

HIGHLAND PARK REPORT

**RE:FORM
SHREVEPORT**

PREPARED MARCH 1, 2018



RE:FORM SHREVEPORT

ReForm Shreveport was founded in 2016 and works to bring citizens, business owners, and public servants together to find pragmatic, implementable solutions to improve Shreveport's built environment. By creating these communication channels and engaging people, we believe we can grow a more financially-sound and prosperous city.

RE:FORM HIGHLAND PARK PROJECT HISTORY

In November 2016, ReForm Shreveport began work in Highland Park (Olive Street at Coty Street) with an aim to collect trash and assess the park's basic needs. It was quickly determined that the park had suffered catastrophic erosion damage. Immediately, the volunteer group began work on implementing erosion abatement efforts. Additional Highland Park "Work Days" in 2017 were conducted on April 22, June 3, June 28, July 26, and October 28. These events saw continued work on erosion abatement, litter collection, and conversation with citizen stakeholders.

SURVEY COLLECTION

In the fall of 2017, ReForm's board members met with representatives from Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation (SPAR) to discuss the use of a 2011 bond issue that allocated \$200,000 for use in capital improvements for Highland Park. The reconstruction of the walking trail throughout the park had already been identified. Remaining funds were unallocated and SPAR invited ReForm to conduct a survey to determine the desires of the community for the park.

Over two survey days, December 16, 2017 and January 27, 2018, ReForm volunteers conducted a door-to-door survey to determine the current use of, complaints about, and dreams for Highland Park. Additionally, an online survey was conducted in which participants were required to indicate their address to participate. The results have been compiled in this report.

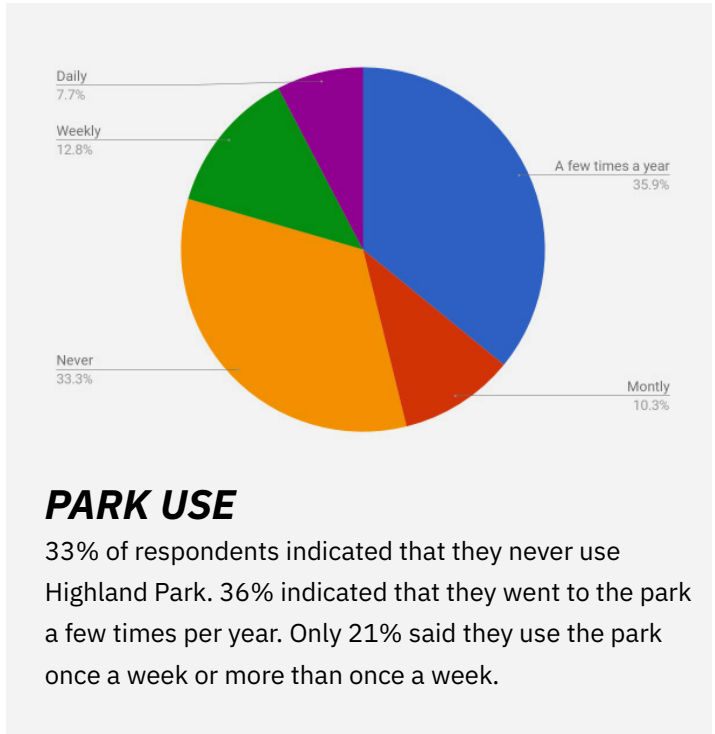
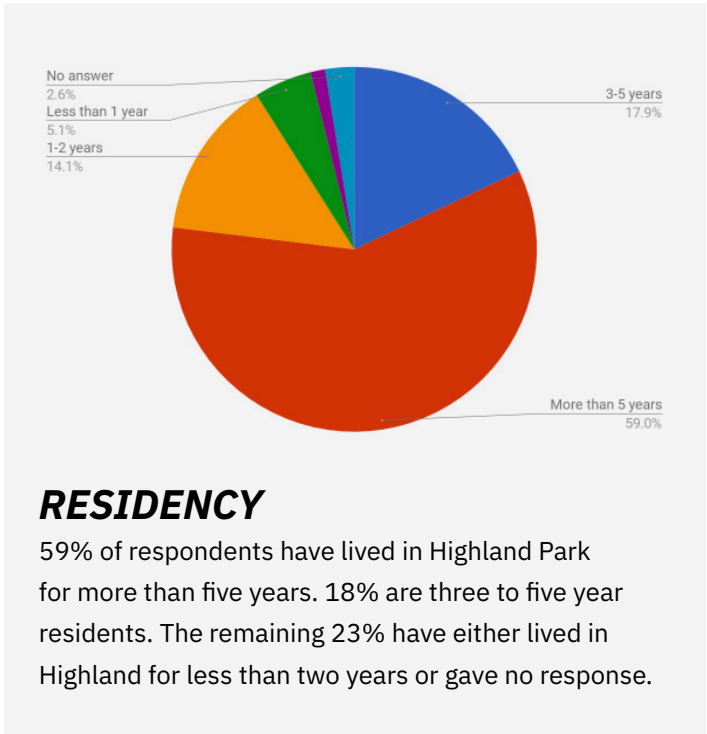
METHODOLOGY

