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Huntington Park Improvement Plan & Design 2018

HML began the process of planning improvements to the Huntington Park in the spring of 2017 and contracted with Templeton Landscape Architects to create a design. Templeton met with the Library Board approximately five times and observed the usage of the Huntington Park about four times. As a result, a conceptual park design was developed that was presented to the community in various formats.

Online survey

An online survey was created that had 12 simple questions.

Display in the library

Drawings of the conceptual design were displayed in the library for one month. Print surveys were available and were manually entered into the online survey by library staff. A comment box was also available and were transcribed into question 12 of the survey.

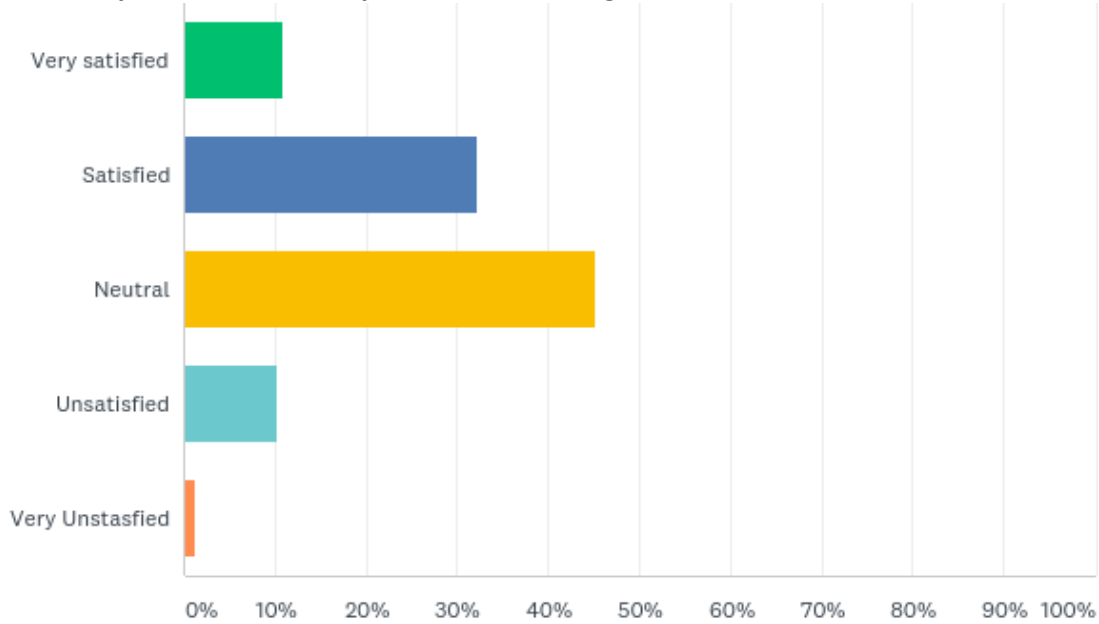
Presentations to community groups

A series of meetings were held with community groups to gauge interest, set priorities and to gather input of a general nature. The print survey was made available to participants and were then manually entered into the online survey.

1. Huntington Hundred public reception
2. Afternoon Adventures Minecraft Design a Park Contest (ages 8-12)
3. Friends of HML
4. Destination Oneonta (local business association) annual meeting
5. Library program
6. United Methodist Church Council (next door neighbors)
7. Parents of Afternoon Adventures program (ages 5-7)
8. Oneonta Garden Club

