



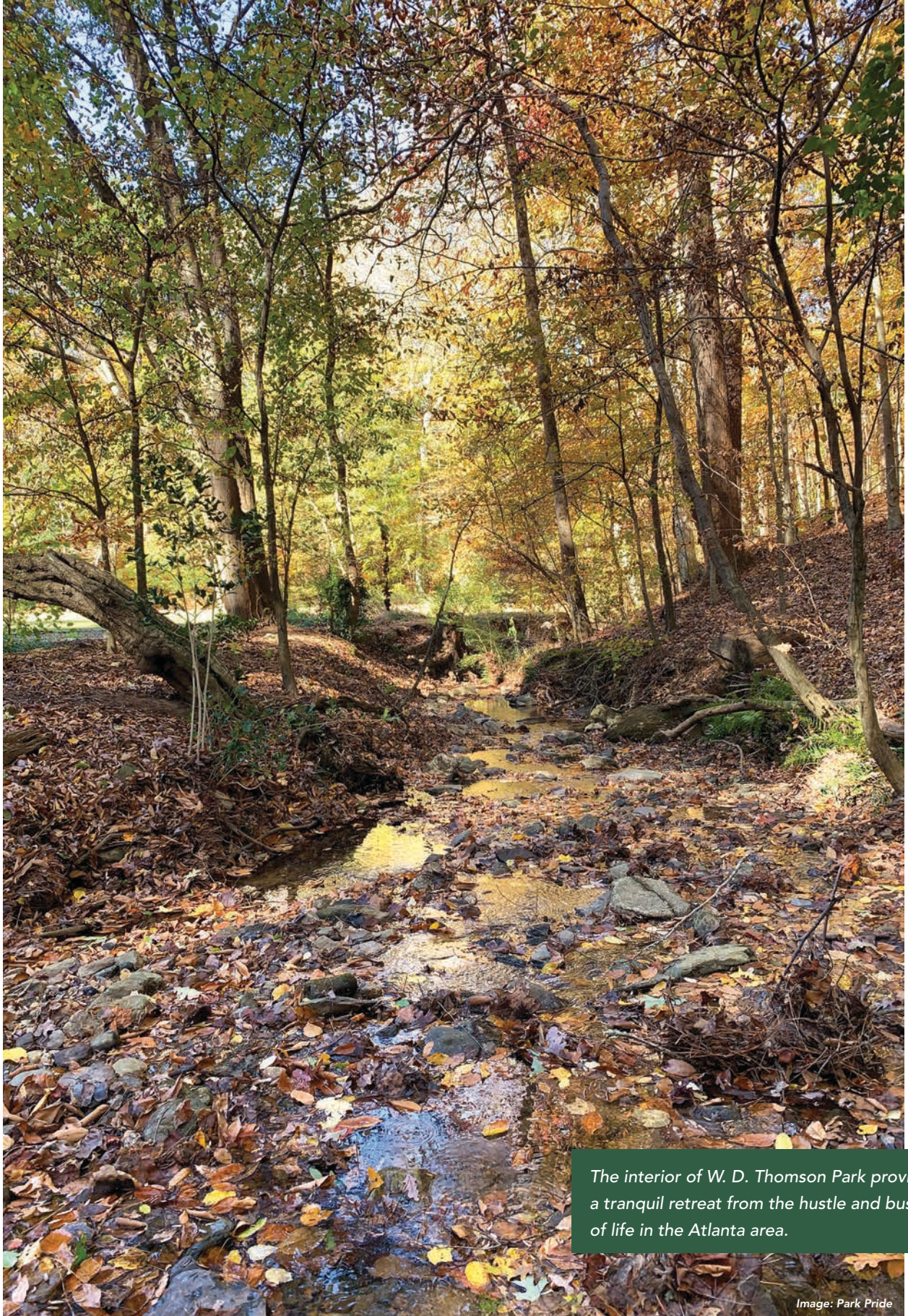
2024 Vision Plan

W. D. Thomson Park

North Druid Hills



Prepared by Park Pride



The interior of W. D. Thomson Park provides a tranquil retreat from the hustle and bustle of life in the Atlanta area.

Acknowledgements

This vision plan would not have been possible without the concerted effort of a devoted group of people with a deep love of their community. We were inspired by this community's longstanding initiatives that prioritize natural habitat restoration and park stewardship. As the applicant for park visioning, **Mr. Steve Walker** organized the steering committee and served as a crucial nexus of communication with the community. He also publishes the Friends of Thomson Park newsletter, which extends neighborhood outreach to 275 subscribers.

Mr. W. Reed Owens drew on his deep bench of historical knowledge of the park and shared his memories with the steering committee. A neighborhood resident for over 60 years, Mr. Owens' gentle demeanor made all feel welcome, and his granular knowledge of the neighborhood enriched our understanding of the park's history. Both **Steve** and **Reed** also devote a great deal of time to park stewardship, organizing regular community work days to remove invasives and restore native habitat.

Ms. Jessica Chee brought a parent's perspective to the process and helped us to recognize the needs of people pushing strollers, while **Ms. Carol Ude** offered her perspective as a long-term resident and as someone who appreciates design considerations for those with mobility challenges.

Mr. Buckley Terpenning was fearless in offering recommendations for community outreach, particularly in the phrasing of survey questions to ensure the feedback we received was meaningful. Together with **Jessica, Buckley** also helped manage the survey dropbox in the park.

Ms. Rachel Travis also provided valuable & thoughtful feedback throughout the process

and offered creative ideas to address design challenges.

Neighborhood outreach for this project was deftly supported by **Ms. Mary Hinkel**, who sent meeting reminders and other information through the neighborhood association.

Special thanks also goes to **Intown Community Church** for allowing our group to hold meetings in their building, and to **Reed** for acting as the communication liaison with their facility manager.

We also appreciate the delicious flavors of **Mokipops**, which supplied yummy popsicles for our final public meeting.

DeKalb County Greenspace Manager **Mr. Caleb Wittenmyer** of the Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Affairs offered viewpoints from the department's perspective, shared relevant information, and engaged in creative problem solving, particularly related to the stream restoration project.

We'd also like to thank DeKalb County Commissioners **Edward "Ted" Terry** and **Michelle Long Spears** for their support of parks in their districts. **Ms. Beth Ganga** and **Ms. Caroline Enloe** from **Commissioner Spears'** office attended meetings to stay informed throughout the process.

Lastly, we'd be remiss not to mention the efforts of our three 2024 summer interns, **Ms. Lauren Anderson Pirkle**, **Ms. Mary Flatt**, and **Ms. Joyah Mitchell** whose production work and photographs show up throughout this document. We see great things ahead for all of you!

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Andrew White, Director of Park Visioning Nick Voravong, Park Designer, Park Visioning



River birch (*Betula nigra*) thrives along the stream bed in W. D. Thomson Park.

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W. D. Thomson Park boasts a serene wooded forest in the heart of North Druid Hills.

Image: Park Pride

Executive Summary

In the summer of 2023, the Friends of Thomson Park applied for and were awarded a Park Pride Visioning grant to create a vision plan for W. D. Thomson Park. The visioning process began in February 2024 and completed in August 2024. A Steering Committee of six community members led the effort, which was facilitated by Park Pride. The process followed the key steps below.

1) Ask the Community

The visioning team studied the existing conditions of the park and its context via a **site analysis**, a review of historical records, and informal interviews.

An online **survey** was used to document the community's needs and desires for the park. Paper versions of the survey were mailed to households within a half-mile of the park.

To provide a central location for information, community input, announcements, survey results, and the public review of concepts and plans, Park Pride designed a **website** to support the park visioning process.

After each meeting, ideas and/or plans were displayed on the visioning website for a two-week **public comment** period.

2 Establish Guiding Principles

During the first virtual public meeting on May 16, 2024, participants engaged in live electronic polling questions to establish their primary concerns and goals for the park. Based on this feedback, plus data collected through the survey, the Steering Committee established **Guiding Principles** for the park's future.

Park Name: W. D. Thomson Park

Acreage: ~29 acres

Year acquired: 1952

Address: 1760 Mason Mill Rd

Parcel numbers: 18 104 01 030 & 18 104 01 062

Property Owner: DeKalb County,
Department of Recreation, Parks and
Cultural Affairs

Commissioner: Michelle Long Spears

Super Commissioner: Ted Terry

3 Review and Feedback of Draft Concepts

The second public meeting was held in person at Intown Community Church on June 27, 2024. There, two preliminary design concepts were offered for review and comment. Polling questions during the meetings and post-meeting online surveys were used to encourage participation and collect feedback.

4 Agree on a Final Vision Plan

Based on survey feedback and poll results, the preferred elements from each preliminary concept were incorporated into a **final plan**. This plan was then cross-checked with the Guiding Principles and reviewed by the community via a third public meeting held in person on July 25, 2024. This plan was also published on the website and distributed electronically to the community.

The vision plan was edited one final time after public comments were reviewed by the steering committee to add a wheelchair-accessible elevated boardwalk in the lower park.

This document will be archived at the Atlanta History Center.

Vision Plan Key Features, Priorities, and Cost Estimates

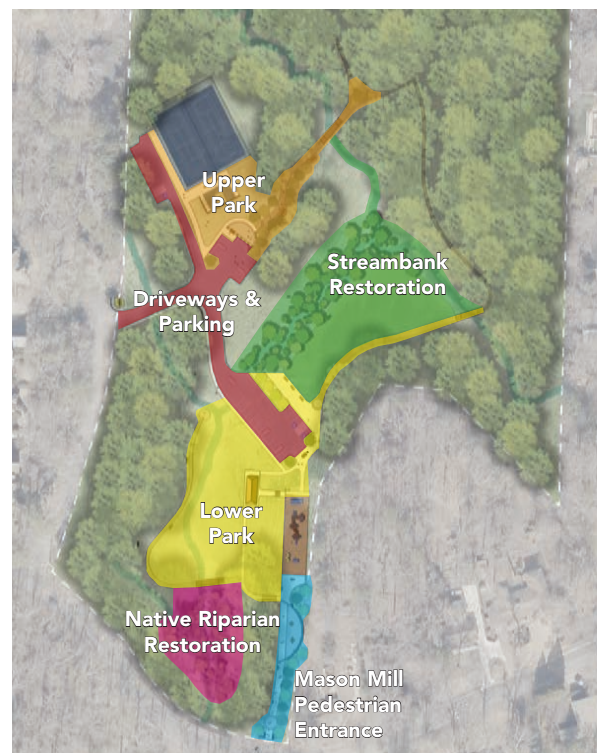
The vision plan emphasizes the following key features.

**Costs are based on 2024 pricing for guidance only. More detail can be found in the Projects and Budget chapter. All projects subject to approval by DeKalb County Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Affairs. Individual project line items and contingencies can be viewed in the Projects and Budget chapter.*

W. D. Thomson Park	Est. cost
Upper Park	\$472,000
Driveways & Parking Lots	\$250,000
Lower Park	\$1,013,000
Mason Mill Rd Pedstrian Entrance	\$300,000
Stream Restoration	\$1,116,000
Native Riparian Restoration	\$108,000
TOTAL	\$3,259,000

Guiding Principles

1. To provide a safe, accessible area where people can revitalize their spirits
2. To provide an area where natural features such as the forest and its trails, native plants, wildlife, and the creek are highlighted, respected and protected
3. To provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of community through park stewardship, celebrations, activity, and play



The EXISTING TRAILS and forest are preserved to PROTECT NATURE within the park. ADDITIONAL BENCHES are recommended along trails. Wayfinding on the trails is enhanced with a MAP KIOSK at both new TRAILHEADS with signage reminding dog owners of their responsibility to keep their PETS LEASHED while in the park.

The existing TENNIS COURTS are kept in place with MODIFIED PARKING and circulation to provide a wider drive aisle and a small ENTRY PLAZA with seating and a DRINKING FOUNTAIN/BOTTLE FILLER. The proposed BASKETBALL QUARTER COURT replaces the lost hoop due to the dam removal and includes a fence to prevent balls from leaving the court.

This plan proposes a BEAUTIFIED ENTRANCE to the park, including a RESTORED SIGN, native flower plantings, and a WALKWAY leading into the park.

A major STREAM RESTORATION AND DAM REMOVAL project is proposed in order to restore the stream to a fully functional riparian system and an attractive public greenspace. The project will REMOVE THE EXISTING BASKETBALL HOOP, ROAD, AND CUL-DE-SAC while relocating the trailhead closer to the park entrance. The dam between the upper and lower streams will be removed, and a NEW PATH AND PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE will provide access to the nature trails. The formerly-paved cul-de-sac area can be restored with NEW TREE PLANTINGS and NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION.

New PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES will provide trail connectivity on the south side of the park across the stream to the existing trail system. THE RED AND BLUE TRAILS are both restored, providing additional trail options. SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS are also noted on the plan to reduce unpleasant smells near the lawn.

A REORGANIZED PARKING LOT will provide up to 14 parking spaces serving the lower park and TRAILHEAD with map kiosk and drinking fountain/bottle filler. NO LIGHTING is offered in this plan in deference to the park's focus on nature. The EXISTING LAWN will be reduced in size to accommodate the realigned and restored stream. The EXISTING PAVILION is rehabilitated in its current location with NEW SITE FURNISHINGS. The area around the pavilion is RE-GRADED to achieve positive drainage and reduce instances of sedimentation on the floor. The PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE linking the lower fields to one another is replaced in its traditional location.

A small SEATING AREA and READING NOOK provide a comfortable spot to supervise play at the existing playground while offering creative seating options like a SEATING WALL or SWING BENCHES overlooking the creek and floodplain below. A LITTLE FREE LIBRARY acts as a point of exchange for books.

The PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE along Mason Mill Road is formalized with a SMALL ENTRY PLAZA with signage, seat wall, waste receptacle, and paved pathway to the playground. A STAIRWAY AND PATH provide a pedestrian route to the interior of the park that bypasses the playground.

Consistently wet areas of the floodplain are restored with NATIVE RIPARIAN HABITAT, while the culvert under Mason Mill Road is enlarged to reduce instances of flooding in the park and restore historic flow patterns.

Map Labels: Mason Woods Drive, Mason Mill Road, Park Entrance Beautification & Park Sign Restoration, Reorganized Parking (8 spaces), Sports Entry Plaza with Drinking Fountain, Quarter-Court Basketball Hoop, Unpaved Walkway to Nature Trails, Proposed Upper Trailhead with Map Kiosk, Additional Parking (6 spaces), Open Lawn, Stream Realignment & Restoration using Bio-Engineering Methods and Native Vegetation for Bank Stabilization, Pedestrian Bridge, Sewer Infrastructure Repairs, Proposed Lower Trailhead with Map Kiosk & Drinking Fountain, Reorganized 90' Parking (14 spaces), Rehabilitated Pavilion with new Furnishings, Open Lawn and Floodplain with New Path around Playground, Existing Playground, Parent Seating & Book Nook, Riparian Restoration, Enlarged culvert under Mason Mill Road to reduce flooding in the park, New Pedestrian Entry Plaza.

Callout Images: Dog on leash, Tennis court, Basketball court, Stream, Pedestrian bridge, Pavilion, Playground, Seating area, Little Free Library, Dam, Stream restoration, Native plants, Pedestrian entrance plaza.

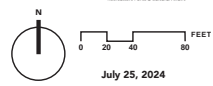
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

W. D. Thomson Park
North Druid Hills

Vision Plan
2024

Guiding Principles
The concept supports these three guiding principles, which serve as the main goals for the park design.

1. To provide a safe, accessible area where people can revitalize their spirits
2. To provide an area where natural features such as the forest and its trails, native plants, wildlife, and the creek are highlighted, respected and protected
3. To provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of community through park stewardship, celebrations, activity, and play



July 25, 2024

Context & History

Context

Consisting of roughly 29 acres of mostly forested land, W. D. Thomson Park has been a cornerstone of the North Druid Hills community since it was founded in the 1950s. The southern third of the park features active elements, including two recently resurfaced tennis courts, a playground, a pavilion, parking lots, and open fields; whereas the northern section includes a network of nature trails and bridges. A strong forest canopy provides a picturesque backdrop for activities in the park. An unnamed stream tributary flows throughout the park, feeding into the South Fork of Peachtree Creek.

The park is centrally located in the North Druid Hills neighborhood in unincorporated DeKalb County just north of Emory University. The park is bordered by Mason Woods Drive and Mason Mill Road at its southwest corner, by 41 single family residences along its east and west sides, and by a multifamily apartment complex, Calibre Woods, to the north.

The park may be accessed from Mason Woods Drive (car or pedestrian), Mason Mill Road (pedestrian only), Vistavia Circle (pedestrian only), and Calibre Woods Apartments (pedestrian only). The neighborhood is suburban in character, with single-family homes and tree lined streets. The sprawling Toco Hills shopping

center, which is home to over 70 shops and restaurants, is less than half a mile from the park. Emory University, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center are other notable major landmarks near the park.



Toco Hills shopping center with W. D. Thomson Park in the background. Runoff from this development presents challenges to the park.

W. D. Thomson lies just north of several existing and planned multiuse trails, including the South Peachtree Creek Trail and Emory PATH (see map on next page). The closest transit stop is the MARTA bus stop #19 at the intersection of Clairmont and Mason Mill Roads. There are several K-12 schools within a half mile of the park, including the Richard and Jean Katz High School for Girls, Yeshiva Ohr Yisreal of Atlanta, Torah Day School of Atlanta, Intown Community School, and Ben Franklin Academy.

Hydrologically, the park lies in the watershed of the South Fork of Peachtree Creek. This significant local drainageway is a tributary of the Chattahoochee River, eventually draining to the Gulf of Mexico at Apalachicola Bay.

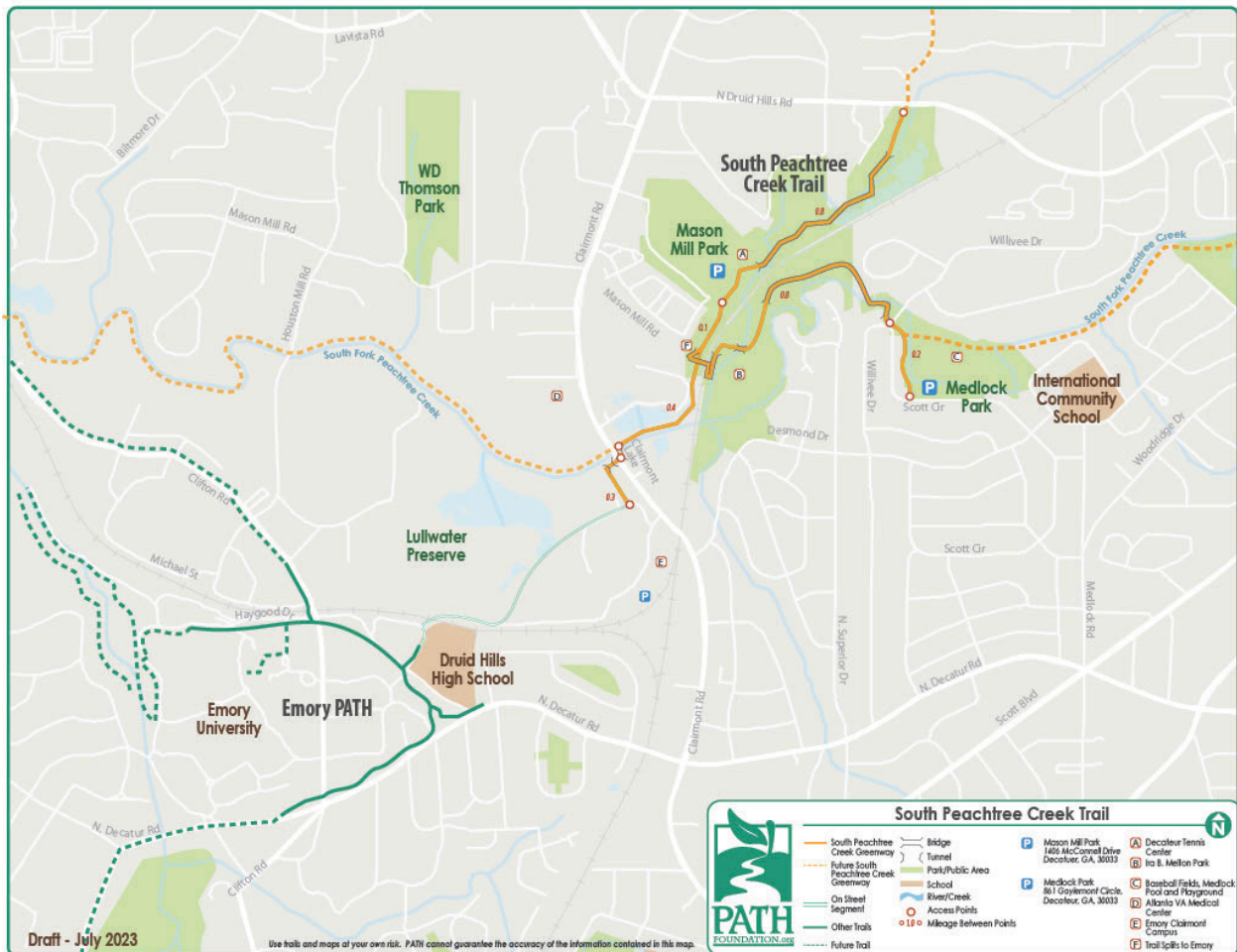
Much of the southern section of the park is located in a flood plain, which makes it prone to wet conditions. In this way, the park acts as natural “green” infrastructure by providing space for flooding to occur away from homes and businesses. Over the decades, impervious surfaces and development upstream from W. D. Thomson have exacerbated flooding and erosion problems within the park.

There are several other greenspaces in the neighborhoods surrounding W. D. Thomson Park. Mason Mill Park is the largest and most developed of the nearby

parks and is designated as a community park by DeKalb County (meaning that it has the size, amenities, and attractions to serve 10,000 to 50,000 users). Located



Image: Mason Mill Park, courtesy DeKalb County DRRPCA



Top: The South Peachtree Creek Trail winds through Mason Mill Park, where much of it is elevated boardwalk
 Bottom: PATH Foundation map of current and proposed trails in the area.

approximately one mile from W. D. Thomson Park, Mason Mill offers amenities such as a community garden, dog park, multiuse trails, a recreation center, a senior center, playground, and a tennis center with 17 courts.

Nearby Lullwater Preserve and Ira B. Melton Park offer more naturalistic experiences such as trails and historic features. Though privately owned by Emory University, Lullwater Preserve is publicly accessible as a park-like space. Both are within two miles of W. D. Thomson Park.

Both Kittredge Park and Medlock Park are each about two and a half miles from W. D. Thomson. Both offer baseball fields, swimming pools, playgrounds, trails, and other amenities.

History

Though an exhaustive study of the history of the neighborhood is beyond the scope of this vision plan, a brief sketch is offered here to shed light on how the land has changed over time.

Prior to Hernando de Soto's 1550 expedition through North America's southeast region, complex societies of Indigenous Americans evolved over the course of thousands of years. Archaeological evidence suggests that humans have lived in this part of the world since around 10,000 BCE.

As European colonization progressed, groups of Muscogee-speaking people organized into a loose confederacy for the purposes of negotiation and joint defense. For generations, Muscogee (Creek) people inhabited all the land in Atlanta as well as vast lands south and east of the Chattahoochee River.

This territory was lost through a long series of treaties, lastly by a Muskogee leader named William McIntosh. McIntosh, whose father was a Scottish immigrant, claimed to speak for the whole Muscogee tribe

in negotiations and accepted personal payments of land and currency in exchange for releasing Muscogee claims to much of what is now Georgia.

McIntosh was executed soon after by a contingent of Muscogee for his actions, and the Muscogee people were forcibly removed to Oklahoma in 1836 during a series of events commonly known as the Trail of Tears.

Between 1805 and 1833, land taken from the Muscogee and Cherokee peoples was redistributed to European colonists through a series of eight land lotteries. The land where W. D. Thomson now lies was allotted as part of the 1821 land lottery, in Land Lot 104/District 18 to Levingston P. Gaines.

The area surrounding W. D. Thomson Park garnered more attention with the arrival of new industries. During the 1850s, local businessman Ezekiel Mason opened a gristmill near the confluence of South Fork of Peachtree Creek and Burnt Fork Creek. The mill burned down three decades later but ruins of this facility remain in and around Mason Mill Park, and his name remains on two streets adjoining the park - Mason Woods Drive and Mason Mill Road.

In 1915, newly rechartered Emory University relocated to the North Druid Hills area. One of the institution's founders was William Danner (W. D.) Thomson, who was an accomplished lawyer and was active in the banking industry. Thomson, born in 1876, served as a member of the board of trustees (1915-1952) and dean of the law school (1916-1919, 1948-1949). He was also an organizer of Tate Educational Enterprises, which set up vocational, industrial, and academic training schools for boys and girls.

On March 20, 1952, W. D. Thomson made a generous gift to DeKalb County by donating 29 acres of land "to be held in use perpetually as a park." As part of the gift, Thomson made three requests related to use of the property.

1. That a direct pedestrian link be made between W. D. Thomson Elementary School and the new park.
2. That the private property on the east and west sides of the park be appropriately marked so that park users will not trespass on private land.
3. That the property not be arranged to permit automobiles into the area.

Thomson died on April 30, 1952 while on a road trip with his son in Florida, just six weeks after deeding the property as park.

After acquisition, the newly-established DeKalb County Department of Parks began developing initial plans for the park, emphasizing the area's natural beauty, as noted by Parks Director Tom O. Flemming.

The park opened for public use amid the gradual de-segregation of public facilities, including parks, which happened in phases in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1958, an official master plan was published for W. D. Thomson Park. The influence of this plan is readily apparent in the park today, and are reflected in the following goal statements.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, new residential subdivisions were built around the park including Mason Woods and

Vistavia. The newcomer residents founded the Mason Woods Garden Club in 1960 with the goal of hosting community fellowship events and organizing neighborhood improvement projects. Their projects included neighborhood entrance signage, beautifications, and speed humps along Mason Mill Road. Community members also held annual parties in the park to celebrate milestones, share fellowship, and enjoy the outdoors.

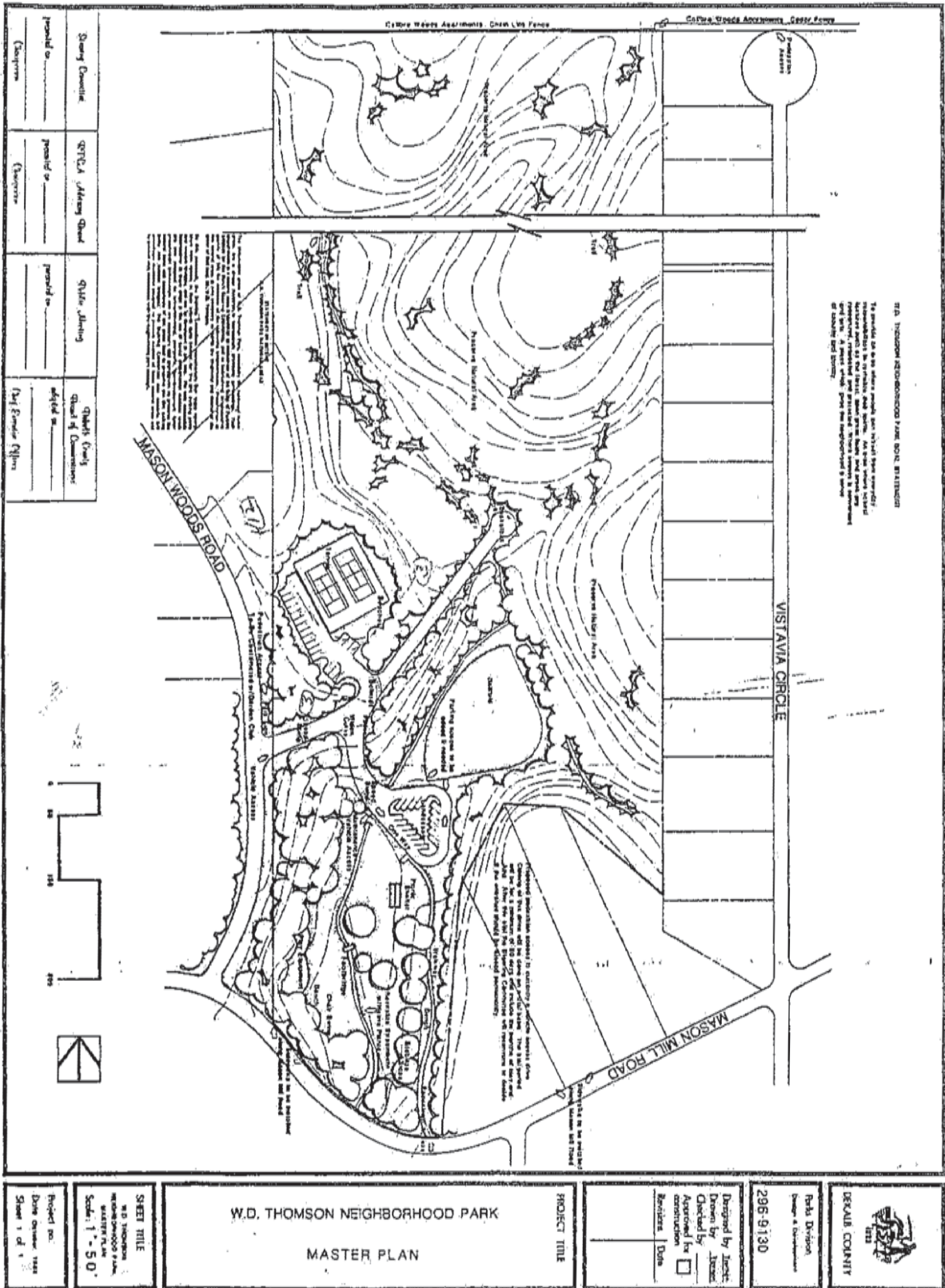
In 1990, W. D. Thomson received improvements from the Parks for People bond referendum. After years of flagging funding and lack of public support for bonds, this \$33M bond issue was the first successful bond referendum in decades and led to capital improvements throughout the DeKalb County park system, including \$100,000 spent at W. D. Thomson Park.

