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Do The Design Principles Established By William Hollingsworth Whyte For Creating Successful Urban Parks Apply To Parks In The New Urbanism Community Of Mt. Laurel?

William Miller Allen

DO THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM HOLLINGSWORTH

WHYTE FOR CREATING SUCCESSFUL URBAN PARKS APPLY TO PARKS IN

THE NEW URBANISM COMMUNITY OF MT LAUREL?

By

William Miller Allen

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
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Candidate for Degree of Master's of Landscape Architecture

This thesis will study the resident's perceptions of a community park in the new urbanism community of Mt Laurel, Alabama by evaluating the thirteen principles established by William Hollingsworth Whyte for creating successful urban parks. The thirteen principles are:

- The parks proximity/relationship to the street

- Location of the sidewalks to the street

- Its ability to consistently sustain a constant flow of people through its boundaries

- Its amount of defined spaces rather than large open spaces

- Its amount of sitable space, in terms of ledges, steps, planters, chairs etc.

- The parks sense of security among its users

- The incorporation of water features within the parks boundaries

- The extent of tree canopies within the park for shading purposes

- The availability of food concessions

- The parks number of waste receptacles

- Routine performers

- Outdoor cafes in the park

- Occasional art and music exhibits

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my lovely wife Elizabeth Allen and my little boy Griffin Allen who continuously gave me the strength and motivation to complete this task and who remanded patient with me throughout my graduate school studies. Your support, faith, and encouragement have forever fueled me and because of this I am forever devoted. I would also like to dedicate this research to Craig and Laurie Allen, and my brother Christopher.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Writer/sociologist William Whyte first studied the social impacts of public spaces
in urban settings in 1969, while working with the New York City Planning Commission.
Whyte believed there was an urgency and sacredness for creating and sustaining public
spaces. He once expressed, "small urban places are priceless, and the city street is the
river of life where we come together" (Whyte 1980).   Furthermore, it is believed by
many professionals that Whyte's ideas are as relevant today as they were over twenty
years ago, and perhaps even more so today (Godbey 1993).

The great designers of the 19th century, Sir Joseph Paxton, Andrew Jackson
Downing, and Frederick Law Olmsted who were often referred to by the general public
as simply landscape gardeners, projected America would become an urban nation. As
American cities began to industrialize, these inspirational icons, who gave us New York's
Central Park, San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and similar grand parks in cities across
the nation, took it upon themselves to preach the power of parks. For these landscape
sculptors, parks were not amenities but necessities. Parks provided places for recreation
and inspiration away from the city's hustle and bustle. Early 19th century visionaries felt
that parks should be available to the entire city's residents, especially those who did not
have the resources to escape to the countryside. However, after World War II the

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population shifted to the suburbs as did the attention of park advocates and landscape architects. The pattern began to change with the emergence of modern architecture, zoning, and the ascension of the automobile with availability of inexpensive gasoline (Whyte 1980).

Most of the land allocated by the city for public use was replaced with lavishly landscaped subdivisions with curving cul-de-sacs located on the outskirts of the city's boundaries. According to a survey produced by National Recreation and Park Association in 1993, nearly one-half of the U.S. population lives in the suburbs, up from 25 percent in 1950 (Godbey 1993). Conversely, only about 31 percent of our population now resides in urban areas (Godbey 1993). Spaces that once would have been designated as public parkland were replaced with sprawling shopping centers and concrete parking lots. This movement later became known as conventional subdivision planning. Recently, however, there has been a push by designers and planning professionals to return back to the traditional style of planning based on the market demand for alternative housing conditions (Godbey 1993). This change in the market demand has spawned the interest in traditional neighborhood development.

1.2   Introduction to New Urbanism

Based on new urbanism principals, traditional neighborhood developments (TND's) are commonly thought of as modernized versions of the towns and villages built prior to World War II, where the streets are narrower and sidewalks are plentiful. TNDs often have parks and other public spaces woven into their master plans. TND developments are gaining attention throughout North America and are considered by many planning professionals as positive alternatives to conventional subdivision planning

(Southworth 1997). They provide a unique living experience where residents have the opportunity to interact with one another daily and the essence of community values are placed back into the neighborhoods. The idea is quite simple. In order to create a small town community atmosphere, design communities to incorporate higher density housing, walk-able streets, provide for public open spaces, and have a town center. These design elements have been around for centuries and have proven to be successful not only in North America but throughout Europe (Southworth 1997).   Jane Jacobs, author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* which set the precedent for the new urbanist trend, condemned the accepted planning theories of the 1960's (www.pps.org 2004). In addition, she called for an increased effort by planners to rethink single family housing projects by widening vehicular thoroughfares, and isolating commercial centers. However, many critics, including politicians and college planning professors, feel that the TND model is simply a forged concept which has been marketed to attract the younger generations into believing they harbor the essential elements which promote a healthier living environment.

1.2.1   Critics of New Urbanism

Critics of new urbanism argue that residents of TND developments care more about privacy and security than community (Southworth 1997). Since TND's are often located on the fringe of city boundaries, critics argue that they contribute to urban sprawl, a term used to describe undesirable growth patterns or the spreading outwards of a city and its suburbs over rural land. This connection is warranted because of the dependence on automobiles for traveling and the association between higher income families living in traditional neighborhood developments. It has been claimed that TND's have contributed

to an environment with less diversity and a dependence on the automobile. Because of associations like the movie *The Truman Show,* which depicted a monotonous landscape with a sterile community, TNDs are thought to be small fantasy lands that create a false sense of community. TNDs have typically looked at the design principles put forth by successful communities such as, Williamsburg, Virginia, and many European communities and tried to emulate their appeal to present day real estate purchasers. The idea is to build a community that looks and functions like the communities of the past. By incorporating design principles such as, narrow streets, rear alleys, sidewalks, and community parks, designers are appealing to families that envisioned raising a family like their parents had in the past. Some critics argue that New Urbanism is too concerned with appearances, that is, it's too architecturally based, and ignores the social concerns which promote a strong community infrastructure (Southworth 1997). These ideas raise the question, are these communities truly functioning in a similar manner to the successful residential communities of the past, or are they simply props like on a movie set which lack the internal components that make successful communities? In the past, much emphasis was placed on improving the quality of life by incorporating public spaces for urban city dwellers. As changes in living environments and community housing developments shift from the city to the suburb, designers must continue to design public spaces with the park's potential users in mind. This belief stems from the fact that in 1997 half of the current U.S. population resided in suburban settings (Southworth 1997).

1.3   Problem Statement

As the growing number of subdivisions begins to encroach upon the rural countryside, designers must begin to plan public spaces within these communities to promote the physical and psychological well being of its users. As Frederick Law Olmsted believed, parks offer an excellent way to promote the public value of tolerance and they encourage respectability (Goldberge 1999). As urban parks were planned to provide an alternative to the busy lifestyles of city residents, suburban parks need to be planned in order to instill a sense of community for disconnected suburbanites. Proponents of New Urbanism have made it their agenda to design and develop communities that promote interaction among residents. However, are these new developments truly encouraging community interactions or are they simply using the past design elements such as, narrow streets, sidewalks, clustered housing, and well maintained public spaces to promote their concept? In urban settings, parks have proven to be important amenities in supporting the well being of its users by offering leisure and recreational activities. Past studies have shown that people regard public parks as vital amenities in their respective communities (Goldberge 1999). Therefore, to completely understand the role public parks play in New Urbanist communities, researchers must evaluate the perceptions and attitudes of residents living in these communities.

1.4   Preview of Study

This thesis studied the resident's perceptions of a community park in the new urbanism community of Mt Laurel, Alabama by evaluating the thirteen principles established by William Hollingsworth Whyte for creating successful urban parks. The thirteen principles established by Whyte for creating successful spaces are:

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- The parks proximity/relationship to the street,

- Location of the sidewalks to the street,

- Its ability to consistently sustain a constant flow of people through its boundaries,

- Its amount of defined spaces rather than large open spaces,

- Its amount of sit able space, in terms of ledges, steps, planters, chairs etc.

- The parks sense of security among its users,

- The incorporation of water features within the parks boundaries,

- The extent of tree canopies within the park for shading purposes,

- The availability of food concessions,

- The parks number of waste receptacles,

- Routine Performers,

- Outdoor cafes in the park,

- Occasional art and music exhibits, (Whyte,1980)

It is the position of this thesis that parks improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work. Shouldn't the design principles which have proven to be successful in creating a "people's space" in urban settings apply to new urbanism communities in suburbia? William Whyte's study on public spaces in urban environments will provide the framework for evaluating public parks in new urbanism neighborhoods.

1.5   Purpose of Study

There have been numerous studies focused on creating successful urban parks. Whyte's study, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980) was successfully used in the restoration of Bryant Park in New York City in 1969 by implementing the design principles previously mentioned. Laurie Olin was also known for his work on the restoration of Bryant Park in New York City. In addition, nonprofit groups such as the Project for Public Spaces have been formed to continue the research of Whyte and have created an initiative for cities to implement these design principles when forming new public parks.

However, many landscape architects are frustrated with the director of Project for Public Spaces, Fred Kent (www.artsjournal.com 2007). For instance, Landscape Architect Laurie Olin who claimed Kent's empty methodology and preconceived solutions from supposed conceptually open citizen workshops have produced spaces which lack visual joy (www.artsjournal.com 2007). These statements from the landscape architect profession came about after Fred Kent called out the profession as too concerned with design and not paying attention to the idea of place making. Kent is a firm believer in the idea that ordinary people can create successful spaces for themselves. Nonetheless, Project for Public Spaces have consulted cities on building successful open spaces such as, Logan Circle in Seattle, Washington, Houston Downtown Park, and Wade Oval Park in Cleveland, Ohio. All the previously mentioned projects are examples of parks which are being implemented using the design principles established by William Hollingsworth Whyte (www.pps.org 2000). However, each of these parks previously listed are located in a densely populated urban areas (populations greater than 60,000).

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Therefore, with the growing trends in real estate development outside of the city's limits, it is important that planners, architects, and landscape architects put as much emphasis on suburban parks in new urbanism communities as they do on public parks in urban environments. Although there are organizations that are dedicated to continuing Whyte's research on creating successful public spaces, there has been little research on creating and promoting successful spaces in suburban settings.

1.6   Objective of Study

Therefore, with the increase in the number of people living in the suburbs it is particularly important to understand the public's perception of suburban neighborhood parks. There has been much praise by the planning profession on New Urbanism principles, in regards to, its ability to successfully create a sense of community. Therefore, the specific objectives of this study are to evaluate William Whyte's design principles for creating successful urban public spaces on public spaces in new urbanism neighborhoods and to better understand how and if these principles can be used in creating successful spaces in new urbanism communities. It is the objective of this thesis to enlighten its readers on the perceptions and attitudes toward neighborhood parks by residents of the Town of Mt Laurel.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The History of Urban Parks and Their Role in Offering Leisure, Recreation, and Social Activities for Users

Historically, open spaces within urban areas have been considered an important asset for the public. Parks and urban open spaces have been valued by their users for a number of reasons including fulfilling leisure, recreation, and social needs of urban residents (Sideris 1995). In addition, they offer visual and psychological relief in the stressful surroundings of high paced urban areas. Public parks have a long history in the American urban tradition (Sideris 1995). By the end of the 19th century, almost all American cities had set aside land for open space development (Sideris 1995). Frederick Law Olmsted, commonly known as the father of the profession of Landscape Architecture in the United States, advocated and praised the potential of these public spaces as a cure for city residents from the stresses of urban life and as places which inspire moral values in their visitors (Sideris 1995).

In the past, reformist planners and playground movement advocates saw that the creation of neighborhood parks and playgrounds offered an opportunity for combating urban ills and revitalizing inner city areas. In contrast to the pleasure ground movement, which was an attempt to soften the transgressions of industrialization, neighborhood playgrounds were built using hard paving surfaces and were aligned with symmetrical

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building arrangements. These elements implied an acceptance of the industrial culture (Cranz 1978).

In the 1930s, there was more importance placed on active recreation for the purpose of promoting health and physical development in urban parks (Sideris 1995). Park designers and suppliers sought to accommodate the recreational needs of park users by implementing swimming pools, tennis courts, and ball fields in urban and neighborhood parks. However, many critics of this movement towards recreational facilities felt that parks were becoming single purpose and primarily utilitarian establishments (Cranz 1978).

Present design and programming of parks continues to be dominated by past ideas and values. One common critique of present day urban and neighborhood parks, is that designers tend to combine a hodgepodge of elements from past park models because they do not know what is truly appropriate (Cranz 1978). In Gold's (1972) study of neighborhood parks, he observed that, "there is no significant difference between portions of the country, which is a reflection of the same space standards used by most cities for urban parks and their relatively uniform levels of design, maintenance, and program" (Gold 1972). More recent studies conducted by the design research field have indicated that many American neighborhood parks do not meet the needs of users (Sideris 1995). Gold (1972), Sideris (1995), and Cranz (1978) have blamed these shortcomings on park designers and planners who treat parks as historic sites which should be maintained rather than remolded according to the local population's changing needs. It can be further argued that the time has come for park designers to examine

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carefully people's perceptions, needs, and values of parks in an ever changing urban park landscape.

2.2 Past Studies Involving People's Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Urban Open Space

Little argument remains in the profession about the benefits parks have on people's mental health, fitness, social and recreational needs. Countless studies have been conducted on the values and benefits recreation has on people's physical and emotional well being. As far back as ancient Egypt and Greece, leisure places and open space were considered essential to good health and enjoyment (Panza & Cipriano 2004).

Current research, such as that done by Panza and Cipriano (2004), have shown that parks and open spaces decrease stress levels and blood pressure while improving depression and people's perceived general health (Panza & Cipriano 2004, Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie & McKenzie 2007). Other studies have researched public parks and physical activities in minority communities (Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie & McKenzie 2007). There has been research conducted which examined park usage in socially and ethnically diverse communities (Sideris 1995). Sideris's (1995) research was an attempt to understand sociocultural patterns of park use, the relevance of past models of park design, and the level of fit between current park form and contemporary user needs. In addition to the research examining racially and ethnically diverse clientele of public parks, there have been a few past studies on people with respect to their park use patterns (Gobster 2001, Sideris 1995, Panza & Cipriano 2004, Berry 1976, Burgess & Harrison & Limb 2007, and Airola & Wilson 1982). These studies have focused on not only race but examined public park users based

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on gender, income, and life styles. However, there have been few studies which specifically examined the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of park users such as Godbey, Panza, and Cipriano did in 1993 and 2004 respectively. In addition, all the studies previously mentioned dealt with urban public parks. However, information collected from the previous studies will help in identifying the factors that lead to creating successful suburban parks.

2.3   Benefits To Studying People's Perceptions And Attitudes Of Public Open Spaces

Understanding the public's opinions and attitudes is critical to making the case for neighborhood parks. As the U.S population continues to reside in suburbs, they are thought to be increasingly anti-government, anti-taxes, critical consumers; and more highly privatized in their uses of leisure (Godbey 1993). The general perception is that suburbanites have no time for leisure activities and if they did would prefer to conduct them in their private backyards. However, recent studies conducted by government organizations are examining the public's perceptions and attitudes toward public open space and finding that many suburbanites prefer using public parkland (Panza & Cipriano 2003). A few of these studies have been issued by the National Recreation and Park Association, which found that the public perceives a range of benefits from using parks and open spaces.

The National Recreation and Park Association completed a study (1993), designed to determine the benefits of local park and recreation services as perceived by the American public. The study was an attempt to understand how individuals at different socio-economic and demographic statuses perceive the benefits of public parks

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and the services which they provide. Interestingly enough, the study found a surprisingly high use by the public of local parks and recreation services throughout the country (Godbey 1993). Based on the sample population, four out of every five Americans used local recreation and community park services during the last twelve months (Godbey 1993). Use of parks and recreational services increased according to income and education levels (Godbey 1993). In general, the study found that the public perceives a range of benefits from using parks and open spaces (Godbey 1993). Even the non- users of parks and public open spaces perceived the services they provide as beneficial for leisure and physical activities (Godbey 1993). The results of this study can be interpreted within the context of increased suburbanization. The findings from this study indicate that the general public rates the services provided by public parks as beneficial to community and public health.

2.4   New Urbanism: An Alternative to Urban Sprawl

New Urbanism is gaining a considerable amount of popularity throughout the United States and Europe (Southworth 1997). This trend is evident by increasing numbers of New Urbanism communities. In 1996 there were 119 such projects reportedly being built (Southworth 1997). Today, the Urban News is reporting 648 such developments built in the United States (Garde 2002). It is being seen as a reform movement which emphasizes design as a way to improve the quality of life in urban and suburban areas (Garde 2002).   In table 2.1, the chart shows the similarities, in terms of sociodemographics, that have made New Urbanism communities' popular substitutes for conventional neighborhood developments.

Table 2.1   Rodríguez, D. A and Evenson (2006) The Characteristics of the
             built environment in Conventional and New Urbanism
             neighborhoods

	Conventional suburban neighborhoods	New urbanist neighborhood
Sociodemographics		
Average assessed housing value	$303,357	$301,787
Average resident age	31	33
Physical characteristics		
Date constructed	Late 1980s–1990s	Late 1990s
Number of housing units	1030	676
Area of development (acres)	646	315
Gross housing density (units/acre)	1.59	2.15
Net single-family dwelling density (units/acre)*	2.61	6.12
Distance to downtown Chapel Hill (miles)	3.5	2.5
Street layout and connectivity		
Street density (miles/acre)	0.022	0.028
Connectedness (# of 3- or 4-way intersections/area)	0.108	0.248
Number of cul-de-sacs and dead ends	56	2
Average block face length (ft.)	5,648	2,080
Median block face length (ft.)	3,419	1,209
Mixed land uses		
Commercial space (sq. ft.)**	0	> 200,000
Jobs in neighborhood**	0	430

Proponents of New Urbanism have been developing traditional neighborhood
developments as a way to combat sprawl and facilitate infill development (Garde 2002).
New Urbanism developments promote walking and transit oriented transportation, as
well as, encourage sustainable growth which is sensitive to environmental quality,
economy, and social equity (Southworth 1997). The leading designers and planners of
New Urbanism developments believe the growing popularity of the movement is a result
of the weakening role of neighborhood in individual's lives (Garde 2002). This

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phenomenon is a result of the edge-city movement commonly referred to as urban sprawl (Garde 2002). However, New Urbanism principles have been criticized for being too concerned with appearances, while ignoring the social concerns and regional issues of transportation and land use (Southworth 1997). In addition, it has been criticized for being merely another type of sprawl.

Neo-traditional developments encompass open space in the form of parks, playing fields, and water bodies. In addition, open spaces are typically more plentiful in new urbanism communities than conventional suburbs or traditional neighborhoods (Southworth 1997). However, a recent study conducted by the Department of Regional Planning in California, has shown that a few of these developments include open spaces that are too large and lack character (Southworth 1997). Laguna West, a new urbanism community in California, contains over 205 acres of open space which is 20 percent of the site. Residents of the community expressed a concern with the spaces being too large and empty to feel comfortable in, at least in their current state (Southworth 1997). Section 2.3 of the Literature Review will go into more detail about the perceptions of open space by residents of subdivisions that were established using an open space ordinance and those in the same region who live in more conventional communities.

2.5   Background: William Hollingsworth Whyte

William Whyte was known by many for his excellent writing skills and his position as editor of Fortune magazine, as well as, his studies on human behavior. Whyte began to receive attention after his first published book The Organization Man, which was based on his articles about corporate culture and the suburban middle class. However, Whyte's greatest passion was in studying the potential of urbanity in

contemporary society; for instance, the uses of public open space in urban settings. This creative passion gave way to one of Whyte's famous sayings, "what attracts people the most, it would appear, are other people (www.pps.org 2007)." This statement would later become Whyte's prescription for urban success. For many, Whyte was known as a prophet of common sense (Goldberge 1999). He never entered his projects with a preconceived vision for success yet he became an observer and based his philosophy of open space on what he observed (Goldberge 1999). Whyte deeply cared about how people use the spaces they were given (Goldberge 1999).He was able to give architects and planners facts about how people use open space rather than using plain intuition (Goldberge 1999). However, many scholars believe that Whyte's passion for researching urban spaces was because he had a strong moral obligation to society to improve the quality of life (Goldberge 1999).

Whyte believed that there was such a thing as quality of life, and that the way we build cities and way we make places, can have a profound effect on what kinds of lives are lived within those places (Whyte: 1980). Whyte never underestimated the importance of physical form; however, Whyte made no illusions that a well designed street was as important as food on the table or justice in the courtroom (Goldberge 1999). Whyte believed that the quality of life was enhanced by the urban experience. As one author states, "he (Whyte) believed in the urban values of engagement and serendipity, and not the suburban values of disengagement and separation and unchanging order" (Goldberge 1999). Whyte continuously complained about how planners and architects "waged a war against the street by using walls and building facades close to the street which deterred pedestrian engagement". For Whyte, the greatest achievement of the city is the street.

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Whyte arrived at this conclusion after studying the streets of New York City (Goldberge 1999). He believed that design should start with a thorough understand of how people use a space (www.pps.org 2007). In addition, he believed that people use spaces that are easy to use and comfortable (www.pps.org 2007).

After working for the New York Planning Commission, Whyte began to wonder how newly planned city spaces were successful. His curiosity led him into the Street Life Project, a study on pedestrian behavior and city dynamics (Whyte 1980). Whyte spent more than sixteen years walking the city streets researching people interacting in public spaces (Whyte 1980). From his findings, studies on urban spaces were documented and written into practice for New York City's zoning code book. In addition, his findings were recorded using time lapse photography and charts, which he used to document park use in New York (Whyte 1980). Often amusing, Whyte's cameras would reveal people's behaviors in public spaces as these behaviors are often times undetectable to the nonobservant. The value of Whyte's study was his ability to reestablish the importance of designing spaces for people. Whyte's theory for successfully creating urban spaces was based on his perspective that design should start with a thorough understanding of the way people use spaces (Whyte: 1980). Furthermore, he believed that by observing and talking to people, we can learn more about what people want in public spaces. After completing the "Street Life Project", Whyte wrote a book entitled *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. In the book, Whyte proposes several characteristics which he felt when implemented create successful urban spaces.

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2.5.1   William Whyte's Design Elements

The thirteen design elements William Whyte promoted for successful public spaces are: the relationship of the park to the street, defined spaces, adequate seating, water features, presence of food vendors, outdoor cafes, the proximity of the sidewalk to the street, art and music exhibitions, routine performers, security checks, waste receptacles, availability of sunlight and shade areas, constant flow of people through the park.

The first design principle Whyte mentions in his research is the importance of the relationship of a park to the street. Whyte has often been quoted saying, "the street is the river of life of the city, the place where we come together, the pathway to the center" (Whyte 1980). Whyte believed that great spaces drew their vitality from the street. He believed that a park's success was reliant upon its proximity to the street and sidewalks. In addition, Whyte believed that the proximity of the park to the street promoted a stream of pedestrian traffic which functions as a stage for park users to watch people as they passed through the park. He believed that what attracted people the most to a space are other people. The idea was simply that great spaces have a constant flow of people throughout their boundaries; therefore, great public spaces have the ability to attract people who come to the park simply to watch other people (Whyte 1980). Figure 2.1 and 2.2 displays this relationship of the park to the street.