Survey Results

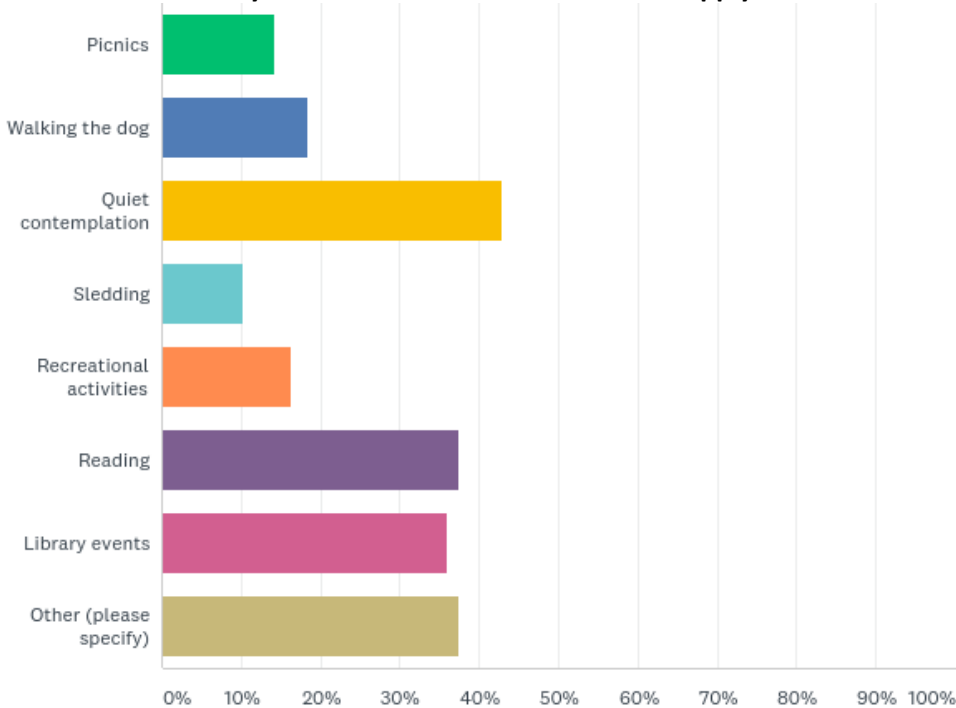
Q1: Currently, how satisfied are you with the Huntington Park?



Q2: What do you like most about the Huntington Park?

123 responded to this question and 35 skipped it. In general the statements referred to enjoying the park because it's a green space in the city, it's peaceful and relaxing.

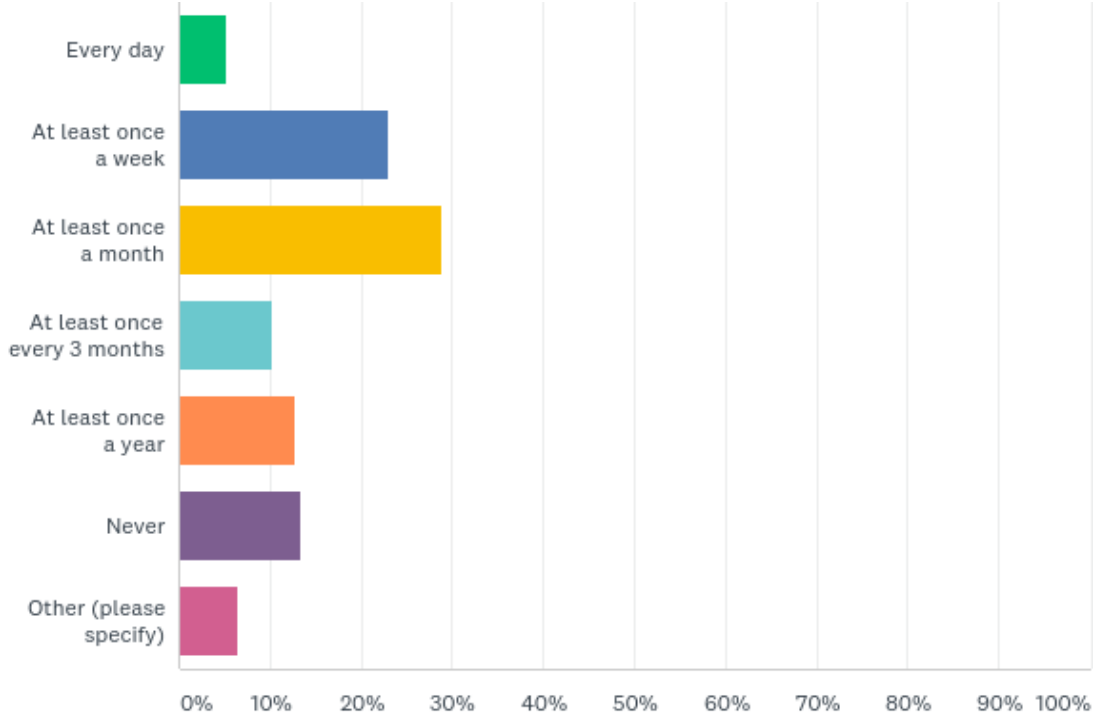
Q3: What activities do you use the Park for? Check all that apply.