Park Pride started serving parks in DeKalb County in 2010, and the Friends of Thomson Park was established soon afterwards in 2012. This community-led group encourages residents to get involved in the park through regularly-scheduled work days, advocacy, and fundraising. Their work includes tending to native planting areas, invasive removal, and anything else needed to make the park a shining gem and welcoming to all in the community.

Recent investments provided by the county include new playground equipment, tennis court resurfacing, and a new bottomless culvert.

W. D. Thomson Park Master Plan 1958 Goals

1. To provide an area where people can retreat from everyday responsibilities to revitalize their spirits
2. To provide an area where natural features such as the forest, open grass fields and creek are recognized, respected and protected
3. To provide a place where access is convenient and safe
4. To provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of security and identity



The master plan from 1958 was the only comprehensive plan for the park prior to this park visioning effort. Source: DeKalb County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs



Indigenous American societies evolved over the course of thousands of years.

Chief William McIntosh (pictured) signed two treaties in 1821 and 1825 that delivered all tribal land holdings east of the Mississippi River to European colonists.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention opens in Atlanta in 1946. The following year, Emory University sold the CDC 15 acres of land for a token payment of \$15.



In 1952, W. D. Thomson donated 29 acres of land to the nascent DeKalb County Parks Department, whose first Director was Tom O. Fleming, a landscape architect (pictured).

10,000
BCE

1550



Muscogee-speaking peoples organize as a loose confederacy for joint defense, negotiation, and organization in response to European colonization.

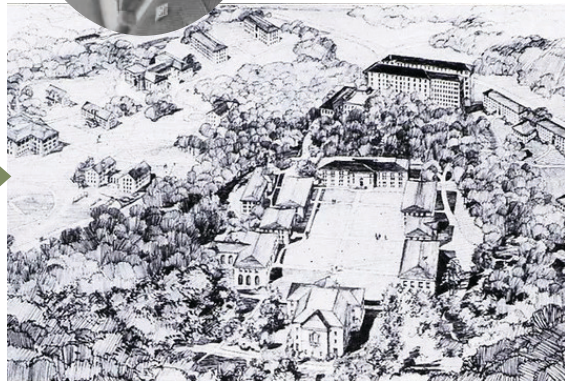
1825

William Danner Thomson (pictured), was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1876. He went to become a lawyer and one of the founders of Emory University after its recharter and relocation to Druid Hills in 1915.



1876

1915



Emory College relocates to North Druid Hills from Oxford, GA and is rechartered as Emory University

Image Sources:

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6. Brittain, M. I. "Education in Atlanta: A Sketch of the Origins and Growth of Our Schools and Colleges." *The City Builder*, April 1926, p.12.
7. "Fleming Named to Direct DeKalb Parks Planning," *The Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, Georgia) · November 11, 1953 · Page 33

1952



Through the mid to late-20th century, the community organized annual parties in the park to celebrate milestones, share fellowship, and enjoy the outdoors.



1960



Mason Woods Garden Club was established in 1960. The organization hosted social events for the community and led neighborhood beautification projects for decades.

1990s - 1970s



Playground Equipment Fall 1989
Bridge, Spring 1990

1989



Steps from our street into the Park added in the Spring 1990

2012



The friends of Thomson Park was established in 2012, shortly after Park Pride began offering services in DeKalb County.

Recent investments have been made to improve park amenities as well as the health of the unnamed tributary to the South Fork of Peachtree Creek that runs through the park.



2020s



In 1987, Mason Mill Park received \$100,000 through the Parks for People Bond Referendum. Improvements including playground equipment and wooden stairs (pictured here) were introduced between 1987 - 1990.

Image Sources:

1. Various photographs. Mason Woods Subject File, DeKalb History Center Archives
2. Mason Woods Garden Club Silver Anniversary Celebration, 1985. Mason Woods Subject File, DeKalb History Center Archives
3. Friends of Thomson Park logo, courtesy of the organization
4. Recent project photography from Park Pride



A beautiful unnamed stream meanders through the heart of W. D. Thomson Park.

Existing Conditions

Tucked within the North Druid Hills neighborhood, W. D. Thomson Park offers residents and visitors a unique wooded and outdoor experience in the heart of a bustling suburb.

W.D. Thomson Park features a wide variety of amenities for visitors. On the southern end of the park there are more built features like athletic facilities, a playground, and a pavilion. The northern end of the park has a series of well-blazed trails that meanders through the forest.

Vehicular Access

For visitors arriving by car, the only access point is the main park entrance from Mason Woods Drive. A subtle yellow wooden sign marks the entrance. The sign itself is in fair condition with a garden bed at its base. However, it appears a bit worn with faded paint and aging timbers that exhibit some splintering and warping.

There are two designated parking areas within the park. The upper parking lot contains 12 parking spaces and serves the tennis courts. There are no marked ADA spaces in the lot. The parking lot shows room for improvement, partly due to its design with a relatively narrow drive aisle and a sharp turn to access parking spaces. The lower parking lot offers 14 parking spaces with some aging pavement and faded striping. There is one ADA parking space, though its distinguishing striping and signage have been lost. In addition, drivers will frequently park their cars on dirt and gravel near the park entrance or along the cul-de-sac for access to the nature trails. Traffic cones and, more frequently, a trash can are used to discourage vehicle access to the asphalt cul-de-sac which serves as an informal trailhead for the nature trails.



Image: Park Pride

Vehicular access to the cul-de-sac is discouraged, but not prohibited through a combination of bollards, fencing, and a Rubbermaid trash can.



Image: Park Pride

The trailhead kiosk is located at the end of the interior park road/cul-de-sac.

The roadway leading to the cul-de-sac trailhead and basketball hoop is failing completely in places due to erosion. The only section of roadway in excellent condition was recently repaved as part of a culvert replacement project.

Pedestrian Access

The main vehicular entrance is also shared with pedestrians and provides the primary means of access to the park, though there is no separated pedestrian pathway. Elsewhere, there are three pedestrian-only entrances. One off Mason Mill Road, one at the end of Vistavia Circle, and one connecting to the Calibre Woods Apartment complex. Except for the entrance from Calibre Woods, the remaining pedestrian entrances lack signage or any formal entry design.

There is a paved walk from the lower parking lot to the playground and the pavilion, which would offer ADA-compliant access to both

features if an appropriate parking option were also offered.

A level unpaved clearing off Mason Mill Road on the south end of the park provides direct access to the playground. Trees line either side of the clearing, but its unpaved condition makes for challenging terrain for parents who use strollers or anyone else with mobility challenges.

At the end of Vistavia Circle there is a discrete pedestrian entrance that leads visitors through the Calibre Woods property to the northern end of the nature trails.

The Calibre Woods entrance also leads to the nature trails at the northern end of the park. The complex has signage in a small picnic area notifying residents of the entrance. A short walk down a hill leads to a chain link gate with trail maps and community notices attached to it.



Image: Park Pride

Park sign at vehicular and pedestrian entrance off Mason Woods Dr.



Image: Park Pride

A narrow drive aisle at the upper parking lot



Image: Park Pride

The lower parking lot lacks striping for parking spaces



Image: Park Pride

The private access from Calibre Woods provides limited information on the park and no rules.



Image: Park Pride

View of Mason Mill Road pedestrian entrance from the playground.

Athletic Facilities

The park offers a limited number of areas geared toward athletic play. Two recently resurfaced tennis courts are located near the main entrance of the park and are in excellent condition.

Further along the roadway, a basketball hoop stands at the end of the cul-de-sac. The basketball hoop and netting are worn, and there is no striping associated with the hoop.

Downhill from the tennis courts and basketball hoop, an open grassy field occupies half an acre of land adjacent to the lower parking lot. Formerly a little league baseball field, the open space provides a welcome area for informal play. Located within the floodplain, the field experiences flooding during heavy rain events, and nearby sanitary sewer manholes can emit unpleasant odors. The field will necessarily be reduced in size due to an upcoming stream restoration project.



Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride

Top:

The park's two tennis courts recently underwent improvements with new nets and resurfacing.

Middle:

The open field provides an area for unstructured play, though it tends to hold storm water following rain events.

Bottom:

The basketball hoop and netting has some wear and tear, but it is one of the only publicly accessible hoops in the area.

Playground & Pavillion

Recently renovated, the playground at the park includes new rubber surfacing, a woodland-themed play structure, and inclusive multi-sensory play equipment. The playground also provides bench seating and a safety railing along the playground's western edge.

The park's picnic pavillion lies between the playground and the creek. The pavillion is situated on a concrete pad and includes three picnic tables, trash cans, a water fountain, a hot coal bin, and a grill. The cement pavement is in fair condition due to age. Due to its location at the toe of a slope in the floodplain, the pad often collects sedimentation following rain events. The tables, grill, trash cans, and water fountain are worn from use and age and merit replacement.

Top: The existing pavillion with grill, trashcans, and hot coal bin.

Middle: Sedimentation collects on the pavillion's ground surface following a storm.

Bottom: The playground has recently been reconstructed with brand new equipment and safety surfacing.



Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride

Trails

Among the most outstanding assets of W. D. Thomson Park are the forest and trails. They encompass over half of the park's total acreage. The park includes six color-coded trails: the Westside trail (green), the Creekside trail (red), the Central Ridge trail (white), the Eastside trail (blue), the High Point trail (yellow), and the Secret Valley trail (orange). Three of the trails, the Westside, Creekside, and Eastside trails traverse north-south through the forest, while the High Point and Secret Valley trails provide east-west connections between the trails. All together there are approximately 1.25 miles of trails. The Westside trail (green) crosses onto private land briefly in the northwest corner of the park.

All the trails employ color-coded blazing throughout the park. Painted trail marker posts indicate where trails begin, and diamond-shaped trail blazes are spaced at regular intervals through the forest.

The trail surfaces are unpaved with some timber planking over rough or muddy

portions of the trails. There are also four bridges that provide access over the water. The bridges are in good to fair condition and provide adequate trail access across the network of small creeks.

A small printed map posted at entrances to the trail system provides limited wayfinding assistance. The trail map and informational kiosk, located at the trailhead in the cul-de-sac, provide an opportunity for improvement and further development/refinement.



Image: Park Pride

Wooden bridge for stream crossing



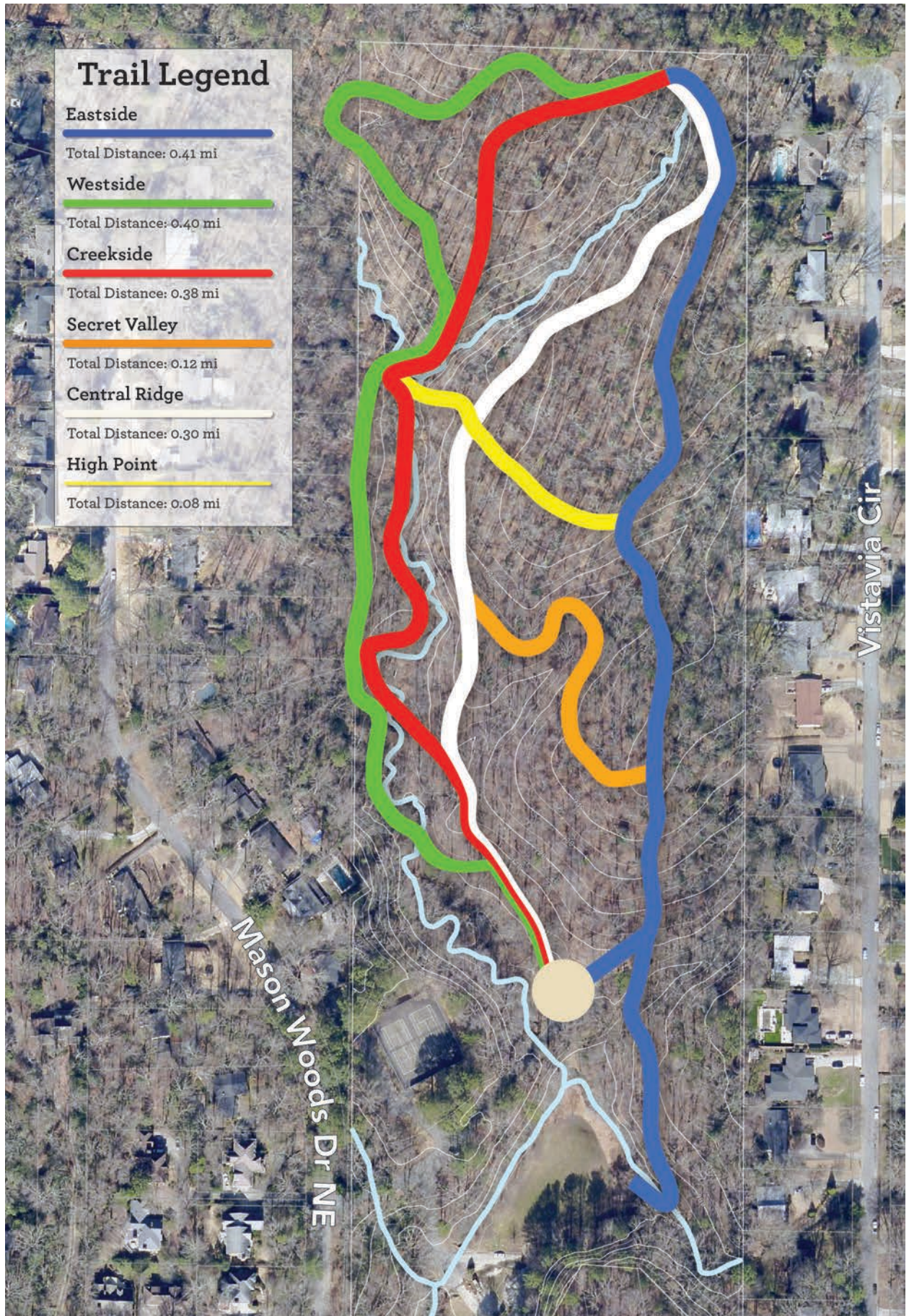
Image: Park Pride

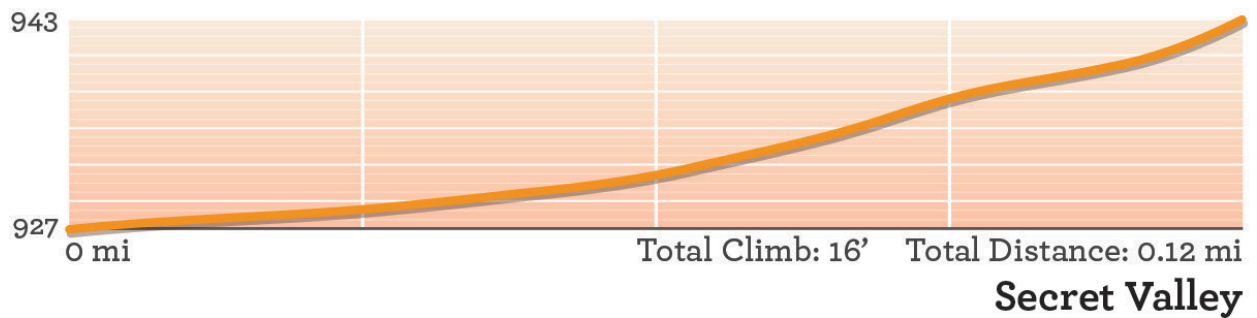
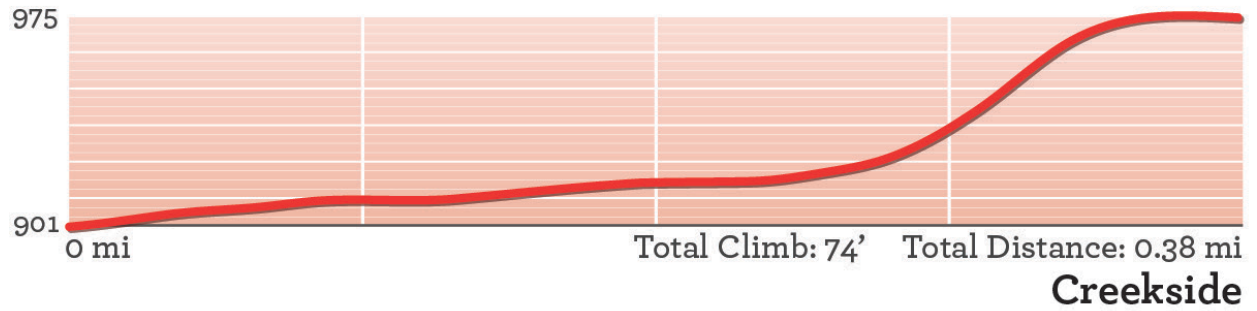
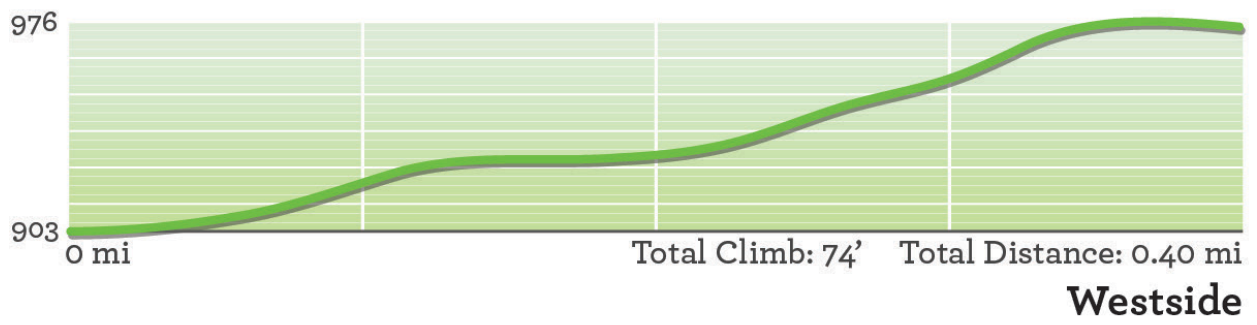
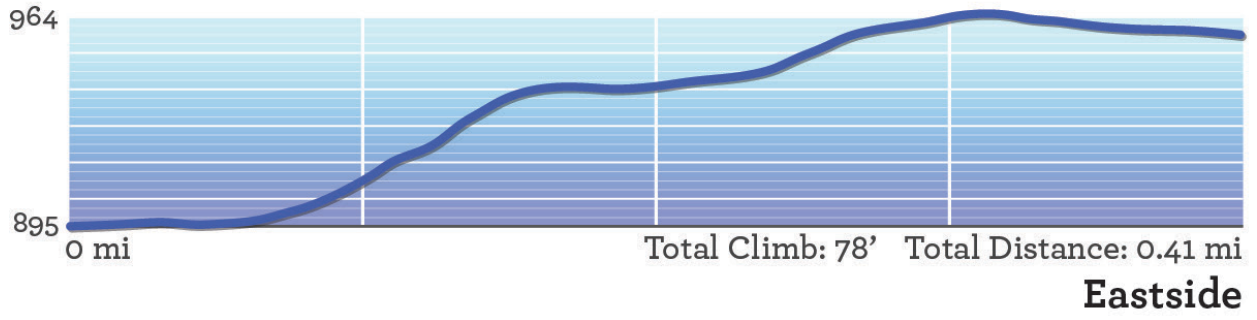
Examples of color coded blazing placed along the trails

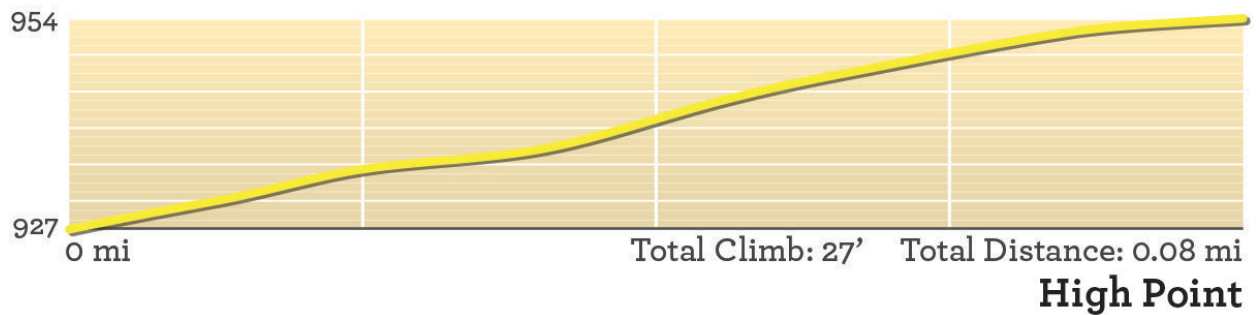
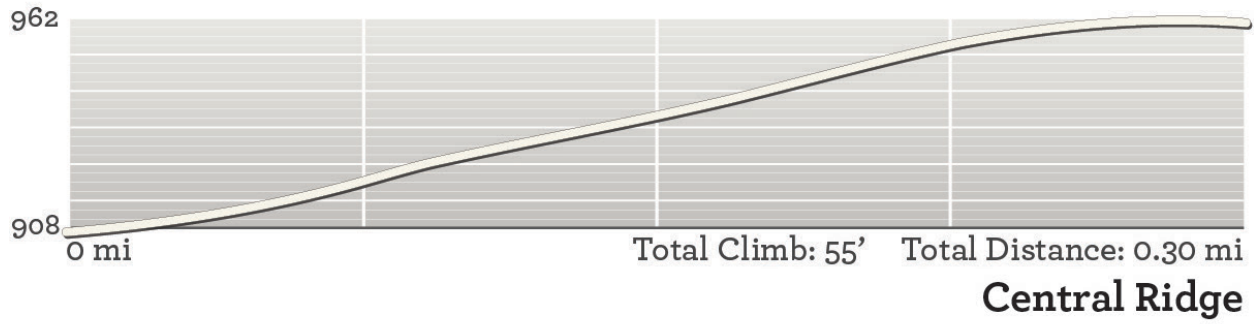


Image: Park Pride

Painted trail marker post







All of the trails are accessible from the asphalt cul-de-sac. The Eastside, Westside, Creekside, and Central Ridges trails go uphill north from the cul-da-sac and meet at the northeastern corner of the park. High Point and Secret Valley serve as connectors trails for visitors who don't want to travel the full length of the primary trails. There is one bench along the White trail for visitors to take a break and observe nature.



Above:
Bench along the white trail provides a chance to sit and rest in nature.

Left:
Logs made from fallen trees have been used to define the edges of some of the trails.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Image: Park Pride

Woodland Ecology & Vegetation

The woods in the park can be classified as being in a later state of Piedmont forest succession. Succession is the natural and ever-changing state of forest communities, marked by distinct stages of forest development and ecological features. Usually initiated by the disturbance of an existing ecosystem or the introduction of new habitat to a site, the process of succession culminates in the achievement of a climax community of plants and animals representing the most mature and stable ecological stage. Within the Piedmont region in Georgia, this climax community consists of an oak-hickory forest characterized by shade-tolerant, nut-producing trees. The rarity of pine trees in the W. D. Thomson Park suggests a more mature forest system and accompanying ecology.

While the park boasts regional woodland ecology, the park also suffers from the presence of invasive species like mahonia, English ivy, and lirioppe. In efforts to remove invasives and re-introduce native plants back to the site, the Friends of Thomson Park group have strived to restore native habitat throughout the park and provide education through signage and plant identification.

Since 2019, the Friends group has introduced almost 70 different species of native Piedmont plants to the area, including River Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), and Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*).

Top:

The park's six trails offer the neighborhood a wooded escape from urban life.

Middle & Bottom:

Through stewardship by the Friends of Thomson Park native woodland plants are making a resurgence within the park.



Image: Steve Walker, used with permission



Image: Steve Walker, used with permission



Image: Steve Walker, used with permission

Streams and Erosion

A central feature of the park are the unnamed streams that run throughout the site. Two main stream systems converge in the southern central part of the park before passing through the floodplain and continuing south. In the park's forested northern reaches, the streambank conditions are somewhat healthy, with some areas of more severe erosion at the outfall of Calibre Woods' drainage system. The southern reaches of the stream are characterized by deeply-incised banks and severe erosion as previous development of the park failed to consider the stream's natural tendencies. Upstream impervious development, including the Toco Hills Shopping Center, have exacerbated these issues. Additionally, the road leading to the cul-de-sac has created a dam-like condition, causing sediment from the northern reaches to settle inside a valley and clog the undersized culvert passing beneath the street. This sediment creates a flat, unattractive, and stagnant condition near the trailhead.



Image: Park Pride

Over time, the past channelization of the stream coupled with the undersized and aging culvert infrastructure has led to stormwater issues and areas of extreme erosion and sedimentation. Recently, a culvert replacement project under the roadway to the lower parking area has greatly improved water circulation in this part of the park, but more work remains to be done.

All streams in the park converge before flowing southward under Mason Mill Road via a culvert, which is also undersized and backs up during periods of intense rain.

Most of the southern portion of the site, including the pavilion, playground, and open field area are within a flood plain. The presence of this floodplain, in combination with state and county stream buffer regulations, limit development in this area.



Image: Park Pride



Image: DeKalb County BRPCA

Above:

Streambank erosion accelerated by a retaining wall, which has long lost its utility.

Top Left:

A little waterfall provides scenery along a trail.

Bottom Left:

The bridge culvert near the main parking area was recently updated to better handle excess stormwater. Image courtesy DeKalb County Dept of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs. Used with permission





Park Pride designer Nick Voravong presents the initial survey results to the community.

Community Engagement

The core of any visioning process is a strong community engagement effort. The utmost care was taken to ensure that the Vision Plan was an accurate reflection of the community's desires. To ensure as many voices as possible were heard, multiple engagement strategies were used such as Zoom and in person meetings, paper and digital surveys, and a website that shared engagement opportunities and published documents and information related to the process. For the purposes of this neighborhood park, outreach was limited to residents within 1/2 mile, or a 10-minute walk, of the park.

Steering Committee

The steering committee assembled for this visioning process included people who have dedicated effort towards maintaining the park, its trail systems, and native habitat restoration. The members were self-selected and included Jessica Chee, Mary Hinkel, Reed Owens, Buckley Terpenning, Rachel Travis, Carol Ude, and Steve Walker. The committee met monthly from February through August 2024.

Vision Branding and Website

To clearly identify the public materials and events related to the visioning process, Park Pride created consistent visual branding.



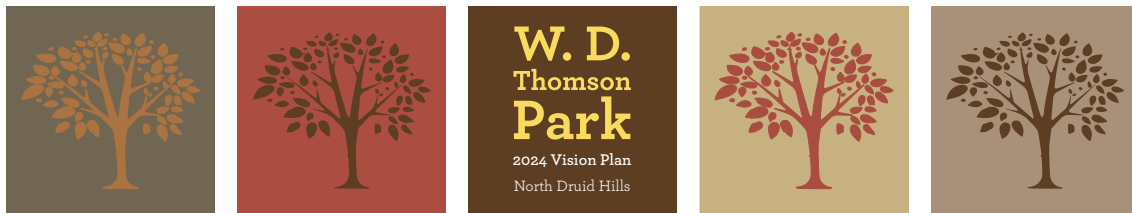
Above: Screenshots of the visioning website. Used as tool to share the visioning plan, displaying the schedule, give site context, show history, and link to the digital survey.

Designing a logo was the initial step for branding the visioning process. Several options were presented to the steering committee and the finalized design was used to create a color scheme. Then, with a finalized logo Park Pride created the website. It hosted progress updates,

inventory and analysis information, history, links to surveys, meeting recordings, and survey results. To ensure that as many community members were reached as possible yard signs featuring the logo were also developed. These signs were then placed strategically around the neighborhood and park.



Logo for Friends of Thomson Park. The tree was used as the main element in all the logo concepts.



Concepts presented to the steering committee. The group made the decision to go with the one at the top

This is your neighborhood park!



Meet on _____
 (Date) (Time)

at _____

parkvisioning.wixsite.com/wd-thomson

Reusable yard signs developed after the creation of the visioning logo and branding.

Community Survey

A preliminary community input survey was designed with the steering committee and open from April 17, 2024 to June 14, 2024. The survey was made available in a paper version and in a digital version. It was distributed through the Friends of Thomson Park newsletter, by mail to all households within 1/2 mile of the park, and emailed to the neighborhood newsletter list. It was also available via QR codes on signs posted in the park, and blank paper surveys were made available in a dropbox near the main park entrance. All individuals in a household (including children) were encouraged to complete the survey. The survey generated 138 responses, results from which are shown on pages 34-40. Complete responses and comments are in Appendix A.

Public Meetings

Each public meeting moves the visioning process along in stages: the first public meeting is a brainstorming session where 'Big Ideas' about the park are established. Participants decide what kind of park they need and want, and what functions are most important for the park to fulfill. Based on the feedback gathered in this meeting plus survey data, a set of guiding principles is

created. All future designs and elements must support these principles in order to be included in the final plan.