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Figure 2.1   This figure shows a constant flow of people through the park
              (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

Figure 2.2   This picture shows the parks proximity to the street (Project for
              Public Spaces, 2002).

For defined spaces. Whyte believed that the majority of people who interact in

public spaces tended to use the areas around steps, corners of fountains, and seating walls

located on the parks edges (Whyte 1980). He explained that large open spaces were used

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primarily for pedestrian travels, yet did not attract mingling park users. Whyte's research demonstrated that most people tended not to stop in the large open spaces to talk and they were more inclined to associate with one another in the more defined spaces (Whyte 1980). Most often, people were recorded moving to the park areas where there were places to sit. Figure 2.3 displays the idea of defined spaces.

According to Whyte, the amount of seating space is one of the most important design elements of a successful urban park (Whyte 1980). Whyte was known for saying, "people sit where there are places to sit" (Whyte 1980).   In addition, he believed that seating could be in the form of ledges, steps, planters, chairs, and tables. Although Whyte hypothesized that sun exposure would be a major factors in attracting users (the study was conducted in New York City), his study demonstrated that it did not have a significant impact. Nonetheless, Whyte does imply that the sun is important in chilly weather.

Figure 2.3   This picture shows seating walls which help define the borders of
                the public space (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

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Figure 2.4   This picture shows a public space with plenty of seating (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

Furthermore, Whyte stated that some benches should be angled though not placed facing one another (Ackerman & Deborah 1996). He recorded in his findings that small benches are socially awkward and the appropriate seating requirements are one linear foot of seating for every thirty square feet of space (Whyte 1980). Whyte said that people preferred not to be forced into eye contact. Therefore, he believed the best solution for providing a variety of seating arrangements is for the space to have moveable seating. This type of seating gives a person a sense of choice when searching for available seats. Whyte goes on to say that elevated seating (seating in along a ledge, wall, or hill top) is comfortable to negotiate and good for people watching (Hall 1989). Figure 2.4 displays Herald Park in New York City with plenty of seating for park users to enjoy.

Whyte suggests adding a water feature to create a soothing sound that drowns the noise of the city life (Whyte 1980). In addition, water is an element that people enjoy to both look at and feel. Whyte recorded many instances in his research of people using

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water features in various parks to cool off. He states that the size of the water feature is

not important. However, it's the water features ability to create a soothing effect that

matters most (Whyte 1980).

Figure 2.5   This picture displays a water feature in Washington Square, New
               York City (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

The presence of food vendors is an important element in successful urban spaces.

Whyte believed that food vendors provide a service that people want and pointed out in

his research that quite often the vendors became meeting points and gossip centers for

people (Whyte 1980). He documented many instances where people would gather

around the food vendors and talk for long periods of time. While gathering, he noticed

that people eating attracted more people to the space. He believed that food vendors

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attracted more vendors thus promoting a demand for various food types. Figure 2.6

shows a park food vendor in New York City.

This demand creates the idea of outdoor cafes where people can sit and relax

while enjoying their favorite foods. When properly placed, compressed seating at

outdoor cafes forces people to meet one another. Whyte recorded on many occasions'

people greeting one another while looking for seats in the cafes (Whyte 1980). Figure

2.7 displays a park café in Hudson River Park in New York City.

The next design element is having routine performers in the park. Whyte believed

that routine performers in urban parks helped in creating a unique atmosphere for park

users (Whyte 1980). He believed that routine performers, which often times consisted of

clowns, mimes, and other out of the norm park acts, attracted onlookers or people passing

by the park (Whyte 1980). He believed that routine performers actually helped attract

people to the park thus creating social interactions with others (Whyte 1980).

Figure 2.6   This picture displays a food vendor in New York City (Project for
             Public Spaces, 2002).

Whyte believed that great public spaces attract other people.   He noted that even

derelict spaces can be transformed into common gathering areas because people feel a

sense of safety when they're surrounded by others (Whyte 1980).   However, Whyte does

point out that even though successful spaces attracted large numbers of people, he

believed that added security or routine security checks helped ease the anxiety for park

users (Whyte 1980).   He observed that people felt more comfortable when added security

was made available throughout the urban space.

Whyte notes on several occasions about the importance of trees in the park.   He

hypothesized that sun exposure was a major factor in attracting park users.   His study

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which was conducted in New York City does imply that sun exposure is important in chilly weather (Whyte 1980). However, although Whyte does stress the importance of the availability of sunny areas in the park, he does point out that there should be a good ratio between sun and shade areas.

Whyte does not go into great detail on the reasons for having an adequate number of trash receptacles but he does point out a few reasons that they're important. Anytime a public space attracts a large number of people, it is important that the site has adequate trash receptacles to handle the amount of trash the site obtains. In addition, Whyte observed on numerous occasions that when the site offered plenty of places to throw away trash that park users actually would use the receptacles to discard their trash (Whyte 1980). It was in the urban spaces that did not have enough in sight trash receptacles that park users discarded their trash on the ground (Whyte 1980). Whyte also points out that it is important to strategically place the trash receptacles so that park users will use them appropriately (Whyte 1980)

The final design principle that Whyte points out in his *Street Life Project*, is the idea of having occasional art and music exhibits in the park. This idea goes back to Whyte's belief that what attracts people the most is other people (Whyte 1980). An occasional art and music exhibit helps in attracting people to the park.

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Figure 2.7   This picture displays an occasional art and music festival in a public urban space (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

Figure 2.8   This picture shows the parks proximity to the street in Manchester, New York (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

Figure 2.9   This picture displays routine performers in Washington Square, New York City (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

Figure 2.10   This picture displays a park café in Hudson River Park, New York City (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

Figure 2.11   This picture shows the abundance of trees in a public park (Project
              for Public Spaces, 2002).

Figure 2.12   This picture shows the availability of trash receptacles in
              neighborhood park (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

Figure 2.13   This picture shows routine security checks in urban park (Project for Public Spaces, 2002).

2.6   Cultural Perceptions of Parks

William Whyte's research addressing pedestrian behavior and city dynamics has led many researchers into examining the needs and interests of racial and ethnic minority groups. Although this information is limited to preferences by different cultures, it provides interesting information on the leisure activities people like and dislike about urban parks. In addition, the information from the following studies will help in understanding how various minority groups use public open space.

A study conducted by the city of Chicago, evaluated 898 users of Lincoln Park (Chicago's largest urban park). It found that park users shared a core set of interests, preferences, and concerns about the park and its management (Gobster 2001). Gobster's (2001) study indicated that African American respondents were less likely to participate in wild land activities such as camping and hiking compared to Caucasians (Dwyer &

Gobster 1997). That being said, African Americans were more likely to participate in ball playing activities and picnicking (Gobster 2001). Interestingly enough, studies conducted by Kaplan and Talbot (1998) showed that African Americans generally preferred settings with higher levels of maintenance such as, more open spaces, formal tree plantings, and higher levels of facility development than Caucasians (Gobster 2001). Findings from Sideris's (1995) study which examined the way neighborhood parks are used by different groups, gives insight into the similarities and differences in social meanings and values among minority groups.

Like Gobster (2001), Sideris (1995) found that African Americans tended to enjoy active recreation activities more so than Caucasians. These activities include: walking, jogging, bicycling, and playing sports related games. In Sideris's (1995) study, Caucasians were observed often times in small groups engaging in passive recreational activities such as watching their children, sitting, sun bathing, reading and people watching. Both studies found that African Americans tended to come to the parks accompanied by friends (Sideris 1995). Young African American males were observed hanging out around the athletic fields joking, laughing, and girl watching (Sideris 1995). Caucasians user groups were mostly encountered engaged in reclusive, self oriented uses. Unlike Caucasians, the study found that the majority of the African American park users used the park for organized recreation activities. These activities included group sports but were also related to family gatherings such as children's birthday parties and family reunions (Sideris 1995). Not only were the studies interested in the varieties of activities among racial groups but they also examined gender and its effects on park use activities. Table 2.2 and 2.3 displays Lincoln Park user's most preferred park qualities.

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Table 2.2   Sideris (1995) Most Preferred Qualities in Lincoln Park

Park Quality	White		Hispanic		African American		Asian (Chinese)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Aesthetic	31	44.9%	23	13.5%	6	11.8%	9	30.0%
Good design	10	14.5%	6	3.5%	2	3.9%	1	3.3%
Landscaping/trees	16	23.2%	12	7.0%	3	5.9%	2	6.7%
Scenery	5	7.2%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	2	6.7%
Cleanliness	0	0.0%	5	3.0%	0	0.0%	4	13.3%
Psychological/Perceptual	5	7.3%	12	7.1%	6	11.8%	3	10.0%
Free Environment	0	0.0%	4	2.36%	1	2.0%	0	0.0%
Safe Environment	4	5.8%	4	2.36%	3	5.9%	2	6.7%
Open/Accessible	1	1.5%	4	2.36%	2	3.9%	1	3.3%
Social	11	15.95%	53	31.1%	12	23.5%	6	20.0%
Social Place	5	7.25%	21	12.3%	5	9.8%	3	10.0%
Family Environment	4	5.8%	27	15.9%	3	5.9%	3	10.0%
People	2	2.9%	5	2.9%	4	7.8%	0	0.0%
Relaxation	9	13.0%	42	24.7%	12	23.5%	9	30.0%
Peaceful Place	4	5.8%	18	10.6%	6	11.75%	5	16.7%
Quiet Place	4	5.8%	22	12.9%	0	0.0%	1	3.3%
Relaxing atmosphere	1	1.4%	2	1.2%	6	11.75%	3	10.0%
Educational	2	2.9%	3	1.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Programs/Activities	2	2.9%	3	1.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Physiological	11	15.95%	37	21.8%	15	29.4%	3	10.0%
Sport Facilities/Equipt.	11	15.95%	37	21.8%	15	29.4%	3	10.0%
TOTAL	69		170		51		30	

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Table 2.3   Sideris (1995) Types of Activities most preferred by Lincoln Park users

Activity	White		Hispanic		African American		Asian (Chinese)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Stationary	32	46.4%	101	59.4%	23	45.1%	17	56.7%
Watch children play	13	18.9%	32	18.8%	6	11.7%	5	16.7%
Watch sports	3	4.35%	19	11.1%	3	5.9%	2	6.7%
Watch people	2	2.9%	3	1.8%	4	7.8%	2	6.7%
Picnic/family gathering	3	4.35%	25	14.7%	2	3.9%	1	3.3%
Sunbathing	2	2.9%	3	1.8%	3	5.9%	1	3.3%
Playing cards/chess	3	4.35%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	0	0.0%
Sitting/relaxing	3	4.35%	13	7.6%	3	5.9%	3	10.0%
Reading	2	2.9%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	2	6.7%
Vendors	0	0.0%	3	1.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	1	1.4%	3	1.8%	0	0.0%	1	3.3%
Mobile	23	33.3%	25	14.7%	11	21.6%	5	16.6%
Walking	9	13.0%	19	11.1%	4	7.8%	2	6.7%
Jogging	7	10.15%	3	1.8%	4	7.8%	1	3.3%
Walking dog	3	4.35%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	1	3.3%
Bicycling	2	2.9%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	1	3.3%
Other	2	2.9%	3	1.8%	1	2.0%	0	0.0%
Sports	14	20.3%	44	25.9%	17	33.3%	8	26.7%
Basketball	2	2.9%	6	3.55%	3	5.9%	1	3.3%
Baseball/softball	4	5.9%	13	7.6%	4	7.8%	0	0.0%
Soccer	0	0.0%	13	7.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Tennis	2	2.9%	3	1.8%	2	3.9%	2	6.7%
Golf	1	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Football	2	2.9%	0	0.0%	4	7.8%	0	0.0%
Swimming	2	2.9%	6	3.55%	4	7.8%	2	6.7%
Tai-chi	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	10.0%
Other	1	1.4%	3	1.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
TOTAL	69		170		51		30	

studies interested in the varieties of activities among racial groups but they also examined gender and its effects on park use activities.

Most of the information collected on the active and passive activities among park users involved males. With the exception of Sideris's (1995) study, there is little information on women and their outdoor recreational preferences. Nonetheless, women

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were observed attending the park with one or more family members (Sideris 1995). Sideris notes that, this statistic may be attributed to women's greater fear of victimization. In addition, researchers have emphasized the physical and psychological vulnerability of women when they are alone in public spaces (Sideris 1995). Women have been thought of by planners and designers of parks as passive users. For instance, Gobster (2001) noted that most women park users were studied using the outer spheres of the playgrounds to observe their children. However, Sideris (1995) found that still contrary to public perception which sees older women as passive users of a park; younger female users did tend to be engaged in sports activities such as tennis, basketball, and soccer (Sideris 1995). One interesting finding from Sideris's (1995) study found that more men than women seemed to enjoy the social role of the park. According to Sideris, this statement is consistent with other research that finds men more prone to intense and public social activities than women (Sideris 1995). In addition to studying race and gender activities in urban parks, Sideris found that some age groups used the park more than others.

Parks have always been regarded as very important amenities for children. Sideris's (1995), study found that participation among teenagers and young adults in park activities were higher in the two "poorer" parks than those studied in middle class neighborhoods. In addition, a small percentage of users belonging to the 40-64 year-old age group used the park. It can be hypothesized that neighborhood parks do not have much to offer people who have raised their children and are not particularly interested in active recreational activities (Sideris 1995). A second distinction between age groups dealt with preferred patterns of park use. As one would expect, active activities declined

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with age, in contrast to stationary activities which increased with age. Sideris (1995) observed that teenage groups appreciated the park more than any other age group. Gobster (2001) concluded that, "teenagers particularly enjoyed the park's playing fields and sports facilities. For them the park represents more spatial freedom when compared to the more structured environment of home (Gobster 2001)". The study also found that only a small percentage of teenagers indicated that they valued the social aspects of the park more than its other attributes (Sideris 1995). Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 displays the ethnicity response and their preferred park qualities at Lincoln Park.

Table 2.4   Sideris (1995) Ethnicity Response Rates for Park Activities

Response categories	% Black n = 217	% Latino n = 210	% Asian n = 182	% White n = 289	% All n = 898	N All	χ^2sig. (p)
Natural environment	37.9	61.4	70.9	61.3	57.4	515	0.000
Beauty, scenery, view	2.8	4.8	18.1	5.5	7.2	65	0.000
Nature, natural env.	1.4	2.9	2.8	1.0	1.9	17	0.361[a]
Wide, open space	3.7	10.5	7.1	9.7	7.9	71	0.035
Trees and other veg.	3.2	11.1	8.8	18.7	11.1	100	0.000
Lake, shoreline, water	8.3	24.8	30.8	25.3	22.2	199	0.000
Beach, sand	17.1	16.7	20.9	6.6	14.4	129	0.000
Birds, animals	.0	.5	1.1	.4	.5	4	0.425[a]
Sun, sunrise, weather	3.2	1.4	1.7	.7	1.7	15	0.175[a]
Fresh air, lake effect	2.3	10.0	4.4	3.8	5.0	45	0.002
Contrast of park w/city	.9	.5	.0	5.2	2.0	18	0.000[a]
Cultural facilities & maintenance	35.9	21.9	13.2	28.7	25.7	231	0.000
City views, skyline	.0	.0	1.7	1.0	.7	6	0.107[a]
Zoo	23.0	8.6	5.0	6.2	10.6	95	0.000
Park buildings	.5	.5	.6	3.1	1.3	12	0.017[a]
Play courts and fields	3.7	5.2	2.2	1.0	2.9	26	0.038
Biking/jogging paths	7.4	2.9	2.2	8.7	5.7	51	0.004
Cleanliness/ maintenance	2.8	5.2	2.8	10.4	5.8	52	0.000
Safety, security	.9	1.0	.0	2.8	1.3	12	0.058[a]
Activities and events	27.2	12.9	9.3	12.8	15.6	140	0.000
Seeing people/activity	11.1	9.1	6.6	11.1	9.7	87	0.363
Picnics, festivals	5.1	1.0	3.3	.7	2.3	21	0.005[a]
Watching/doing sports	11.5	3.3	2.2	1.0	4.3	39	0.000
Miscellaneous							
Peaceful, friendly atmosphere	12.4	7.1	3.3	13.8	9.8	88	0.001
Good, close location	6.5	5.2	4.4	10.4	7.0	63	0.045
Like it all, fun place	4.2	3.3	2.2	.7	2.5	22	0.069

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Table 2.5   Sideris (1995) Ethnicity Response Rates for Park Activities

Response categories	% Black $n = 217$	% Latino $n = 210$	% Asian $n = 182$	% White $n = 289$	% All $n = 898$	N All	χ^2 sig. (p)
Passive	50.2	66.2	63.7	45.0	55.0	494	0.000
Sightseeing/hang out	11.1	9.1	16.5	3.1	9.1	82	0.000
Sitting, relaxing, rest	16.1	18.1	7.7	21.1	16.5	148	0.002
Taking in fresh air	.9	4.9	.0	.7	1.6	14	0.000[a]
Watch people, opp. sex	8.3	4.3	.6	6.2	5.1	46	0.004
Watch organized sports	2.8	5.7	3.9	1.0	3.1	28	0.026
Talking, socializing	7.8	4.8	2.8	.7	3.8	34	0.000
Dating, affection	1.8	3.3	1.1	.4	1.6	14	0.059[a]
Picnicking, barbeque	10.6	33.8	32.4	16.3	22.3	200	0.000
Festivals, parties	1.8	3.3	14.8	2.1	4.9	44	0.000
Active-individual	32.7	33.3	24.2	75.8	45.0	404	0.000
Walking	16.6	18.1	13.2	50.2	2.1	243	0.000
Jogging, running	3.2	7.6	4.4	18.3	9.4	84	0.000
Bicycling	11.2	11.9	6.6	22.5	14.0	126	0.000
Rollerblade/skateboard	.0	.0	.0	3.5	1.1	10	0.000[a]
Exercising	3.7	2.4	4.4	4.2	3.7	33	0.695
Walking the dog	1.4	1.9	1.7	10.0	4.3	39	0.000
Active-group	18.4	28.6	23.1	22.2	22.9	206	0.095
Playing soccer	.9	12.4	1.7	.0	3.5	31	0.000
Playing baseball	3.7	2.4	1.1	4.5	3.1	28	0.180
Playing basketball	6.5	1.4	.6	.0	2.0	18	0.000[a]
Playing volleyball	.5	2.4	6.0	3.5	3.0	27	0.011
Playing tennis	.9	1.0	1.1	4.8	2.2	20	0.004[a]
Playing football	.0	.5	.6	.0	.2	2	0.456[a]
Playing golf	1.4	1.0	6.6	6.6	4.0	36	0.001
Playing oth. org. sports	2.8	2.9	1.7	1.0	2.0	18	0.406[a]
Children playing	.5	.2	1.7	.4	2.0	18	0.000
Playing games	1.8	.0	1.1	3.5	1.8	16	0.030[a]
Playing Frisbee	.5	2.4	1.7	1.7	1.6	14	0.441
Water sports	18.0	38.6	25.8	39.1	31.2	280	0.000
Swimming, sun on beach	13.8	33.8	15.9	35.0	25.7	231	0.000
Fishing	3.2	4.3	9.3	2.4	4.5	40	0.003
Boating, watch boats	1.4	1.0	.6	3.8	1.9	17	0.033[a]
Miscellaneous							
Zoo, watch zoo animals	10.6	28.6	12.6	18.3	17.7	159	0.000
Museums, conservatory	.9	1.9	.0	2.1	1.3	12	0.216[a]
Birding, feed birds	.0	.0	.6	1.4	.6	5	0.113[a]
Commuting through park	.9	1.0	.6	.0	.6	5	0.435[a]
Working, studying	.5	1.0	2.2	1.4	1.2	11	0.447[a]

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Table 2.6   Sideris (1995) Ethnicity Response Rates for Park Activities

Response categories	% Black n = 217	% Latino n = 210	% Asian n = 182	% White n = 289	% All n = 898	N All	χ^2sig. (p)
Facilities/management problems	41.9	40.0	48.9	50.5	45.7	410	0.059
Lacks maintenance	3.7	2.4	1.1	4.2	3.0	27	0.241
Not enough nature, trees	6.0	.5	2.2	3.1	3.0	27	0.009
Bad air or water quality	.9	.0	.0	2.8	1.0	10	0.009[a]
Need more/cleaner restrooms	6.5	19.1	8.8	3.8	9.0	81	0.000
Path condition/length	2.3	.5	.6	3.5	1.9	17	0.045[a]
Beach condition closed areas	.9	.5	.0	2.4	1.1	10	0.060[a]
Litter and vandalism	17.1	17.1	24.7	35.6	24.6	221	0.000
Lack of facilities	3.2	10.5	1.1	2.8	4.3	39	0.000
Lack of parking	2.3	5.2	11.5	3.1	5.1	46	0.000
Cost of food, parking	3.2	1.0	.6	1.0	1.5	13	0.099[a]
Lack of information programs	1.8	1.4	.6	1.0	1.2	11	0.676[a]
Social and user problems	30.0	15.7	22.0	50.5	31.6	284	0.000
Lack of security	4.6	1.4	.6	6.9	3.8	34	0.001
Crowded	1.4	4.3	9.9	17.3	8.9	80	0.000
Cars and traffic	.5	.0	.6	2.8	1.1	10	0.012[a]
Trail user conflicts	.5	.0	1.1	9.0	3.2	29	0.000
Loud and rude users	4.2	1.9	5.5	5.5	4.3	39	0.204
Pet problems	2.8	.5	1.7	3.8	2.3	21	0.091[a]
Drunks and drug users	3.2	3.3	2.8	1.7	2.7	24	0.660
Gangs and drug dealers	3.2	2.4	1.1	2.8	2.5	22	0.559
Police/staff behavior	6.0	2.4	.0	.7	2.2	20	0.000[a]
Racial problems/ prejudice	6.5	.0	.0	1.0	1.9	17	0.000[a]
Homeless/strange people	.9	.5	.6	8.3	3.1	28	0.000
Miscellaneous							
Parking, access problems	.0	.5	5.5	1.0	1.6	14	0.000[a]

Contrary to this opinion, younger adults seemed to divide their preferences among the social, aesthetic, relaxation, and physiological qualities of the park (Sideris 1995). Most middle aged groups ranked relaxation as the most important quality of the park.

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These respondents stressed that they come to the park to sit, relax, and find some peace and quiet.

Both Gobster (2001) and Sideris's (1995) studies found that parks should be designed to be location and context specific. Although current neighborhood parks are still in some way reminiscent of the great parks of our past, they're beginning to lose the centrally located green space to recreational facilities (Gobster 2001, Sideris 1995). Today, the neighborhood park is likely a few acres of land and it is expected to serve multiple purposes and clienteles (Gobster 2001, Sideris 1995).

2.7   The Social and Symbolic Meaning of Urban Green Space

When planning for neighborhood parks in urban and suburban communities, it is important to understand the kinds of values people ascribe to areas of open space. As mentioned in the previous section, these values are often times culturally shaped (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988). Growing concerns over the ability to financially maintain urban and suburban open spaces have developed a trend in park management to exclusively set aside land as "nature preserves" (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988). The idea behind this concept is that natural areas afford people a range of personal, social, and cultural benefits as well as opportunities to learn about ecology (Berry 1976). However, recent studies funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council have pointed out that urban and suburban spaces should perform many different recreational functions and should not be regarded exclusively as nature preserves (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988).

