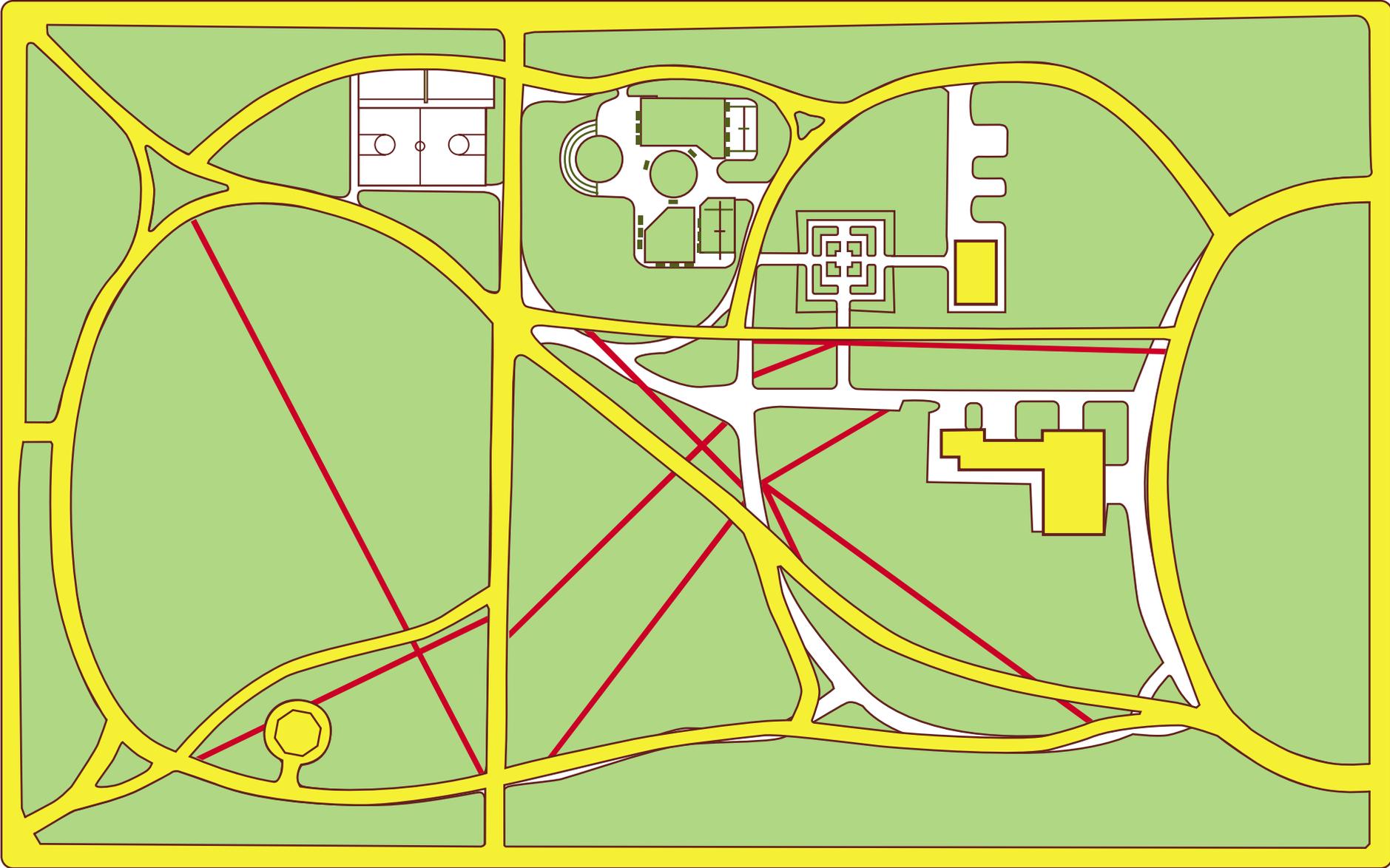
- 1805
- Around 1806
- 1935
- 1957
- 1989-1993

KING PARK - Historic*and Proposed

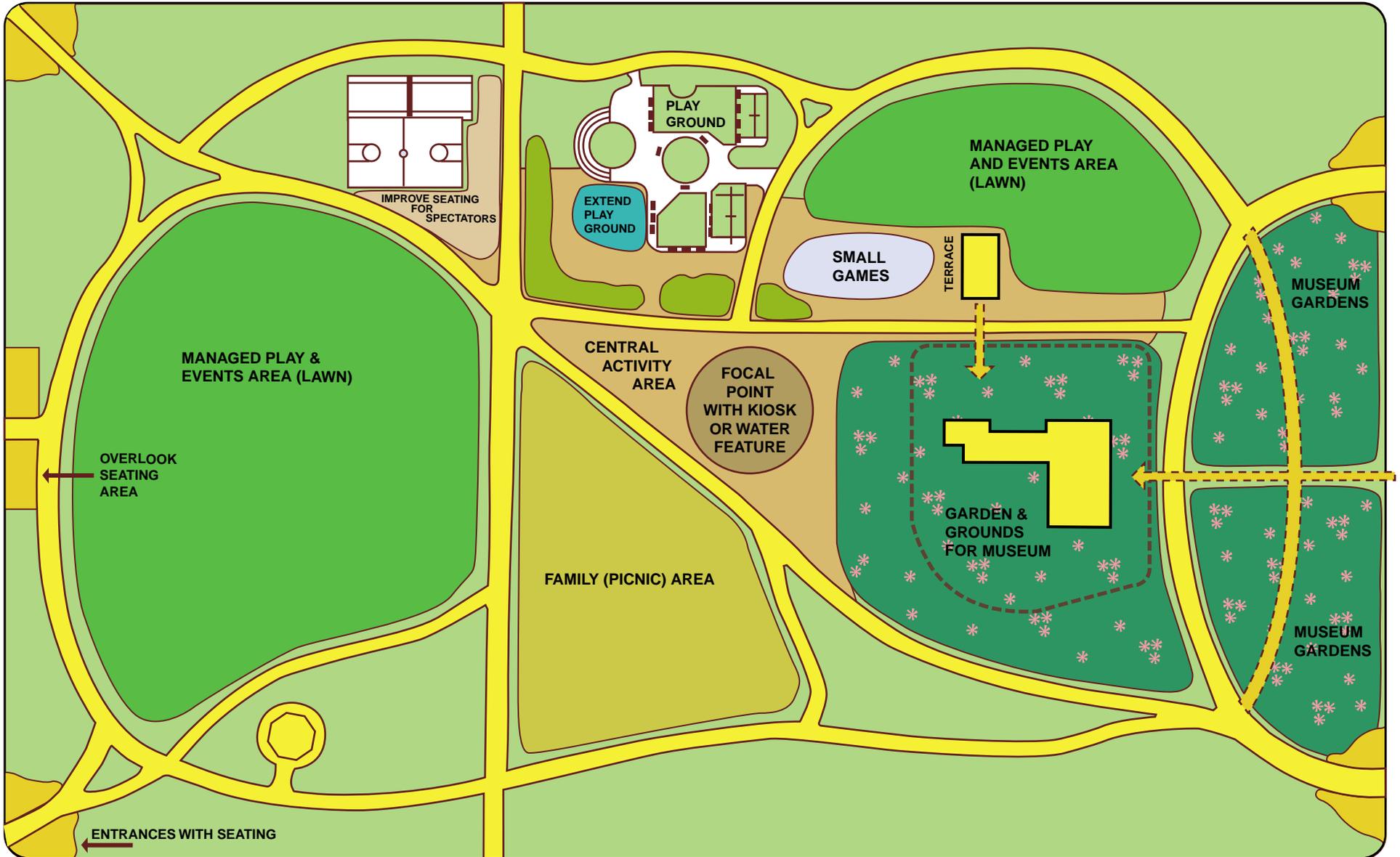
*Historic park period of circa 1935 until the early 1990s



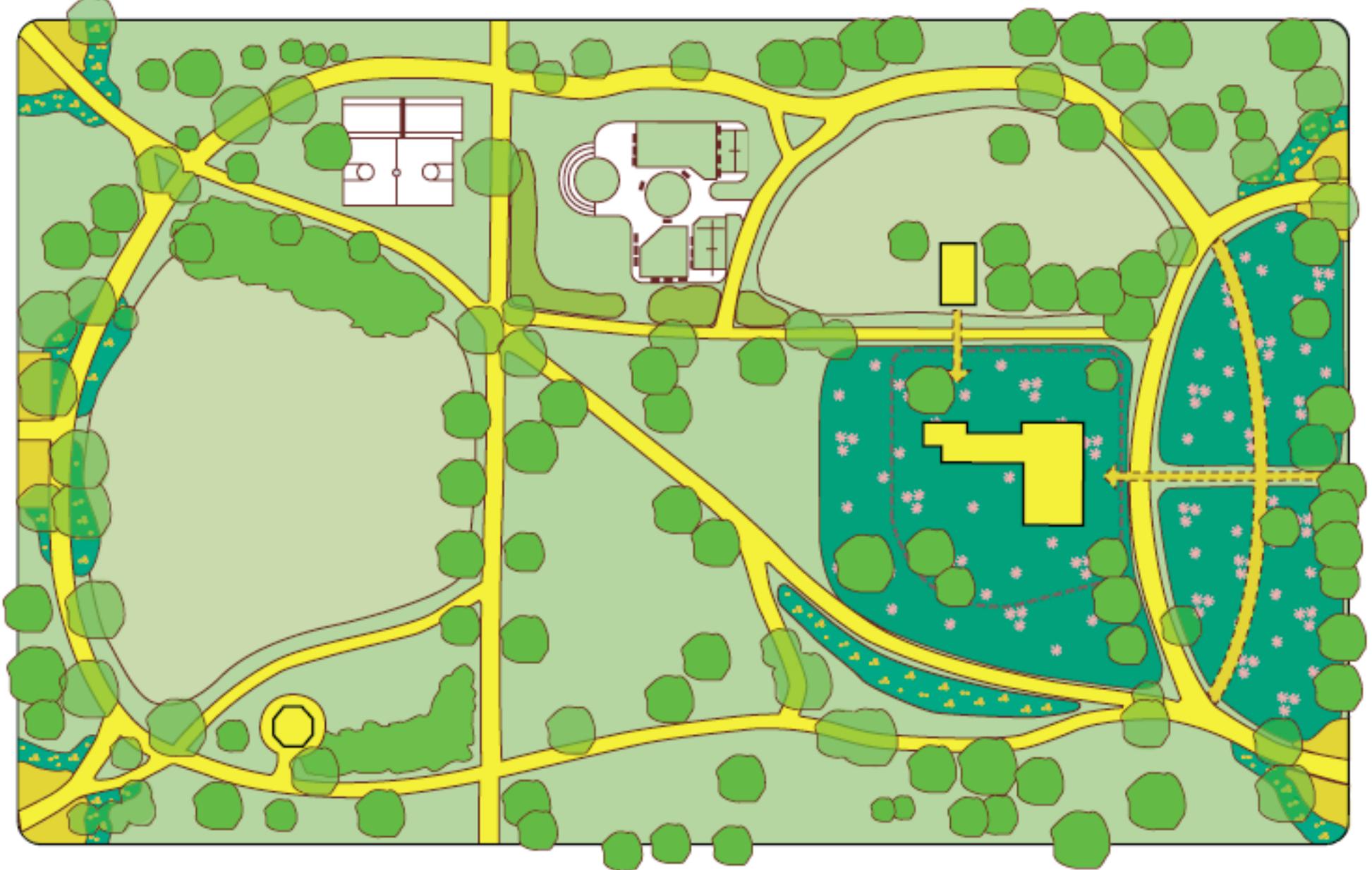
KING PARK - Existing and Proposed Paths with Desire Lines



KING PARK - PROPOSED USES



KING PARK - PROPOSED LANDSCAPING PLAN



Attachment B: Managing Rufus King Park, A Discussion Document

The success of any public space depends, above all, on its management. It is clear that something needs to change in King Park today, both because of the extreme deterioration of the historic character of the park and because the park has the potential to become an asset as central to Jamaica's economic and social health as any new development that gets touted with such acclaim by local boosters, such as the new One Jamaica Center. But only constant management will ensure that this potential is achieved.

In order to begin to better understand the nature of a management program for Rufus King Park, we have identified the key management elements that need to address. We also conducted interviews with the existing organizations and institutions to look at what is currently being done.

Very often, the management required in a park is inefficiently divided up among city staff that work on many spaces, with the result that no single person is responsible for creating a great experience in that place. Many times, the resulting gaps in management are made up by an assortment of neighborhood efforts, and in some cases a nonprofit group may organize to address the gaps. In the case of King Park, there is a history of many groups taking an active role. These groups include existing neighborhood institutions as well as the Friends of King Park, the King Manor Museum, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, Cultural Collaborative Jamaica, and Partnerships for Parks, a joint program of New York Parks & Recreation and the City Parks Foundation. Although the efforts of these various groups have gone a long way to improve King Park, it is impossible to meet all the needs of the park and its users in this uncoordinated fashion.

Currently, the following entities are involved to varying degrees in King Park:

PUBLIC SECTOR

- New York Parks & Recreation
- Historic House Trust

GROUPS DEDICATED TO KING PARK

- Partnerships for Parks
- Friends of King Park
- King Manor Museum
- Asociacion Vecinos del Parque Rufus King

OTHERS

- Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
- Jamaica Avenue Improvement Association
- Cultural Collaborative Jamaica
- Mary Immaculate Hospital
- Social Security Administration
- Queens Family Court
- Jamaica Soccer School
- Centro Hispano "Cuzcatlan"

OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES (FOR DISCUSSION):

The participation of this fairly broad group of players points to some potential for stepping up management to cover some of the key tasks that are currently falling through the cracks. This will depend, however, on strengthening the capacity and commitment of certain players, including New York City Parks & Recreation, over current levels.

The problems that relate to management of the park are many, and the park obviously needs a higher level of care. Management of the lawns, trees, and plantings is inadequate; ballplaying has turned much of the park into a dustbowl. There is little signage to clarify what is appropriate behavior or to interpret the history. Restrooms are too often closed during peak use times. Cars drive across the east-west pathway routinely and employees often drive on the grass.

Beyond these basic services, new management roles, which are clarified in this report, need to be defined to raise the park to a new level. A stronger management presence is needed to help overcome certain negative perceptions associated with the area, maintain the parks at a higher level, manage events, seek external support, and have a larger, more encompassing vision for the future of King Park.

BREAKDOWN OF CURRENT AND FUTURE ROLES (FOR DISCUSSION)

The following is provided as a discussion document to determine how roles and responsibilities could be shared among the key entities listed above.

Maintenance and Operations:

Grass Care:

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Grass is badly eroded

Current contributors:

- Parks Department cuts grass monthly (in season), and reseeds grass or covers with bald spots with mulch. \$40,000 spent on pruning this year due to community concerns.