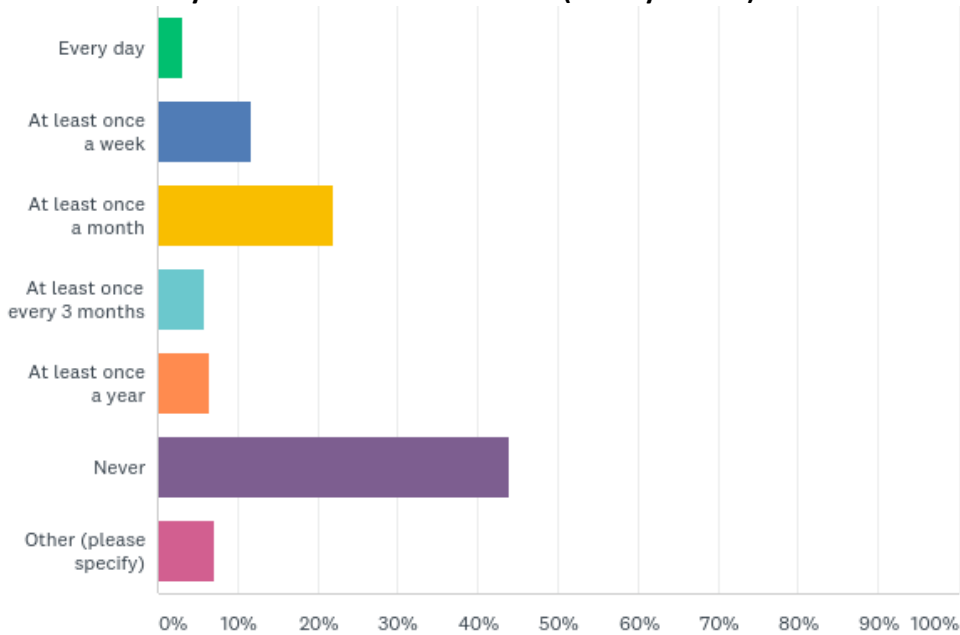
Q3. Other

Walking was the predominant response with some people walking for enjoyment and others walking to get somewhere else.

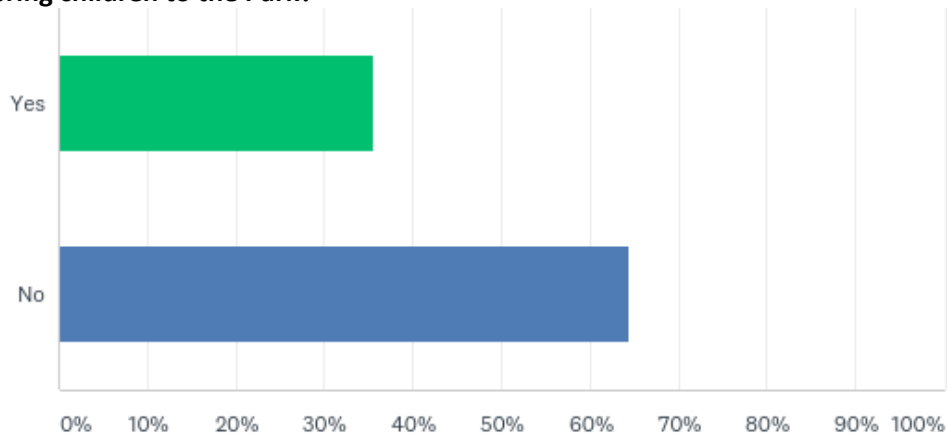
Q4: How often do you use the Park in the spring, summer or fall (for any reason)?



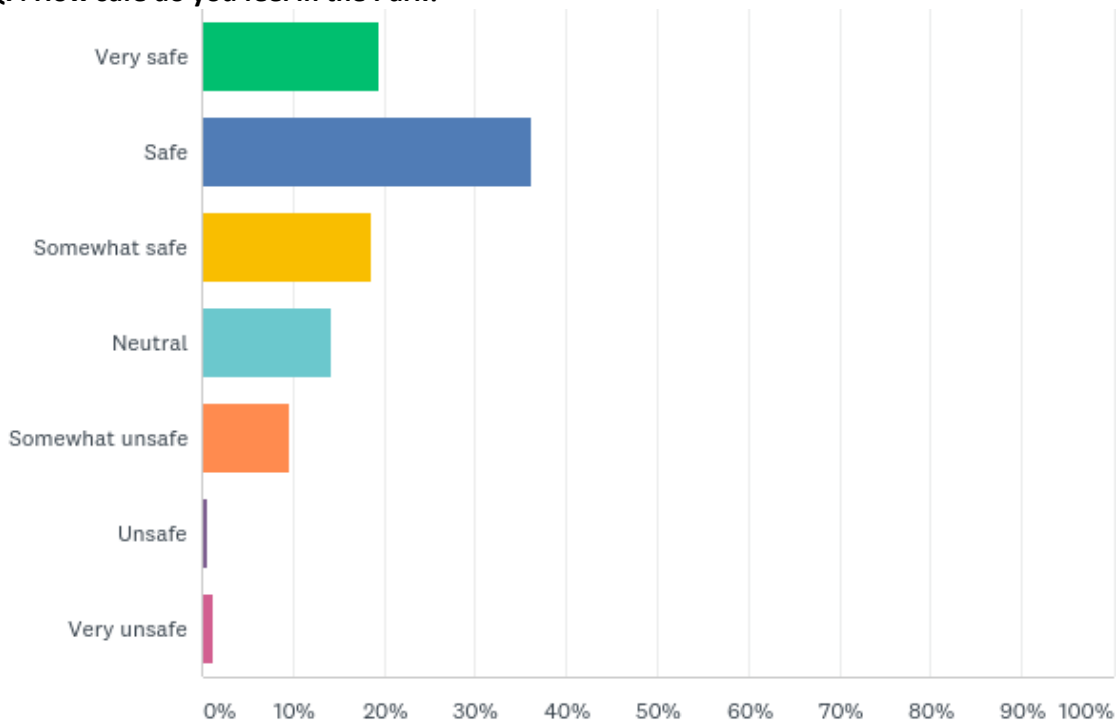
Q5: How often do you use the Park in the winter (for any reason)?



