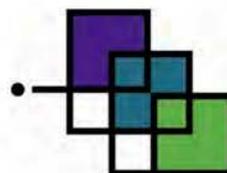


Syracuse Community Geography

# BARRY PARK COMMUNITY INPUT STUDY

---



**SYRACUSE  
COMMUNITY  
GEOGRAPHY**



---

# CONTENT

<b>PART I: ABOUT THE STUDY</b>	02
Introduction	02
Purpose of the Study	03
Study Design	03
Scope of the Study	03
About the Community Partners	04
About Syracuse Community Geography	04
About Barry Park	05
About the Barry Park Neighborhood	07
<b>PART II: DATA</b>	12
Survey	13
Moderated Discussion Groups	29
Interviews	32
Sketch Mapping	34
Observations	37
<b>PART III: RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	40
Recommendations	41
Conclusion	42
References	42
List of Acronyms	42

---



# PART I: ABOUT THIS STUDY

---

## INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2017, students of Syracuse Community Geography partnered with the University Neighborhood Preservation Association and the City of Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation, and Youth Programs to conduct a community input study about Barry Park. This report explains the goals and scope of the project, provides information about the park and its surrounding neighborhoods, describes the data collection methods utilized by student researchers, and summarizes the results of the study. Finally, this report also suggests recommendations for future action in Barry Park.



# PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

---

The City of Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation and Youth Programs and the University Neighborhood Preservation Association (the “community partners”) asked Syracuse Community Geography to conduct a community input study about Barry Park in order to systematically document how community members feel about the park’s current amenities and programming. By collecting this data, the community partners expressed a desire to learn more about how visitors use the park and the types of activities, events, and programming that neighbors currently enjoy, identify any particular needs or concerns, assess which of these concerns may be top priorities, and use this feedback to inform any future renovations or events for the park.

Though at the time of this study there were no concrete plans to renovate Barry Park, the community partners identified several reasons why making upgrades or renovations may be of interest to them. For example, Glen Lewis of the Parks Department said that he believed, “that the playground in the park [built in 2000] was at the end of its usual lifespan” (Lewis 2017). In the future, he hoped to see Barry Park as a place that would be more accessible to the community, including those with different abilities. He also identified parking and lighting as other areas of possible concern, adding that in the cycle of park renovation, Barry is due for some upgrades.

The community partners reached out to SCG for assistance because they do not have the time to undertake a large-scale community input study themselves, and may not have the access to analytical tools and resources that are available to SCG. By gathering community input upfront, whatever redevelopments happen down the road should ideally be more context-appropriate and, therefore, more popular with the Barry Park community, than if a redesign was undertaken without such input.

---

## Study Design

SCG student researchers worked as a team to design and execute the Barry Park community input study. In undertaking this project, the students’ main task was to use rigorous academic research skills to methodically gather community input about the park. With inclusivity as a guiding principle, researchers used multiple methods to collect information, including conducting a survey, moderated discussion groups, interviews, sketch mapping, and observations.

---

## Scope of the Study

Both of the community partners emphasized that the community input study must reach constituents who already use Barry Park, including neighboring residents as well as schools and organizations, like Ed Smith Elementary School and the Eastside Soccer League. As a neighborhood organization, UNPA was most concerned with hearing from residents of neighborhoods adjacent to Barry Park, while Glen Lewis of the Parks Department hoped to cast a wide net in order to gather feedback from as broad a base of Barry Park users and potential users as possible.

In conducting the survey, SCG strove to be as inclusive as possible with the aim of providing an opportunity for residents to express their attitudes and opinions. Neighborhood input is a critical element of community planning. Proactively gathering community input will help to ensure that future park redesign efforts reflect the interests of the community. As such, SCG prioritized current park users and also sought to gather feedback from community members whose voices are less often heard, such as youth, new Americans, and seniors.





## ABOUT THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation, and Youth Programs



The Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation, and Youth Programs (from hereon, “the Parks Department”) is a public entity responsible for maintaining approximately 1,000 acres of parks, playgrounds, and open spaces in the City of Syracuse as well as recreational parks programming such as youth swim lessons. The official mission of the Parks Department is to “cultivate and sustain leisure programming while providing attractive parks that will enrich the quality of life, for both residents and visitors, as well as preserve it for future generations” (Parks Department 2009). Barry Park is one of 172 parks managed by the Parks Department.

### University Neighborhood Preservation Association



Formed by University Neighborhood residents in 1973, the University Neighborhood Preservation Association’s (UNPA’s) mission is to “promote owner-occupancy of homes in the area east of the Syracuse University campus; market the University Neighborhood as a good place to live; and partner with municipal agencies, the University, and other neighborhood organizations to do so” (UNPA 2017). A 501(c)(3) non-profit, UNPA acts as a voice for neighborhood residents, for example, by representing residents on local task forces and councils. UNPA also works in partnership with other local organizations on neighborhood improvement projects and

serves as a clearinghouse for information about the University Neighborhood. Since Barry Park borders the University Neighborhood, many neighborhood residents use the park regularly. The Barry Park Association (BPA), an ad hoc committee of UNPA, organizes neighborhood events in the park like the Barry Park Fun Run. As UNPA Executive Director Rebecca Mannion describes, Barry Park is “a neighborhood asset” (Mannion 2017). As such, UNPA hopes that an updated park with regular programming will help build community and maintain the neighborhood as an attractive place to live in Syracuse.



## ABOUT SYRACUSE COMMUNITY GEOGRAPHY



The Syracuse Community Geography (SCG) program is a university-community collaboration that uses GIS mapping and spatial analyses to provide insight on pressing social issues. SCG accepts project requests for place-based research from community-based organizations in the Greater Syracuse Area and works in partnership with the local community to conduct research. Projects are wide-ranging and utilize a broad set of methodological approaches. Common themes among projects include a participatory approach to conducting the research and an emphasis on action.

SCG partners with diverse community organizations working across issue areas to: raise awareness about community resources and problems; advocate community concerns; inform programming and planning processes; and support community organizing. Professor Jonnell Robinson directs the SCG program and also teaches a bi-annual course entitled “Community Geography,” which trains undergraduate and graduate students from a range of disciplines in the theory and practice of community geography. The Barry Park community input study was conducted by students enrolled in that course during the Spring 2017 semester.

## History

Established in 1945, Barry Park is a neighborhood park that occupies thirteen acres of land on the southeastern side of Syracuse, New York. In 1946, plans were announced for park infrastructure, including tennis courts, a handball layout, paddle tennis facilities, the baseball diamond, a football field and grandstand, volleyball and basketball courts, horseshoe pitching, a playground, a wading pool, lawn space for concerts and pageants, a scenic overlook, a community building with lounges, a library, an auditorium, meeting rooms, and picnic tables. However, many of these plans were never realized.



In 1957, the park was named William A. Barry Park in honor of a former Commissioner of the Parks Department who had studied engineering at Syracuse University. News clippings from the Onondaga Historical Society reveal several additional important markers in Barry Park's history; for example, in 1974, when city council meetings were held to address the concerns of disgruntled park neighbors, who complained that late-night basketball players and partiers were making too much noise in the park. As a result, the basketball courts were moved farther into the park, and replaced on the Broad Street side with the tennis courts that exist today. City police also promised to spend more time in and around the park as a result of these meetings, particularly in the late evenings. At the same meetings, residents were reportedly informed that a \$250,000 skating rink for Barry Park had been allocated in the city's 1975 budget. Records do not indicate why this is the case but, as with many of the amenities planned in the 40s, the rink never materialized.

In 1994, members of the Southeast University Neighborhood Association (SEUNA), along with the East Side Neighborhood Organization (ESNO), and SUNY ESF students enrolled in a landscape architecture course, proposed a master plan for a park uplift. At the time, the results of community polling showed that most local residents favored additional playground facilities, tennis courts, improved parking, and improved maintenance of the park. Planned upgrades included adding a parking lot off Meadowbrook Drive, a parking lot at the south end of the park, earthwork, additional vegetation, playfields, and another drinking fountain, to a total estimated cost of \$320,000. Newspaper records do not indicate what amount was actually spent. Today, there continues to be only one drinking fountain in the park, near Broad Street.

The Barry Park Association, which still exists as an ad hoc committee of UNPA, was formed in 1998 with the goal of improving the playground. In 2000, the new playground structure was installed at a cost of \$25,000—\$20,000 of this money came from state funds and another \$5,000 from the Central New York Community Foundation. Though it was delayed due to poor weather and equipment problems, the playground was installed in just one week with the help of neighborhood volunteers.

Also in 2000, East Side Soccer, a volunteer-run soccer league that continues to use Barry Park today, raised \$68,000 to revamp the soccer fields. The Central New York Community Foundation, and the University Service Agreement Advisory Committee contributed the funds, with help from the league's own fundraising.



## Today



In addition to the baseball diamond, Barry Park features a field house, three multi-purpose athletic fields for soccer, football, ultimate Frisbee, or lacrosse; one full-size and two half-size basketball courts; and two tennis courts. The playground contains swings, slides, see-saws, and climbing bars. There are also benches for users to sit and relax; and several picnic tables in the shaded area next to the field house.

Situated at the convergence of Broad Street, Westcott Street, and Meadowbrook Drive, Barry Park borders the Westcott, Outer Comstock, and University neighborhoods. The surrounding area is highly residential and many park users reside within walking distance of the park. The park is also about one mile southeast—about a twenty-minute walking distance—from the Syracuse University and SUNY ESF campuses.

Barry Park also abuts the Meadowbrook detention basin, which was designed to hold storm water runoff. The popular walking trail around the detention basin is often mistakenly assumed to be part of Barry Park, but the land is owned and managed by Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection, not the Syracuse City Parks Department.



# ABOUT THE BARRY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Knowing that many Barry Park visitors live in the surrounding neighborhoods, SCG student researchers compiled the following demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey to get a better sense of who lives around Barry Park.



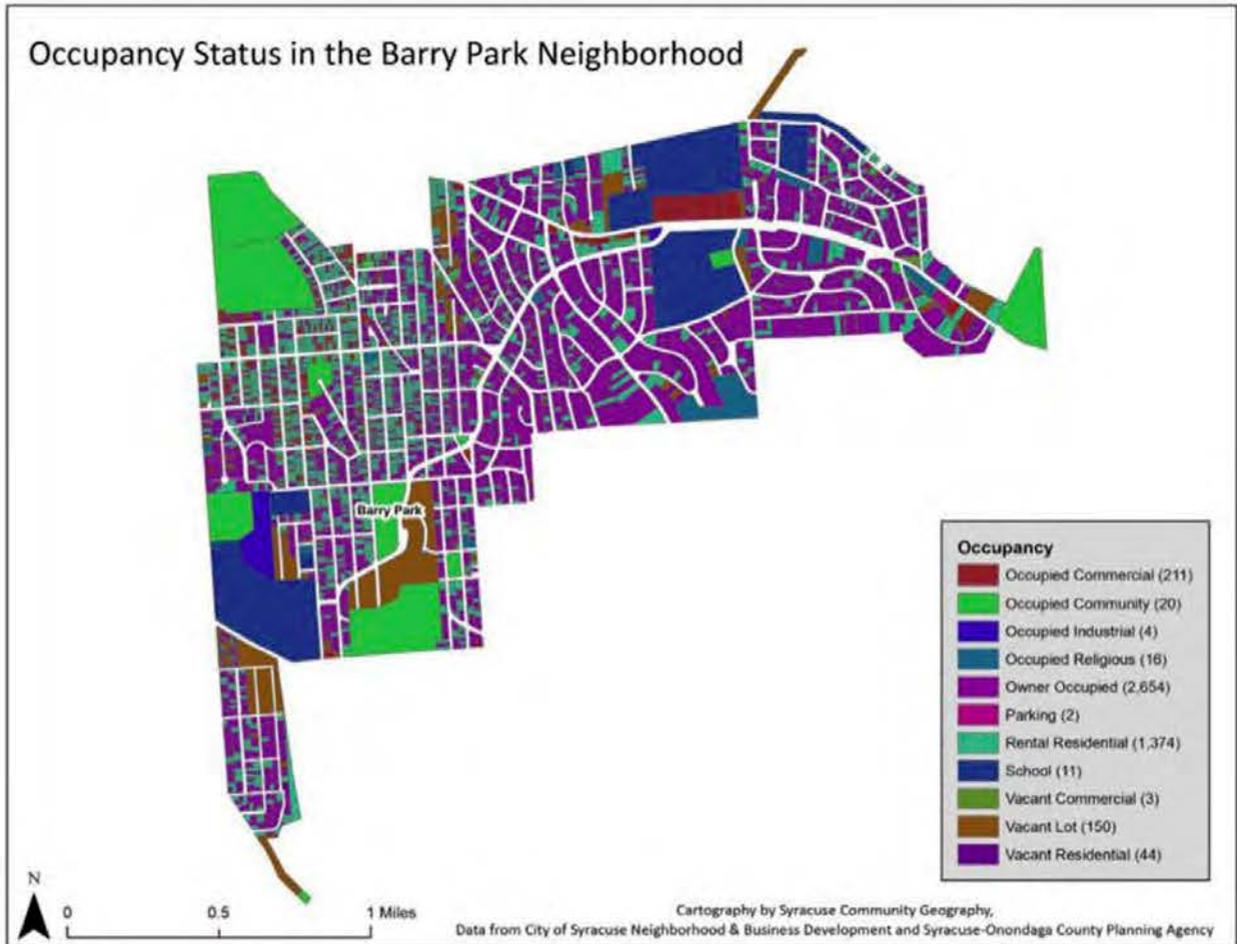
Data were available at the level of the census tract, which does not necessarily match neighborhood boundaries. Recognizing that neighborhood boundaries are fluid, student researchers decided to focus their analysis on four census tracts: 56.01, where Barry Park is located, and the three adjacent tracts 44, 45, and 46. For the purposes of this study, these four tracts are loosely referred to as the Barry Park Neighborhood.