Burgess, Harrison and Limb (1988) examined 212 people in 25 households with different socio-economic statuses, in order to better understand the value they place on

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open space in their community. In addition, the interviewed respondents were from four different settings. The research was an attempt to decipher whether or not the residents of the community valued open space in its natural settings or spaces which incorporated social facilities. Respondents referred to opens spaces as tangible reminders of childhood and memories of community life (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988). In addition, they expressed that open spaces offer "gateways" or opportunities for people to escape for a while from the stresses of urban life (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988). One of the common themes which emerged from all four groups was profound sense of personal satisfaction that individuals gained from experiencing the sensuous pleasures of being outside in open spaces. These responses were no less true of the middle class and lower class discussion groups (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988). Berry (1976), whose study followed a close course with that of Burgess, Harrison and Limb, found that open spaces are particularly important to children.

The results from his study found that open spaces enabled children to take physical risks which parents feel are an important part of growing up (Berry 1976). The wild areas and the left over patches of land were valued as tangible reminders of parents' own happy childhoods. Berry's (1976) research suggests a change in the public's opinion of successful open spaces. The focus groups discussed how new housing, commercial, and industrial redevelopment schemes are destroying valued green spaces (Berry 1976). These new trends in development are believed to be contributing to the demise of social equality and the sense of community.

Burgess, Harrison, and Limb asked respondents to differentiate the potentials for active recreation between four photographed settings. The categories for this study were

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broken down into three distinct groups: sports and play activities which usually were associated with children; investigative and acquisitive activities which included watching animals, learning about nature and picking flowers; and finally, informal activities which included non-sporting uses such as, sitting, walking and jogging (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988).   Respondents from each of the three settings had varying opinions on the appropriate styles of programming for each of the parks and open spaces in their respective settings. Nonetheless, the overall opinion suggested that most individuals felt "attractive" open spaces incorporated both physical and social characteristics (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988). In addition, the respondents felt that open spaces given over to sports uses were less "attractive" precisely because they prevented so many other social activities from taking place in the same area (Burgess, Harrison, & Limb 1988).

The overall theme in both of these studies is that planning for public open spaces and neighborhood parks should be location and context specific. Both authors argue that more open space left in its natural state would be generally accepted by urban and suburban communities. Furthermore, Burgess, Harrison and Limb (1988) feel natural areas and wildlife corridors should be incorporated into communal greens of housing estates and suburban developments. The general consensus is that parks should be judged in terms of their ability to provide the desired mixture of opportunities for their users.

2.8   Urban and Suburban Parks: The Passive and Active Recreational Activities Most Desired By Their Users

Little argument remains in the profession about the health, fitness, social and recreational benefits of leisure parks. There have been numerous authors who have

emphasized the importance and benefits associated with recreational facilities in public parks (Panza & Cipriano 2004). A closer look into the research conducted by Airola & Wilson (1982 and Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, & McKenzie (2007) gives insight into the specific passive and active activities most desired by public park users.

Research conducted by Airola and Wilson (1982) on the recreational benefits of residual open space, examined residents from four communities in northeastern New Jersey. The assessment from residents in Jersey City found that passive activities were the most desired. The four highest rated activities were natural areas, restrooms, trails and hiking paths (Airola & Wilson 1982). Although playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts were rated as important amenities, residents of Jersey City placed more value on passive recreational opportunities. This was especially true among the young adult population who placed outdoor recreation as an important leisure activity (Airola & Wilson 1982). These findings were correlated with income levels. The higher income residents tended to enjoy the passive recreational activities more so than the active recreational facilities. Airola and Wilson's (1982) study concluded with the assumption that passive and active activities were in great demand by all four of the communities in Jersey City. In addition, the study indicated that there is a desire for diversity among passive and active activities. These activities include outdoor recreational resources that range from facilities designed for specific types of active recreation to less highly altered environments more suitable for passive forms of recreation (Airola & Wilson 1982).

Similar studies examined by Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, and McKenzie (2007) indicate that public parks play an important role in facilitating physical

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activity. Recent studies of neighborhoods in Australia revealed that frequent walking by residents was associated with access to attractive, large, public open spaces and respondents used recreational facilities located near their home more than facilities located elsewhere (Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie,& McKenzie 2007). Their findings led to the suggestion that communities should be designed so that all people have a park within at least one mile of their residence (Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, and McKenzie 2007). In addition, they studied the physical activities that occurred in parks and open spaces add summary to study here.

In their study *Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity*, Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, and McKenzie 2007 chose eight parks located in neighborhoods within the city of Los Angeles. The study was an attempt to objectively examine the active and passive activities occurring in each of the particular public urban parks. Of the 1849 persons using the park each week, 40% lived within a 1-mile radius of the park (Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, & McKenzie 2007). The researchers observed that more males tended to use the park than females. The most common park activity among both residents and park users was sitting (72%), followed by walking (59%), using the playground (40%), having a party or celebrating (26%), and meeting friends (25%)(Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie,& McKenzie 2007). Based on the percentage of the number of park users, the study indicated that the most common sports activity played in the park was basketball followed by soccer and baseball. When asked to comment on suggestions for the parks improvement, residents suggested that the park provide more events and fairs and improve the park's landscaping (Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, & McKenzie 2007). The parks appearance

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was directly related to the resident's sense of safety when visiting the park. Another interesting statistic revealed that the older population frequently visited the park with track facilities (Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, & McKenzie 2007). This suggests that senior citizens may need special programs or incentives to use park facilities (Cohen, Sehgal, Williamson, Golinelli, Lurie, & McKenzie 2007). However, the researchers acknowledged that this statistic needs to be further examined.

In conclusion, the researchers found that thousands of individuals visited the park each week. Aside from drawing conclusions about the parks ability to promote exercising activities, the researchers found that the resident's proximity to the park greatly influenced their use of park facilities. In addition, the study found that the residents who frequently visited the park did so to promote their physical health. The researchers suggest that parks should be placed within a one mile radius of neighborhood housing establishments.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1   Surveys and the Self Administered Email Questionnaire

The survey is a useful tool in social research and is the most frequently used mode of study in the social sciences. Surveys can be used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes (Babbie 2004). It has derived considerable credibility from its widespread acceptance and use in academic institutions (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). The ultimate goal of survey research is to allow researchers to be able to generalize large populations by studying only a small portion of that population (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). In addition, surveys are excellent research methods for measuring attitudes and perceptions in a large population (Babbie 2004). Designing good questions will promote useful and trustworthy survey research. A carefully selected population along with a standardized questionnaire offers the possibility of making descriptive assertions about any large population (Babbie 2004). In addition, surveys are very flexible. For instance, questions can be asked on any given topic, giving the researcher a considerable amount of flexibility in their analysis (Babbie 2004).

The questionnaire is specifically designed to extract information that will be useful for analysis in survey research (Babbie 2004). A questionnaire contains open ended questions, ones in which respondents are asked to provide his or her own answers to the question; closed ended questions, ones in which the respondent is asked to select an

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answer from a list provided by the researcher; and Likert scale statements, ones in which respondents are asked to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree to a question (Babbie 2004). Closed ended questions are the most popular form of question for most researchers. They're popular because they provide a greater uniformity of responses and are more easily processed than open-ended questions (Babbie 2004). The major shortcoming for open-ended questions is that they are difficult to code and may influence researcher bias. However, open-ended questions can produce in-depth qualitative results (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). Finally, Likert scale statements can be used to quickly asses a respondent's attitude and position to particular set of ideas.

With the growth of the internet and its impact on virtually every aspect of society, survey research has become a popular research tool (Soloman 2001). It has distinct advantages over traditional mail surveys. The basic principles involved in administering a web-based/email related survey typically include:

(1) Researchers must have access to a listserv that comprises the e-mail address of the sample respondents (Rea 2005, Parker 2005).

(2) The initial e-mail message to all sample respondents is designed to invite participation in the Web-based survey by providing the potential respondent with a unique password that protects against multiple responses by the same respondent (Rea 2005, Parker 2005).

(3) The researcher must provide clear instructions so the respondent understands how to navigate through the questionnaire and submit answers to the researcher (Rea 2005, Parker 2005).

(4) It is important that the questionnaire be submitted to secure server so that the privacy of the respondents is maintained (Rea 2005, Parker 2005)

(5) The researcher should be able to apply a statistical program (such as SPSS) to the data and prepare the necessary tables, charts, and statistical analysis (Rea 2005, Parker 2005)

However, with any method there are advantages that must be identified and weighed against the disadvantages.

One of the advantages to web-based surveys is that they allow a respondent to receive and complete the questionnaire in the convenience and privacy of their home or office (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). In addition, they allow data to be collected and processed within days of it being issued. This method is also more cost effective than traditional mail-out surveys because there is no need for postage or stamp supplies (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). Like in traditional mail surveys, respondents are not pressed for time in responding to web-based surveys thus allowing respondents time to consult records and consider choices when responding to open-ended questions (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). Web-based surveys allow for the researcher the ease of following up with respondents by simply sending follow-up e-mail messages (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). In addition, they are particularly useful in reaching specialized or well identified populations whose e-mail addresses are readily available (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). As with a variety of other research methods, web-based surveys allow the researcher the ability to utilize visual images and add more complex questions. However, like all surveys, web-based questionnaires have disadvantages too.

As Rea (2005) and Parker (2005) state in their book, _Designing and Conducting Survey Research,_ a major disadvantage of a web based survey is that it is limited to people who have access to e-mail and a computer (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). Furthermore, this technique assumes that the respondent has a certain level of computer literacy that is necessary for the completion and submission of the questionnaire (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). As with traditional mail-out surveys, web-based surveys typically incur a self

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selection bias that leads to lower response rates (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). For example, those who do not use e-mail or are not comfortable with web-based technology exclude themselves from the sample. Furthermore, language barriers between researcher and respondent tend to show up in web-based surveys which results in the respondent excluding him or her from the sample population (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). To alleviate this problem, some researchers send follow-up e-mails in multiple languages. Finally, like all survey questionnaires, web-based research lacks interviewer involvement which leads to unclear questions not being explained (Rea 2005, Parker 2005). In addition, the lack of an interviewer can lead to respondents not following the instructions. These problems can seriously compromise the scientific reliability of the survey. These are all the disadvantages that Rea and Parker (2005) identify. The other weaknesses included in survey research are data entry and analysis errors along with the ability of the researcher to correctly analyze the data (Milburn 1999).

A web-based survey was chosen as the method of data collections for this study for several reasons:

- It allowed the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from a large population.

- It allowed the respondents' time to complete the questionnaire and give insightful answers to questions which required thought based answers.

- It provided the respondents with a level of privacy, comfort, and anonymity

- It allowed data to be collected and analyzed in a timely fashion.

- It reduced the cost of postage, paper, and envelopes associated with traditional mail surveys.

There are many research methods that might have been used to help understand people's perceptions of community parks such as interviews or using content analysis on academic journals. For the purpose of this study, surveys were the best method for collecting data. They allow multiple questions to be asked to a large population.

3.2   Tailored Design Method (TDM)

The survey for this project closely followed the Tailored Design Method (TDM). One of the most important aspects of the tailored design method is its dependence on the theory of social exchange (Dillman 2000). Dillman explains that the social exchange theory is used to explain human behavior and the development and continuations of human interaction (Dillman 2000). The idea is based on the concept that a person will always try to minimize the cost of his actions and to boost the rewards gained from these actions (Rada 2000). There are three elements that Dillman uses to explain the social exchange theory which include:

(1) Rewards – What one expects to gain from a particular activity.

(2) Costs – What one gives up or spends to obtain the reward.

(3) Trust – The expectation that in the long run the rewards of doing something will outweigh the cost (Dillman 2000).

Dillman defines the tailored design method as a set of survey procedures that create trust and the perception of increased rewards and reduced cost. In addition, it takes into account features of the survey situation and has as its goal the overall reduction of survey error (Dillman 2000). By doing so, the tailored design method significantly increases the respondents' response rates compared to traditional mailing procedures. In order to invoke a respondent's sense of contribution towards solving a problem and

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improving the responses to the web-based survey, the tailored design method uses five elements for increasing participation (Dillman 2000).

The first element is constructing a respondent friendly questionnaire. Second, the tailored design method calls for up to five contacts with the questionnaire recipient. These contacts consist of:

    a.   A brief pre-notice letter

    b.   A questionnaire

    c.   A thank you email

    d.   A replacement questionnaire

    e.   A final contact (Dillman 2000)

The model is believed to be even more efficient when the target population is more focused (Dillman 2000). In addition, this particular model addresses the theory of social exchange, where the perceived reward for returning the survey outweighs the perceived cost of the time involved in completing and returning the survey.

3.3   Electronic Mail and Web Based Surveys

Over the past several years, there has been a rising interest in electronic mail and web-based surveys. This interest can be attributed to the increase in popularity of the internet. Although the internet and email are still not common enough for general surveys to be conducted and analyzed, it is common enough for smaller more controlled groups such as companies and universities (Schafer and Dillman 1998). Schafer and Dillman developed the electronic mail and web-based survey in 1998 by testing its effectiveness with traditional mail in surveys.

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Schafer and Dillman (1998) studied 904 permanent faculty members at Washington State. The faculty members were divided into four groups and were used to help compare data from traditional surveys versus email surveys. The results of the study in terms of response rates concluded that the email version returned more completed surveys than the traditional paper method (Schafer and Dillman 1998). In addition, the results also concluded that the responses to open-ended questions contained more words than those in the traditional paper version (Schafer and Dillman 1998). The response rate was greatly different with email surveys than paper surveys. According to Schafer and Dillman, responses to email surveys were on average four days earlier than paper surveys (Schafer and Dillman 1998). Thus, through the results of this study and a review of similar studies, Dillman and Schaefer concluded that e-mail surveys may be used to collect data from "important survey populations at lower costs with no reductions in response rates and improved data quality compared to traditional mail surveys" (Schaefer and Dillman 1998).

Schafer and Dillman were able to develop a methodology for email based surveys. The method follows suit with the TDM for mail surveys with a few modifications. The nine principles for email based surveys are as follow:

1) Utilize a multiple contact strategy much like that used for regular mail surveys.

2) Personalize all e-mail contacts so that none are part of a mass mailing that reveals either multiple recipient addresses or a listserv origin.

    3) Keep the cover letter brief to enable respondents to get to the first questionwithout having to scroll down the page.

4) Inform respondents of alternative ways to respond, such as printing and sending back their responses.

5) Include a replacement questionnaire with the reminder message.

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6) Limit the column width of the questionnaire to about 70 characters in order to decrease the likelihood of wrap-around text.

7) Begin with an interesting but simple-to-answer question.

8) Ask respondents to place X's inside the brackets to indicate their answers.

9) Consider limiting scale lengths and making other accommodations to the limitations of e-mail to facilitate mixed-mode comparisons when response comparisons with other modes will be made (Dillman 2007)

As with the tailored design method, Schafer and Dillman's email based methodology and nine principles are strongly recommend but can be tailored to meet the individuals study. Schafer and Dillman also outline four additional principles which when used help further speed up the response rate. The design principles include the following:

1) A brief, one-page pre-notice letter (e-mail)

2) Multiple contacts with shortened timings between mailings (two or three days between pre-notice and initial questionnaire)

3) Progress bar to provide the respondents with a percentage of completion

4) Use the same visual design principles as paper mail surveys (Dillman 2007)

3.4   Survey Population

The town of Mt Laurel, Alabama was the chosen population for this study. Mt Laurel was chosen for this particular research project because the town met the guidelines laid out in Chapter two for New Urbanism neighborhoods. In addition, the town has a neighborhood park which is intended to be used by its residents as well as surrounding neighborhoods.

Mt Laurel is located in Shelby County, Alabama off county highway 41 (Dunnavant Valley Road). The town is nestled in the Valley of Double Oak Mountain.

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In addition, Double Oak Mountain is one of the last mountain ridges of the Appalachian Mountains. Mt Laurel is a traditional neighborhood development that features residential housing, as well as, a town center with numerous shops and restaurants. The town is comprised of about 200 people and broke ground in 1998.   The majority of the residents are Caucasian and call their original homes from all over the United States. One of the many features that Mt Laurel offers its residents is plenty of open space and public parks.

Olmsted Park, which is located in Mt Laurel's first phase of the development and is the park being studied for this research project, offers residents a place to sit, relax and enjoy the outdoors. The park consists of a large recreational field, playground equipment for children, sidewalks, picnic tables, benches and plenty of shading. The park is within a close walking distance of the town's community swimming pool and basketball court. Olmsted Park hosts many events ranging from birthday parties to town festivals such as the 4th of July fireworks show. Figure 3.1 is a master plan of the Town of Mt Laurel with Olmsted Park being highlighted.

Figure 3.1   This figure shows The Town of Mt Laurels master plan with
              Olmsted Park being highlighted by the black arrow (Mt. Laurel
              2001).

Because of the town's small population (200 people), the researcher was able to

create a manageable survey. The town's population of 200 people created an acceptable

representation of a new urbanist neighborhood. The questionnaire was sent to all Mt

Laurel residents listed on the town's email directory

3.5   Questionnaire Construction

Because email based survey methodology is a relatively new design method,

many studies show that the same method used for traditional paper questionnaires may be

used for email questionnaires. The survey and questionnaire used for this study followed

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closely the methodology of Dillman's TDM and Schafer & Dillman's (1998) method for electronic and web based surveys. Therefore, the design of the questionnaire is very important because of the researchers limited interaction with the person being surveyed (Dillman 2007). Although Dillman's method was originally intended for mail surverys, many of the design principles can be associated with email based surveys. For the purpose of this study, the following design principles from Dillman's method were used:

1. The use of a brief, one page cover letter

2. A concise introductory screen

3. The first question was easily answered by all respondents

4. Easy to read font types and sizes

5. Progress bar located at the top of the page

6. Included directions on how to answer all the questions

7. Organized questions based on content (Dillman 2007)

3.6   Questionnaire Implementation

This study followed closely with the methods developed by Dillman for the TDM. The major characteristics used were a brief cover letter, keeping the survey short and providing an incentive such as releasing the data from the study or some sort of fininacial incentive. Dillman outlines five principles that help increase response rates.

1. Pre-notice letter

2. Questionnaire

3. Thank you postcard

4. Replacement Questionnaire

5. Final contact (Dillman 2007)

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Because the study was meant to help improve the design characteristics of Olmsted Park as well as improve the overall design for future parks in the neighborhood, the researcher provided the data from the study as an incentive for survey completion and return.

Based on the previous paragraph, Dillman's TDM suggests that five contacts be made with the person being surveyed. However, for the purpose of this project, as well as, to limit the interaction with the survey respondent, which was due to the town's request, a few of the contacts were merged together. Therefore, the following mailings were issued which reduced Dilliman's original five contacts to three.

1. Pre-notice letter and questionnaire

2. Questionnaire (reminder # 1)

3. Thank you letter with replacement (reminder # 2)

For this particular study, the researcher was able to view real time response rates by using a web based survey software program. This program offers a host website which stores and manages responses on an online database. The design principles for web based surveys are similar to those issued by Dillman's TDM. Qusetionpro.com, an online surveying software developed by Rob Hoehn, Ivana Taylor, Vivek Bhaskaran, was chosen as the web host site for this study. It was chosen for its ability to construct, organize and analyze the responses very quickly with a limited amount of training. Questionpro.com allows the user to develop and view real time reports as well as export the data into an analysis program.

3.7   Cover Letters

In traditional mail surveys the cover letter is meant to introduce the survey or questionnaire. However, email surveys include an introductory email that outlines the

study. The introductory email was designed after the Dillman method for cover letters. Therefore, the letter was limited to one page and included information such as, the importance of the study, how the respondent was chosen for the study, a thank you email, and the researchers contact information. The letter also explained to the respondent that their participation was completely voluntary and their responses would be kept confidential throughout the study. For this particular study, the contact information included the researcher's university email address, as well as, the phone number to Mississippi State University Office of Regulatory Compliance and the Department of Landscape Architecture in order to express university approval. Just below the body of the email and the researchers contact information, the respondent was asked to hit a hot link which would direct them the survey.

3.8   Questionnaires

The web based questionnaire for this study consisted of seventeen questions which took the average respondent about nine minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of closed ended questions, Likert scale and open ended questions; however, the open ended questions were limited in number in order to create a questionnaire that was time efficient. The first ten questions on the questionnaire asked the respondent questions which were specific to their demographics and personal use of Olmsted Park. The last seven questions involved the respondents' general feelings about park design elements which help improve the park's functionality. The open ended questions were left at the end in order for the respondent to add additional information which they felt was pertinent to this study.

3.9 Mailing Procedures

The questionnaire was sent out to the residents of Mt Laurel using Questionpro.com, a web based host site. The initial contact with the respondents was sent in the form of an email notifying the recipients that they would be receiving a survey in the next two to three days. The email was sent to 200 residents of the Town of Mt Laurel. The email followed Dillman's method for issuing a cover letter and included the purpose and importance of the study, as well as, all contact information and an internet link to the survey. The initial email was sent on February 5, 2009.

The next email was on March 5, 2009 and served as a reminder to the recipients about the importance of filling out the survey. Although, the email was sent out to all 200 Mt Laurel residents via an email listserv, the researcher was able to keep up with individual responses by their participation number which questionpro.com assigns at random.

The third email was sent out June 4, 2009 to all 200 and included a letter thanking all respondents for their help in this study as well as reminding them of the cutoff date for the study. All the letters sent out to Mt Laurel residents may be viewed in the appendix section. The researcher received a few emails from respondents with additional information that was in the form of written out answers. In addition, the researcher made it clear to all recipients of the survey that the results from the study would be made available to those who wished to view them.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Response Rate

The initial survey went out to 200 Mt Laurel resident's email addresses which were based on EBSCO Development's email server and town home sales records. However, out of that 200 residents, some of the families have just one family email address while others have multiple. Of the 200 that received the email, 65 viewed the survey and followed the link to the survey on the website questionpro.com. Only 50 of the 65 who viewed the survey on the website started it, and 1 dropped out after the beginning of the survey. Therefore the final number of useable responses was 47 (n=47) out of 200 which gave a final response rate of 21%. See the table for the complete breakdown of responses.

Table 4.1   Survey population as compared to frequency of responses Michele

Viewed	65
Started	50
Completed	47
Completion rate	94%

The response rate refers to the total number of people who were interviewed divided by the number of people who participated in the survey. Although there're 200

residents in the Town of Mt Laurel, 65 of those residents actually viewed the survey and only 47 completed the survey. Since the response rate is thought by researchers as an indicator of the accuracy of the survey results, it can be presumed that the Mt Laurel survey falls short in its correctness. However, researchers believe that since very few studies have been done in researching the relationship between non-responses and the accuracy of a survey statistic then it is unclear as to the validity of response rates. The researcher was able to find one study by Visser, Krosnick, Marquette and Curtin (1996), which showed that surveys with lower response rates (near 20%) yielded more accurate measurements than did surveys with higher response rates (near 60 or 70%) (Visser, Krosnick, Marquette and Curtin 1996). Therefore, although the response rate is lower than expected, the researcher feels that out of 200 hundred houses in a private development, to get close to 65 responses is sufficient enough for the level of accuracy needed for this study.

