



HOLBROOK-PALMER PARK MASTER PLAN 2014

FOR THE
TOWN OF ATHERTON

DRAFT
DECEMBER 23, 2014

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Special Thanks

Thank you to all members of the community who have participated in the formation of this project.

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Project Overview 1

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Holbrook-Palmer Park is 22 acres of open space located in the heart of Atherton, California. The land was originally given to the town of Atherton in 1950 by Olive Holbrook-Palmer to be developed and used as a recreational park. The Atherton Town Council officially accepted the gift in 1964 with the provision that the development of the property would be funded by donations. The Holbrook-Palmer Park Foundation, a non-profit organization, was then established in 1968, to receive donations for developing the property into a viable and usable park. Since then, the land has been shaped by a shared stewardship between the Town and the Holbrook-Palmer Park Foundation in guiding various park improvement projects over the course of its history.

Today, the Park offers many amenities to the community, including shady, tree-lined walking paths, tennis courts, a playground, a large sports field, open space and gardens. Several historic buildings provide a glimpse of Atherton's past, and provide space for meetings and classes. The Main House and the Jennings Pavilion are also used for weddings and larger events. As the only public park in Atherton, the park supports a variety of activities, including sports, a place to play for children, classes, public and private events, a preschool and more.

A Landscape Master Plan was developed in 2005, with the goal to "build on the existing character of the park to make a place that the community will use and enjoy while serving the diverse needs of its residents." It organized the park into three areas: Civic, Recreational, and Pastoral. A concept plan for the layout of these areas was developed, along with sketches and elevations for an event garden, promenade, creek restoration, entrance gate and courtyard. Reference images for site elements and furnishings were also provided, as well as a master tree list for both existing and proposed trees.



Goals & Process 2

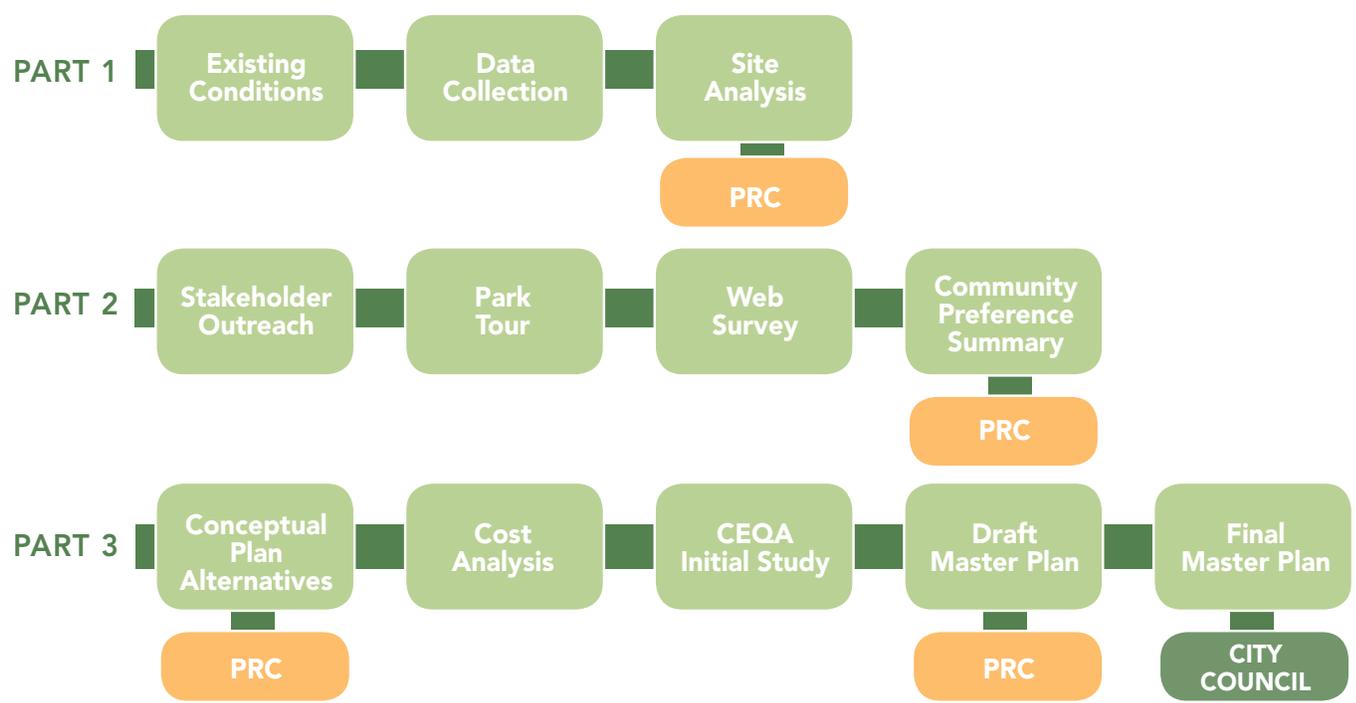
The goal for Holbrook-Palmer Park is to “maintain the Town’s only Park through the implementation of such a Master Plan so that the Park retains its utility for community activities and events while remaining a tranquil haven for Park visitors. Its use will balance the varying needs of the community in a way that maintains the historic small town character that is uniquely Atherton.”

GOALS

BFS Landscape Architects was hired in 2013 to develop an overall master plan for the park to “guide use and any future redevelopment of Holbrook-Palmer Park.” The team was tasked with building upon the 2005 landscape master plan with a more intensive analysis of the site, a more in-depth look at community desires and evaluation of the functional needs of all program elements, including buildings, activities, circulation and current development projects.

PROJECT FRAMEWORK

To meet the established goals for the master plan, BFS Landscape Architects established a framework for the project that was completed from October 2013 to July 2014. Town staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission guided the process throughout the course of the project, and all presentations were open to the public for comment.



Existing Conditions

PROCESS

Onsite field visits were conducted between October and December 2013, and photos were taken of all major areas of the park. Park elements were evaluated with regard to general condition, level of apparent maintenance, adjacency of elements and use. Documentation of these conditions is organized using the following sub-categories:

- Trees and Plantings
- Fields and Sports
- Buildings
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Vehicular Circulation
- Playground and Fountain

Additional information was gathered from Town staff with regard to recent park updates and changes already slated for implementation in the near future.



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HISTORY OF PARK DEVELOPMENT

The historical aerial photos available for the park were helpful in understanding how the park has changed over time. In 1948, while the property was still in private ownership, there was a single tree-lined driveway to the house, which was enveloped with trees and gardens. The property was named Elmwood after the stately elm trees present on the property. Rectangular fields on each side of the house were undivided by trees or structures. A small orchard was located next to the *Carriage House*.

The current layout of the park was essentially in place by 1991, including entrance roads, parking, open spaces, tennis courts, and tree plantings. By 2013, the pedestrian bridge was in place on *Watkins Road* near the railroad crossing, and the historical fountain was rehabilitated and placed at its current location. The *Water Tower* and *Carriage House* had also been refurbished, and new trees were planted. The sports field was expanded, a new playground built, and a more formal lawn established between the *Jennings Pavilion* and the *Water Tower*. Additional trees were also planted along pedestrian corridors. Below is an aerial photo of how the park looks today.





1. Existing Trees at “Elm Arboretum”



2. Rose Garden



3. Oaks at Picnic Area



4. Existing Trees near Entrance to Main House

TREES AND OTHER PLANTINGS

Holbrook-Palmer Park is recognized for both its gardenesque qualities and its wide diversity of trees and plants. A tree survey conducted in 1998 described over 600 trees, with dozens of species, with 122 of the trees listed as “heritage” trees. A Master Tree List was developed for the 2005 Landscape Master Plan, which identified both existing trees and proposed species for specific areas of the park. New trees are frequently planted through the activities of the Atherton Tree Committee and park staff.

A rose garden near the Main House is actively maintained by volunteers. Many of the roses were rescued from local homes that were being demolished.

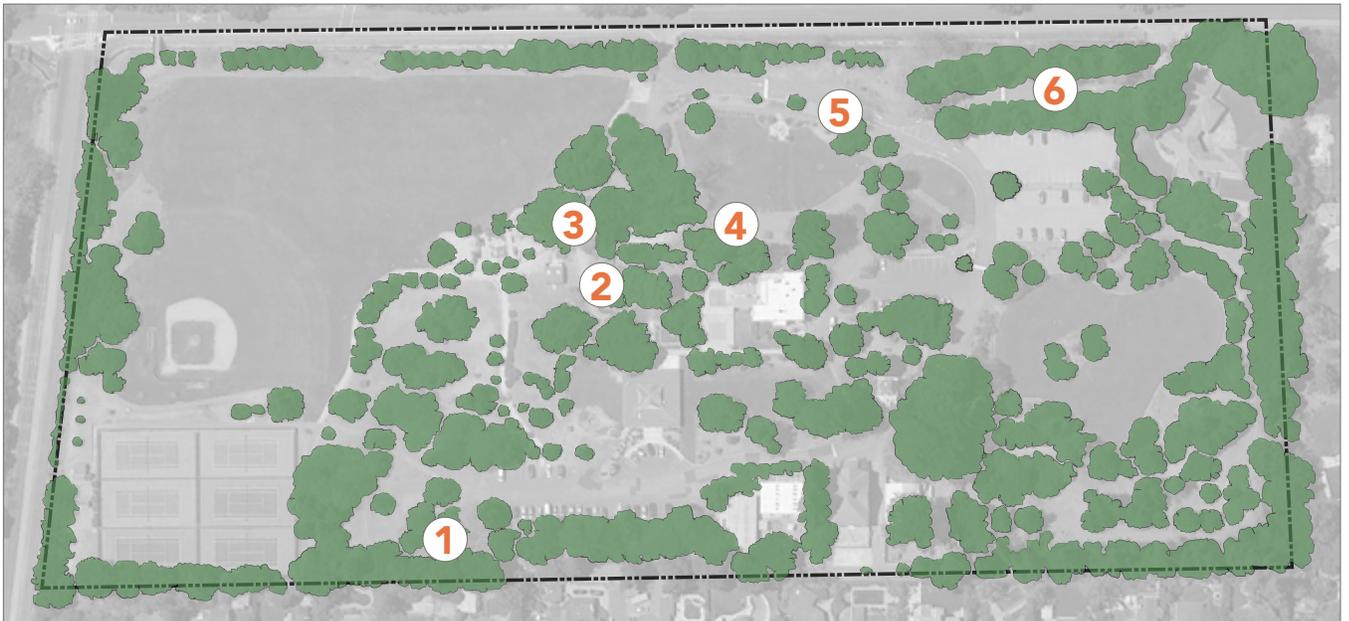
A wide variety of understory plantings are present near pedestrian walks and in higher visibility areas. Other areas of the park are simply maintained with mulch or turf grass. Some of the lawn near the Jennings Pavilion has been recently converted to a more drought-tolerant, lower maintenance grass.



5. Trees at Entry Drive



6. Cedar Trees at Exit





1. Ballfield



2. Entry Lawn



3. North Lawn



4. Water Tower Lawn

FIELDS AND SPORTS

Approximately 1/3 of the park is irrigated lawn for open space activities, lawn-based sports, or paved for tennis. The irrigation supply system and some irrigation zones, particularly the playfields and lawn areas, have been updated within the last five years. The turf appears to be in good condition, although some bare spots and some wet areas were observed. The ball field is planned to be upgraded with new seating, infield and fencing by 2015. The six tennis courts on the property are fenced and were resurfaced in 2011/2012. Tennis court use at the park has declined over the last 10 years, so in 2014 the

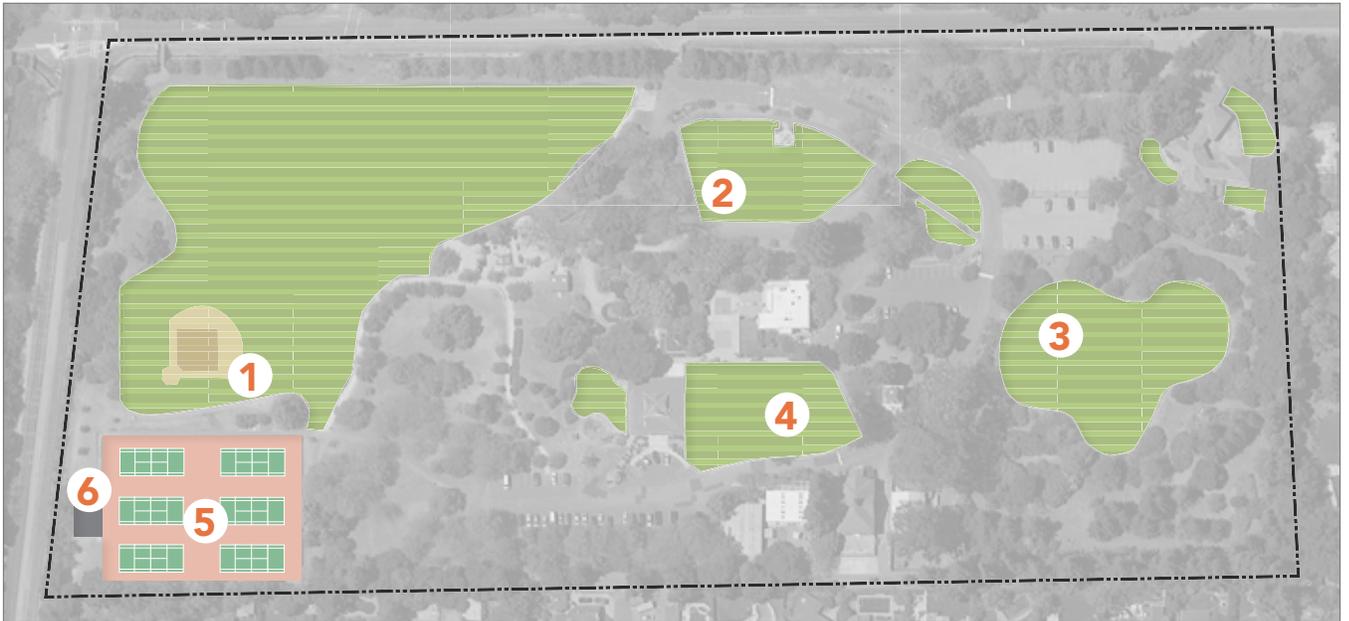
tennis court use fee was reduced for Atherton residents in order to encourage a larger number of participants. Two handball courts adjacent to the tennis courts are in fair condition—the concrete block wall appears to have been recently repainted, and cracks in the concrete paving have been recently patched.



5. Tennis Courts



6. Handball Court

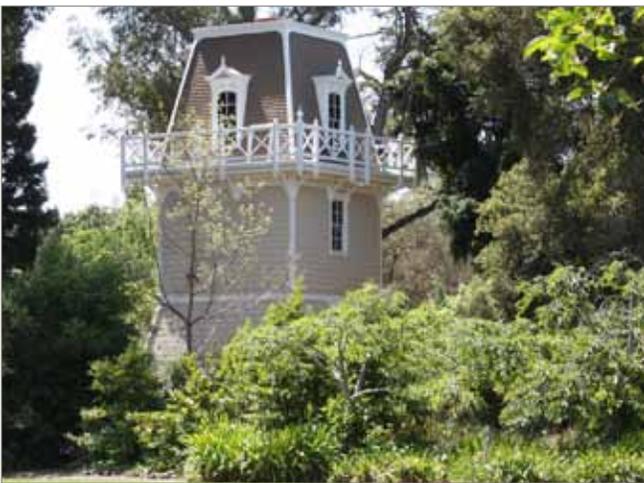




1. Main House



2. Carriage House



3. Water Tower



4. Jennings Pavilion

BUILDINGS

The original house on the property, called Elmwood, was the home of Olive and Silas Holbrook-Palmer until it burned in 1958, the same year that Olive died. Silas immediately had a new home built in its place and he lived there in what is now called the *Main House* until his death in 1963. It is now used for events and meetings, and includes a 700 square foot meeting room, two smaller rooms for small conferences, and a fully equipped kitchen. It can accommodate 70 in the living room for a ceremony and approximately 50 for dinner. A

large porch, wide brick steps and an oak-covered patio area are ideally suited for outdoor events.