# ABOUT THE BARRY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

## Occupancy

While predominantly residential, the Barry Park Neighborhood is comprised of a mix of renters and owner-occupied households. The following map details the occupancy status in the census tracts surrounding Barry Park, where 2,654 properties (about 59%) are owner-occupied while 1,374 are rental-residential (about 31%).

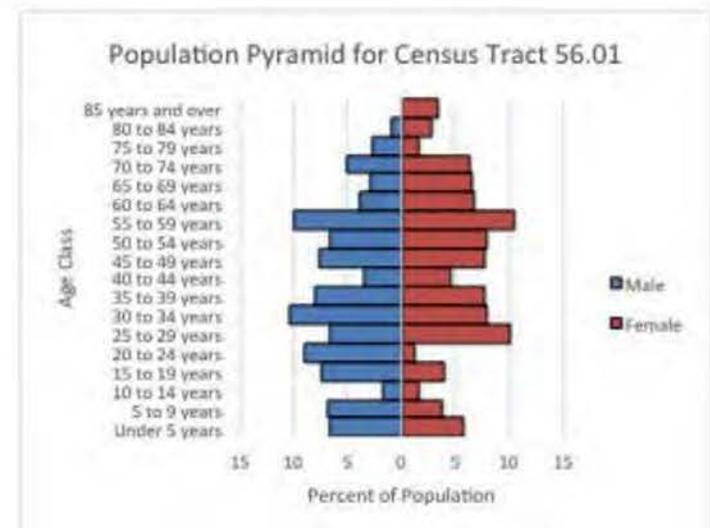
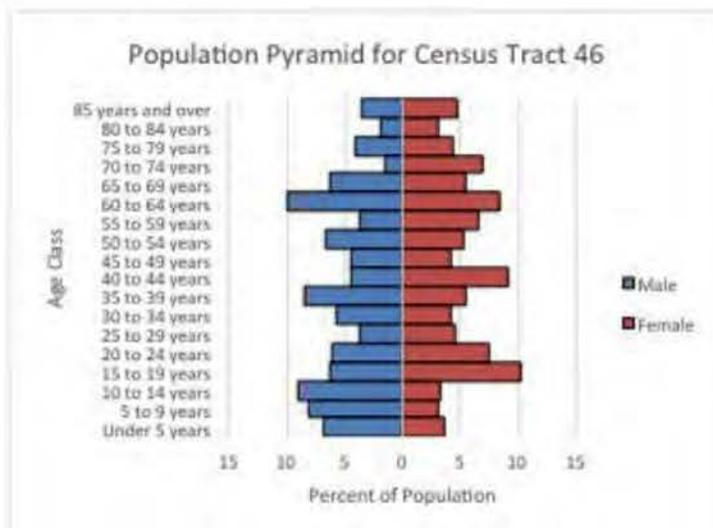
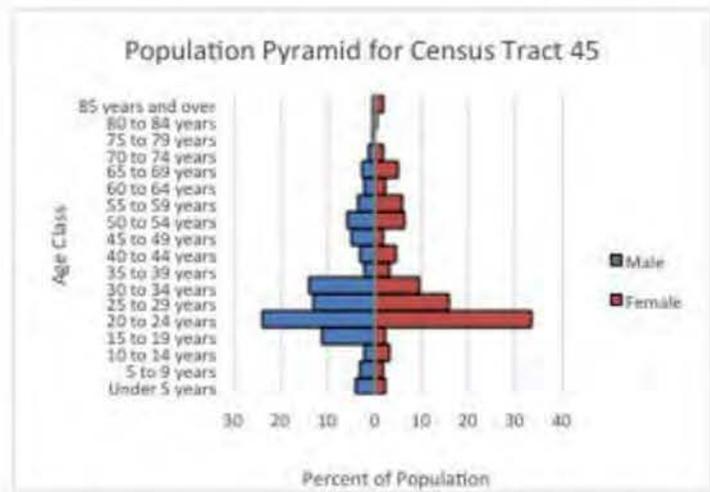
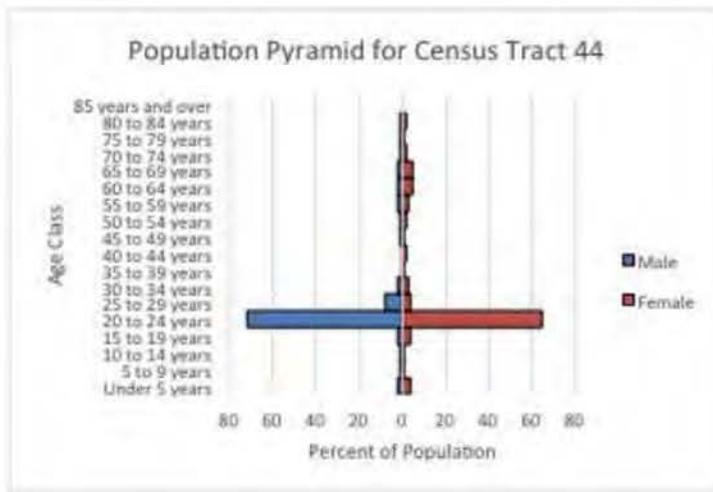




# ABOUT THE BARRY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

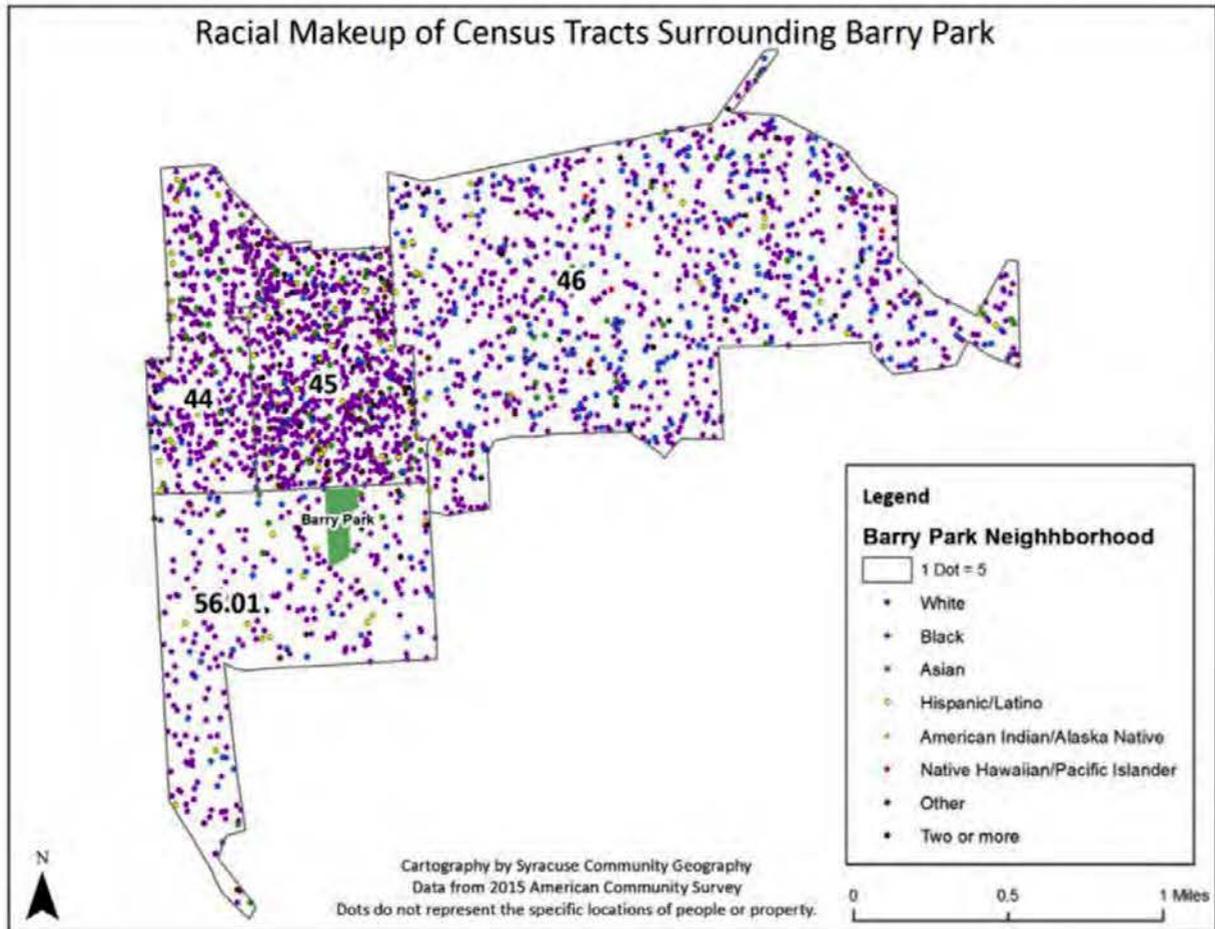
## Age

Next, in early conversations, the community partners asked SCG to verify demographic information about the Barry Park neighborhood, such as composition by age and race/ethnicity. Typically, older median age and a larger presence of families—as opposed to students, for example—is associated with higher rates of owner occupancy. As a result, it was important to get a clear picture of who lives in the census tracts around the park.



Of the census tracts around Barry Park, two (44 and 45) are relatively young areas, with median ages of 22 and 27 respectively. Many undergraduate and graduate students attending Syracuse University or SUNY ESF reside in these census tracts, thus accounting for the relatively young populations there. In comparison, the other two tracts (46 and 56.01) are relatively older, both with a median age of 42 years. This following graph represents the dualistic age composition of the Barry Park Neighborhood.