4.2   Demographics

Of the 47 respondents, 32.65% were male and 67.35% were female. Therefore, the population was split between male and female respondents, as shown in figure 4.1. The age range of the respondents ranged from 21 years old to 75 years old. The majority of the population ranged from 32 years old to 64 years old. See figure 4.2 for the complete age breakout of the participants. When questioned about their highest educational degree, 38 (76%) held bachelors and masters degrees. Of the remaining respondents, 2 (4%) had high school diploma, 3 (6%) associate degree, 4 (8%) doctoral degrees and 3(6%) had some other form of degree.
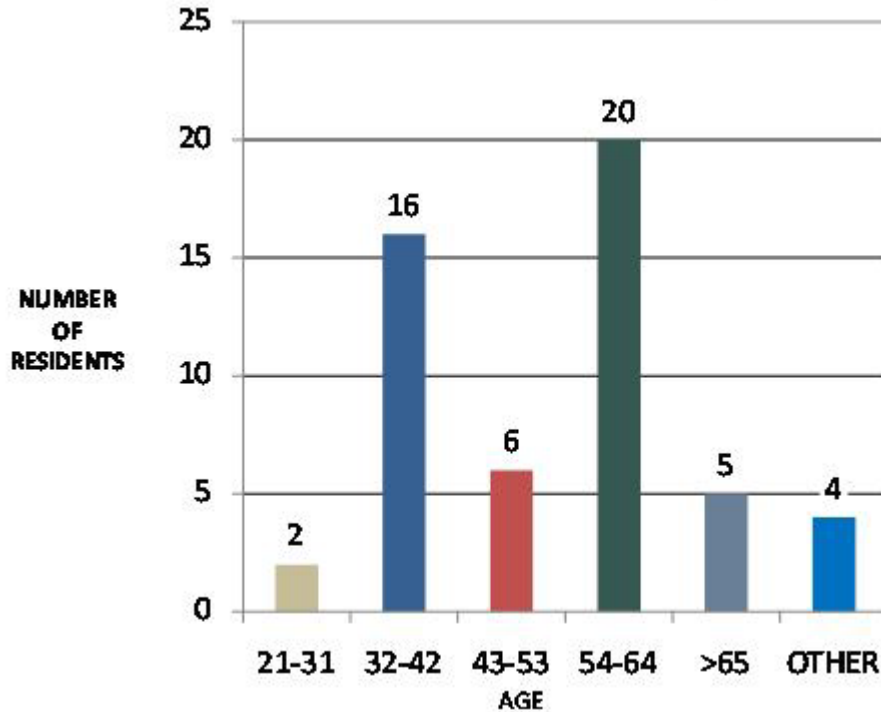
Figure 4.1   The age of respondents from Mt Laurel, Al survey

4.3   Park Usability Characteristics

Mt Laurel respondents were asked about their frequency of visits to Olmsted

Park. Twenty five (50%) of the residents visited the park within the last week. In

addition, 11 (22%) had visited the park in the last month and 9 (18%) had visited in the

last three months. Finally, 5 (10%) had last visited the park within the past year. None

of the respondents indicated that they had not been to the park in over a year. Figure 4.3

illustrates the breakdown of park users and their last time they visited Olmsted Park.

In order to understand how Olmsted Park users were spending their time in the

park, they were asked to describe their average length of stay at the park, 20 (40%) of the

residents spent less than an hour, 16 (32%) spend 30 minutes, 10 (20%) 1-2 hours and 1

(2%) spend more than 2-4 hours. There were no responses for people who spend more

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than 4 hours, yet 3 (6%) indicated that they spent some other time not listed on the survey. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents indicated they spend less than an hour at the park. In figure 4.4, the bar graph represents the average time responses the park user usually spent in the park.

In addition to being asked about the time each park user spent in Olmsted Park, they were also asked about who they usually accompanied to the park. By knowing this information, the surveyor can begin to understand the demographics of the park. Out of the 48 responses, 21 (44%) park users came to the park with their children, 11 (23%) came with their spouse or partner, 4 (8%) came by themselves, 2 (4%) with friends, and 1 (2%) with a school or other group. In addition, 9 (19%) respondents stated they came to the park with some other category not listed on the survey. It was later reported that 7 out of the 9 responses for the "other" category in the survey question were for park users who came to the park with their grandchildren. Over 60% of the respondents indicated that they came to the park with their children, spouses or partners.   The least chosen option was park users coming to the park with a friend. Figure 4.5 graphically illustrates with whom residents of Mt Laurel typically accompanied to the park.
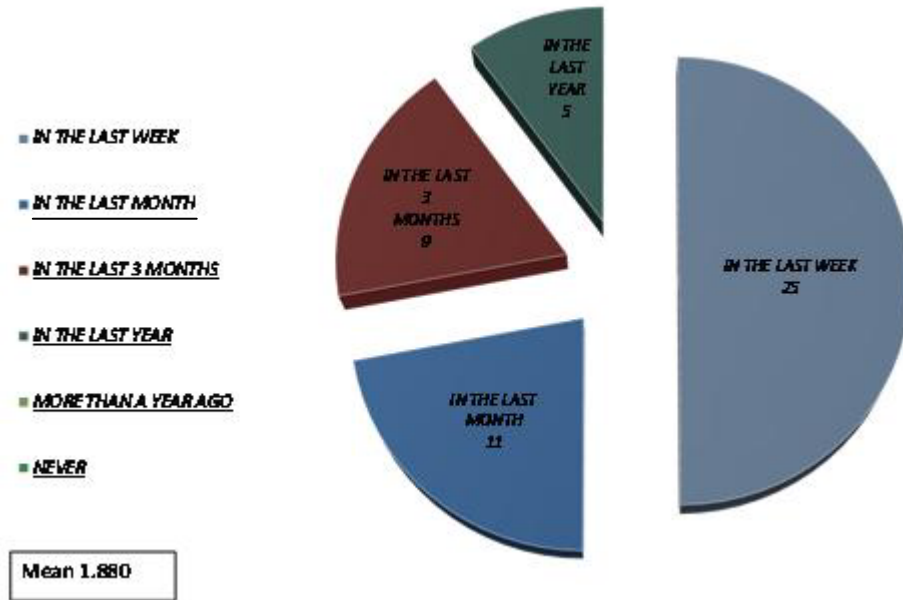
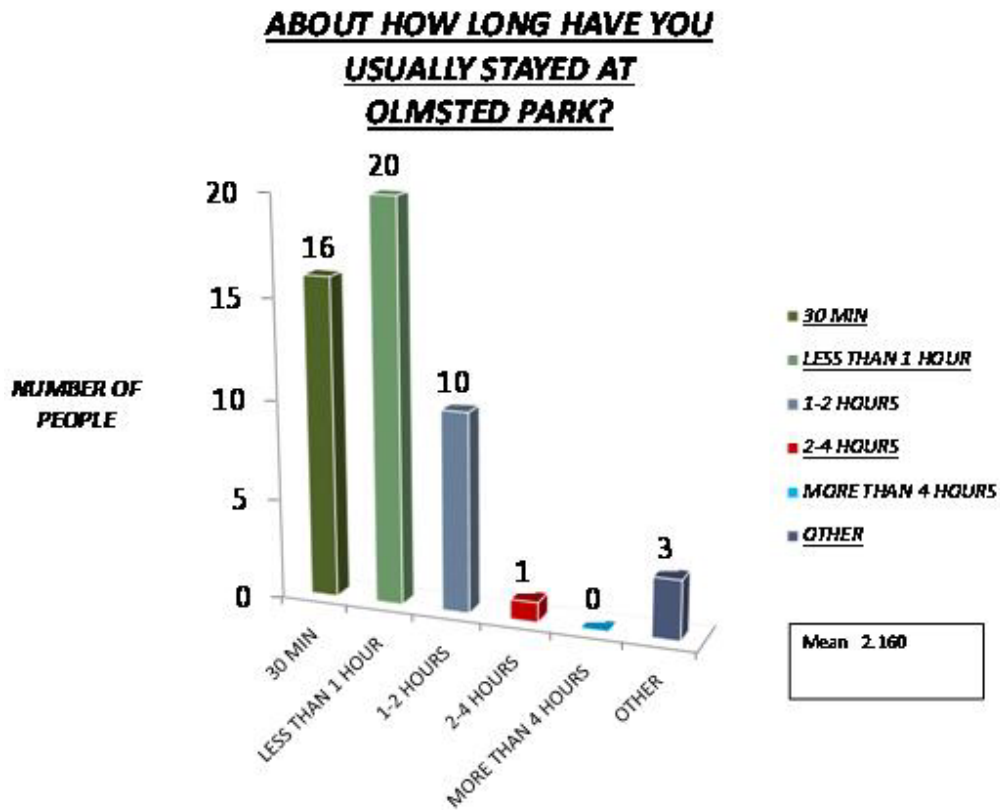Figure 4.2   Last time Mt Laurel residents visited Olmsted Park.

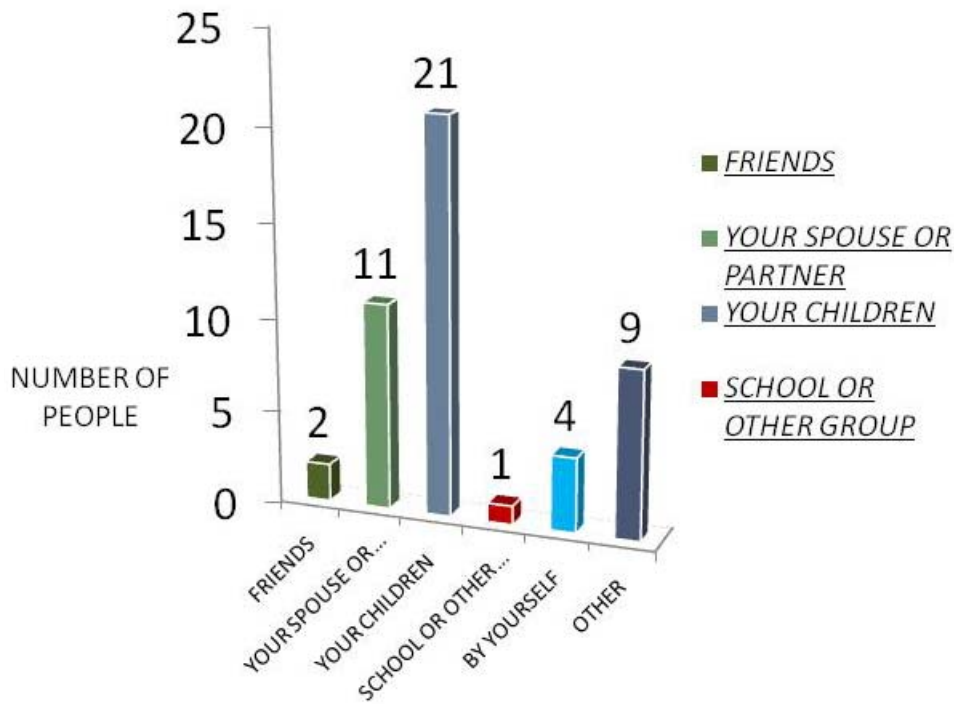Figure 4.3   Average amount of time Mt Laurel residents spent in the park

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Figure 4.4   Mt Laurel residents and who they can to Olmsted Park with.

4.4   Olmsted Park User Preferences

Once the residents were asked to describe their park attendance characteristics, they were then asked to choose from a list of park activities the ones they perform most frequently. The activities chosen most often involved walking/strolling 11%, watching their kids play on the play set 10%, sit and relax 9%, attend special events 9%, watching their kids play on the recreational field 8%, and people watching 6%. Watching children play on the play set and recreational field accounted for 60 people and 18% of the responses. On the other hand, the least chosen activities were playing softball .59%, bicycling .89%, playing baseball 1%, and jogging/running/speed walking 1%. The park activities chosen as preferred are in line with activities commonly associated with a

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passive park or a park where organized recreation doesn't exist. Table 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate the activities Olmsted Park users preferred and preferred the least.

Table 4.2   Commonly Chosen Activities of Olmsted Park Users

Activity	#of people	percent of total responses
Walking/Strolling	36	10.68%
Watching kids on Play set	33	9.79%
Sit and Relax	31	9.20%
Watching kids on Recreational field	27	8.01%
People Watching	23	6.82%
Walking the dog	22	6.53%
Picnic in park	21	6.53%
Play on recreational Field	17	5.04%

The following table (4.3) outlines the activities least preferred by Olmsted Park users.

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Table 4.3   Least Chosen Activities of Olmsted Park Users

Activity	#of people	percent of total responses
Playing Softball	2	.59%
Bird Watching	3	.89%
Bicycling	3	.89%
Jog/Run/Speed walk	4	1.19%
Sun Bathe	4	1.19%
Play Baseball	4	1.19%
Picnic elsewhere in The park	4	1.19%
Play soccer	7	2.08%
Swim	7	2.08%

After respondents were asked about the activities they chose or didn't choose to perform while visiting Olmsted Park, they were asked to rate their importance on thirteen design principles, which William Whyte deemed important for creating successful urban parks.

Figure 4.6 is the master plan for Mt Laurel, Al and includes Olmsted Park and the soccer fields, swimming pool and basketball court. In addition, the plan helps provide information on where Olmsted Park is in relation to the rest of the town.

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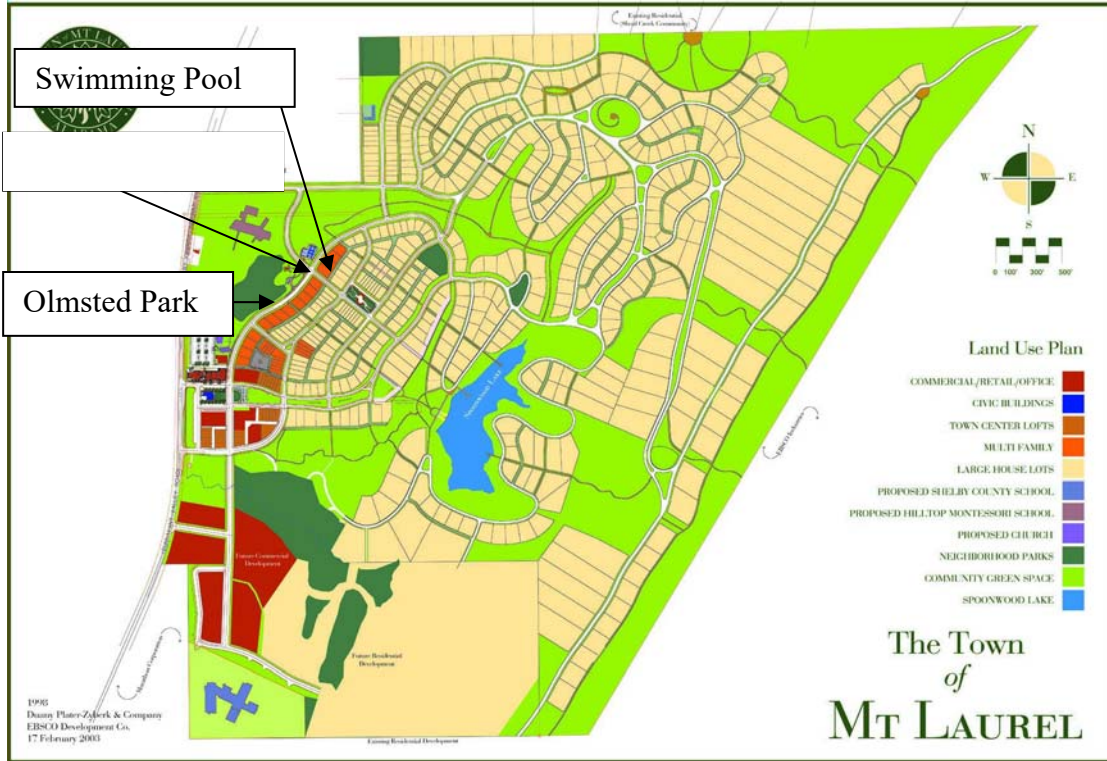
Figure 4.5   Mt Laurel Master plan with indications where the Swimming Pool,
              Basketball Court and Olmsted Park are Located (Mt. Laurel, 2001).

4.5   Mt Laurel Residents and Their Importance Ratings of William Whyte's Design Principles at Olmsted Park

Mt Laurel residents were asked to rate the following design elements based on how important they are to have at Olmsted Park. The thirteen design elements included are: the relationship of the park to the street, defined spaces, adequate seating, water features, presence of food vendors, outdoor cafes, the proximity of the sidewalk to the street, art and music exhibitions, routine performers, security checks, waste receptacles, availability of sunlight and shade areas, and the constant flow of people through the park. The following chart (table 4.4) includes the activities Mt Laurel residents felt were very important to important in creating a successful open space in their community.

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Table 4.4   Design Principles' viewed as "very important" or "important" for
            the success of Olmsted Park

Design Element	Rank Score
Adequate waste receptacles	1.383
Abundance of Trees	1.426
The amount of shading in the park	1.596
Location of the sidewalk to the street	1.745
Adequate seating	1.783
Areas of the park which receive an ample amount of sunlight	1.783
Location of the park to the Street	1.809
Routine security checks	1.915

The following chart (table 4.5) shows the design principles Mt Laurel resident found as

"unimportant" to "very unimportant"

Table 4.5   Design Principles' viewed as "unimportant" or "very unimportant" for the success of Olmsted Park

Design Element	Rank Score
Reflection Pond	3.723
Wading Pool	3.711
Portable food vendors	3.543
Seating in the form of moveable chairs	3.426
Routine Performers	3.383
Availability of seasonal food concession	3.234
Outdoor cafes	3.152
Water features	3.152

4.6   Individual Response Statistics for William Whyte's Thirteen Design Principles at Olmsted Park in Mt Laurel, Al.

Each respondent was asked to rate the importance of thirteen design principles established by William Whyte that he believed when implemented created a successful public space. The first design element that respondents were asked to rate the importance of was the idea of a water feature in Olmsted Park. Out of a total of 46 responses, 9% people felt a water feature was a "very important" design principle, 24% felt it was an "important" design principle, 33% were "neutral", 13% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 22% felt a water feature was a "very unimportant" design principle. The majority of the respondents were neutral about the importance of a water feature in Olmsted Park. The least chosen importance rating was "very important" which received

9% of responses. Figure 4.6 graphically displays the respondent's importance rankings for a water feature in Olmsted Park.
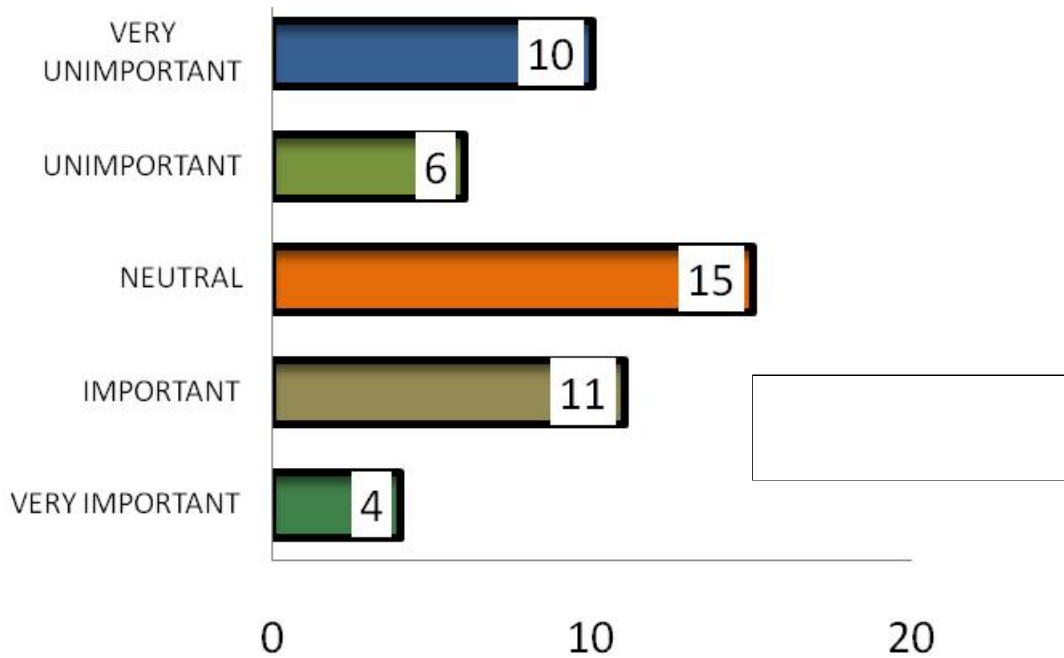

Figure 4.6   How Important do Mt Laurel Residents think a Water Feature is at Olmsted Park

The next design element respondents were asked to rate their importance on was the location of the sidewalk to the park.   Out of a total of 47 responses, 49% people felt the location of the sidewalk to the park was a "very important" design principle, 34% felt it was an "important" design principle, 13% were "neutral", 2% felt it was an "unimportant "design principle and 2% felt the location of the sidewalk to the park was a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 83% of the respondents ranked the location of the sidewalks to the park as either "very important" or "important".   Figure 4.7 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for the location of the sidewalks to the park.

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Adequate seating in the park was the next design element residents were asked to rate their importance factor. Out of a total of 46 responses, 35% people felt adequate seating was a "very important" design principle, 54% felt it was an "important" design principle, 9% were "neutral", 2% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 0 (0.00%) felt adequate seating was a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 89% of the respondents ranked adequate seating as either "very important" or "important". Table 4.6 illustrates some of the open ended responses residents had towards the availability of seating in the park. Figure 4.8 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for adequate seating in Olmsted Park.