After the first public meeting, the visioning team goes to the drawing board to come up with draft concepts. These concepts are first reviewed by the steering committee, then presented for review at the second public meeting. Finally, armed with input from the community and steering committee, Park Pride's visioning team develops a final conceptual vision plan. This plan is presented for review at the final public meeting. The community provides feedback on the final conceptual plan as well, which is taken into account before preparing this report.

Public Meeting 1- Big Ideas

The first public meeting was held virtually on May 16, 2024 with over 70 people registered for the Zoom meeting. The goal of this meeting was to introduce the visioning process to the community, encourage involvement and participation in the survey, describe the context and history of the site, and establish the guiding principles for the park's design.

Guiding Principles

During the meeting, participants were shown two sets of historic guiding principles for the park, one from W. D. Thomson's original bequest and one from the 1958 master plan. They were then asked a series of questions using an interactive polling application called PollEverywhere to elicit qualitative responses from attendees.

- What word or phrase of W. D. Thomson Park's guiding principles resonates most with you?
- In one or two words, what anchors you in this community?
- In one or two words, what sights and sounds would/do you like to experience at W. D. Thomson Park?



Look inside to take part in the Vision Process! Return to the dropbox at W. D. Thomson Park, or by mail to: Park Pride, P.O. Box 4936, Atlanta, GA 30302

W. D. THOMSON PARK SURVEY
 Park Pride is engaged in partnership with DeKalb County Dept of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs and the community to create a "Vision Plan" for W. D. Thomson Park. This survey will provide us with information on how the community currently uses the park and what investments you would like to see in the future. **Each person in your household can complete the survey once!**

Visit our website or scan the QR code to:
 • Complete the survey online.
 • Learn about the visioning process.
 • See the public meeting schedule.
(first public meeting on May 16.)
parkvisioning.wixsite.com/wd-thomson

To complete the survey online, please scan the QR code to the right. The survey will close on **June 14**.

What is your favorite thing about W. D. Thomson Park today?

What are the biggest challenges facing W. D. Thomson Park?

How do you get to W. D. Thomson Park? (Select the one you use most frequently)

- Drive
- Walk
- Bike
- Other (Please write your answer below)

How often do you visit W. D. Thomson Park?

- Often (weekly)
- Occasionally (every few months)
- Rarely (once per year or less)
- Frequently (monthly)
- Seldom (fewer than four times/year)
- Don't go/Never been

Why do you visit W. D. Thomson Park (Select all that apply)

- Community events
- Cookouts, picnics, small group parties
- Eat lunch
- Exercise
- Meet a friend
- Play basketball
- Play tennis
- Use field
- Use playground
- Volunteering and caretaking
- Walk my dog
- Walk the trails
- Other (Please write your answer below)

Have you seen amenities at other parks that you would like to see offered at W. D. Thomson Park?

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the **LOWEST** and 5 being the **HIGHEST**) rate the quality of each of the following **existing** features in W. D. Thomson Park

- Basketball hoop
- Parking areas
- Picnic shelter/grilling area
- Open lawn
- Park entrances
- Playground
- Signage (entrance sign, park rules, trail maps, etc.)
- Tennis courts
- Walking trails

W. D. Thomson Park recently received investments to improve the playground, tennis courts, and vehicular creek crossing. What other types of **potential investments** would you prioritize? (Select up to 3)

- Active recreation (Ex: Basketball, field improvements)
- Protection/restoration of natural systems (Ex: Native plantings, stream restoration, invasive plant removal, erosion control, etc.)
- Park access and circulation (Ex: Sidewalks, improved trailhead, improved entrances, wheelchair accessible trail, reorganized parking, multi-use trail connectivity, etc.)
- Passive enjoyment (Ex: Bird watching, beautification, more benches, picnic shelter updates, etc.)
- Signage and wayfinding (Ex: Park entrance sign, rules, educational signage (potential topics might include native plants, Peachtree Creek, who was W. D. Thomson, etc.))

Tell us more about your answer above

Who is in your household? (Select all that apply)

- Adults only
- Infant - 5 years old
- Children (6-12 years old)
- Teenagers (12-18 years old)
- Seniors (65 years and up)
- Dog owner
- Person with mobility challenges

Is there anything else you'd like to share about W. D. Thomson Park? Feel free to expand on your previous answers or share something we didn't ask about.

If you would like to receive e-mail notifications about the visioning process, kindly provide your name and e-mail address below. Your name will not be published, and all survey responses will be aggregated and anonymized. **We do not share your information with third parties without permission.**

Please print clearly!

First _____

Last _____

Email _____



The Friends of Thomson Park is a Park Pride-affiliated volunteer group, open to all, that takes an active interest in the stewardship of W. D. Thomson Park. Their work includes tending to native planting areas, invasive removal, trail maintenance, and anything else needed to make the park a shining gem in the community. To stay informed about future volunteer days and current projects in the park consider signing up for the newsletter.

- I would like to sign up for the Friends of Thomson Park newsletter.

The community survey was distributed in both electronic and paper formats.

1958 Master Plan Guiding Principles

- To provide an area where people can retreat from everyday responsibilities to revitalize their spirits.
- An area where natural features such as the forest, open grass fields and creek are recognized, respected and protected.
- Where access is convenient and safe.
- A place which gives the neighborhood a sense of security and identity.

Excerpt from the public presentation showing the original guiding principles for the park. These help inform the current principles for the park, shown later in this report.

What word or phrase of W.D. Thomson Park's guiding principles resonates most with you? What word or phrase would you add? Answer up to three times.

1958 Master Plan Guiding Principles

- To provide an area where people can retreat from everyday responsibilities to revitalize their spirits.
- An area where natural features such as the forest, open grass fields and creek are recognized, respected and protected.
- Where access is convenient and safe.
- A place which gives the neighborhood a sense of security and identity.

natural features ☆

Escape-from-city ☆

protected ☆

SEE MORE ▾

In one or two words, what anchors you in this community? Answer up to three times.



In one or two words, what suggestions would you make for strategic investments in the park? Answer up to three times.

Another pavilion ☆

all dogs on leash ☆

Accessible natural path from playground, across lawn, and over creek to the trails ☆

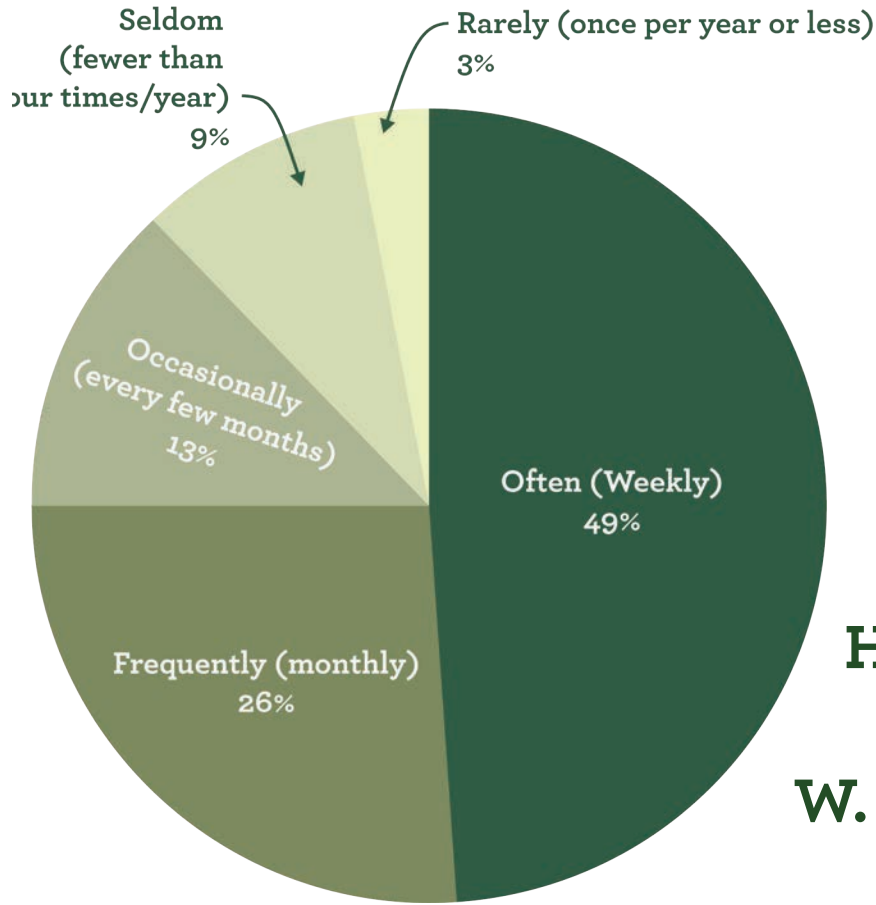
SEE MORE ▾

Attendees of the virtual public meeting were able to participate via PollEverywhere. The results would display on each slide dynamically. The responses to the second questions aggregated as a word cloud.

Community Survey Results

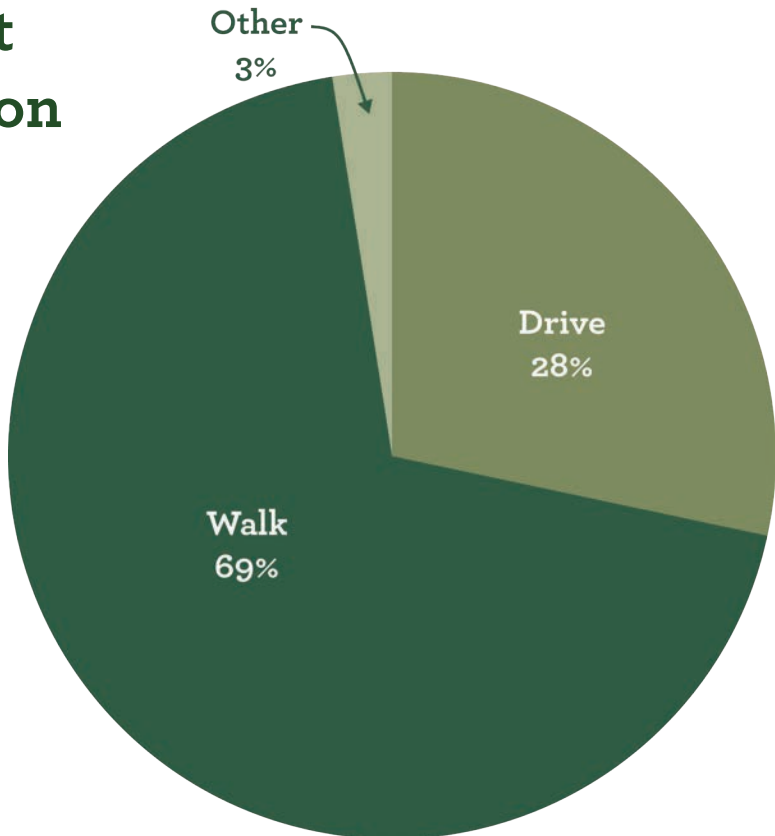
With over 138 responses to the community there was a need to distill the data into a format that was easy to understand. The data visualizations shown here helped steer design decisions for the vision plan concepts.



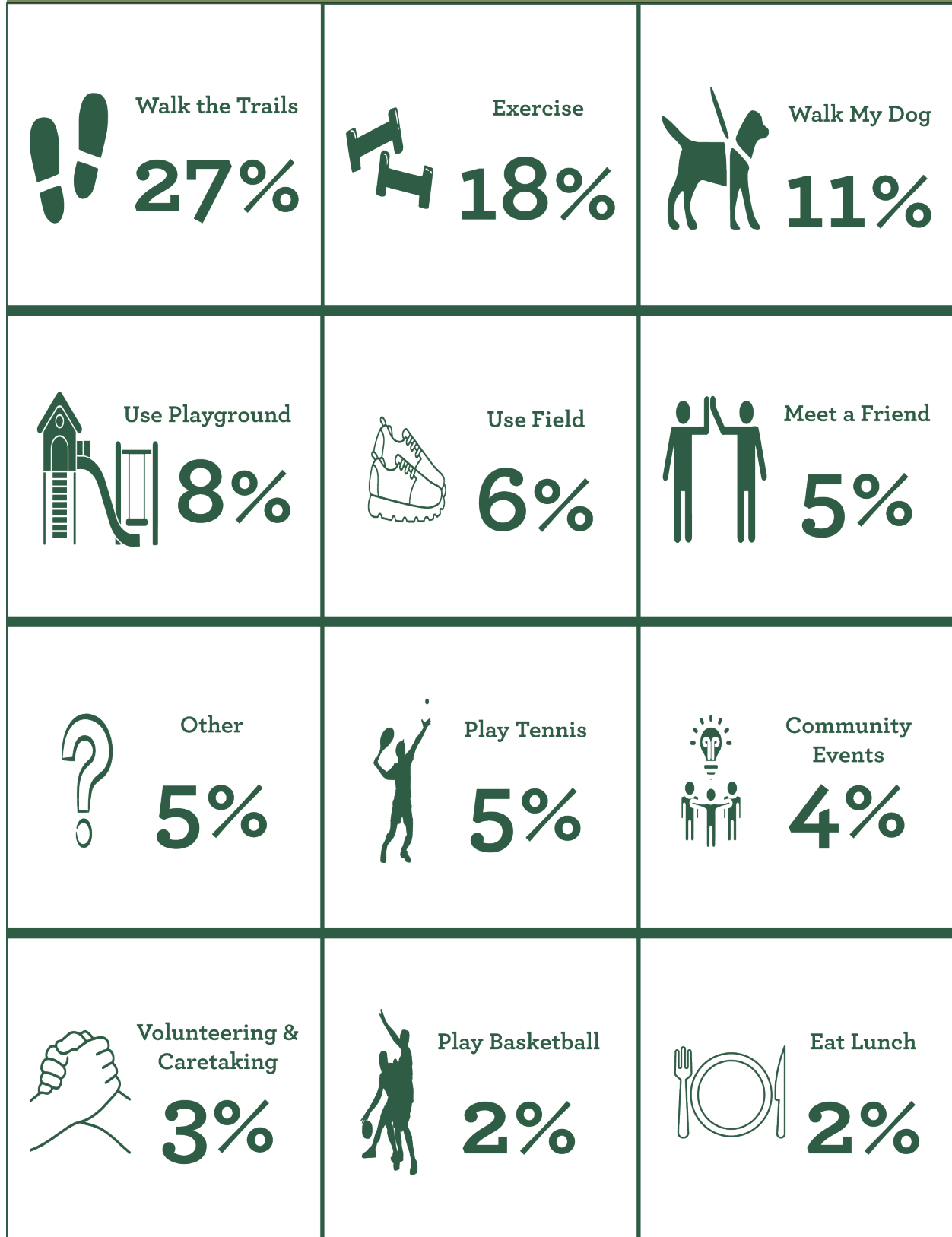


How often do you go to W. D. Thomson Park?

How do you get to W.D. Thomson Park?



Why do you visit W. D. Thomson Park?



Rate Existing Amenities on a scale of 1-5

Playground
(4.4)



Walking Trails
(4.3)



Tennis Courts
(4.1)



Park Entrances
(3.8)



Open Lawn
(3.7)



Parking areas
(3.7)



Signage
(3.6)

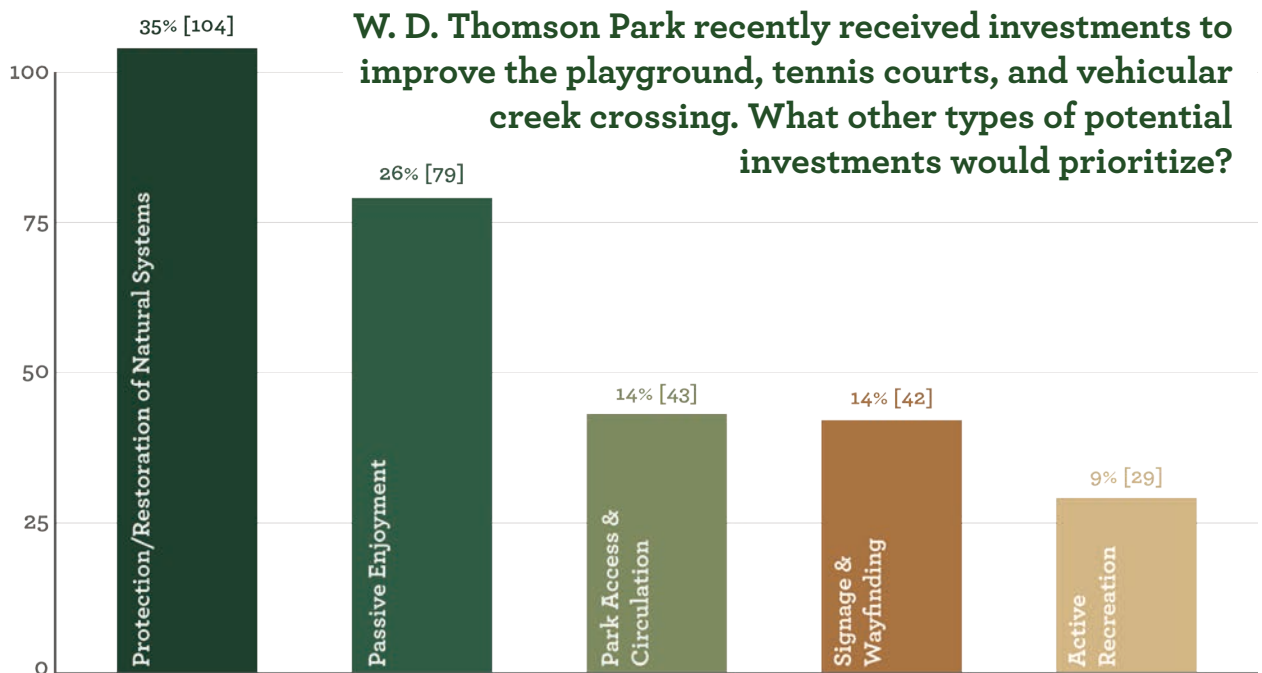


Picnic Shelter/Grilling Area
(3.5)



Basketball Hoop
(2.4)

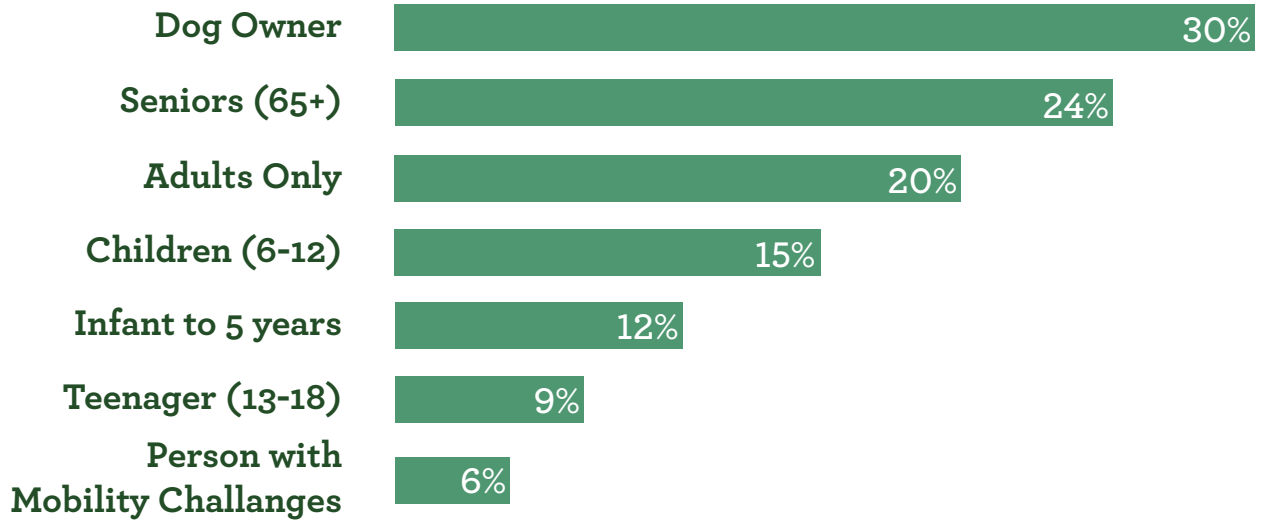




Who is in your household?

Adults Only [50]	Adults + Children (6-12) [6]	Adults + Children(6-12) + Dog(s) [3]
Adults + Children(6-12)+ Seniors(65&Up) [1]	Adults+ Children(6-12)+ Teenagers(13-18) [3]	Adults+ Children(6-12)+ Teenagers(13-18)+ Seniors(65&Up) [1]
Adults+ Dog(s) [13]	Adults+ Person with Mobility Challenges [1]	Adults+ Infant - 5 yrs [5]
Adults+ Infant - 5 yrs Children(6-12) [4]	Adults+ Infant - 5 yrs Children(6-12) Dog(s) [2]	Adults+ Infant - 5 yrs Dog(s) [5]
Adults+ Seniors(65&Up) [10]	Adults+ Seniors(65&Up)+ Dog(s) [2]	Adults+ Seniors(65&Up)+ Person with Mobility Challenges+ Dog(s) [4]
Adults+ Seniors(65&Up)+ Person with Mobility Challenges [3]	Adults+ Teenagers(13-18) [1]	Adults+ Teenagers(13-18) Dog(s) [6]
Adults+ Teenagers(13-18)+ Seniors(65&Up)+ Dog(s) [1]	Seniors (65&Up) [6]	Seniors(65&Up)+ Dog(s) [5]

Who is in your household?



Anything Else to Share?

"Having a forest so close to downtown is a special amenity and it should be **protected and preserved.**"

"**Dogs off-leash** in the woods can be a big nuisance."

"It would be great to have a plan in place to avoid erosion and **maintain the natural beauty** of the park"

"The **trails are the highlight**, by far! The creek and slopes and nature's back there is so amazing to have in our backyard"

"I really think more people would play basketball there if it was in good shape and regulation. **There's no other public courts nearby**"

"I feel so lucky to live near a conserved wooded space that, in my opinion, **balances recreation options and wooded areas** very well."

Public Meeting 2 - Preliminary Plans

The second public meeting was held on June 27 at Intown Community Church. Sixteen community members attended, along with Caleb Wittenmyer of DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs. Draft guiding principles were presented, along with preliminary concepts for each park. A feedback form (see page 45) was provided for participants to complete as they reviewed the concepts. The preliminary concepts were also made available on the website, along with a link to an online version of the feedback form, which was open until July 15.



Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride

Top and Bottom: Participants of the second community meeting evaluate the two concepts offered for W. D. Thomson Park.

Middle: Andrew White of Park Pride presents an synopsis of the park visioning process and the features of the two proposed design concepts.

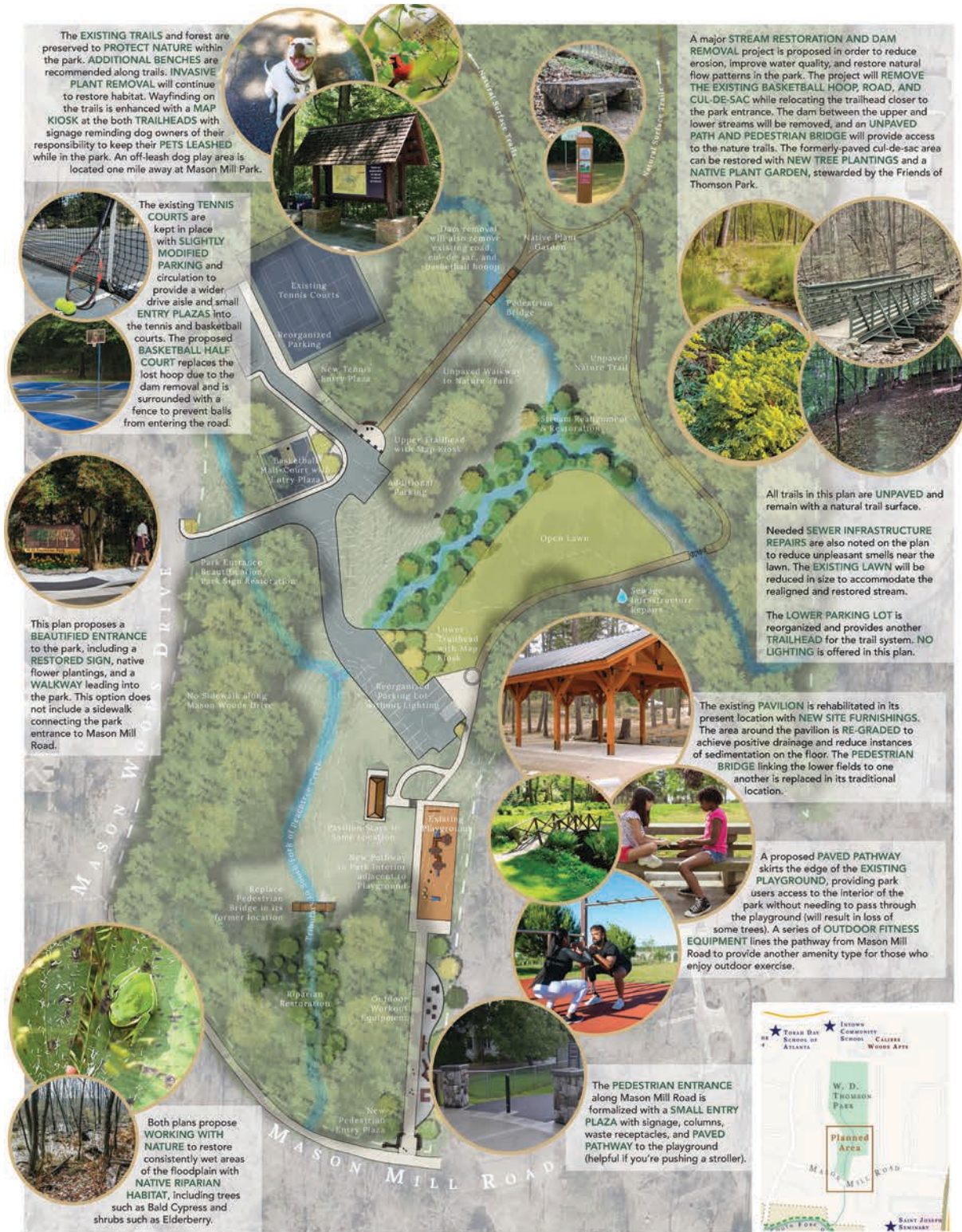


W. D. Thomson Park
North Druid Hills

Preliminary Concept 1 Vision Plan 2024



June 27, 2024



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

W. D. Thomson Park
North Druid Hills

Preliminary Concept 2
Vision Plan
2024

Facilitated by

DeKalb County SPCA | parkpride

June 27, 2024

FEATURES: CONCEPT 1

- Paved pedestrian entrance off of Mason Mill Road with seating area, reading nook, and a Little Free Library
- Restoration of natural systems including stream restoration, dam removal, and wetland restoration
- Paved pathway bypassing playground into interior of park
- Reorganized parking with modest security lighting
- Pavilion moved to higher ground in upper field
- Short paved nature trail loop connecting upper and lower parking lots
- One new trailhead with map kiosk
- No basketball court
- Improved/beautified park entrance from Mason Woods Drive
- New sidewalk along Mason Woods Drive to park entrance

FEATURES: CONCEPT 2

- Paved pedestrian entrance off of Mason Mill Road with a series of outdoor fitness equipment
- Restoration of natural systems including stream restoration, dam removal, and wetland restoration
- Paved pathway bypassing playground into interior of park
- Reorganized parking with no added lighting
- Pavilion stays in same location
- All trails in this plan are unpaved and remain with a natural trail surface
- Two new trailheads with map kiosk
- New basketball half-court near tennis courts
- Improved/beautified park entrance from Mason Woods Drive
- No sidewalk added to Mason Woods Drive

BOTH CONCEPTS

- Restoration of natural systems, including stream restoration, dam removal, and riparian restoration
- Pedestrian entrance from Mason Mill Road with paved pathway to playground
- Preservation of nature trails and forest with additional benches provided along trails
- New trailhead with map kiosk and informational signage related to keeping pets on a leash
- Beautified park entrance from Mason Woods Drive with new pedestrian walkway into the park, restored sign, and native plantings

PROPOSED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Provide a safe, accessible area where people can retreat from everyday responsibilities to revitalize their spirits.
2. Provide an area where natural features such as the forest and its trails, native plants, wildlife, and the creek are highlighted, respected and protected.
3. Provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of community through park stewardship, celebrations, activity, and play.

Feedback Form & Results

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

June 27, 2024
Public Meeting 2
Facilitated by Park Pride for Friends of Thomson Park

CONCEPT FEEDBACK

The team at Park Pride has developed two draft concepts for W.D. Thomson Park based on community feedback. We are now asking for your feedback on these drafts, which will guide the vision plan for the park. Draft concepts can be downloaded at: <https://parkvisioning.wixsite.com/wd-thomson>

FEATURES: CONCEPT 1

- Paved pedestrian entrance off of Mason Mill Road with seating area, reading nook, and a Little Free Library
- Restoration of natural systems including stream restoration, dam removal, and wetland restoration
- Paved pathway bypassing playground into interior of park
- Reorganized parking with modest security lighting
- Pavilion moved to higher ground in upper field
- Short paved nature trail loop connecting upper and lower parking lots
- One new trailhead with map kiosk
- No basketball court
- Improved/beautified park entrance from Mason Woods Drive
- New sidewalk along Mason Woods Drive to park entrance

FEATURES: CONCEPT 2

- Paved pedestrian entrance off of Mason Mill Road with a series of outdoor fitness equipment
- Restoration of natural systems including stream restoration, dam removal, and wetland restoration
- Paved pathway bypassing playground into interior of park
- Reorganized parking with no added lighting
- Pavilion stays in same location
- All trails in this plan are unpaved and remain with a natural trail surface
- Two new trailheads with map kiosk
- New basketball half-court near tennis courts
- Improved/beautified park entrance from Mason Woods Drive
- No sidewalk added to Mason Woods Drive

The following features are included on both plans.
Please let us know to what extent you support the proposed investments.