The *Carriage House* provides a unique focal point for the park. It was built in 1890 to replace an original barn that was destroyed by fire. The wood floors, windowpanes, moldings, and iron grills in the horse stalls have remained the same for over 100 years. The exterior has been refurbished in the last 15 years. It is used for classes, parties, meetings and workshops and can seat up to 77 people. Currently, the second floor has some smaller rooms for storage and one large open



5. Public Restroom



6. Gilmore House



7. Knox Playschool



beam space. Some additional upgrades are required to bring the building to current code standards. There is an interest in the community to enhance the event experience with amenities consistent with the historic structure. Upgrading the kitchen, bathroom and heating system to meet current code requirements will increase opportunities for use of the *Carriage House*.

The oldest structure in the park is the 1883 three-story *Water Tower* which is deemed a historical site by the town. The exterior has been recently rehabilitated, but serves no regular function. There is no planned public access into the tower.

In 1977 the *Jennings Pavilion* was constructed at the Park to accommodate larger groups for events and meetings. The main room seats up to 150-theatre style or 100-classroom style. The large adjoining patio is often used for outdoor receptions and a walkway connects the building to the Main House and its patio area.

The *Public Restroom* was built in 1991, then expanded and remodeled in 2003. The exterior of the building and the privacy fence is composed of rustic wood siding, which is showing signs of age.



1. Pedestrian Bridge



2. Typical Asphalt Path



3. Felton Gable Access



4. Typical Decomposed Granite Path

The mediterranean-style *Gilmore House* was built in the 1930's and up until recently, was used as a residence by the city manager. Currently, the Gilmore House is being utilized by some Atherton police officers with long commutes as a facility to overnight between work shifts. This arrangement allows use of the residence as it was originally intended - as a potential benefit to City employees. The presence of these officers in the park during their off-shift hours is a benefit to park users and the surrounding residences alike in terms of security. It also serves as a part of the Town's disaster preparedness

plan as a place for employees of the Town to get rest during an extended event.

The preschool, *Knox Playschool* rents the portable buildings from the Town of Atherton, and runs programs for up to 100 children per day. Some portable buildings are nearing the end of their useful life, but the preschool would like to continue to operate out of the park.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

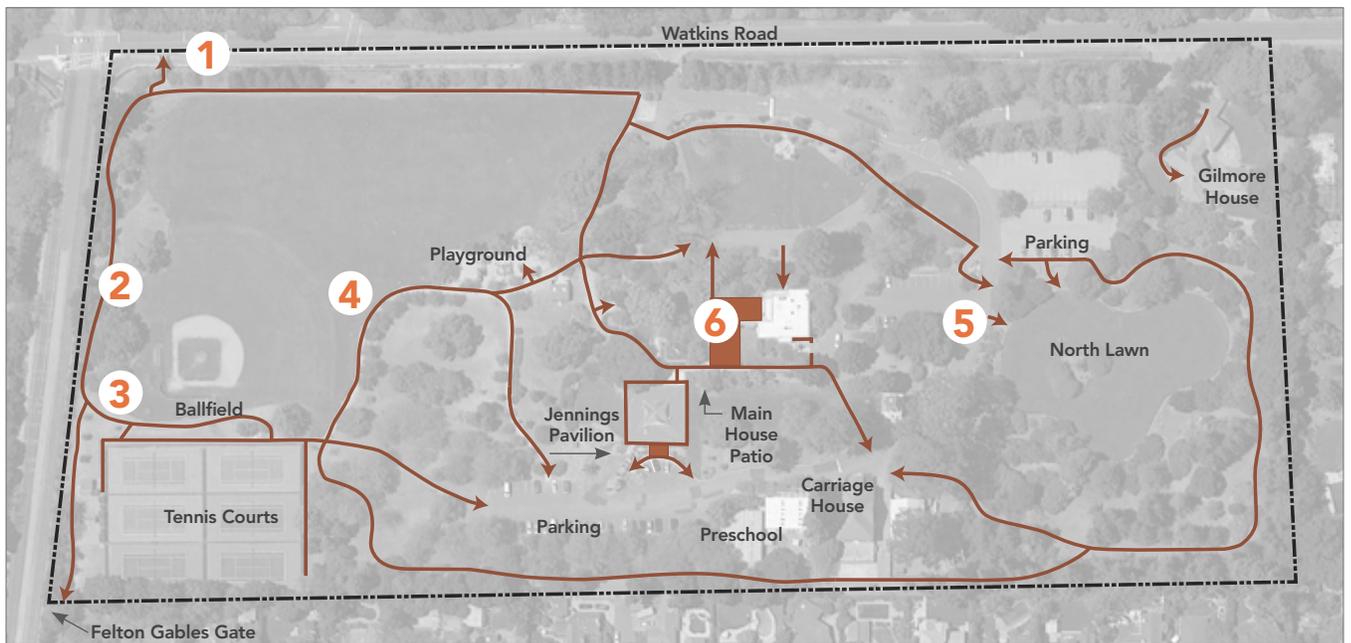
There are approximately 1.3 miles of pedestrian walks in the park, which primarily consist of asphalt paths approximately 6 feet in width, laid without headerboard



5. Path into North Lawn



6. Brick Patio at Main House



or base material. Some of the paths around the park perimeter were repaired in 2014. All are in fair to good condition. The paths near the playground are decomposed granite approximately 6' wide, and in good condition, although in many areas the material has migrated beyond the headerboard out into adjacent mulched or planted areas. A concrete and brick patio in good condition near the *Main House* has often been

used for outdoor weddings and events, and can be rented with the *Main House* or *Jennings Pavilion* for that purpose. Access into the north lawn (Photo 5) requires a better mulch or paved surface. The access from the Felton Gables Gate near the tennis courts provides a valuable neighborhood link and potential bike path connector. There is a lack of separated pedestrian access at the park



1. Parking area near Gilmore House



2. Entry Drive at Preschool



3. Parking area near Main House



4. Entry Drive along Watkins Avenue

entrances and along the main park road (pedestrians use the road itself).

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

Vehicular access to the park from Watkins Road is through a one-way entrance and separate one-way exit. The exit drive has 12 parallel parking spaces along the right shoulder which encroaches into the required fire access width. The asphalt entry drive has been newly resurfaced with new lane markings to convert the two access points into the park from two way to one way. A circular drive leading up to the *Main House* is only

accessible to vehicles for special events and is seldom used. Bollards block regular access to the drive.

Three separate parking lots provide space for 130 vehicles. The larger parking lots need more tree canopy for park character and shade. Exiting these parking lots can be a problem with no formal turn around if all spaces are full. Speed bumps on the entry drive slow speeds down to the listed maximum speed of 15 mph.

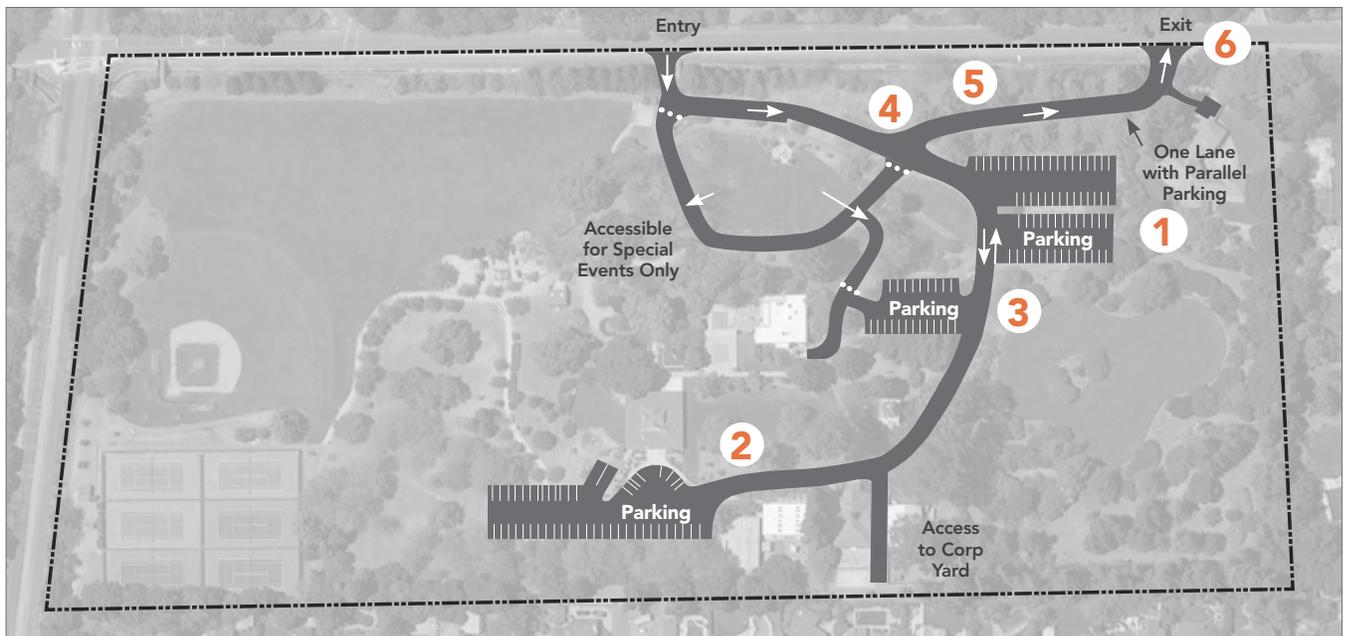
In general, the roads are in good condition and look to be maintained regularly. Signage at both the entrance and the exit provides the name of the park and the operating



5. Exit Drive



6. Exit Signage



hours. Fire truck turnarounds at the *Main House* and near the *Jennings Pavilion* are present and maintained.

One circulation issue to address is the lack of a turnaround at the parking lot near the *Jennings Pavilion*. When the parking lot is full, cars typically back up into the flow of traffic. Another issue is the preschool drop-off that is mixed with park vehicle traffic. There is no separate area for dropping children off and picking them up at the

preschool. This backs up the flow of traffic as well, and is not safe for children exiting vehicles.

Another circulation issue is that vehicles tend to enter the park at the park exit, which is a one-way road. This is likely due to the fact that the entrance and exit are marked with similar signs and look almost identical.



1. Playground (5-12 year olds)



1. Playground (2-5 year olds)



2. Entry Fountain

PLAYGROUND AND FOUNTAIN

The playground was built in 2002, funded through private donations. There are two separate play areas - one for children up to age five and another for ages five through twelve. The train-themed playground includes sand play, swings, climbing areas, slides, a tunnel, and bouncers. There is adequate seating and a small picnic area in the sand adjacent to the playground. Currently, the swings are installed too high for most children to use, and some of the wood play equipment shows signs of age and use, although it is generally still in good condition.

The entry fountain was part of the original Charles Holbrook estate, and was originally sited closer to the *Main House*. In the last 10 years, the fountain was restored, placed on a new brick base with planting and new benches. It appears to need additional restoration.

Site Analysis Summary 4

The analysis of current conditions, from site review and from feedback received by the community, is that the park is in good condition, well-cared for, and well-loved by the community. Park uses have varied somewhat over time, but for the most part, these are existing harmoniously with one another in the park. However, one of the goals of this Master Plan is to further scrutinize the park program as a whole to see where there is room for improvement. The following is an summary of those recommendations.

EXISTING TREES AND PLANTING

The quality and quantity of trees and plants present in the park is remarkable. For little effort and cost, this diversity could be highlighted with the addition of tree identification signs at high quality individual plants throughout the park, similar to an arboretum.

However, the park suffers from a problem common to many parks - a lack of understory planting. This is either

due to overshadowing by canopy trees, lack of maintenance or just lack of planting. The areas that are devoid of planting could become attractive backdrops to other activity areas of the park. The low area near the playground could be planted with water-loving species and could become a beautiful raingarden. The surrounding open area that is not shaded by trees could become a diverse stand of meadow grasses and wildflowers, and would not require long-term irrigation and very little maintenance other than occasional mowing.

Some of the larger shrubs in the park have outgrown their intended spaces, such as in front of the *Carriage House*, and along the parking lot at the back of the park. Several hedges, such as those near the rose garden, are suffering from lack of maintenance or lack of purpose. Some areas could benefit from additional screening, such as in front





Drive between Carriage House and Corp Yard

of the trash area at *Jennings Pavilion* and in front of the *Corp Yard* area.

FIELDS AND SPORTS

Open lawn areas are some of the most popular areas of the park, as they can be used for a variety of activities. They are generally in good condition, although some brown spots and soggy areas were noted. Maintenance staff could reduce some low points through an aggressive top-dressing/seeding program. Regular adjustments to irrigations operation should eliminate any “wet spot” conditions.

An upgrade to the existing ball field is currently underway, including a new infield, additional seating, fencing and restrooms. The general layout for those changes is included in this Master Plan, but the detailed plans are found in a separate project.

The other sports courts are in good to fair condition. Half of the tennis courts were resurfaced in 2011 and the other half in 2012. The asphalt path wrapping around the courts is worn and cracked and the seating area is aging. It was noted by others during the master planning process that the courts may need to be completely rebuilt, with a more stable base. The handball court wall is in fair condition, although it would benefit from a curb

to keep soil from washing onto it. The concrete is in usable, though cracked, condition.

BUILDINGS

At the heart of the park, the *Pavilion*, *Preschool*, maintenance yard, and *Carriage House* combine to generate peak levels of activity in a relatively concentrated area. With the *Preschool* needing replacement of prefabricated structures, its present location should be reconsidered. Relocating those buildings would provide more space around the historic *Carriage House*, and provide an opportunity for enhanced outdoor space, which could support increased use.

The *Carriage House* is also directly adjacent to the *Corporation Yard* building and driveway, which detracts from the *Carriage House* visitor experience and usable space. A location for the Maintenance building that is farther away from the *Carriage House* would provide room for planting along the side of the *Carriage House* and a more hidden driveway to screen the corporation yard from view. The exterior of the restrooms are also in need of repair, although the interior was refurbished recently.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Pedestrian access throughout the park is logical but there are new path segments needed to provide full



Park Exit Signage

pedestrian circulation throughout the park. A better path connection from the north parking lot to the play fields would encourage more parking use during sports events. Other needed alignments are shown in the Master Plan. Some of the asphalt paths need resurfacing, and a new header is needed at some DG paths. A paving option to consider instead of asphalt is to bind on-site soils with a natural resin, which would provide a more natural look while still providing the stability of asphalt.