What's needed:

- Management of sports, in relation to lawn wear and tear (see below)
- Turf management program (fence off areas and reseed regularly)
- Possible research into artificial turf options
- Better path placement (capital improvement)

Possible future contributors:

- Parks Department (for both capital and operations)
- Historic House Trust (approve path placement)
- Landmarks (approve path placement)

Horticulture:

PROBLEM STATEMENT: No one coordinates or maintains flowers or plantings. No vision for landscape or museum grounds; trees receive sporadic care and new specimens do not survive

Current contributors:

- Parks Department donates plants to kitchen garden
- Probationers plant flowers occasionally (in kitchen garden)

What's needed:

- Vision for gardens
- Landscape plan
- Joint vision with Manor on landscape
- Horticulture staff
- Business plan (for ongoing operations, promotion and maintenance)
- Fundraising plan

Possible future contributors:

- Historic House Trust (to guide vision and create plan)
- Landmarks (approves plan)
- Parks Department (to implement plan)
- Queens Borough Commissioner (support and fundraise)
- King Manor (advise on plan and possibly be involved in fundraising or managing gardens)
- Jamaica Avenue Improvement Association
- Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
- Sutphin Blvd BID
- Mary Immaculate Hospital
- York College
- Greenthumb
- Friends of King Park (e.g. fundraising, butterfly garden)

Cleaning and litter:

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Since this is the primary focus of park staff, the park is fairly clean.

Current contributors:

- Parks Department
- Jamaica Ave Improvement Association (along Jamaica Ave)
- Partnerships for Parks (liaison for complaints)
- Volunteers: Asociacion Vecinos del Parque Rufus King, Parks Dept, Family Court

Managing sports and recreation programs:

PROBLEM: Park building is underutilized; no one coordinates and enforces how the lawns are used; new programs are needed to balance usership.

Current contributors:

- Parks Department: provides playground associate (although not in summer 2001); sometimes supervises games; sporadically checks permits; has power to remove games if no permit
 - PEP: issues fines sometimes to non-permit uses
- Partnerships for Parks: Works w/ PD to identify programs that can be run out of park; reaches out to sports clubs to join Friends
- King Manor: family and kids programs

What's needed:

- Physical changes to park building and surroundings
- Redraft user guidelines to accommodate, yet control, intensive uses (such as ball-playing)
- On site supervisor during peak use times (to sunset), including weekends, to enforce park etiquette
- Coordinator of park-friendly programs and activities
- Ongoing outreach to develop new programs

Possible future contributors:

- Parks Department: Recreation Supervisor enforce park etiquette and organize programs such as storytelling, science and environmental programs, tree identification, puppet shows
- Friends of King Park: hire additional person to enforce etiquette? Bring sports groups into their membership to help educate them; develop new programs that others might implement
- King Manor interpret the historic garden landscape, run children's programs in the Manor and other community programs (lunchtime programs for area employees)
- YMCA run programs (martial arts, sports camps...)
- Family Court work with probationers on talent shows, etc
- Mary Immaculate Hospital programs (recreation therapy, clown training, etc.)
- Asociacion Vecinos del Parque Rufus King: reach out to soccer players and leagues

Events:

Current contributors:

- Partnerships for Parks: helps coordinate their events
- King Manor: walking tours and family programs
- Parks Department: gives approvals
- Cultural Collaborative Jamaica: Tuesday (a.m.) Five seasonal Art in the Park events
- JAMS - one annual event

What's needed:

- Scheduling and coordinating events organized by area groups
- Promoting events
- Developing new events

Possible future contributors:

- Friends and Asociacion: possibly organize a limited number of events
- Jamaica Avenue Improvement Association
- Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
- Sutphin Blvd BID
- Historic House Trust
- Mary Immaculate Hospital
- Social Security Administration/GSA
- York College
- Family Court: volunteers available

Security:

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Security has improved significantly, thanks to improvements made in the last 15 years by the Parks Department, but many people feel threatened by such issues as cars driving across the park, inappropriate behavior such as drinking alcohol, and visits by the homeless.

Current contributors:

- PEP officers, who are in the park October to May, but rarely during the summer

What's needed:

- Monitor the park
- Enforce park etiquette
- Call police when necessary
- Coordinate enforcement with homeless services agencies

Possible future contributors:

- PEP: increase their service and clarification of what rules to enforce
- Parks & Recreation: on-site staff enforce rules
- Friends of King Park: provide auxiliary “park steward”
- Jamaica Avenue Improvement Association: could expand their coverage to include park?

Plan implementation:

PROBLEM STATEMENT: The recommendations developed in this process need a public-private team capable of pushing for their implementation. The team needs to consist of the main “power players” that can help move the park forward and sign onto a pact to cooperate and provide mutual support toward a common vision.

What's needed:

- Advocating with parks department, politicians, partners for plan implementation
- Developing management mechanisms
- Consensus-building among neighborhood groups and partners
- Eventually seeking approvals (including Landmarks)
- Driving design and capital improvement phases, with focus on maintainable design and gradual, incremental implementation

Gardener (skilled)

Options:

- Parks Department hires gardener
- Gardener jointly funded through Parks Department and others, such as King Manor and BID.

Programming Coordinator

Options:

- Recreation Supervisor assigned to King Park by the Parks Department
- Continue and expand cultural programming through Partnerships for Parks, CCJ, King Manor.
- Friends assume more active role developing and organizing programs and events.

POSSIBLE NEW REVENUES:

- BID assesses the surrounding institutions
- Manor or HHT fundraise for new gardens
- Friends fundraise for special projects
- Fees from weddings and other events (or wedding photos)
- Concessions, such as food kiosk or café, with revenues dedicated to King Park
- Jamaica Ave Improvement Association takes over maintenance or makes an annual cash contribution to help maintenance efforts

Attachment C: Recommended (eventual) make-up of the Implementation Committee

Historic House Trust

King Manor

Director, Partnerships for Parks

Friends of King Park

Residents' Association

Queens Parks Commissioner

District Manager, Parks & Recreation

Landscape Architect

District Manager, Community Board 12

Queens Borough President's office

Greater Jamaica Development Corp

City Councilman's office

Implementation Committee Guidelines

The Implementation Committee is about the process of working together and finding common ground between all those who have an interest in the park. It will be the place where each member organization discusses their ideas for King Park, proposes plans for improvements, and airs their grievances, in an open and problem-solving environment. The Committee should meet frequently at first and remain in place at least for a year, or until it is replaced by some other mechanism or partnership for finding consensus in implementing changes in King Park.

- The vision of an individual, organization or agency may be unachievable without *working with others* who can share both resources and rewards.
- In a new partnership, going slowly at first builds trust. Trust is the single most important element to success--it will lead all partners to have the flexibility necessary to take the first steps.
- Commit to making this a positive, meaningful experience for all of your colleagues and invest in the success of everyone. Do not dwell on mistakes you think you or your partners may have made in the past.
- Welcome the variety of ideas these differences will spawn. Be ready to negotiate between groups who vary widely in outlook on any one issue.
- Be flexible on as many points as possible. Hold your ground on things that really matter.
- Define your expectations. At all times throughout your relationship be completely honest with your partners about what you expect from the partnership, and about what you can contribute.
- Make sure you or your group is representing all the stakeholders on whose behalf you claim to be speaking.
- Be clear about what you want to accomplish and prioritize these goals. Try to develop these goals in concert with all the stakeholders.
- Include in the process at least one other person who can represent your agency – that way, when the principle contact is unavailable, someone who has the trust of the partner organizations is still available. This doesn't mean two people from your organization need to attend every meeting, but that you should keep someone else abreast of the committee's progress.
- Cultivate a relationship where you and your collaborators can honestly check each other. The partners should feel comfortable enough to tell each other when someone has dropped the ball.
- Never make promises you can't keep. This may be the hardest part, since you will be under pressure for deliverables.
- Be succinct and respect everyone's right to have a turn to speak
- It is always in your interest to let other people get credit for the success of the project--don't keep it for yourself. Generally it will be widely known that your group was instrumental.

Attachment E: Case Studies

Sacramento Downtown Partnership **Sacramento, California**

Cesar Chavez Park occupies one square block in downtown Sacramento, approximately two acres. It is bounded by 9th and 10th Streets and I and J Streets. The park's neighbors include City Hall, high-rise office buildings such as the US Bank Building and the new CAL EPA building, restaurants, and a city parking garage. Although the park is 100 years old, an early 1960's redesign was a failure, and the park floundered until the early 1980's, when Sacramento began its downtown revitalization efforts and forged a plan to redesign and revitalize the park. The vision for the park drew on its historic design--diagonal entrances, a central fountain, and a circular walk ringed with trees. Today, the park is a successful and flexible space, with a low permanent stage, a refurbished fountain, a sculpture of Cesar Chavez, a café with indoor and outdoor seating, restrooms, and portable tables and chairs. The park is part of the 65-block BID, the Sacramento Downtown Partnership.

Owned by: City of Sacramento.

The City of Sacramento leases the park to the Sacramento Downtown Partnership, which then provides permits for events. The members of the Partnership include the city, the state, the county, and approximately 200 property owners who are members of the Property and Business Improvement District (PBID). The City Council and the Mayor's office make the final decisions about design, planning and bidding for the park. Other stakeholders include the California EPA (diagonally opposite the park at 10th and I), the Farmers Market, the Cesar Chavez Committee, the Public Library and the Friends group (responsible for the art project in the park). A Special Events Committee composed of representatives from the Fire Department, the Police Department, and other city departments must approve large events. The Partnership also works closely with the City's Parks and Events Departments. The staff specifically assigned to the park include one Community Service Guide and one person in charge of permitting.

Management Program:

Maintenance: The City Parks Department maintains the lawn and landscape. One result of intensive programming is that the lawn is destroyed annually, and the parks department continually works to restore it.

Security and Hospitality: The Community Service Guides corps, a program of the Partnership, provides information for visitors and act as overseers for the park. Guides have approximately a six-block beat, spending most of their time in the park, where they act as ambassadors and become familiar with the regular visitors. They report maintenance and safety problems to the police as needed, and try to educate visitors about the park's systems. There are two downtown police officers on bikes that help patrol the park, as well as the California Highway Patrol officers who are responsible for the neighboring state buildings. Security officers for the courthouses and the Sheriff's Department also often take their lunch in the park, which increases the sense of a "security presence."

Programming: Event hosts submit their applications to the Downtown Partnership, which secures approvals from the City of Sacramento Events Committee, and then distributes permits to event organizers. There is a Wednesday Farmers' Market with entertainment six months of the year; a weekly concert series in the summer; "Clean Air Day" hosted by the State of California; a "Battle of the Bands", a Jazz Festival, and a restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating.

Marketing and promotion: The Downtown Partnership works with local newspapers and the City of Sacramento Utility Billing System to distribute fliers and advertisements. The Partnership has a limited advertising budget, with which they put up banners in the park and distribute fliers through their information carts throughout downtown.

Problems:

The Partnership had a difficult time identifying the appropriate caretakers for various services such as wiping down tables or cabling together the portable tables and chairs. These were resolved by contracting with a maintenance service, using funds from park use permit fees. Managing vendors is also a challenge in the park.

Funding:

The Partnership is funded through assessments of the PBID members. The revenue generated from park-permit fees for events is used to support park maintenance. [Annette Seeber from the Downtown Partnership is sending information regarding the budget.]

Capital investment:

\$1 million from bond financing as well as \$150,000 from the Downtown Department of the City is earmarked for improvements in the park, such as expanding the café and adding more furniture.

Lessons:

Cesar Chavez Park shows the importance of both the right design and good management to the success of a public space.

Contact:

Sacramento Downtown Partnership
Ryan Loofbourrow
Director of Community Services
(916) 442-8575
Annette Seeber
Director of Special Events
(916) 442-8575
Web Site:

City of Sacramento
(916) 264-7730
Web Site:

Knox Greenways Coalition **Knoxville, Tennessee**

Running over 20 miles through the city of Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee are over a dozen greenways, part of a much more substantial regional system that will eventually incorporate the nine contiguous counties around Knoxville.

The current system includes greenways, city parks, trails, and small pocket parks. In some areas, a greenway is adjacent to the Tennessee River, while other greenways are on flood plains. The main arteries of the trail system are planned along three creeks that run through the inner city. When completed, the trail system will contain bike trails and walking paths linking up existing parks in Knoxville and will be accessible to residents in all areas of the city and county. Downtown Knoxville will be the hub of the city-county trail system that someday will connect to the Smoky Mountains National Park, and to the surrounding cities of Oak Ridge, Maryville, Alcoa, Pigeon Forge, Sevierville, and Gatlinburg. So far, sections of the trail have been built in high, middle and low income areas with an emphasis on an equal distribution in all neighborhoods.

Established in 1991, the Knox Greenways Coalition was formed by a group of three conservationists active in the Sierra Club who believed a greenway system would improve the quality of life and provide recreational opportunities and access to alternative transportation in Knoxville. Will Skelton, a local real estate lawyer, had been inspired by the greenways he had seen throughout his travels in the U.S., Canada and Europe in the 1980's and wanted to continue to develop the existing 1.5-mile greenway that had been started in Knoxville in the 1970's. In the early eighties, Skelton teamed up with Judith Ideker, a landscape architect, and Sam Rogers, another Sierra Club member interested in greenways and water quality, to form the Knox Greenways Coalition. The team created a slide show and brochure and went to speak to local businesses, civic, and conservation groups to build support for a greenway system, promote membership in the coalition, and gather political clout.

Membership grew and, with the coalition's backing, Skelton contacted the mayor and city council members to advocate for the greenway system, resulting in the creation of the Mayor's Greenways Advisory Commission in 1992. The commission was set up to be an official body to plan and implement work on developing the greenways. Skelton was asked to chair the effort and, with him at the helm, the commission undertook the work of creating a greenways plan for the city and county. Approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the city council in 1993, the plan has been broadly publicized since then through television and radio.

Developing the plan for the regional greenway system was not controversial. The mayor's commission, which was made up of representatives from a wide range of constituencies, received input from the city and county, members of the coalition, and citizens through a series of city-wide public hearings. After the plan was created, the city and county established greenways coordinators to implement the plan.

The success of the commission was a watershed for the coalition. According to Charles Thomas, president of the coalition, the group considered disbanding after the formation of the mayor's commission, but the members decided that an "outside" force to represent the neighborhoods and lobby the city would be beneficial. With the greenway system being built, the role of the Knox Greenways Coalition shifted to providing political pressure and to lobbying for additional public financial support for the ongoing development and implementation of the greenway.

The coalition now meets only quarterly, and its primary activities consist of advocating for public funds for the greenway system's continued development; advising on greenway design, planning and policy; organizing neighborhood groups to help them develop plans for greenway segments; advocating for continued political support; marketing and outreach to community and politicians; and organizing volunteers. The coalition and the city and county greenway coordinators are all actively involved in organizing communities to participate in the planning and design of the greenway segments as they are developed. To this end, the coalition considers itself a liaison between the city and Knoxville's well-

organized neighborhood groups, many of which are now calling for greenways in their neighborhoods. These organizations frequently approach the coalition to advise them on the best path to take to influence the city.

The first greenway segment was slated to go through a city park and private property. Community residents were apprehensive about who would use the new greenway and what kinds of activities would develop on and near it. Skelton spent the summer meeting with community groups in the area to resolve their issues and get their support. Working with the community groups paid off. "Now those communities are among the most supportive of the greenway," says Skelton. Other early segments of the greenway system were developed along the city's waterfront and west section in highly visible and populated areas as a way to build support and "spread the word" of the new greenways. Additional greenway segments are being built as land becomes available with the goal to construct one or more miles of greenway in all parts of the city.