Restoration of natural systems, including stream restoration, dam removal, and riparian restoration

strongly oppose oppose neither support nor oppose support strongly support

Pedestrian entrance from Mason Mill Road with paved pathway to playground

strongly oppose oppose neither support nor oppose support strongly support

Preservation of nature trails and forest with additional benches provided along trails

strongly oppose oppose neither support nor oppose support strongly support

New trailhead with map kiosk and informational signage related to keeping pets on a leash

strongly oppose oppose neither support nor oppose support strongly support

Beautified park entrance from Mason Woods Drive with new pedestrian walkway into the park, restore sign, and native plantings

strongly oppose oppose neither support nor oppose support strongly support

Additional comments or preferences: _____

CONCEPT FEEDBACK

Big differences The following are major areas of difference between Concepts 1 & 2. Check the options you prefer. Features from both concepts may be included in the vision plan!

CONCEPT 1

- Includes seating area and Little Library along new path to playground
- Pavilion moved to higher ground in upper field
- Reorganized angular parking in lower parking lot with modest security lighting
- Short paved trail loop connecting upper and lower parking lots for inclusivity
- No basketball court
- New sidewalk along Mason Woods Drive to park entrance

CONCEPT 2

- Includes outdoor fitness equipment near new pedestrian entrance from Mason Mill Rd
- Pavilion stays in same location
- Reorganized parking in lower parking lot with no added lighting
- All trails in this plan are unpaved and remain with a natural trail surface
- New basketball half-court near tennis
- No sidewalk added to Mason Woods Drive

Seating area and Little Library along new path to playground

Pavilion moved to higher ground in upper field

Lighting in parking area

Short paved trail loop

New sidewalk along Mason Woods Drive to park entrance

Additional comments or preferences: _____

Guiding Principles

How much do you agree with the following goals, or "guiding principles" for the park?

1 Provide a safe, accessible area where people can retreat from everyday responsibilities to revitalize their spirits.

strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

2 Provide an area where natural features such as the forest and its trails, native plants, wildlife, and the creek are highlighted, respected and protected.

strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

3 Provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of community through park stewardship, celebrations, activity, and play.

strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

Additional comments or preferences: _____

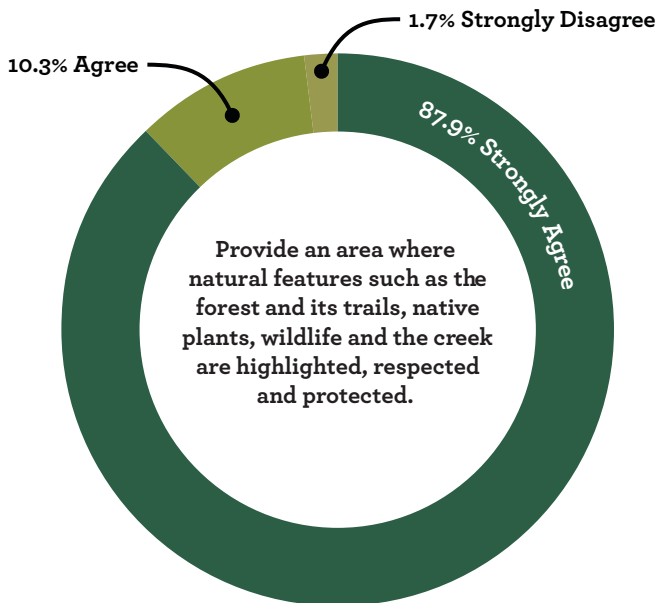
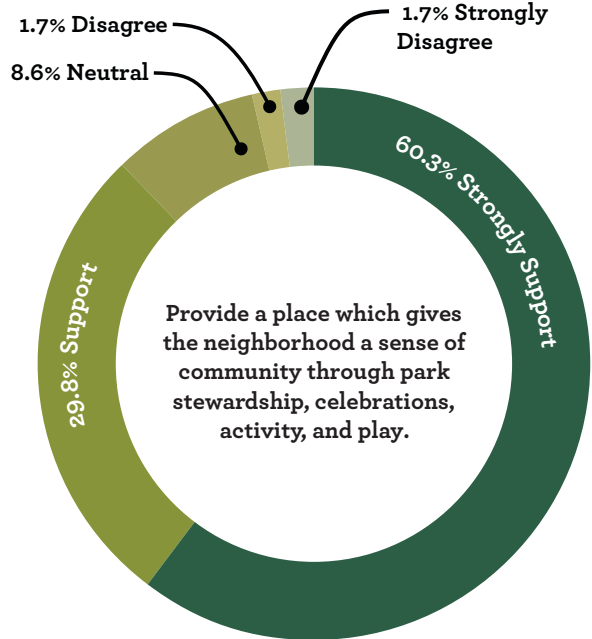
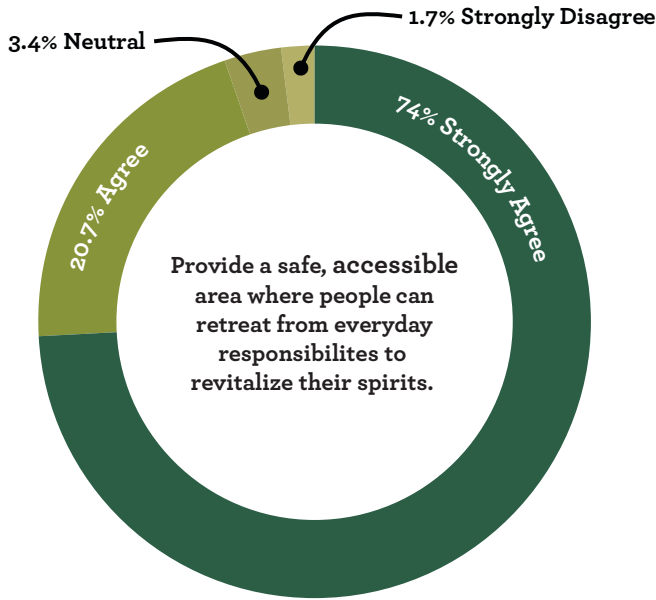
If you would like to receive e-mail notifications about the visioning process, kindly provide your name and e-mail address below. Your name will not be published, and all survey responses will be aggregated and anonymized. We do not share your information with third parties without permission.

Name: _____ Email: _____

The physical survey developed to hand out at at the second public meeting

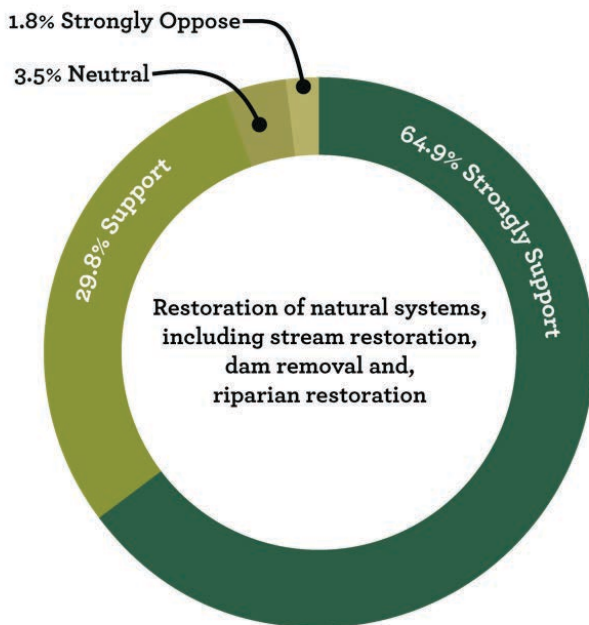
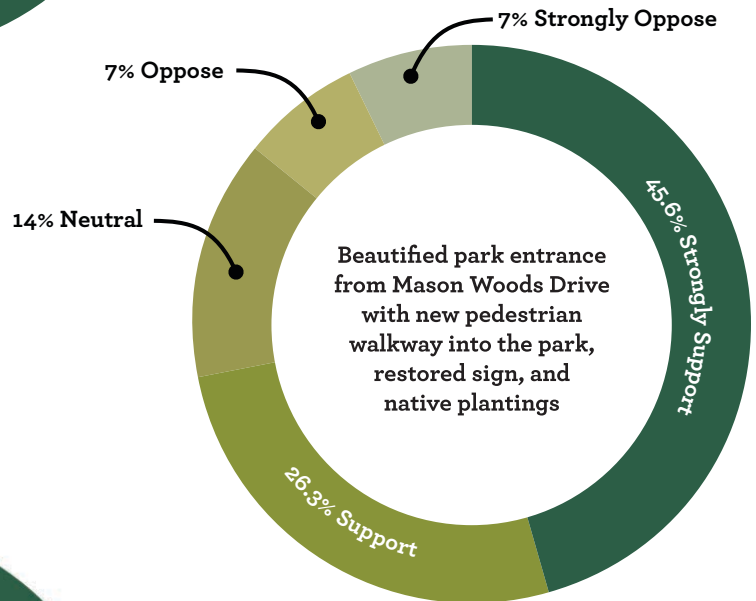
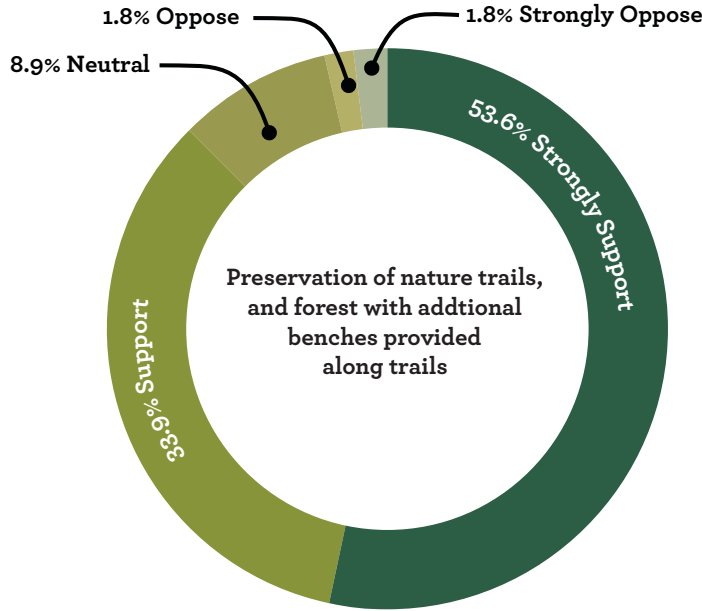
Vision Plan Concepts & Guiding Principles Survey Results

After the concepts were presented at Public Meeting 2 a survey was provided to get feedback on the preferred design elements for the final concept plan. These charts show results from **68** participants around the community. The results were grouped by topic and presented with the charts shown on the following pages.

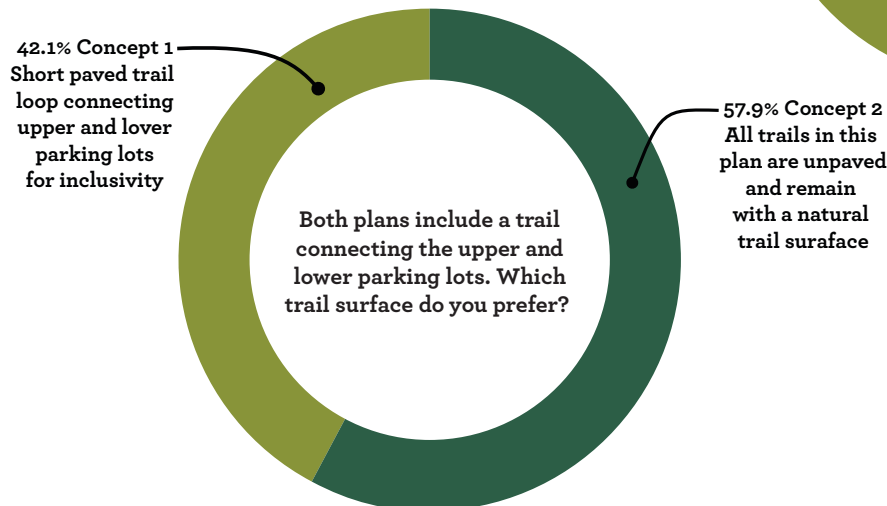
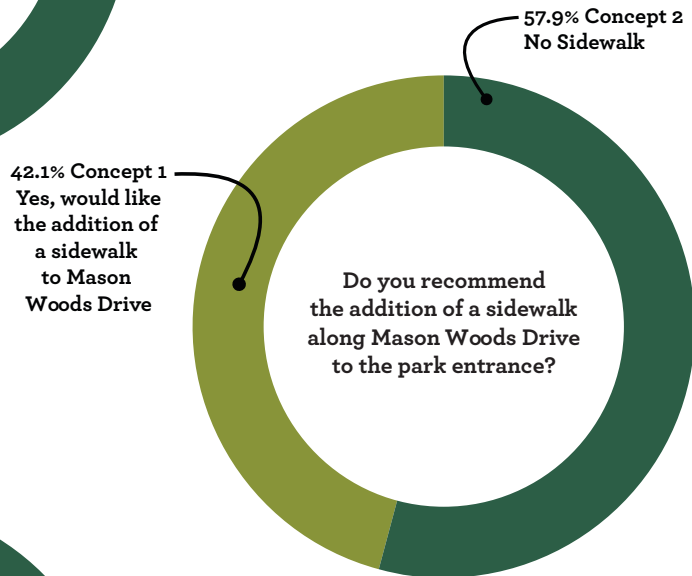
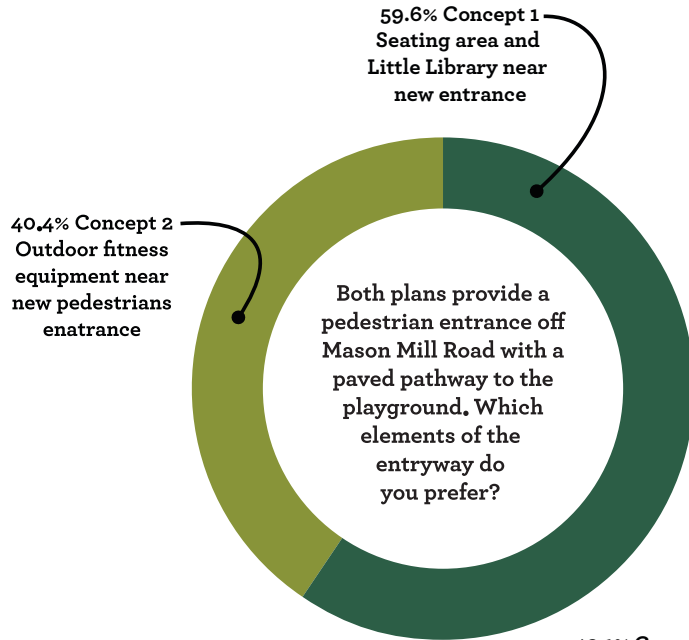
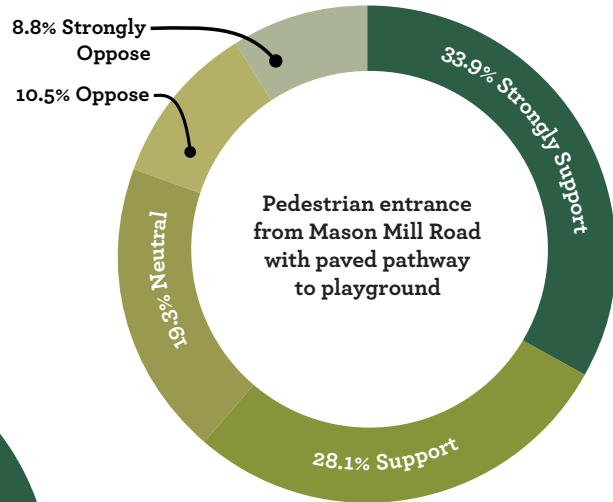


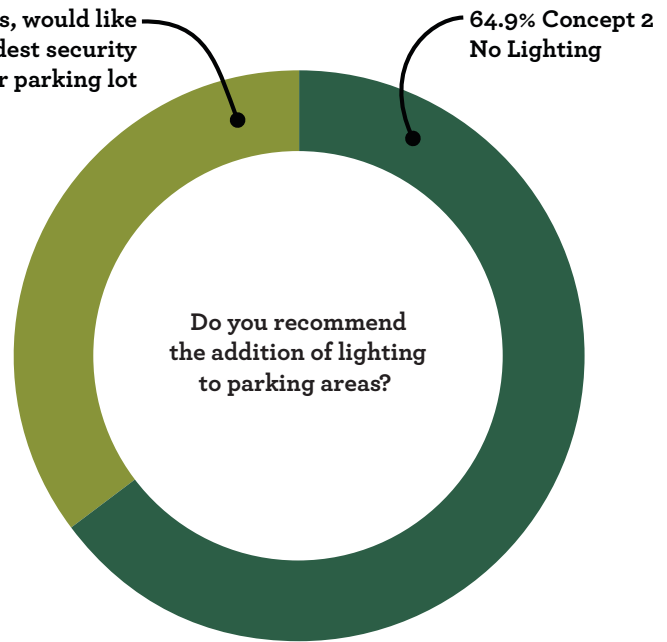
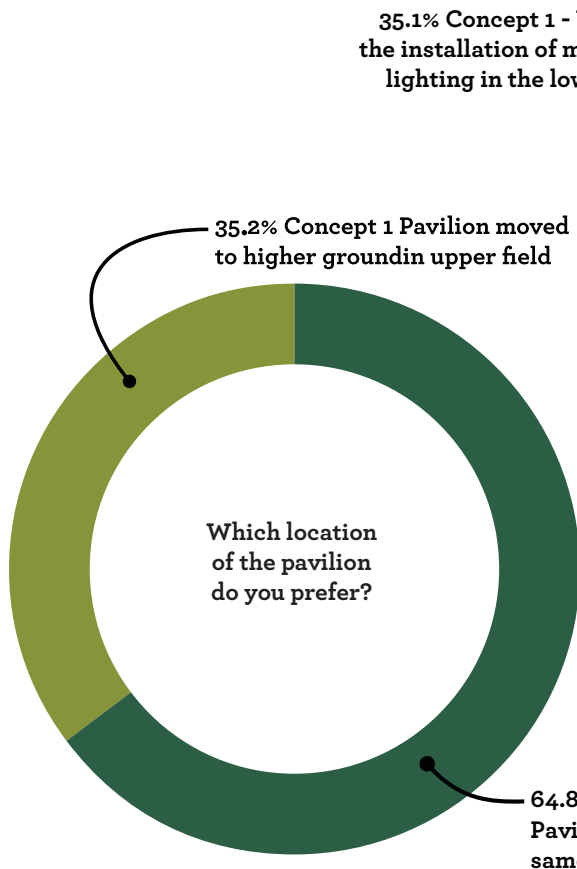
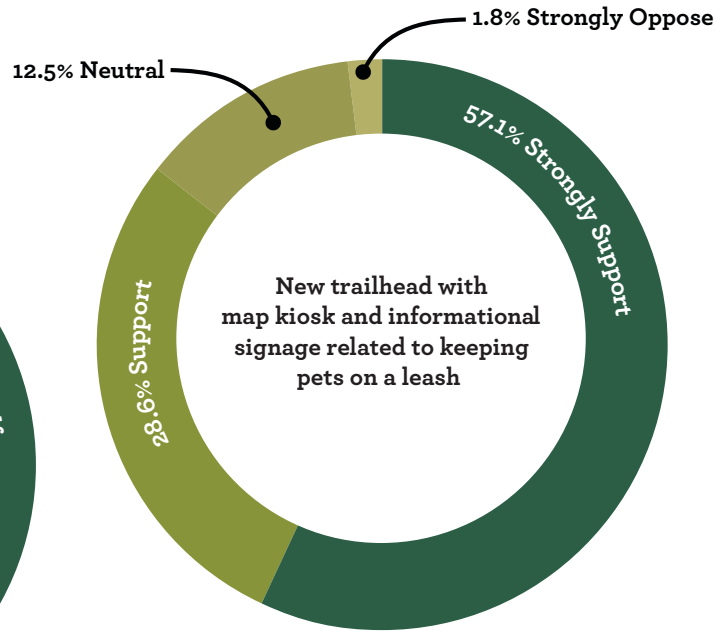
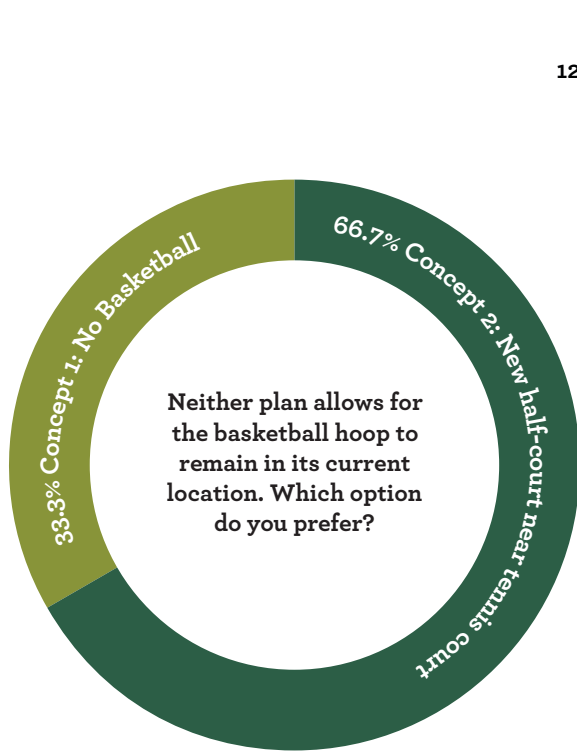
Guiding Principles

Nature & Restoration



Trails & Access





Amenities

Public Meeting 3 - Vision Plan

The third and final public meeting was held on July 25. Although planned to be held in the park, the meeting was moved to Intown Community Church due to rain. Seventeen community members attended, including Torrance Jones of DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs. Results from the preliminary concept survey were presented on posters, along with the final vision plan. Attendees were asked to take a survey to offer any feedback on the final plan. The plan and electronic version of the feedback form were also made available online. Seven people filled out the final survey.

Although the general theme of the responses was gratitude for the work put into the visioning process, there was a thoughtful comment on ADA accessibility that prompted a discussion at the final steering committee meeting. This discussion resulted in a change to the vision plan to include a fully-accessible boardwalk trail in the lower part of the park. Full results can be seen in the appendix.



Image: Park Pride



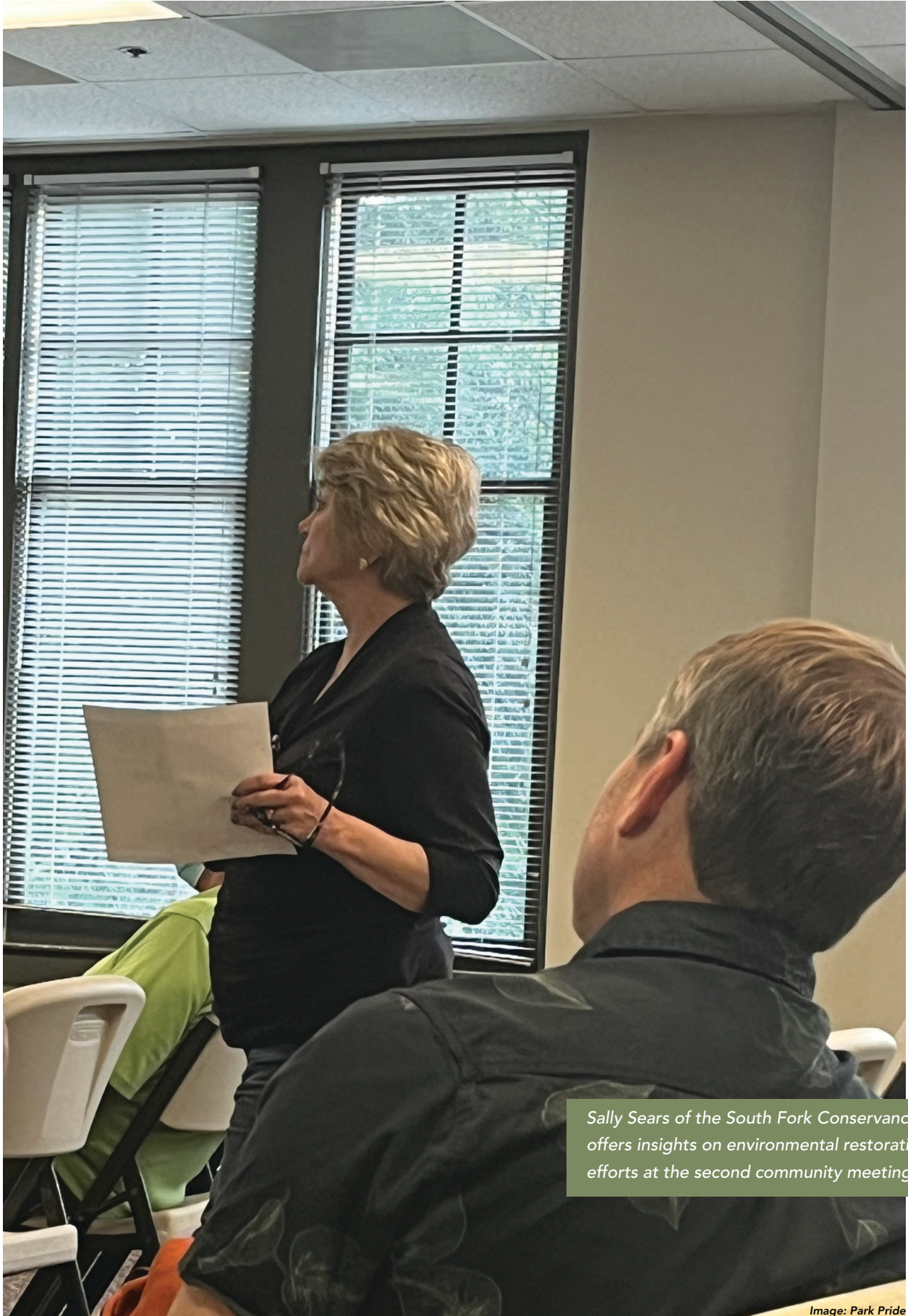
Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride

Top and Bottom: Community residents look over the results of the survey and final plan.

Middle: Torrance Jones of DeKalb County Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs joins Park Pride's Lauren King in enjoying a delicious popsicle at the final community meeting.



Sally Sears of the South Fork Conservancy offers insights on environmental restoration efforts at the second community meeting.



The EXISTING TRAILS and forest are preserved to PROTECT NATURE within the park. ADDITIONAL BENCHES are recommended along trails. Wayfinding on the trails is enhanced with a MAP KIOSK at both new TRAILHEADS with signage reminding dog owners of their responsibility to keep their PETS LEASHED while in the park.

The existing TENNIS COURTS are kept in place with MODIFIED PARKING and circulation to provide a wider drive aisle and a small ENTRY PLAZA with seating and a DRINKING FOUNTAIN/BOTTLE FILLER. The proposed BASKETBALL QUARTER COURT replaces the lost hoop due to the dam removal and includes a fence to prevent balls from leaving the court.

This plan proposes a BEAUTIFIED ENTRANCE to the park, including a RESTORED SIGN, native flower plantings, and a WALKWAY leading into the park.

Consistently wet areas of the floodplain are restored with NATIVE RIPARIAN HABITAT, while the culvert under Mason Mill Road is enlarged to reduce instances of flooding in the park and restore historic flow patterns.

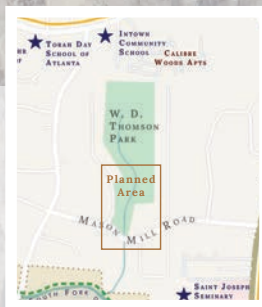
A major STREAM RESTORATION AND DAM REMOVAL project is proposed in order to restore the stream to a fully functional riparian system and an attractive public greenspace. The project will REMOVE THE EXISTING BASKETBALL HOOP, ROAD, AND CUL-DE-SAC while relocating the trailhead closer to the park entrance. The dam between the upper and lower streams will be removed, and a NEW PATH AND PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE will provide access to the nature trails. The formerly-paved cul-de-sac area can be restored with NEW TREE PLANTINGS and NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION.

New PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES will provide trail connectivity on the south side of the park across the stream to the existing trail system. THE RED AND BLUE TRAILS are both restored, providing additional trail options. SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS are also noted on the plan to reduce unpleasant smells near the lawn.

A REORGANIZED PARKING LOT will provide up to 14 parking spaces serving the lower park and TRAILHEAD with map kiosk and drinking fountain/bottle filler. NO LIGHTING is offered in this plan in deference to the park's focus on nature. The EXISTING LAWN will be reduced in size to accommodate the realigned and restored stream. The EXISTING PAVILION is rehabilitated in its current location with NEW SITE FURNISHINGS. The area around the pavilion is RE-GRADED to achieve positive drainage and reduce instances of sedimentation on the floor. The PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE linking the lower fields to one another is replaced in its traditional location.

A small SEATING AREA and READING NOOK provide a comfortable spot to supervise play at the existing playground while offering creative seating options like a SEATING WALL or SWING BENCHES overlooking the creek and floodplain below. A LITTLE FREE LIBRARY acts as a point of exchange for books.

The PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE along Mason Mill Road is formalized with a SMALL ENTRY PLAZA with signage, seat wall, waste receptacle, and paved pathway to the playground. A STAIRWAY AND PATH provide a pedestrian route to the interior of the park that bypasses the playground.



W. D. Thomson Park

North Druid Hills

Vision Plan 2024

- Guiding Principles**
The concept supports these three guiding principles, which serve as the main goals for the park design.
1. To provide a safe, accessible area where people can revitalize their spirits
 2. To provide an area where natural features such as the forest and its trails, native plants, wildlife, and the creek are highlighted, respected and protected
 3. To provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of community through park stewardship, celebrations, activity, and play

Facilitated by

July 25, 2024

Vision Plan

Based on public opinion gathered throughout the visioning process, Park Pride drafted a final vision plan for W. D. Thomson Park. The vision plan has been divided into potential projects and described below. The approximate costs (2024) for implementation of the vision plan is included in the Projects & Budget section. Projects can be undertaken separately, in groups, or all at once depending on funding and neighborhood need.

Stream Restoration & Native Habitat

As previously identified by DeKalb County and the Friends of Park group, stream restoration and reestablishing the native riparian ecosystem are top priorities for W. D. Thomson Park. Recently, a new bottomless culvert has been constructed under the roadway connecting the park's lower parking lot, greatly improving stream conditions. Further initiatives are recommended to advance the restoration of the park's stream and watershed.

Principally, this plan recommends realigning the stream to restore it to a more naturalistic, meandering configuration with gently sloped banks. This project should also include the removal of the cul-de-sac and road leading to it. Constructed on fill dirt packed into the creek valley, the road creates a dam-like condition with an undersized culvert passing beneath it, which has failed. The removal of this impervious surface and earthwork in tandem with realignment of the stream will restore a more naturalistic, functional, and aesthetically pleasing water flow pattern.

Wherever possible this project should observe the Level 1: Preferred non-structural bio-engineering methods as recommended by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources streambank stabilization guidelines. Bio-engineering techniques emphasize the use of natural materials when re-directing stream flow and the establishment of a native riparian vegetation zone to help stabilize the streambanks. As opposed to the typical method of stabilization which uses large stones called rip rap.

Re-aligning the creeks to include meanders and grading the banks to a 3:1- 4:1 slope will widen the riparian zone. As native vegetation takes hold over the years, the restored stream will settle into a fully functional riparian system and attractive green space that will go a long way toward addressing many of the existing erosion and flooding issues. A portion of the open field space will be lost as the result of this restoration, but a sizeable fraction will remain as a usable open greenspace.

This stream restoration project has already secured funding and is in design and engineering. It is recommended that the culvert under Mason Mill Road also be studied for possible replacement, as it is undersized, creating a pinch point in the stream network.

This plan furthermore supports the efforts of the Friends of Thomson Park group to continue its campaign of education and restoration of native habitat in the park, ensuring its beauty persists into the future.



The Reedy Creek stream restoration project in Charlotte, NC uses bioengineering techniques and provides an example of how W. D. Thomson could approach the rehabilitation of its creek.

Bridges and Boardwalk

Users of W. D. Thomson have a deep appreciation for the wooded nature trails in the park and their relationship to the stream. A strong priority expressed by the community for the plan includes the installation of pedestrian bridges at high foot-traffic points in the southern part of the park. The plan proposes three bridges in the southern section of the park to maintain and improve access to the trails.

The first new bridge replaces a much-beloved timber bridge in the lower floodplain, which was recently lost to flood



Rustic bridges will contribute to the park's aesthetic and circulation needs.

waters. A new ADA-accessible boardwalk is recommended in tandem with this bridge to offer an accessible trail experience to those with mobility challenges.

A second bridge suggested in this plan traverses the stream on the east side of the open field where informal stepping stones currently provide trail users with a way of crossing the creek. This bridge will increase access to the existing blue trail.

The third pedestrian bridge will replace the existing dam-like road and cul-de-sac, allowing visitors access to the nature trails while restoring the hydrology of the area.



Accessible trails can be created with sensitivity to the surrounding landscape by using boardwalk.

Pedestrian Entry off Mason Mill Rd.

A formalized and paved pedestrian entry off Mason Mill Road would provide neighborhood users with more access to the park. Presently, a clearing at the southern end of the park serves as an unofficial entry to the park’s playground area and pavilion. The plan calls for a beautified entrance and tree-lined paved walkway at this location, giving pedestrians, particularly stroller and wheel-chair users, a safe and attractive entry into the park. To create a more comfortable space for adults and children, the paved pathway could include seating and a dedicated reading nook with a seat wall and picnic tables.

In addition, the plan introduces a paved stairway and walkway that bypasses the playground, leading to the pavilion and connecting to the proposed boardwalk and bridge over the stream. Such a path gives pedestrians using this entrance access to the interior of the park that does not involve walking through the playground, which is presently the only option and is generally disfavored from a safety viewpoint.



Image: Google Streetview



Image: Teri Nye, used with permission

Top Right and Middle Right:
Inspiration for the proposed pedestrian entry and reading nook area.

Left:
A conceptual rendering of the proposed pedestrian entrance off Mason Mill Road

Pavilion Rehabilitation

When asked during the concept phase whether to relocate the existing pavilion or keep it at its current location, most survey respondents (approximately 65%) expressed wanting to maintain the pavilion's current location. Even so, because of its position within the park's floodplain and general wear and tear, the pavilion warrants some rehabilitation. Re-grading the area around the pavilion to reduce siltation and replacing the area's aging grill, drinking fountain, and furnishings are recommended to improve the usability of the pavilion.

Enhanced Park and Trail Entry Experiences and Signage

A park's entrances and signage enhance a site's ease of circulation and contribute to a park's identity and sense of place. This plan has identified several such projects for W. D. Thomson Park.

To create a more welcoming threshold, the plan recommends updated signage and beautification at the main vehicular entrance

of the park off Mason Woods Drive. The current wood signage is worn from age and its low profile makes it easy to miss. Taller signage using natural materials and color scheme may better express the park's naturalistic personality. Native plantings are also suggested in the planting bed at the sign's base, which would further promote the aesthetic qualities of W. D. Thomson Park.

Once inside the park, visitors are welcomed with a new trailhead and plaza offering access to the park's trails. The trailhead is located at the point where the existing roadway begins. Site furnishings, such as waste receptacles, a drinking fountain, and benches may be installed, along with bollards to exclude vehicular traffic on the trails. The trailhead serves as a meeting spot and provides information such as a trail map, rules, park history, and etiquette. A large kiosk structure is also recommended, including a graphic map of the park and its trails, as well as space for community announcements.



Image credit: Google, modified by Park Pride

Above: A rendering depicting what the enhanced park main entrance could look like. This design includes a more prominent sign, as well as native plantings and a paved sidewalk along the park entrance drive, offering grade-separated pedestrian access into the park.

An unpaved pedestrian trail with naturalistic curves and seating opportunities leads visitors from the trailhead to the woodland trails along the former route of the asphalt road. The former cul-de-sac offers an opportunity for reforestation in advancement of the community’s habitat restoration project.

A second smaller trailhead is proposed adjacent to the lower parking lot, providing a threshold to the open field and trail system. As at the main trailhead, this location also offers appropriate signage and furnishings such as benches.

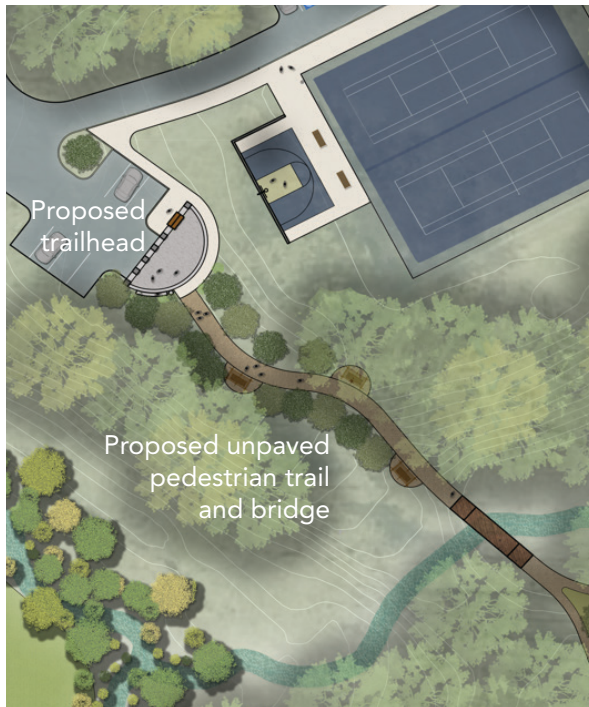


Image credit: Arnauld van Wambeke, accessed via pexels.com. Public domain.

The park entrance off Vistavia Circle is meant to be diminutive and available for nearby residents. Similarly, the private entrance from Calibre Woods is only available for residents of the complex. At both of these entrances, signage is recommended expressing park rules and trail etiquette, including the expectation that dogs remain on leash.



Image credit: Teri Nye, Park Pride

Image: Deepdene Park bench, Park Pride



Image: Emory University kiosk, Park Pride

Left Top: An overview of the plan’s design for the new trailhead area and pedestrian path to the park’s trails.

Left Bottom: Proposed character of the new trail leading away from the upper trailhead

Right Top: Benches can have naturalistic character, like this example at Deepdene Park.

Right Bottom: Larger kiosks are proposed at trailhead spaces in the park for wayfinding and posting community announcements.

Accessible Parking and Circulation Improvements

While W. D. Thomson Park currently has two parking lots, circulation and accessibility of both lots could be improved. In the lower parking lot, the plan proposes a perpendicular parking configuration that retains the 14 spaces currently in the lot, while dedicating two of these spaces for accessible parking.

Likewise, the plan reimagines the upper parking lot near the tennis courts to include an additional accessible parking space not currently offered, as well as a standard-width drive aisle to enable more efficient egress. Another parking improvement in this plan is the addition of seven parking spaces at the new trailhead plaza entry. This design formalizes parking behaviour that already occurs in this area and gives visitors to the trails more convenient parking.



The plan recommends an updated, logical, and intuitive arrangement of parking options.

Small Basketball Court

Given the proposed stream restoration project and the loss of the cul-de-sac that currently houses the basketball hoop, this plan proposes the construction of a new small basketball court adjacent to the existing tennis courts. This feature would help the neighborhood retain access to one of the only publicly-accessible basketball facilities in the North Druid Hills area. The court's design also includes a shared entry plaza with the tennis courts with seating and a drinking fountain.



The plan endorses a compact basketball court to fit within available space near the tennis courts

Leash Law Awareness & Promotion

Through the W. D. Thomson Park community survey, several respondents cited unleashed dogs as an issue facing the park. A public awareness campaign partnership between the County and the community may serve to remind visitors that W. D. Thomson is a public park and to encourage all guests (furry or human) to be respectful of others by keeping their pets leashed and removing their waste.

Example campaigns can be seen below

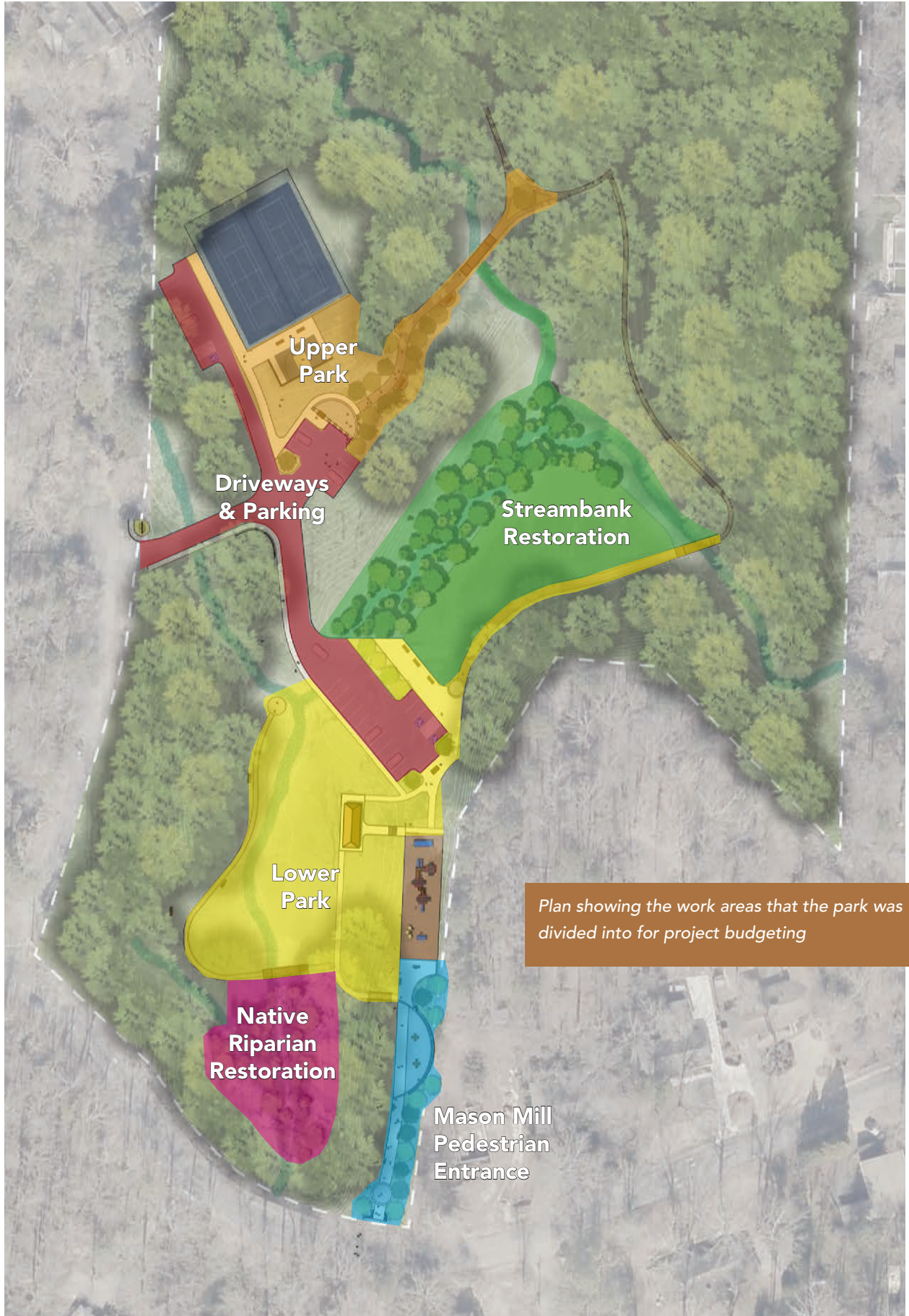
[Arizona Parks & Recreation's Leash Up. Clean Up. Campaign](#)

[Byron Shire Council's Bow Wow Leash Me Now! Campaign](#)



A bee finds delight on a native purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea) in the park.

Image: Park Pride



Projects & Budget

To create an opinion of probable cost the park was divided into several work areas. The streambank restoration project was previously identified as a need by DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs. The pricing for that project was created by another design firm and has been added to the opinion of probable cost on the following pages.

Ultimately, the construction process will be contingent upon funding. Several funding possibilities are available, including Park Pride grants, other State and National grants, funding from the DeKalb County, SPLOST and Bond dollars, or additional dollars identified by the community and other advocacy organizations.

The estimates included in this document were created with limited information, without the benefit of survey, detailed utility, and other information which may change significantly the cost of any project. Furthermore, volatility in the construction market makes predicting the cost of future projects challenging. Park Pride makes no warranty as to the accuracy of the pricing in this chapter. It is meant only as a starting point for conversations about prioritization as funding becomes available.

Opinion of Probable Costs by Project, August 2024

The budgets presented here are intended to provide a starting point for fund raising and advocacy efforts and were compiled without the benefit of detailed design, survey, geotechnical, and other site conditions, which may change significantly the cost of any project. Park Pride makes no guarantee or warranty as to their accuracy. Projects may be value engineered or subdivided to fit smaller budgets.

UPPER PARK - BASKETBALL COURT & ENTRY PLAZA

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Grading/Site Prep	ALLOW	1	\$15,000	\$15,000	Demo/General conditions/EPSC fencing/ Tree protection
Concrete Paving	SF	3,500	\$12	\$42,000	Includes entry plaza for basketball and tennis courts
Quarter Basketball Court	ALLOW	1	\$12,000	\$12,000	Includes court surface, hoop, retaining walls, and fencing
Design & Engineering	15%	1	\$4,052	\$4,052	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Contingency	20%	1	\$5,402	\$5,402	Plan for a contingency budget of 20%
Total				\$78,454	

UPPER PARK - TRAILHEAD & PATHWAY TO NATURE TRAILS

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Grading/Site Prep	ALLOW	1	\$20,000	\$20,000	Removal of asphalt /General conditions/EPSC fencing/Tree protection
Concrete Paving	SF	2,000	\$12	\$24,000	Includes main walkway to basketball and tennis courts and trailhead plaza
Stone Paving	SF	100	\$18	\$18,000	18" Stone banding around concrete walkways where shown on plan
Seat Wall	LF	14	\$150	\$2,100	Curved stone veneer seat wall
Site furnishings (benches, trash cans, drinking fountains, picnic tables, etc)	ALLOW	1	\$25,000	\$25,000	Benches = \$5,000 each installed, Trash cans = \$3,000 each installed
Vehicular Access Control	ALLOW	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	Includes stone columns, wheel stops, and removeable bollards where needed.
Trailhead Kiosk	ALLOW	1	\$18,000	\$18,000	Large wooden information kiosk

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Pedestrian Bridge	LS	1	\$140,000	\$140,000	Includes 1 bridge and 2 Concrete Abutments
Natural Surface Trail	ALLOW	3,500	\$45,000	\$45,000	Includes path from trailhead to forest trails, retaining walls for trail bumpouts, and wood railings
Planting	ALLOW	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	Native Trees and Shrubs
Design & Engineering	15%	1	\$43,635	\$43,635	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Contingency	20%	1	\$58,108	\$58,108	Plan for a contingency budget of 20%
TOTAL				\$392,715	

REALIGNED DRIVEWAYS & REORGANIZED PARKING LOTS

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Grading/Site Prep	ALLOW	1	\$20,000	\$20,000	Removal of asphalt and curbing /General conditions/EPSC fencing/Tree protection
Asphalt Paving and Striping	SF	16,000	\$10	\$160,000	Resurfacing or full depth construction where needed for new road alignment and parking lots. Includes road striping and ADA symbols
Design & Engineering	15%	1	\$27,000	\$27,000	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Contingency	20%	1	\$36,000	\$36,000	Plan for a contingency budget of 20%
Total				\$243,000	

REALIGNED DRIVEWAYS & REORGANIZED PARKING LOTS

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Grading/Site Prep	ALLOW	1	\$35,000	\$20,000	Demo/General conditions/EPSC fencing/Tree protection
Concrete Walkways	SF	6,300	\$12	\$75,600	Includes playground bypass path, trailhead plaza, and Mason Woods Dr connector path
Stone Paving	SF	1	\$27,000	\$27,000	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees

PROJECTS & BUDGET

LOWER PARK - PATHWAYS, TRAILHEAD PLAZA, & PAVILION

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Grading/Site Prep	ALLOW	1	\$35,000	\$20,000	Demo/General conditions/EPSC fencing/Tree protection
Concrete Walkways	SF	6,300	\$12	\$75,600	Includes playground bypass path, trailhead plaza, and Mason Woods Dr connector path
Stone Paving	SF	1	\$27,000	\$27,000	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Stairway to playground bypass path	ALLOW	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	Includes cheek walls along edges, steel handrails, and concrete treads/risers/landings
Boardwalk	SF	1500	\$80	\$120,000	Includes path from bridge to circular seating area
Site furnishings (benches, trash cans, drinking fountains, picnic tables, etc)	ALLOW	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	Benches = \$5,000 each installed, Trash cans = \$3,000 each installed
Trailhead Kiosk	ALLOW	1	\$18,000	\$18,000	Large wooden information kiosk
Pedestrian Bridge	LS	1	\$310,000	\$310,000	Includes 2 bridges and 4 Concrete Abutments
Pavilion Upgrades	ALLOW	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	Aesthetic upgrades to structure and repairs where needed
Vehicular Access Control	ALLOW	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	Includes stone columns, wheel stops, and removeable bollards where needed.
Planting	ALLOW	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	Native Trees and Shrubs
Design & Engineering	15%	1	\$111,600	\$110,100	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Contingency	20%	1	\$171,120	\$168,820	Plan for contingency budget Of 20%
Total				\$1,012,920	

PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE & READING NOOK

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Grading/Site Prep	ALLOW	1	\$25,000	\$25,000	Demo/General conditions/EPSC fencing/Tree protection
Pedestrian Park Entrance from Mason Mill Rd	ALLOW	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	Includes fencing, signage, and vehicular access control

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Concrete Walkways	SF	2,800	\$12	\$36,600	Includes main walkway from Mason Mill Rd to the existing playground
Stone Paving	SF	300	\$18	\$5,400	18" Stone banding around concrete walkways where shown on plan
Seat Wall	LF	85	\$150	12,750	Curved stone veneer seat wall
Site furnishings (benches, trash cans, drinking fountains, picnic tables, etc)	ALLOW	1	\$75,000	\$75,000	Benches = \$5,000 each installed, Trash cans = \$3,000 each installed
Crushed Stone Patio	SF	1,200	15	\$18,000	Crushed stone walkway with metal edging
Planting	ALLOW	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	Native Trees and Shrubs
Design & Engineering	15%	1	\$32,963	\$32,963	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Contingency	20%	1	\$38,950	\$38,950	Plan for contingency budget Of 20%
Total				\$291,663	

STREAM RESTORATION & REALIGNMENT

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Demo and Clearing	AC	0.5	\$10,000	\$5,000	
In Stream Structures	LS	1	\$230,000	\$230,000	
Earthwork/Grading	LS	1	\$465,000	\$465,000	
Erosion Control	LS	1	\$95,000	\$95,000	
Planting	ALLOW	1	\$35,000	\$35,000	Native Trees and Shrubs
Design & Engineering	15%	1	\$124,500	\$124,500	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Contingency	20%	1	\$166,000	\$166,000	Plan for a contingency budget of 20%
Total				\$1,115,500	

STREAM RESTORATION & REALIGNMENT

Item	Unit	Qty	Cost/Unit	Extended Cost	Notes
Invasive plant removal	ALLOW	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	Professional removal of invasive plants
Planting	LS	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	Native plants
Design & Engineering	15%	1	\$124,500	\$124,500	Plan to spend 15% of total budget in design & engineering fees
Contingency	20%	1	\$166,000	\$166,000	Plan for a contingency budget of 20%
Total				\$108,000	

Grand Total**\$3,242,252**



Image: Park Pride



Image: Park Pride

The resurfaced tennis courts and renovated playground are examples of recently completed improvement projects within the park.



A floor of tree cross sections helpfully keeps feet dry during wet or muddy conditions

Appendices

Survey Data

Appendix A

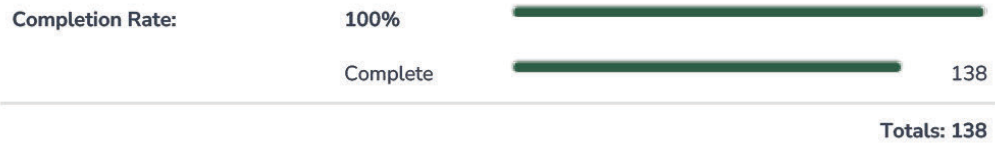
Community Survey
Open April 17 to June 14, 2024

Notes:

1. *Any identifying information of respondents or names of individuals mentioned in answers have been redacted. Redactions are marked and noted*
2. *Community responses start at #71. Response #1-70 were automatically generated for testing purposes and thus omitted from this report.*

Report for W. D. Thomson Park Community Survey

Response Counts



1. What is your favorite thing about W. D. Thomson Park today?

ResponseID	Response
71	The hiking trails.
72	The secluded nature that makes you forget you are in the city.
73	The proximity and accessibility directly to Calibre Woods Apartments and the surrounding neighborhoods. It is a small park, but it's several great walking trails and density of the landscape make you feel very secluded in nature.
74	The openness
75	The trails! Despite the small footprint I feel transported outside of the city when I'm on the trails. I enjoy the creek crossing as well.
76	How convenient it is to my home (I live in Calibre Woods)
77	The trails! (And that it exists at all)
78	Walking trail
79	The birds and other small wildlife
80	The natural beauty and accessibility
81	I love the upgrades, especially the musical instruments
82	Proximity to my living place.
83	Its nice to be in nature and its very close to where I live.
84	I like the accessibility of the park to the houses and apartments in the area, as well as the private entrance that we have at my complex, Calibre Woods.
85	The peacefulness of the trail, it's quite and well kept!
86	Playground
87	Everything! Trails , Playground, Tennis courts.
88	We can hear birds
89	The nature trails are so lovely and my main reason for visiting the park. I love walking them and enjoying the nature.
90	The areas of (relatively) untouched nature.

ResponseID	Response
91	Nature
92	Its natural beauty
93	The open green space, shade, creek.
94	Native plants
95	The trails!
96	The natural park with birds trees plants and other animals. I even saw 2 deer the other day. The park brings nature to our neighborhood
97	Walking the marked trails
98	Proximity. Size. Views.
99	The flat field it has to use as an actual park.
100	playground
101	It's clean.
102	Everything
103	The beautiful trees, trails and openness of the park
104	Walking trails, creek
106	Nature trails and stream beds
107	Playground
108	The forest and playground
109	The open areas - meadow, pavilion area, followed by walking trails.
110	New playground and walking trails.
111	Trails.
112	The trails.
113	it's peace and quiet.
114	The new playground and nature trails

ResponseID	Response
115	Walking trails way into the woods with my dog.
116	The truly wild feeling of the nature trails- it is a great escape from the cars and city. I also love shooting at the basketball hoop! AND THE WATER FOUNTAIN ISNT WORKING! I always get thirsty there.
117	Tennis courts, swingset, picnic area
118	How peaceful and quiet it is. How there are no people and tons of nature.
119	How undeveloped it is. It is a perfect spot of undisturbed nature where you can really feel like not in the city.
120	Quite nature trails, children's playground
121	I'm very grateful that I can improve my mental health by escaping to a heavily-wooded quite place to enjoy nature. I walk a dog (who used to be a stray) in this park. Thank you for this gift!!!
122	The new tennis courts! My kids love the new playground too. I always loved the little bridge across the creek and the area surrounding it... it feels so peaceful down there.
123	The trails and the neighborhood picnics.
124	The natural walking trails
125	Nature trails and playground
126	Easy access, great walking trails
127	Walking trails
128	The shaded playground and the many trails through the forest
129	It is a great park and a hidden gem. The renovated tennis courts! The awesome trails. Very serene and makes you feel you are in the mountains
130	Oasis in the city. On a blistering hot summer day with unending traffic. Here is an escape.
131	It's so close & still has wild areas & water.
132	I love the fact that Thomson Park has the feel of "wilderness". Soon after we moved here, I walked the trails and felt as though I was in a remote part of a National Forest. I was alone on my first walk through, and at one point was a little concerned that I might get lost. Of course, I did not get lost, but the feeling of being in this forest was exhilarating!
133	Very natural without any man-made structure except the bridges. Multiple easy to follow trails. Adequate parking by the tennis court.

ResponseID	Response
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134	Woods walking trail.
135	Walking trails through the woods
136	Lots of grass space to play sports, great playground and shaded pavilion
138	The wooded canopy and very natural feel of the park free from any formal human development.
139	That I can walk my dog here without driving anywhere (in my backyard) and without having to see any cars. Perfect serenity in the middle of Atlanta. So grateful
141	The creek is pretty.
142	Trails
143	The abundant greenery that hasn't been decimated by <input type="text"/>
144	Pristine Beauty of the woods; oasis of nature with birds with no interference from man made structures or noise. Feeling of peace; feels ecstatic in an ocean of calm
145	The walking trails
146	walking trails, children's playground, tennis courts, natural beauty.
147	Playground
148	Walking in the woods, the sound of water, and the serenity
149	Strong neighborhood support for maintaining natural beauty and removing invasive plants.
150	Connectivity to Lullwater trails.
151	It's connection to a bigger park (Emory/South Fork) and the creek.
152	I heard 3 Swainson's Thrushes near the basketball goal and I came to bird watch.
153	It is not overly developed. Rustic and natural.
154	The trees! The wonderful tree canopy on the trails! It's my walking meditation, the trees soothe my soul.

ResponseID	Response
156	Feeling of woodland seclusion in an urban setting. The thoughtful layout uses the topography to isolate individual trails from each other, lending a wilder feel to the experience.
157	Thompson Park is a real gem in our neighborhood, it's the place where we meet new neighbors, make new friends, do picnics, hike and do our usual art classes " Art in the Park" every other Friday after school.
158	The nature trails!
159	Nice walking paths and the playground area
160	Walking trails
161	The canopy trails
162	Playground area and pavilion area
163	location, trails, playground
164	Walking trails and tennis courts
165	Tennis courts and the trails
167	Convenient to my house
168	Tennis courts
169	Hiking trails
170	woods and trails
171	Trails, fields
172	Trails
173	I'm glad it's there. It provides a green space in the neighborhood.
175	family atmosphere and small size
176	Like being in the N. Georgia Mountains.
177	How green and cool it was this morning! Peaceful!
178	ALMOST WILDNERNESS
179	IT IS SPARSELY USED.