## Race/Ethnicity



In terms of racial composition, all four of these census tracts are majority white, with white residents comprising 70-85% of each tract. After that, the tracts vary somewhat in composition:

Census Tract 44 is approximately 7.3% Asian, 5.5% Black or African-American, 3.9% Hispanic/Latino, 1.5% Two or More Races, 0.5% Some Other Race, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0% American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Census Tract 45 is approximately 5.8% Asian, 5.6% Black or African-American, 5% Hispanic/Latino, 3.5% Two or More Races and Some Other Race, 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0% American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Census Tract 46 is 22% Black or African-American, 2.9% Two or More Races, 2.4% Hispanic/Latino and Asian, 1.1% Some Other Race, 0.8% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

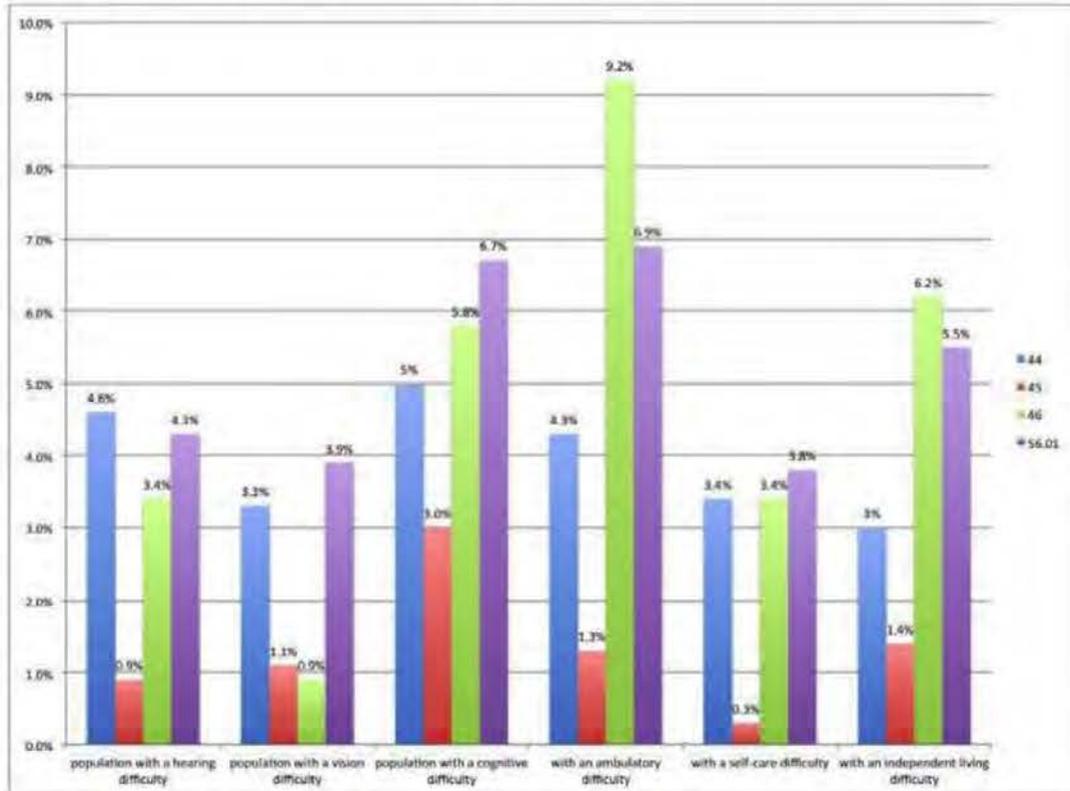
Finally, Census Tract 56.01 is 12.6% Black or African-American, 5.9% Hispanic/Latino, 4.3% Asian, 2.9% Two or More Races, 1.5% Some Other Race, and 0% American Indian or Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.



# ABOUT THE BARRY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

## Disability Characteristics

Next, since early conversations with the community partners suggested that the park should ideally serve persons of all levels and types of abilities student researchers analyzed disability characteristics in the census tracts surrounding Barry Park. Ambulatory difficulties, defined by the Census Bureau as “Having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs,” are most common in tracts 46 and 56.01, which are also the older of the four census tracts. This is the most noteworthy of the disability trends in the neighborhood.



## Local Schools

Finally, student researchers examined the composition of the two schools that are within walking distance of Barry Park—Ed Smith Elementary School (K-8) and Nottingham High School (9-12)—since UNPA reported that students from these schools regularly visit Barry Park. These schools serve 706 and 1,380 students respectively. Both schools are socially and economically diverse: For example, both schools are racially diverse (NYSED 2016a and 2016b). Additionally, at Ed Smith, 26% of students are categorized as having a disability, while 59% are economically disadvantaged and 8% are English language learners. At Nottingham, 18% are characterized as having a disability, 74% are economically disadvantaged, and 17% are English language learners.

## Summary

Overall, Barry Park is located at the intersection of several census tracts on the southeastern edge of Syracuse. As a multi-use neighborhood park, Barry Park draws a diverse range of users from throughout the city—not just these four tracts. However, it is useful to note the composition of the surrounding neighborhood to better understand the geographic context within which Barry Park is situated.



# PART II: DATA

---



# SURVEY

To gather broad-based input, SCG researchers designed and administered a survey about Barry Park. Intended to gather both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (close-ended or check box) feedback from as broad a group as possible, the survey was designed in an electronic format using a survey collection software tool called Qualtrics and disseminated via an emailed link, although a paper version was also mailed to immediate park neighbors. Neighbors of the park received a survey by mail to ensure that all proximate neighbors received the survey and had the opportunity to participate.

The survey was designed to take 10-15 minutes to complete and consisted of a mix of open- and closed-ended questions, as well as a map where participants could indicate where they spend time in the park. The survey was piloted among members of UNPA and BPA prior to dissemination. Piloting the survey enabled researchers to make changes to unclear questions and ensure that the list of questions was appropriate for soliciting the information the community partners wanted.

The survey was distributed via numerous email listservs in the neighborhoods surrounding Barry Park. A list of listservs along with their approximate number of recipients is included below. When possible, a description of recipients is also provided. It is important to note that more than one adult in a household may subscribe to a listserv and that some neighbors are subscribed to multiple neighborhood listservs. For example, two married adults with children may subscribe to UNPA, WNA, and Ed Smith while other families in the neighborhood may not subscribe to any listservs. The choice to use these listservs was based on suggestions by community partners and other neighborhood leaders.

## Web-based Survey Distribution

Neighborhood Group	Social Media	No. of Recipients	Description of Recipients
UNPA	Facebook: 567 likes	4,500	UNPA grant and loan recipients and neighbors who sign up at events or on website
Ed Smith PTO		508	Parents of Ed Smith students, alumni families, faculty, staff, other Syracuse City School District staff
Ed Smith K-8 Staff		143	Ed Smith Staff
H.W. Smith K-8 Staff	Facebook: 218 likes	118	H.W. Smith School teachers/staff
H.W. Smith K-8 PTO			Parents of H.W. Smith Students
Nottingham High School Staff		150	Nottingham High School teachers/staff
Syracuse Montessori School Staff		23	Montessori School teachers/staff
Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today 5	Facebook	300	People who have signed up to receive TNT correspondence
Westcott Community Center	Monthly e-newsletter & Facebook: 200 likes	466	WCC members, mostly neighborhood residents (about 85-90%), but some non-neighborhood residents
Westcott Neighborhood Association	Mail chimp listserv & website	286	Includes a diverse group, both in age and home occupancy type. Recipients sign up at WNA meetings or events like the Street Fair.
Southeast University Neighborhood Association		150	Southeast University neighborhood residents
Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association		300	Mostly homeowners, some apartment dwellers, renters, and a few students.
Sherman Park Association		166	Sherman Park residents and neighbors.
Berkeley Park Association		80	
The STAND	Facebook: 515 likes		



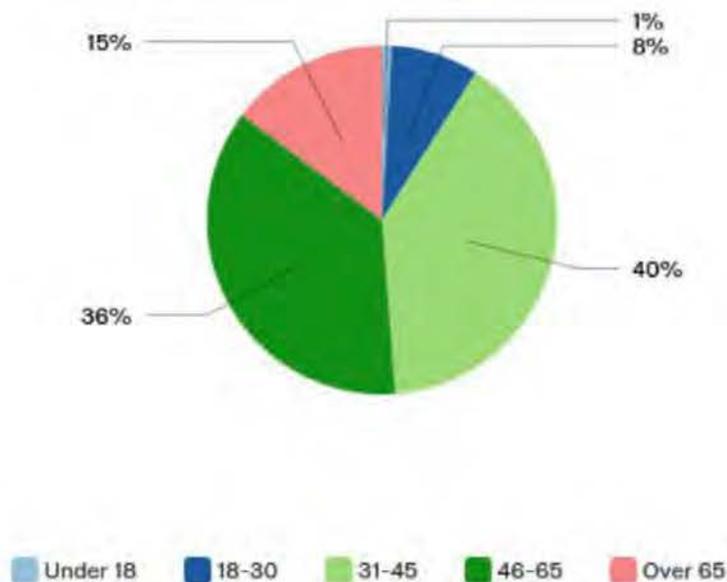
# SURVEY

SCG initially distributed the emailed survey on April 6, 2017. Three reminder emails were also sent out. By the end of data collection on May 1, there were 566 responses.

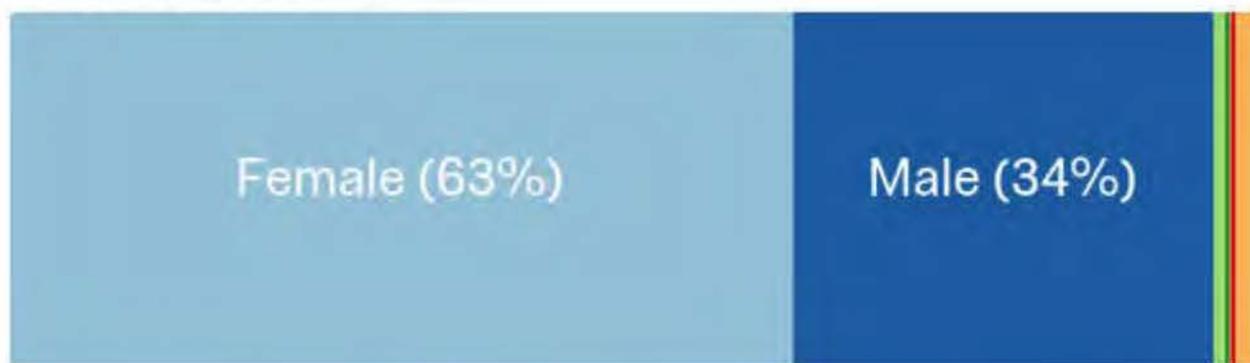
## Survey Respondents

SCG collected the following demographic information from respondents:

### Survey Respondent Age



### Survey Respondent Gender





# SURVEY

## Survey Respondents

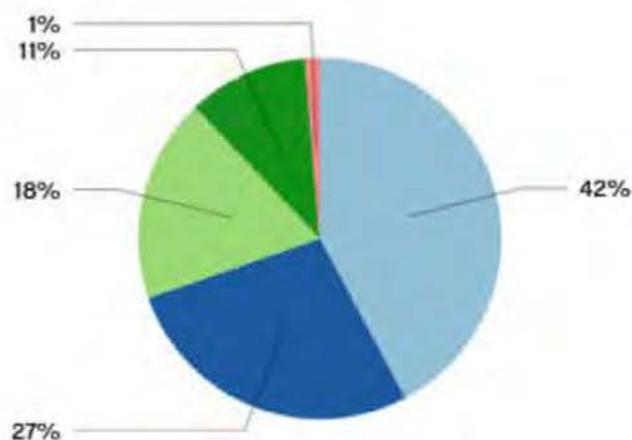
### Survey Respondent Race/Ethnicity



- Asian/Pacific Islander (3%, 13)
- Black or African-American (4%, 17)
- Hispanic/Latino (3%, 12)
- Native American/American Indian (1%, 5)
- White (83%, 390)
- Other: (1%, 7)
- Prefer not to say (6%, 28)

Those who specified an additional response for "Other" identify as either Middle-Eastern or Euro-American.

### Approximate Distance from Barry Park



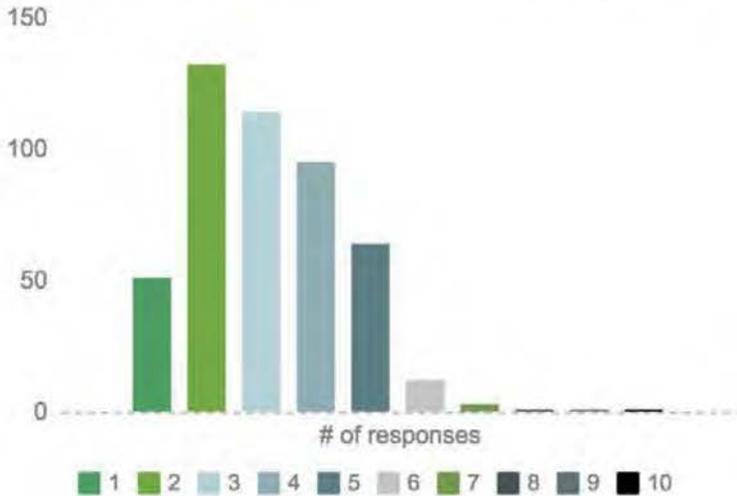
- 0-0.5 miles
- 0.6-1 miles
- 1.1-2 miles
- >2 miles
- I don't know



# SURVEY

## Household Size and Composition

The average household size of the respondent was 3 people, as was the median. The mode was 2 people, with the overall breakdown of responses as follows:

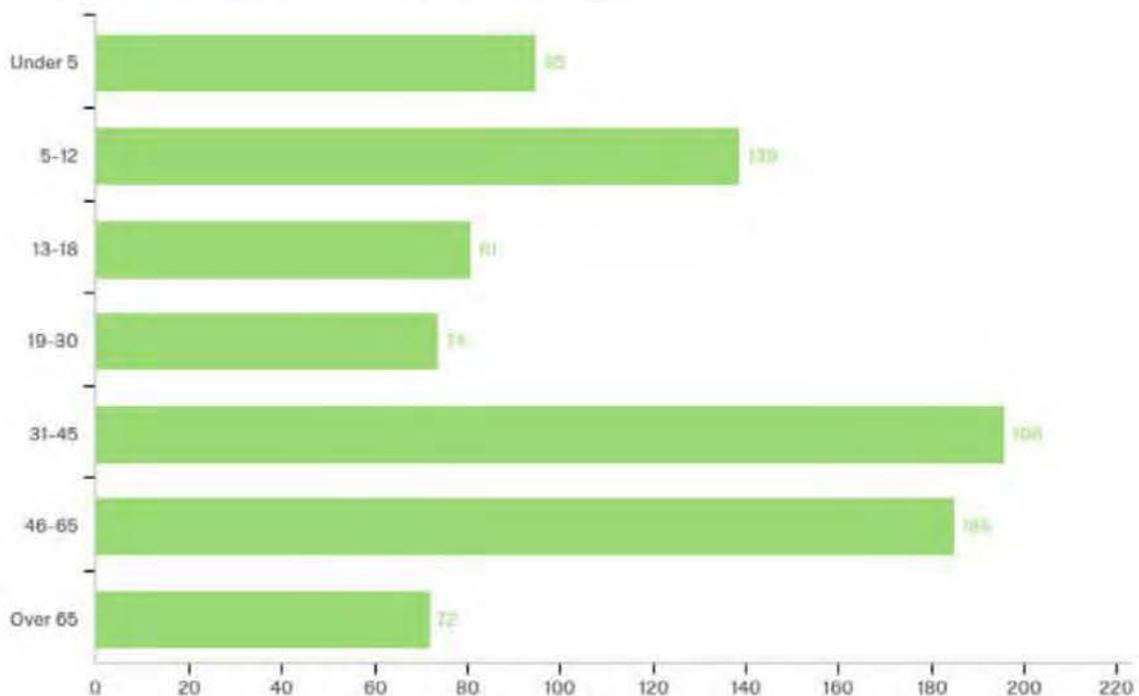


In several cases, respondents indicated that there used to be more people in the household, for example, before children left for college. In this case, SCG used the lower number (indicating people currently living in the house) for the purposes of analysis.

## Of the people in your household, how many use Barry Park? Please specify a number.

Though answers to this question varied, participants indicated that most if not all members of their household visited the park.

## Please indicate the age range of the people who visit Barry Park in your household. Check all that apply.





# SURVEY

## Results

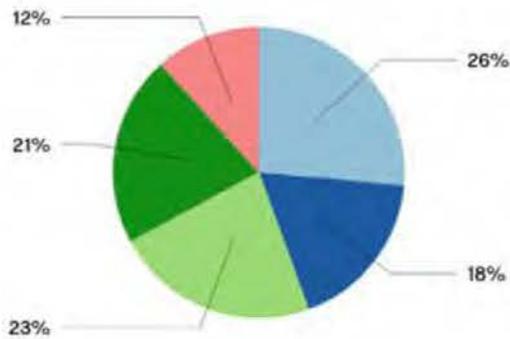
The following summarizes key results of the survey. Due to the high response rate and the many open-ended questions included on the survey, there is not space to reproduce the responses in full here. However, a complete copy of the survey data is available upon request (see <http://communitygeography.org/projects/BarryPark>).

### Have you ever visited Barry Park?

98% of respondents had visited Barry Park; 2% had not.

### How often do you visit Barry Park, on average?

How Often People Visit Barry Park

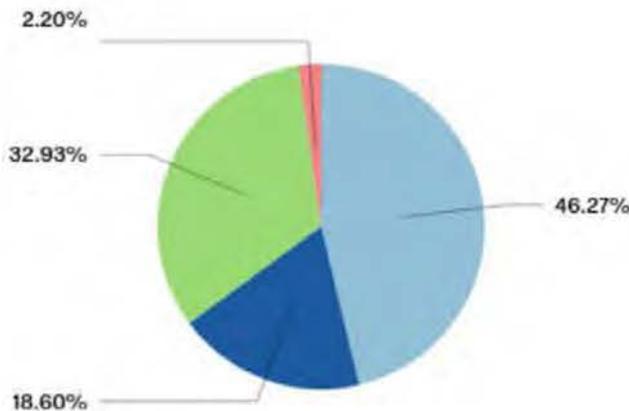


Of the 12% who specified "Other" as a response, answers ranged from "it depends on the time of year" and "almost every day" to "twice, ever" and "At 89, it's hard to get there."

More than once a week    Once a week    Monthly    A few times per year    Other

### How do you get to Barry Park?

How People Get to Barry Park



For "Other," respondents specified running, skateboarding, and riding a scooter as alternative modes of transportation to the park. No one reported taking a bus to get to Barry Park.

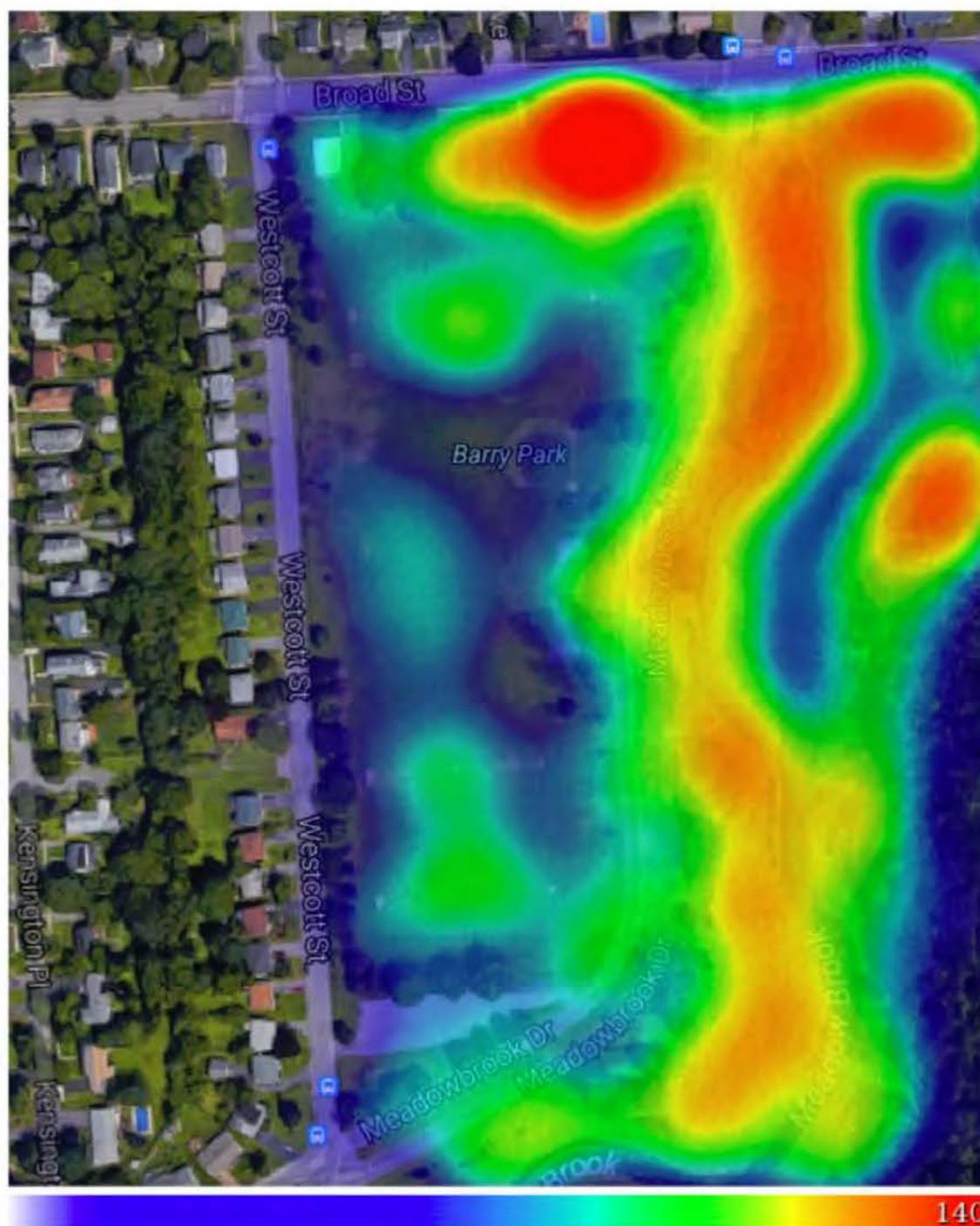
Walk    Bike    Drive    Bus    Other;

## 06

## SURVEY

Please indicate where you spend most of your time in the park, including the Meadowbrook Pond area. Click places on the map.

Red areas include the most concentrated areas of activity by survey respondents; blue, the least.

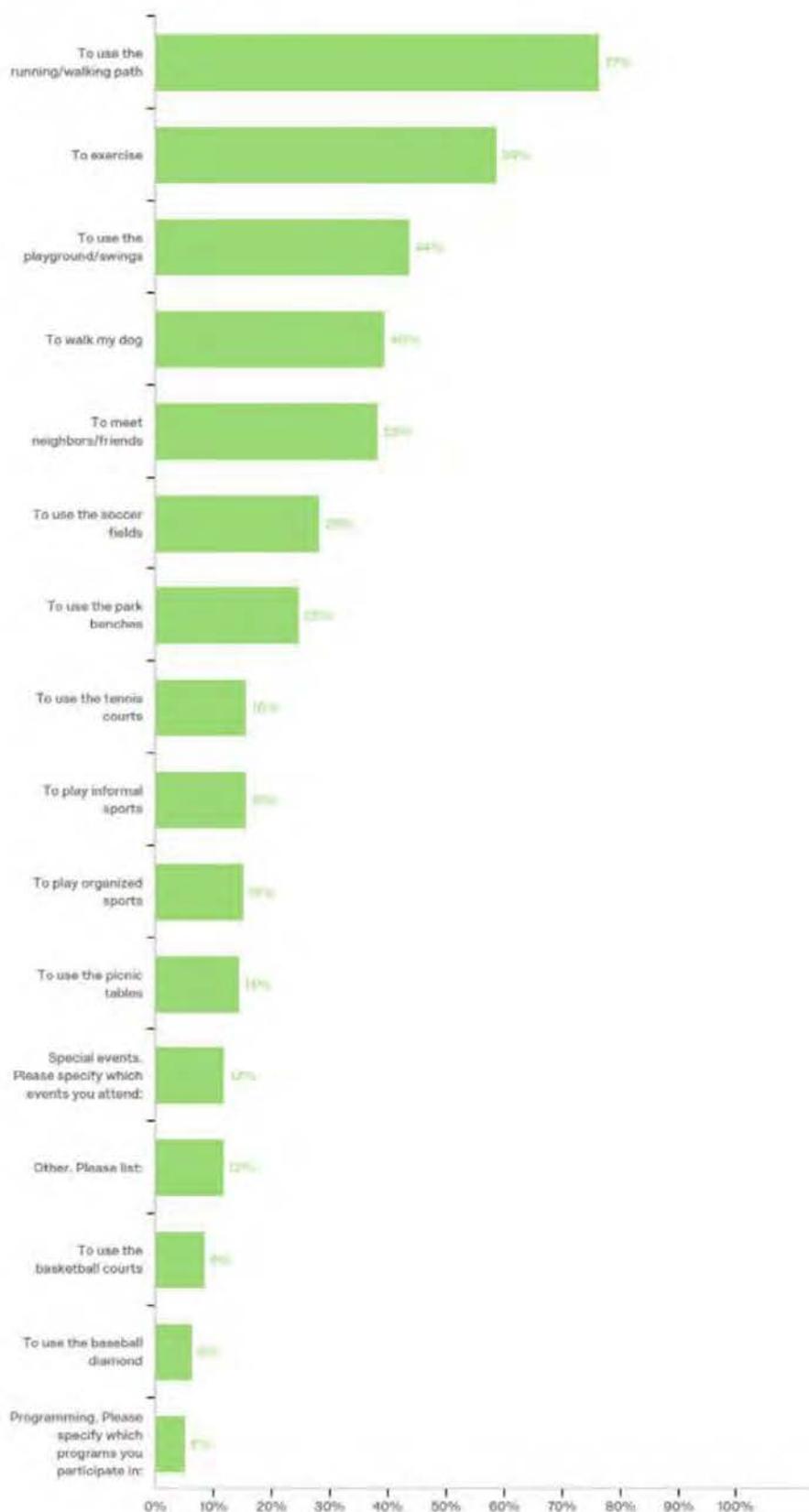




# 06 SURVEY

Why do you visit Barry Park? Check all that apply.