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

Arrival at the park in a vehicle can be confusing. The exit looks somewhat like an entrance, and often vehicles enter there incorrectly. Signage could be improved and integrated with upgraded fencing to replace the existing chain link fence. Secondly, upon entering the park a sharp left turn is required to avoid a row of bollards blockading a drive to the *Main House* that is only open



Bollards at Entry

during special events. If that circular drive to the *Main House* were converted to a pedestrian walk and the bollards were eliminated, the park entrance would be more welcoming and attractive.

Once inside the park, the circulation is fairly simple and logical. However, there are parking conflicts during large events because the parking lot near the *Jennings Pavilion* has no turnaround. Drop-offs for children at the preschool generates a lot of traffic and there is no designated drop-off area. Reconfiguring the parking area is needed to address user safety.

CIRCULATION OPTIONS

There are several options to create a turn around in the *Jennings Pavilion* parking lot. Locating a "Y" or hammerhead turnaround at the end of the lot would provide 3-point turn access. A circular roundabout at the end of the parking lot would not require cars to back up, but it would require more space than the hammerhead option.

The best solution for the *Preschool* if it stays at its current location would be to create a "safe route" walk from the parking lot to the school. All cars would be required to park and walk the children to the school within that safe route. Up to four parking spaces might be used for this sole purpose.

PARKING

There are currently 142 parking spaces for all park activities. Parking is located on the north and eastern perimeters. Some limited roadside parking fills during peak times. On a typical weekday, this is sufficient for the variety of scheduled activities and informal users. However, during peak times, for visitors in cars headed for the ball field, tennis courts, playground, *Jennings Pavilion* or other events, parking may not be available. Some people park inappropriately off the pavement. Others face the difficulty of turning around in a full parking lot. Occasionally during peak use times, with no on-street parking, the parking lots do not meet capacity.

Estimate of Peak Parking Demand

Ballfield	30 spaces
Lacrosse Practice	10 spaces
Tennis courts	9 spaces (25% carpool)
Main House Event	50 spaces (if 100 person event)
Pavilion Event	50 spaces (if 100 person event)
Picnic Facility	15 spaces (assumes 4 visitors per vehicle)
Preschool	10 spaces
General Park Use	10 spaces
Total Required	184 spaces

These are current peak demand parking projections assuming all activities occur concurrently. Considering that parking for the entire park is rarely full, not all park activities are concurrent. Typically the Main House event would not be scheduled with a Pavilion event. Theoretically, that opens up spaces to absorb other peak time demand.

FUTURE PARK USES AND PARKING DEMAND

The new expanded Event Garden, when complete, will provide space for larger events. Additional parking may be required as well for those events.

If the Carriage House is renovated, increased use might also include larger meetings and events, with an estimated parking demand of 25 new spaces, particularly if the second floor is accessible.

If an off-leash dog area is introduced, an estimate of 1 parking space per 2,000 s.f. of area is recommended, requiring 10 parking spaces. While many park users walk to the park, some drive to walk their dog, and additional park visitors are anticipated with a formal off-leash area.

Estimate Future Parking Demand

Event Garden	25 spaces (net 25 space increase over Main House)
Carriage House	25 spaces (assumes 50 person event/2 people per car)
Off-Leash Dog Area	10 spaces (1 space/2,000 s.f.)
Total	60 additional spaces

PARKING

With enough lead time, major events can be scheduled to avoid other scheduled activities. Since the largest parking demands are scheduled events, Atherton can manage peak demand through scheduling. For example, the *Jennings Pavilion* and *Main House* could be limited to a combined 50 parking spaces when sportsfield events are scheduled.

If the *Carriage House* is renovated, scheduled events could also be limited or permitted in consideration of other facility uses to satisfy parking needs.

With the popularity of off-leash dog exercise, additional park users are anticipated throughout the day, evening hours and weekends. This would be considered a general park use and additional scheduling would not be needed.

The expansion of the lot near the *Jennings Pavilion* was studied and options were analyzed to determine the best alternative to fit an additional 25-30 spaces. The preferred alternative is shown in the Master Plan. If the *Preschool* moved to another location in the park, a portion of the vacated footprint of the school could also be used for 15-20 parking spaces.

The 2005 Landscape Master Plan identifies proposed surfacing and planting recommendations that should be implemented as parking is altered or expanded.

PLAYGROUND AND GARDENS

The playground was updated in 2002. The area provides basic play features for children and appears to be within current code compliance, except for some minor repair tasks. The two play areas are laid out in a typical way and appear to provide sufficient play variety for the community. However, the wood on the play elements needs to be refinished where it is splintering and cracking. In the next few years, a plan should be in place to replace worn out wood pieces. Any new playground equipment will have to meet current code requirements, and the playground might expand its boundary to include these changes or any other expanded uses that might be desired. Those details would be refined in the future.

OTHER SITE ELEMENTS

The park needs a more consistent site furniture theme for benches, tables, garbage and recycling cans. There is currently a multitude of different types of site furnishings, all in various level of repair.

The exercise equipment is in fair condition—it should be fixed where broken and repainted, if not replaced. There is a rise in interest in outdoor fitness, and the park should stay current with what the current needs are. The outdoor equipment available today has a longer lifespan and more exercise options than what the park has today.

The informality of the group picnic area fits the park character. The compacted aggregate surface beneath the oak trees appears to be compatible with their health. However, care should be taken in the area, as heat from barbeque fires can desiccate low-hanging branches.

The lighting to the parking lots and event areas should be updated with LED fixtures for increased efficiency. Additional area lighting is recommended for public safety.

SITE FACILITIES SUMMARY

<i>Park Facility & Features</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
<p>Main House and Patio 800 s.f. of office space and storage, 700 s.f. meeting room, misc. event preparation rooms and commercial kitchen. Available as rental - indoor seating for 50-70 or outdoor terrace for 100.</p>	Good Condition	Holbrook-Palmer Park Foundation and Atherton Dames are planning an Event Garden to expand outdoor venues.
<p>Jennings Pavilion 1,500 s.f. of meeting room space with kitchen and restrooms. Available as a rental for 100-150.</p>	Good Condition	Upgrades to kitchen would improve facility rental options.
<p>Carriage House Original stables - wood structure, with limited second floor space. Most of old stable area is intact. 1,160 s.f. available as rental for 77 people.</p>	Requires structural and accessibility upgrade for code compliance. Outdated kitchen facility.	Atherton Dames are studying code compliance and renovation for new uses.

SITE FACILITIES SUMMARY

<i>Park Facility & Features</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
<p>Water Tower Original wood structure - original water tank removed.</p>	Not accessible structure for public. Access secured - generally in good condition.	Interpretive value only.
<p>Preschool Five portable structures and outdoor play spaces. Facility rental for preschool - 100 children.</p>	Two portable structures need replacement within next 2-3 years.	Replace existing structures in current location or relocate preschool to new location near Gilmore House.
<p>Tennis Courts & Handball Court Six asphalt courts - 60' x 120'. Controlled access available to residents and non-residents with annual fee. One free standing masonry ball wall.</p>	Courts recently resurfaced. Seating and notice board in poor condition.	Continue to support organized events and classes. Consider future options for tennis waiting area.
<p>Play Field Lawn Little League field - 200' at outfield fence, lacrosse/soccer 60 yd x 110 yd overlap or 60 yd x 100 yd without overlap.</p>	Good condition. Fields could be regraded for improved playing surface.	New seating and restroom at ballfield in progress.
<p>Playground 2-5 ages play area (2,200 s.f.), 6-12 ages play area (3,200 s.f.), plus tot swings and sand play area.</p>	Good, but requires annual surfacing and equipment review. Wood splinters may need replacement or refinishing.	Consider options for future upgrades, with more challenge for 6-12 year olds.
<p>Picnic Area Ten movable wood tables, trash barrels on compacted decomposed granite.</p>	Aging tables and trash barrels. Paving in good condition.	Resurface table tops; surface treatment for DG to provide all-weather ADA accessible surface for two tables. Restrict BBQ use to specific tables with signage information.
<p>North Lawn Large grass open space with picnic table island and trees.</p>	Good.	Provide compacted, crushed gravel surface at table area. Create accessible path, bench and table at lawn perimeter.
<p>Gardens 1.5 acres of ornamental shrub planting at Main House, Pavilion and various locations.</p>	Fair-Poor Irrigation system is a mix of abandoned spray and newer drip areas.	Focus ornamental planting at Main House and Pavilion per 2005 Landscape Master Plan. Larger masses of understory.

5 Community Outreach

METHODS

One component of data collection for this Master Plan was gathering input from the local community about park use, satisfaction with park, park use frequency, and ideas about potential changes to use or facilities. Overall, the enthusiasm and contribution of the community was an integral part of the master plan process.

The first method used was an online survey, which collected 137 responses, which while not a statistical section of Atherton, is a fairly typical user response rate. The survey was made available as a link on the Holbrook-Palmer Park website, as an email from the Town to Atherton residents and organizations, and through posters in the park with a written URL and QR code. Secondly, a park tour event allowed individuals to either fill out a survey, write comments on boards at several stations set up around the park, or fill out comment cards. A questionnaire was also sent to community organizations, including the Atherton Dames, Knox Playschool, Menlo-Atherton Little League, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC), the Atherton Civic Interest League, the Atherton Arts Foundation, Atherton Tree Committee, the town arborist, Tennis Association, Garden Guild, and Dog Days dog training. Information from surveys was summarized and presented at the December 2012 PRC meeting. All presentations were

published for the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, and open to public comment.

KEY FINDINGS

The community who contributed to our survey and data collection effort were primarily Atherton residents (91%) who live within a very close proximity to the park. About an equal percentage of people get to the park by vehicle as by foot, with travel times of 10 minutes or less (87%). Approximately 1/3 of respondents use the park daily, and another 1/3 use it weekly. The final 1/3 use it monthly or rarely. The areas used most often are the open spaces and paths, by a large majority. The tennis courts and playschool were used the least by respondents. The quality of the outdoor amenities were rated as “good” in every category, with the maintenance level of the park was rated as “very good” (31%), “adequate” (45%), and “needs improvement” (24%).

When asked how they were able to share the park with other users, 76% of respondents stated they did not have any conflict with other park users. The remaining conflicts that were listed included sharing the existing parking during large events or during ball games, conflicts with dogs off-leash, with bicycles, or with drop-offs at the playschool.



The park is used to host a variety of events, as it is the only public park in Atherton. Of those who had been to an event at the park, 72% of respondents said that they had been to a neighborhood event, and 56% had been to a private event. Business meetings, weddings, community meetings, school events and classes made up a smaller percentage of the category. The quality of the space at the outdoor events was rated as either “excellent” (42%) or “good” (44%), while the quality of the indoor facilities was rated a bit lower, with “good” being the predominate answer for the *Carriage House*, *Main House*, Jennings Pavilion, and *Gilmore (called Watkins) House*.

The community generally likes (78%) the informal, rural character of the park—the meandering narrow trails, wooded and open spaces, lack of defined edges, and use of natural materials for curbs and site furnishings, and want to keep that character, rather than creating a more urban, activity-defined park. According to the



respondents, the most important outcome of the master plan (64% of survey respondents) is simply making improvements to the park elements that are already there. Another 15% of respondents stated that they didn’t want to change the park at all. Only 8% of respondents wanted to see any new buildings or facilities, and only 3%

wanted to see any new programs. Buildings or facilities that the community would most like to see improved are the restrooms, the playground, and the *Carriage House*.

OFF-LEASH DOGS

New site elements that were suggested were limited, with an off-leash dog area being the only major request, with 24% supporting off-leash dog use anywhere in the park, and another 44% supporting it in a designated area, for a total of 68% of respondents. It is worth noting that although the park open house was held during a dog event, only 7 surveys were completed that day on site. There were also many comments written on comment cards and posted bulletin boards at Open House information stations. Currently, the park allows dogs, but they must be leashed. An off-leash area would fence part of the park (at least 1/2 acre of space is suggested) and would allow dogs to run freely within the area.

BICYCLES

A second expanded use that was supported by survey respondents was bicycles on the trails and paths. The park currently does not allow bikes, although 22% of respondents get to the park by bike. 25% of respondents would support bikes on all the paths while another 42% would allow them on specific paths only; for a total of 67% of respondents supporting use of bikes on at least some paths.

One related bike planning opportunity is a connection through the Felton Gate for a Class 1 Bike Trail. Offsite constraints are a limitation, but a trail through the park is potentially a safe cycling link.

All other uses that are currently prohibited in the park were not supported, including smoking, skateboarding, scooters, horseback riding and roller-blading. The survey also asked the community if they are in agreement with the current park rules, such as park hours, noise level, and speed limits: all current rules were supported by approximately 75% of respondents.

ORGANIZATION RESPONSES

Responses from the organization questionnaire were similar overall to the comments from the community. The lawns (both for sports and other recreation) and trails are all used by over 100 people daily. The preschool also is used by over 100 people daily, and at least some of them use the playground every day. Indoor facilities, gardens and picnic areas are used less frequently—either weekly or monthly. There are several large events, such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Art in the Park, Jazz Festival, and Children’s Holiday Tea that happen once a year.

The Atherton Dames have stated that their meeting spaces are not adequate, that the buildings need improvement, and need better maintenance. They would also like to see upgrades to the entry fountain and the gardens.

The Little League has stated that they do not have sufficient seating or restroom facilities, but these upgrades are already planned separate from this Master Plan process. Although they do not think the maintenance is sufficient for sports use, and more parking is needed, they have plenty of outdoor space and the park in general is of good quality.

The *Knox Playschool* has adequate space in the buildings that it occupies, but they are old and need to be replaced. They find the maintenance adequate, but state that parking can be a problem on days when there is an event at the *Jennings Pavilion*.

Recreation Assessment 6

RECREATION FACILITIES

The evolution of the land from a private estate to a public park reflects a history of thoughtful site planning, site design and landscape care. The size and character of the park has allowed for fulfillment of wide range of recreation needs for Town residents and neighbors.

With 22 acres, the park site fits the definition of a neighborhood/community park by National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) standards. With a current town population of 6,914 residents, that is equivalent to 3.3 acres of parkland per 1000 people, which exceeds the 3 acre/1000 residents minimum standard in California (NRPA suggests 2 acres/1000). By comparison, Menlo Park provides 2.4 acres/1000 residents, and Palo Alto provides 2.8 acres/1000 residents. Many newer communities are striving for 5-10 acres/1000 residents to accommodate recreation demands for more sports fields. Typically, parkland is distributed throughout the community and is not in one park location.

SPORTS FIELDS

From an active recreation perspective, the Park is part of a successful collaboration with several youth sports leagues: Menlo Atherton Little League (February–June); Atherton Lacrosse (year round except December and January); and AYSO Soccer (August–November). The league organizations are networked with other facilities on the Peninsula, which expands sports play for youth to a variety of locations.

The large lawn area at the Park can accommodate 2–3 organized (practice or game) sport events simultaneously. Menlo Atherton Little League was approved in Fall 2013 to make improvements for fencing, backstop, bleachers, restroom and the field itself. No other field improvements are planned at this time.

TENNIS

The six courts are standard size, and meet NRPA facility standards of one court per 2,000 residents. Individual court use is managed with an annual key-user fee (resident/non-resident). The number of courts allow

for limited organized tournament play if desired. Court surfaces are experiencing some deterioration due to site drainage and normal weathering.

Handball courts are available adjacent to the tennis courts.