Q6: Do you bring children to the Park?



Q7: How safe do you feel in the Park?

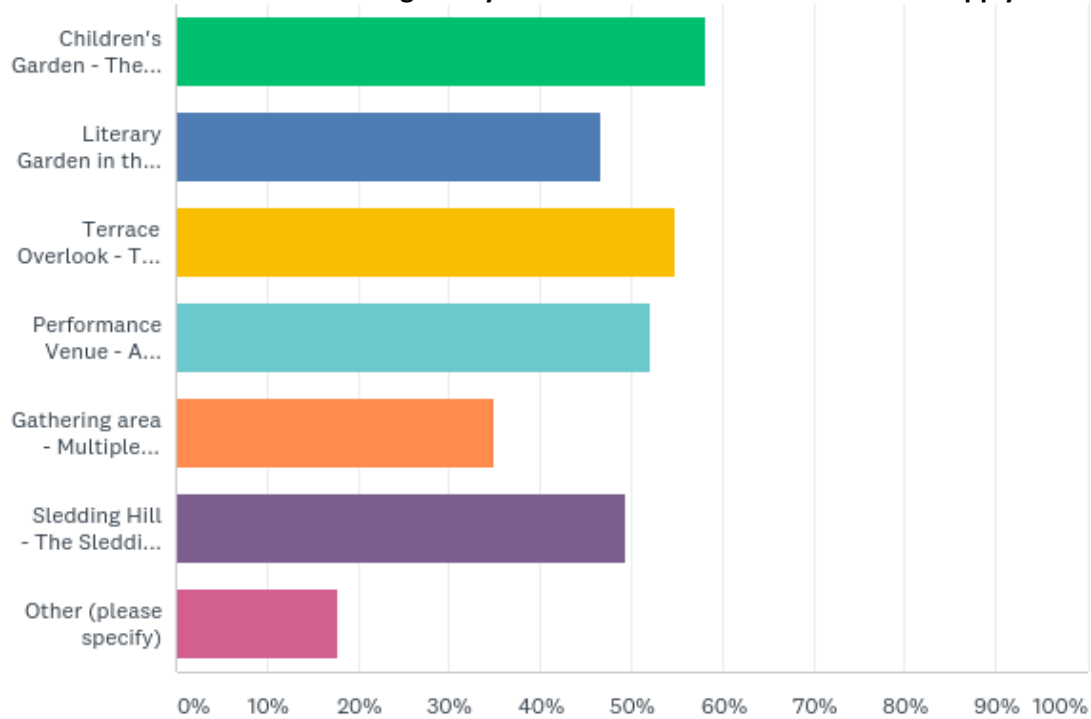


Q8: What are the reasons you don't use the Park?

87 Respondents answered and 71 skipped this question.

Most of the responses were that the park doesn't offer a reason for them to use it. The next most common response was that the park isn't considered safe. Many respondents stated that they don't live or work nearby, some had health or mobility issues and a few said that there is no seating.

Q9: What new areas in the Park design are you most interested in? Check all that apply.