Why People Visit Barry Park



For "Other," respondents noted:

- To watch the lunar eclipse
- To play Pokemon Go
- Eastside Soccer
- Syracuse City School District Modified Soccer
- To cross country ski
- To launch rockets and fly kites
- To bird watch
- Fresh air
- To be in the forest
- To fly model sailplanes
- Little Free Library
- See lilacs and trees
- Disc golf practice
- Volunteering: tree planting/mulching
- Climb trees
- Collect pine cones



## SURVEY

---

### What do you like most about Barry Park, as it is now? Please describe.

SCG researchers classified responses to this question into the following thematic categories, which are as follows, listed from most responses to least as noted in the parentheses (Note that some respondents provided more than one answer. Each answer was counted separately):

- Walking trail (131)
- Nature (95)
- Proximity (74)
- Open green space (69)
- Community/diversity (67)
- Variety/diversity of activities/spaces (59)
- Playground use (54)
- Sports fields (34)
- Traffic flow (32)
- Cleanliness (22)
- Safety (19)
- Accessibility (18)
- Exercise (12)
- Biking (9)
- Little Free Library (8)
- Not too busy (7)
- Tennis court (6)
- Benches (4)
- Parking (3)
- Drinking fountain (2)
- Tree climbing (1)
- Trash cans (1)
- ADA swing (1)
- Restrooms (1)
- Movie nights (1)

### What, if anything, do you dislike about Barry Park as it is now? Please describe.

SCG researchers classified responses to this question into the following thematic categories, which are as follows, listed from most responses to least as noted in the parentheses:

- Bathrooms (62)
- Playground (56)
- Dogs (off leash/cleanliness) (38)
- Trash (need more trashcans) (28)
- Sidewalk/road safety (32)
- Lack of benches/tables/seating (20)
- Trail/path (narrow/not paved/muddy) (19)
- Field/grass (muddy/un-mowed/holes) (19)
- Shade (lack of) (9)
- Water fountain (need one on field side) (6)
- Fieldhouse (6)
- Lighting (4)
- Nuisance/crime (1)





## SURVEY

---

### What, if any, events or programming would you like to see hosted in Barry Park? Please describe.

Several common themes emerged from this question.

1. Respondents like the existing events held in Barry Park, like the Fun Run and community potlucks.
2. When suggesting new events or programming, many emphasized that additions should maintain the family-friendly, community-oriented ethos of Barry Park's current programming. Many mentioned the importance of programming for youth in particular.
3. With those values in mind, many of the most popular suggestions revolved around adding performance and art-related events to the park, particularly in the summer months: live music/concerts (53), movie nights (37), festivals (19), art classes/installations/sales (11), and live theater/dance (9).
4. Another popular suggestion was for food-related events. Many respondents say that they enjoy the community potlucks that already happen, and would like to see more neighborhood potlucks/cookouts/barbecues/picnics at Barry Park (10). Many also suggested having food truck rodeos or regularly stationed food trucks at the park (6). There was also a suggestion to host a farmer's market at Barry Park (7).
5. Another popular theme was exercise, and particularly the possibility of having guided exercise classes or events in the park. The most popular suggestions in this vein included yoga classes (14) and sports tournaments, including sports for adults (field days, basketball or soccer tournaments, races) (9).
6. Next, a number of respondents highlighted that organizers could do more to make Barry into an educational space for children and youth. Nine respondents recommended hosting guided nature walks in the park, installing informational signs for bird watchers, organizing workshops on edible plants, and similar activities.
7. Finally, it is important to note that 7 respondents mentioned that they do not want to see added events or programming at Barry Park. Some of these respondents said that they like the current events, but do not want the park to become overly busy. Others said that they feel the park is already over-used, and do not want more noise in the neighborhood or additional wear-and-tear to the park.



In addition to the themes listed above, this question generated a number of creative responses. The remainder of those responses, which each received five or fewer nominations, are as follows: fireworks, more field parties, summer camps, park cleanups/stewardship activities, playing music (singing, drum circles), gardening, martial arts, tai chi, ping pong, Frisbee, hooping, crafts for children, archery, kickball, ice rink, bicycle race, magic show, acrobats, go-cart racing, stargazing, water feature, walking/running clubs, pumpkin carving contest, snow sculpture competition, dog agility course, dog training classes, dog park/run/area, bike rentals, bridge across the detention pond, swap meet, Christmas tree, book fair, windmill, solar panels, community bulletin board, mile markers around the pond, pet rescue groups, neighborhood watch meeting with police, newcomer's welcome events, bathrooms, hot cocoa social, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, fishing clinics, activities for older adults, photography, meet the mayor/political events, golf, sledding, pavilion/shelter structure, and chess.

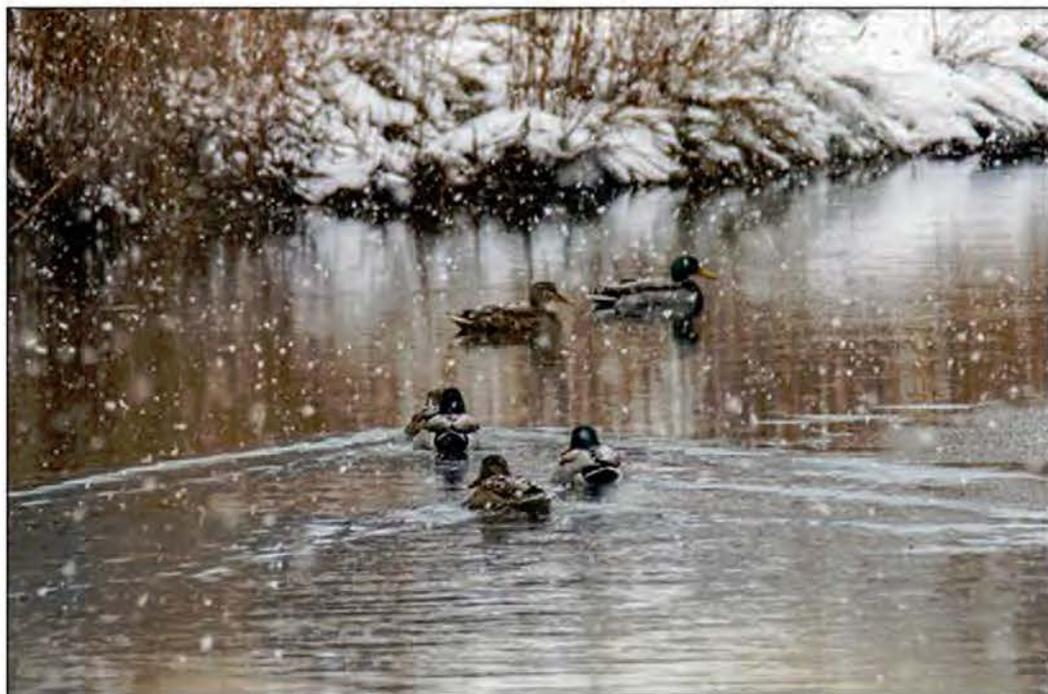


## SURVEY

### What amenities or features would you like to see added in Barry Park? Please describe.

SCG researchers classified responses to this question into the following thematic categories, which are as follows, listed from most responses to least as noted in the parentheses:

- Bathrooms (open/accessible/additional) (74)
- Seating/benches (45)
- Playground (improve/upgrade/new structure) (37)
- Dog-related amenities (dog park or pet waste stations) (33)
- Water
  - Recreational features (17)
  - Drinking (30)
  - Pond water quality (4)
- Picnic areas
  - Tables (23)
  - Grills (5)
- Trash cans (26)
- Landscaping (2)
  - Trees (22)
  - Plants, flowers (4)
- Exercise trail, circuit trail, workout equipment (12)
- Pavilion structure (9)
- Lights/lighting (7)
- Art (5)
- Skate park (5)
- Vendors/food trucks (4)
- Garden (4)
- Additional basketball courts (3)
- Chess table (3)
- Outdoor skating rink (2)
- Volleyball (2)
- Cross-country ski trails (2)
- Events (2)
- Disc golf (2)
- Camera (1)
- Bocce ball court (1)
- Pickle ball court (1)
- Hopscotch surface (1)
- BMX (1)
- Batting cage (1)
- Paddle boats (1)
- Diaper changing area (1)
- Tea house (1)
- Screen for movie nights (1)
- Vending machines (1)

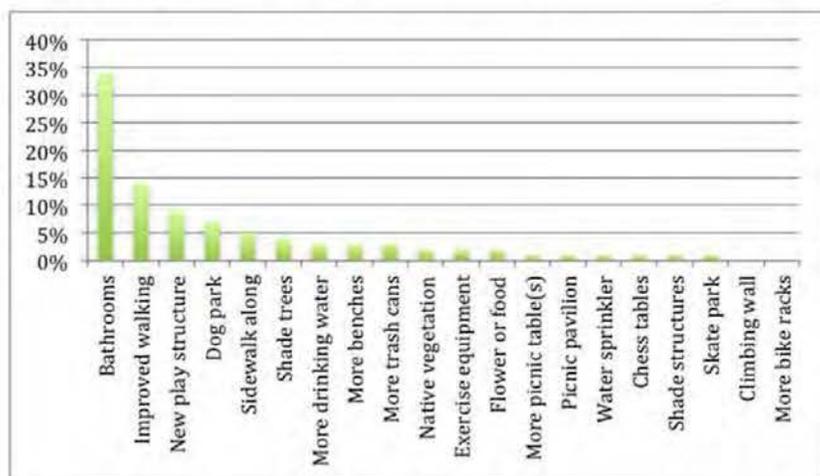




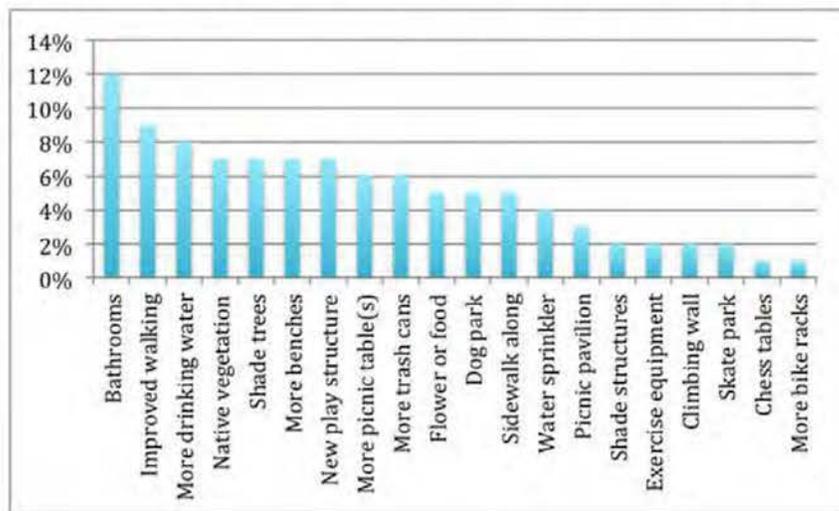
## SURVEY

Please indicate your preferences for new or upgraded amenities in Barry Park. Rank your top five choices by order of preference (1=most preferred). You may only rank five. If you would like amenities that are not listed, use "other" to explain and rank your preferences.

Amenities ranked as #1, by percent of responses ranking that amenity as #1 preference:



Amenities ranked as #2, by percent of responses ranking that amenity as #2 preference:

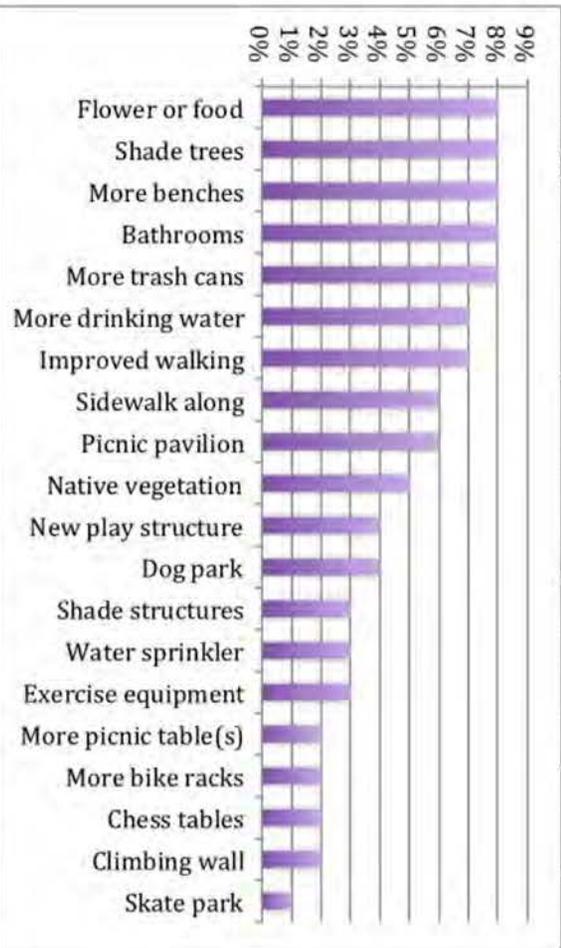


For each option, 5% or fewer respondents selected "Other" as a preference. For this question, "Other" choices included wind chimes around the walking trail, a fishing pier, more basketball courts, a proper and safe school to replace or augment Ed Smith, food and drink vendors, a dedicated space for bike riding (for kids), a batting cage, an extensive forest, a fenced-in playground/barrier around the playground, lights, a farmer's market, a formal fountain, a BMX track, a disc golf course, some catchable fish species in the detention basin, a sidewalk on the trail side on Broad Street, swimming pool, grills, gazebo/stage, pet waste stations, vendors for movies/sports, resurfaced courts, dredged/cleaned basin, sand area, walking loop in park, wedding area, groomed cross-country ski trails, water park, ice skating rink, universal access points to the edge of the detention basin for the mobility impaired, bird feeders, art trail.