PLAY COURTS

No basketball or volleyball courts are in the park due to history of concern for noise and lack of formal demand. Basketball courts are often included in other neighborhood parks, but are in place as a result of user demands. In Atherton, residential homes and schoolyards may be accommodating personal needs. Since there is no town recreation programs, there is no formal demand.

PLAYGROUND AND STRUCTURES

The playground is centrally located in the park, and is a very popular area for the Town's youngest park users. The play area elements provide a good range of traditional and informal play experiences for physical and social development.

Age group separation, 2-5 years old and 5–12 years old, as well as safety surfacing, meet recommended current Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards. Basic maintenance of the play areas appear to be satisfactory, with some minor repairs needed. Regular play safety inspections can identify equipment suitability or safety rule changes that need to be addressed. New play features are available which provide a wider range of skill development, but may require a larger area for the equipment and required safety zone.

PICNIC AREA

In the shady area near the playground and sports fields, an informal picnic area with rustic wood tables and benches provides space for large or small family or group events. Although there is no standard for picnic area size, it appears that the size provided meets the community's needs. No mention was made by staff or the community for a larger picnic venue.

The compacted soil/decomposed granite area surfacing supports the park character and is low-maintenance. However, to be compliant with American Disabilities Act (ADA), an all-weather surface with accessible tables and barbeques is required. There are resin-stabilized surfacing materials available that would meet this requirement and provide the desired informal paving appearance, and accessible tables and barbeques that would fit with the current park character.

FITNESS STATIONS

Located along the pedestrian paths are clusters of 3-4 exercise stations. Some of wood elements are in disrepair or visibly aging, but these do provide some supplemental stretching and conditioning activities to complement walking or jogging exercises.

In this age of heightened concern over sedentary lifestyles, new outdoor equipment is available that provides greater exercise options for personal outdoor fitness, as well as longer-lasting materials.

DOG EXERCISE AREA

Over the last 10 years, more communities have formally recognized the need for off-leash dog areas in parks. There are no community standards for size and amenities, however there are considerable design guidelines available. In Holbrook-Palmer Park, current ordinance requires dogs to be on a leash, although many owners allow their dogs off leash, particularly on the sports field.

The solutions to this problem vary from eliminating the restriction, to providing designated hours of off-leash use, to providing an enclosed off-leash use area. The size of local off-leash areas range from 1/2 to 1 acre in size, with a variety of configurations and surfaces. Due to the impact of concentrated dog use, traditional turf grass has a short life. Decomposed granite or wood mulch provide a more durable surface requiring less maintenance. A location for a designated off-leash dog area is provided in this Master Plan, based on input from town residents, Parks Commission, and City Council. Further details for construction would need to be

developed in the future when and if the Town decided to move forward with such an area.

RECREATION TRENDS

Holbrook-Palmer Park satisfies most traditional recreation needs for Atherton residents; no new recreation desires were expressed by the community in surveys or meetings. Maintaining and improving existing facilities was the primary concern.

The general recreation trend is toward providing more sports field spaces in community parks. Basketball, sand volleyball, and skate facilities are also popular activities that could be considered appropriate for a community park. Bocce and outdoor fitness courts are attractive to older residents. Indoor fitness activities and crafts vary in demand and are frequently satisfied by the private sector.

RECREATION SITE OPPORTUNITIES

Holbrook-Palmer Park has some capability to absorb these recreation activities, but limited opportunity to develop new facilities. There is no additional space for new sports fields. Park grass open spaces need to remain unstructured to accommodate a variety of sports as well as community events and activities, such as kite flying, picnics, Frisbee toss, etc. The balance between open space and park development requires care to preserve the historic estate qualities.

- *North Lawn:* This northeastern quadrant of the park is currently open space for passive recreation, picnic, perimeter walk and arboretum tree collections. The lawn area could be utilized for organized fitness classes. Sand volleyball could be integrated at the lawn perimeter by reshaping the shrub/lawn edges with little or no loss of lawn area.

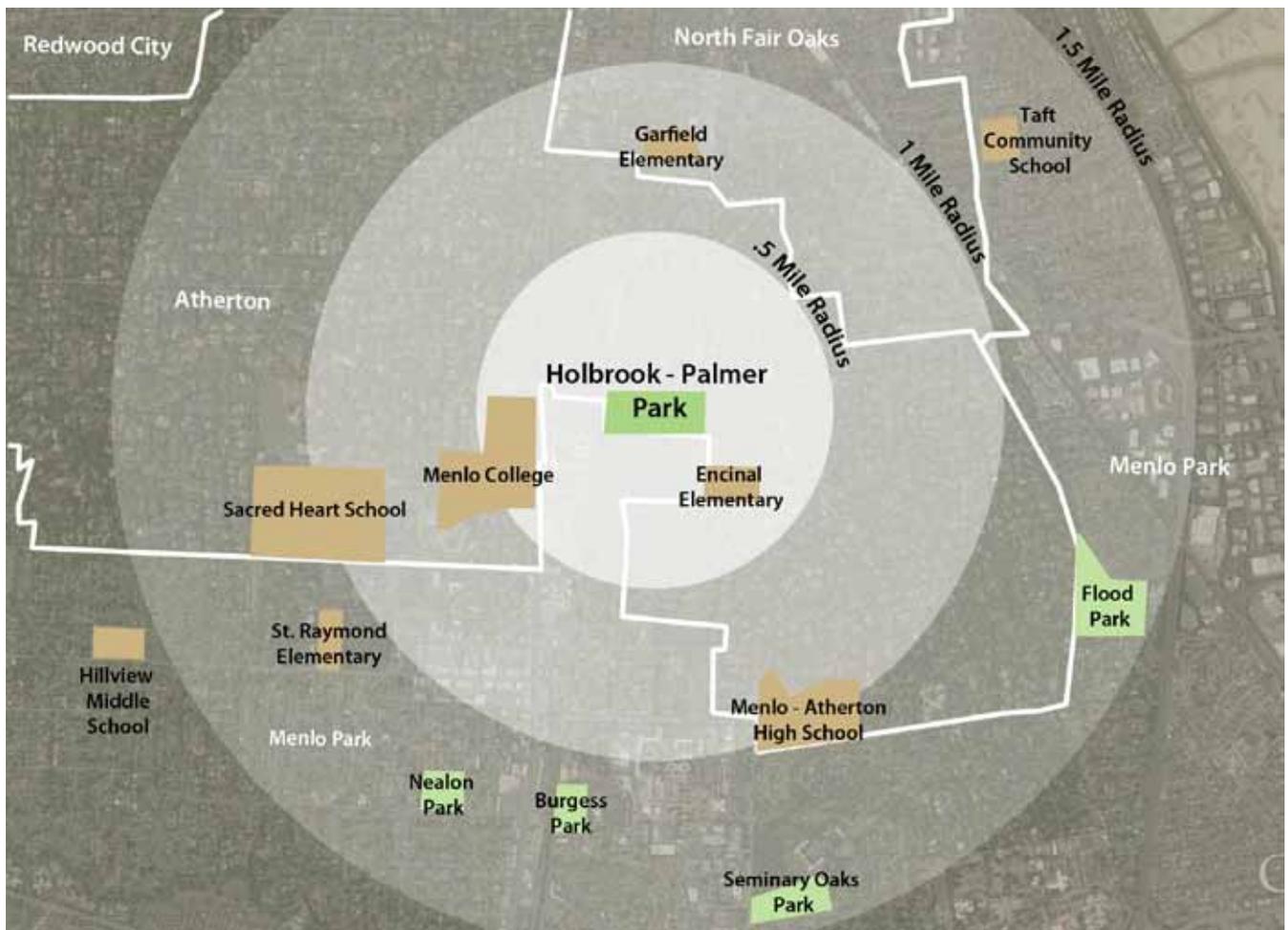
This area also has the potential to integrate an enclosed or open off-leash dog run with minimal loss of open space. Most of the dog area could be accommodated within the tree understory.

- *Civic Core*: This central area of the park should be reserved for more formal event spaces and gardens. No additional active recreation activities are recommended. The outdoor courtyards and Jennings Pavilion could be programmed for fitness activities, community groups/club meetings, or educational presentations appropriate for weekdays so as to not encroach on weekend events.
- *Picnic/Play Area*: As a family zone, volleyball and bocce ball could be incorporated near the park walk without removing any trees or lawn play area.

PROGRAMS

Holbrook-Palmer Park could be utilized more for youth or adult recreation programs. In many communities, the City provides the meeting room, work space or outdoor facility. Private individuals sponsor and organize their own class or program. Atherton should continue to offer space for these types of recreation programs.

Regional Recreational Facilities: Little League Field



Recreational facilities within a 1.5 mile radius.

7 Concept Development

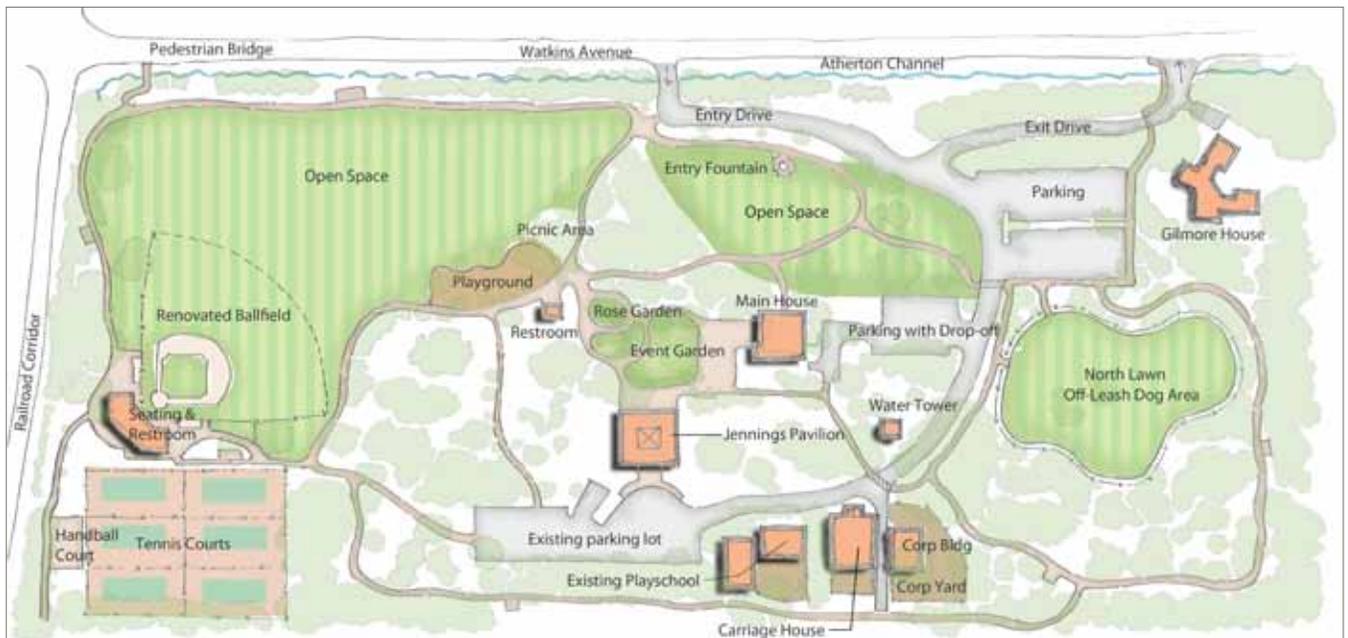
Based on community input and site analysis of the park, three conceptual designs were presented to the PRC, with varying levels of proposed change. Options for the off-leash dog area, preschool, and parking were the major items of discussion. Concept 1 has the least amount of change, Concept 2 has a moderate amount of change, and Concept 3 has the most change. Some of the suggestions made in these concepts are minor and could be completed easily, within the normal yearly operating budget, while others are more major configuration changes that would require additional funding and a longer time frame. Many items are simply matters of maintenance, and there is an assumption that current maintenance practices will continue, and that facilities will continue to be upgraded as needed.

CONCEPT 1

Concept 1 keeps much of the park as it stands today, but includes new site elements, such as the *Event*

Garden and the improvements to the ball field, which are already in the planning stages. An off-leash dog area is introduced at the *North Lawn*. The advantage of this location is this open space is already separate from the others, and fencing could be fairly inconspicuous, due to the heavy planting around the area. It would require the least amount of construction and planning to accomplish.

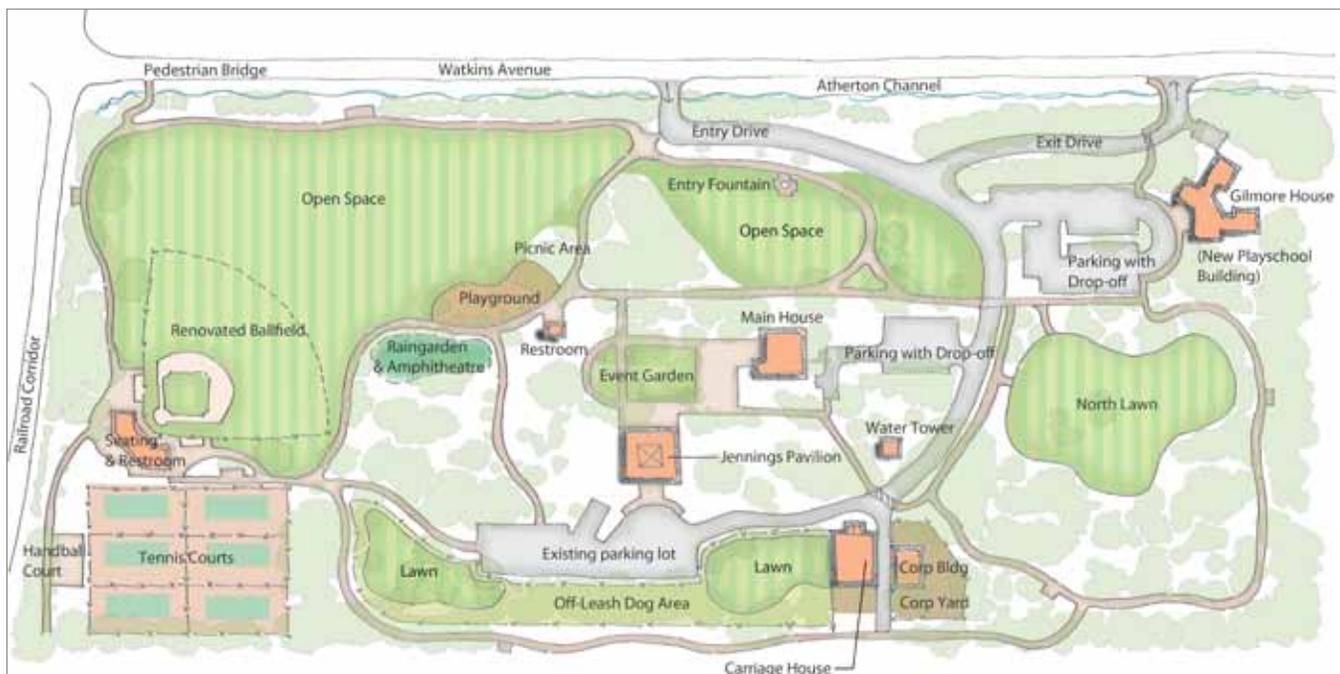
Several additional pedestrian path links have been added, such as along the main park road, from the *North Lawn* to Watkins Road, and from the Felton Gables Gate past the tennis courts into the park. The circular entrance drive to the *Main House* has been replaced with pedestrian only paths, which allows the open space near Watkins Road to flow as one continuous space.