According to Skelton, the biggest struggle was over the issue of preserving the trees. "There was a mild dispute with preservationists over how many trees to cut down to make way for the greenway," he related. "The width of the greenway had to be sufficient to ensure that the asphalt wouldn't buckle. Commission members ended up walking the trail with the mayor and deciding tree by tree which would stay and which would go."

As a result of the strong support and interest in the greenway by the mayor, the project has been financed entirely by public funds. Much of the funding for greenways comes from the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA -21), which has provided over \$1 million to date. The city or county have matched those funds by 20% and contributed substantial additional amounts for greenways not funded by TEA-21. Maintenance funding comes from the city parks and recreation departments. To finance its own operations, the coalition offers memberships and holds an annual 5K race along the greenway that raised around \$4,000 in 1999. The Knox Greenways Coalition is not a 501(c)(3) corporation, but is rather a loose association of groups interested in advocating for the development of a greenway system. One reason for this is that to date, all funds for the greenway have been public. However in 1998, the coalition provided \$1,000 in seed money to a new land trust that its hopes will be able to raise private funds and acquire parcels of land that the city and county cannot.

The organization's political clout comes from its success in talking with neighborhood groups, and its close connections with the political establishment in Knoxville. The founder of the coalition is, after all, the chairman of the mayor's commission. In addition, the president of the coalition is a member of the mayor's commission, as is the city greenways coordinator. In this way, the Knox Greenways Coalition can work with the city to establish an agenda that is acceptable to both of them, and approach city council members and the mayor, among others, to advocate for that agenda. According to Donna Young, the city greenways coordinator, the coalition is successful because "they are able to get grassroots and political support to work together to further the expansion of the greenway system."

In addition to its work in city hall, the coalition holds an awards ceremony at the annual Metropolitan Planning Commission Banquet to thank political and neighborhood leaders for their support and effort on behalf of the greenway. Awards are given to elected officials, government employees, and neighborhood activists who have made a significant contribution to the greenway over the last year. Occasionally, the coalition will hold a banquet for others involved in the greenway. For example, in the spring of 2000, the coalition had a barbecue for the greenway maintenance workers and engineers. It also distributes a newsletter, and funds a scholarship program for a seminar on habitat gardening.

The primary focus of the city parks and recreation department is on security, design and capital improvements, capital construction, and routine maintenance. The city is involved to a lesser degree in programming, organizing volunteers, advocacy, and marketing and outreach. Young describes her role as the city's greenways coordinator as "seeing the big picture of the greenway." She has a counterpart greenway coordinator who works for the county. The city and county greenway coordinators are part of the city and county parks and recreation departments.

The Mayor's Greenways Advisory Commission is now made up of an 18-member advisory board that includes the city and county greenway coordinators as well as a coalition member. Skelton has daily conversations with the greenway coordinators in the process of implementing the plan and works with the mayor to help facilitate problems as they arise. A \$2.2 million greenway along the Tennessee and French Broad Rivers has been named after him and will open officially in Summer 2000.

Summary:

Name of Park: Smokey Mountain Regional Greenway System

Location: Knoxville, Tennessee

Park Size: 12.8 miles, another 18.1 miles are planned over the next 5 years.

Primary Caretaker: Knoxville City and County Department of Parks and Recreation

Name of Organization: Knox Greenways Coalition

Type: Catalyst

Year Founded: 1991

Staff: None

Mission: "To improve the quality of life in Knoxville and Knox county by the addition of greenways. Greenways provide recreational opportunities (walking biking and in-line skating, jogging, etc.) and alternate transportation routes while protecting water quality along creeks and lakes."

Board: 9 members

Master Plan: 1993

Written Agreements: None

Contact:

Charlie Thomas, President

Knox Greenways Coalition

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Friends of Garfield Park, Inc.
Indianapolis, Indiana

It seems appropriate that first park in Indianapolis, the home of the country's most famous motor speedway, began as a racetrack. Indeed, the area known as Garfield Park today was originally a horseracing facility built by the Indianapolis Fair Association in the 1850's. Ironically, the track was a failure, and the association sold the land to the city in 1873. The 128-acre site was the first piece of property the city bought specifically to develop as a public park.

The park's roots are in its greenhouses. Twenty years after the site was acquired by the city, the park had 40,000 square feet of greenhouse space. The park supplied plantings for most of the major civic institutions in town, but, more significantly, it provided a community gardening program of some magnitude – all the plantings in and maintenance of the facility was done by volunteers. By the turn of the 20th century, greenhouse space had expanded to nearly 200,000 square feet.

In 1908, George Kessler, a landscape architect and onetime Olmsted protégé, who was developing a scheme for parks and boulevards throughout Indianapolis, designed Garfield Park. Kessler had a prolific career, eventually planning the park systems of Kansas City, Denver and nearly a dozen other Midwestern cities, as well as parkways and individual parks in dozens of cities and states across the country. He designed Garfield Park in a more formal style, emphasizing the greenhouse's function by building a large glass conservatory, now the central feature of the park, and a classical sunken garden, though he also left large wooded areas and open meadows in the park.

In addition to the 7,500 square foot conservatory and the four-acre sunken garden, Garfield Park now also includes several monuments and memorials, a performing arts center, a family and aquatic center, a pagoda, a trail and bike system, numerous playgrounds, ballfields, and several tennis courts.

Garfield Park has a long history of volunteerism. From its earliest days in 1873, immigrant volunteers flocked to the new park's greenhouses to plant and care for species native to their homelands. However, for most of its existence Garfield Park did not have its own nonprofit or community group to organize and represent park users.

In the 1980s, Garfield Park suffered a fate similar to many urban parks in the United States--severe budget cuts forced maintenance cutbacks in the Indianapolis Parks Department, and Garfield Park was neglected. Eventually, its pool leaked, its playgrounds were unsafe, and the park had developed a well-deserved reputation as a center of illicit activity—in 1990, more vice arrests occurred in Garfield than in any other park in the system, according to Mark Bowell, the former director of the Indianapolis Parks Foundation. Several years later, Mayor Stephen Goldsmith hired Leon Younger, formerly the director of parks and recreation in Jackson County/Kansas City, Missouri to oversee a long-term plan to revitalize the Indianapolis Parks System. The focus was on establishing a plan to increase community outreach and earned income, large citywide meetings were held and the mayor promised that \$10 million from a bond campaign would go toward park improvements. The park eventually received \$5 million of that money, and in 1996 was able to restore its conservatory, swimming pool, playground, and pagoda. However, when the mayor ran for governor and lost, the program lost momentum.

Soon thereafter, the state of Indiana pledged \$500,000 for the park, and the Lilly Endowment stepped forward with \$4 million towards restoration of the park's historic sunken garden, and for construction of a new recreation facility. But Lilly was skeptical that the community was fully behind the changes in the park, and wanted a reassurance both that capital improvements were being prioritized correctly and that the park's maintenance would be adequately funded into the future. Therefore, the foundation placed a condition on the grant—it mandated that an organization be formed that could both provide a forum for the residents to express their priorities for the park, and endow its maintenance into the future. With help from the Indianapolis Parks Foundation, the Friends of Garfield Park was initiated in 1998 by members of the foundation and local residents who had been active in the planning of the park from the outset. The friends convened the communities surrounding the park through their neighborhood associations, churches,

schools, politicians, businesses, and merchants. They came up with a list of priorities for Garfield Park and began to raise the necessary money to endow maintenance.

According to Mark Bowell, who is now the friends' development consultant, the organization's primary role is to raise a \$3 million endowment for the continued maintenance of the park's conservatory, which was rebuilt in the 1950's, and the sunken garden, which was completely restored in 1998 with the funds from the Lilly Endowment.

Bowell notes that the endowment is not about alleviating the commitment of the public sector. The friends have a specific maintenance of effort clause in their memorandum of understanding with the parks department (see Chapter 4, Written Agreements) that holds the city commitment to Garfield Park to at least the 1997 budgetary level. "The endowment is a safety net," says Bowell, "it allows us to provide the value added funds the department needs to keep the park to the highest standards."

The friends organize two main fundraising campaigns, one for their operating costs, and one for the endowment. Last year's effort raised approximately \$150,000 for the organization, and they have established a goal of \$365,000. In the endowment campaign, their goal over four years is to raise \$3 million. The friends have been given the right to use naming opportunities as fundraising tools only for the Sunken Garden, and offer bricks, fountains and other amenities for people to adopt. They would like to expand that right to include the entire park in the future, however the naming opportunities are still restricted to amenities – donors cannot adopt an entire area of the park.

The friends also have a goal of increasing community input into park planning. To that end, they have established a twice-yearly event, known as the "Friends Forum" to elicit suggestions and get feedback from local park users and organizations. The first event, held in May, 2000, attracted over 200 people, and the friends needed to rent a tent to accommodate them. The friends also provided food and entertainment. "It's a check and balance thing," says Bowell. "We find out from the neighbors and stakeholders whether we're doing our job."

The friends' offices are located at the Garfield Park Conservatory, and they share space with the Friends of Garfield Park Conservatory, an all-volunteer group that runs a plant shop on site.

Although it is a major piece of the Indianapolis parks system, Garfield Park does not have a master plan. However, the board of the friends is working on a strategic plan for the group, and the parks department is currently developing a comprehensive five-year plan.

Summary:

Name of Park: Garfield Park

Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

Park Size: 128 acres

Primary Caretaker: Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation

Name of Organization: Friends of Garfield Park, Inc.

Type of Organization: Assistance Provider

Year Formed: 1998

Staff: 2

Board: 12 members

Mission: "The mission of the Friends of Garfield Park, Inc is to ensure the preservation and continuation of public benefits of Garfield Park through enhanced funding, the application of effective advocacy, and expanded stewardship."

Master Plan: None

Written Agreements: MOU, 1999

Contact

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Friends of Buttonwood Park **New Bedford, MA**

At approximately 98 acres, Buttonwood Park is one of New Bedford's largest and most heavily used parks. The famous landscape architecture firm of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot designed the park in 1895 in their characteristic naturalistic landscape style, with a large pond, stream, groves, lawns, and a forest. However, the original plan was never fully implemented. A 1987 master plan noted that "Buttonwood Park's 90-year evolution has been piecemeal and sporadic, providing services and facilities as needs have arisen."² At that time, there were several park facilities, including 10 tennis courts, three ballfields, three basketball courts, an exercise room, a zoo, a library, a greenhouse, a nursery, a bandshell, a Veterans Memorial Building, a warming house, 12 monuments, and five parking areas. A decade ago, the city initiated renovations on the park. A great lawn and a pedestrian promenade, based on the Olmsted firm's original design, were added. More recently, several maintenance buildings have been demolished. Buttonwood Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Located in a residential area of the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts, the park is bordered by city streets and surrounded by houses built between 1910 and 1930. Residents are predominantly middle class and are culturally diverse. In addition to the wide range of facilities that the park has to offer, the Buttonwood Park Zoo attracts both residents and visitors to New Bedford. The park is host to the city's annual Whaling Festival, a three-day event that attracts over 300,000 people.

The origins of the Friends of Buttonwood Park are in statewide rather than local activism. In 1983 the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks conducted a pilot study of public parks in the state that had been designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm, including Buttonwood Park. The organization hoped to create a model Olmsted park inventory that could be useful nationwide.

Of the more than 280 public parks designed by the Olmsted firm in Massachusetts, the study highlighted ten parks it felt demonstrated a representative sample of both the range and condition of the Olmsted parks in Massachusetts. New Bedford's Buttonwood Park was on the list. According to the inventory, Buttonwood Park's trees "suffered from vandalism and neglect," its buildings were "poorly maintained," and the sporadic additions of recreation facilities and parking have caused the park to lose definition and character.³

In producing the report, the association's members hoped that they would bring attention to these valuable landscapes, and also help locate the money needed to rehabilitate them. The report had the desired effect. Influenced by the study, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management created a program called the Olmsted Historic Landscape Preservation Program, and in 1987 the department funded studies and rehabilitation projects for 15 parks in Massachusetts, including Buttonwood Park, which was awarded \$1.2 million.

The mayor of New Bedford appointed 32 residents, including members of the parks department, to form a citizens advisory committee that would guide the development of a master plan, funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. The committee hired a consultant to prepare the plan, which covered the concerns outlined by the inventory report and also raised other important issues such as flooding, vehicle congestion, safety, and the need for ongoing management and maintenance. It also recommended that a friends group be formed to "provide overview of and support for the park."⁴

² Walker-Kluesing Design Group. (1987). *Reclaiming the Useable Past: A Master Plan for Veteran's Memorial Park and Zoo at Buttonwood Park, New Bedford, Massachusetts*. Prepared under the Olmsted Historic Landscape Preservation Program, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Contract No. 251-85, Executive Summary Section, page 1.

³ McPeck, Eleanor M.; Morgan, Keith; and Zaitzevsky, Cynthia, editors; Brookline, Mass. 1983, "Olmsted in Massachusetts: the Public Legacy: A Report of the Inventory Committee of the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks," p 37.

⁴ Walker-Kluesing Design Group, 1987, *ibid.*

Later that year, the citizen's advisory committee formed the Friends of Buttonwood Park to oversee the master plan's implementation. The new group entered into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Environmental Management and the city of New Bedford, the two key partners in this project to date. The New Bedford Zoological Society, which managed the Buttonwood Zoo, offered to serve as an umbrella organization for the friends; the president of the society helped the friends to develop a set of by-laws, obtain 501(c) 3 status, and form an organization in nine months. The initial members set about developing a wider membership for the friends by holding public meetings and inviting speakers, including Tupper Thomas of the Prospect Park Alliance, and Betsy Shure-Gross, co-chair of the National Association of Olmsted Parks.

Formed to assume a watchful eye over the master plan and the park, the friends oversaw the first round of capital improvements in the park based on the plan. One million dollars from the Department of Environmental Management grant was spent on building a great lawn (part of the original Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot plan that was never implemented), a pedestrian walkway through the park with benches and lights, and on reconstructing tennis courts that had been eliminated to allow for the great lawn. A new playground, another improvement recommended in the master plan, was added with money raised by an independent group that later joined the friends.

Though their influence is strongly felt in the city, the friends are a small organization. In conjunction with their role as the stewards of the master plan, the friends focus on park programming, organizing volunteers, and advocacy. Programming activities include concerts, and providing and maintaining an outdoor reading space in conjunction with the public library. Volunteers serve as the staff of the friends organization and are also involved in park clean-ups, tree maintenance, and staffing activities and programs. The volunteer board runs the group on a tiny \$3,500 annual operating budget. The New Bedford Department of Parks and Recreation maintains and manages the park.

However, defining the friends' role, as well as their working relationship with the parks department has not been all smooth sailing. In 1994, several years after the great lawn and promenade had been built, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued a formal complaint about the severe deficiencies at the New Bedford Zoo. The city took an aggressive approach to revitalization that included plans for a significant expansion into the park, and the addition of 250 parking spaces. The friends became concerned--the expansion would clearly impinge heavily upon the master plan for the park and would require significant alterations to improvements that were already in place.

Committed to a public process, the board of the Friends of Buttonwood Park brought their concerns to the parks department and told them that they wanted to hold public meetings about the zoo expansion and its impact on the park. The parks department, the zoological society, and the friends hosted the workshops and public meetings collectively, with the understanding that it was important for the groups to get along. Compromise did not come easily, but eventually limitations were placed on the zoo expansion, although parts of the new pedestrian concourse would have to be replaced, and 135 parking spaces, rather than 250, are now in the main parking lot. As a result of this process, according to Jean Bennett, president of the Friends of Buttonwood Park, "the friends emerged stronger and more respected by the parks department."