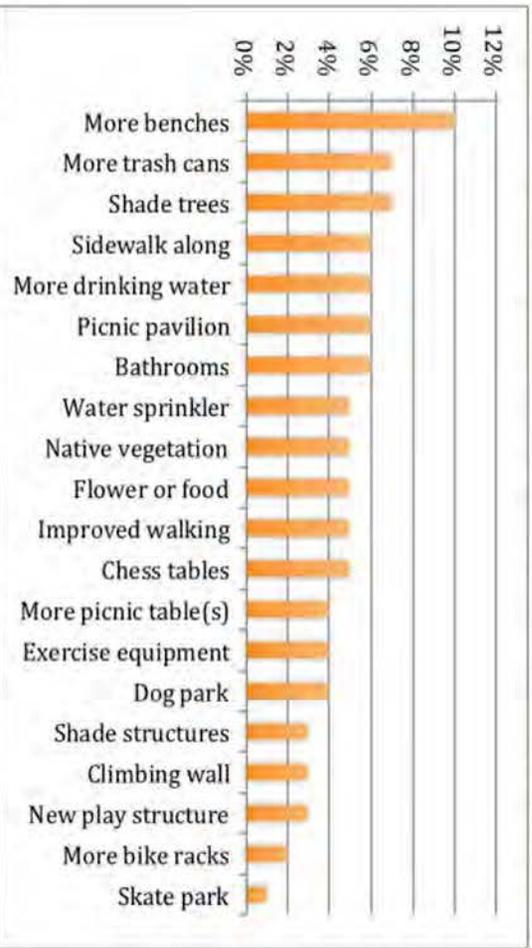


# SURVEY

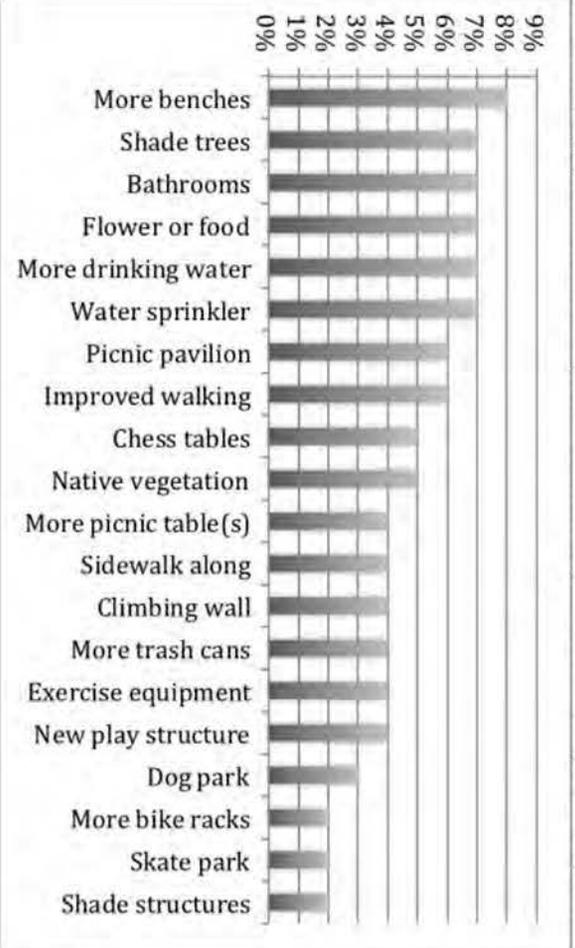
Amenities ranked as #3, by percent of responses ranking that amenity as #3 preference:



Amenities ranked as #4, by percent of responses ranking that amenity as #4 preference:

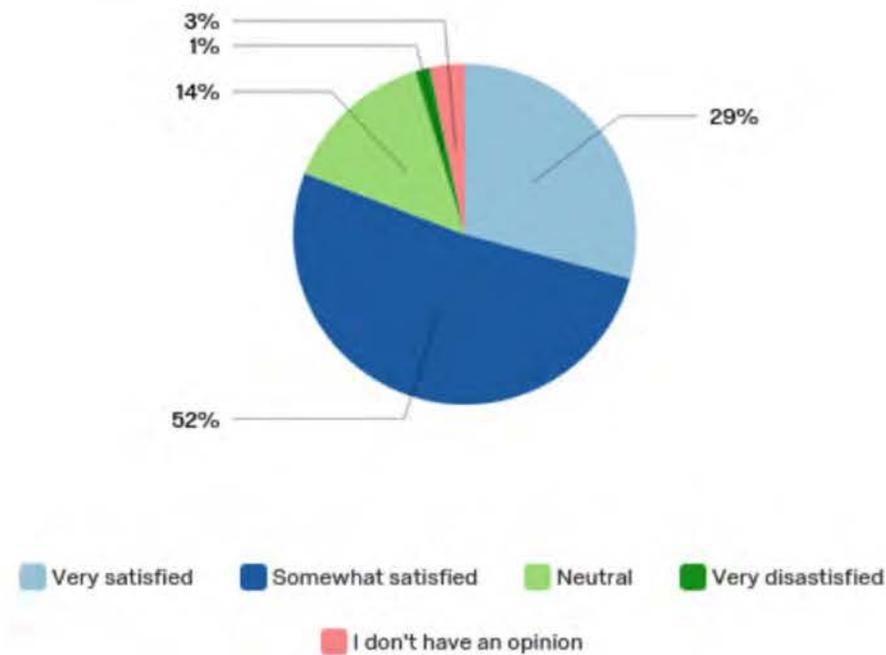


Amenities ranked as #5, by percent of responses ranking that amenity as #5 preference:



Think about the amenities in Barry Park (e.g. playground, soccer fields, benches). Overall, how satisfied are you with the amenities in Barry Park?

Barry Park Amenities Satisfaction





## SURVEY

---

### Proximate Neighbors

In addition to the online survey, a paper copy was sent to every proximate park neighbor. SCG researchers felt it was important to collect information from these neighbors specifically, since they likely have a unique perspective from living directly along the park. Of 50 paper surveys that were sent out to park neighbors, 22 were returned from these respondents.

The results of the proximate neighbor surveys largely tracked the trends of the online survey. Proximate neighbors most value the walking trail, sense of community, variety of spaces and activities in the park, and, not surprisingly, the park's proximity.

However, when asked what they disliked about Barry Park, several proximate neighbors raised complaints about traffic that did not come up in the other surveys. In particular, two proximate neighbors report issues with cars speeding on the Westcott side of the park. While some respondents say they do not like the new traffic configuration on Meadowbrook Drive through the park, others said they approve of the new arrangement and find it an improvement to the park and surrounding traffic patterns. One respondent mentioned that parking can get congested at the corner of Westcott and Broad Streets. This becomes a particular problem when a bus tries to round that corner.

There were no discernable trends in the responses from proximate neighbors about what amenities or events they would like to see added in the park. Aside from the suggestions already included in the online survey, proximate neighbors suggested a pickle ball court, speed bumps on Westcott Street, bird boxes, a "dressed up" park entrance on Broad Street, a gazebo, and lower swings. The suggested events duplicated those collected in the online survey.

When asked to rank their preferences for new or upgraded amenities in Barry Park, proximate neighbors prioritized accessible/improved bathrooms, flower/food gardens, more benches, a sidewalk along Westcott Street, and native vegetation.





## SURVEY

---

### Limitations of Survey Data

The survey is limited by the demographics of its respondents. Of the 566 participants that took the survey, 83% of those respondents are White, which reflects the composition of the Barry Park Neighborhood, although the response rate for African Americans of 4% was low compared to the overall neighborhood composition. This may reflect the composition of the listservs targeted. Anecdotal evidence suggests, for example, that Syracuse's growing refugee population uses Barry Park, but it is unlikely that the survey reached refugees. Also, the survey was only available in English, so it is possible that if non-English speakers received the survey, they were not able to complete it.

Survey respondents also tended overwhelmingly to be middle-aged, with about 40% of respondents in the 31-45 year old age range and another 36% in the 46-65 year old range. Again, anecdotal and observational evidence suggest that youth are frequent visitors to Barry Park, but their voices were less often captured in the survey data. However, in many cases, it is likely that the female head of household took the survey on behalf of the family unit and commented on activities and amenities important to themselves as well as their family.

Finally, the vast majority of respondents (about 70%) live within 1 mile of Barry Park. While many park visitors do live within close proximity, not all do, and the survey was not able to capture input from residents of other areas of Syracuse who commute from farther away to visit Barry Park and therefore are likely not subscribed to neighborhood-based listservs.

### Strengths of Survey Data

Despite these limitations, the survey was an effective tool for reaching a large number of community members. SCG is pleased with the number of responses and feels that the survey effectively captured some key trends. The survey helps legitimize anecdotal evidence and does emphasize areas of priority interest/concern among a large swath of park users.

Disseminating the survey also acted as one means of advertising the study. The email that was sent with the survey link offered community members information about the study as well as other opportunities to provide input.

To complement the information provided by the survey, SCG researchers also collected community input through moderated discussions, interviews, sketch mapping, and firsthand observations. The results of each mode of data collection, as well as the strengths and limitations of each, are discussed below.





## MODERATED DISCUSSION GROUPS

---

SCG student researchers conducted a total of four discussions led by a moderator and recorded through handwritten notes as well as voice recording software (typically on a cell phone). Researchers asked questions that ranged from broad to narrow, starting with asking introductory questions about participants' familiarity with Barry Park to more specific questions about the park's programming, amenities, and accessibility.

The four discussion groups were as follows:

- Wednesday, April 5, 2017 Golden Senior Lunch
- Monday, April 10, 2017 Westcott Neighborhood Association
- Thursday, April 13, 2017 Barry Park Association
- Monday, April 17, 2017 Inclusive Discussion Group

### Results

#### Seniors

On April 5, 2017, SCG researchers attended the Golden Senior Lunch at the Westcott Community Center to talk about Barry Park with seniors in the community. Many of these seniors attend these lunches on a weekly basis. Three researchers split up between different tables to conduct more personal conversations with the seniors after lunch. One group included four African-American seniors, one male and three females. The women are related and have been living in Syracuse for 40-50 years each.

One of the men present at the lunch expressed that there is a lack of programming for seniors in Barry Park and suggested a need for less physically demanding activities to attract more seniors. In general, participants expressed a recurring sentiment that parks are not designed for older generations, but also provided suggestions to make the park more inviting to seniors.

For example, senior discussion group participants suggested that bench placement is important for seniors with mobility constraints. Benches along the periphery of the park are needed so that seniors with mobility challenges can sit and enjoy the park without having to walk on the uneven grassy area to get to a bench. Shaded seating areas were also important to seniors as well as accessible bathrooms and wheelchair-accessible paths. Participants also reported that lack of accessibility within the park as well as difficulties getting to the park limit them from regularly visiting Barry Park.

Seniors also talked about other parks they had visited (some had not been to Barry Park at all, so in order to have an inclusive conversation, SCG researchers broadened the conversation to include experiences in other parks). Many of the seniors mentioned that they enjoy seeing food vendors and family-friendly events that would draw children of all ages to the park. They also mentioned well-maintained lawns, concession stands, picnic areas, and swings as amenities they particularly enjoy in parks. They cited convenience—as in proximity as well as ease of accessibility—as an important factor that attracts them to parks.