CONCEPT 2

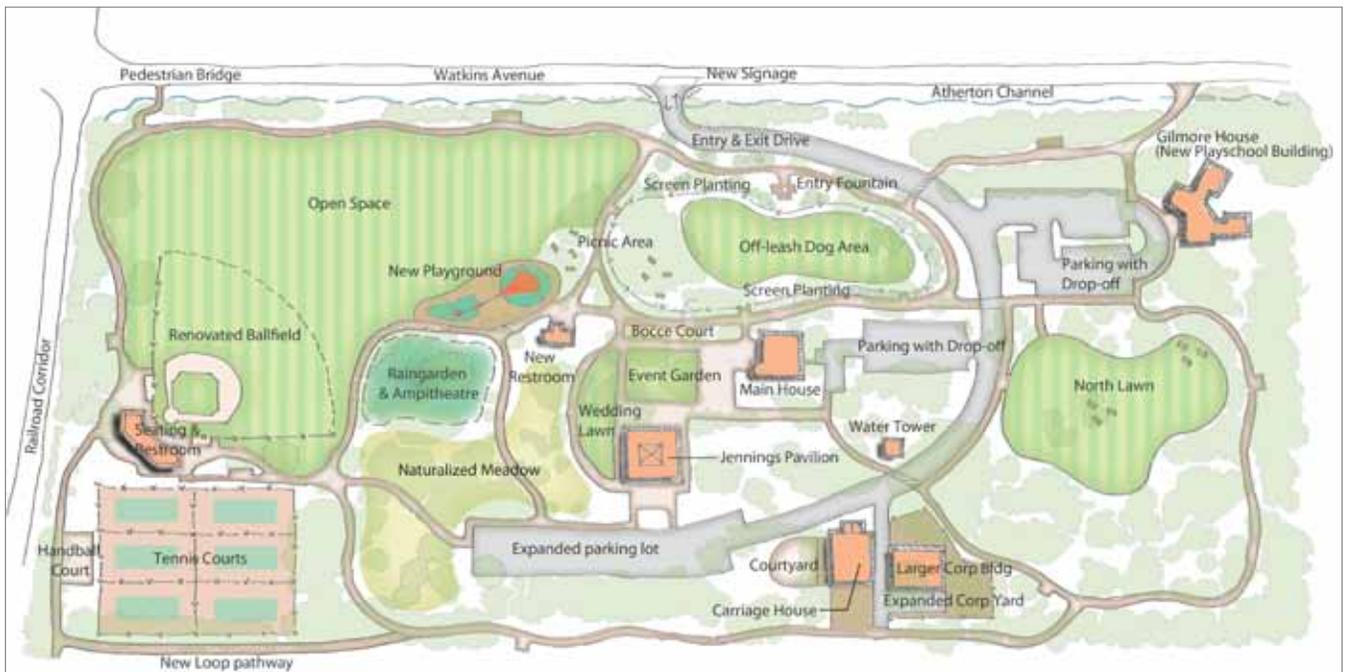
Concept 2 includes pedestrian path links and ball field upgrades similar to Concept 1, but in addition, proposes moving the preschool to the *Gilmore House* and revising the adjacent parking to accommodate a drop off for the school. It also places the off-leash dog area near the Jennings Pavilion. The advantage of this location is that it would not impact the *North Lawn* open space. Open space would be adjacent to the *Carriage House*, which could expand its use for events. The *Event Garden* reflects the 2005 Landscape Master plan. An amphitheater and rain garden are also identified in the low-lying area near the playground.

A rain garden design would detain storm water flow to create a native riparian habitat for environmental education. Interpretive signage would present the interface between natural hydrology systems and the main made landscape. The amphitheater could accommodate a performance event or school age outdoor classroom for groups or individuals.



CONCEPT 3

Concept 3 includes previous ideas identified, but in addition, identifies a new playground, new restroom, larger corp yard, and elimination of the exit drive, replacing it with a pedestrian path. The existing entrance drive is wide enough to accommodate vehicles travelling in both directions. This new entrance and exit would also have new signage and fencing to make the entrance more welcoming and easy to understand. It also places the off-leash dog area closer to the front of the park, in an open space that is less often used than the others. A planting buffer would screen the area from the entrance drive. An additional picnic area within the off-leash area is provided. Near the *Event Garden*, an additional space has been created for a bocce court, and additional lawn area provided for weddings or other events. An amphitheatre and raingarden are shown for the low-lying area near the playground, and a naturalized meadow proposed to provide a pleasant backdrop for all of the activities clustered around it. This would include drought tolerant, easy to maintain plants that would require minimal or no irrigation in the summer.



Master Plan



OVERVIEW

Atherton residents are proud of Holbrook-Palmer Park and generally pleased with its balance of nature, recreation and community gathering spaces. Residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations actively utilize park elements with minimal reported or observed conflicts. A need for new parkland is not anticipated, as the town population is stable. However, there are opportunities to continue refinement of the park, and improvements that can be made in a variety of ways. Some code compliance and deferred maintenance elements have been noted and both short and long-term recommendations provided in the following sections.

2005 LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

The 2005 Landscape Master Plan recommended some major long-term opportunities to restructure park spaces such as the Event Garden, Pavilion Garden, and Grand Promenade. Formal landscape spaces were expanded around the “Civic Core” to better accommodate existing activities as well as refresh the planting character. The Water Tower Garden is an example where implementation has already begun. Other planting recommendations such as clearing overgrown shrub masses and creating meadow plantings would enhance the less formal landscape spaces. Many other design ideas seek to enrich the park experience. As the Town moves ahead with park improvements and maintenance, the 2005 Master Plan offers details that remain relevant to park enhancement goals.

OTHER MASTER PLANNING EFFORTS

Atherton has undergone a number of Master Planning efforts during the last year. The new Town Center Master Plan (2014) proposes a Town Green and Library Garden for new passive recreation opportunities. A Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan (2014) recommends a link through Holbrook-Palmer Park to enhance cyclist connectivity and safety. Path recommendations along Watkins Avenue would enhance safety and appearance of the park. These other planning efforts are congruous with the Holbrook-Palmer planning effort, and due to

their inter-related scopes, will provide the community with a more cohesive network for outdoor recreation in the future.

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

These are all elements that could be completed in the near future as budget allows; priorities for implementation are found at the end of the chapter.

Park Entrance

Remove barrier posts and abandoned park drive to the Main House. Provide a walk connection from entry drive to park paths.

Pedestrian Circulation

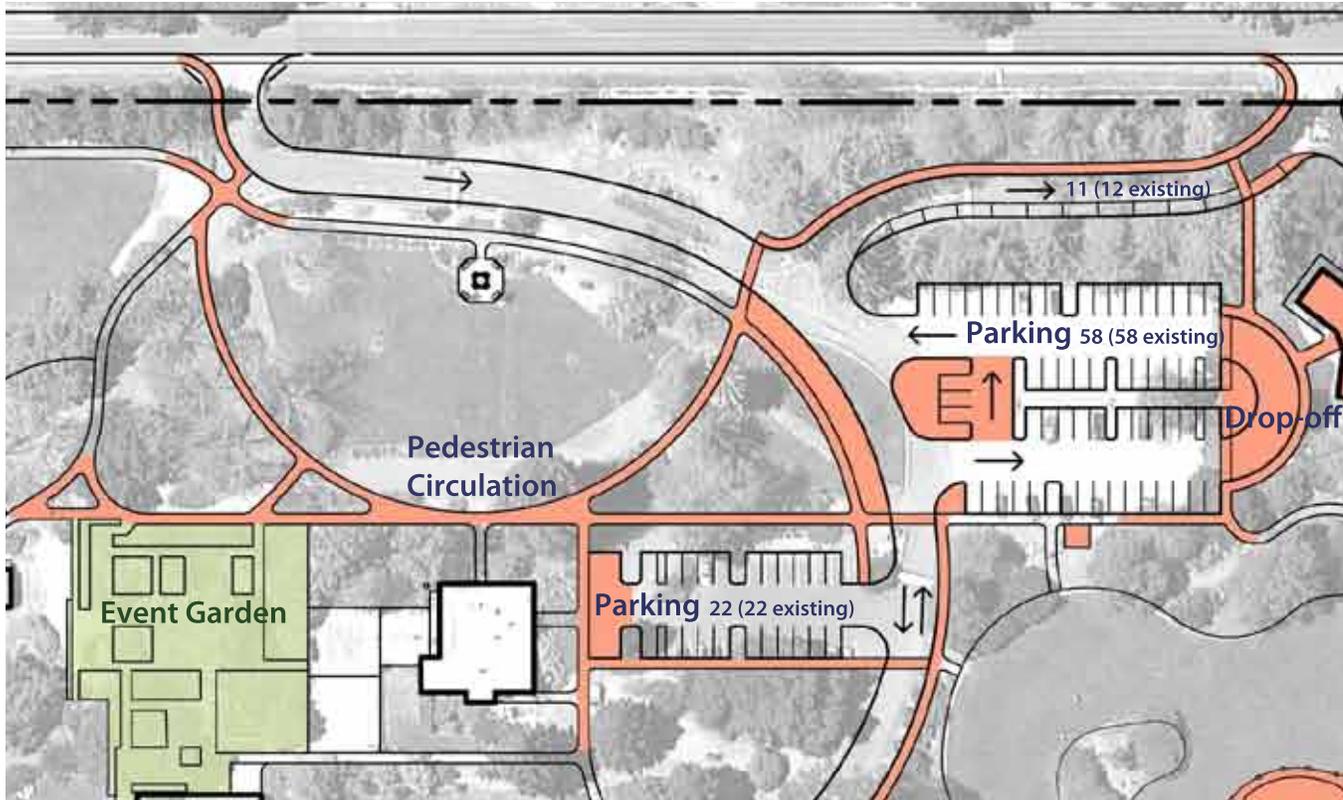
Pedestrian access into the park needs improvement. There is currently no sidewalk connection from Watkins Avenue at either the entrance or exit drives - there is

adequate room to separate cars and people, with either a curb or painted stripes.

The pedestrian circulation through the park is generally sufficient; however several new path links are recommended and shown on the Master Plan. Paths are predominately asphalt which provide a durable all weather surface. An additional path is recommended along the main entry drive to eliminate the need for pedestrians to walk in the drive lane. These links provide safe separation of people from cars.

The little-used circular driveway to the Main House should be removed and grass seeded to match the existing park grass: a smaller formal path recommended.

Access to the North Lawn from the parking lot needs improvement, either with asphalt or resin-stabilized decomposed granite, to be consistent with other park paths. Adjustment to the irrigation may be required in this area to avoid watering walk areas. Access from the



Recommended improvements highlighted



HOLBROOK-PALMER PARK MASTER PLAN
 Atherton, CA
 June 16, 2014





main park drive should remain wood chips, but chips should be replaced regularly to maintain ground cover.

Signage

The park exit is frequently confused as an entrance because park information signs are mixed with “exit only” signage. All general information signs should be removed except for “exit only” signage.

The park directional sign near the North Lawn is faded and out of plumb; refinish and re-install.



Lighting

The existing pole lighting at the parking lots should be replaced more energy efficient standards, and lighting should be restricted to areas providing access from parking lots to buildings that may be used after dark. Other parts of the park do not require additional lighting.

Trash Enclosure

The existing trash area at the *Jennings Pavilion* is very visible from the park drive, and should be reorganized with trash enclosure to reduce the visual impact.

Parking/Turn Around

Parking at the end of the park drive does not provide an adequate place to turn around if all the spaces are full. A car turnaround should be added at the end of drive to address this need.

A fire turnaround needs to be retained at the *Main House* parking lot. The current configuration works but will need Fire Department approval if changes are made to the walk configuration. For the *Jennings Pavilion* and



Rain Garden

Carriage House, a fire truck turnaround will need to be accommodated if any changes are made to the parking and circulation. A reconfigured entry of the *Jennings Pavilion* is shown in this Master Plan.

Planting

Ornamental plantings require the most intensive care and should be limited to the formal gardens associated with the *Main House* and *Jennings Pavilion*. Elsewhere, there are select areas at the park entrances and *Carriage House* where limited low maintenance ornamental plants are appropriate.

The proposed meadow planting between the playground and parking area would be an attractive backdrop to the Event Garden and *Jennings Pavilion*. With the proper mix of wildflowers and grasses, the meadow is the perfect complement to the principles of the park as an Arboretum. In conjunction with the meadow, a Rain Garden in the adjacent low area would be an environmental education feature, with species both drought-tolerant for the dry summers as well as capable of handling standing water. The rain garden would be an opportunity to celebrate the interaction of water with the land, and to teach how these gardens can be a beautiful way to manage stormwater on site. The existing outlet and topography would be reconfigured to detain storm water. This would be a conjunctive use that builds on other Town drainage goals. Currently all storm water is



Amphitheater

routed directly by pipe into the Atherton Channel along Watkins Avenue.

Amphitheater

As identified in the 2005 Landscape Master Plan, the amphitheater is a natural fit for its proposed location in a gently sloping bowl and would be the ideal location for music concerts, poetry readings, an outdoor classroom, or fitness activities. Built into the slope, seatwalls of stone or wood could capture an artful or rustic appearance; terrace steps might be crushed aggregate or turf. The size and materials would be selected in a design process with Town and community input. Due to Atherton's mild climate, it could be used throughout the year. It could be shaped and planted in conjunction with the Rain Garden. The Rain garden and amphitheater details and construction drawings would have to be refined in the future should the Town decide to move forward with them.

Arboretum

The arboretum as an environmental and educational resource is evolving and changing as trees mature and supplemental trees added. The diversity of the trees and plants at the park could be highlighted for relatively low cost through the addition metal placards placed on wood posts of placed at representative specimen plants. These placards could also include codes that smart

phones could read, which link to more information about the plant.

To further diversify the park, enhance bird life and to reduce the large expanses of bare mulch, other native understory plantings are recommended, especially in high visibility areas. Native or drought tolerant plants can be used in higher density for screening views and providing a ground cover on erodible slopes.

Off-Leash Dog Area

To provide an enclosed area for dog exercise and not encroach onto current park use spaces, the area near the *Jennings Pavilion* parking lot provides a mix of shade and sun. Located between the Preschool and tennis courts, the site is accessible from the perimeter walking path and parking lot. Separate small and large dog areas with separate unleashing entrances are suggested. The ground surface could be either decomposed granite or wood chips, or a combination of both. Decomposed granite has a higher installation cost, but will require less long-term maintenance. Mulch is less expensive, but must be rejuvenated more frequently, and tends to be less sanitary. A five-foot high perimeter fence is suggested, and should be of a character consistent with the existing fences at the park. Low shrub masses outside the perimeter fence are suggested to provide some screening from the adjacent walking path.

The Master Plan shows the latest recommendation by City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission where the off-leash dog area could be located. If and when the Town chooses to implement this type of facility, it would still have the mandate to implement hours of use and would need to complete a more detailed design plan for the area before construction, including type of ground cover (lawn, decomposed granite, mulch, or some combination), whether to separate large and small dogs, the design of fencing to be used, and other site amenities, which may include dog mitts/pet litter

stations, tables, benches, signage and/or dog drinking fountains.

OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

Little League Field Improvements

Construction is underway for updated bleachers, restrooms, paving, fencing and infield upgrades to the current ball field. This Master Plan reflects the general layout of these improvements.

