

2006 Manzanita City Park Survey Recap

At the December 7, 2005, Manzanita City Council meeting, the Manzanita Ad Hoc Park Committee, comprised of Walt Stickel, Sandy Heaman, Bob Nelson, Colleen and Dick Everroad, presented the *2005/2006 Proposed Plan* that was approved by the mayor and City Council. Part of the proposal included developing a survey that would be sent out to citizens of Manzanita with the January water bill. The intent of the survey was to gain insight into the community's interest in and use of the park.

Of the approximately 1,500 surveys sent out in January, 2006 water bill, 236 completed surveys were received – a response rate of 15.7 percent. Not all respondents answered all questions.

The intent of the survey instrument was to gather the community's comments about the City of Manzanita Park and how it fulfills the needs of the community. Individuals were asked to assess their interest/use in the park; offer suggestions for enhancements; and to provide demographic data about themselves.

Frequency of Park Use section of the survey addressed the frequency of park use. 214 or 71.33 of the respondents answered this question. Three respondents (1.40 percent) stated that they used the park daily; 14 (6.54 percent) use it 3-5 times/week; 49 (22.90 percent) use it 1-3 times/month; 9 (4.21 percent) use it 4-6 times/month; and 139 (64.95 percent) stated 'other.'

Comments under the 'other' category range included "...when our grandchildren visit, use it often." "Use it every day we visit - 7 times/year or so." "Two times/year." "During summer." "A few times/year." "Several times a summer." "Tennis, weather permitting." "When we use our beach house - almost every weekend!" to "Never, but like to see it look good, children playing there." "Never." "Do not use the park." "Haven't used it yet." "We use the park bathrooms while walking to/from the beach."

Park Features and Order of Importance section of the survey referred to the specific park features and the degree to which the respondents considered this feature important. It was broken into 10 features of the park: Children's Play Area; Volley Ball Court; Adult Swings; Tennis Court; Basketball Court; Multi-use Court; Covered Picnic Tables; Bar-B-Que; East-side Tables; and the Grass east of the Tennis Court. Within each feature, respondents were asked if the park feature was "Very Important," "Somewhat Important," "Neutral," "Not Too Important" to them or "Not Used."

Of the total 236 survey responses, the Tennis Court had the most total responses at 220 or 93.22 percent. Of these, 166, or 75.46 percent of the 220 respondents stated that this feature was either very important or somewhat important to them. Conversely, 35 respondents, or 15.91 percent, stated that it was not too important to them or they did not use the tennis court at all.

The Children's Play area had the second most responses at 211 or 89.41 percent of the total 236 survey responses. Of these 211 responses, 161 or 76.31 percent stated that this feature was very important or somewhat important to them. Thirty six respondents (17.06 percent) stated that this feature was not too important to them or they did not use this area.

The Covered Picnic Tables had the third highest response rate - 210 responses out of the total 236 surveys received, or 88.98 percent. This feature had 151 or 71.91 percent of respondents rating it as being either very important or somewhat important, while 35 or 16.67 percent stated that they were not too important or they did not use them.

The Multi-use Court and the Basketball Court were closely tied as the fourth feature respondents stated were either very important or somewhat important to them – 132 responses (64.39 percent) for the Multi-use Court and 131 responses (65.18 percent) for the Basketball Court. Conversely, 44 respondents or 21.89 percent stated that the Multi-use Court was not too important or they did not use it. For the Basketball Court, 48 or 23.42 percent indicated that this feature was not too important to them or they did not use it.

While some features such as the Adult Swings or the East Side Tables had lower overall response rates – 199 and 196, respectively, of the 236 total responses - each had a strong following of park users who thought they were very important or somewhat important – 86 or 43.22 percent for the Adult Swings and 85 or 33.37 percent for the East Side Tables. Interestingly, some respondents weren't even aware that there were east side tables in the park – “We just noticed them.” “I'm not familiar with these.” “I didn't know there were any.”

The remaining features – the Bar-B-Que, Grass east of the Tennis Court and Volley Ball Court – each had its own following of loyal users.

(Refer to the 2006 Manzanita City Park Survey Results – Abbreviated for a breakdown of the individual responses to each feature.)

The **Suggested Park Improvements** section of the survey asked respondents that if additional funds were available, what improvements would they suggest. This question should have been stated more clearly to reflect donated funds as two respondents thought the additional monies would result in higher taxes. “Return them (\$) to residents! Manz. taxes too much & wastes way too much money. \$160 for 0 water is case in point.” “Not to sound negative, but this appears to benefit summer visitors. I do not want my property taxes to go up. Summer visitors have an enormous beach to play on!” And “Use funds elsewhere.”

The horseshoe pit garnered the most marks with 71 or 30.08 percent of total survey respondents stating that they would like to see a horse shoe pit returned to the park. This was followed by a children's water feature (65 respondents or 27.54 percent); additional picnic areas (50 respondents or 21.19 percent); more lawn games (35 respondents or 14.83 percent); and more quiet areas (31 or 13.14 percent).

Additionally, under the ‘other’ category, there were requests for increasing the security at the park with added police patrols and installing surveillance cameras and recording equipment. There were requests for a skate board park for teens, an additional tennis court and making repairs the current tennis court, a bocce ball court, and a swimming pool. Some wanted a softball field; an indoor area for ping pong and other rainy day activities, more green areas, more benches, bonfire pits so people won't build fires on the beach, native plants gardens, restrooms on the beach, doggie play areas, a tire swing, a second volley ball court; a croquet court, a bike rack and more garbage cans.

Several respondents thought that the teens in the community were largely ignored. “When the park was redone, they took out the equipment for the older children. Now they need to add some big stuff - the water feature would be awesome!!!” “I think the park needs to be youth activity and sports oriented.”

Several respondents stated that they thought a water feature would be too dangerous and a liability to the city. Some also thought that a horse shoe pit was dangerous. Lastly, there was one respondent who asked that the city, “Just up keep of what is there.” And another who stated, “None - Great Park!”

In looking at the data, all features of the park were important to some degree to everyone, depending on the respondent's demographics and interests. No city park can be all things to everyone because of these varying interests; however, the overall responses were more positive than negative.

Those respondents who had younger children or grandchildren thought that the Children's Play Area was the most important feature while some with older children/grandchildren or no children enjoyed the Tennis Court most. There were also those who thought the Volley Ball Court or the Adult Swings were most important.

Based on the results of this survey, the Manzanita Ad Hoc Park Committee recommended to the Mayor and City Council at the July 5, 2006, council meeting that in addition to the approved *2005/2006 Proposed Plan*, the City Council reinstate the Manzanita Ad Hoc Committee to review the recommendations offered by the citizens to determine if they are appropriate for and will enhance the City Park. The committee would report its findings at the August City Council meeting. Lastly, the committee recommends that the results of the survey be made available to citizens once the Mayor and City Council have had an opportunity to review the data.

With all the resources working together, the city of Manzanita can continue to provide a park that is a safe, fun environment for all families and other groups.