The survey questions were written to identify and corroborate three primary inquiries:

1) How long had the respondent lived in Highland and how often they used Highland Park, if at all; 2) What problems kept them from using the park more often; and 3) What ideas they had for betterment of the park. Respondents who could not readily identify possible improvements were given ideas that had been suggested by ReForm volunteers during Work Days. Respondents were asked if they agreed with them. These suggestions included: Fixing the walking path, playground equipment, pavilions, lighting, and emergency call box. Additionally, the respondents were directly asked if they would support the conversion of the tennis courts into basketball courts, which was also recommended by Work Day participants.

SURVEY RESULTS

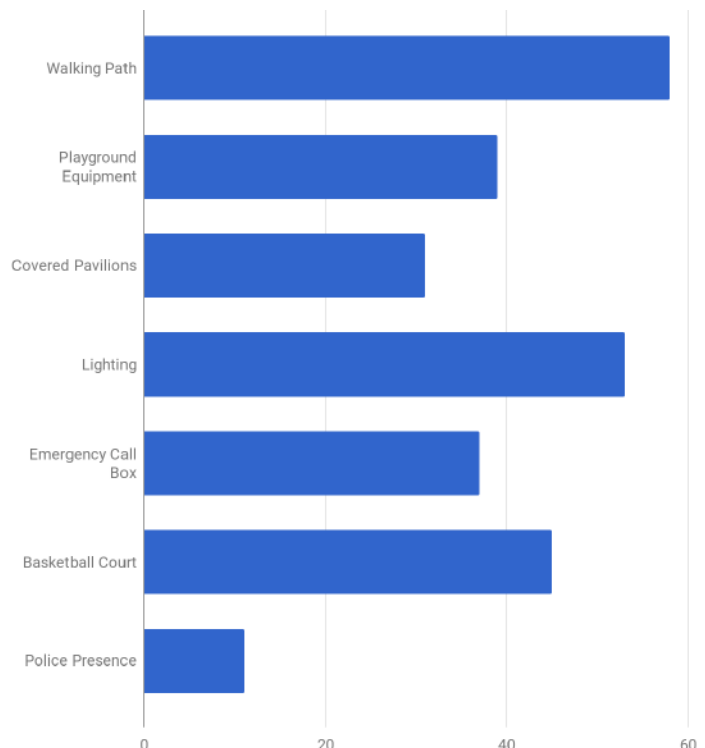
The Highland Park survey received 78 total responses from Highland residents and one business. The majority of respondents were immediately adjacent to the park (within one block).



AMENITY REQUESTS

Survey participants indicated several areas for improvement that would increase the likelihood that they would use the park, including fixing the walking path, better lighting, upgraded playground equipment, covered pavilions, changing the use of the tennis courts to include basketball, installing emergency call boxes, and increasing police presence. Other suggestions included sprucing up the frisbee golf course, trash cans, water fountains, bike infrastructure, and more.

We will detail the numerous responses with our own commentary in this report.





RECOMMENDATIONS I: PARK USE MODIFICATIONS

Complete the work already begun on the replacement of the walking path with additional study of runoff and drainage. Ideally, the park's pathways would have been reconstructed after erosion abatement had been completed and with the use of permeable pavement or other low-impact alternatives. However, the process of bidding the path project was underway prior to ReForm being asked for input. There is still time, however, to include additional drainage based on our observations that could be compiled in a supplementary report or shown on a walk-through with project leaders.