LONG TERM CONSIDERATIONS

Playground

There may be a need or desire to update the wood playground structures in the next 10 years, as part of the ongoing maintenance of the park and to meet ADA requirements. It is recommended that future planning consider how new play structures would fit into the character of the park, and how they meet the physical and developmental needs of children of all ages.

Civic Core

The *Main House* and *Jennings Pavilion* are used for public meetings and private events. The 2005 Landscape Master Plan created a formal civic core around these buildings for garden spaces, walks, and planting. Some of these recommendations have been completed or in progress, and others have been reflected in this Master Plan. The new Event Garden would complete the transformation of this area as the central and most intensively designed part of the park.

Knox Playschool

As some school structures are near the time for replacement, consider relocating the Preschool to a location adjacent to the Gilmore House. At this location, a reconfigured parking lot could accommodate safer student pick up and drop off. Moving the school would create more outdoor space adjacent to the Carriage House, including the potential for more parking and/or event space.

Carriage House

This historic structure provides a unique snapshot of Atherton's history and is a beautiful focal point of the park, as the exterior has been recently renovated. However, the interior does not meet current code requirements, and so design studies have been initiated to evaluate costs for restoration and upgrades for expanding public use. In support of improving the park setting to enhance the interpretation and use of the building, moving the *Preschool* and maintenance yard will create space around the *Carriage House* for garden space and courtyards.

Park Maintenance Building & Corporation Yard

The current location of the park maintenance building and corporation yard is directly adjacent to the *Carriage House*. Relocating and redesigning the building and yard would allow for an improved outdoor setting for the historic building. The yard could be reconfigured for a more efficient use of space. Access would still remain off the park drive, but the building could be more effectively screened.

Parking

There are currently short periods of time when parking seems inadequate. However, with potential increase in park use, a shortage of parking may be experienced more frequently. At that time, the Town should assess if additional spaces are necessary. Existing trees should be preserved and incorporated into planting islands. For any new parking paving, a permeable material is recommended.

Gilmore House

The Gilmore House is currently providing temporary housing for Town police working long shifts, who often live far away. Use of this structure as part of the *Preschool* was considered, but renovation would be a major expense and preclude future employee residence options. No other uses are proposed for the building in this Master Plan.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

Improvements Costs

Funding for park improvements has been from a combination of individual donations, organization fund raising, and the Town general fund. Costs shown in this report for future improvements are based on 2014 public bid prices (plus a 20% contingency) and will vary based on scope of actual project. Also, project costs are not necessarily all City responsibility; funding may be shared through park use lease agreements, such as with the preschool move or entirely (such as recent ballfield improvements).

Maintenance Costs

For the last three years, park expenditures have averaged \$447,880. The approved park program and maintenance budget for 2014/15 is \$513,481, which reflects continued attention to park infrastructure and horticultural needs. The planting and irrigation improvements proposed in this Master Plan will require increased maintenance attention efforts. In the long term, an additional 1/4 to 1/2 time position could focus on the restoration and maintenance of the gardens at the Pavilion, Main House and Carriage House.

Facility Program Costs

Park facility event scheduling and management costs in 2010/11 were \$350,850. With staffing changes and reduction of facility use, program costs have averaged \$106,800 for the last three years. This includes staff time to 1) manage schedule of all site facilities, 2) coordinate with the rental client or organization for setup and access requirements, and 3) take down and clear space.

Revenue

Facility rental fees in 2010/11 were \$265,775. In addition to facility fees, annual rental for the preschool has averaged \$78,118 over the last 3 years. Facility rental was restricted beginning in 2011 to assess management strategies that minimize overall park crowding at peak weekend times. As a result of the limitations, annual

TOWN OF ATHERTON PARK REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

EXPENDITURES

TENNIS FUND	105	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget
Description		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-2015
Salaries & Benefits		13,515	4,841	0	0	0
Professional Services		0	1,677	3,232	2,543	5,700
Operation and Maintenance		1,053	717	14,219	1,015	5,000
Total Tennis Expenditures		14,568	7,235	17,451	3,558	10,700
DPW - PARK MAINTENANCE	DEPT 57	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget
Description		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-2015
Salary and Wages		190,505	79,372	26,664	27,157	
Employee Benefits		81,901	36,333	15,907	12,253	
Salaries & Benefits		272,406	115,705	42,571	39,410	41,510
Professional Services		0	136,205	149,235	168,630	225,491
General Operation		41,807	29,769	30,616	33,463	
Supplies & Materials		7,901	3,106	174	137	
Other Services/Expenses		909	13,408	859	1,103	
Operation and Maintenance		50,617	46,283	31,649	34,703	79,150
Capital Outlay		1,361	0	31,500	0	25,000
Total DPW - Park Maintenance		324,384	298,193	254,955	242,742	371,151
DPW - PARK PROGRAM	DEPT 58	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget
Description		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-2015
Salary and Wages		216,149	36,320	13,587	27,291	
Employee Benefits		99,000	34,864	24,554	12,417	
Salaries & Benefits		315,149	71,184	38,141	39,708	41,699
Professional Services		0	40,739	30,217	44,537	79,000
General Operation		29,311	21,284	13,866	15,765	
Supplies & Materials		6,391	452	1,245	29	
Other Services/Expenses		0	490	0		
Operation and Maintenance		35,702	22,226	15,111	15,793	21,631
Capital Outlay		0	0	1,647	1,101	0
Total DPW - Park Program		350,851	134,149	85,116	101,140	142,330
TOTAL PARK MAINTENANCE & PROGRAMS EXP		675,235	432,342	340,071	343,882	513,481

REVENUES	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget
Description	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-2015
Social Fees	86,062	29,300	33,275	57,143	41,000
Weddings	89,550	27,750	0		25,000
Meeting Fees	77,460	14,650	23,725	18,438	25,000
Class Fees	9,953	16,500	14,000	16,080	15,131
Misc. Use Fee	2,750	1,400	2,400	0	
Park Day Use Fee	0	0	0	4,075	3,500
Park Program Revenue	265,775	89,600	73,400	95,735	109,631
Property Rental - Playschool	77,575	78,118	78,118	78,118	79,810
Tennis Fund Revenue	8,828	8,601	9,822	8,400	8,250
Transfer From GF			4,853		
Total Tennis Fund Program Revenue	8,828	8,601	14,675	8,400	8,250
TOTAL PARK PROGRAM & TENNIS REVENUE	352,178	176,319	166,193	182,253	197,691

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

<i>Park Facility & Features</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Main House and Patio (MH)	
MH1: Continue use as a rental facility to generate revenue for maintenance and enhancement. Monitor scheduling to manage event sizes and times that minimize parking conflicts.	\$0
MH2: Support efforts to create Event Garden for expanded use and revenue.	To be determined
Jennings Pavilion (JP)	
JH1: Continue use as a rental facility to generate revenue for maintenance and enhancement. Monitor scheduling to manage event sizes and times that minimize parking conflicts with other park uses.	\$0
JH2: Construct trash enclosure.	\$12,000
JH3: Update kitchen.	\$50,000 - \$75,000
Carriage House (CH)	
CH1: Support efforts to assess costs for upgrades to Carriage House.	To be determined
Preschool (PS)	
PS1: Prepare Relocation Study.	\$15,000
PS2: Relocate Preschool: Assume 2 new portables and 3 relocated.	\$250,000 - \$350,000
Vehicle Circulation and Parking	
VC1: Remove barrier posts and abandoned asphalt drive to Main House. Provide a walk connection; modify planting and irrigation; level gate panel and stripe walk at park entrance from street.	\$27,000
VC2: Create turnaround at Pavilion parking lot.	\$18,500
VC3: Modify Pavilion parking lot at Pavilion Entry.	\$50,000
VC4: Directional sign on park roadway (Remove, refinish, install)	\$3,500
Pedestrian Circulation (PC)	
PC1: Construction/repair various path links (22,100 sf) in asphalt or decomposed granite.	\$203,750
PC2: Site Lighting: Replace ten poles and fixtures. (Use existing controls, conduit and wire.)	\$93,750
Park Features (PF)	
PF1: Off-leash dog area (20,000 sf) includes fencing, decomposed granite surfacing, signs, benches, litter station and water.	\$247,463
PF2: Rain Garden (3,000 sf) includes grading, soil preparation, establishment, planting and irrigation.	\$50,000
PF3: Amphitheater (600 sf/100 lf seatwall) includes grading, drainage, seatwall, decomposed granite, planting and irrigation.	\$75,000
PF4: Arboretum Meadow (37,000 sf) Includes irrigation for establishment, soil preparation, grading, seeding and planting.	\$91,500
PF5: Picnic Area: Refinish tables; create two accessible tables and pad.	\$15,500
PF6: North Lawn: Create accessible seating at Lawn edge; provide compacted aggregate pad at picnic table.	\$5,500
Planting and Irrigation (PL)	
PL1: Top dress and reseed; level isolated low spots at playfield (200' x 300')	\$15,000
PL2: Renovate shrub plantings at various locations around the park. (63,400 s.f.)	\$190,200
Maintenance Building & Corporate Yard (MB)	
MB1: Prepare Relocation Study	\$10,000
MB2: Relocate Building and Corporate Yard.	\$170,000 - \$210,000

facility rental income dropped to an average of \$86,245 through 2014. Full rental of facilities was restored in 2014 and should increase closer to 2010/2011 levels, though under a watchful eye to respect other park uses.

In today's era of parks facility management, cost recovery is a priority. The Main House, Pavilion Carriage House and Play School provide significant revenue to the Park. The tennis facility and sports fields offer other revenue opportunities that help offset park maintenance costs. Between 2010–2014 total park revenues offset park maintenance and operation costs by an average of 48%. For a typical community park without a specialized recreation/sports facility, this is better than average situation, and benefits the Town of Atherton.

Looking ahead, the Town should annually review revenues to assess cost recovery for facility program management while continuing to favor Town residents and organizations in fee structure and use priority.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Short term (1-5 years)

1. Planting Renovation (PL1). Planting enhancements should continue to be regularly budgeted and implemented under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Committee. Relocation of the Rose Garden, implemented by the Holbrook Palmer Park Foundation, will take place during the Event Garden Project.

2. Pedestrian Circulation (PC1 & VC1). The park's walking paths are one of the most valued amenities of Holbrook-Palmer Park. Some segments require minimal planning and can be implemented incrementally within the annual budget process. Some longer segments will require more coordination, construction drawings, and bidding for implementation. Combining both projects (as budget allows) may provide some cost savings.

3. Pedestrian Circulation (PC2). Replace the 10 current light posts and install potentially 3 additional lights (2 on N side of the Pavilion parking lot and 1 between the Carriage House and the Pavilion parking lot).

4. Preschool Relocation Study and Maintenance Building/Corporation Yard study (PS1 & MB1).

Combine both studies to maximize utility needs analysis.

Preschool Relocation Study (PS1). There is a priority for replacing aging prefabricated structures used by the Preschool. Relocating the school will be a significant undertaking that will reduce park congestion, improve park use safety and create an improved setting for the Carriage House. A relocation study is recommended to determine program needs, utility requirements, and a cost estimate, which then can be used to further discuss options with the Preschool.

Maintenance Building/Corporation Yard Study (MB1).

Moving the facility creates a tremendous opportunity for enhancing the park's historic character and improving park use. Combining this study with the Preschool relocation study would be valuable in determining how the utility needs of both projects could be combined cost effectively.

5. Vehicular Circulation and Parking (VC2). Create a turn around at the end of the Pavilion parking lot.

6. Off-Leash Dog Area Design (PF1). Due to popular use of the park for dog exercise, initiate design development for off-leash area of approximately 20,000 sq. ft.

Long term (5-10 years)

Progress of the Master Plan should be evaluated annually for implementation and adjust priorities for individual projects or combined for expected cost savings with other improvements.

Summary of Community Input

Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan



PRC Presentation – December 4, 2013

Plan Goals

Gather community input

Analyze site and program elements, and the interaction between them

Articulate future direction for the park



Methods for Community Input

Online Survey & Onsite Surveys

Organization Questionnaire



Methods

Online Survey

Survey monkey: www.surveymonkey.com

Where?