Table 4.6   Open ended responses to question asking residents about the importance of adequate seating in Olmsted Park

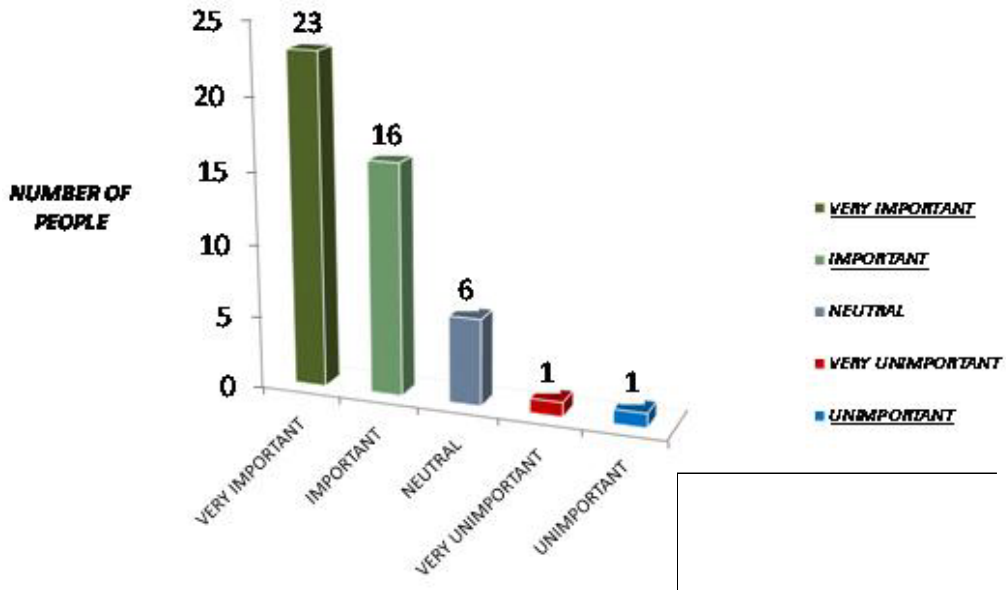| |
|---|
| ….I'd probably hang out more if the seating at the playground was more comfortable (i.e. the stone wall). |
| ….I often take my grandchildren to the park. There needs to be additional swings, as the three swings usually filled. |
| ….Would love to sit and read or visit with friends if better seating was available. |
| ….More seating more swings. |
| ….Perhaps larger picnic area; stationary park seating away from play area. |
| …. More swings, slides, play equipment, more benches to sit on that are comfortable. |
| ….More seating for picnics. |
| ….More seating. Tables and chairs. |
| ….Additional seating for adults. |
| ….Provide more comfortable benches for sitting. |

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Figure 4.7   How Important Mt Laurel Residents feel the Location of the
               Sidewalks to the Park is for the success of Olmsted Park.
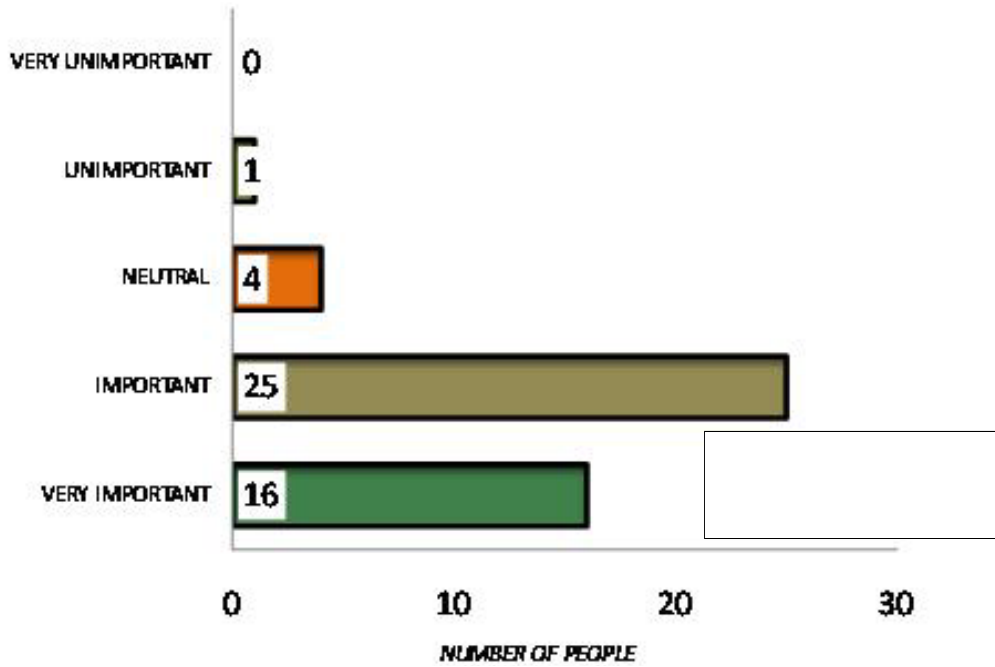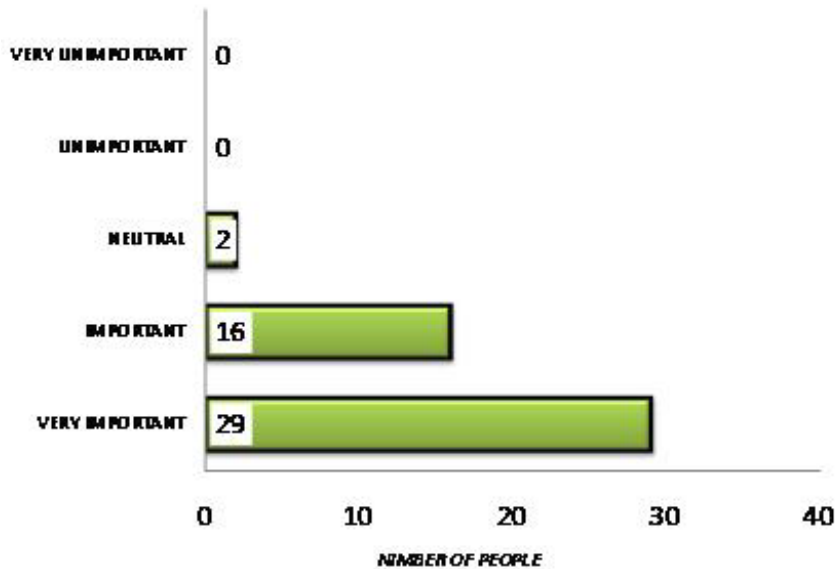

Figure 4.8   How Important Mt Laurel Residents feel Adequate Seating in the
               Park is for the success of Olmsted Park.

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The next design element residents were asked to rank their importance for the successfulness of Olmsted Park was the availability of sunlight and shade areas. The researcher divided this design principle into two separate questions on the survey. The first question involved asking the survey recipient the importance of an abundance of trees in Olmsted Park. Out of a total of 47 responses, 62% people felt the abundance of trees were a "very important" design principle, 34% felt it was an "important" design principle, 4% were "neutral", 0% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 0% felt the abundance of trees were a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 95% of the respondents ranked abundance of trees as either "very important" or "important". Figure 4.9 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for the abundance of trees in Olmsted Park.

Residents were asked how important they felt that there are areas in the park which receive an ample amount of shade. Out of a total of 46 responses, 34% people felt areas in the park which receive an ample amount of shade were a "very important" design principle, 54% felt it was an "important" design principle, 8% were "neutral", 2% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 0% felt areas in the park which receive an ample amount of shade were a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 89% of the respondents ranked areas of the park which receive an ample amount of shade as either "very important" or "important." Figure 4.10 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for areas of the park which receive an ample amount of shade.

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Table 4.7   This table displays the open ended questions residents had toward
            the amount of shade and sunlight in the park.

….Right now the park is so shaded that it stays fairly cold during the winter months. It would be nice if it allowed more direct sunlight in the winter
….In the summer there is no shade from 11-4 and the equipment is too hot to play on. Would be great to have more shade/canopy, etc.
….I actually don't want more non-residents at the park. For residents I believe shade in the summer would help.
….Water fountain and shade. The surface is great but it needs to be power washed. There are a few areas that are unsafe for toddlers could just have a board or plastic put up to prevent child from falling. I love the train and would love another hand built structure…no water feature b/c that adds to another safety issue for young children. Plus they all get wet! We have the pool and lake for that. My children love the park and its always clean and well maintained.

VERY UNIMPORTANT   0

UNIMPORTANT   0

NEUTRAL   2

IMPORTANT   16

VERY IMPORTANT   29

0   10   20   30   40

NUMBER OF PEOPLE

Standard Deviation
.580

Figure 4.9   Mt Laurel residents' importance ranking on the abundance of trees
            in Olmsted Park.

73

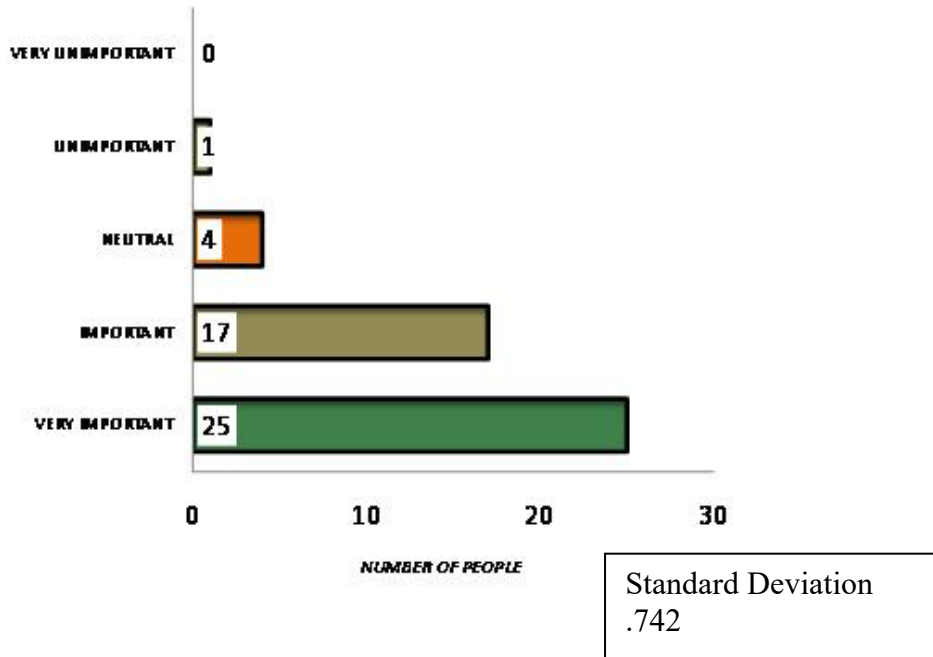|	
Standard Deviation	.742

Figure 4.10   Mt Laurel residents and their importance ranking on the amount of shade in Olmsted Park

Residents were asked how important they felt that Olmsted Park have a constant flow of people through its boundaries.   Out of a total of 47 responses, 6% people felt the constant flow of people through the parks boundaries was a "very important" design principle, 32% felt it was an "important" design principle, 38% were "neutral", 17% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 3% felt the constant flow of people through the park was a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 70% of the respondents ranked the importance of the constant flow of people through the park as either "important" or "neutral". The majority of the respondents were neutral about the importance of a constant flow of people through the park.   Figure 4.11 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for the design principle "constant flow of people through the park.

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Residents were asked how important they felt having an adequate amount of waste receptacles' in Olmsted Park.   Out of a total of 47 responses, 62% people felt an adequate amount of waste receptacles was a "very important" design principle, 38% felt it was an "important" design principle. In addition, 100% of the respondents ranked the importance of waste receptacles in the park as either "very important" or "important". Figure 4.12 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for adequate waste receptacles in Olmsted Park.
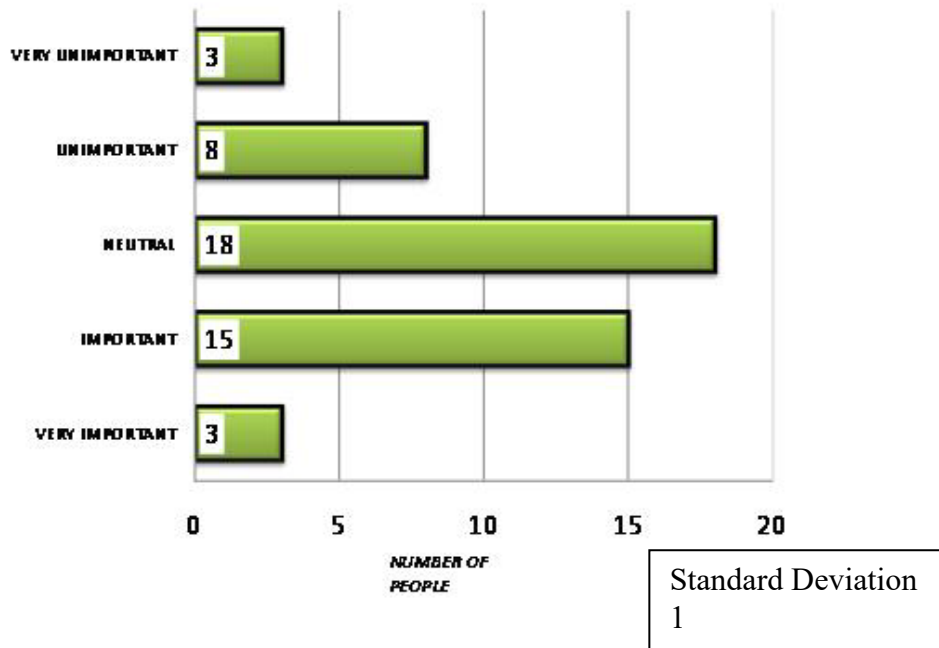
Figure 4.11   Mt Laurel residents and their importance ranking the constant flow of people through the park
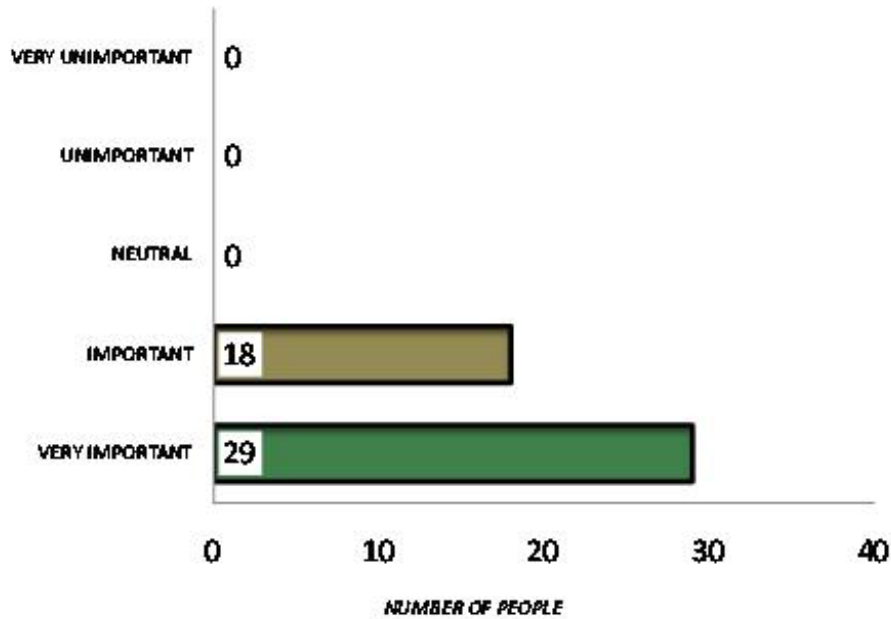
Figure 4.12   Mt Laurel residents ranked their importance on having an adequate
                number of waste receptacles in Olmsted Park

Residents were asked how important they felt it was to have the park closely located to the street.   Out of a total of 47 responses, 32% people felt the location of the park to the street was a "very important" design principle, 55% felt it was an "important" design principle, 13% were "neutral", 0% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 0 % felt the location of the park to the street was a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 87% of the respondents ranked the importance factor as being either "very important" or "important" for the success of Olmsted Park.   Figure 4.13 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for the location of the park to the street.

Residents were asked how important they felt security was in the Olmsted Park. Out of a total of 47 responses, 38% people felt security in the park was a "very important" design principle, 38% felt it was an "important" design principle, 17% were "neutral", 6% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 0% felt that security in

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the park was a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 77% of the respondents

ranked security in the park as being either "very important" or "important" for the

success of Olmsted Park.   Figure 4.14 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for
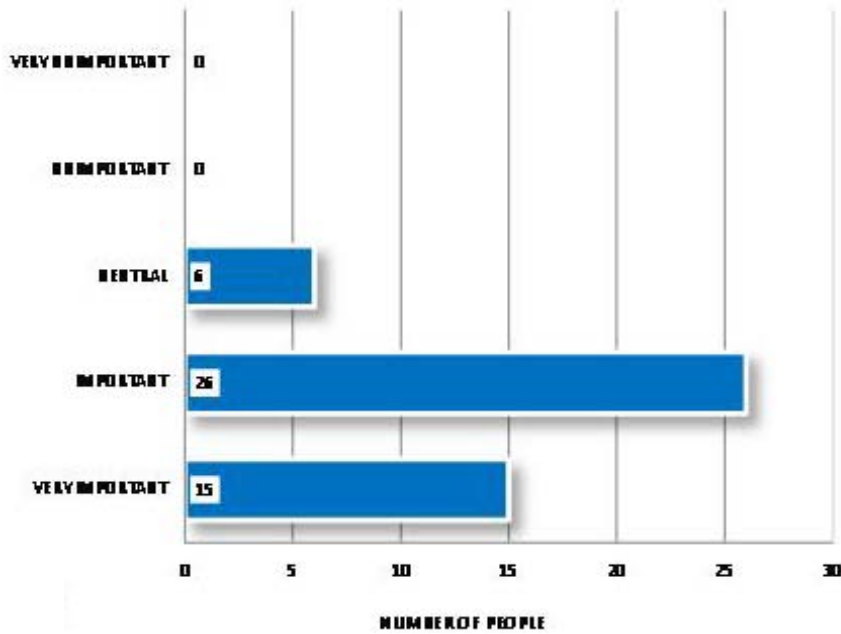
security in the park.

Figure 4.13   Mt Laurel residents ranked their importance on the location of the
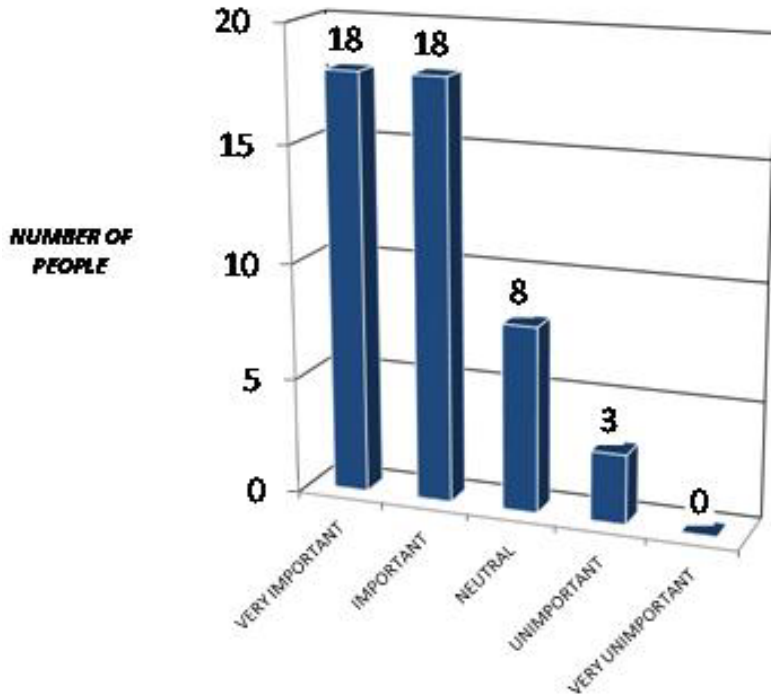park to the street.

Figure 4.14   Mt Laurel residents ranked their importance on routine security
checks in Olmsted Park.

Residents were asked how important they felt it was to have food vendors in the
park.   Out of a total of 46 responses, 4% people felt food vendors in the park was a "very
important" design principle, 13% felt it was an "important" design principle, 28% were
"neutral", 33% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 22% felt portable
vendors were a "very unimportant" design principle.   In addition, over 60% of the
respondents ranked portable food vendors in the park as being either "unimportant" or
"neutral" for the success of Olmsted Park.   Figure 4.15 illustrates the respondent's
importance ranking for portable food vendors in the park.

Residents were asked how important they felt it was to have outdoor cafes in the
park.   Out of a total of 46 responses, 9% people felt outdoor cafes in the park were a
"very important" design principle, 20% felt it was an "important" design principle, 33%

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were "neutral", 26% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 13 felt outdoor cafes were a "very unimportant" design principle. In addition, 60% of the respondents ranked outdoor cafes in the park as being either "neutral" or "unimportant" for the success of Olmsted Park.   Figure 4.16 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for outdoor cafes in the park.
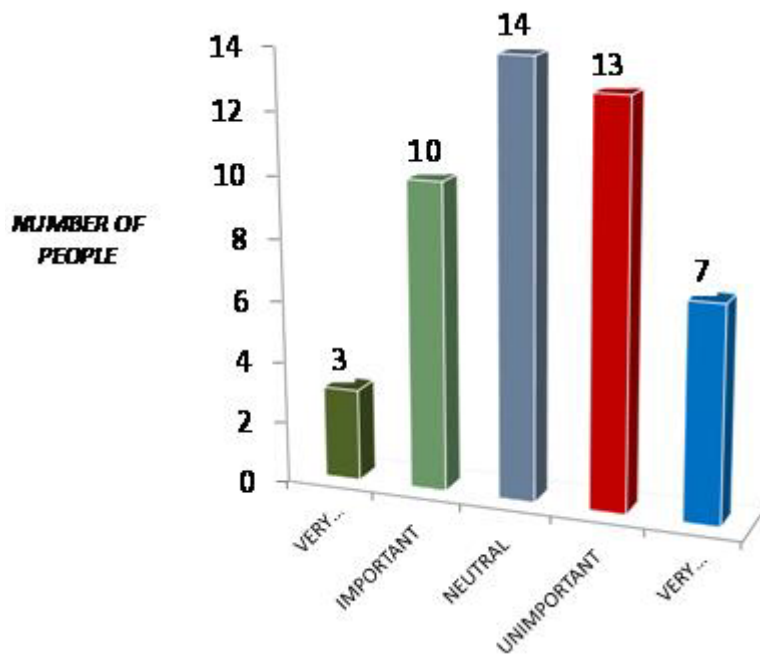

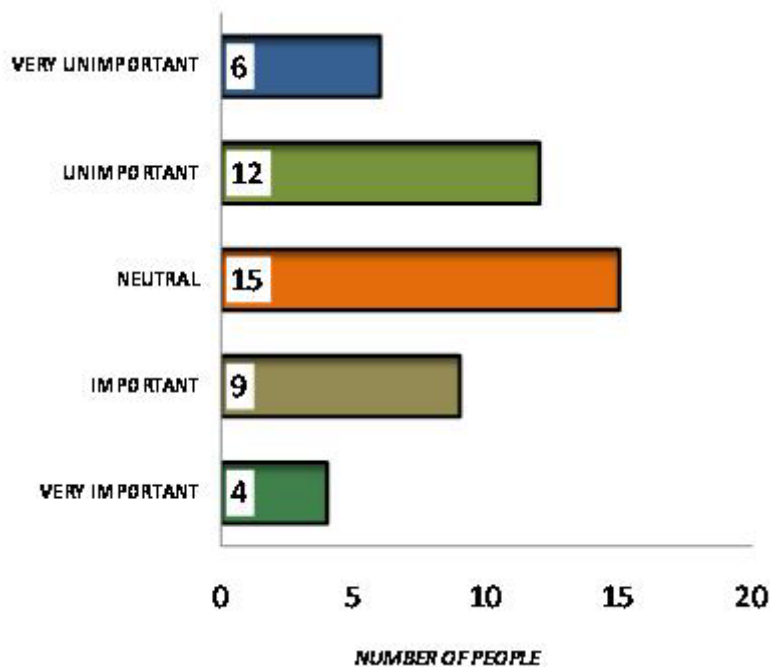Figure 4.15   Mt Laurel residents ranked their importance on having portable
              vendors in the park.

Figure 4.16   Mt Laurel residents ranked their importance on having outdoor
cafes in Olmsted Park

Residents were asked how important they felt it was to have occasional art and

music exhibits in the park.   Out of a total of 46 responses, 20% people felt occasional art

and music exhibits in the park were a "very important" design principle, 48% felt it was

an "important" design principle, 17% were "neutral", 13% felt it was an "unimportant

design principle" and 2% felt occasional art and music exhibits were a "very

unimportant" design principle. In addition, 70% of the respondent's ranked occasional

art and music exhibits as being either "very important" or "important" for the success of

Olmsted Park.   Figure 4.17 illustrates the respondent's importance ranking for occasional

art and music exhibits in the park.