The friends have been involved in other advocacy issues as well, including a campaign to create and implement a pooper-scooper law, and an effort to limit the number of additional memorial statues in the park by encouraging people to plant trees instead. The friends also have been very involved in advocating for the city's annual Whaling Festival to be relocated from the park to an alternate location, and promoting increased and safe use of the park. The friends also raise funds for park events and capital improvements. In 1998, the friends raised approximately \$10,000 in revenue from contributions, including those to their tree fund.

In addition to increasing their current activities in the next few years, the friends plan to expand their park involvement to include security, design and planning for capital improvements, marketing and outreach, and remedial maintenance. While the parks department and the New Bedford Zoological Society are the

sole managers for the park and the zoo, the friends have hopes of expanding their working partnership with the city to become more actively involved in managing and maintaining the park in the future.

Summary:

Name of Park: Buttonwood Park

Location: New Bedford, Massachusetts

Size: 98 acres

Primary Caretaker: New Bedford Department of Parks and Recreation

Name of Organization: Friends of Buttonwood Park

Type: Assistance Provider and Public Advocate

Mission: The Friend's mission is to work with the community in support of all efforts to preserve and promote Buttonwood Park as a premier horticultural and zoological landscape. The Friends work to provide the public with information, rest, relaxation, and recreation in Buttonwood Park and assist governmental agencies to enable people to enjoy the park in peace and safety.

Staff: None

Board: 18 members (maximum is not to exceed 30); Ex Officio: New Bedford Zoological Society, the Park Board /Department and one city representative as appointed by the Mayor.

Master Plan: 1987

Written Agreements: MOU

Contact

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Appendix F: Ideas on soccer management (from the Urban Parks Online listserve)

This may not be the answer you are looking for, but in a number of public European parks that I have been to, the soccer fields are designed to be fenced off with permanent goals and a playing surface that more closely resembles packed dirt or clay -- I have even seen a surfaces that are synthetic.

The goals are smaller than the regulation 24' x 8' (and more appropriate for pickup) and the fenced off area is actually designed to be a combination fence and concrete. The one that pops into my mind immediately is in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. If I can trust my memory, the field is twice the size of a pickup basketball court (maybe three times the size). The space is designed well enough so that it seems to fit in with the rest of the park. My recollection is that some of the grassy spaces were still used by people doing other activities in small groups, but the soccer was confined to the space set aside for soccer.

The other thing is that it's my understanding that the United States Soccer Federation is trying to make inroads into more urban communities. You may want to contact them to see if they have any ideas. It's also my understanding that Kearny, NJ (or a town near Kearny) has some sort of public fenced pickup soccer facility that is pretty famous.

Matt Dalbey
Jackson, MS

I am and have been a soccer fan my entire life, and I have seen many different solutions to the problem. I would hesitate to use artificial turf because it is a terrible surface for playing any sport. Furthermore, if you are in an environment that has little green space, it would be a shame to cover up the little bit you had with an artificial surface. I would suggest a couple of things. First, I would look into using a very traffic tolerant turf. I live in the South and it seems that the most tolerant turf for heavy traffic is Bermuda grass. The other thing I would suggest is to heavily manage the turf area by doing intensive reseeding and aeration. Finally, I would try and use smaller soccer goals that can be moved by two people. Using smaller goals and a larger number of them allows the users to move the field around, thus giving turf a time to rest. Overall though, I would try and recommend some periphery nodes that are more specific to the user groups that are being excluded from the central space.

Paul Littman
Land Design Group, Raleigh, NC

In Atlanta, the fields and passive green spaces are turning into dustbowls because the demand for soccer fields in the City of Atlanta far outweigh the supply. Clearly, there is a need for additional recreation spaces in the City of Atlanta.

The only short-term solution to your problem is to close the fields down at regular intervals. It is vital that you have irrigation or you will need to close them for longer. Our turf managers also use shifting goal areas and rotating play direction as part of the solution on natural turf fields.

Dan Cagle
Executive Director/Director of Coaching
Atlanta Youth Soccer Association

Paul has hit the nail on the head by suggesting correct management of the site and the very best solution of them all, smaller goals and moving them regularly, not necessarily month by month but certainly season to season.

In the UK we have four seasons and a very definite football season, so the grass, in the best of the summer, gets a good rest and if it's a tough mix it recovers very quickly. In wetter areas with a heavy soil, drainage and initial preparation is vital, particularly in the goalmouth area. If the same areas have to be used over and over then re-turfing could be an option and this is happening more and more on UK parks having been used successfully on UK Professional pitches for many years.

You'll never cure the problem but you can minimize the damage...and if you think this one's hard, just you wait till Cricket takes off in the US!!!

Kind regards

George Liddell

Attachment G: Place Performance Evaluation Game Results

King Park - Jamaica, Queens

Place performance evaluation

Conducted with Friends of King Park and stakeholders

Location: King Manor - North side

Quantitative Data (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree):

Comfort & Image		Access & Linkages		Uses & Activities		Sociability	
Attractive:	2.0	Identifiable from a distance:	2.0	Mix of stores/services:	People in groups:	1.0	
Feels Safe:	3.0	"Walkable"	3.0	Community events/activities:	Evidence of volunteerism:	1.0	
Clean/ well Maintained:	2.0	Connected to adjacent areas:	2.5	Active adjacent uses:	Sense of pride and ownership:	1.0	
Comfortable places to sit:	1.0	Adequate information/signage:	3.0	Economic vitality of area:	Children and seniors are present:	1.0	
Average:	2.0	Average:	2.6	Average:	1.7	Average:	1.0

Overall:	1.8
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Open Answers:

What do you like best about this place?

Historical identity, trees

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

Restore flower garden; small-scale planting; maintain lawn

What 3 changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

Maintenance - proper management; keep shutters open; recreational area - chairs, benches, water fountain

Ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

Are there specific institutions or organizations that could be partners in improving King Park and its program offerings to the community?

Social Security; York College; Elementary School; Family Court; NYPD; Jamaica Ave. BID; JCAL; Bown High School; Tyra's Group Cultural Collaborative

King Park - Jamaica, Queens

Place performance evaluation

Conducted with Friends of King Park and stakeholders

Location: Park Lawn

Quantitative Data (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree):

Comfort & Image		Access & Linkages		Uses & Activities		Sociability	
Attractive:	1.0	Identifiable from a distance:	5.0	Mix of stores/services:	1.0	People in groups:	5.0
Feels Safe:	3.0	"Walkable"	5.0	Community events/activities:	2.0	Evidence of volunteerism:	5.0
Clean/ well Maintained:	1.0	Connected to adjacent areas:	5.0	Active adjacent uses:	5.0	Sense of pride and ownership:	1.0
Comfortable places to sit:	3.0	Adequate information/signage:	1.0	Economic vitality of area:	1.0	Children and seniors are present:	2.0
Average:	2.0	Average:	4.0	Average:	2.3	Average:	3.3
Overall:							2.9

Open Answers:

What do you like best about this place?

Green, open

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

Lighting; color - flowers; security

What 3 changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

Better security; soccer or no soccer (?); more activity by local institutions

Ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

Security - hanging out

Are there specific institutions or organizations that could be partners in improving King Park and its program offerings to the community?

School, hospital, court, police

King Park - Jamaica, Queens

Place performance evaluation

Conducted with Friends of King Park and stakeholders

Location: Jamaica Ave. & 153rd

Quantitative Data (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree):

Comfort & Image		Access & Linkages		Uses & Activities		Sociability	
Attractive:	3.00	Identifiable from a distance:	2.00	Mix of stores/services:	2.00	People in groups:	3.00
Feels Safe:	3.00	"Walkable"	3.00	Community events/activities:	3.00	Evidence of volunteerism:	2.00
Clean/ well Maintained:	3.00	Connected to adjacent areas:	4.00	Active adjacent uses:	2.00	Sense of pride and ownership:	2.00
Comfortable places to sit:	3.00	Adequate information/signage:	2.00	Economic vitality of area:	2.00	Children and seniors are present:	2.00
Average:	3.00	Average:	2.75	Average:	2.25	Average:	2.25

Overall:	2.56
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Open Answers:

What do you like best about this place?

Public buildings, places; landmark church; clean; spectacular view at entrance; museum; trees; wide sidewalks

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

Widen entrance way; change position of museum sign; more inviting entranceway - more ornate gate, flowers; open shutters, flowers not shrubs at museum; raised bed gardening for seniors

What 3 changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

Herb garden; flowers along walkway and fence; chess, checkers

Ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

Put up a community bulletin board; a bigger sign in the entrance

Are there specific institutions or organizations that could be partners in improving King Park and its program offerings to the community?

Police, SSA, Bus stop

King Park - Jamaica, Queens

Place performance evaluation

Conducted with Friends of King Park and stakeholders

Location: Jamaica Ave. & 150th

Quantitative Data (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree):

Comfort & Image	Access & Linkages	Uses & Activities	Sociability				
Attractive:	3.00	Identifiable from a distance:	4.00	Mix of stores/services:	1.00	People in groups:	5.00
Feels Safe:	4.00	"Walkable"	4.00	Community events/activities:	3.00	Evidence of volunteerism:	2.00
Clean/ well Maintained:	5.00	Connected to adjacent areas:	1.00	Active adjacent uses:	2.00	Sense of pride and ownership:	4.00
Comfortable places to sit:	1.00	Adequate information/signage:	5.00	Economic vitality of area:	5.00	Children and seniors are present:	5.00
Average:	3.25	Average:	3.50	Average:	2.75	Average:	4.00

Overall:	3.38
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Open Answers:

What do you like best about this place?

Clean

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

In bus area, we would like flowers, a place to sit, a food area, a game area, tables, chairs; open another entrance

What 3 changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

Redevelop the front area; provide permanent area where you can buy coffee

Ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

Are there specific institutions or organizations that could be partners in improving King Park and its program offerings to the community?

Jamaica YMCA - youth sports; Jamaica Art Center - art programs; Jamaica Neighborhood Center; schools; large corp. to be a part of the beautification and provide funding and upkeep.

King Park - Jamaica, Queens

Place performance evaluation

Conducted with Friends of King Park and stakeholders

Location: Playground, garden, and comfort station

Quantitative Data (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree):

Comfort & Image		Access & Linkages		Uses & Activities		Sociability	
Attractive:	3.50	Identifiable from a distance:	1.00	Mix of stores/services:	2.50	People in groups:	3.00
Feels Safe:	2.00	"Walkable"	3.00	Community events/activities:	3.00	Evidence of volunteerism:	1.00
Clean/ well Maintained:	4.00	Connected to adjacent areas:	2.00	Active adjacent uses:	2.00	Sense of pride and ownership:	2.00
Comfortable places to sit:	4.00	Adequate information/signage:	1.00	Economic vitality of area:	3.00	Children and seniors are present:	3.50
Average:	3.38	Average:	1.75	Average:	2.63	Average:	2.38

Overall:	2.53
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Open Answers:

What do you like best about this place?

Clean; creative jungle gyms - and the kids love them!

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

Vendors/food; spruce up comfort station

What 3 changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

Plants/grass would be an asset; widen the walkways

Ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

Are there specific institutions or organizations that could be partners in improving King Park and its program offerings to the community?

Jamaica Business Association; Police Department; Parks Department

King Park - Jamaica, Queens

Place performance evaluation

Conducted with Friends of King Park and stakeholders

Location: Gazebo

Quantitative Data (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree):

Comfort & Image	Access & Linkages		Uses & Activities		Sociability		
Attractive:	2.00	Identifiable from a distance:	4.00	Mix of stores/services:	N/A	People in groups:	4.00
Feels Safe:	4.00	"Walkable"	4.00	Community events/activities:	N/A	Evidence of volunteerism:	3.00
Clean/ well Maintained:	3.00	Connected to adjacent areas:	4.00	Active adjacent uses:	4.00	Sense of pride and ownership:	1.00
Comfortable places to sit:	1.00	Adequate information/signage:	1.00	Economic vitality of area:	4.00	Children and seniors are present:	4.00
Average:	2.50	Average:	3.25	Average:	4.00	Average:	3.00
Overall:							3.19

Open Answers:

What do you like best about this place?

Location and greenspace

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

Enforcement by park of misuse (music, other groups w/o permits); keep bathrooms open; more usable - seats, handrails, improved design

What 3 changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

Enforce proper/improper use; improve lawns, walkways; beautification

Ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

Concert activities/programming

Are there specific institutions or organizations that could be partners in improving King Park and its program offerings to the community?

GJDC; Hospital; local social/non-profit groups (senior); grantwriting outfit for improvements

King Park - Jamaica, Queens

Place performance evaluation

Conducted with Friends of King Park and stakeholders

Location: NE corner

Quantitative Data (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree):

Comfort & Image	Access & Linkages	Uses & Activities	Sociability
Attractive: 3.00	Identifiable from a distance: 5.00	Mix of stores/services: 3.00	People in groups: 5.00
Feels Safe: 5.00	"Walkable": 5.00	Community events/activities: 4.00	Evidence of volunteerism: 3.00
Clean/ well Maintained: 3.00	Connected to adjacent areas: 4.00	Active adjacent uses: 5.00	Sense of pride and ownership: 1.00
Comfortable places to sit: 4.00	Adequate information/signage: 2.00	Economic vitality of area: 4.00	Children and seniors are present: 5.00
Average: 3.75	Average: 4.00	Average: 4.00	Average: 3.50

Overall:	3.81
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Open Answers:

What do you like best about this place?

Trees, history, liveliness

List three things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:

Partnership w/ hospital/café; eliminate vehicle traffic off passways; centralize storage of garbage

What 3 changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

Memorial garden; dedicated park manager; organize community around park - educate

Ask someone who is in the place what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

Accommodate pathways (according to pedestrian traffic)

Are there specific institutions or organizations that could be partners in improving King Park and its program offerings to the community?

Downtown CTE., GJDC, YMCA (5k run)

Attachment H: Summary Survey and Observation Results

Summary

In the fall of 2001, Project for Public Spaces, with the help of the Friends of King Park, conducted surveys of both park users and area residents, with the goal of determining their current use of the park, their perceptions of it, as well as their suggestions for improving park facilities, uses and events. Surveys were conducted in both English and Spanish, and a total of 228 surveys were collected – 150 in English and 78 in Spanish. Additionally Project for Public Spaces observed and mapped park use on both a weekday and weekend day, in order to better understand how the park was being used at different times of day and week. Factors that were considered included: what types of people use the park, what were they doing, which areas of the park were they using, who were they with, etc.

Survey Results

Demographics

The majority of respondents who answered the survey live close to the park, and have lived in the neighborhood for a long time – 45% over 10 years, another 18% between 6 and 10 years. There were also a number of recent arrivals to the neighborhood – 10% have lived here under 1 year, another 26% - between 1 and 5 years.

More women (54%) responded to the park user survey than men, but this does not mean that more women use the park.

Time Factors

The majority of survey respondents are frequent users, visiting the park daily (24%), weekly (38%) or several times per month (25%). Almost half of respondents (46%) use the park both on weekdays and weekends. 40% report using the park on weekends, and only 14% - on weekdays.