In terms of events, one woman described in detail her enthusiasm for watching nature movies in a park field house where she took her children when they were young. An elderly gentleman who grew up in the neighborhood recounted stories about dances with live bands that were held on the tennis court in Barry Park when he was younger.



## MODERATED DISCUSSION GROUPS

---

### Westcott Neighborhood Association

A second discussion group was conducted with members of the Westcott Neighborhood Association (WNA). This discussion group was publicized ahead of time through an email listserv detailing the project. The meeting was held at the Petit Library at 6:30 pm on April 10, 2017. The discussion included four individuals, two males and two females, who all live in the Westcott neighborhood and walk to Barry Park. One of the men was an older gentleman who started visiting the park seventy-two years ago. Similar to seniors at the Westcott lunch, he expressed a strong feeling that the park is not designed for his age group. Two of the participants are married, live within a block of Barry Park, and are frequent visitors to the park. The last woman is Puerto Rican, a student, and frequently visits the park to walk dogs and study.

One of the main topics discussed at the WNA discussion group was the extensive use of the green space in Barry Park, and how this open space might be improved. Suggested improvements include adding shade, adding planters, adapting walking paths, and improving drainage. One participant suggested that local businesses may be willing to sponsor planters. As far as infrastructure, the play structure and the field house bathrooms were mentioned as needing upgrading and improvement. Participants also mentioned that added communal amenities, like a pavilion, grills, or additional benches, would be useful assets. One participant recalled having her birthday party in the park when grills used to be available. Respondents all agreed that reinstalling the grills would be great.

The group had many suggestions for new programming to bring more people—especially families—into the park, such as food trucks, movie nights, a magic show, evening dances, and musical concerts. The group also mentioned winter activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. However, all participants find it hard to stay informed about the events in the park.

Several common requests arose from this conversation, such as increased vegetation, adding public art, prioritizing the needs of families, and the need for a dog park or more amenities for dog walkers. All participants felt that more vegetation would add to the green space and make it more attractive, and that public art would be great for community engagement and attracting new users. There is contention over whether to establish a dog park in Barry Park, however.



# 07

## MODERATED DISCUSSION GROUPS

---

### Barry Park Association

On April 13, 2017, the Barry Park Association (BPA) meeting was held in Ed Smith School. The participants included a white couple; a white man; and two white women. The group reported that they are pleased with the current programming in Barry Park and have enjoyed past events such as the potlucks and movie nights. They suggested placing a folder or mailbox behind the little free library that would advertise events in the park and other information pertinent to the local community. Current advertising occurs through the UNPA listserv, but subscribers to that listserv are not representative of the surrounding neighborhood's year-round residents. In addition, because they had history of working in Barry Park, they had ideas to offer based on past involvement with park events and programming. The group talked about the possibility of organizing winter activities, such as snowshoe rentals and cross-country skiing.

Participants agreed upon several existing issues with Barry Park, including the lack of available pet waste stations, as well as a lack of benches. The women spoke out on the issue of lighting and reported feeling unsafe walking at night. The group also expressed concerns about the safety of the metal playground infrastructure, which can pose a potential danger to children. One of the women lives on Westcott Street facing Barry Park and expressed uneasiness that there is no sidewalk along the western boundary of the park on Westcott Street.

### Inclusive Discussion Group

Student researchers also organized a discussion group around the theme of inclusivity, broadly defined. SCG researchers reached out to Beth Meyers, a Professor of Inclusive Education and member of the Ed Smith PTO Inclusive Committee, who recruited Ed Smith parents and neighbors who could speak to the accessibility and inclusivity of the park's current design. The discussion group convened on April 17, 2017 at Petit Library at 5:30 pm, but was under-attended, with only two out of five confirmed participants attending.

Both participants in this discussion group were mothers of one or more children with Down Syndrome. Both grew up in the Syracuse area, are well-acquainted with Barry Park, and continue to visit the park frequently with their families (both knew each other as well). They mentioned the playground as a particularly popular play area for their children (of all abilities), though they said that they also like to use the tennis courts as a bounded play space, where their kids can run around safely, away from the road. Indeed, child safety was a key concern of these participants, who mentioned repeatedly that there should be some kind of barrier between the street and the existing play structure. Their suggestions for improvements include more swings, updated play equipment (ideally, structures built with interactive play opportunities for children of all abilities to enjoy), and better-maintained and accessible bathrooms. Both families enjoy the current programming in the park such as the potluck dinners.





# 07 MODERATED DISCUSSION GROUPS

---

## Limitations of Discussion Group Data

One limitation that researchers ran into—particularly in the case of the Golden Seniors lunch—was that some participants had not visited Barry Park. In this case, the discussion shifted to discuss parks in general.

Both the WNA and Barry Park discussion groups were limited by their small size and relative lack of diversity of the participants.

As previously mentioned, the Inclusive Discussion Group was also under-attended, with only two out of five confirmed participants actually attending. In addition, both participants are parents of children with Down Syndrome, so their comments are not necessarily generalizable towards other inclusivity issues, for example, people with mobility or hearing/vision impairments.

Low attendance at the discussion group meetings was due in part to unfortunate timing in mid-April when many local schools are on spring break, as well as overlap with the Easter and Passover holidays. As a result, many people were unavailable who may otherwise have been willing to participate.

## Strengths of Discussion Group Data

Compared to other forms of data collection, moderated discussions can often evoke a more dynamic and therefore, more detailed, conversation on a topic of interest. Indeed, all of our discussion group conversations were rich in their own ways and while attendance tended to be limited, participants were generous with their time and offered many candid insights. Conversations unfolded organically with participants building on others' input.

Organizing discussions through existing meetings and relationships also provided convenient access to various park users. In the case of the WNA and Barry Park discussion groups, all of the participants had prior experiences at Barry Park and participated because they are interested in the changes that could be implemented at Barry Park. In the case of the Barry Park Association, everyone present had taken our online survey prior to attending the discussion group, and so were excited to talk more at length and in-depth about Barry Park, which made for a dynamic conversation.

All in all, the moderated discussion groups garnered key insights on how people use the park and the overall value of the park to the neighboring community.

## Key takeaways from moderated discussion groups include:

- Participants agree that Barry Park is a community asset, but report that some small improvements could make it more widely accessible and enjoyable for everyone. In particular:
  - o More programming geared towards seniors
  - o More accessible sidewalks and trails within the park that are amenable to those with mobility issues
  - o Updated playground infrastructure that fits inclusive design standards
  - o Open, accessible bathrooms
  - o Winter activities
  - o Added benches, shade structures, lighting, public art and/or planters to make for a more comfortable and dynamic public space

# 08

## INTERVIEWS

In total, SCG student researchers conducted eleven interviews with various members of the Barry Park community. All interviews were conducted between April 11 and April 17, 2017 in a variety of locations proximate to Barry Park including but not limited to Recess Cafe, Upstate Medical, and an interviewee's home. Five of the eleven interviews were conducted at Ed Smith's Family Fun Night.

A majority of the interviewees either live or have lived near Barry Park. Two of the eleven participants were female. With regard to ethnicity and racial composition, a majority of the interviewees identify as white, while a minority identify as African American, Kosovan, and Yemeni. One person who was interviewed preferred to remain anonymous.

In order to ensure that the interviews were well organized and the most relevant information was collected, SCG researchers created an interview guide. The guide included sample questions geared towards gauging what community members like most about Barry Park or would like to see changed. General topics focused on community events, programming, and park amenities. The interviews were intended to be semi-structured in order to allow for some flexibility in conversation. The interviews lasted between fifteen minutes and one hour each. The interviewers either recorded their interview using a tape recording device (typically a cell phone) or handwritten notes. The notes and reflections on the interviews were later compiled for analysis.

### Results

Several key themes emerged from the interview data. First, the park was frequently described as a place for parents to spend time with their children after school or work hours and on the weekend. Several of the interviewees are parents of children who like to use the playground. One interviewee specified that she prefers to take her children to Barry Park over other parks in the neighborhood because she feels it is a safe space.

The interviewees expressed an overall satisfaction with the park, despite offering some suggestions for park improvements. Suggested changes include adding more benches, updating the playground, and resurfacing the soccer fields, basketball courts, and tennis courts. Additionally, individual suggestions included adding a tree house, pavilion area, and chess table, though these were not consistent across interviews and instead reflect the interests of particular interviewees.

There was also some mention of increasing bathroom and drinking water access. One interviewee at Family Fun Night mentioned that children visiting the park frequently urinate under the pine trees, since the bathrooms are rarely open. Her own child once had to defecate in the park because they were not going to make it home in time. As she pointed out, the lack of accessible bathrooms is not only inconvenient, but a health hazard.

With respect to programming, several individuals mentioned that they did not receive, but would be interested in hearing more information about park programming and events.



SCG researchers also visited Barry Park between 4 and 6 pm on June 20 and June 21, 2017 to speak with basketball players about the courts.

Players at the park reported that they like the new backboards on the full court, but that the half court needs new backboards and nets as well as resurfacing. At the time of the visit, the surface was visibly cracked and bubbled and, on the first day, when it had just rained, filled with puddles of standing water.

Players also reported the need for more water fountains near the courts, as well as an accessible bathroom. Researchers observed the need for benches along the sidelines, as well as a bike rack.

### Limitations of Interview Data

While the interviews were informative, it is important to recognize that the views of interviewees do not reflect the perspectives of everyone who uses Barry Park. Nevertheless, their responses were generally in line with the survey and discussion group responses.

Another concern with the interviews was that some researchers did not have previous interview experience, and therefore did not have a strong understanding of when and where to probe or push the discussion further. Additionally, the interviews could have been enhanced if the interviewers had brought a map to use as a visual aid while asking questions about Barry Park, to ensure that the interviewer and interviewee were referring to the same spaces within the park. For example, many people mention the “trail” in Barry Park, but some use “trail” to refer to the walking path around the detention pond, while others use it to signify the section of Meadowbrook Drive that has been closed to cars, where many people now run, walk, and bike.

### Strengths of Interview Data

Because they allow for in-depth questioning, the interviews helped to contextualize the information generated through other data collection methods. In addition to providing new information, the interviews reinforced or repeated ideas that had emerged in the survey and moderated discussion groups, and what was observed during student researcher observations.

The interviews also allowed for more open-ended responses than other data collection methods. Despite being somewhat limited by the survey guide and sample questions, interviewers were encouraged to provide follow-up questions and prompts when an interviewee's answers were unclear or when their answer warranted another question—something that closed-ended methods like surveys do not allow.

### Key takeaways from interviews include:

- Barry Park is an important space for families, where parents often take their children after school.
- Current amenities could use some basic upgrading and repairs, particularly the playground and sports fields/courts.
- Accessible restrooms and drinking fountains would significantly enhance the park, particularly for parents of young children.
- Park events could benefit from enhanced advertising.



Because the community partners know that many neighborhood children regularly frequent Barry Park, especially students at Ed Smith School, SCG researchers designed a sketch mapping exercise targeted to youth. Broadly, as a research tool, sketch mapping provides one way of collecting qualitative geographic data in a participatory manner. Because it relies on individual perception, sketch mapping helps convey how individual users experience particular spaces. Researchers conducted sketch mapping exercises at Family Fun Night, held at Ed Smith School on the evening of April 11, 2017.

### Re-imagine Barry Park

How would you redesign Barry Park?



To conduct the exercise, SCG researchers printed base maps representing Barry Park on 11 x 14 pieces of paper. Children in attendance were then asked to draw how they currently use the park or what they would like to see in the park. Most of the participants were between the ages of 5 and 12 years old but some adults also completed sketch maps. Features were sometimes drawn, and other times indicated through writing on the maps.