Residents were asked how important they felt it was to have routine performers in

the park.   Out of a total of 47 responses, 4% people felt routine performers in the park

were a "very important" design principle, 14% felt it was an "important" design principle, 36% were "neutral", 28% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 17% felt routine performers were a "very unimportant" design principle.   Figure 4.18 represents the respondent's importance ranking, in regards to the success of Olmsted Park, for having routine performers.
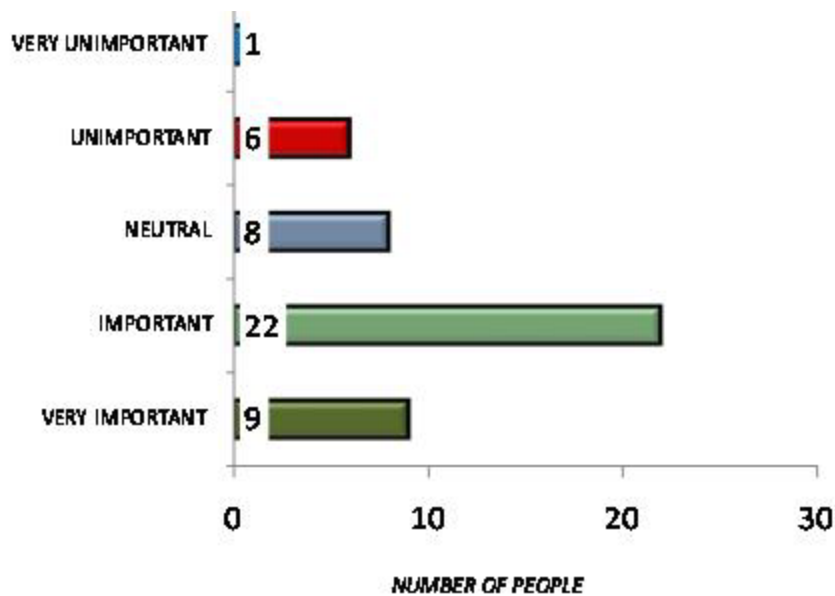

Figure 4.17   Mt Laurel residents ranked their importance on having an
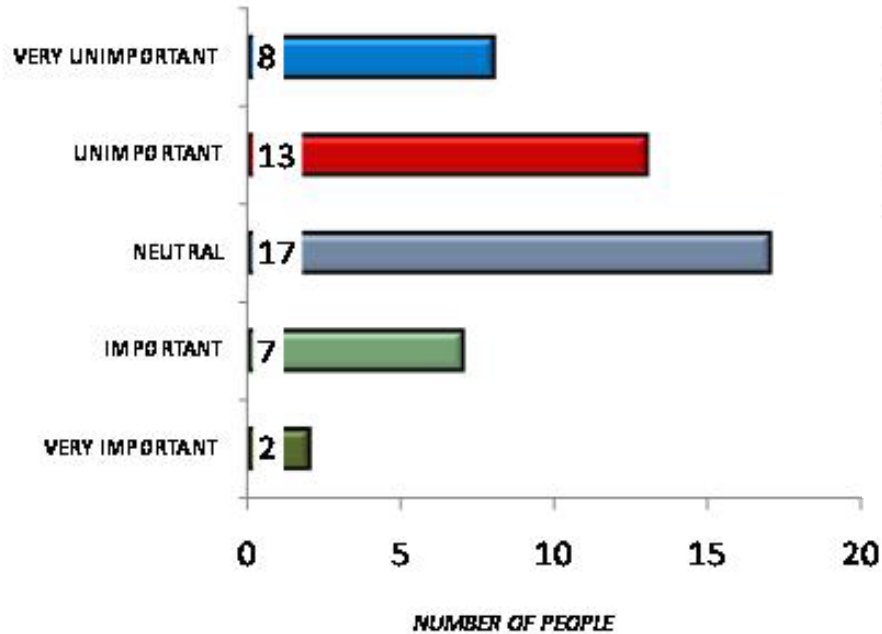occasional art exhibit or music in Olmsted Park

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Figure 4.18   Mt Laurel residents ranked their importance on having routine
performers in the park.

**4.7   Individual Response statistics for William Whyte's Thirteen Design
Principles at Olmsted Park in Mt Laurel, Al Compared to Their Response
Statistics for a Neighborhood Park.**

After each survey respondents ranked their importance on William Whyte's

thirteen design principles for Olmsted Park, they were then asked how important the

thirteen design principles were for a neighborhood park. The researcher felt that in order

to obtain the residents true opinion that he would ask the same question in regards to a

neighborhood park where none of the residents had a direct involvement. In addition, it

should be clarified that the term "neighborhood park" refers to a park that provides relief

from the built environment for residents. They may offer a range of facilities which might

involve passive or active recreation. They also offer their users a place to enjoy nature.

For the purpose of this study, neighborhood parks will include a public open space that

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range in size up to 30 acres'.   In addition, it is considered a public gathering space which can serve social or recreational purposes. With that being said,   the survey respondent's importance rankings for the thirteen design principles were analyzed with both Olmsted Park and a neighborhood park for correlation purposes.   The thirteen design elements included are: the relationship of the park to the street, defined spaces, adequate seating, water features, presence of food vendors, outdoor cafes, the proximity of the sidewalk to the street, art and music exhibitions, routine performers, security checks, waste receptacles, availability of sunlight and shade areas, and the constant flow of people through the park

The first design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on was the idea of a water feature in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 4(9.76%) people water features in a neighborhood park were a "very important" design principle, 29% felt it was an "important" design principle, 32% were "neutral", 17% felt it was an "unimportant design principle" and 12% felt a water feature in a neighborhood park was a "very unimportant" design principle. Figure 4.19 illustrates the resident's importance ranking for water features in both a neighborhood park and Olmsted Park. In both cases, 60% of the respondents felt water features were either an important design element or were neutral.
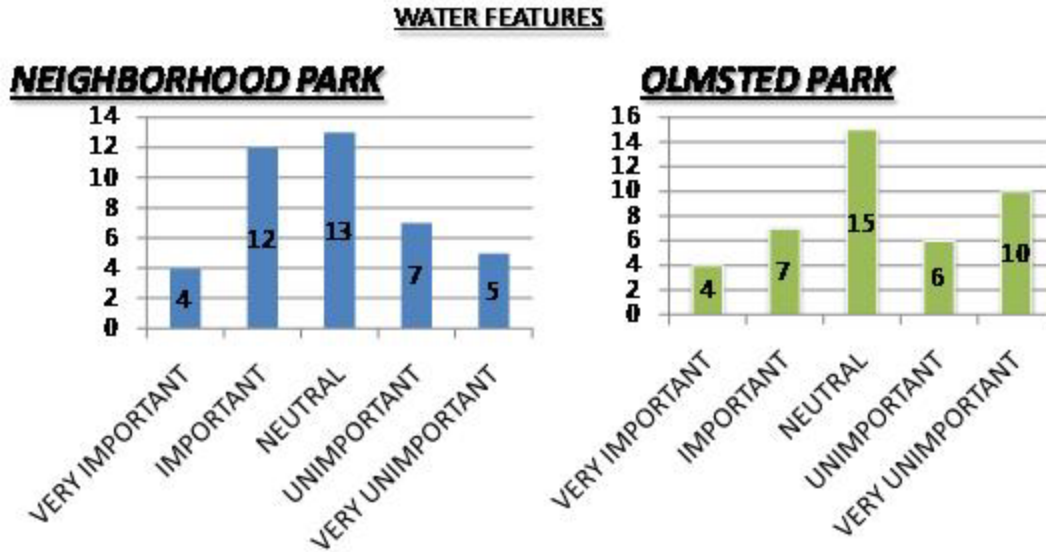
WATER FEATURES

Figure 4.19   Residents importance ranking for a water feature in a neighborhood
park as compared to Olmsted Park.

The next design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on
was the location of the sidewalk to the park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 32% people
felt the location of the sidewalks to the park was a "very important" design principle, 25
61% felt it was an "important" design principle, 5% were "neutral", 0% felt it was an
"unimportant design principle" and 2% felt the location of the sidewalks to the park was
a "very unimportant" design principle. Figure 4.20 illustrates the resident's importance
ranking for the location of the sidewalks to the park in both a neighborhood park and
Olmsted Park. In both cases, over 85% of the respondents felt the location of the
sidewalk to the park was were either a "very important" or "important" design element.

For adequate seating in a neighborhood park, out of a total of 40 responses, 35%
people felt adequate seating was a "very important" design principle, 58% felt it was an
"important" design principle, 8% were "neutral". In both cases, over 90% of the

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respondents felt adequate seating in a neighborhood park was were either a "very important" or "important" design element. Figure 4.21 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on adequate seating in a neighborhood park.
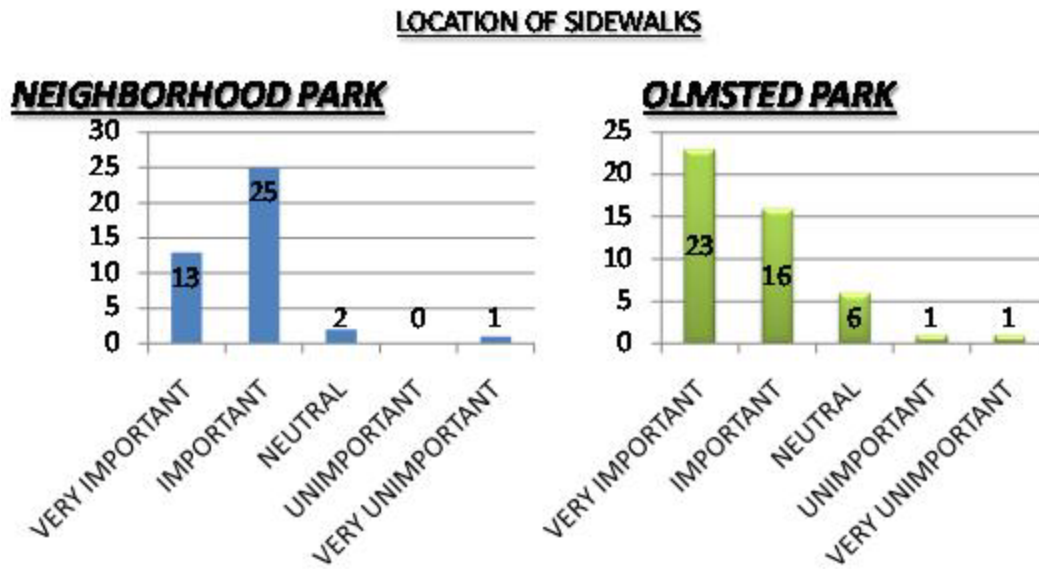

Figure 4.20   Residents importance ranking for the location of the sidewalks in a neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.
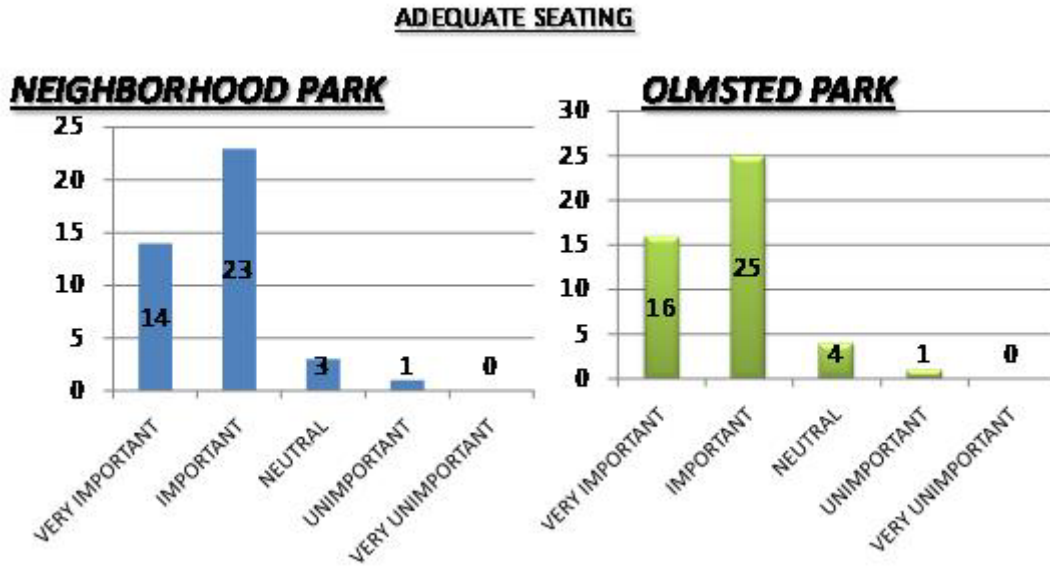
ADEQUATE SEATING

Figure 4.21   Residents importance ranking for adequate seating in a
              neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.

The next design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on
was the abundance of trees in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 59%
people felt the abundance of trees were an "very important" design principle, 37% felt it
was an "important" design principle, 5% were "neutral", about the abundance of trees in
a neighborhood park. In both cases, 95% of the respondents felt an abundance of trees in
a neighborhood park were either a "very important" or "important" design element.
Figure 4.22 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on an abundance of trees
in a neighborhood park.

The next design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on
was the amount of shading in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 46%
people felt the amount of shade was an "very important" design principle, 49% felt it was
an "important" design principle, 5% were "neutral". In both cases, over 90% of the

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respondents felt the amount of shading in a neighborhood park was either a "very important" or "important" design element. Figure 4.23 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on the amount of shade in a neighborhood park.
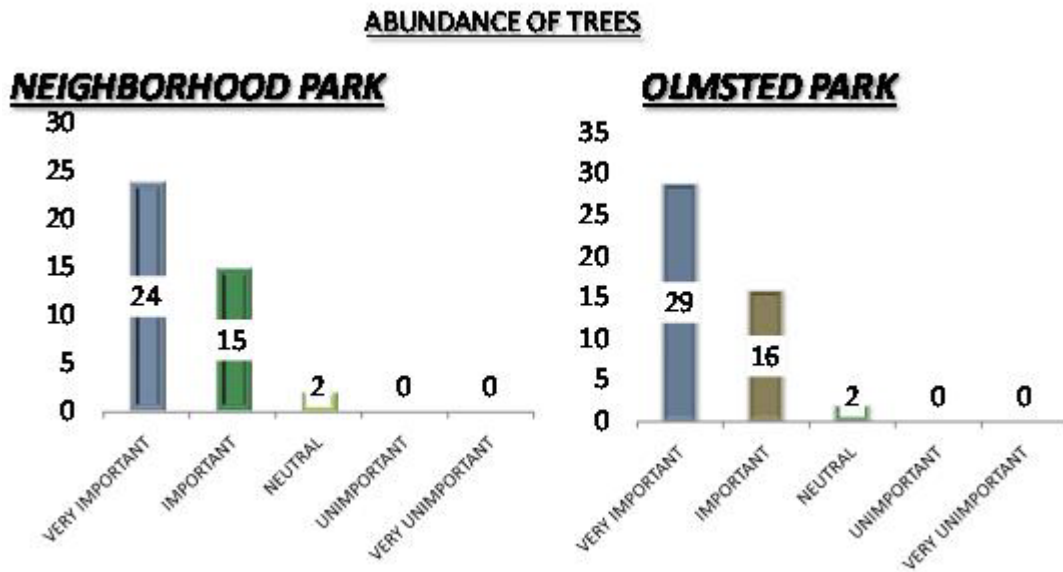

Figure 4.22   Residents importance ranking for the abundance of trees in a neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.
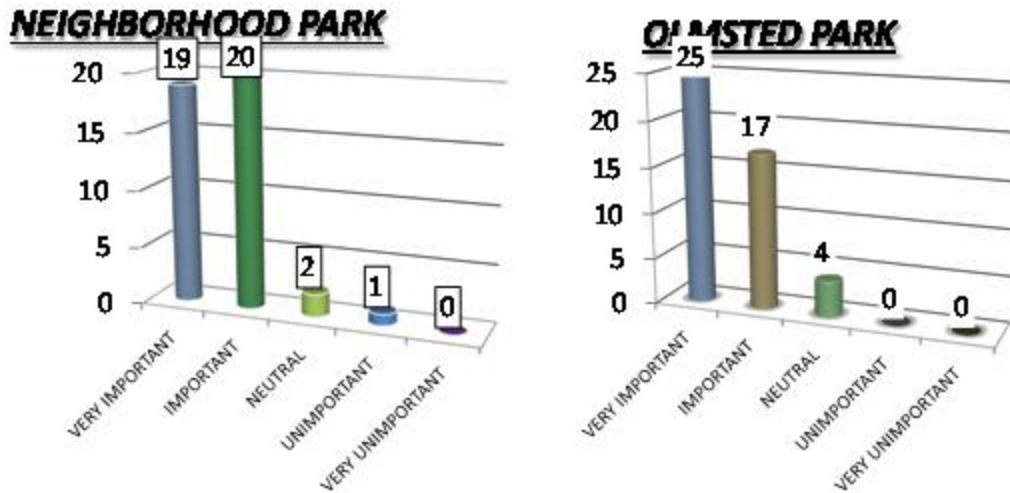
AMOUNT OF SHADING IN THE PARK

Figure 4.23   Residents importance ranking for the amount of shading in a
neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.

Respondents were asked to rate their importance on the constant flow of people

through the park in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 10% people felt

the abundance of trees were an "very important" design principle, 37% felt it was an

"important" design principle, 29% were "neutral", 15% felt it was an "unimportant

design principle" and 10% felt the abundance of trees in a neighborhood park is an "very

unimportant" design principle. In both cases, over 65% of the respondents felt that the

constant flow of people through a neighborhood park were either a "very important" or

"important" design element. Figure 4.24 illustrates how respondents ranked their

importance on the constant flow of people through the neighborhood park.

Respondents were asked to rate their importance on the parks proximity to the

street. Out of a total of 41 responses, 24% people felt the abundance of trees were an

"very important" design principle, 66% felt it was an "important" design principle, 10%

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were "neutral". In both cases, over 85% of the respondents felt the parks proximity to the street in a neighborhood park was either a "very important" or "important" design element. Figure 4.25 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on the parks proximity to the street in a neighborhood park.
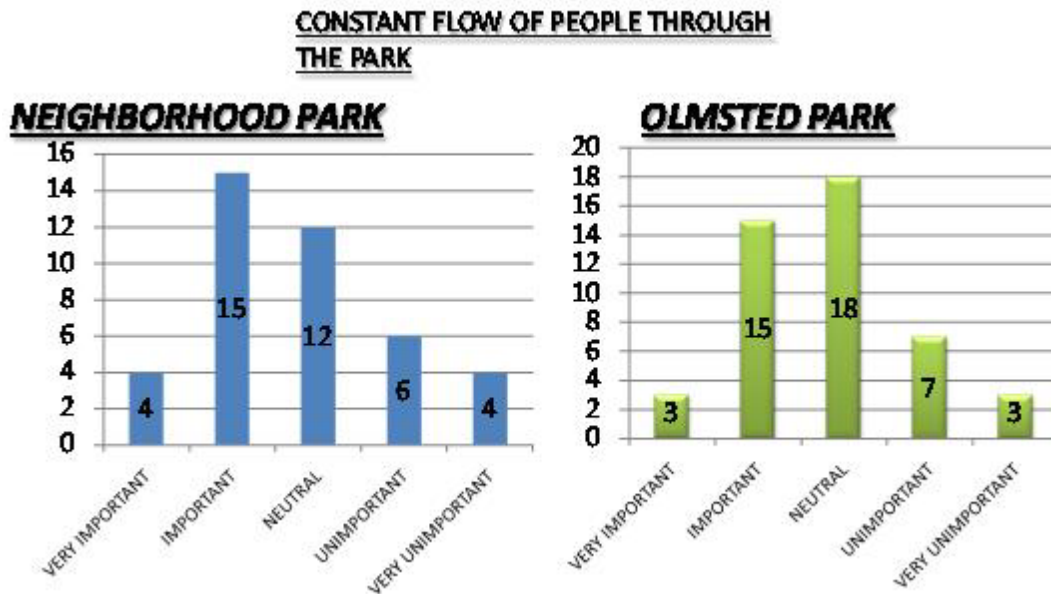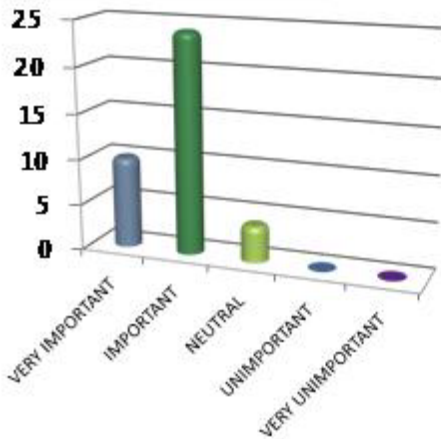

Figure 4.24   Residents importance ranking for constant flow of people through the park in a neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.

LOCATION OF THE PARK
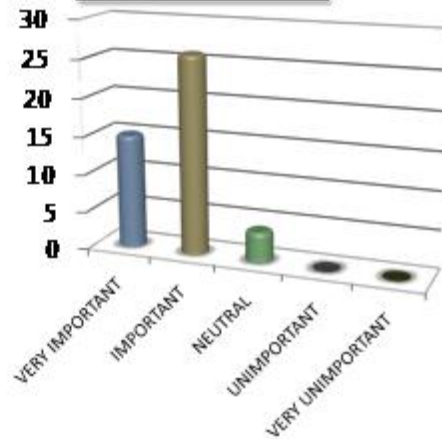TO THE STREET

Figure 4.25   Residents importance ranking for the location of the park to the
                street in a neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.

The next design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on

was routine security checks in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 51%

people felt that routine security checks were a "very important" design principle, 32% felt

it was an "important" design principle, 10% were "neutral", 7% felt it was an

"unimportant design principle". In the case of Olmsted Park, 77% of the respondents felt

routine security checks were either "very important" or "important" for the success of the

park. However, over 85% of the respondents, in regards to neighborhood parks, felt

routine security checks were either "very important" or "important" design principles.

Figure 4.26 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on routine security

checks in a neighborhood park vs. Olmsted Park.