Survey respondents also reported staying in the park for long periods of time. A majority (55%) of park goers stay in the park between 1 and 3 hours, another 21% stay in the park more than 3 hours; 6% stay in the park for 6 hours or more. Meanehile, only 23% stay in the park for less than one hour.

A large proportion of survey respondents reported using the park in the afternoon (43%). Only 7% reported using the park in the evening, although observations actually showed that there is a major peak in use at around 7 p.m. 16% reported using the park at all times.

Activities that people are engaged in

The surveys show that King Park is a very social place. Only 20% of the survey respondents report going to the park by themselves. All other respondents come to the park with a variety of groups and individuals: 34% come with kids and family, 11% - with their partner or friend, 29% - with a group of friends, 5% - with an organized group or a sports team.

Rufus King Park is used for a variety of activities. Although at first glance King Park seems overwhelmingly used for active uses (sports, biking, running, etc.), surveys show that passive uses (such as talking and socializing, sitting and relaxing, people watching, etc.) were mentioned far more frequently – in fact they outstripped active uses by a ratio of 3 to 1. The surveys also showed that only 4% of respondents come to the park to visit the King Manor Museum. In fact a number of park goers were unaware of the museum being in the park.

Ratings of the park

Survey respondents were asked to rate King Park for several categories. The park received the highest ratings for condition of benches, followed by condition of entrances, condition of King Manor Museum, condition of the playground, and condition of ball courts. The park received average ratings for general cleanliness and grass-cutting. Safety and general condition of the park received below average ratings. The poorest ratings were given to flowers and landscaping, followed by condition of restrooms, conditions of drinking fountains, and lighting.

Open-ended survey questions

What do you like best about King Park?

The most common answer to this question was tranquility (15.4%), followed by location and convenience (14.9%), trees and nature (14%), large size of the park (12.3%), and the playground and soccer games (at 8% each). Other common responses, in order of importance included the good environment for kids, sprinklers for kids, place to socialize, place for sports, King Manor Museum, place of quiet.

Think about your favorite Park, here or in your home country. What physical improvements would you make to King Park to make it your new favorite park?

The most desirable physical improvement to the park, according to surveys, is the addition of chess and other game tables (26% of respondents) and an outdoor café (18% of respondents). 13% recommended additional ball/sports courts; 13%, more restrooms or longer hours for the existing ones; 11%, improvements to the playground; 11%, more flowers; and 9%, a soccer field. Additionally smaller number of respondents mentioned a better garden, new grass, trash cans, lights, snack vendors, swings, a picnic area, and more water fountains.

What activities or events would make King Park more enjoyable for you?

Park users agreed that *concerts* are the most desirable events in the park (16%), an even higher proportion among English-speaking responses (25%). Exercise classes were mentioned by 11% overall, but by a much higher 27% of Spanish-speaking respondents. Other events mentioned included children's programs (13.6%), martial arts classes (4.4%), soccer classes (4.4%). In addition, games for kids, a community center, tournaments in various games, and an Easter egg/scavenger hunt were each mentioned by 1.3% of respondents.

Is there anything you would be willing to teach to others, if you had the opportunity?

A large number of people offered their skills to teach others, and many of them provided their contact information for future outreach. People offered to teach baseball (28 people), chess (21), and soccer (20), followed by supervising children (18), crafts classes (17), job skills (17), music and painting (16 each), life skills (15) and English (12). These results present truly exciting programming opportunities to any group that wishes to organize these potential volunteers in the future.

Name any skills you would like to learn, if possible:

Our survey results suggest that the people of King Park were more generous with the skills they were willing to teach than the skills they wished to learn. Nonetheless, 28 people said they wish to learn chess, which coincides nicely with the number of tutors that may be available (above)! Other popular requests were music (22), yoga (17), basketball (17 people), aerobics (15), and gardening (14). A few mentioned learning English, painting, salsa and tango dancing, and even auto-mechanic's skills.

Observations

The observations noted significantly more men using the park than women – 68% men vs. 32% women.

Observations also found that it is a very young audience that uses King Park: 26% of park goers are under the age of 15, 25% between 15 and 20, 38% between 21 and 40 years old. Only 9% of observed park users were between 41 and 60 years old, and just 2% were over 60.

Observations established that King Park is being used more intensely in the afternoons and evenings, with two peak time periods – one around 3 pm and another one around 7 pm.

31% of park users were observed talking and socializing, 28% sitting and relaxing, 11% using the playground, 5% people watching, etc. Of the sports-related uses, the largest percent of users were observed *watching*, rather than playing, sports (13%). Another 7% were playing soccer, 3% were playing respectively basketball, baseball, and handball.

Observations confirmed the survey findings that most visitors to King Park come with family or friends – only 13% of users were observed in the park alone.

The most intensively used area of the park is the north end, which includes the large lawn, a major path crossing the park east to west, and ball courts. The middle section of the park, including the playground, had 30% of all observed users. The largest section, which included the King Manor Museum, the parks' building, and the garden, saw the least use, with only 16% of users observed there.

Attachment I: Detailed survey results

12. What do you like best about King Park?

Tranquility	35	15.4%
Location/ Convenience	34	14.9%
TREES / nature	32	14.0%
Large	28	12.3%
Playground	19	8.3%
Soccer	19	8.3%
Good for little kids	15	6.6%
Place to socialize	12	5.3%
Sports	12	5.3%
Sprinklers for kids	12	5.3%
King Manor Museum	9	3.9%
Quiet	8	3.5%
Feeding birds	2	0.9%
Open to public	2	0.9%
Bike paths	1	0.4%
Shade	1	0.4%

13. Think about your favorite park, here or in your home country.

What physical improvements would you make to King Park to make it your new favorite?

Outdoor café	42	18.4%
Chess tables	59	25.9%
More restrooms open	30	13.2%
Sports Courts	29	12.7%
Improve playground	25	11.0%
More flowers	24	10.5%
Soccer field	21	9.2%
Better lighting	20	8.8%
Game tables	20	8.8%
New grass	16	7.0%
Better garden	15	6.6%
Picnic area	12	5.3%
Snack vendors	12	5.3%
Food vendors	11	4.8%
Baseball field	9	3.9%
More swings	9	3.9%
New trash cans	8	3.5%
Museum should be open more often	7	3.1%

More water fountains	5	2.2%
Remove rocks	5	2.2%
Paint benches	3	1.3%
Pool	3	1.3%
Make the park less hostile to the homeless	2	0.9%
More shade	2	0.9%
A zoo	1	0.4%
Carousel	1	0.4%
Electric sockets for misc. use	1	0.4%
Fence around playground	1	0.4%
Level courts	1	0.4%
More open space	1	0.4%
Replace playground bridge	1	0.4%

14. What activities or events would make King Park more enjoyable for you?

Concerts	38	16.7%
Children's programs	31	13.6%
Exercise classes	25	11.0%
Martial arts classes	10	4.4%
Soccer classes	10	4.4%
Community house/ center	6	2.6%
A fair	5	2.2%
Tournaments chess, basketball, baseball	5	2.2%
Games for kids	4	1.8%
Advertise events better	3	1.3%
Arts and crafts	3	1.3%
Scavenger/Easter egg hunt	3	1.3%
Free food	2	0.9%
Performers	2	0.9%
Church activities	1	0.4%
Fashion show	1	0.4%
Film screen	1	0.4%
flea market	1	0.4%

Is there anything you would be willing to teach to others?

coaching baseball	28	12.3%
chess	21	9.2%
coaching soccer	20	8.8%
supervise children	18	7.9%
crafts classes	17	7.5%
job skills	17	7.5%
music	16	7.0%
painting	16	7.0%
life skills	15	6.6%

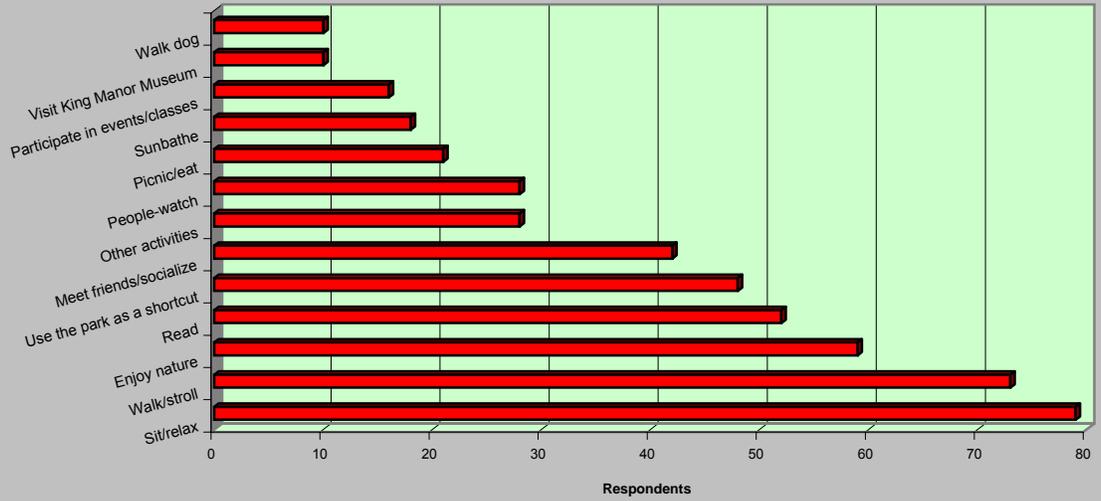
English	12	5.3%
sports	12	5.3%

Name any skills you would like to learn:

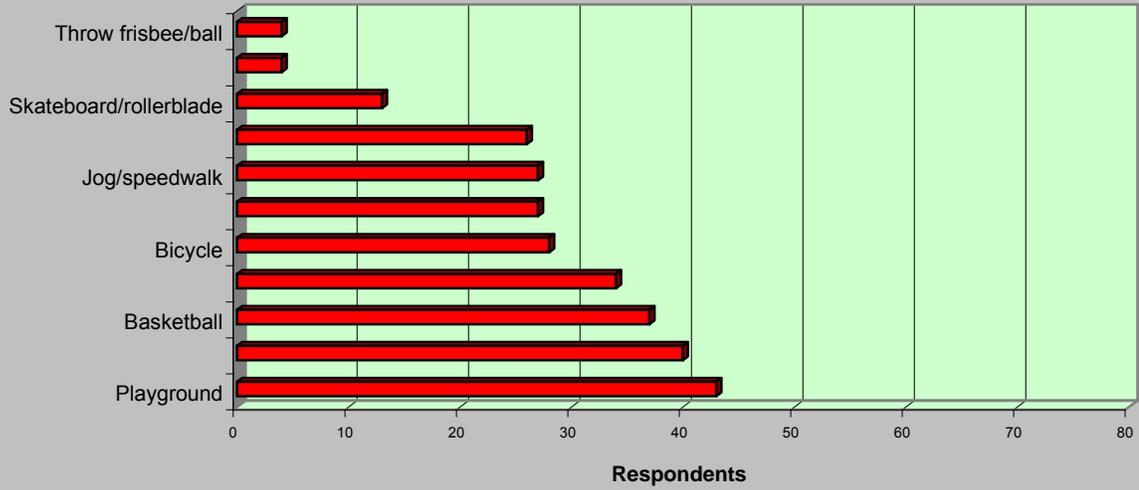
chess	28	12.3%
basketball	17	7.5%
yoga	17	7.5%
aerobics	15	6.6%
tennis	15	6.6%
gardening	14	6.1%
baseball	12	5.3%
music	12	5.3%
play guitar	10	4.4%
painting	9	3.9%
english	8	3.5%
dancing salsa	7	3.1%
computers/ computer graphics	6	2.6%
dancing tango	5	2.2%
karate	4	1.8%
quilting	3	1.3%
ceramics	3	1.3%
sewing	2	0.9%

Based on 228 surveys

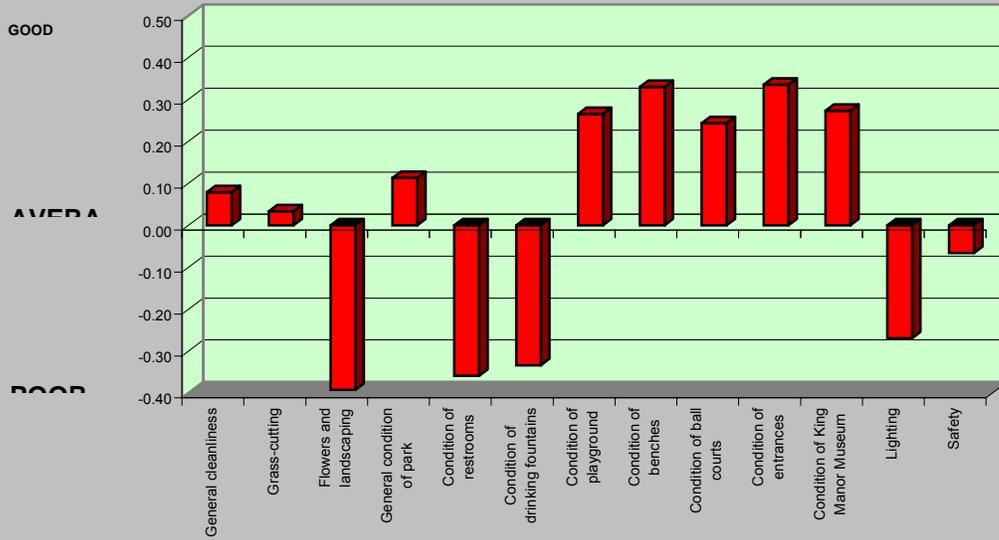
King Park Surveys: Passive uses
When you use King Park, what are you most likely to do here?



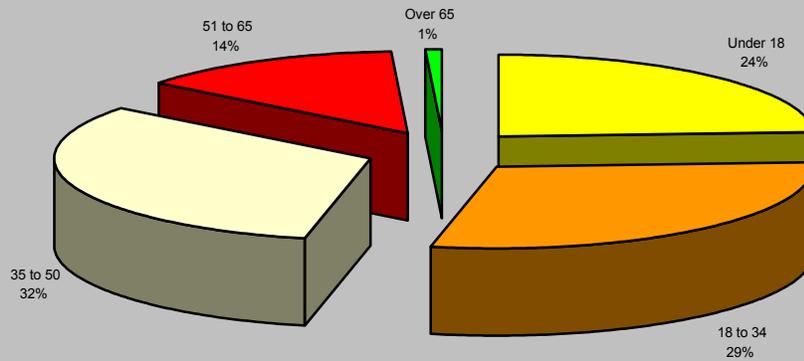
King Park Surveys: Active Uses
When you use King Park, what are you most likely to do here?