# SKETCH MAPPING

## Results

In total, 66 participants completed sketch maps. The complete list of sketch mapping results is below, with the number of each type of image/response noted in parentheses:

### Kids

Pool (10)  
Swings (13)  
Monkey bars (7)  
Playground (7)  
Trees (7)  
Field(s) (7)  
Slide (6)  
"Find where you are tower"/climbing tower (3)  
Baseball field (3)  
Rollercoaster (3)  
Chess (2)  
Stands/bleachers (2)  
Working bathrooms (2)  
Tube slide (1)  
Side walk (1)  
Carnival (1)  
Pavilion (1)  
Better soccer nets (1)  
Bigger basketball courts (1)  
Tunnels (1)  
Water fountain (1)  
Path (1)  
Ice cream shop (1)  
Pond (new) (1)  
Baby playground (1)  
Tennis (1)  
Shrub maze (1)  
Football field (1)  
Statues (1)  
Harp/instruments you can play (1)  
Free ride (1)  
Gym (1)  
Rocket ship (1)  
Porta potties (1)  
Pig pen (1)  
Zoo (1)  
Barn (1)  
Gymnastics (1)  
Farm (1)  
Rope swing (1)  
"Do something with parking lot" (1)  
Toys (1)  
Water (1)  
Lacrosse field (2)  
Hospital (1)  
Parking lot (1)  
Parachute (1)  
Bike trail (1)

### Adults

Soccer (3)  
Bathrooms (2)  
Basketball (2)  
Exercise equipment (1)  
• "pull up bars, like in Thornden"  
Go-Kart racing (1)  
Expand club house, add bar (1)  
Better drainage in fields (1)  
Fountain with rubber pavement (1)  
Covered picnic area (1)  
Play games (1)  
Baseball (1)  
Swings (1)  
Water sprinkler (1)  
Seating (1)  
Water fountain (1)  
More shading (1)  
Skate park (1)  
Pool (1)  
Pool house (1)  
Giant trampoline (1)  
Meadow (1)  
Dino sculpture to climb on (1)  
Community building (1)  
Greenhouse (1)  
Orchard (1)



# SKETCH MAPPING

## Limitations of Sketch Mapping Data

A limitation of the sketch mapping activity was that, when asked to think about Barry Park from a distance, the students concentrated on the areas of the park near the playground, where they likely spend the most time with their families. It is possible that if the children were physically present at the park, they would have walked around and specified a broader range of activities they do when they visit Barry Park in a mix of areas throughout the park.

In some cases, the children's drawings were difficult to interpret. While sketch mapping provides a way to engage youth in the process, it can be difficult to meaningfully translate the results of the sketch maps into concrete suggestions for park improvements.

## Strengths of Sketch Mapping Data

Despite its limitations, the sketch mapping exercise provided a creative way to outreach to youth, who comprise an important group of Barry Park visitors. Youth may not be able to complete an online survey or participate in a formal interview or moderated discussion, and just observing children in the park does not reveal how children really feel about the park or what they might like to see added or changed. By asking students to draw the park and highlight places important to them, or things they would like to have in the park, researchers were able to get a better sense of how children understand and use the park.

Researchers also took the opportunity to evoke conversation with the children about the park. In this way, while the maps provided a hands-on activity that the participating kids enjoyed, drawing on the maps got the children thinking about how they currently use the park as well as ways they thought the park could be improved. Researchers could then ask more questions to clarify, thus provoking deeper conversations than if the children had simply been asked a series of questions about Barry Park.



## Key takeaways from the sketch maps include:

- Though there was significant variation in the maps created by adults, children most frequently depicted a pool, swings, monkey bars, trees, fields, and a playground. In particular, kids expressed desires for water and climbing structures to be added to the park.
- Older youth specifically called out the field conditions in a group discussion with researchers, suggesting that there are too many divots and bumps on the soccer fields.
- Chess tables were of particular interest to one family as parents encouraged their children to add chess tables to their drawings.
- Youth also expressed through their sketch maps that bathrooms need to be available.



# OBSERVATIONS

---

Direct observations offered a final method of assessing how the community uses Barry Park. SCG students observed Barry Park during two-hour shifts on different times and days, conducting a total of nine observations between Sunday, April 9 and Monday, April 17, 2017.

Three students stayed in the same spot for the entire observation while the remaining six students were mobile throughout the observation.

## Results

Two separate observations were conducted on April 9 between 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm. As this was a nice day, researchers observed people walking dogs, playing basketball, and using the playground. The researchers noted that the families using the playground tended to be mainly white, while young African-American males were using the basketball courts at the time. Not many seniors were present and people tended to arrive in cars. The observers also noted several people using the tennis courts as a makeshift dog park, and mentioned that a Boys and Girls Club van arrived with a number of kids. This was the only noticeable organized group using the park at the time.

Two more observations were conducted on Friday, April 14 during different yet overlapping times of the day. One observation was conducted between 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm and the second observation was conducted between 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm. The park was busy during these times, particularly at the northern end of the park by the tennis courts, playground, and basketball courts. The playground in particular was in high demand at this time of day. One observer also noticed a number of bikers using the paved bike lane on Meadowbrook Drive. All of the benches were occupied when this observer arrived. The second observer noted a number of couples who arrived to jog or run together in the park in the early evening and that the Meadowbrook trail occasionally got crowded, with different runners having to run off of the path to pass one another. Around 5:00 pm, an ice cream truck arrived and parked by the playground and about five families visited the truck to purchase ice cream.

A fifth observation was conducted on Saturday, April 15 between 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm. This observation was made from the Meadowbrook trail and the researcher noted that although the day was cool, there were a wide range of users in the park, including many walkers along the trail. Of these, a number of people brought dogs. The researcher noted that interactions between people who had not arrived together were limited.

A sixth observation was done between 11:00 am and 1:30 pm on Sunday, April 16 (Easter Sunday). At this time, visitors were widely distributed across the park, though the playground was especially popular. There were people playing soccer and the researcher noted that some people left busy areas of the park to have a more peaceful experience in other parts. One family held their own Easter egg hunt, while many visitors enjoyed the nice weather in the park that day by reading or napping under trees, playing golf, or flying kites.





# OBSERVATIONS

---

## Results (cont'd)

A final three observations were conducted on Monday, April 17 between 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm. The playground, soccer fields, and basketball courts were among the facilities being used at this time, and the park got busier overall after 5:00 pm. Observers at this time also noted children climbing trees and people playing Frisbee and walking dogs.

While conducting their observations, student researchers also noted that park users were generally unconcerned for the safety of their belongings while in the park. For example, observers noted that park visitors left bikes on the ground unchained rather than using the bike rack next to the tennis courts, and also left backpacks and jackets strewn on the ground while not in use.

Observers also noted that the park's different amenities tended to be used by different demographic groups. For example, at the time of the observations, the basketball court was predominantly used by men who appeared to be in their teens to mid-twenties, in comparison to the playground, where most park users were children or young teens. Adult caretakers frequently accompanied the younger visitors using the playground, often sitting on the benches next to the playground while they supervised their kids or groups of kids.

The majority of the observations mentioned the presence of dogs in the park. The dogs were predominantly noted to be walking by the mulch path surrounding the Meadowbrook basin or in the paved path along Meadowbrook Drive. Observers also noted that there was no space specifically allocated for the dogs, nor many trash cans to dispose of their waste and pet waste stations.



## Limitations of Observational Data

Overall, the observations were not as successful as the class hoped them to be. Due to confusion in scheduling, students often went to Barry Park at the same time. Therefore, these observation periods garnered much more detailed data than others. While it is not necessarily a problem to have multiple students observing the park at the same time from different locations, or in proximate time slots, there was a sense that the observations could have been better coordinated and that a more randomized observation pattern could be more representative of general trends. With more purposive and advanced planning, researchers could maximize data collection and ensure that the observations more accurately reflect park usage across a range of times, dates, days of the week, and weather patterns (since daily weather conditions also affect who is using the park and how).

Another limitation is that student researchers tended to observe what people were doing and where they were doing it, rather than noting the condition and accessibility of particular infrastructure. For example, where are there (or aren't there) garbage cans in the park? Was the field house open or closed? By focusing on what people were doing in the park, researchers less frequently captured what amenities were not being used.

Next, these observations are subject to a seasonal bias. According to survey results, fewer people go to Barry Park in the winter as compared to the summer, the number and types of people visiting Barry Park during this period of time in April likely does not represent park utilization and users year-round. Similarly, park visitors may use different amenities in the spring compared to other seasons.



# OBSERVATIONS

---

## Strengths of Observational Data

Despite these limitations, the observations allowed researchers to understand Barry Park and its users on a visceral level, unlike other forms of data collection that are all physically removed from the space of the park. As one data collection approach among several, observations provided a useful method of triangulating data collected in other forms, reinforcing or challenging what researchers were told in interviews, moderated discussions, and surveys.

For example, observers were able to note trends in how the park is utilized and compare these to other data collected in the study. On Monday, April 17 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, park visitors were using the baseball diamond and tennis courts, despite the fact that the survey data reported low utilization of these areas. Just as the observational data collected during this two-hour time span on April 17 cannot be generalized to say that the baseball diamond and tennis courts are always in use, nor can the survey data indicate that these areas are entirely unpopular. However, taken together, these two data sources provide a more complete picture of Barry Park's usage.

Observations also helped researchers to identify park users who may not have responded to the survey. For example, observers noted black youth using the basketball courts, but these park users are unlikely to be subscribers of the neighborhood listservs used to disseminate the survey.

Finally, because many of the student researchers are not originally from Syracuse and may not have spent time in Barry Park prior to conducting this study, observations provided an important way for the research team to ground their research in lived experience. In turn, this also made it easier for student researchers to understand what participants told them about the park in the interviews, moderated discussions, sketch maps, and surveys.

## Key takeaways from the observations include:

- Consistent with the results of other forms of data collection, Barry Park is used by diverse groups of people for a wide variety of activities.
- Observers noted the presence of many dogs and a subsequent need for pet waste stations.
- Researchers felt the need for additional seating during their time in the park.
- It may be useful to have a place to store bags or equipment in the park, so users do not have to leave their belongings on the ground during their time there.





# PART III: RECOMMENDATIONS

---



# RECOMMENDATIONS

---

## 1. Work with what you have

People love Barry Park. Already a dynamic, multi-use park, Barry Park hosts a diverse range of visitors year-round. In each phase of the community input study, community members expressed their enthusiasm for visiting Barry and a commonly held sentiment that Barry Park is a community asset. To that end, many participants saw upgrading the park's current amenities and maintaining its current programming as a first step, before making any additions or large-scale changes.

## 2. Start small

Building off of the many amenities that Barry already offers its visitors, this study helps to identify a few of the community's top priorities for Barry Park. In particular, common requests include clean, regularly accessible bathrooms; more benches; resurfaced sports fields and courts; the installation of pet waste stations and trashcans throughout the park. Since most of these would be relatively low-cost changes, these suggestions constitute low-hanging fruit for officials looking to make easy improvements to the park.

## 3. Areas of interest

Next, our study indicates a few particular areas of interest where larger changes could be made. Suggestions include:

- Improved Accessibility: resurfaced sidewalks and trails; added walking paths accessible for those with mobility issues; a new sidewalk along Westcott Street
- Improved Playground Equipment: upgraded and improved playground amenities, designed to be inclusive for children of all abilities, at a range of ages
- New Amenities: drinking fountains throughout the park; a pavilion structure for shaded seating as well as events; nighttime lighting

## 4. Programming

In addition to the current programming, respondents generally indicated that they would like to see additional and better-publicized events in Barry Park. Respondents regularly emphasized that events should be family-friendly, and continue to be largely geared towards youth. Particularly in the summer months, families look for fun, interactive activities and events to keep children busy learning and playing in the park.

However, there is also a need for more events geared towards seniors, as this group is largely overlooked in current programs. Adding a few events or activities specifically for seniors could help attract more seniors to the park and thereby extend the park's use to a wider range of age groups. Given that the several of the census tracts around Barry Park have senior residents, ensuring that the park is accessible and welcoming to seniors will be particularly important going forward.

Finally, there is opportunity to increase the park's year-round use by adding winter activities, such as snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, a hot cocoa social, or other winter sports and themed gatherings. While Barry Park gets a lot of use in the spring, summer, and fall months, it is less utilized in the winter.

---

# CONCLUSION

Barry Park is a well-loved community resource. A few minor improvements to the current amenities will help preserve the park for future generations and make it accessible to a wider swath of users, while more ambitious changes to the infrastructure and programming in the park will only enhance the resources currently in place. At the end of the day, Barry Park is an extension of its surrounding community, and as the response to this community input study demonstrates, that community is vibrant.

---

## References

- Lewis, Glen. 2017. Interview with the authors. Email interview. Syracuse, New York.
- Mannion, Rebecca. 2017. Interview with the authors. Email interview. Syracuse, New York.
- NYSED. 2016a. "Edward Smith K-8 Enrollment." <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2016&instid=800000040906>.
- NYSED. 2016b. "Nottingham High School Enrollment." <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2016&instid=800000040872>.
- Parks Department. 2009. "About Us." <http://www.syr.gov.net/Parks/AboutUs.html>.
- UNPA. 2017. "The University Neighborhood Preservation Association." <http://unpa.net/about>.

## List of Acronyms

- BPA — Barry Park Association
- ESNO—East Side Neighborhood Organization
- SEUNA—Southeast University Neighborhood Association
- SCG — Syracuse Community Geography
- UNPA — University Neighborhood Preservation Association
- WNA — Westcott Neighborhood Association
-