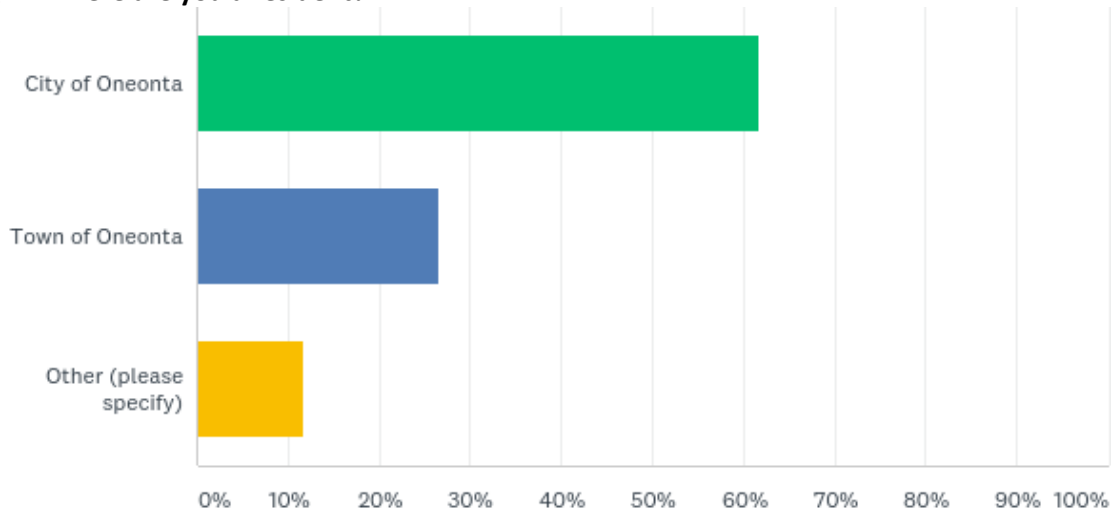
Q9: Other responses.

These responses were quite varied. A few people asked for a dog park, others want the benches back and there were a few comments about keeping it the way it is, leaving the trees alone, adding more security cameras and lighting, etc.

Q10: What is your age?

The ages ranged from 13 to 90 with an average of 57 years of age.

Q11: Where are you a resident?



Q12: Do you have other suggestions for the Huntington Park design?

The suggestions were difficult to group except for several responses that demanded that we not remove any more trees, that we include public art, more dog park requests, etc. One comment resonated with me that requested that the Gathering Area not impair the park walkers and runners. It makes sense that a seating area where all sidewalks converge could be very disruptive.

Summary

158 responses were collected on the survey. Some took the survey online, others in print, and comments were manually entered from people who did not take the survey. The ages of respondents ranged from 13 to 90 with an average of 57 years of age. Most lived in the City of Oneonta with the next largest group residing in the Town of Oneonta. Most respondents do not bring children to the park. During the winter season, most people never use the park but in the good weather, most people visited weekly or monthly.

The majority of respondents were neutral when asked if they are satisfied with the Huntington Park and most of the others were satisfied or very satisfied. The park is mostly used for quiet contemplation, reading, library events and walking. Respondents said that they like having a green space in the city that is peaceful and relaxing. Most responses indicate that people feel safe in the park, yet when asked why they don't use it, many indicated that the park isn't considered safe. The primary reason that the park isn't used was that there isn't a reason to use it.

Hoping to set priorities for the six different areas defined in the conceptual design, the survey asked which new areas they are most interested in. The Gathering Area had the least interest and all other areas had a range of 47% to 58% interest. The most popular area was the Children's Garden at 58% and the least popular was the Literary Garden at 47%. There isn't a strong and distinct interest in specific areas of the Park Design to help to determine priorities. Comments were made about other elements that the respondents would like to see in the Park. A few people asked for a dog park, others want the benches back and there were a few comments about keeping it the way it is, leaving the trees alone, adding more security cameras and lighting, etc.

Recommendations

In general, people view the Huntington Park as a nice green space in the middle of Oneonta but one that offers few amenities. As is typical, those that use the park have strong affinity for it but others don't feel that there is a reason to use it. Several comments were made that requested we not change it too much and to make sure that it remains park-like. After talking with several people about the Gathering Area, it is advisable to focus on making that space into a round-about for walkers and runners rather than a space with extensive seating. It could be designed to be a beautiful feature with patterns in stone or wood.

There are also several important changes that are not mentioned in the conceptual design. Adequate lighting is necessary to fully realize the library's vision of a park that is fully embraced by the community. In addition, a planned arboretum will enhance the long-term appeal of the park.

The next step is to seek funding from New York State. At this time, Thoma Development Consultants have been contracted to submit the grant application.