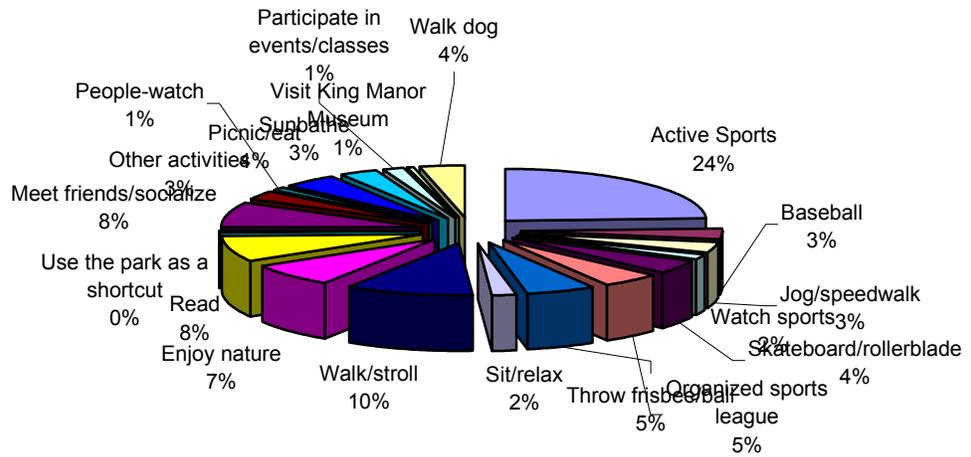
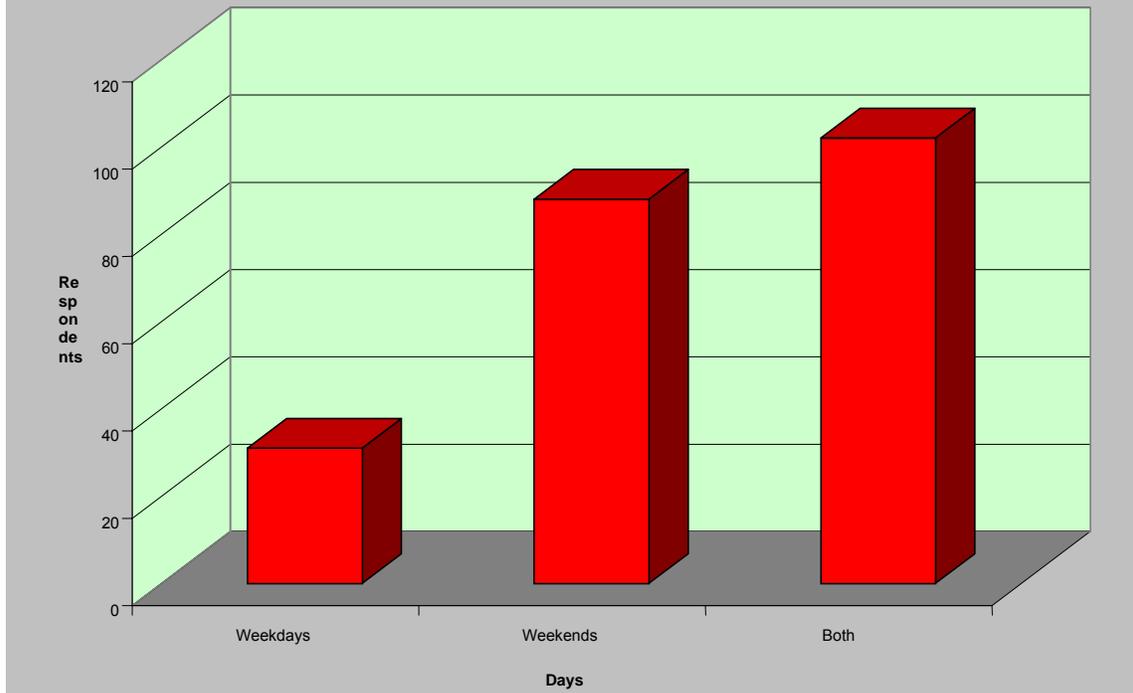
King Park Surveys: Ratings



Age of Survey Respondents

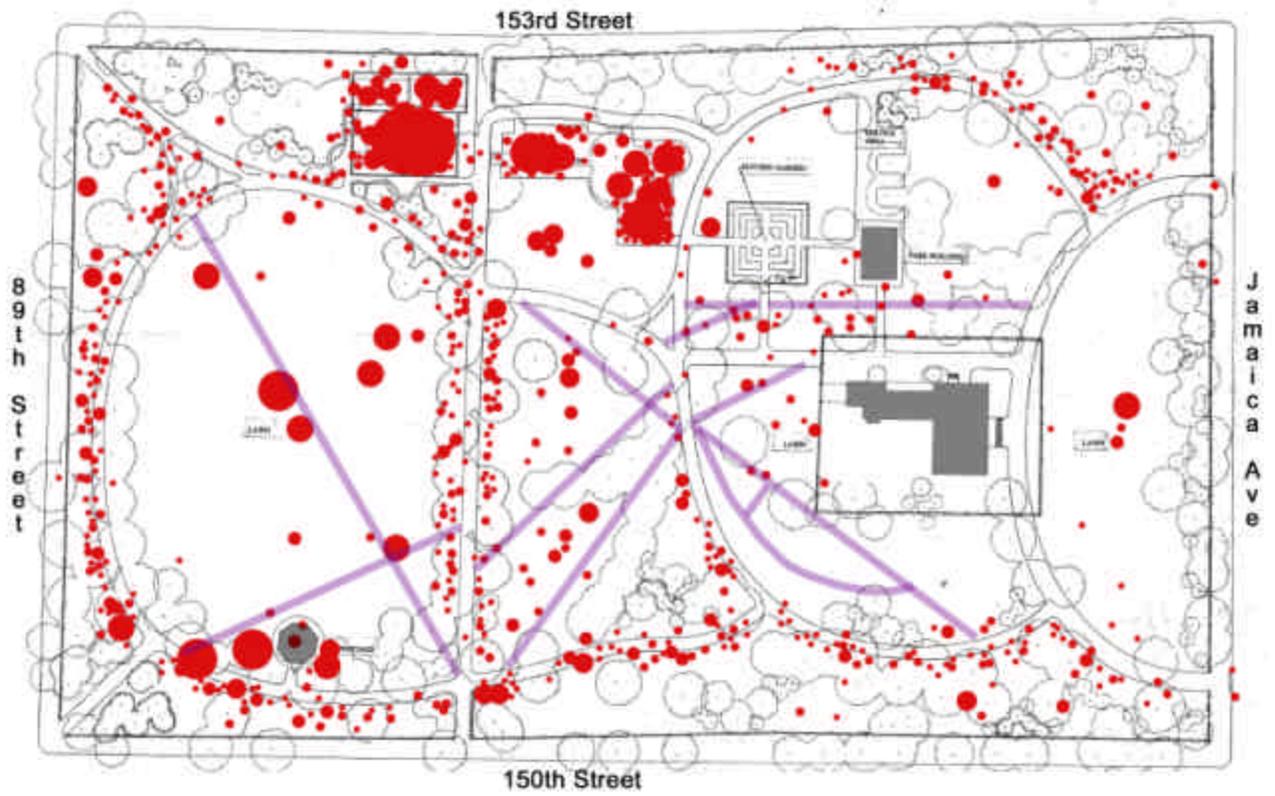


What days do you usually use King Park? - survey results

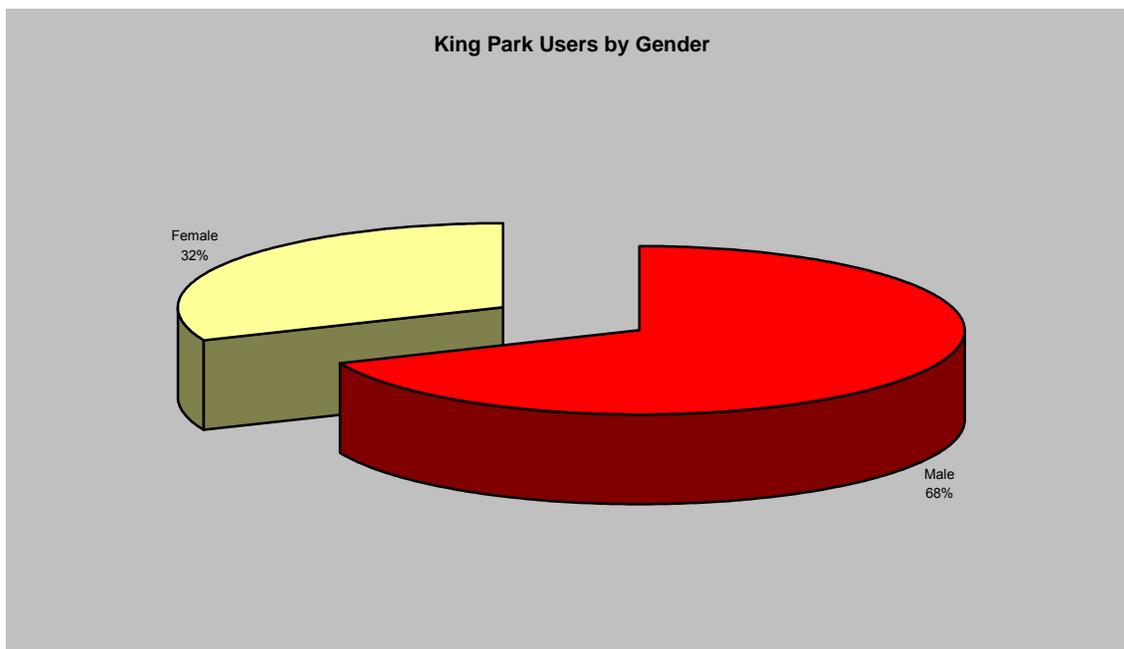
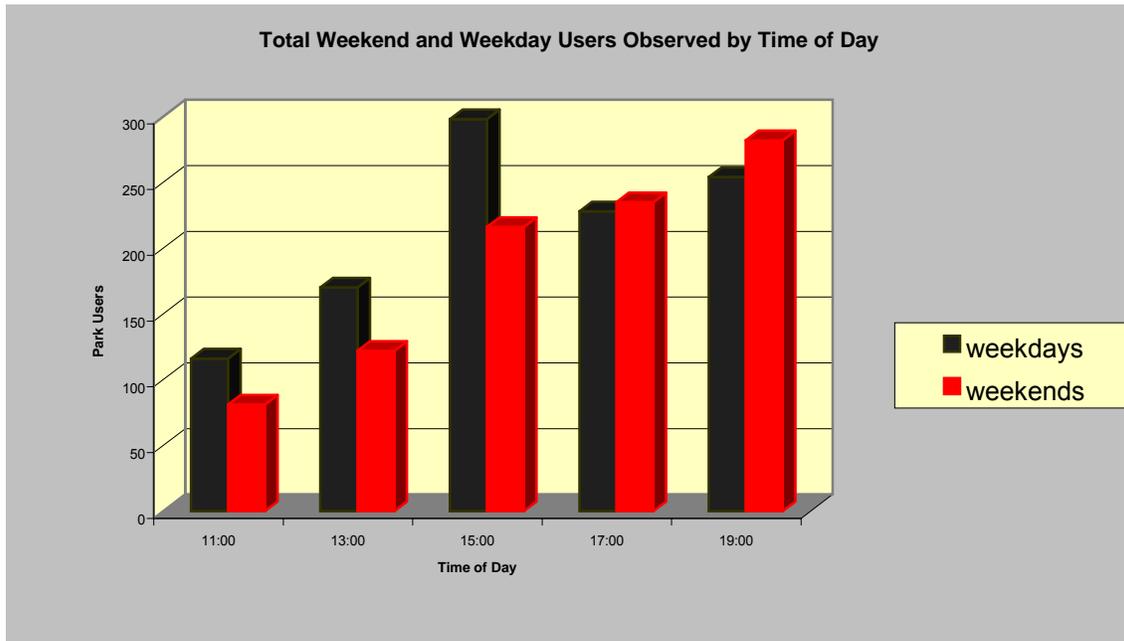


Attachment J: Behavior mapping results

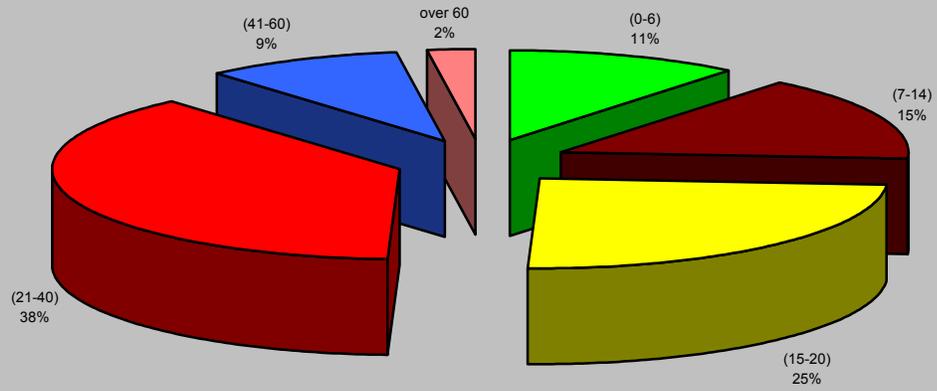
*Red areas indicate people; purple lines indicate paths worn through grass



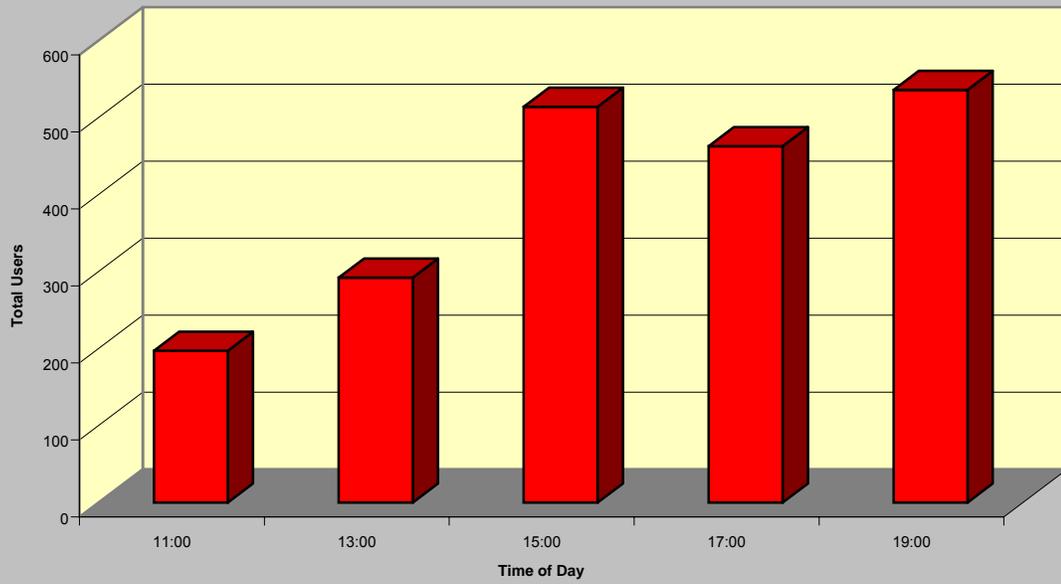
Behavior mapping breakdown of activities