Respondents were asked to rate their importance on having occasional art and

music exhibits in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 17% people felt

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having an occasional art or music exhibit is a "very important" design principle, 46% felt

it was an "important" design principle, 24% were "neutral", 7% felt it was an

"unimportant design principle" and 5% felt having an occasional art or music exhibit is a

"very unimportant" design principle. In both cases, 70% of the respondents felt having

an occasional art or music exhibit in a neighborhood park or Olmsted Park was either a

"important" or "neutral" design element. Figure 4.27 illustrates how respondents ranked

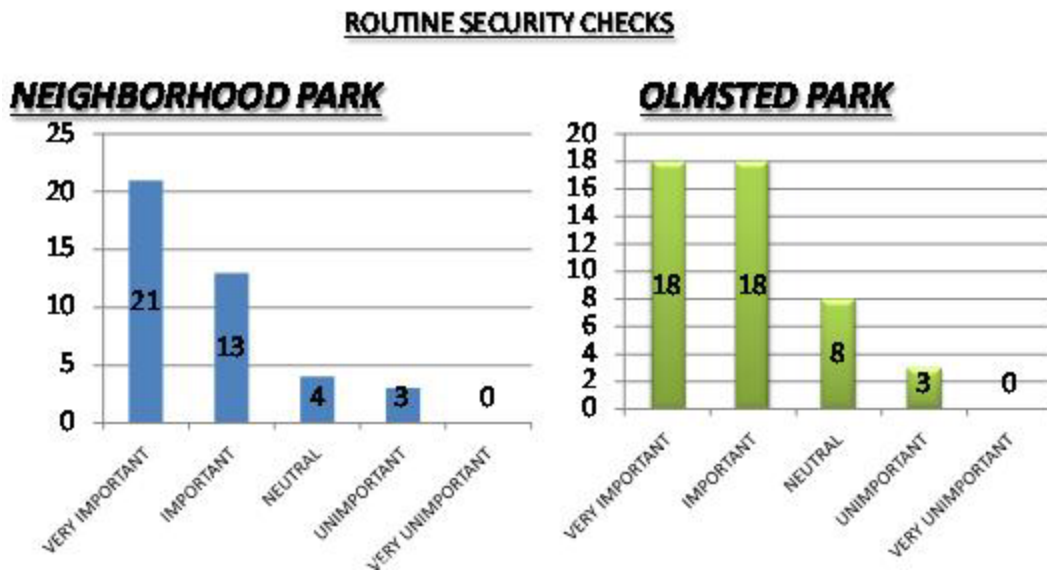their importance on an occasional art and music exhibit in a neighborhood park.

Figure 4.26   Residents importance ranking for routine security checks in a
neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.
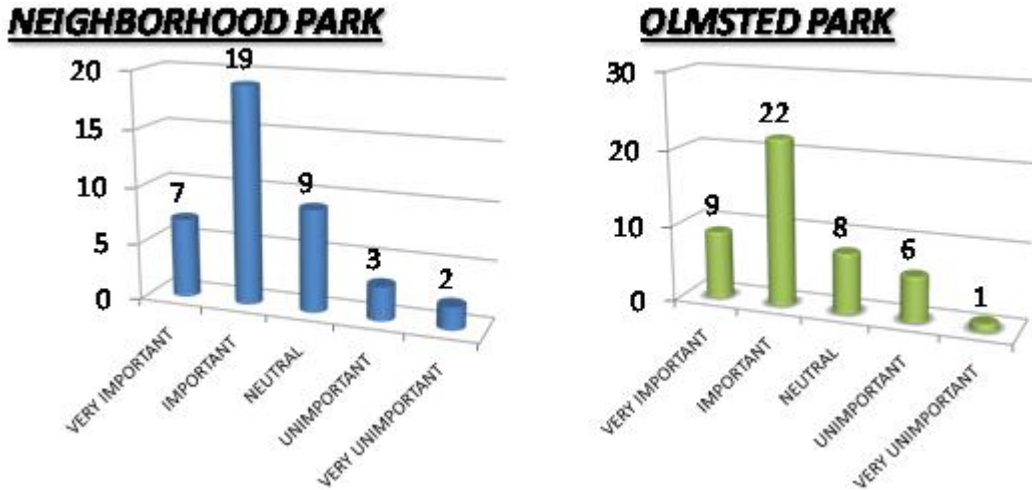
91

Figure 4.27   Residents importance ranking for an occasional art or music exhibit
                      in a neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.

The next design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on
was having an outdoor café in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 40 responses, 5%
people felt having an outdoor café is a "very important" design principle, 18% felt it was
an "important" design principle, 33% were "neutral", 28% felt it was an "unimportant
design principle" and 18% felt having an outdoor café is a "very unimportant" design
principle. In both cases, 60% of the respondents felt having an outdoor cafe in a
neighborhood park or Olmsted Park was either a "neutral" or "unimportant" design
element. Figure 4.28 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on outdoor
cafes in a neighborhood park and Olmsted Park.

Respondents were asked to rate their importance on having portable food vendors
in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 22% felt it was an "important"
design principle, 29% were "neutral", 29% felt it was an "unimportant design principle"
and 19% felt having portable food vendors was is a "very unimportant" design principle.

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In both cases, 60% of the respondents felt having portable food vendors in a

neighborhood park or Olmsted Park was either a "neutral" or "unimportant" design

element. Figure 4.39 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on portable

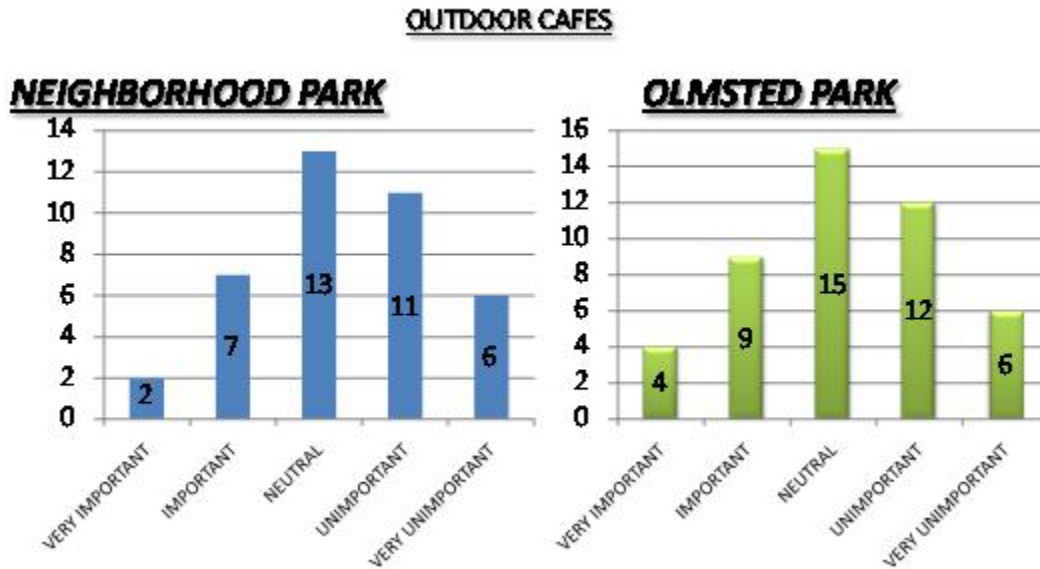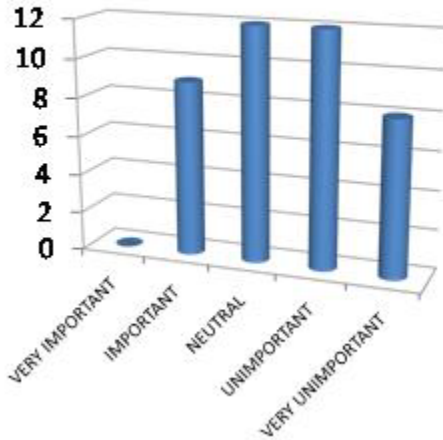food vendors in a neighborhood park and Olmsted Park.

Figure 4.28   Residents importance ranking for outdoor cafes in a neighborhood
park as compared to Olmsted Park.
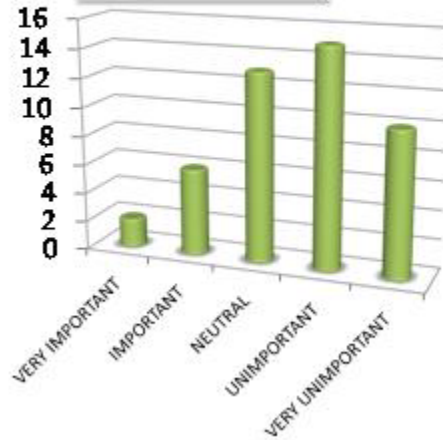
PORTABLE FOOD VENDORS

Figure 4.29   Residents importance ranking for portable food vendors in a
neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.

The next design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on
was an adequate number of waste receptacles in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of
41 responses, 71% people felt having adequate number of waste receptacles was a "very
important" design principle, 29% felt it was an "important" design principle. In both
cases, 100% of the respondents felt having an adequate number of waste receptacles in a
neighborhood park or Olmsted Park was either a "very important" or "important" design
element. Figure 4.30 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on adequate
waster receptacles in a neighborhood park and Olmsted Park.

The next design element that respondents were asked to rate their importance on
having routine performers in a neighborhood park. Out of a total of 41 responses, 8%
people felt having routine performers was a "very important" design principle, 23% felt
it was an "important" design principle, 21% were "neutral", 33% felt it was an

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"unimportant design principle" and 15% felt having routine performers is a "very unimportant" design principle. Figure 4.31 illustrates how respondents ranked their importance on routine performers in a neighborhood park and Olmsted Park.
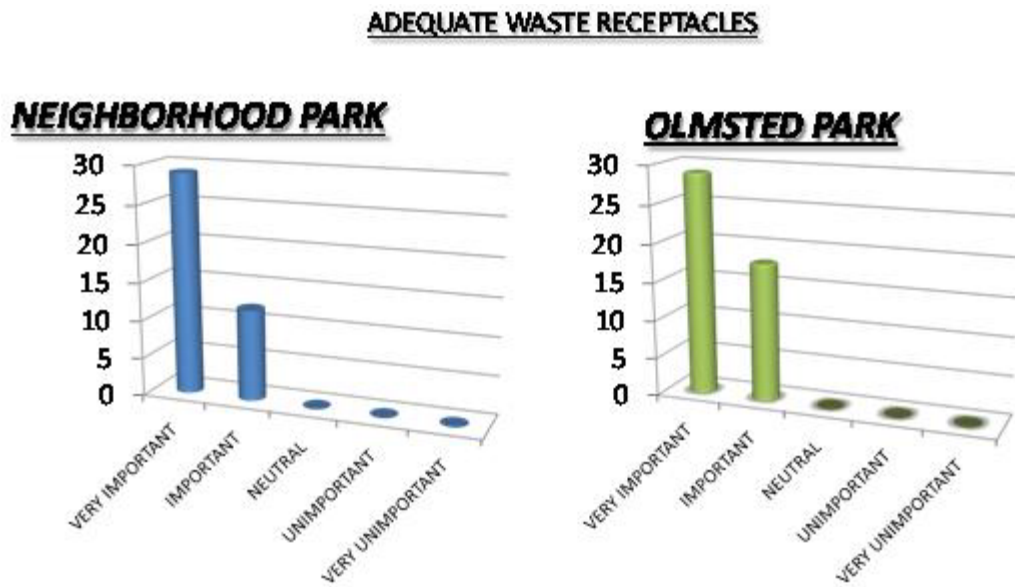
ADEQUATE WASTE RECEPTACLES

Figure 4.30   Residents importance ranking for adequate waste receptacles in a neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.
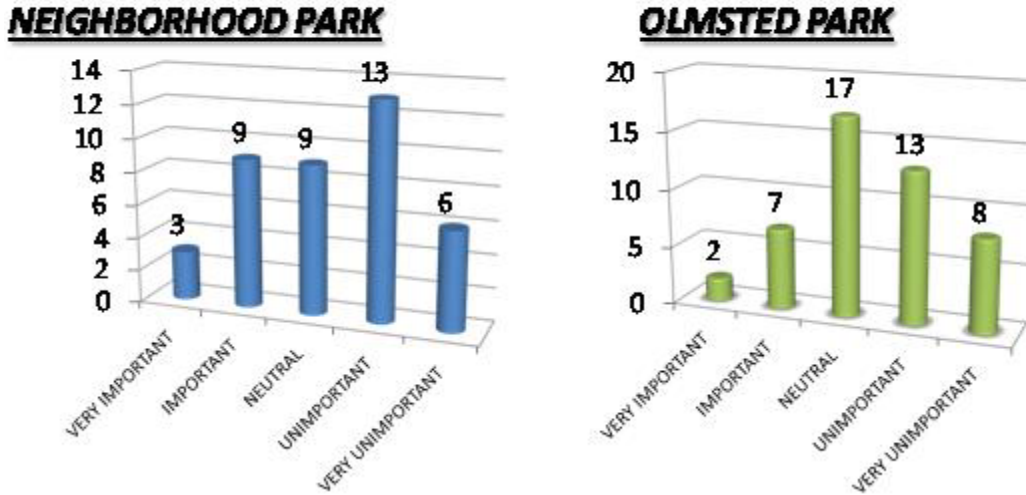
95

ROUTINE PERFORMERS

Figure 4.31   Residents importance ranking for routine performers in a neighborhood park as compared to Olmsted Park.

Finally, the residents of Mt Laurel were asked to give their opinions on what they felt would help in attracting more people to Olmsted Park. Although the majority of survey respondents felt the park was functioning as it should, a few of the respondents had questions about the parks maintenance. However, most of the responses tended to deal directly with the park's playground equipment. All open ended responses which were related to Whyte's design principles have already been addressed in the previous sections of Chapter IV. The following table is the open ended responses to the question about the improvements, if made, would attract more people to the park.

Table 4.8   Open ended responses to question asking residents about the
            importance of adequate seating in Olmsted Park

….a clean and well-maintained park.
….better upkeep. Grass area and trees seem to have been neglected
….the playground equipment needs to be maintained. At the present time, the round monkey bars are broken. One of the openings on the equipment has been broken for well over a year. A temporary piece of plywood was mailed to the opening as a safety device. It was my understanding that the part was on order to be replaced. As a year, it has not been replaced. With children playing on this equipment, attention needs to be given to their safety.
….Repair ladder on play set; a smaller play set for very young children
….Field area stays wet for about a week after it rains. Better drainage would improve the usability of the field.
….Playground equipment looks moldy
….Many pieces of the playground equipment have been broken for months

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1   Introduction

Included in this chapter is a discussion and analysis of William Whyte's design

principles and how residents of Mt Laurel view their importance. In addition, the chapter

provides suggestions for future research and implications of this study for design

professionals and landscape architects. Analysis of the residents' importance ratings for

the thirteen design principles, along with their open-ended comments, reveals that most

all of the principles established by Whyte are contributing to the overall success of

Olmsted Park. In addition, the research has revealed that residents of Mt Laurel

understand the significance of these design elements and the importance of maintaining

the parks overall beauty. It should also be pointed out that the parks unique setting in a

new urbanism community where most of the residents share common beliefs is causative

to the similarity in each of the respondent's answers to the survey questions. One might

suppose that people who choose to live in a traditional neighborhood development like

Mt Laurel where there is high housing density, a common appreciation for nature and

public open space, pedestrian oriented, and a unique town square share similar beliefs

and ideologies' on the importance of community.   It is a frequent opinion of Olmsted

Park users that the park is contributing to the overall well being of the community. In the

next section each of the thirteen design principles established by William Whyte are analyzed based on the opinions of Mt Laurel survey respondents.

5.1.1   Water Features

In general, residents of Mt Laurel were neutral in terms of their importance ranking for water features in Olmsted Park. Most of the respondents were impartial as to the improved value a water feature would have on Olmsted Park. Only 4 people out of 46 responses felt a water feature was a "very important" design feature whereas, 10 people (21.74%) felt it was a "very unimportant" design feature. In addition, the majority of the residents were neutral in their response. When asked about a water features importance in a neighborhood park, residents of Mt Laurel responded the same as they had in regards to Olmsted Park. However, only 5 out of 41 people chose the option "very unimportant" for neighborhood parks, whereas 12 people chose that option for Olmsted Park.   It is believed by the researcher that a water feature might be interpreted by the residents as an added maintenance issue.

5.1.2   Location of the Sidewalk to the Park

The majority of the residents of Mt Laurel felt that the proximity of the sidewalks to the park was an important design element. In both the Olmsted Park and neighborhood park scenarios, 82% of the responses felt that the location of the sidewalks to the park were either a "very important" or "important" design element which when implemented creates a more successful park. William Whyte believed that the location of the sidewalks to the park promoted a stream of pedestrian traffic, which functions as a stage for park users to watch people as they passed through the park. However, in a suburban

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setting such as Mt Laurel, the location of the sidewalks to the park creates a safer means of travel for parents and children to and from the park. Because of the way the town was planned for safe pedestrian travel through means of sidewalks, Mt Laurel residents are able to reach Olmsted Park by a series of pedestrian pathways. Whereas Whyte felt it was important for location of the sidewalk to the park to be close in proximity, because of the benefit of being able to "people watch", Mt Laurel residents seem to value the sidewalks proximity to the park because they allow for a safer means of pedestrian travel. However, it can be concluded that this difference in people's perception of the added benefit for the sidewalks proximity to the park is based on the difference between an urban and suburban parks. One can suggest that Olmsted Park in Mt Laurel, Al could be referred to as a suburban park because it shares many of the characteristics of a suburban park. Suburban neighborhoods are referred to as, "any community in an outlying section a city or, more commonly, a nearby, politically separate municipality with social and economic ties to the central city (Gans 1965)". Therefore, according to this definition by Gans, Mt Laurel, Al could be considered a suburban neighborhood because it is located in an outlying section of the city. However, it cannot be determined whether or not its residents are tied to the central city (Birmingham, Al) socially and economically.

Figure 5.1   This picture displays the parks proximity to the existing brick
             sidewalks located towards the front of the picture (Allen 2009).

5.1.3   Adequate Seating

The majority of the residents of Mt Laurel felt that adequate seating in the park
was an important design element. In both the Olmsted Park and neighborhood park
scenarios, 90% of the responses felt that adequate seating in the park was either a "very
important" or "important" design element which when implemented creates a more
successful park. According to Whyte, adequate seating was one of the most important
design elements of a successful park. Furthermore, Whyte believed that the best solution
for providing a variety of seating arrangements is for the space to have movable chairs so
people can sit where they want (ex: in the shade, sun, with people or without people).
Many of the respondents to the survey stressed the need for Olmsted Park to have more

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seating available. The survey respondents stressed the need for seating to be made

available in the form of tables and chairs which could be located near and away from the

playground area. It should also be noted that the stone seating wall was commented on as

being uncomfortable by several of the survey respondents. The researcher felt like the

park could use more seating or improve the comfort of the seating wall. Table 5.1

displays the answers survey respondents had for the importance of adequate seating in

Olmsted Park.

Figure 5.2   This picture displays Olmsted Park's seating in the form of benches
              and seat wall which are located around the playground equipment
              (Allen 2009).

Table 5.1   This table displays all the open ended responses to questions which asked residents about the importance of adequate seating in Olmsted Park.

….I'd probably hang out more if the seating at the playground was more comfortable (i.e. the stone wall).
….I often take my grandchildren to the park. There needs to be additional swings, as the three swings usually filled.
….Would love to sit and read or visit with friends if better seating was available.
….More seating more swings.
….Perhaps larger picnic area; stationary park seating away from play area.
…. More swings, slides, play equipment, more benches to sit on that are comfortable.
….More seating for picnics.
….More seating. Tables and chairs.
….Additional seating for adults.
….Provide more comfortable benches for sitting.

5.1.4   Abundance of Trees in the Park

The better part of the residents of Mt Laurel felt that the abundance of trees in the park was an important design element. In both cases involving Olmsted Park and a regular neighborhood park, 95% of the responses felt that the abundance of trees in the park was either a "very important" or "important" design element which when implemented creates a more successful park. Whyte did hypothesize that sun exposure was a major factor in attracting users. His study which was conducted in New York City does imply that sun exposure is important in chilly weather. Most respondents of the study felt Olmsted Park had plenty of areas in the park which received an ample amount of sunlight and shade.

Figure 5.3   This picture displays Olmsted Park and its abundance of shade trees
(Allen 2009).

5.1.5   Amount of Shade

The majority of the residents of Mt Laurel felt that the amount of shade in the park was an important design element. In both cases involving Olmsted Park and a regular neighborhood park, 90% of the responses felt that the amount of shade in the park was either a "very important" or "important" design element which when implemented creates a more successful park. Currently, the park is located in a fairly new stand of shade trees that were planted when the park was built in 1999. Therefore, the trees are 10 years old and have not reached their potential heights. A few of the residents expressed their concern towards the playground equipment being too hot in the summer months between the hours of 11 A.M. and 4 P.M.

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Table 5.2   Displays the open ended questions residents had toward the amount of shade and sunlight in the park.

… .Right now the park is so shaded that it stays fairly cold during the winter months. It would be nice if it allowed more direct sunlight in the winter
….In the summer there is no shade from 11-4 and the equipment is too hot to play on. Would be great to have more shade/canopy, etc.
….I actually don't want more non-residents at the park. For residents I believe shade in the summer would help.
….Water fountain and shade. The surface is great but it needs to be power washed. There are a few areas that are unsafe for toddlers could just have a board or plastic.

Figure 5.4   Olmsted Park has areas which receive an ample amount of shade (Allen 2009).

Figure 5.5   Olmsted Park has areas which receive an ample amount of sunlight
             (Allen 2009)

5.1.6   Constant Flow of People Through the Park

The majority of the residents of Mt Laurel felt that the constant flow of people through the park was an important design element. In both cases involving Olmsted Park and a regular neighborhood park, 65% of the responses felt that the constant flow of people in the park was either a "very important" or "important" design element which when implemented creates a more successful park. Whyte believed that great public spaces have a constant flow of people through the park. He felt that what attracted people the most to a space are other people. In addition, Whyte thought that people came to the park simply to watch other people. In the case of Mt Laurel residents and their response to the question about whom they came to the park with, the researcher feels that most Olmsted Park users entertained children at the park. However, it appears that most of the survey respondents understand the importance of a constant flow of people through the park. With that being said, there were a few survey respondents that

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felt the park was fine the way it was. In addition, some didn't want to encourage outsiders to use the park.

5.1.7   Adequate Waste Receptacles

Out of a total of 41 responses to the question involving the importance of an adequate number of waste receptacles in both Olmsted and a neighborhood park, 100% of the survey respondents felt it was either a "very important" or important design principle for successful parks.   In addition, it was viewed as the most important of all thirteen William Whyte design principles by Mt Laurel residents.
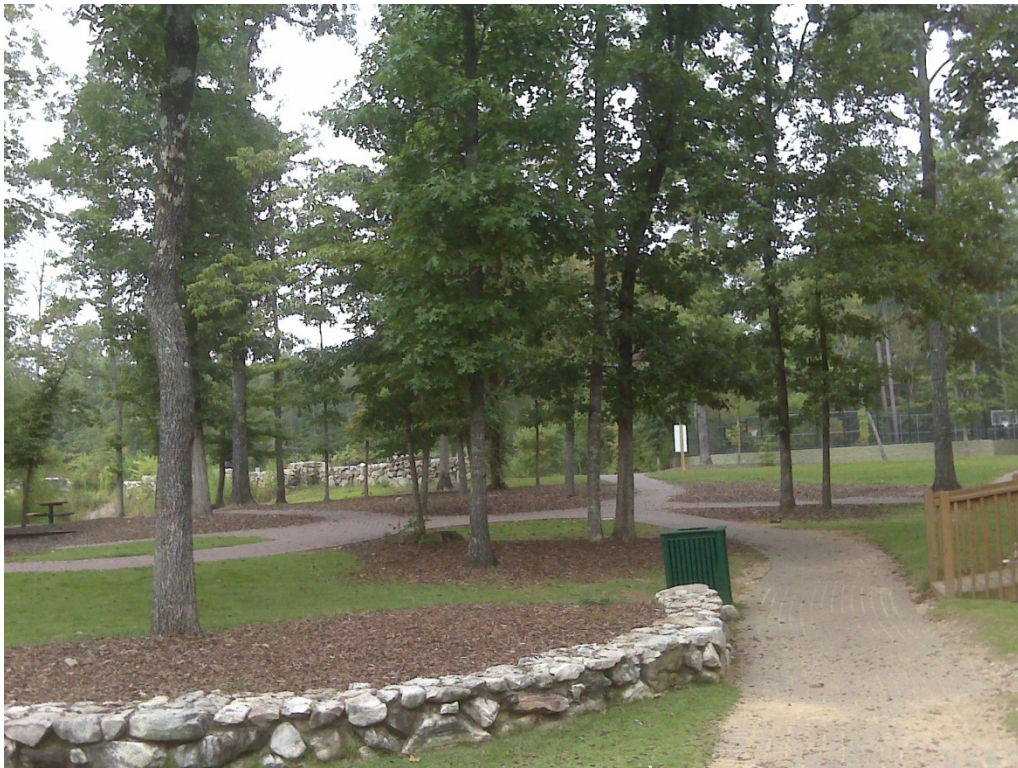

Figure 5.6   Picture displays one Olmsted Park's many trash receptacles (Allen 2009).