Dismantle existing playground equipment and replace with a modern play set that can accommodate ages 4-14. We recommend that SPAR partner with ReForm to apply for a grant with Kaboom! in order to offset costs. A Kaboom! grant is dependent on community involvement in the installation of the play set which can be combined with a park event to raise awareness.

Repurpose the tennis courts. Respondents favored the idea of including a basketball court on the existing tennis courts. There would be room, however, to leave one tennis court or to convert the remaining portion of the tennis court into a play area for young children. The latter option would be dependent on availability of funding.

Create power access as is available in other parks. This amenity can facilitate everything from concerts or speaking engagements, Movies & Moonbeams, bounce houses, and more. We recommend installing power adjacent to the tennis courts as well as atop of the main hill.

RECOMMENDATIONS II: AMENITIES

Construct more covered pavilions and accompanying amenities. At least two additional covered pavilions with accompanying seating, grills, and trash cans. Ideally, these pavilions would also include lighting for use at night as well as to promote security.

Install additional bench seating. Senior respondents indicated that they would be more likely to walk the path if more benches were made available along the pathway. We recommend that ten total benches be present around the parameter.

Install distance markers along the walking path in an effort to provide additional functionality to the walking path. We recommend using vertical markers made of wood, engraved with markers for kilometers and miles.

Install water fountains. We recommend multi-tier water fountains be installed. This water fountain should be readily capable of filling water bottles and include a runoff collector or separate button for pet use. Ideal placement would be near the parking lot and playground.

Accommodate dog owners. We recommend that Highland Park receive dog waste collection bags and trash bins like the ones found in Betty Virginia Park.

New trash cans that accommodate waste disposal and recycling to create awareness about waste and provide a place for those who wish to recycle to do so.

Bike Infrastructure Because Highland Park is adjacent to a bikeway, we recommend installation of bike racks and a bike repair station near the main parking lot.





RECOMMENDATIONS III: SAFETY & SECURITY

The vast majority of the respondents indicated that their primary reason for not visiting the park included the safety of the grounds.

Add more and better lighting. In addition to being the number one requested security change, ReForm studied the park's lighting and determined that there were too few lights along the walking path that were too bright. This creates pools of light which are inadequate to provide a sense of safety along the park's pathways.

Additionally, the lighting in the park in and around the parking lot is inadequate for a general sense of safety, security, and invitation to use the park after dark but before the park closes.

More lights and lower intensity and broader beam spread can make it easier to see outside of the light's direct path and cover more area. We also recommend more lighting. Additionally, the color temperature of the lights should be addressed to remove the orange color and replace with a more natural color.

Install police call boxes. In an effort to create a sense of security and presence, we recommend the installation of two police call boxes along the path - one on the north end and one on the south. These boxes, when activated will call 9-1-1 and activate a flashing light.

Increase police patrols. Respondents indicated that visible police presence in the park is desired to make the park feel more safe, particularly in the early evening hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS IV: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Address parking lot runoff. We recommend that a lip be added to the existing parking lot adjacent to the tennis courts on the north side and so that the water sheets, which are contributing to erosion of the path and the retaining hill for the parking lot, are diverted and slowed to existing drainage outlets.

Allow the continuance of ReForm and community erosion control measures so that we can work to retain the soil to protect the current structure of the park. We see this as an ongoing project that will be a decade in the making. As areas are reconstructed and rehabilitated, more challenges will reveal themselves until we reach the ideal amount of control. Remaining engineering challenges will become apparent and will almost certainly require direct injection of public funds in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS V: BEAUTIFICATION

Plant grass, fruit trees, and shrubberies. Not only does this beautify the park, but it can also provide educational opportunities for groups like the Boy Scouts, who share the park, as well as provide additional stability of the grounds in an effort to curb erosion damage.

New Highland Park signage. Adding a main sign near the parking lot that matches the new SPAR standards will further improve community connection to and proper use of the park. Additional signs could be added that educate visitors on efforts like erosion abatement, frisbee golf, and the history of the park.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In accordance with the ReForm mission, we have identified the next best steps to improve Highland Park. With the remaining bond money, we recommend the prioritization of a new playground, use modification of the tennis court, new amenity installation such as bike infrastructure and dog accommodations, pavilions and seating, as well as safety and security improvements like better lighting and emergency call boxes. Long-term, we recommend continued maintenance of ReForm-implemented erosion control and adding programming.





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