Link on Holbrook-Palmer Park website

Email to Atherton residents and organizations

Posters in the park with URL and QR code

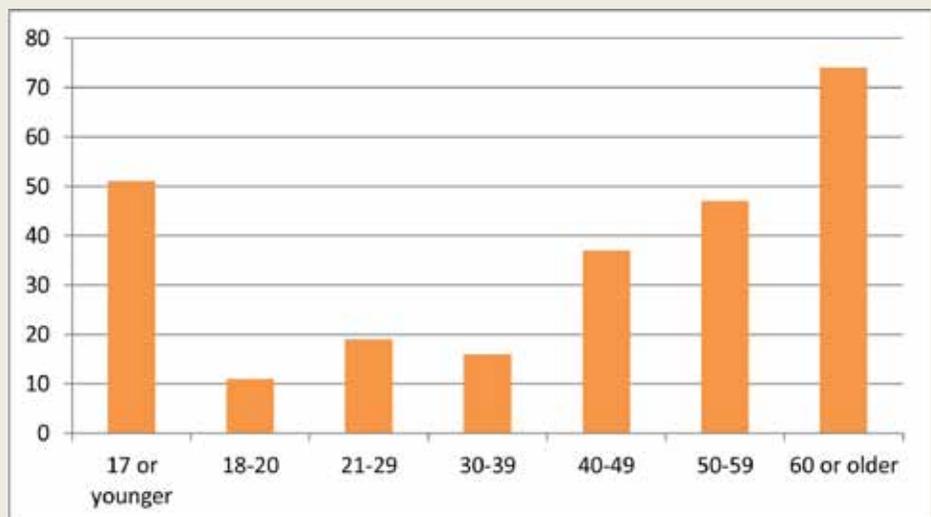


137 Individual Responses

2.5 week collection period

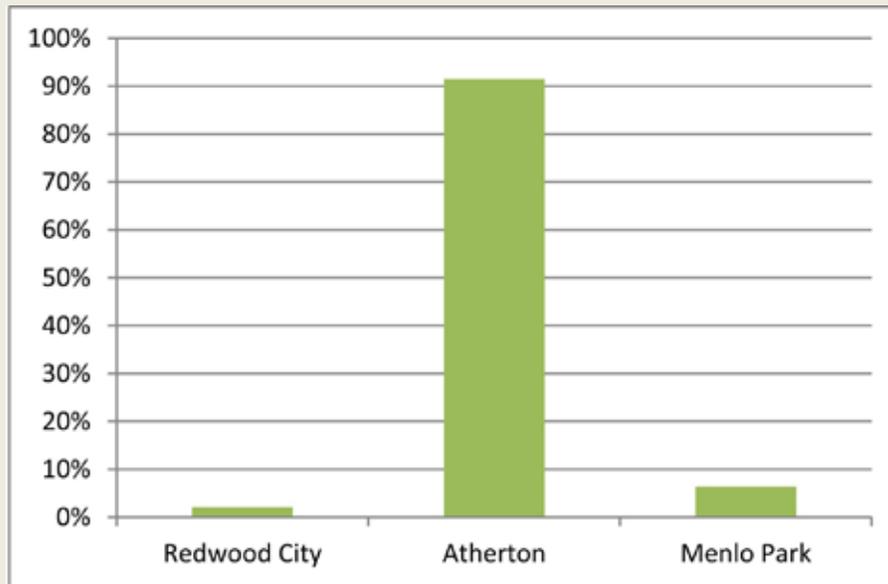


Ages within Households of Respondants



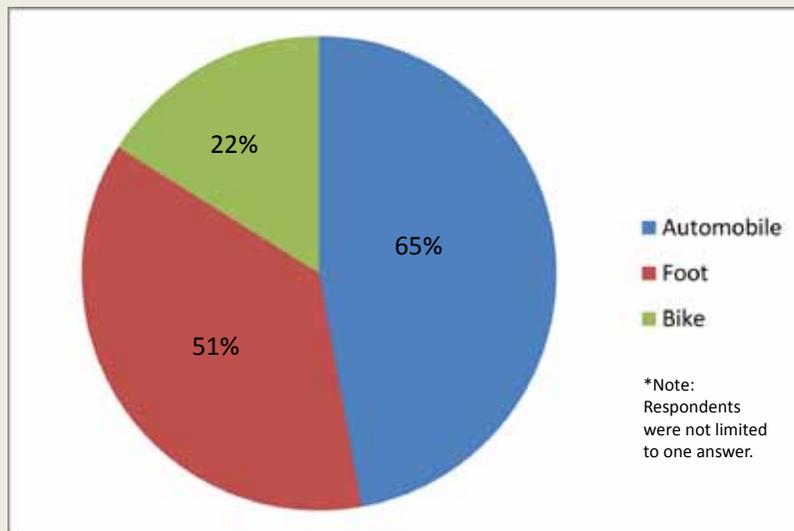
Online Survey

Proximity of Users



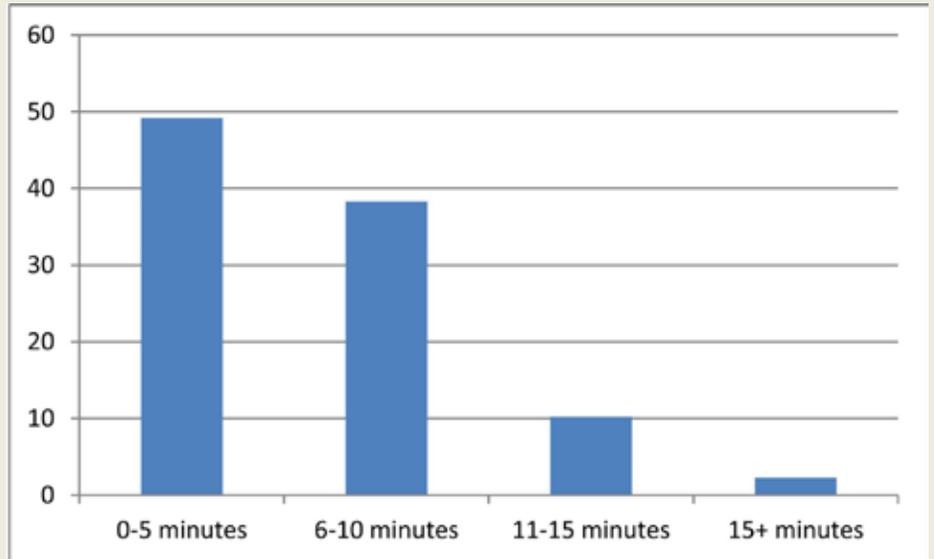
Online Survey

Primary Mode of Transportation



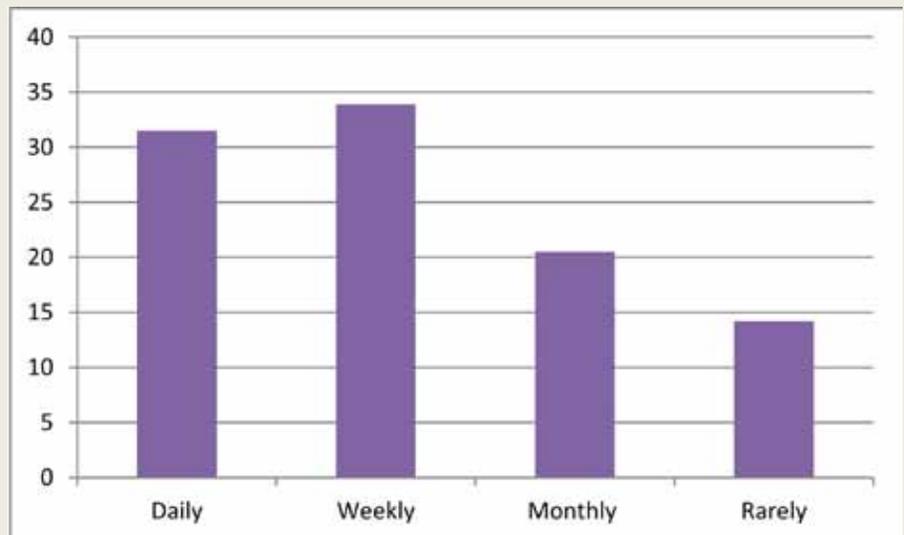
Online Survey

Travel Time



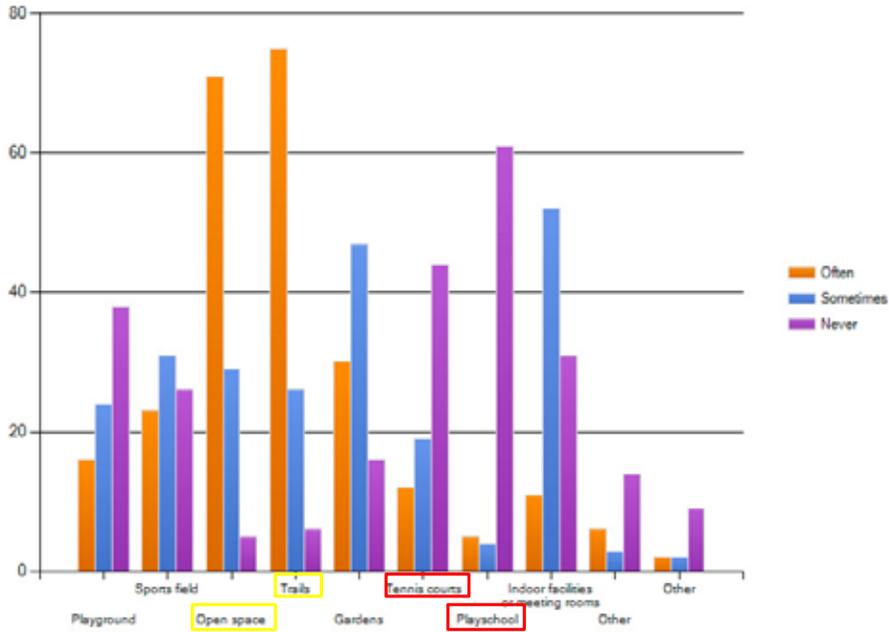
Online Survey

Frequency of Visits to the Park



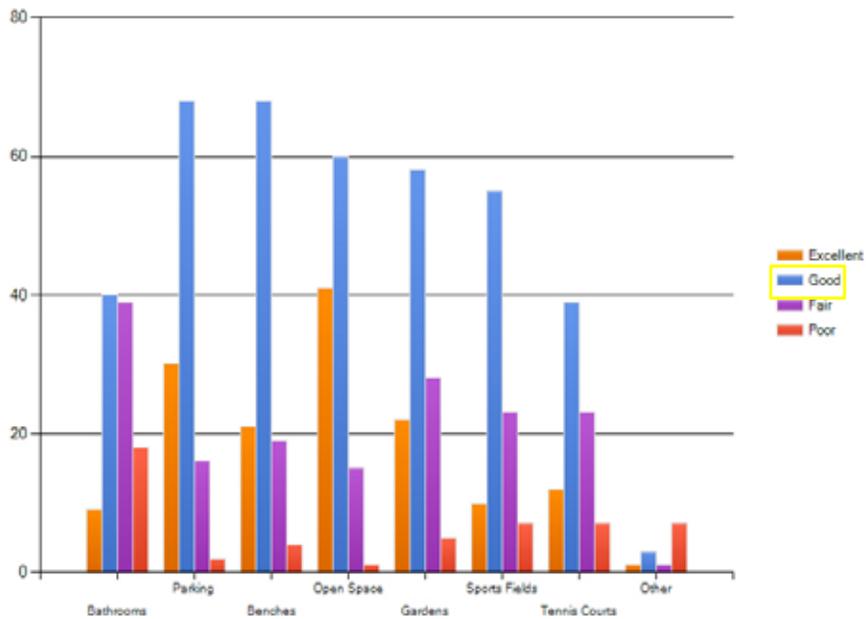
Online Survey

What areas do you use at Holbrook-Palmer? (Check all that apply.)



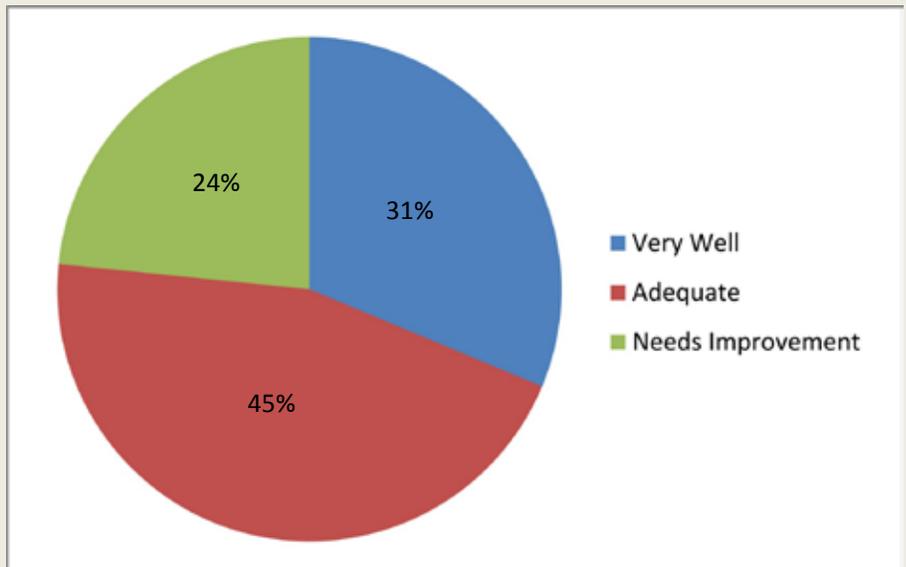
Online Survey

Rate the quality of the outdoor amenities:



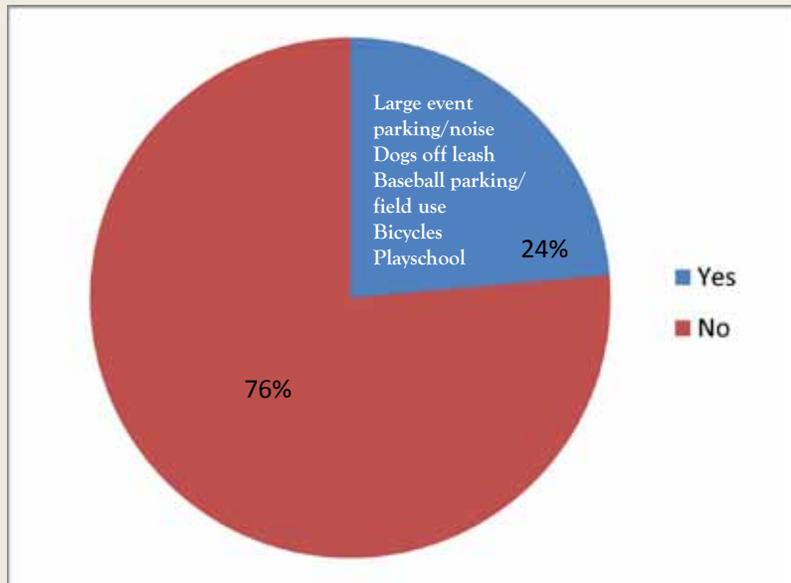
Online Survey

How well is the park maintained?



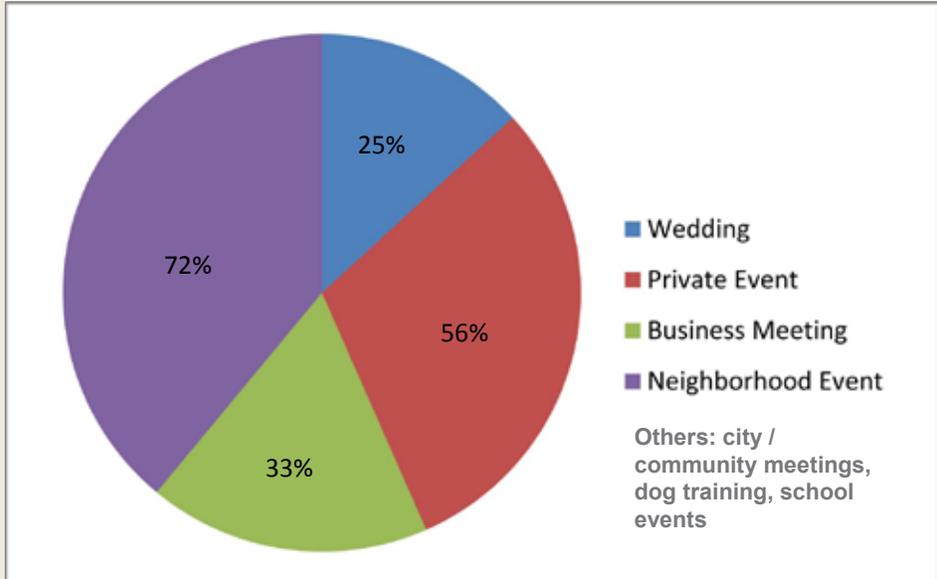
Online Survey

Frequency of Use Conflicts



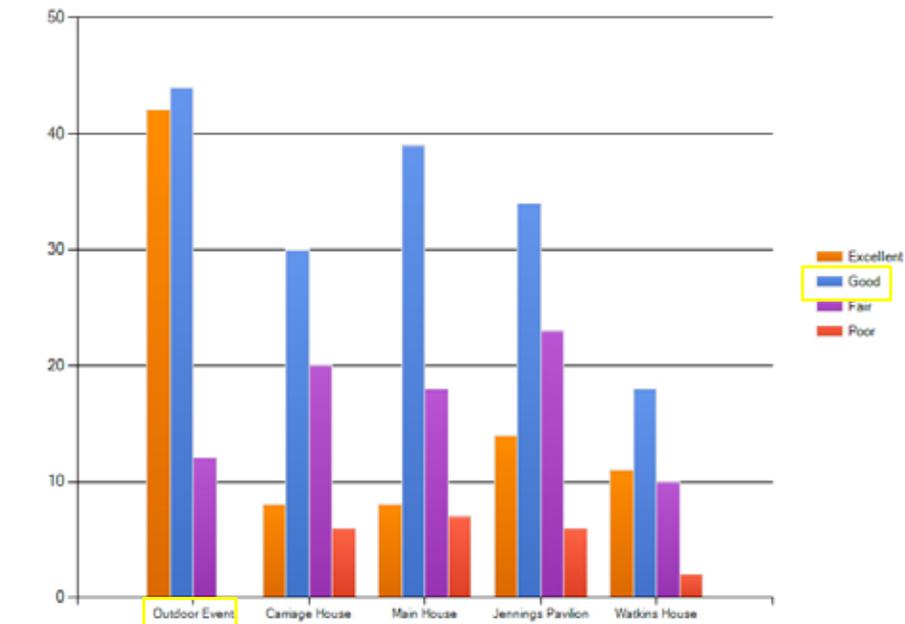
Online Survey

Type of Events Attended



Online Survey

How was the quality of the space?