ResponseID	Response
180	Peaceful setting to walk in woods
181	Walking the trails.
182	proximity to house
183	play structures
184	I like that is connected to Mason Mills Park and trail.
185	Alternative to eating my lunch in my office.
186	trees, birds
187	We love the playground
188	The beautiful woods and wildlife
190	BEAUTY
191	proximity to residence/convenience
192	the playground and trails
193	How natural it is. Trees & birds -- a quiet space almost far enough away from urban noises that you can imagine you're hiking in the wild
194	The woods (in their natural state with simple trails) Native plant restoration project Friends of group Music from the playground is magical Community (picnics - though rare since COVID)
195	new landscaping with native plants (planted as well on the trails)
196	Lovely trail variety and beautiful walks The trails are so beautiful and private, we really look forward to spending time here.
197	I love to come here to hunt for wild mushrooms!
198	The trails and the mushrooms
199	Natural beauty - the structures & playground fit into environment aesthetically. I like that the trails are natural - not all cemented in. The smallness of the park and that it feels a part of the neighborhoods nearby.
200	The field and trails
201	tennis courts, covered picnic area

ResponseID	Response
202	I really enjoy walking the trails through the wooded areas of the park. I hope to start playing tennis there in the future!
203	The trails through the woods.
204	Walking distance Trails Not congested
205	walkability, tennis courts, nice playground, access from sidewalk at Mason Mill w/o walking all the way around to main entrance, trails
206	Variety of walking trails close to my house.
207	The wait for court was not too long and like the trail.
208	Amazing criss-cross woods, shady trails, and sparsely populated. Trails, tennis courts, playground are A well kept and appreciated.

2. What are the biggest challenges facing W. D. Thomson Park?

ResponseID	Response
71	The grassy areas tend to smell like sewer
72	Since the trails are natural, given the increased amount of rain that we're getting nowadays, the trails are muddy a good bit. The basketball court is not even and it's difficult to play basketball due to deteriorating concrete
73	Proper care and maintenance to ensure that the density of the landscape continues to thrive. Fostering regrowth of trees of any are needing to be removed.
74	Spider webs
75	Many people walk their dogs off leash which is concerning because I've had dogs run up to me when no owner is near.
76	English ivy, poison ivy, erosion
77	Lack of entrances and the surrounding property owners making it impossible to cross it efficiently.
78	Subpar use of space on the field
80	Dogs off leash and ailing/downed trees
81	NO BATHROOMS!
82	n/a
83	Unkept trails. No lighting on trails at night
84	I am not pleased with the size and maintenance of the field space at the park. It may not be feasible, but I would love to have a multipurpose athletic field of some kind, or at least for current open space to be better maintained.
85	IDK
86	No toilet
87	Flooding below the playground and behind the pavilion.
88	What happened to the roses
89	The trails are easily washed out and affected by erosion. They require a lot of upkeep that I know is handled by volunteers, but they only have limited resources.
90	Not sure lol, people trying to build a Walmart there or something; who knows.

ResponseID	Response
92	Litter/people not respecting the property
93	cleanliness & lack of running water fountains
94	Being overrun by invasive species (Ivy and privet are huge issues)
95	Finding the entrance and exit in the Calibre Woods neighborhood
96	People throwing trash on the grounds
97	Not sure - keeping trails in good condition and making sure markers are in place (?).
98	Amount of people with their dogs unleashed. Prevents me from going. Also development.
99	The mosquitoes make me leave, the rainwater pools in the small pavilion.
100	homeless needing more day to day support
101	It is isolated so not so many people know about it.,
102	Erosion under the basketball court.
103	I don't know ...
104	Park becoming too known/ popular. Love that it is a quiet oasis
106	Unleashed dogs
107	The gazebo by the playground is broken. I wish the tables were fixed so children could gather. Also wish there was a small barhroom building like at Mason mill park.
108	Facilities
109	Stream erosion throughout the park and soggy wet areas around the pavilion
110	No bathroom
111	Erosion
112	Drainage. It's gets really muddy though I haven't been since the new culvert was installed.
113	people walking their dogs without a leash.
114	Trail maintenance and clearing dead trees that fall in the woods. Water quality in the creek isn't great but I don't know how much the county can help that.

ResponseID	Response
115	Ivy and erosion
116	The basketball hoop is in bad shape and should be replaced with an adjustable one that can be regulation 10 ft but shorter for kids.
117	Can be crowded and st times trash is left behind. Workers also sleep in the parking lot
118	People destroying the vegetation and nature.
119	The erosion around the infrastructure.
120	Erosion
121	The threat of development - isn't every wooded in-town area threatened by real estate developers (sooner or later)?
122	Water. The flat area that used to be a baseball field smells and gets very soggy when it rains.
123	It's being taken over by English ivy and in some places by poison ivy. In some areas the trails are badly worn and the exposed roots are dangerous. I fell because of the roots recently and have restricted my walking on parts of the trails. Loose dogs have discouraged my wife from using the trails.
124	the parking lot is a little rough.
125	Use and upkeep
126	Erosion, invasive. Perhaps better maintainance to cut up fallen trees on paths
127	Maintain condition of trails and playground
128	Water/bathroom
129	Loitering (day and night). No restroom available for park guests.
130	Sewage over flow, invasive ivy, improvement to shelter where people hold birthday parties. More tables, cleaner, better cookout space, etc. Better reservation approach. There are large water issues. Erosion and the bog needs draining.
131	Terrible runoff from the apartments that were built next to it. The runoff needs to be absorbed by vegetation. Another method is to encourage "green roofs" as a certain percentage of rooftops in countries like Germany.
132	I'm new to the area, and am not aware of the challenges.
133	I'm not aware of any.

ResponseID	Response
134	Defacto dog park. 10 acres denuded of vegetation from large dogs running off leash throughout the trail loop. Invasive plants like ivy.
135	Soggy Fields
136	No bathrooms
138	Erosion
139	I wish it was completely fenced in
140	It's kind of dark and creepy. I do not like going there alone. The abandoned house on Mason Mill does not help with the creepiness.
141	That back field gets spongy when it rains.
142	Erosion
143	Those who want to impose their vision on the park
144	Sports fanatics
145	Historically water issues around the parking lot. It seems like those are resolved. It can also take time for fallen trees to get cleared from the paths. Lack of a nice pavilion.
146	Erosion from storm water and invasive plants
147	Storm water erosion and the smell coming from the meadow area near the sewer manhole.
148	Erosion, invasive plants, lack of awareness of this gem.
149	Continuing to build public interest in volunteering.
150	Complete trails through the area.
151	Connecting to the South Fork trails.
152	A general challenge-- a not-so-large park might be aiming for too many features, trying to please too many people.
153	Water erosion.

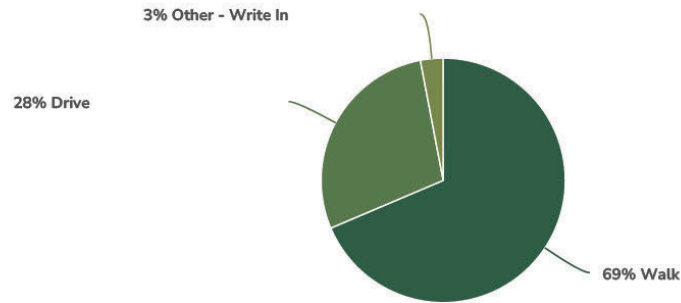
ResponseID Response

154	1) Adding any more "amenities" will over-develop the amount of space available and detract from the laid-back, natural feel of Thomson. 2) Erosion of the creek banks. 3) The squishy soggy areas between the picnic shelter and Mason Mill Rd and in the open area where the ballfield cage used to be. 4) Keeping as much shade in the park as possible, not everyone likes to be in the sun, especially in summer.
157	I believe that some areas are kind of muddy and wet the whole time due to the inclination of the land. The lack of public restrooms makes it a bit challenging.
158	Invasive plants, flooding
159	Lack of parking and restrooms
160	Erosion unleashed dogs After house e-bikers
161	Restroom facilities are in very poor condition!
162	Swings for younger kids too/ lock hard to work
163	maintenance, erosion, and some criminal activity in parking lots
164	erosion
165	Trees that overhang the tennis courts thus causing leaves and branches to fall on the courts
167	Upkeep
168	Basketball court needs to be remade
171	Poor drainage at east side of field
172	Dogs that are walked without a leash
173	Erosion! -Mis-use -Poor water quality & problems w/ storm drains & sewage
175	homeless sleeping overnite. suspicious cars overnite. people using park for park & ride.
176	Maintaining the simple beauty of the park. Drainage on left as one walks into the park bottom left.
178	LOOSE DOGS
179	KEEPING THE DOGS ON LEASH.
180	Too much development

ResponseID	Response
182	trails could be better maintained for running (well marked!)
183	I don't think there are any challenges. More people may walk the trails if there is more signage.
184	More activity space
186	the unhoused who have to call it home. At least two men have lived there for 4 years!
187	Bathroom and mud management/erosion
188	Historically, the erosion and wetland problems. Also-the dogs running wild--no leash and/or no voice control.
190	MAINTAINING BEAUTY
191	no restrooms/water fountain, limited parking, small playground,
192	no bathroom. invasive plant species.
193	1. unleashed dogs, which are a serious hazard to elderly & young visitors 2. removing nonnative plants/food sources in a manner that does not force starving birds/bugs into adjacent properties where pesticide/herbicide use endangers/kills them. It takes years for natives to mature & provide food. Gradually trimming non natives while they are maturing is challenging but essential to the wellbeing of the park's inhabitants.
194	Dogs off leash! Stream erosion & flooding All the invasive plants Stink on the field
195	protecting the park's ecology and natural systems
196	Erosion, parking Some trails and paved areas are eroded in places.
198	Dog owners not keeping their dogs on leash and dog feces left in the park. Waste cans not being emptied
199	Probably maintaining it with neighborhood help
200	The mud that drains into the parking lot and picnic shelter when it rains -- I hate this. Please get rid of dirt & mud under picnic shelter.
201	up to date park amenities Tennis courts have been in poor shape for a long time, for example
202	Erosion and invasive species.
203	Water collection/pooling near the picnic area and playground.

ResponseID	Response
204	Safety & security
205	muggy field w/ bugs, lawn could be kept up better for picnics, no working water fountains, shaded bench covering needed at tennis courts
206	?
207	I propose maintenance but people were picking up their trash
208	Possibly flooding in the field area.

3. How do you get to W. D. Thomson Park? (Select the one you use most frequently)

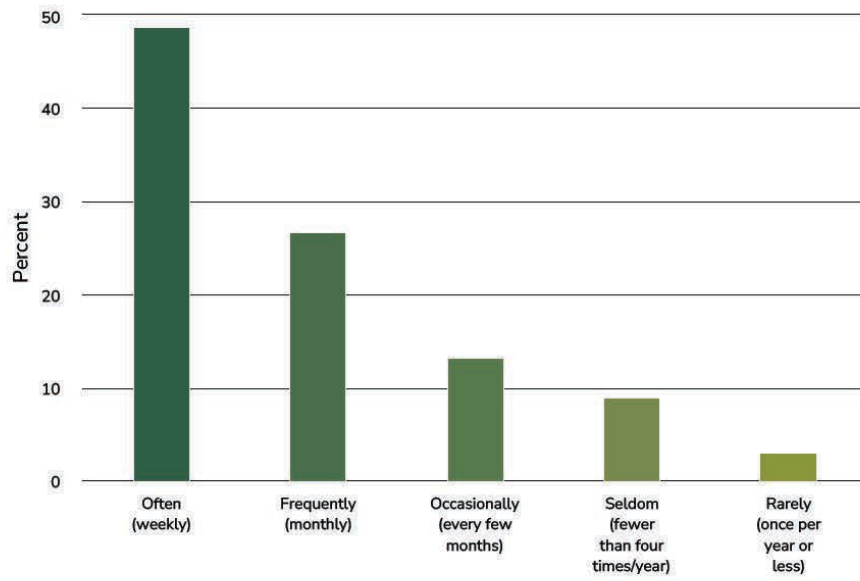


Value	Percent	Responses
Walk	68.7%	92
Drive	28.4%	38
Other - Write In	3.0%	4

Totals: 134

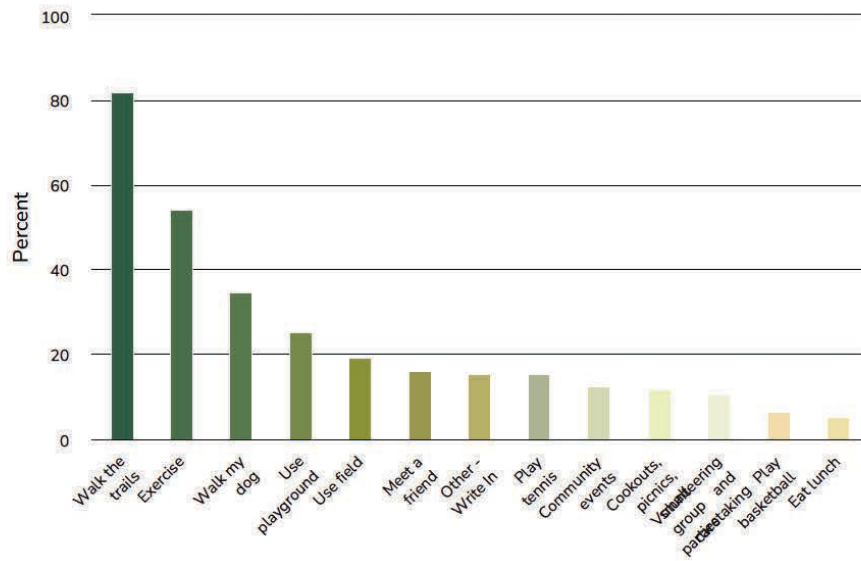
Other - Write In	Count
Drive and Walk	1
Drive, Walk, Bike	1
walk and drive	1
walk, bike, run	1
Totals	4

4. How often do you visit W. D. Thomson Park?



Value	Percent	Responses
Often (weekly)	48.9%	66
Frequently (monthly)	26.7%	36
Occasionally (every few months)	13.3%	18
Seldom (fewer than four times/year)	8.9%	12
Rarely (once per year or less)	3.0%	4

5. Why do you visit W. D. Thomson Park (Select all that apply)



Value	Percent	Responses
Walk the trails	82.2%	111
Exercise	54.1%	73
Walk my dog	34.8%	47
Use playground	25.2%	34
Use field	19.3%	26
Meet a friend	16.3%	22
Other - Write In	15.6%	21
Play tennis	15.6%	21
Community events	12.6%	17
Cookouts, picnics, small group parties	11.9%	16
Volunteering and caretaking	10.4%	14
Play basketball	6.7%	9
Eat lunch	5.2%	7

Other - Write In	Count
Bird watching	1
Bird watching!!!	1
CHILL OUT	1
Enjoy the quiet; check out the flora and fauna	1
IDENTIFY WILDFLOWERS AND MUSHROOMS.	1
JUST DROVE THERE	1
LOVE NATURE.	1
My grandchildren visit from out of town.	1
NEAR APT.	1
Native plant restoration site	1
Pickleball	1
Plant ID hikes with kid	1
Reset my mind	1
To become more familiar with local flora and fauna	1
To escape society and write my essays on transcendentalist philosophy	1
To get somewhere!	1
bird watching; seeing how native plants grow in a natural, unmanicured setting	1
park & take a call	1
peace & solitude	1
run, bicycle	1
see over	1
Totals	21

6. Have you seen amenities at other parks that you would like to see offered at W. D. Thomson Park?

ResponseID	Response
71	Restrooms, dog bags for waste, more picnic areas
72	I would like the trails to be gravel. I think that will increase accessibility for people with mobility issues and also make the trails more accessible in all climates as they will not be as muddy.
75	n/a
76	Recycling bins
77	Yes. Connections between and across neighborhoods so that pedestrians can get places without encountering cars.
79	Child and dog friendly playing area
81	Bathrooms!!
82	Flatter paths that can be used for running or a track
83	no
84	As mentioned above - would love a multipurpose field, if possible. If not, soccer goal(s) would be a welcome addition and would make me visit more often to train, rather than choosing other parks.
85	IDK
86	toilets and drinking water fountain
87	No
88	Roses
89	A better basketball court would be really nice. More grilling and covered spots.
90	Nature 2.0
92	No
93	Running water, a tire swing, sunscreen station, water stream area
95	waterbottle fill stations
96	No

ResponseID	Response
97	Maybe some chairs on the open lawn -- as I recall, there used to be a few.
98	Maybe poop stations. Or benches. Not much really - love trails.
99	The pavilion should be increased in footprint, height, and prevent rainwater from pooling in it.
100	no
101	Not sure
102	No
103	not really
104	No
106	Yes, restrooms
107	Yes! Bathroom. Picnic tables that are nicer.
108	Working water fountain. Bathroom. Flatter basketball court. Bridge across the river behind the field. New tables.
109	Fitness stations?
110	Bathrooms
111	Working water fountain
112	A fenced dog area would be INCREDIBLE.
114	Bathrooms Splash pad or water feature would be neat, but expensive
115	Maybe a restroom, but that could create other problems..
116	Nothing comes to mind. Is there a bike rack? I like to bike and that would be good.
117	Walking trails that are paved
118	No
119	No.
120	No

ResponseID	Response
121	Yes, some parks have a field of wild plants that are meant to help important and threatened insects and small animals such as bees and salamanders, etc. - could we develop such a place in our park?
122	A fenced in dog park would be amazing. Bike trail. Better basketball goal/playing area.
124	No. I like that Thomson Park is largely still natural. I would not like a lot of man-made amenities
125	Better basketball court. Skatepark. Mountain bike trails.
126	No
127	Concerts like at Brook Run on Thursday nights
128	Bathrooms, water fountains, signage directing to parking, playgrounds, tennis, trails, etc for new visitors
129	Restroom, updated pavilion, bocce courts
130	Not really
131	Signs that describe the wildlife & vegetation as in the Mason Mill Park.
132	Do not add ANY amenities, because they will detract from the natural beauty of this park. Keep this park like a forest. I saw a notice posted that invasive species were being removed and replaced with Georgia native species. This is tremendous, and is the only modification that should continue.
133	Can't think of any. I like the trails as they are.
134	No. I like natural parks
136	Bathrooms, water
138	No, I prefer the park stay natural giving a feeling of being lost in the woods. I DO NOT want to see any developments within the wooded park area.
139	Fenced in completely
143	More holly trees, dogwoods, and flowering trees
144	No you are doing an excellent job at it. If there are invasive species you might consider removing invasive species.
145	Benches would be nice. A nicer pavilion. Soccer nets in the field.

ResponseID	Response
147	no
148	The playground update is great. Not sure how much parents of littles are aware.
149	Well-marked trail signs connecting this park to other nearby greenspaces.
150	Native plants
151	Nice trails down to the creek.
152	Restrooms. Bird feeders.
153	Keep park as is.
154	Hesitant to mention, but "maybe" a bathroom? While nice, this has it's own inherent problems with cleaning, misbehavior inside. Instead, maybe a couple of porta-potties in the summer? (Though one year both were turned over and caused a nasty mess.) No good solution to this.
157	-Playground is great! -We can have more benches and tables, - We can have some used toys in an area that kids can share -and for sure more ART (Sculpture, mural, community projects)
159	Dog Park, restrooms
160	More benches of good quality Granite etc
161	Sprinkler and water pad for kids
163	No
164	Keep it like it is
165	Water fountain
167	Resting spots along trails
168	lights at the tennis courts and a real basketball court
175	lights overnite at entrance
176	Thank you!
178	MORE BENCHES
179	NO

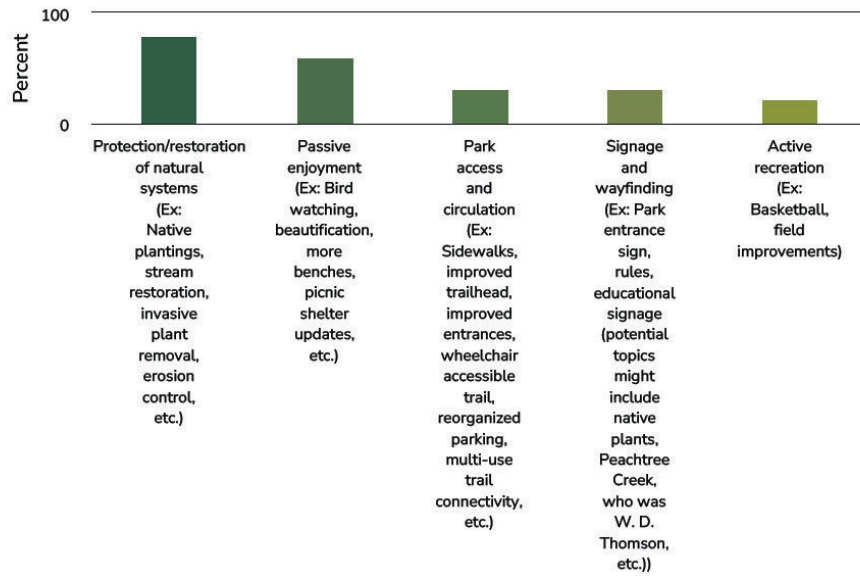
ResponseID	Response
180	No
182	closed in area for dogs to run
183	No.
184	More tennis/pickleball courts.
185	Food truck events could be awesome.
186	no more parking more community gardens
187	splash pad/water fountain
188	Better signage and other recreational activities
189	wheel chair walking to picnic area stream watching
191	restrooms/water fountain
192	bathroom
193	This is a park for nature. If you want "amenities," go to Mason Mill Park. The existing amenities amply provide for visitors' needs.
194	Dog bag stations with waste can More trash receptacles & maybe even recycling Would rather not have added infrastructure (ie. no restrooms, dog park, sports equipment etc.)
195	no
196	It is perfect as-is!
198	Park is fine, just needs to be kept clean.
199	Restroom or porta potty
200	Ranger Noah Bird watching
202	No.
204	Highly recommend a water feature like splashpad or sprayground
205	useable water fountains
207	I think a bathroom but only if AM Patrol ca open PM Patrol can lock up. I think enough amenities for it's size and don't want to disturb woods.

ResponseID	Response
208	Water fountain, bottle filler

7. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the Lowest and 5 being the Highest) rate the quality of each of the following existing amenities in W. D. Thomson Park

	Rating
Basketball hoop	★★☆☆■ Count: 103 Average: 2.4 Not Applicable: 0
Parking areas	★★★★★■ Count: 121 Average: 3.7 Not Applicable: 0
Picnic shelter/grilling area	★★★★★■ Count: 119 Average: 3.5 Not Applicable: 0
Open lawn	★★★★★■ Count: 121 Average: 3.7 Not Applicable: 0
Park entrances	★★★★★■ Count: 121 Average: 3.8 Not Applicable: 0
Playground	★★★★★☆ Count: 115 Average: 4.4 Not Applicable: 0
Signage (entrance sign, park rules, trail maps, etc.)	★★★★★■ Count: 123 Average: 3.6 Not Applicable: 0
Tennis courts	★★★★★☆ Count: 98 Average: 4.1 Not Applicable: 0
Walking trails	★★★★★☆ Count: 129 Average: 4.3 Not Applicable: 0

8. W. D. Thomson Park recently received investments to improve the playground, tennis courts, and vehicular creek crossing. What other types of potential investments would prioritize? (Select up to 3)



Value	Percent	Responses
Protection/restoration of natural systems (Ex: Native plantings, stream restoration, invasive plant removal, erosion control, etc.)	80.0%	104
Passive enjoyment (Ex: Bird watching, beautification, more benches, picnic shelter updates, etc.)	60.8%	79
Park access and circulation (Ex: Sidewalks, improved trailhead, improved entrances, wheelchair accessible trail, reorganized parking, multi-use trail connectivity, etc.)	33.1%	43
Signage and wayfinding (Ex: Park entrance sign, rules, educational signage (potential topics might include native plants, Peachtree Creek, who was W. D. Thomson, etc.))	32.3%	42
Active recreation (Ex: Basketball, field improvements)	23.1%	30

9. Tell us more about your answer above

ResponseID	Response
72	Like I mentioned before, providing a more stable gravel path through the park will increase accessibility for both people with disabilities and also for anyone during times when it is more muddy.
75	More benches and maybe a gazebo in the open field area would be nice.
77	The park should not be developed in any way. The nature should be emphasized. It needs right of ways across fenced in backyards.
82	Wheelchair accessible trail would be great!
84	Would LOVE to see improvements to the field, as mentioned above - if the open lawn area were nicer, I would visit and train there far more often.
85	Not much needs to be done to meet my needs/wants.
88	Roses are gone so is bridge
89	I would love to see more work on the nature trails as well as making sure protection & restoration of the natural elements. I love to enjoy the trails and see the conservation.
92	.
93	Signage for trails should be more visible instead of trying to follow colors around trees or on the ground. Cleanliness as there are scraps (e.g., broken tents and shopping carts) from other left by the playground.
94	I also like the idea of a wheelchair accessible trail. I think signs about the native plants and other natural features could help teach how important parks like these are!
95	Ways to more easily find the trailheads
96	I want the trails and most of the park to remain natural
97	The abovementioned responses are pretty self-explanatory. I've never used the basketball area or playground so I don't feel qualified to comment. I enter the park from the Calibre Woods apartment complex so I don't know the situation with parking for those visitors who drive over. It's certainly a good idea to invest in the restoration and protection of natural systems--a few years ago I really enjoyed watching the goats that were brought in to help with plant removal!
98	Educational signage is ok, but tends to get damaged or fade with sun overtime. Rather see efforts made with respect to conservation, preservation, enhancements.

ResponseID	Response
99	The mosquitoes and flying insects stop me from using the flat field I like for long. The pavilion is small and usually full of water which prevents use. When it rains, the field matted grass and mud makes it hard to use.
102	There have been big improvements over the past decade, thanks to the volunteers.
103	I don't really want anything to change!
104	Personally just interested in walking trails as they are but keeping them in good condition
106	I think important not to hurt what makes Thomson Park so special if trying to improve it. when I walk the trails, I like to feel lost in nature. I wouldn't feel that way if the trail was improved too much or if there were encroachments into the woods.
107	Really hope the gazebo is fixed and bathroom added! Thank you
109	Top priority for me is the stream restoration, followed by improvements to park access and circulation. After those investments I would focus on both passive enjoyment and signage/wayfinding. Re the latter two I think they require smaller financial investments than the other two and can be dealt with through community group donations and involvement (like scouts? civic association and Friends groups?) which could help build community.
110	Slight improvements to the picnic shelter and repairing one of the tables that was damaged some time ago would go a long way. Also as noted multiple times in this survey, a bathroom is really in need.
113	the park is in a residential neighborhood surrounded by many busy streets. it is a refuge from the traffic and noise in the rest of the area. it would be great to maintain its natural beauty.
114	More restoration of the habitat may help the creek be cleaner (maybe?) The field is great, but gets a bit squishy Mosquito control would be nice too
115	I love the outdoors and nature. Anything that makes the experience more accessible and more educational would be great. I also walk to work at Emory, so if there was a way to connect up with the South Fork Peachtree Creek trails, that would be amazing.
116	There is a ton of "liminal" space that isn't usable lawn but isn't the woods. That should get planted! Also growing something on the fences around would be nice, to soundproof against the sounds of the city.
117	Needs better trash pickup after people use the park
118	Don't destroy the peaceful place that it is now. Update a few simple things and let the community volunteer to improve. It's the only place I truly enjoy visiting and relaxing in the busy city.