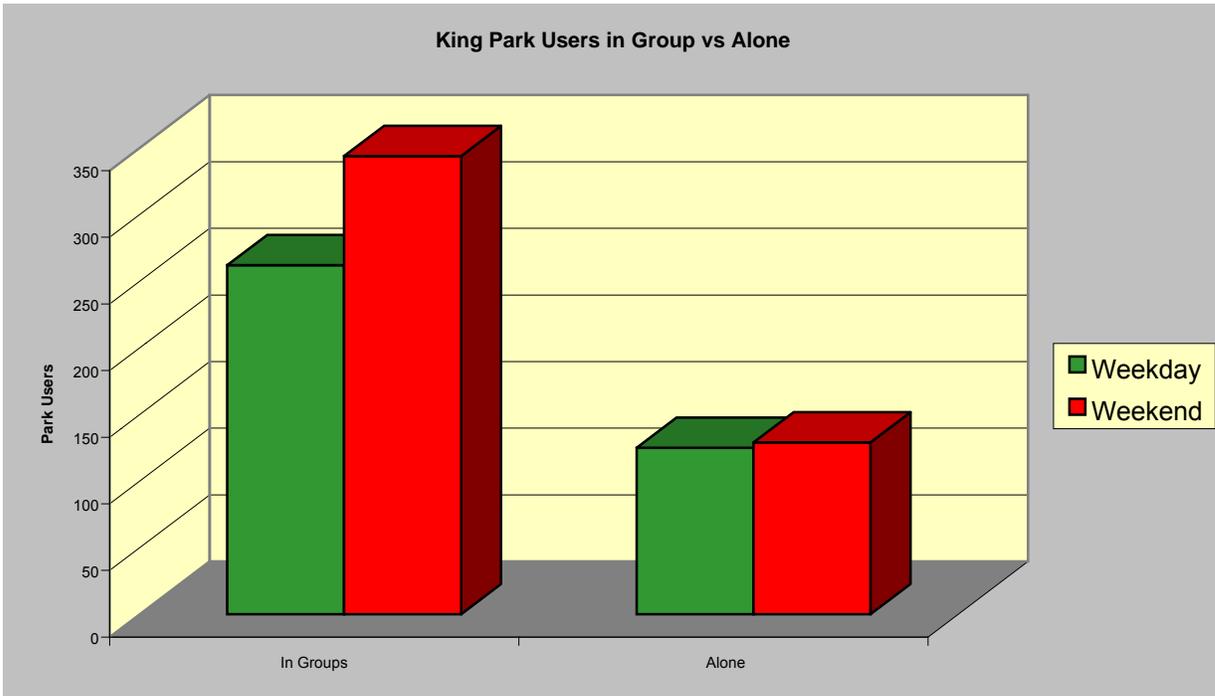
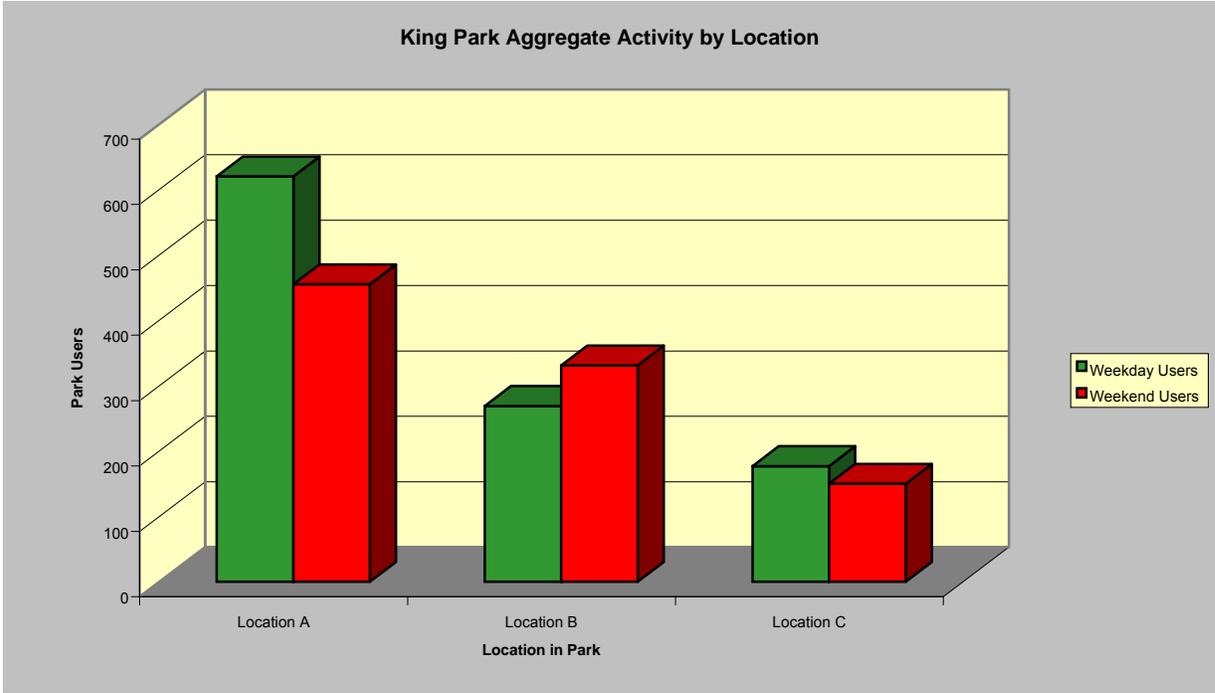


King Park Users by Age

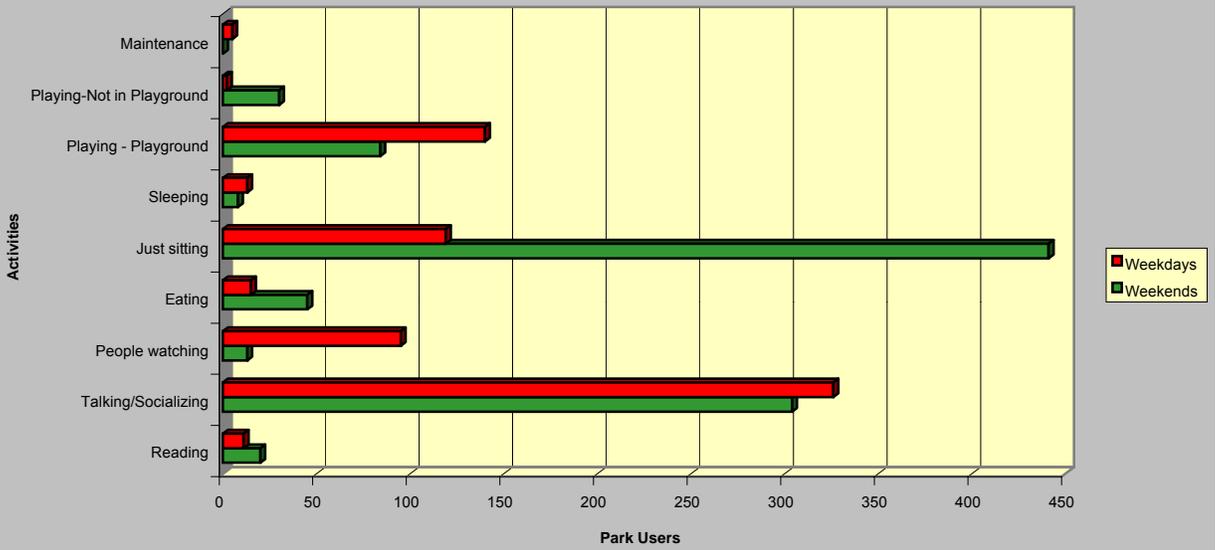


King Park: Aggregate Activity

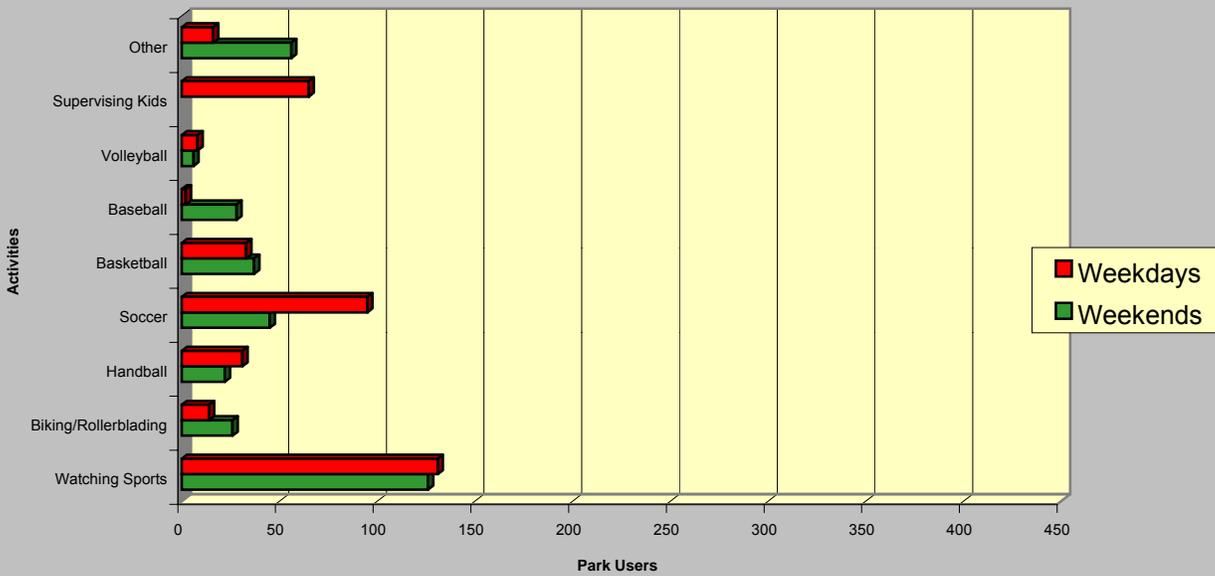




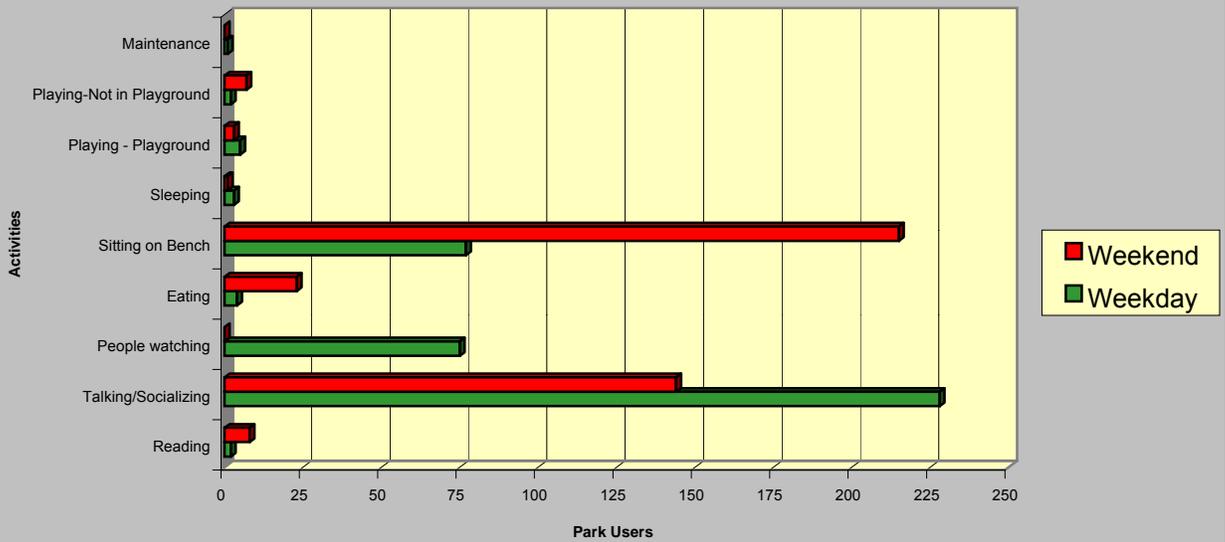
King Park Activities - part 1



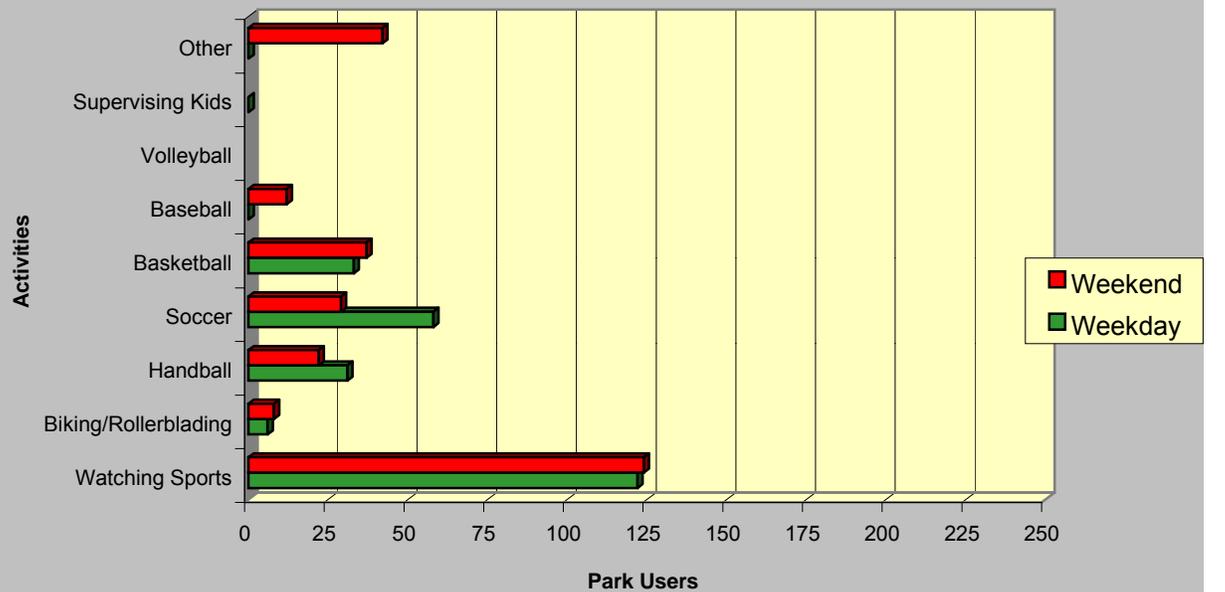
King Park Activities - part 2



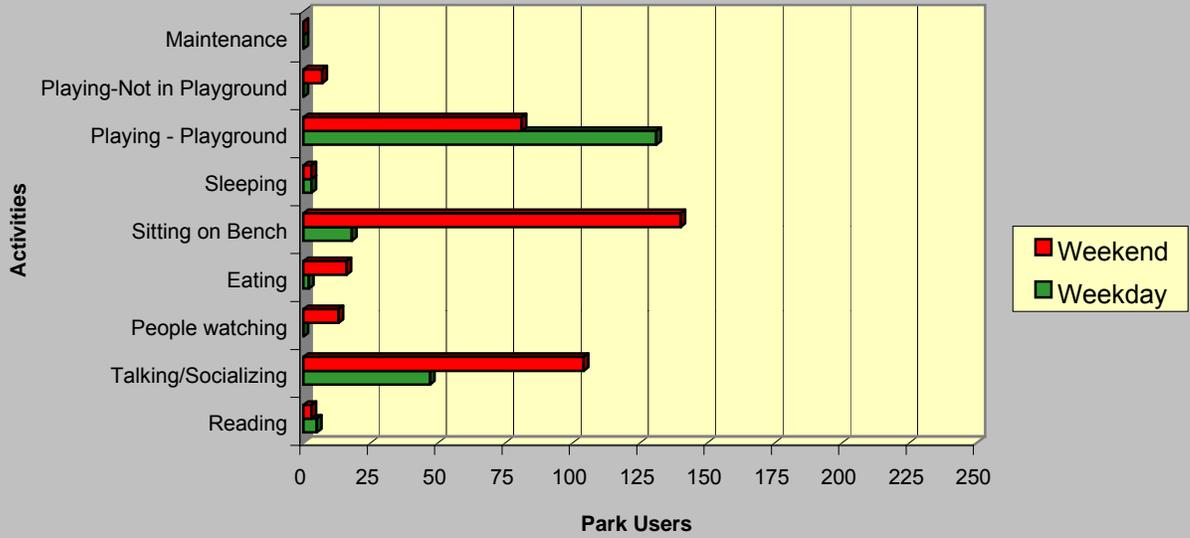
King Park Location A Activities - part 1