5.1.8   Location of the Park to the Street

Out of a total of 41 responses, 85% of the respondents felt the parks proximity to the street was either a "very important" or "important" design principle. William Whyte believed that planners and architects waged a war against the street by building walls and building facades close to the street which deterred pedestrian engagement. Furthermore, Whyte was quoted as saying, "the street is the river of life of the city, the place where we come together, the pathway the pathway to the center" (Whyte 1980). He believed that the location of the park to the street promoted a stream of pedestrian traffic which functions as a stage for park users to watch people as they passed through the park. In the case of Olmsted Park in Mt Laurel, the park is easily attainable by residents through a series of public right away trails and sidewalks. It can also be assumed that residents feel a sense of security with the park being located near the street and sidewalk because it allows their children to be close in eyesight while they are playing in the park. Figure 5.7 shows the parks proximity to the street.

5.1.9   Routine Security Checks

Out of a total of 41 responses, 21(51.22%) people felt that routine security checks were a "very important" design principle, 13 (31.71%) felt it was an "important" design principle, and 3 were neutral. In both cases involving residential parks and Olmsted Park, residents felt very strongly about having routine security checks in the park. In regards to Olmsted Park, many residents felt like routine security checks would help reduce the number of "non Mt Laurel residents" from using the park's facilities. Many residents felt that non residents were holding events in the park thus leaving trash and adding to the wear and tear on the play ground equipment.

5.1.10   Food Vendors in the Park

Whyte believed that urban parks which employ food vendors were often successful spaces because they provided a service that people want. In the case of Olmsted Park, residents of Mt Laurel felt portable food vendors were rather unimportant park elements. The same response was felt toward portable food vendors in a typical neighborhood park as it was in Olmsted Park in Mt Laurel. However, Whyte pointed out in his research that quite often the vendors became meeting points and gossip centers for people. In addition, he documented on numerous instances where people would gather around food vendors and talk for long periods of time. It can be assumed that residents of Mt Laurel might not view the importance of food vendors as users of a urban park would because Olmsted Park is located in a housing district instead of an urban district. In addition, Olmsted Park is within 200 yards from three restaurants in Mt Laurel's commercial district which occasionally are used by park users as refreshment centers. The restaurants include a soda shop, bistro and grocery store with a sandwich shop in the back of the store.

5.1.11   Outdoor Cafes

In both cases involving the importance of outdoor cafes in neighborhood parks and Olmsted Park, over 60% of survey respondents were either neutral or felt that they were unimportant design elements. William Whyte believed that outdoor cafes allow people the opportunity for people to sit and relax while they enjoy their favorite foods. In addition, he recorded on many occasions people greeting one another while looking for seats in the cafes. In the case of Olmsted Park in Mt Laurel, it can be assumed that most residents might encounter this brief social interaction of greeting one another while

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they're at the park searching for a place to sit. In addition, the researcher recorded on numerous occasions this interaction occurring at the local bistros and cafes located in the town commercial center.

5.1.12   Routine Performers

In both cases involving the importance of routine performers in neighborhood parks and Olmsted Park, over 60% of survey respondents felt they were unimportant design elements. Were as Whyte saw routine performers in a park as a way to attract other people to the park, Mt Laurel, being a small suburban park, doesn't have the pedestrian traffic through its borders that an urban park might encounter, thus making the occasional street performer out of context. It can assumed that performers help add to the parks uniqueness by offering entertainment to its users. However, in the context of Olmsted Park in The Town of Mt Laurel residents felt street performers were not necessarily important for the success of the park.

5.1.13   Occasional Art and Music Exhibit

In both cases involving the importance of occasional art and music exhibits in neighborhood parks and Olmsted Park, over 70% of the survey respondents felt they were either "important" or "very important" design elements. However, it can also be assumed that residents of Mt Laurel, whom already are accustomed to planned festivities in the town, might enjoy more local activities which are near their own homes. Currently, there are a few festivities planned for Olmsted Park. For instance, Olmsted Park hosts the 4th of July fireworks show and occasional movie nights which take place in the summer. However, there is no formally planned music or art exhibits that the researcher knew took

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place. Due to the positive response for an occasional art and music exhibit from residents of Mt Laurel, the researcher believes that implementing such activities would have a positive impact on the successfulness of Olmsted Park

5.2   Limitations

It is understood that there are several limitations to this study which might have led to a low response rate. Conducting a pilot study would have helped identify issues with using a web based survey. For instance, Question Pro, the method by which the survey was designed and distributed, made exporting the data collected into a statistical analysis programs difficult. The researcher used the student version of the program which wouldn't allow the exporting of data into other programs. Therefore, the researcher was limited to the statistical analysis tools made available by Question Pro. In addition, the survey was kept brief in order to increase response rates which Dillman's research method suggested; therefore, the short survey might not have allowed additional information to be collected about Olmsted Park and Mt Laurel resident's perceptions of public parks. For instance, Dillman's method for increased response rates suggests that the survey be short enough that the respondent doesn't lose interest while answering the questions. With that being said, the researcher left out a few questions which involved the respondents ethnicity, income levels, and original place of birth. This information would have helped in better understanding the population being surveyed and given the researcher a better opinion as to why the respondent answered the question in such a manner.   Another limitation to the research was the time period the survey was distributed. The survey was sent in the summer months which are typically when families are on vacation. Therefore, the low survey response rates might have been a

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result of residents of Mt Laurel not checking their email due to being on vacation. Further, email based surveys run the risk of not being viewed because not all the respondents have the internet or check their email at their homes.   The researcher was also limited, per the town's request, to contacting the residents via email to a maximum of three correspondences. More correspondence between the researcher and the survey recipient might have resulted in a higher response rate.

5.3   Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research might include testing Whyte's design principles for successful urban parks on suburban parks which are not in new urbanism communities. In this particular study, the Town of Mt Laurel did not offer much diversity in terms of ethnicity. An interesting topic would involve how different ethnic groups view the importance of Whyte's design principles in their neighborhood parks? Numerous studies have focused on the activities different ethnic groups participated in while visiting a neighborhood park. However, no research has been done on the design principles different ethnic populations feel are important for successful neighborhood parks. Future research into public parks might also include surveying people's perceptions of passive recreational parks versus organized parks such as multi use sports parks. In addition, one of the issues that kept coming up in the literature review for this study was the idea established by the Project for Public Spaces which involved the notion that community involvement in designing a public space was as important as the design itself. It can be argued that the communities' input is extremely helpful but is it the designer's ability to make sense if that input through the planning of the various spaces

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which is most important? Therefore, the question is what role should the community have in planning various public open spaces?

5.4   Implications for Park Design and Landscape Architecture

As communities continue to expand, there is the growing need to provide residents with an area designated for passive recreational activities. It is especially important in today's society when obesity is at an all time high in the United States to provide a public place for residents to relax and enjoy the outdoors. However, it is important for the profession of Landscape Architecture to understand the needs and wants of the community and to design parks which are reflective of those community desires. It is the responsibility of Landscape Architects to design parks with the parks users in mind as opposed to their own aspirations and design dreams. Although there is no easy formula for designing public parks, Landscape Architects must be able to use the public's perceptions and opinions when designing a public space. Just like most design professionals were taught in Design "101", one of the most important criteria for designing a successful space starts with the inventory and analysis of the site. Too often, design professionals overlook this step in the design process. They are too occupied with the drawing of spaces and coloring of plans. One of the most valuable resources a designer has during the design process is the client or in terms of public space is the community. As this thesis has helped demonstrate, public parks are valuable resources to communities and when designed with the people who use them in mind, create a sustainable spaces for generations to enjoy.

It should be noted that the residents of Mt Laurel felt the most important design principles which when implemented create a successful park are: adequate waste

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receptacles, abundance of trees, the location of the sidewalk to the street, adequate seating, and routine security checks. With that being said, it can be assumed that residents of Mt Laurel value a park which is clear of trash debris and well maintained in both its appearance aesthetically and its playground equipment. One of the main differences between William Whyte's observations of successful urban spaces as compared to Olmsted Park in Mt Laurel is that residents of Mt Laurel tended to discourage non residents to use the park. It is the opinion of the researcher that residents of Mt Laurel would rather keep out non-residents from using the park and its facilities. Therefore, the parks ability to attract a person to its boundaries which is what Whyte believed created successful spaces is actually what Mt Laurel residents wanted to discourage. One can argue though that successful public parks are only successful if they satisfy their users. With that being said, one can assume that from the responses obtained in the survey regarding Olmsted Park and its functionality that it is operating in a favorable manner for the residents of Mt Laurel. In addition, many of the issues that residents had with Olmsted Park seemed to be maintenance problems which can be easily fixed. For instance, the issues with the playground equipment being broken and there not being enough adequate seating spaces can easily fixed.

Furthermore, it is believed that William Whyte's design principles still apply for Mt Laurel. However, a few of them such as, outdoor cafes, portable food vendors, and routine performers are more suitable to urban spaces rather than suburban spaces. Whyte's thirteen principles for successful urban spaces can be used when designing suburban public parks. For instance, the amount of shade and sunny areas, seating, waste receptacles, and routine security checks all might be important for creating successful

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neighborhood parks. However, since there is no simple formula for creating successful spaces it is important to understand the opinions and perceptions of the community. It is up to the designer to create a successful space after obtaining all the valuable information from the community. Like the making of all great spaces, it's the designer's ability to know how to choose and use the most important design elements/principles, which can transform a common outdoor space into a comfortable gathering place.

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APPENDIX A

WEB-BASED SURVEY

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What is your gender?
1. Male
2. Female

What is your age?
1. 21-31
2. 32-42
3. 43-53
4. 54-64
5. >65

What is your highest level of education?
1. General Equivalency Diploma
2. High School Diploma
3. Associate Degree
4. Bachelors Degree
5. Masters Degree
6. Doctorate Degree
7. Other _____

Are you a resident of Mt Laurel?
1. Yes
2. No

How many children live in your household?
1. 0
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. Other _____

When was the last time you visited Olmsted Park?
1. In the last week
2. In the last month
3. In the last 3 months
4. In the last year
5. More than a year ago
6. Never

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On average, how often do you visit Olmsted Park?
1. Only one time
2. Almost daily
3. At least once a week
4. At least once a month
5. Less than a year
6. Never

About how long have you usually stayed at Olmsted Park?
1. 30 Minutes
2. Less than 1 hour
3. 1-2 hours
4. 2-4 hours
5. More than 4 hours
6. Other _____

What time of year have you typically visited Olmsted Park?
1. Spring
2. Summer
3. Fall
4. Winter
5. Anytime of year

With whom have you usually come to the park?
1. Friends
2. Your spouse or partner
3. Your children
4. School or other group
5. By yourself
6. Other

Please place a check next to each of the activities you have done when you visited Olmsted Park. (Place as many check marks to as many of the activities as you wish)
1. Picnic at picnic area
2. Picnic elsewhere at Olmsted Park
3. Sit and Relax
4. Walk/Stroll
5. Attend special events (classes/parties etc.)
6. Jog/Run/Speedwalk
7. Bicycle
8. Bird-Watch
9. Fly a kite
10. Watch kids play on play set
11. Play on playset
12. Watch kids play on recreational field
13. Play on recreational field
14. Play basketball

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15. Walk the dog
16. Play football
17. Play baseball
18. Play softball
19. Play soccer
20. Throw the frisbee
21. Sun bathe
22. Swim
23. People watch
24. Other _____

Are there other activities you might enjoy doing at Olmsted Park (e.g., sports, services, etc.) if the right facilities or programs were provided for it?

Please rate each of the following design elements according to how important to you they are to have at OLMSTED PARK. Please be sure to answer all the questions. Thank You!

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
A water feature	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
The location of the sidewalks to the park	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
A reflection pond	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Adequate seating	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
An abundance of trees	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
The location of the park to the street	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
A wading pool	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
A constant flow of people through the park	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
The amount of shading in the park	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Seating in the form of moveable chairs	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Parkside restaurants	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Availability of seasonal food concessions	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

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Portable food vendors	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Adequate waste recepticles	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Areas which receive an ample amount of sunlight	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Routine Secuity checks	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Outdoor cafes	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Art sculptures on display	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Routine performers	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Occasional art/music exhibits	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please rate the following elements according to how important to you they are to have in a NEIGHBORHOOD PARK. Please be sure to answer all the following questions. Thank you!

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
A water feature	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
The location of the sidewalks to the park	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
A reflection pond	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
adequate seating	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
An abundance of trees	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
The location of the park to the street	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
A wading pool	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
A constant flow of people through the park	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
The amount of shading in the park	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Seating in the form of moveable chairs	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Parkside restaurants	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Availability of seasonal food concessions	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Portable food vendors	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Adequate waste recepticles	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Areas which receive an ample amount of sunlight	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Routine security checks	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Outdoor cafes	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Art sculptures on display	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Routine performers	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Occasional art/music exhibits	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

What do you think would attract more people to Olmsted Park?

Do you have any other suggestions for improving Olmsted Park?

Do you have any additional comments about this research?

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APPENDIX B

PRE-NOTICE EMAIL AND COVER LETTER

Dear Mt Laurel Residents,

Over the past several summers, I have been given the unique opportunity to work as an intern for EBSCO Development Company at the Town of Mt Laurel. I am graduate student in landscape architecture at Mississippi State University and I am currently pursuing my master's degree. Many of you might have seen me whirling by in a golf cart throughout the summer months with either Rip Weaver (Town Landscape Architect) or Michael Newton (Landscape Forman). Fortunately, my course of study has allowed me to become part of the Mt Laurel family for the past few summer and winter breaks. Mt Laurel is truly a wonderful place and I have learned a great deal from my experience.

Throughout graduate school, I have been very interested in the concept of New Urbanism and its solutions for successfully instilling a sense of community among its residents'. As a designer, I am fortunate enough to have the opportunity to create spaces for people to enjoy. However, I believe it is important that we design these spaces to promote a sense of community and positively contribute to the quality of life for those who use the spaces. Therefore, it is important to me and my profession to begin to understand how people use and perceive outdoor spaces.

This survey is intended to get a better understanding of how residents of Mt Laurel feel and use the recreation facilities at Olmsted Park (lawn, playground, basketball court, and pool). The questions listed below have been based on the past studies by William Whyte, an urbanist thinker and sociologist. This survey is meant to test Whyte's design principles

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for successful urban spaces. Please answer the following questions by <u>placing a dot next to the appropriate answer</u>. Thank you very much!

In addition:

I am seeking your help in identifying the ways landscape architects can design better community parks which promote a higher standard for the quality of life. No matter what your role is in the neighborhood, you're an important part of the community, and your opinion counts. Please tell me what you think about Olmsted Park by completing an online survey sometime during the next several days.

The survey is confidential and takes only three to 5 minutes to complete. The data collected will not be associated with any individual. This research project has been approved by the Mississippi State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects*. Results will be received and analyzed by an approved MSU graduate thesis committee. Of course, your participation is completely voluntary and you may skip any of the following questions.

Thank you for your help in creating better public spaces. To begin the survey, simply click on the embedded link below.

Sincerely,

William Miller Allen

Graduate Student

Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State University

wma21@msstate.edu

Michael W. Seymour

Advisor

Assistant Professor

Dept. of Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State University

mseymour@lalc.msstate.edu

If you have any questions or technical problems, please call Miller Allen at 205.999.4056

or email at wma21@msstate.edu .

*For additional information regarding human participation in research, feel free to

contact the Mississippi State University Regulatory Compliance office at 662.325.5220

or email them at irb@research.msstate.edu

APPENDIX C

PRE-NOTICE EMAIL AND COVER LETTER

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to work as an intern for EBSCO Development Company at the Town of Mt
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winter breaks. Mt Laurel is truly a wonderful place and I have learned a
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of New Urbanism and its solutions for successfully instilling a sense of
community among its residents'. As a designer, I am fortunate enough to
have the opportunity to create spaces for people to enjoy. However, I
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of community and positively contribute to the quality of life for those
who use the spaces. Therefore, it is important to me and my profession
to begin to understand how people use and perceive outdoor spaces

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Sincerely,

William Miller Allen

Graduate Student

Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State University

wma21@msstate.edu

Michael W. Seymour

Advisor

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Dept. of Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State University

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APPENDIX D

THIRD MAIING AND EMAIL COVER LETTER

THANK YOU LETTER

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Dear Mt Laurel Residents,

I first wanted thank each of you who participated in filling out my survey about Olmsted Park. Your insight into how Olmsted Park functions as a neighborhood park has helped me to better understand what people want and desire in a neighborhood park.

From my initial findings, it appears that the design principles established by William Whyte for successful urban parks can be applied to parks in new urbanism communities. In addition, your survey responses have made it clear that design professionals should involve the community, for which they are designing the park for, in the design process.

Because several of you have asked if my finding will be made available, I have decided to print a copy of my thesis and have it bound for the Mt Laurel Library. In addition, a digital copy will be made available through the Mt Laurel Sales Office.

Finally, I have attached the survey to this letter for anyone who might not have had the chance to fill it out. I will still be collecting data for the next few weeks. Once again, I thank each of you who participated and I look forward to visiting Mt Laurel soon. It is truly a wonderful community!

Sincerely,

William Miller Allen

Graduate Student

Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State University

wma21@msstate.edu

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Michael W. Seymour

Advisor

Assistant Professor

Dept. of Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State University

mseymour@lalc.msstate.edu

If you have any questions or technical problems, please call Miller

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APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL FORM

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Do the principles established by William Hollingsworth Whyte for creating successful urban parks apply to public parks in the new urbanism community of Mt Laurel?

Miller Allen

Department of Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State University

January 25, 2007

I. <u>Personal Qualifications</u>

William M. Allen

As principle investigator and graduate student pursuing a Masters degree in Landscape Architecture at Mississippi State University, I will be responsible for the design, execution, and analysis of this study, with oversight and approval from my thesis advisor and committee members.

I became familiar with design and analysis of various research methods, including surveys, through two courses on research methods in landscape architecture, LA 8613, completed in the fall semester of 2005, and LA-8741, completed in the spring semester of 2006. I received certification from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Mississippi State University on 10/20/2004

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Michael W. Seymour

Thesis chair and Assistant Professor in Department of Landscape Architecture at Mississippi State University, I will be responsible for coordinating the study.

I have experience in research methods and approaches through my graduate study at Louisiana State University. I received certification from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Mississippi State University on 11/15/2005 and will update my certification on 11/15/2008.

Bob Brzuszek

Assistant Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Mississippi State University.

I have experience in research methods and approaches through my graduate study at Louisiana State University. I received certification from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Mississippi State University on March 31, 2005 and will update my certification on March 31, 2008.

The estimated ending period for this research projects is 12/31/07

II. Research Protocol

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1. Site Work

This study will be conducted at Mt Laurel in Birmingham, Alabama . Mt Laurel is located on Highway 280 and County Highway 43 in Birmingham. Mt Laurel is a town in the city limits of Birmingham, Alabama,

2. General Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the principles for successful urban parks derived by writer and sociologist William Hollingsworth Whyte and the relevance those principles have on public spaces located in new urbanism neighborhoods.

3. Benefits

The major benefit of this study is that it could provide valuable insight into how to design better community parks, which will help promote a higher standard for the quality of life. This type of knowledge may aid designers of the built environment in making better decisions which will improve and strengthen our communities. Not only can successfully designed parks improve a person's physical and psychological health, they can also make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work. This topic is particularly relevant to parks in neighborhoods located outside of the city's core in areas primarily referred to as the suburbs.

4. Procedures

Data for this study will be collected using email surveys. The surveys have been
prepared using the Dillman Tailored Design Method for internet/mail surveys. The email
surveys have been created using Mississippi States' licensed agreement with questionpro,
an online email survey website. The survey will be administered by the principal
investigator and sent to all the residents at Mt Laurel. Currently, Mt Laurel has a resident
group mailing list which is publicly available and will be used to conduct the survey.
Prior to the survey being administered, an email will be sent to all participants explaining
the survey's intended objectives. In the email, the principal investigator will explain that
the survey is completely voluntary and all information acquired will be kept confidential.
After the introductory email has been sent, the principal investigator will then send the
survey to all the residents in the community of Mt Laurel, Alabama. According to
Dillman's method, three carefully timed follow up mailings will be sent to recipients who
have not yet viewed the survey. Finally, a thank you letter will be sent to all recipients
thanking them for their participation. The only planned interaction between the principal
investigator and the survey recipients are through six email interactions (one initial, the
survey and explanation email, 3 follow-ups, and a thank you email).

5. Vulnerable Subject Populations

The subjects for this study will be all residents in the community of Mt Laurel and who
have access to the internet. No subjects will be recruited that are under the age of 18.

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6. How will the subjects be selected and recruited?

The subjects selected for this research are Mt Laurel residents and employees of the town's locally owned business. The subjects will be recruited through an introductory email which will be sent out at the time of the study.

7. What inducement will be offered?

None

8. How many subjects will be used? List any salient characteristics of subjects (e.g.., age range, sex, institutional affiliation, other pertinent characterizations)

The study is limited to Mt Laurel residents and employees which currently consist of 245 people.

9. Number of times researcher will interact with each subject?

I will interact with each subject a minimum of three times and a maximum of 6 times.

10. What will the subjects do or what will be done to them, in the study?

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See attached survey which they will be asked to complete.

11. How do you intend to obtain subjects' Informed Consent?

See attached consent letter

12. Assessment of Risk

There are no anticipated risks to the subjects in this study physically, psychologically, socially, or otherwise.

13. How do you ensure Confidentiality of information collected?

The principal investigator will control access to the data along with Michael Seymour (Thesis Chair) and Bob Brzuszek (Co PI). The data will be stored in the secure office of the principal investigator and on the principal investigator's password-protected computer. No identifiers will be collected. Data will be retained for later replication of the study.

14. Are approvals needed from another MSU regulatory committee (I.e. IACUC for animals or IBC for infectious agents or recombinant DNA)?

No additional approvals are needed for this study.

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