ResponseID Response

119	I like how isolated you feel inside the park
120	Nature signs, educational signs targeting kids would be nice
121	Please see my comment above.
122	The park is ok but it feels a little unkempt and unintentional. Getting into the park at the top of the hill has always felt a bit off, like someone just decided one day to turn it into a walking path but it was clearly a road. The field has never felt useful in a meaningful way — it seems to be without a clear purpose. Same with the basketball goal — it feels like an afterthought. There are lots of kids in this area again so it would be great to have more options for them to play.
124	I would like the park to stay as natural as possible
125	Protect existing trails and native plants from invasive ivy. Improve basketball area. Add skatepark.
126	Na
127	Connectivity to PATH trails would make it easier to access by bike or foot.
128	I'd like to see a sand volleyball court installed on the flat grass open area where it seems there is little use of the space today
130	Natural native plantings are important to me. Would love programming on trees, birds, snake lectures, drumming, etc. That makes community.
131	I have gone to Thomson Park since the 1970's & even some before. Because Atlanta has had population explosion it's even more stressful on the plants, wildlife & trails. People need access to natural areas more than ever to offset urban stresses.
132	Enhance the natural characteristics. Minimize manmade features.
133	Preserving the park and nature is more important to me than building more amenities.
134	I stopped going because of the illegal off leash dogs running loose on the trails that have terrorized the small children I was with. Or jumped on me and left mud on my clothes. Happened many times. Often the dog owners aren't in sight to even speak to. The park needs education and signage to prevent the damage dogs are doing.
135	Fields are often soggy and unusable. Stream Banks are eroding and need a buffer zone and a zone for people to have access. Stop mowing up to the edge. Tons of invasives predominate the park entrance. Looks overgrown and uncared for. I love the native wildflower garden. It would be great to have other flower beds native or ornamental to beautify the areas near the playground and pavilion.
136	Would love to have sitting closer to the field to watch the players

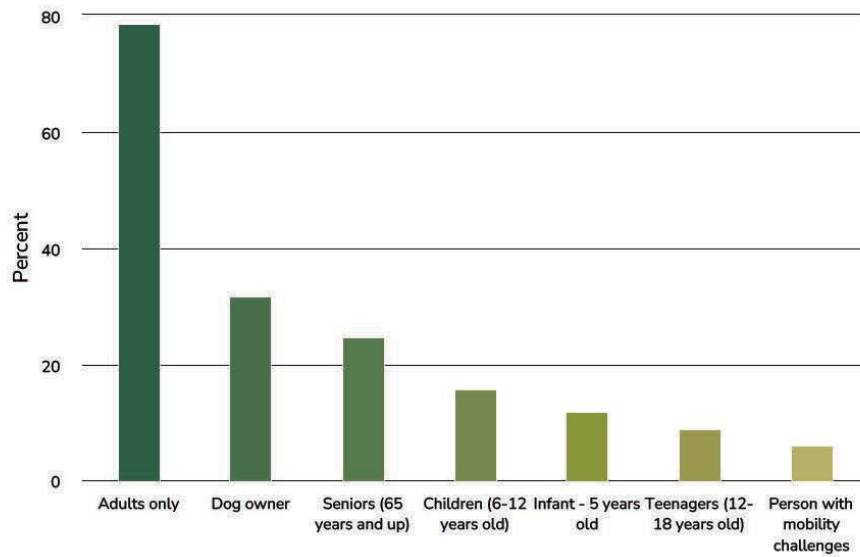
ResponseID	Response
138	Keep the park NATURAL - please do not develop the interior of the park NO sidewalks NO benches NO picnic areas in the interior of park. This is one of the very few completely undeveloped nature areas in the city. Keep it natural & undeveloped.
139	I only use the trails really
140	The Mason Mill entrance is not marked at all. Is it an entrance? or do people just cut through there b/c of the abandoned house?
141	Benches would be nice.
142	Descriptive would add to knowledge, appreciation and defense of park inherent beauty
143	By all means avoid spraying herbicides next to the creeks as <input type="text"/> did
144	Preserve natural beauty untouched by sports and other man made structures. Keep this wild.
146	Stream restoration needs to be a priority to help with erosion control. Invasive plant removal will be on-going, forever. I think sidewalks would help bring people to the park. A wheelchair accessible trail would be a nice addition.
147	I bring my grandchildren to the park to play on the playground. It is very nice. It would be nice to have sidewalks from Mason Mill Rd. to the playground as well as a sidewalk from Mason Mill Rd. to the entrance on Mason Woods Dr.
148	Increasing accessibility would be a good draw for older folks and those who need devices for walking. Signage would increase awareness for the vehicular traffic that races by.
149	Let's use this park to demonstrate the vital importance of interconnectedness of the natural world.. including the people who live nearby and those who have yet to discover it.
150	I see the park as a way to be in nature in an urban environment.
151	Connectivity is key.
152	Please don't add any new construction; just improve or replace features that are already in the park. I mainly come to bird watch. I don't want stuff built that would remove habitat and disrupt the birds and other wildlife.
153	No major changes needed. Keep as is.

ResponseID	Response
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154	Would love more benches on trails so folks could quietly commune with nature - hopefully one on each trail, with an outlook. Would also be nice to have benches on the perimeter of the open lawn area. Re: invasive plant removal: the intentionally planted mahonias along Mason Woods Dr were removed, which was going too far with the invasives campaign, IMHO.
157	Me and some parents organize the "Art in the Park" on Thompson Park every Friday. We painted the sewer walls, added some tiny fairy door in trees. WE would love to use our art to make it more magical .
158	A natural walking path from the playground, across the lawn and over the creek to the trails would be nice.
160	Erosion in very significant especially in the north end of park. Unleashed dogs are a continuing problem- more signage might help
162	Trails and walking is what I want to do more of. If bike access good, that would be great. Trails well-lit and safe.
164	Red trail across the open lawn needs flood protection
165	Trim trees around tennis courts
167	Always good to remember that we are guests in Mother Nature's home. Therefore, protecting nature while supporting human activity is paramount.
170	Signage to post rules for dogs on leash!
173	-Fix the hoop (tall fencing) -Stop the environmental disaster in erosion and poop water quality
175	also selected signage and wayfinding
176	Love the simplicity and natural beauty.
177	Thomson Park is refreshingly free of excess signage
180	Protect the natural beauty without many changes
183	The field can get quite soggy, there is water pooling or seeping from somewhere.
186	no more signs or sidewalks Make it a nature "preserve". Plant more trees, pollinator gardens. Education, recycling tops! Tennis ctr throws out tennis ball containers. Yikes.
187	I would love more beautification such as adding flowers, field improvements could be made and stream restoration would be very beneficial.

ResponseID	Response
188	Basketball hoop could use some repair. Open lawn is too often wet and soggy. Would love to see some lights on tennis courts.
190	JUST ENJOY NATURE
191	i'd like to see improvements to the overall active recreation areas. the new playground equipment is a great start, but the other areas need improvements also.
192	It could be more clear how to enter the trails and a map would be useful to know the different routes/lengths.
193	I would invest in hiring park rangers to randomly patrol the park & cite off leash unruly dogs. Do it, say, 3-4 times a month for 3-4 months in a row, repeat when needed -- it's a good way to change the entitled behavior of certain dog owners
194	Would love to see the stream banks get restored, erosion & flooding controlled, get neighbors to control the spill out of invasives from their yards, blast out the invasives so native plants can come back, fix up the picnic shelter and add some more benches around, increase signage for rules especially for dogs to be ON LEASH and the poop picked up and thrown away properly. Would love to see Thomson Park connected to Hahn Woods/Lullwater somehow
195	We need to protect the park's fragile ecosystem and support an increase in pollinators with native plantings. Educational signage would, I think, make the park a better resource for all ages.
197	I would like to see the wild life as undisturbed as possible. Aside from invasive species.
200	Wood bridge over creek -- so nice but it's gone!
202	I had not considered that we do not have an ADA compliant trail. I think that offering even a small portion of one of the trails as being wheel chair accessible would be a benefit to our residents and neighboring communities.
203	I would prioritize the three above as: 1. Protection/restoration of natural systems. This is by far the most important and valuable component of the part in my view. 2. Park access and circulation. I think greater wheelchair accessibility would be really nice. 3. Active recreation. I personally would shoot hoops more often on a newer basketball hoop. But that is a bit self-absorbed so listing it last!
204	The nicest thing about the park is that you can pretend you're in the mountains. It's not heavily populated.
205	shade options at tennis court, nicer grass upkeep for sitting
207	Walking path around edge your being invasive

10. Who is in your household? (Select all that apply)



Value	Percent	Responses
Adults only	78.8%	104
Dog owner	31.8%	42
Seniors (65 years and up)	25.0%	33
Children (6-12 years old)	15.9%	21
Infant - 5 years old	12.1%	16
Teenagers (12-18 years old)	9.1%	12
Person with mobility challenges	6.1%	8

11. Is there anything else you'd like to share about W. D. Thomson Park?
 Feel free to expand on your answers to previous questions or share something we didn't ask about

ResponseID	Response
77	The park is recreation focused, it should be community focused. Surrounding properties should not block access. It should be connected to nearby Toco Hills shopping and Mason Mill park
82	It's a great park! I've only been a couple of times, but this survey reminded me that I should go more.
87	W.D. Thompson is a wonderful place. So glad it is in the neighborhood!
88	Where are the roses and the bridge Marc
89	Thank you so much for your continued work on WD Thomson park. I enjoy living near it so much and enjoying the nature trails. I look forward to seeing it continue to evolve.
90	Don't change the nature stuff
91	Thanks for being there
92	I love the park!
93	N/aa
96	It is a beautiful natural area that should remain protected
97	I love having this park in my backyard, so to speak. It was one of a few saving graces during the pandemic that I could spend time walking on the trails and occasionally greeting others doing the same. Though very busy in the past year at work, I hope to resume trail walking soon (before it gets too hot and the mosquitoes chew me up).
98	No
99	Reduce the number of mosquitoes, fix up the pavilion area. This will increase the number of ppl who use the park and stay in the park. The park is in a prime location and it's use can be greatly increased if it is improved.
101	It is a lovely park. It's so secluded that it doesn't seem like neighborhood people know about it.
102	The bridge across the creek by the shelter should be rebuilt. A bridge across the creek behind what use to be the ball diamond. Crossing on the rocks is slippery and also eroding the creek bank.

ResponseID	Response
103	Please allow dog owners to have their well-trained dogs off-leash as long as they are under control.
104	Thanks for all your efforts
107	Love the playground but the baby swing needs raising :) I called but no one resolved
108	Lovely park, playground has been an amazing update. Working water fountain would be a huge quality of life upgrade.
110	NA
111	So grateful to Mr. Thomson and to the neighbors who work so hard to maintain the park.
112	An improved and/or official entrance from Mason Mill Road (just downhill from Vistavia Circle) would be great. The area gets kinda muddy and overgrown without maintenance and it's a lot of people's main way in. Again, a fenced dog park would be a huge attraction.
113	there is a creek between my land and the park and land erosion is a major issue along that creek. it would be great to have a plan in place to avoid erosion and maintain the natural beauty of the park.
115	It's a gem in a chain of gems along the Peachtree Creek watershed!
116	I really think more people would play basketball there if it was in good shape and regulation. There's no other public courts nearby! I wish Mason Mill had one but they don't.
117	Maybe timeliness on tennis courts.
121	Thank you, very much, for your contributions to our park - I'm very grateful to you all.
122	The trails are the highlight, by far! The creek and slopes and nature back there is so amazing to have in our backyard. It bothers me that people blatantly ignore the leash rule for their dogs, even though I know it's a wonderful place for them to roam. If there was a designated spot for dogs to be off leash, maybe that would help? Going back there with my (small) children and dogs who I won't let off leash is, at best, VERY unpleasant and, at worst, potentially unsafe. It would be nice to have a day for kids to come help clean up or help with other responsibilities in the park! Anything directed to the kids would be wonderful.
125	No
126	Really great to have this where we live
127	Having a forest so close to downtown is a special amenity and it should be protected and preserved.

ResponseID Response

129	As a resident on the street that contains the park entrance, I don't think we need to increase park traffic...this is a residential area. However it is a great park that is enjoyed by many and enhancing the existing park would be great. For example, the picnic shelter could use updating. It would be great to have a restroom available for park guests. While I do want every one who wants to enjoy the park to be able to, there have been issues with people in the park at night. Perhaps there is a way to "close" the park at night with a park gate? Not sure who would manage this but would decrease nightly visitors.
130	Appreciate the volunteers.
131	It's extremely important to eliminate erosion which is harder to do the longer you wait. Also, children desperately need nature to stay in balance - especially with the competition of technology & AI.
132	Love it! As it currently is, mostly natural, the best city park that I've ever been to. Nice that with it, we are sharing some space with other species, whose habitat has largely been taken. First step toward E. O. Wilson's suggestion that we give back half of the terrain in America (actually throughout the planet) to nature.
135	Dogs off-leash in the woods can be a big nuisance
138	Just to reiterate, please keep all interior of the park natural. DO NOT turn this into another generic public park with paved walking trails, landscaped lawns, huge parking lots. Please keep it underdeveloped & natural for the wildlife & native wild habitat.
139	Just curious about what's going on since i come here every day
140	The neighborhood is sort of unfriendly and weird. There are a few abandoned houses throughout the neighborhood. The park is dark and creepy. Often regret buying a house over here.
141	It's a lovely park.
143	The home owners next to the park need to know they don't own the park
144	Important space in Decatur for retirees and the old. Important for stressed out working middle aged adults.
145	We love the park! We want to continue to protect it's natural beauty and trails while making the open areas more useful for gatherings and play.
146	No bathrooms. I know a lot of people might want them, but I believe, based on past experience, that they become attractive nuisances. Plus, the cost of installation would be prohibitive. Add port-o-lets if it is considered necessary.
150	Connectivity to surrounding natural areas.

ResponseID Response

152	1. There are too many off-leash dogs running through the park daily, sometimes with no owners in sight. Dogs have jumped on me on the trails. They bark and ruin my experience. 2. My bigger complaint are the trucks who come for lunch and run their loud engines for a long time. In perfect weather, those drivers idle with windows up and look at their phones. Make a "No Idling" rule and enforce it with signs and occasional police visits. 3. I have observed 75 bird species in W.D. Thomson Park in the past 6 years. Noticed a decline in species past 2 years. Summer Tanagers nested there every summer until 2 years ago. Not sure what caused this. 4. My relatives turned down visit to Thomson Park last weekend because there is no restroom. The 2 1/2 year old LOVES playgrounds but lack of bathroom was a deal breaker. I hesitate suggesting restrooms because that would attract even MORE idling trucks. 5. Specific improvements? Repave the middle-level parking lot between field and tennis courts and put barrier to stop cars from rolling off hill. It's scary! Smooth out the basketball court more. Replace little bridge near pavilion.
153	Keep the trails natural.
154	Please DO NOT over-develop Thomson Park!! Keep it just as it is, natural! No new development or paving, please. But perhaps clean up the picnic shelter (it floods), with more covered trash cans as they overflow with events. Adding a bridge over the creek at the backside of the former ballfield cage would be nice.
155	Oops! Just submitted survey. Forgot: Please add a railing on the railroad tie stairs at the back of the walking trail adjacent to Vistavia Circle. The steps are pretty high, those of us with bad knees would greatly appreciate this. :-)
157	I am an artist and muralist, I would love to collaborate with you and the community and some parents and kids to make this park more magical! I hope you like what we did and we I would love to e part of your committee to plan how we can transform this park as an example to other park and a happy and safe space for our community!
160	It is very enjoyable for my family as is. Please don't do anything to screw it up.
162	Nice Park and I bring my grandkids there. Would like to walk more there too, need to do that more.
163	Thank you for getting it where it is today!
164	Park needs a wildflower area
165	Thank you for this vision plan :)
166	We lived on Mason Woods 1965-1972 and in Victoria Estates 1/2 mile away since '72. Always loved the park and especially the woods and trails behind Mason Woods, but now at ages 90 and 89 and health reasons rarely if ever go to park but our children in Vistavia enjoy the trail. We approve of all and any enhancements.
170	Dogs off leash bother me! Scared my grandchildren!

ResponseID Response

174	Thanks to the county for resurfacing the tennis courts
175	prevent adjacent neighbors from using park as additional parking for rental properties
176	I'd like to see the park remain as it is. No overdevelopment.
177	Please resist the idea of overdeveloping this park. It's great as is!
178	TOO MANY PARKS ARE LIKE LAWNS. THIS ONE IS DIFFERENT.
179	I HAVE SEEN TOO MANY DOGS RUNNING FREE. I WAS TOLD BY A WOMAN RENTING A FLOOR ACROSS FROM THE PARK THAT REAL ESTATE AGENTS SHOWING IN THE AREA TOUT THE PARK AS "DOG FRIENDLY" (WORD OF MOUTH). THAT WOMAN, A BIRDER, SAYS SHE NOW HAS TO GO ELSEWHERE TO WATCH BECAUSE THE FREE-RANGING DOGS HAVE FRIGHTENED SEVERAL SPECIES OF BIRDS AWAY. THERE NEEDS TO BE NEW PROMINENT SIGNAGE (NOT BURIED IN WITH ANOTHER DOZEN RULES) DEDICATED TO WARNING OWNERS TO KEEP THEIR DOGS LEASHED. ALSO, CITATIONS SHOULD BE ISSUED.
180	Keep trails natural
182	My grandson visits and the playground is now his playground of choice vs. Mason Mill Park.
186	Feel concern for the unhoused. Also, they are sometimes aggressive. <input type="checkbox"/> hungry in the winter.
187	Bathrooms would allow us to have more get-togethers, parties, etc.
188	We moved here because of backing up to the wonderful woods--32 years ago. Parks was not used much by others way back then but usage (plus some of negative effects of usage) have increased dramatically--as have water problems.
191	restrooms/water fountains should be a standard for all parks.
193	We need a park where nature itself is the reason to visit.
196	I was visiting today (5-20-24) and some someone liberally using pesticides in the native plant restoration area. We should not be using pesticides in an area meant for revitalization that is RIGHT next to a waterway!
197	I love this park :)
198	Need to divert rangers from other parks to here to enforce leash laws. Need to empty the trash BEFORE they overflow otherwise what's the point? I would like to see the park sign restored to its original condition.

ResponseID Response

199	maybe sitting areas in the park where local friends can meet and talk rather than only being able to walk not only in children's area
200	I love going there everyday. Would love for the wooden bridge to be built or put back. It twas so nice to walk from side to side.
201	we've used the park for 41 years, from children's playground to softball to picnics to hiking to tennis! We walked to it and love having it in the area
202	I feel so lucky to live near a conserved wooded space that, in my opinion, balances recreation options and wooded areas very well.
203	I love the park, it is one of my favorite things about the area. I am grateful that folks are spearheading this.
207	Like that it sits in a natural setting with private homes nearby.
208	Loving park. Would visit more often if basketball hoop and net in good repair

12. The Friends of Thomson Park is a Park Pride-affiliated volunteer group, open to all, that takes an active interest in the stewardship of W. D. Thomson Park. Their work includes tending to native planting areas, invasive removal, trail maintenance, and anything else needed to make the park a shining gem in the community. To stay informed about future volunteer days and current projects in the park consider signing up for the newsletter.

Statistics

Total Responses

45

Appendix B

**Preliminary Concepts Survey
Open June 27 to July 15, 2024**

(Note: Any identifying information of respondents has been redacted)

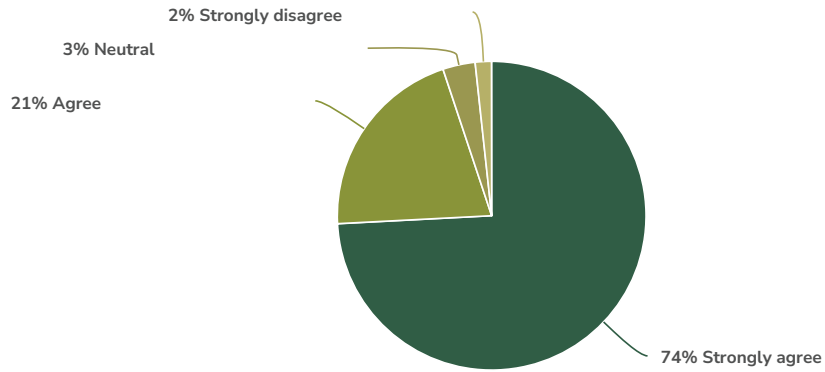
Report for W. D. Thomson Preliminary Concept Feedback

Response Counts



Totals: 60

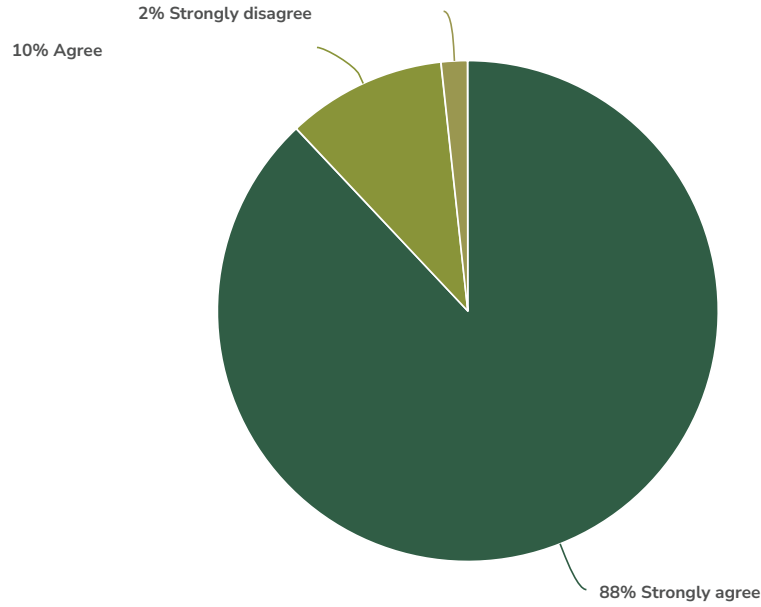
1. Provide a safe, accessible area where people can retreat from everyday responsibilities to revitalize their spirits.



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly agree	74.1%	43
Agree	20.7%	12
Neutral	3.4%	2
Strongly disagree	1.7%	1

Totals: 58

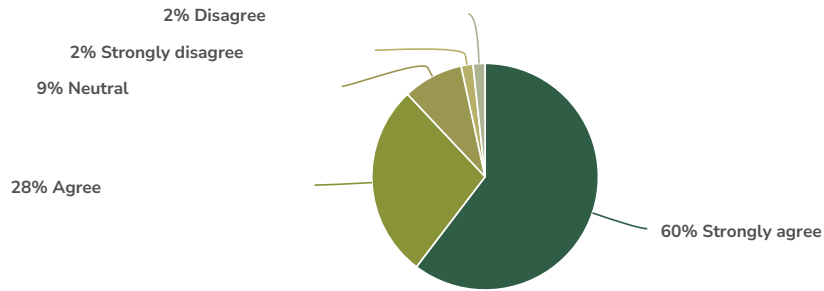
2. Provide an area where natural features such as the forest and its trails, native plants, wildlife, and the creek are highlighted, respected and protected.



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly agree	87.9%	51
Agree	10.3%	6
Strongly disagree	1.7%	1

Totals: 58

3. Provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of community through park stewardship, celebrations, activity, and play.



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly agree	60.3%	35
Agree	27.6%	16
Neutral	8.6%	5
Strongly disagree	1.7%	1
Disagree	1.7%	1

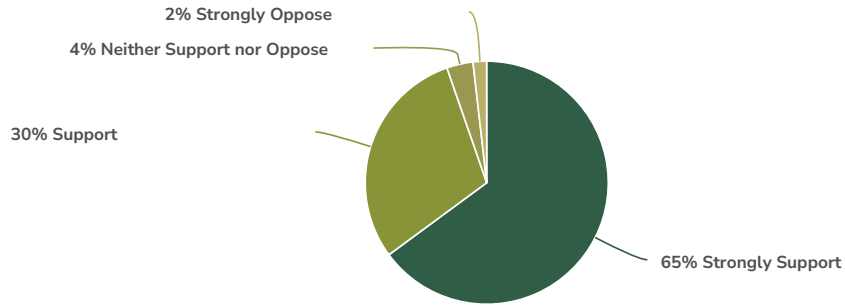
Totals: 58

4. Provide any additional comments here.

ResponseID	Response
8	Really would love better pavilion! Thank you!
17	No. 3 is delicate to implement. There are many other parks regular parks where this feature is offered.
21	Many thanks for your efforts on this!
22	Thank you so much for all of your hard work on this!
28	It looks like the bathroom is being vetoed by the county. I know Kittredge recently had a bathroom building at this location (https://maps.app.goo.gl/BdfXacxcxUvCN8Cv8). I believe that park would be classified as neighborhood as well?
38	I like the avoidance of paved walkways (except for strollers) because they are bad for walking & our joints.
39	Protect the integrity of the creek and the creek banks. Focus on re-introduction of native plants. Shore up areas where it looks like large trees might be susceptible to falling in a severe rainstorm, especially near the playground.
40	PLEASE keep some sort of basketball hoop. This hoop is the ONLY public basketball hoop in the area and would be incredibly missed if it is removed and not replaced
42	One caveat: "Retreating from everyday responsibilities" does not imply retreating from the responsibility to observe common courtesy and respect for the park as a public space.
43	Not really a guiding principle but something to consider perhaps on signage... I would expect park visitors to remain responsible stewards of the land and respectful to other park visitors, be good humans. Perhaps add a combination of #1 and #2, a place where everyone (not just natural features) can enjoy the park equally and be respected (i.e. people not litter, create graffiti, keep dogs on leashes, and collect dog waste and dispose of properly).
44	In the 2nd goal, may we PLEASE add "soil"? By adding soil, we anticipate future construction near any side of the park, such as the vacant lot next to the playground, and we are better-positioned to immediately stop the construction industry's ubiquitous abuse of soil by dumping every excess chemical, powder, paint, liquid, etc. on the ground (sometimes large quantities) and quickly washing away visible evidence with a hose. How do I know? My bathroom is being renovated and I have seen that my soil and hose are the go-to trashcan (which I stop) for everything that is not a solid. As an example, goal 2 could say "wildlife, soil and the creek are highlighted..." Thank you for your consideration and all you do. If this tiny renovation is every over, maybe I can help. Judey Thessen
51	Park is pretty great as is. Please be careful not to screw it up.

ResponseID	Response
58	The less change, the better.
61	The premise of the original agreement for the park was for this to be primarily for the nearby residences. Keep improvements simple.
62	I love that Thomson is largely undeveloped and hope it continues to be a natural, wooded sanctuary for visitors and native species alike.
69	Can we have place to have art in the park, community art too. Since I am a mural artist living in the neighborhood I would love to be part with my student to paint something in the park, a wall, the entrance sign ... Teresa Abboud www.teresaafternoon.com
74	In the master plan, please consider adding plants that naturally deter mosquitos (such as citronella and lavender).

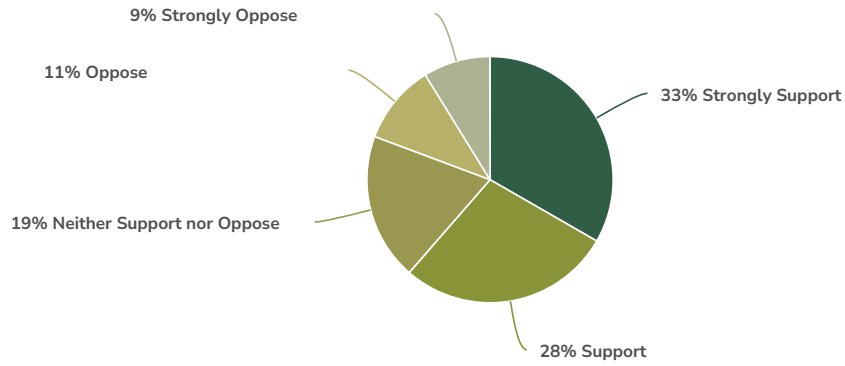
5. Restoration of natural systems, including stream restoration, dam removal, and riparian restoration



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly Support	64.9%	37
Support	29.8%	17
Neither Support nor Oppose	3.5%	2
Strongly Oppose	1.8%	1

Totals: 57

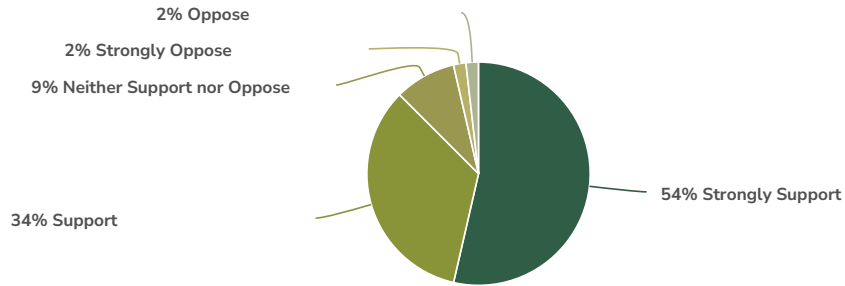
6. Pedestrian entrance from Mason Mill Road with paved pathway to playground



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly Support	33.3%	19
Support	28.1%	16
Neither Support nor Oppose	19.3%	11
Oppose	10.5%	6
Strongly Oppose	8.8%	5

Totals: 57

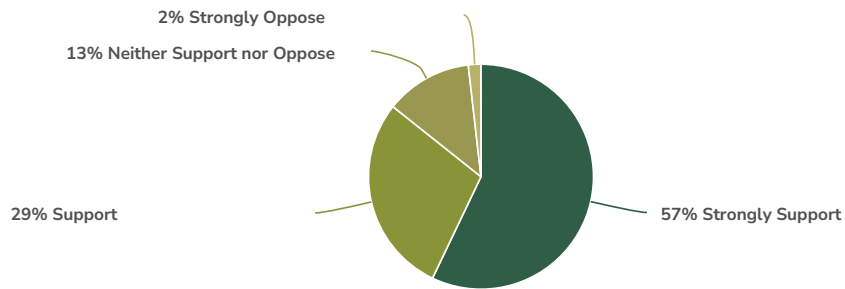
7. Preservation of nature trails and forest with additional benches provided along trails



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly Support	53.6%	30
Support	33.9%	19
Neither Support nor Oppose	8.9%	5
Strongly Oppose	1.8%	1
Oppose	1.8%	1

Totals: 56

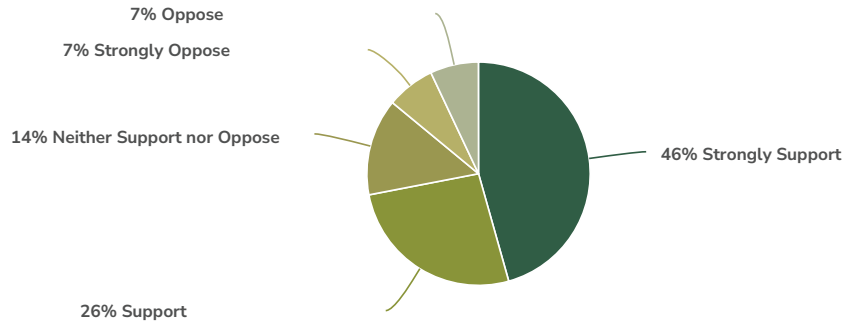
8. New trailhead with map kiosk and informational signage related to keeping pets on a leash



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly Support	57.1%	32
Support	28.6%	16
Neither Support nor Oppose	12.5%	7
Strongly Oppose	1.8%	1

Totals: 56

9. Beautified park entrance from Mason Woods Drive with new pedestrian walkway into the park, restored sign, and native plantings



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly Support	45.6%	26
Support	26.3%	15
Neither Support nor Oppose	14.0%	8
Strongly Oppose	7.0%	4
Oppose	7.0%	4

Totals: 57

10. Provide any additional comments here.

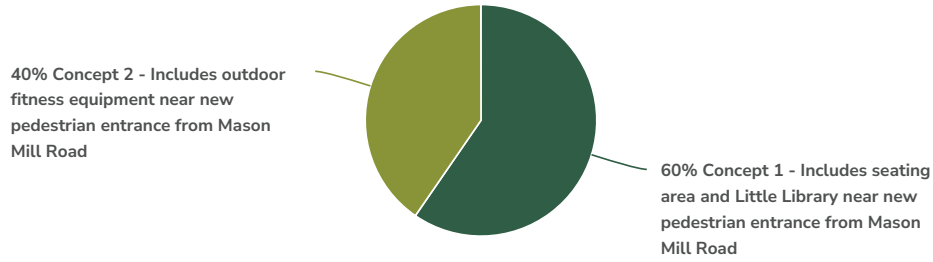
ResponseID	Response
11	Keep trails. No benches. Restoration, yes, but no new construction. None.
31	#5 is supported only if basketball court is included per Plan 2 #7 is supported re additional benches only if no more than 2 add'l benches
36	I want the bridge back!
37	Please keep basketball court.
41	Please keep basketball hoop! It brings such joy to me and my boys.
42	#9 (entrance, walkway,etc) covers a lot of ground and can be interpreted several different ways. But generally support.
43	Item 6, I like the idea of a pedestrian entrance from Mason Mill and would like to see minimal impervious surfaces in that area, nothing fancy. Item 9 covers a lot of things, restoring the entrance (again nothing fancy) and some native would be nice. And maybe a safer way to get down the big hill into the lower lot park for pedestrians as that can be slippery with leaves and after a rain.
44	Other than the native plantings, how does question 9 support the park's goals? . Beautification usually involves hardscapes. Forests need light, water, nutrients to survive. More hardscapes mean more water run-off - often to a road, not to the soil. I support native planting. How does the other support the park goals?
46	Unless, I missed something, none of the literature made clear to me why the dam is being removed. Is there a reason for this? I think it is fine to beautify entrances, signage etc., although I also think the park looks fine now, and I don't think that needs to be the greatest priority.
51	Mason Mill road at the playground entrance is located on a very difficult hill on Mason Mill Road. Anything more than a paved path would be a waste of money due to lack of usage.
58	Native plantings, yes, absolutely, but Mason Woods is only lightly trafficked. Walkways seem unnecessary. Don't fix what isn't broken.
59	Signage should be clear and plentiful about leashing pets. Preserve the trails. Don't necessarily need more benches.
61	Plants are great but fancy bridges seem wrong for a nature preserve
62	I think that a pedestrian entrance is nice, but I don't believe it will see especially high usage, so perhaps don't apportion too many funds there.