Online Survey

Results

In Your View, What Changes Need to be Made?

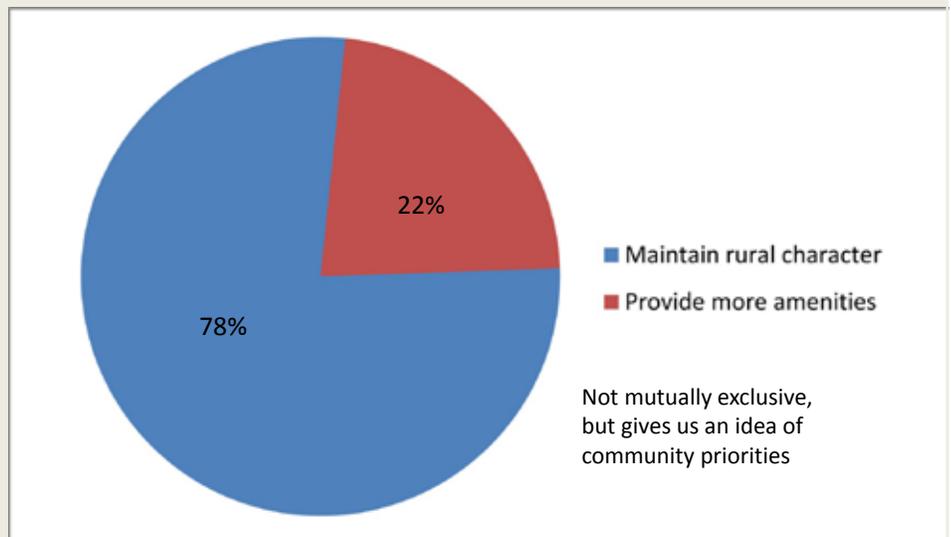
No change needed	Improve What's there	Create new	Make Bigger
<p>Park Entrance</p> <p>Park Signage</p> <p>Open Space</p> <p>Playground</p> <p>Gardens</p> <p>Place for active recreation</p> <p>Picnic Areas</p> <p>Facilities for classes</p> <p>Vehicular access & circulation</p> <p>Pedestrian Access & circulation</p> <p>Parking</p> <p>Facilities for events</p> <p>Off-leash dog area</p>	<p>Facilities for Events</p> <p>Pedestrian Access & Circulation</p> <p>Playground</p> <p>Open Space</p> <p>Picnic Areas</p> <p>Facilities for Classes</p> <p>Gardens</p>	<p>Off-leash Dog area</p> <p>Other answers: Improve ball park Fix paving on trails Improve bathrooms Confusing entry / exit and parking Repair exercise stations New outdoor event garden</p>	<p>Open Space</p>

*Text in red was most popular answer, text in black were also popular answers



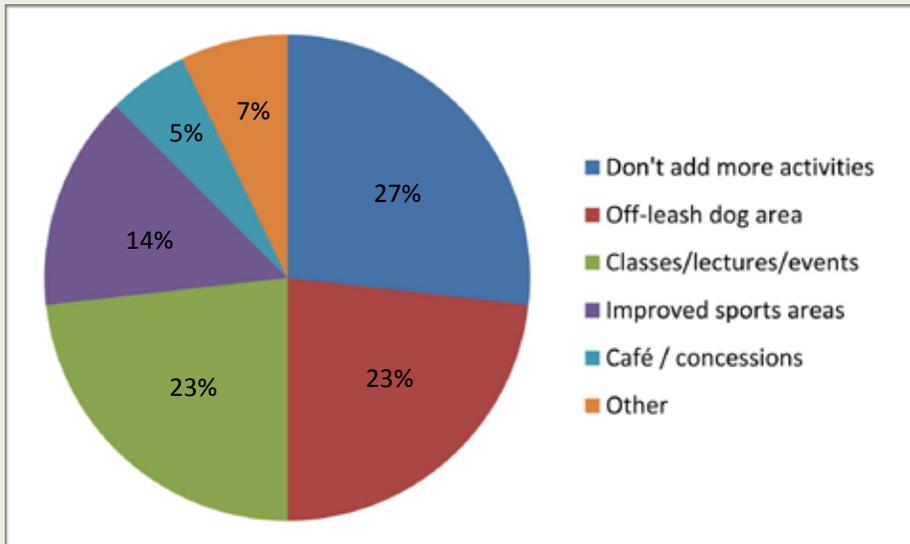
Online Survey

Park Character



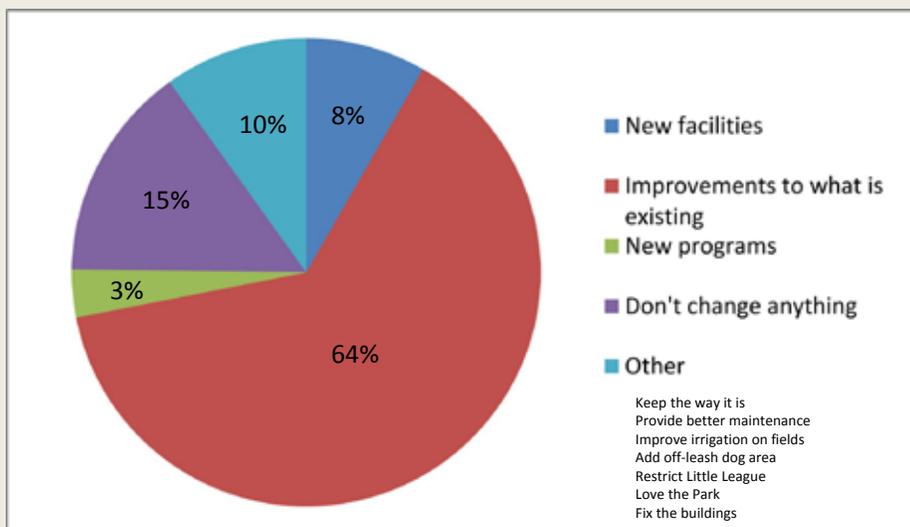
Online Survey

Ideas for new activities or programs

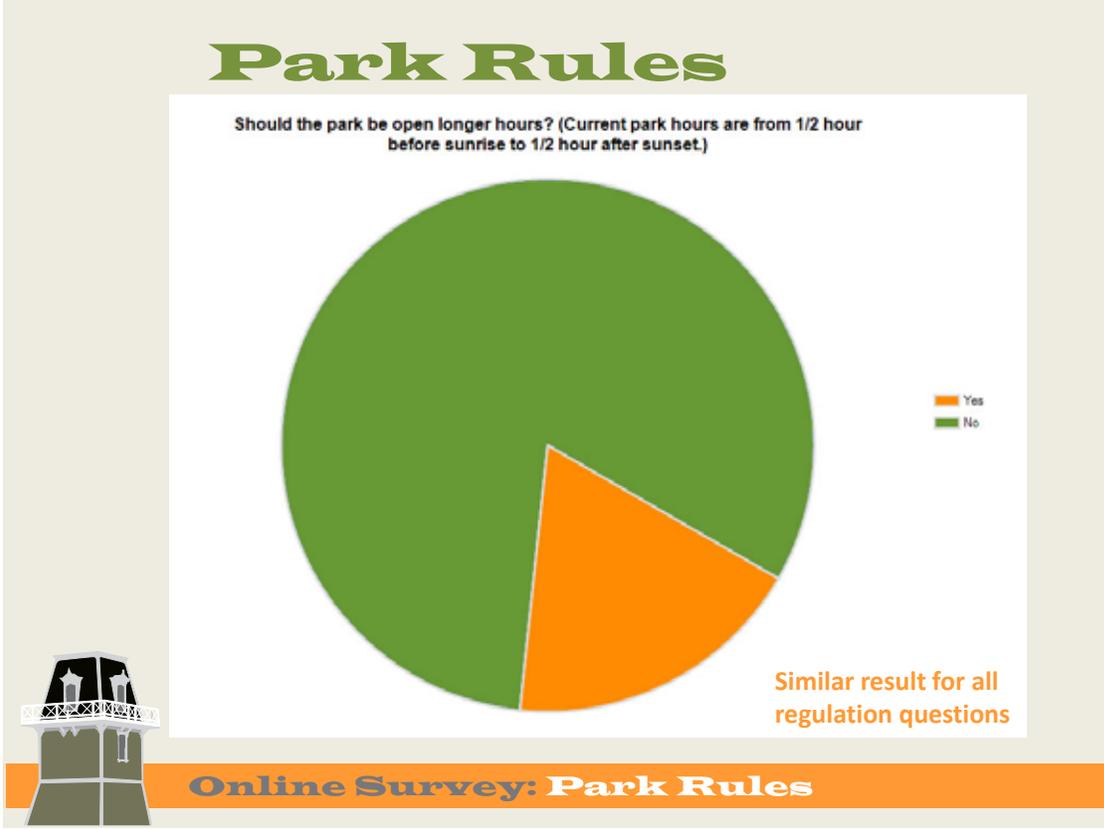
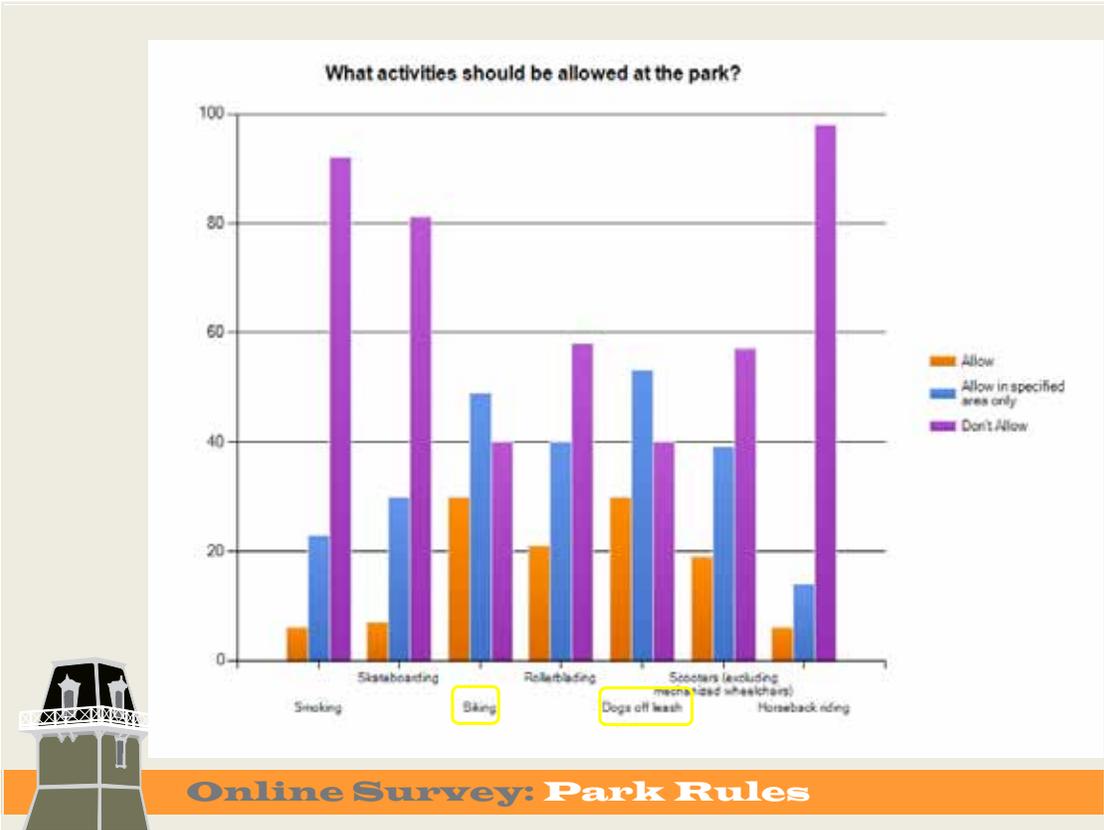


Online Survey

Most important outcome of Master Plan?



Online Survey



Methods for Community Input

**Online Survey &
Onsite Surveys**

Organization Survey



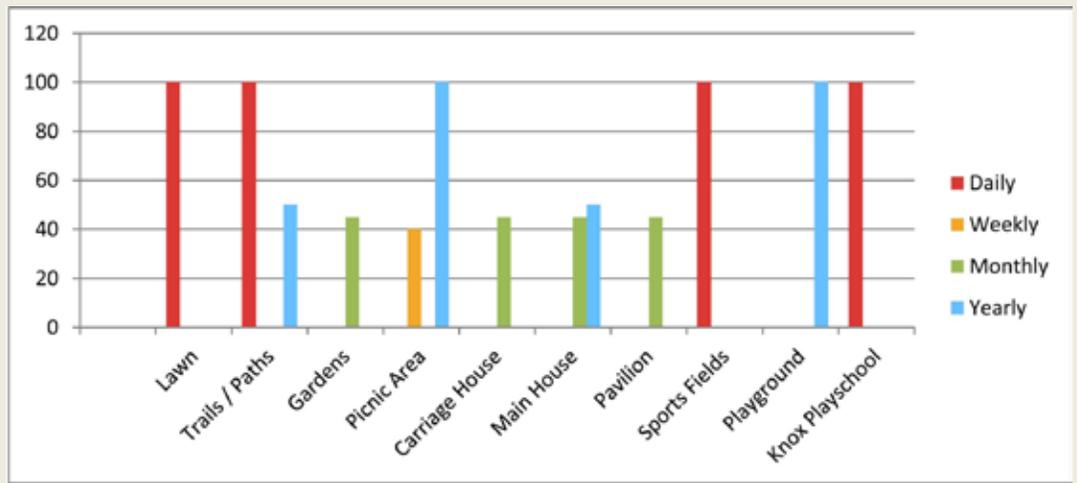
Respondents

- **Atherton Dames**
- **Little League**
- **Knox Playschool**



Organization survey

Park Use



Organization survey

Adequate Space?

Atherton Dames - we make do with what is available
 Little League - not sufficient seating or restroom facilities
 Knox Playschool - yes

Quality of Space?

Atherton Dames - buildings need improvement, bathrooms inadequate
 Little League - park itself is beautiful
 Knox Playschool - the older playschool building needs to be replaced



Organization survey

Maintenance?

Atherton Dames - buildings are not maintained very well
Little League - substandard for sports use
Knox Playschool - OK

Space conflicts?

Atherton Dames - Carriage House not a viable space to use
Little League - plenty of space for all groups
Knox Playschool - parking can be a problem for us when there is a big event at the Pavilion



Organization survey

Spaces you would like to see added or improved?

Atherton Dames - Renovate Carriage House, as well as improving other buildings, fountain and the gardens
Little League - more parking
Knox Playschool - none



Organization survey

Key Findings:

- Maintain informal character of the park
- Make improvements to what we have, especially bathrooms, play area, Carriage House
- Consider adding an off-leash dog park area
- Consider new classes and programs
- Address Use Conflict areas



Organization survey

Other Considerations:

- Playschool location
- Corp yard
- Drainage channel
- Tree Replacement



Organization survey