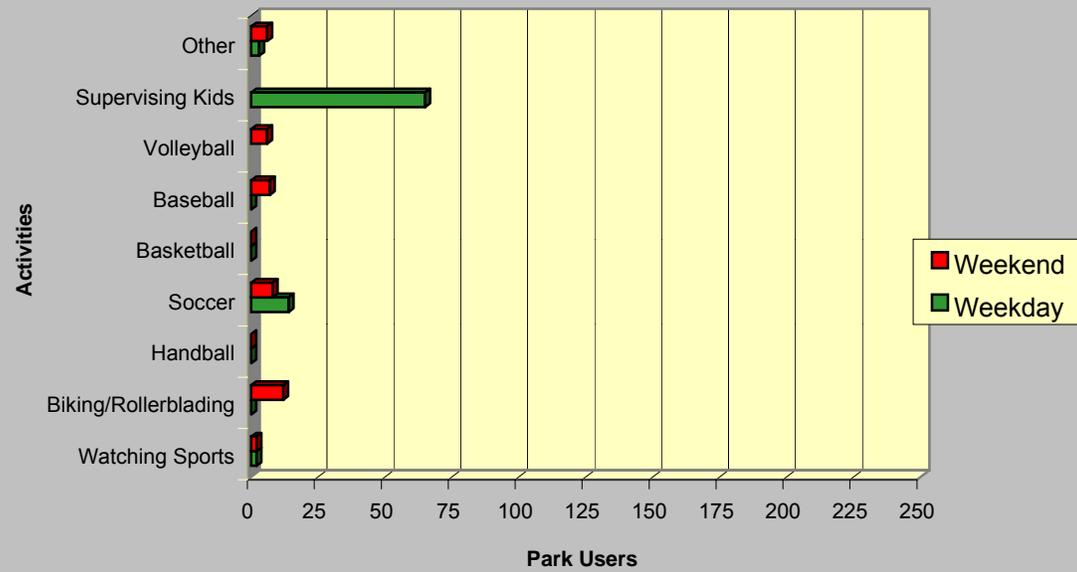
King Park Activities Location A - part 2



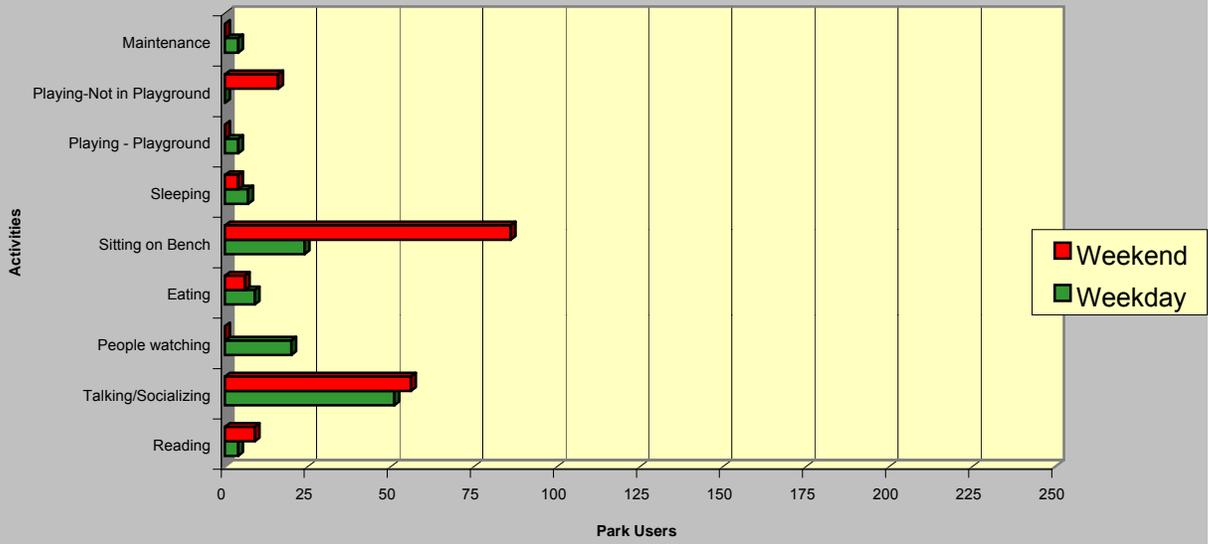
King Park Activities Location B - part 1



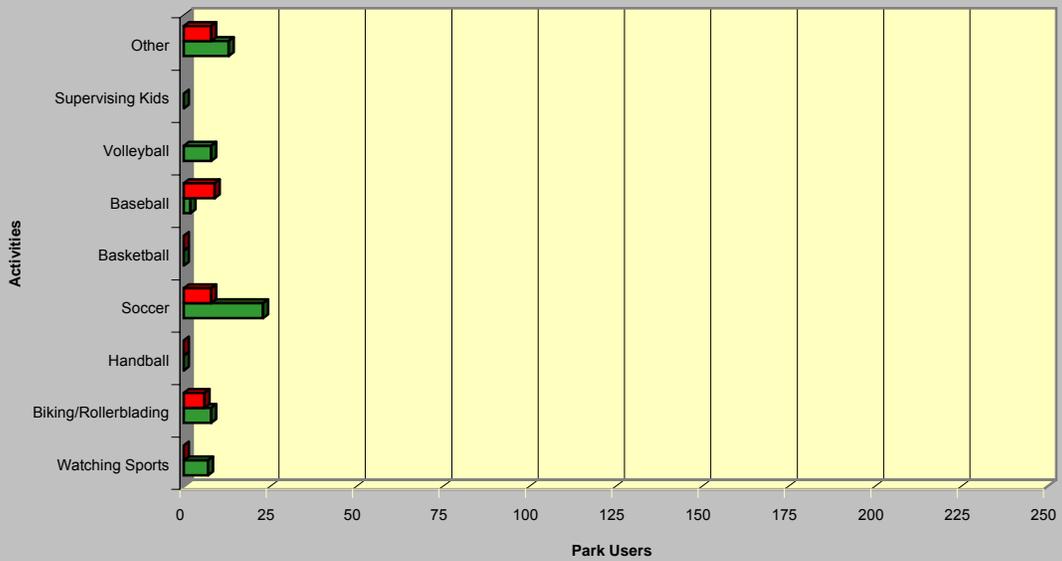
King Park Activities Location B - part 2



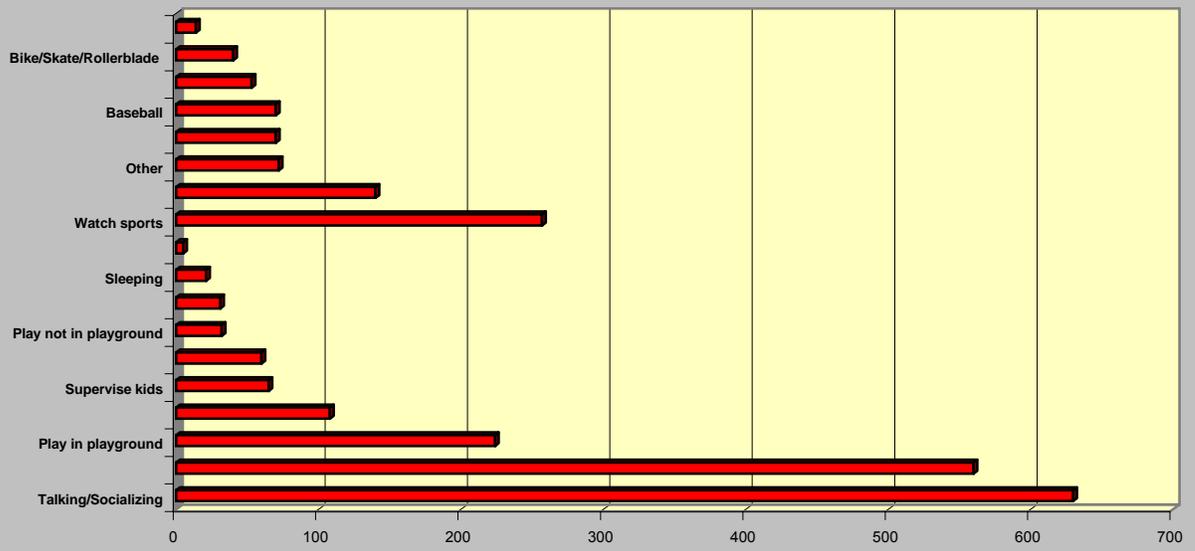
King Park Activities Location C - part 1

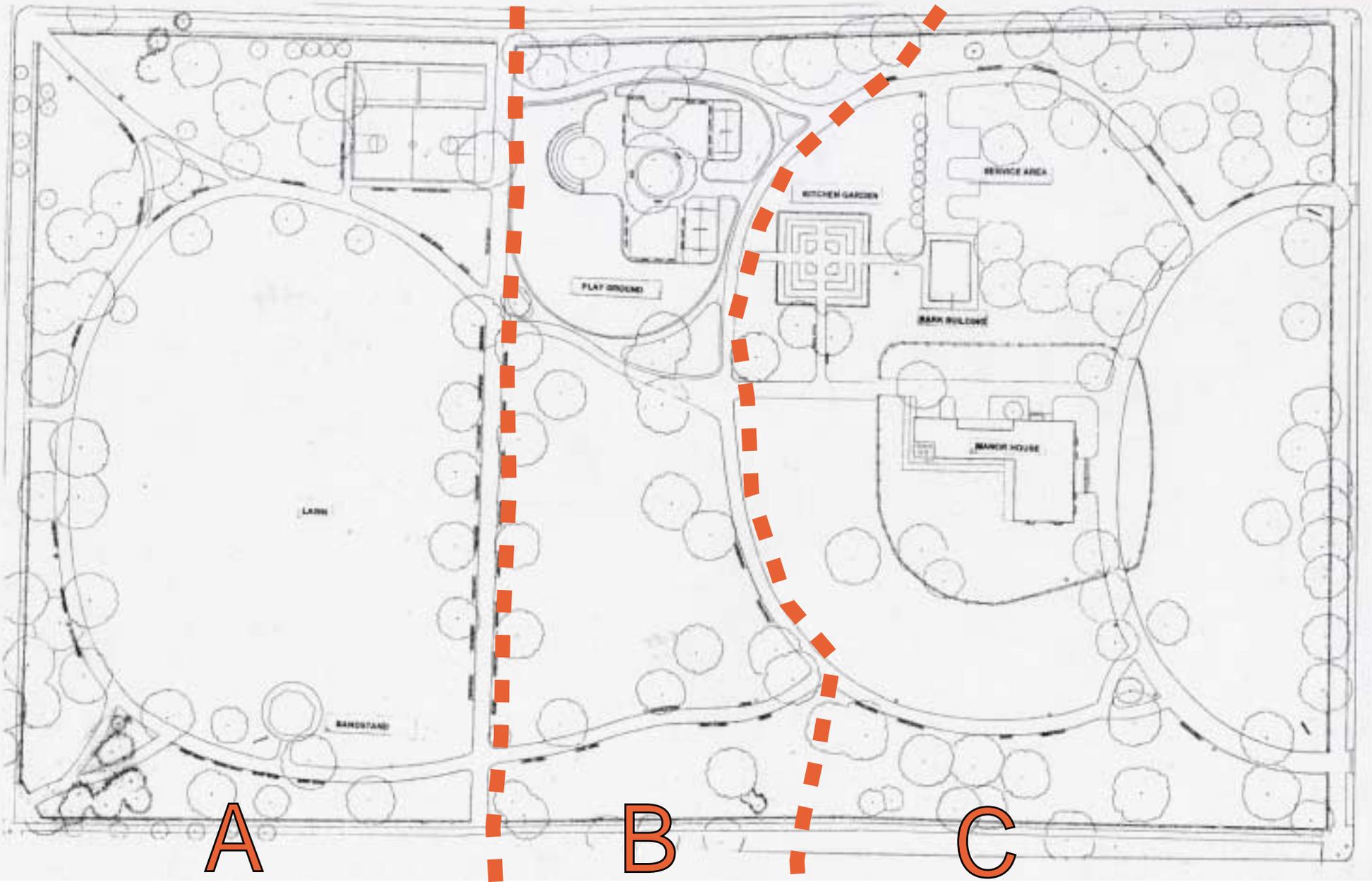


King Park Activities Location C - part 2



Observed activities totals





MAPPING SECTORS

Attachment K: King Park Workshop results March 16, 2002

Area 1 (North lawn and middle lawn)

Problems:

- Big Rocks laying around in the middle of the ground
- Not enticing
- Cleanliness
- Safety/ Security issues
- More relaxing atmosphere
- Water fountain/ restroom

Suggestions:

- Re-landscape area by 89th Avenue & middle lawn
- Split big lawn in two:
 - Soccer area
 - Events area for concerts and movies by band stand
- Put moveable chairs in events area
- Food court in middle lawn with restrooms

Area 2 (Playground and ball courts)

Suggestions:

- Playground for older kids?
- Child farm at the Manor- petting zoo, half lawn soccer field, other half passive recreation
- Entertainment: Concerts, grass by the band stand
- Keep the lawn open (a hospital helicopter lands there)
- Swings for older kids
- Additional rubber padding under swings
- Higher slides
- Night lighting
- Re-pave basketball court
- More security
- Flea – market / arts & crafts market in park
- More community activities
- Art exhibits
- Farmers' market
- Concerts all year round
- Concession stands
- Picnic tables
- No pets

Area 4 (Area around park building and kitchen garden)

Suggestions:

- Signage about park and manor
- Chess
- Walking club

- Dog run- rules against dogs outside of dog run.
- Beautiful garden with volunteers—kitchen garden—herb garden
- Rent out manor for receptions
- No grilling near Rufus King
- Upgrade rest rooms
- Food concession
- Not enough trash cans
- Is it wheel chair accessible?
- Jazzy bands at lunch time
- Soccer players tear up grass
- Extend fenced area
- Move bandstand by the entrance across from the hospital
- Historical plantings in big lawn
- Concession stand in big lawn
- Gardens in middle lawn

Area 5/6 (Manor and lawns around, including main South Lawn to Jamaica Ave)

Problems:

- Soccer Playing
- The Desire Paths
- Dead Foliage-no watering done
- Vehicles all parked on side house
- Gravel pathways in front of museum
- Traffic too fast
- Speeding traffic on Jamaica Ave & 89th Ave
- Dead plant material in front lawn
- Soccer
- Rocks
- Desire paths
- Vehicular traffic off pathways

Suggestions:

- Historical Plantings
- Organized activities
- Painting classes in the park—playground
- Re-plant front lawn
- Organized activities
- Historic plantings & trees
- Re-pave gravel path
- Control park building
- Improve signs / plantings around manor

Comment:

I think that the park should have a lot of security because there are homeless people who frighten the children. They should have programs like exercise programs. The park is more important because my school does not have a gym.