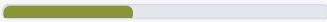
ResponseID Response

73 I very much support efforts to create welcoming, accessible entrances to the park with natural aesthetics in line with the ethos of the park. I love that there is minimal infrastructure on the trails - I feel like I've stumbled into a hidden gem every time I'm there. However subtle benches, better signage at the entrances (including leash reminders) and attention to bridges and creek banks throughout will help make the park feel loved and safe.

74 If there's a way to restore the basketball hoop to regulation height, that might entice more people to use it. Also, provide recycling bins as well as garbage bins. Add native wetlands plants near the creek. Possibly consider adding an arbor/stage near the pavilion for small outdoor acoustic concerts.

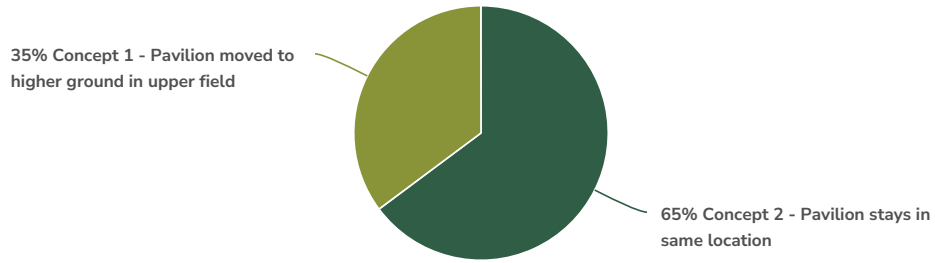
11. Both plans provide a pedestrian entrance off of Mason Mill Road with a paved pathway to the playground. Which elements of the entryway do you prefer?



Value	Percent	Responses
Concept 1 - Includes seating area and Little Library near new pedestrian entrance from Mason Mill Road	59.6% 	31
Concept 2 - Includes outdoor fitness equipment near new pedestrian entrance from Mason Mill Road	40.4% 	21

Totals: 52

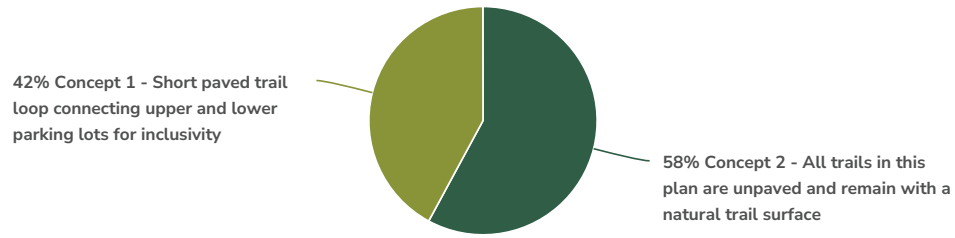
12. Which location of the pavilion do you prefer?



Value	Percent	Responses
Concept 2 - Pavilion stays in same location	64.8%	35
Concept 1 - Pavilion moved to higher ground in upper field	35.2%	19

Totals: 54

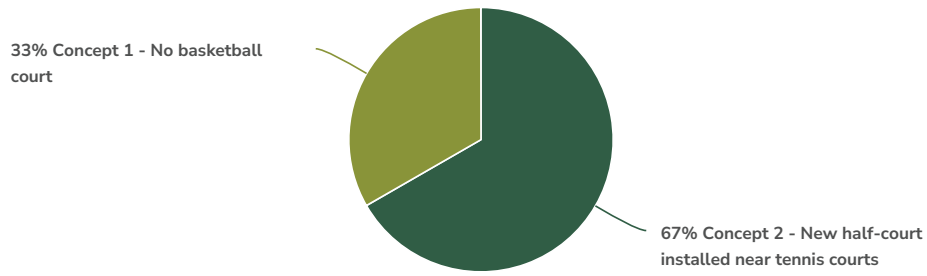
13. Both plans include a trail connecting the upper and lower parking lots. Which trail surface do you prefer?



Value	Percent	Responses
Concept 2 - All trails in this plan are unpaved and remain with a natural trail surface	57.9%	33
Concept 1 - Short paved trail loop connecting upper and lower parking lots for inclusivity	42.1%	24

Totals: 57

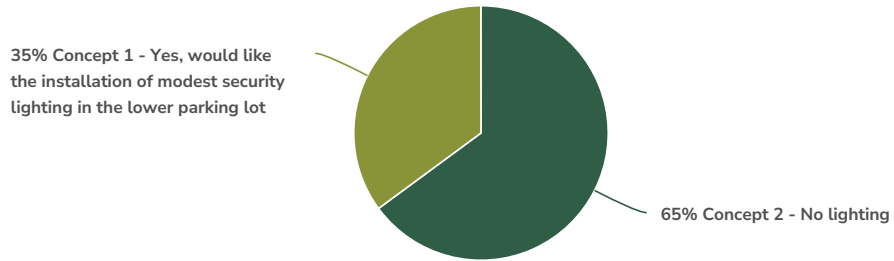
14. Neither plan allows for the basketball hoop to remain in its current location. Which option do you prefer?



Value	Percent	Responses
Concept 2 - New half-court installed near tennis courts	66.7%	38
Concept 1 - No basketball court	33.3%	19

Totals: 57

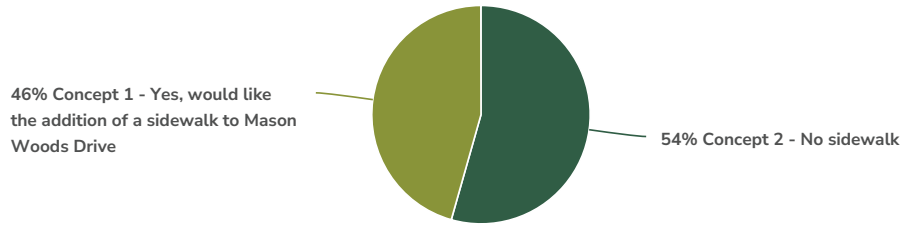
15. Do you recommend the addition of lighting to parking areas?



Value	Percent	Responses
Concept 2 - No lighting	64.9%	37
Concept 1 - Yes, would like the installation of modest security lighting in the lower parking lot	35.1%	20

Totals: 57

16. Do you recommend the addition of a sidewalk along Mason Woods Drive to the park entrance?



Value	Percent	Responses
Concept 2 - No sidewalk	54.4%	31
Concept 1 - Yes, would like the addition of a sidewalk to Mason Woods Drive	45.6%	26

Totals: 57

17. Is there anything you would like to add? Feel free to expand on one of your answers above, or tell us about something we didn't ask about.

ResponseID	Response
8	I understand no bathrooms allowed sadly but is water fountain an option?
11	Minimal walkway construction from Mason Mill to avoid soggy ground and aid strollers but no more than than that.
12	Park is good as is.
18	Against lighting, don't want people in the park at night anyway, and will disturb the animals. Against paving any paths, there's already a very long paved path in Mason Mill park, we don't need it here. No need for outdoor workout equipment, not sure who the intended audience for those is, but every time I've seen them they're not getting used and rusting. Is there any way for the plan to not reduce the size of the upper field? I understand we need the stream restoration, but the field is already small as is (not really big enough for an adult game of frisbee or soccer). I would prefer minimal to no parking by the playground, would be nice to not have to worry about kids running between and the playground and park. Maybe keep parking only by the tennis court, or make the lower parking lot significantly smaller and farther away (2-4 spots)? The parking spots by playground seem to always be empty right now. The pedestrian entrance in concept one looks much nicer. Didn't see anything about drinking fountains. Can that be included?
21	Very strongly in favor of paved trail loop. B-ball hoop not essential, but I would use it! Very reluctant about light pollution, would favor no added lighting if feasible.
22	For pavilion: I liked the idea of waiting until stream restoration to decide For b-ball hoop: Not essential, but would encourage young people to visit the park
26	I like both ideas of little library/seating area and fitness equipment. Perhaps having the fitness equipment along the paved trail would allow the library/seating area to be placed in new pedestrian entrance from MM. My least prioritized item is the sidewalk on Mason Woods Drive.
35	I don't know that I feel strongly one way of the other on almost every question. I like the idea of sidewalks at entrances, but why add extras, such as a lending library or athletic equipment.. There are benches in the playground area.
38	I really appreciate the efforts to include all choices & input from the public!!!
39	Prefer one good-mobility friendly (for walkers and wheelchairs) path, paved if necessary, not concrete, wood if possible -- but no other pavement. Bring back our wooden bridge! Add safe wooden bridges at a few more sites across the creek!
42	Environmental cleanup and rehabilitation (stream, woods, vegetation) should take priority in this plan. The results of the major projects will inform the feasibility (space allocation, need, funding, etc.) of the other amenities. For example, a decision on the future location of the pavilion can wait until after the stream rehab project is complete.

ResponseID	Response
43	Item 11, something simple please, nothing fancy. Item 12, wait to see if the stream bank restoration fixes the flooding in the lower park, if so the refurbish existing pavilion, if not then reassess. Item 14, again wait to see if the restoration fixes flooding in the lower park, if so consider putting the hoop there so the parking isn't so tight by the tennis courts. Consider 3 kiosks (at trailhead, Mason Mill pedestrian entrance, and lower parking lot) to include park map, dog leash rules, dog waste bags, and trashcans.
44	How do more lights support the park goals? Who doesn't have a flash light on their phone? Artificial light is contributing to the decline of the insect population. Insects are a major food source for other animals, such as birds. Anthropogenic light at night is growing exponentially while many insect populations are in decline. Many nocturnal insects provide numerous ecosystem services and are attracted to anthropogenic lights at night resulting in decreased fitness, greater mortality and population declines.
46	I would prioritize maintaining the basketball court -- it gets used a lot. I have seen outdoor workout equipment elsewhere -- and it is a nice feature that people gravitate towards. I'm a little against extra sidewalks and such -- what makes our park unique is its forest feel, although this would mostly impact the entrances so that would be alright -- as long as it isn't a budget thing. Again, to me the most important thing is to keep the basketball and tennis courts -- but adding more exercise equipment in the play area would be a bonus.
51	A relatively narrow asphalt paved path though a densely wooded area will be effectively destroyed by tree roots in a few years and end up an ugly mess.
52	If the "neighborhood park" category allows electrical connection, an outlet would be nice for the pavilion.
53	In my opinion the paved loop trail for inclusivity in Concept 1 trumps lighting, pavilion move, sidewalk, exercise equipment. The b'ball court would be great, and maybe could also be afforded if skip the sidewalk on Mason Woods, don't move the pavilion, skip the lighting and even the exercise equipment if funds won't cover everything. I just think the basketball court will be very popular. But that paved loop trail needs to be a top priority for sure. These plans are spectacular. Kudos to whoever developed them.
58	If the park closes at dusk, why the need for lights? They interfere with the reproductive cycle of lightning bugs and will be vandalized. If you must have lights, be sure to get a commitment from someone to maintain them. Lights in other parks are destroyed frequently. The Little Library idea is commendable but it will be vandalized. Even the wooden trail posts are frequently pulled up. I and others have to find where they've been thrown and put them back in their holes. I can easily see the books littering the park. Love the idea of a native garden replacing the mostly unused basketball court. Brilliant idea. One other suggestion: the garbage cans should be replaced with hinged ones like county recycle/trash bins. Critters dump them out. I (and others) make a point of picking up trash along trails, in the parking lots, but I have stopped picking up the mess pulled out of the trash cans.
59	Prefer to maintain the sense of a neighborhood park.

ResponseID	Response
61	Are more trails necessary? Seems like both plans are fancier than necessary. Keep it simple, easy to maintain.
62	I like the idea of stepping stones rather than a bridge for the stream crossing behind the former ballfield.
71	Thank you!
73	Yes to better basketball court! While I don't see a lot of utility in adding a paved loop where it is proposed (it will be short and hilly and doesn't seem particularly useful to someone with a stroller or wheelchair) I think other additions could make the park more accessible, like better entrances, stairs near the entrance, and paved path from the side entrance to the field. Also water fountains, new trash cans, and upgraded pavilion area please!
74	See previous fill in the blank answers.

Appendix C

Final Feedback Survey
Open July 25 to August 9, 2024

(Note: Any identifying information of respondents has been redacted)

Report for W. D. Thomson Park Vision Plan feedback

Response Counts

Completion Rate:	100%	
Complete		 7

Totals: 7

1. Share your feedback below.

ResponseID Response

3	The tennis courts need wind screens on the fencing in order to provide an appropriate visual backdrop for tennis. Please DO NOT add pickleball lines to our tennis courts
4	Would love to see the upper trail be ADA accessible. This would be a fantastic way to open the park up and allow those that can't walk on the dirt trails a way into the forested part of the park.
5	Your first mission goal is to provide a safe, accessible area where people can revitalize their spirits. This goal and the goal of building community are not fulfilled in the omission of any paved trail. In a neighborhood filled with elders who are "unsteady on their pins," and with some residents who use wheelchairs or are visually impaired, the short paved trail that was proposed would allow those neighbors an experience of the woods with its sights, smells, proximity to running water--all conducive to a revitalization of spirit. Otherwise, for those needing to stay on paved surfaces, access is extremely limited to the essential quality of the park, which is the woods. The plan is otherwise gorgeous, and welcoming to children, teens, and the able-bodied. Is there any way that funds can be re-allocated to get a paved path so that everyone can engage fully with nature? What would the price tag be for that project? Thankyou for all that you do for Thomson Park. Julie Martin 404.824.6943
6	This plan looks good. Thank you for considering all options and arriving at a plan which will benefit all users of the park.
7	Excellent work by the Park Pride team and the Thomson Park Vision steering committee. Two items for us to keep in mind as plans go forward: 1) possibility of wheelchair/stroller accessible path and 2) additional park signage along Mason Mill Road, either at pedestrian entrance or on corner of MM and Mason Woods Drive.
8	Thank you to everyone who worked so very hard on this project! You created an inclusive process and options that gave everyone the opportunity to weigh in. And this final vision plan incorporates the best of both options! (Per my husband and me.) Love reinstalling a bridge near the picnic shelter, so a mini walking loop is again feasible; refreshing the shelter; a new Little Library; and more places to sit near the playground. When placing the new pathway between the picnic shelter and playground, it would be great to remove as few trees as possible (even the spindly ones) as the western sun tends to make the playground area hot in summer; shade is important for the kiddos running around. And a new bridge behind the meadow (old softball backstop) is a wonderful addition. I frequently walk in on the trails (not so much since knee surgery in October, but hope remains) and I really appreciate the sensitivity to keeping the trails, meadow and entire park as natural as possible. Think all proposed changes will enhance, not detract from the park's beauty. The only thing I hope could be added in the future are a few benches on the periphery of the meadow/open grassy area - and a railing on the Vistavia trail in the back coming up from the apartments. The railroad tie steps are great, but pretty high and it would be wonderful to have a railing to hold on to. Kudos and again, thank you to all the folks who worked on this. We've lived on Vistavia for 30 years and having had Thomson Park and its trails has been such a treasure. Regards, Kathleen Collomb & David Morgan

ResponseID Response

9 The vision plan looks great! Many thanks for all that was put into the development of the project by Park Pride, DeKalb County, Friends of Thomson Park, the visioning committee, and the community. I look forward to the continued transformation of the park over the next several years.



This document and materials created for this park visioning process are available online at <https://parkpride.org/we-can-help/park-visioning/>

These materials are also be archived at the Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center. Appointments can be made to view the materials at 404.814.4040 or by emailing reference@atlantahistorycenter.com.



233 Peachtree St NE
Suite 1600
Atlanta, GA 30303

parkpride.org

The **EXISTING TRAILS** and forest are preserved to **PROTECT NATURE** within the park. **ADDITIONAL BENCHES** are recommended along trails. Wayfinding on the trails is enhanced with a **MAP KIOSK** at both new **TRAILHEADS** with signage reminding dog owners of their responsibility to keep their **PETS LEASHED** while in the park.

The existing **TENNIS COURTS** are kept in place with **MODIFIED PARKING** and circulation to provide a wider drive aisle and a small **ENTRY PLAZA** with seating and a **DRINKING FOUNTAIN/BOTTLE FILLER**. The proposed **BASKETBALL QUARTER COURT** replaces the lost hoop due to the dam removal and includes a fence to prevent balls from leaving the court.

This plan proposes a **BEAUTIFIED ENTRANCE** to the park, including a **RESTORED SIGN**, native flower plantings, and a **WALKWAY** leading into the park.

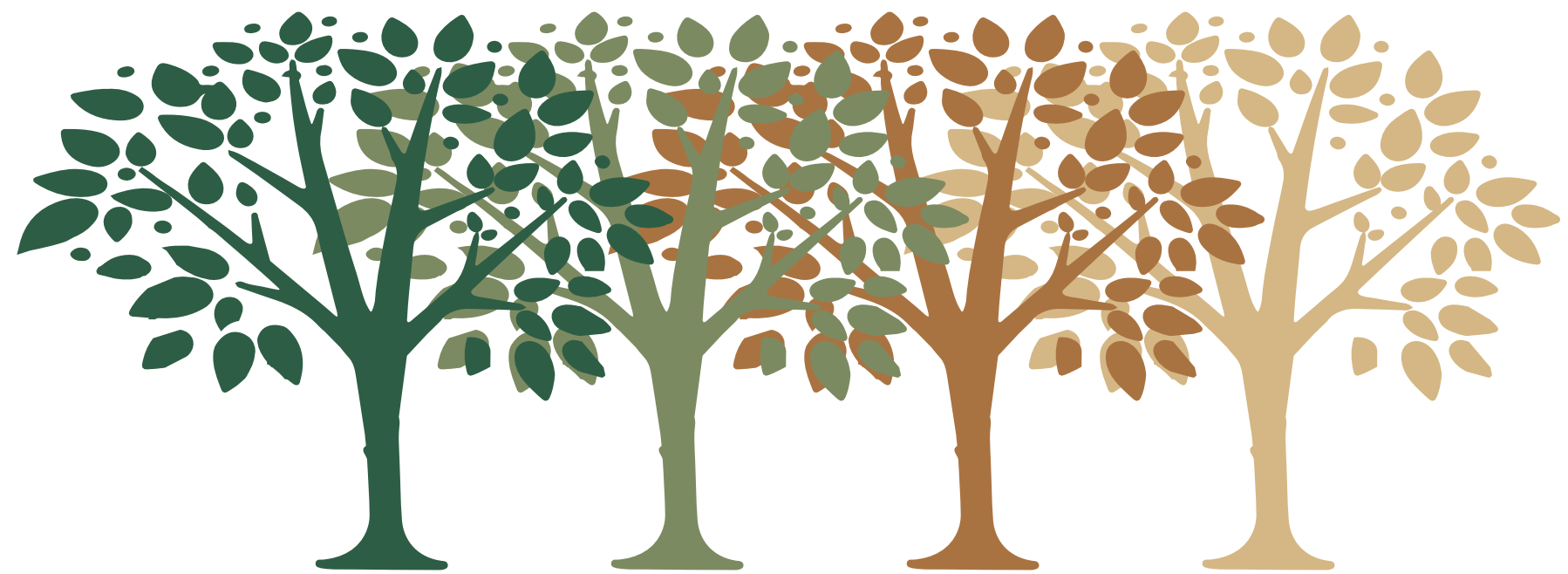
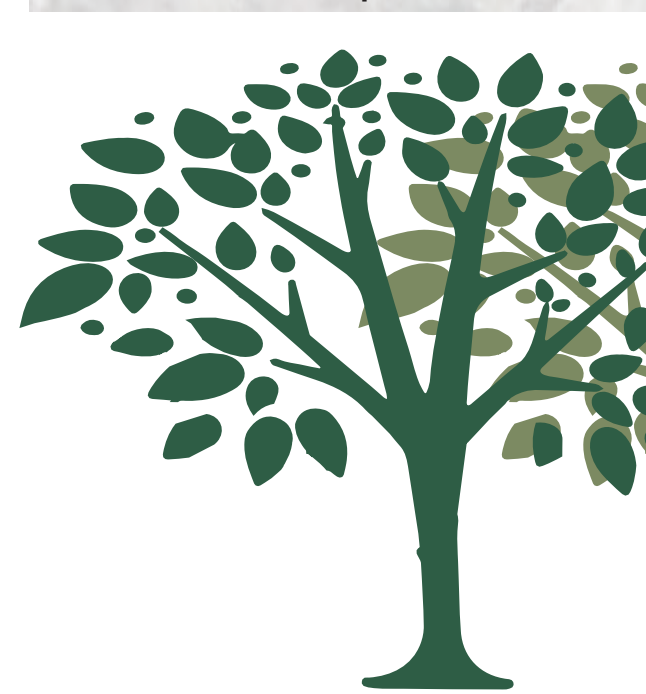
A major **STREAM RESTORATION AND DAM REMOVAL** project is proposed in order to restore the stream to a fully functional riparian system and an attractive public greenspace. The project will **REMOVE THE EXISTING BASKETBALL HOOP, ROAD, AND CUL-DE-SAC** while relocating the trailhead closer to the park entrance. The dam between the upper and lower streams will be removed, and a **NEW PATH AND PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE** will provide access to the nature trails. The formerly-paved cul-de-sac area can be restored with **NEW TREE PLANTINGS** and **NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION**.

New **PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES** will provide trail connectivity on the south side of the park across the stream to the existing trail system. **THE RED AND BLUE TRAILS** are both restored, providing additional trail options. **SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS** are also noted on the plan to reduce unpleasant smells near the lawn.

A **REORGANIZED PARKING LOT** will provide up to 14 parking spaces serving the lower park and **TRAILHEAD** with map kiosk and drinking fountain/bottle filler. **NO LIGHTING** is offered in this plan in deference to the park's focus on nature. The **EXISTING LAWN** will be reduced in size to accommodate the realigned and restored stream. The **EXISTING PAVILION** is rehabilitated in its current location with **NEW SITE FURNISHINGS**. The area around the pavilion is **RE-GRADED** to achieve positive drainage and reduce instances of sedimentation on the floor. The **PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE** linking the lower fields to one another is replaced in its traditional location.

A small **SEATING AREA** and **READING NOOK** provide a comfortable spot to supervise play at the existing playground while offering creative seating options like a **SEATING WALL** or **SWING BENCHES** overlooking the creek and floodplain below. A **LITTLE FREE LIBRARY** acts as a point of exchange for books.

The **PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE** along Mason Mill Road is formalized with a **SMALL ENTRY PLAZA** with signage, seat wall, waste receptacle, and paved pathway to the playground. A **STAIRWAY AND PATH** provide a pedestrian route to the interior of the park that bypasses the playground.



W. D. Thomson Park

North Druid Hills

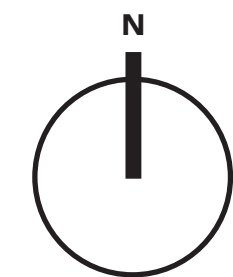
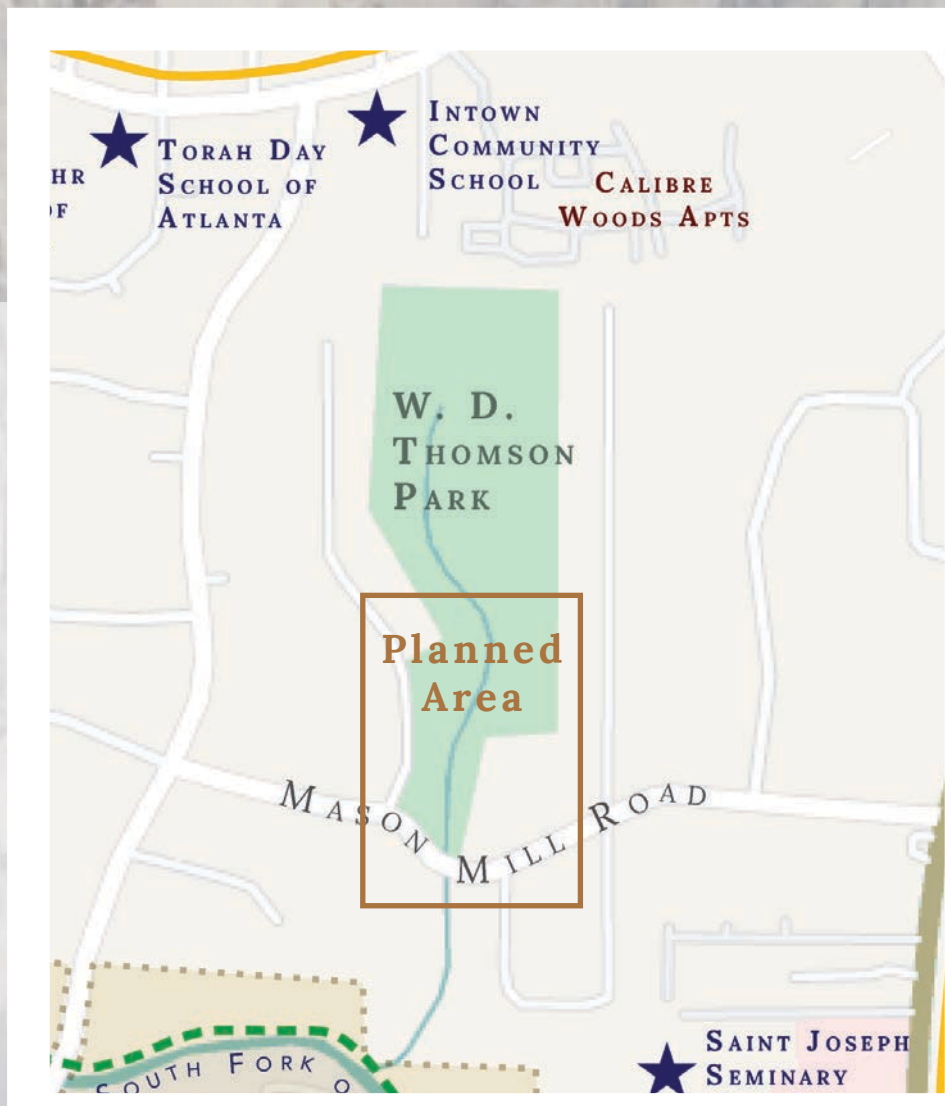
Vision Plan 2024

Guiding Principles

The concept supports these three guiding principles, which serve as the main goals for the park design.

1. To provide a safe, accessible area where people can revitalize their spirits
2. To provide an area where natural features such as the forest and its trails, native plants, wildlife, and the creek are highlighted, respected and protected
3. To provide a place which gives the neighborhood a sense of community through park stewardship, celebrations, activity, and play

Facilitated by



July 25, 2024