

Southwest Corridor Park Garden Survey – Rose Garden and Northampton Green February 2018

Summary of results and first steps

The Southwest Corridor Park Rose Garden and Northampton Green survey was circulated via email, social media, and flyers during February 2018. It was sent to park volunteers and advisory committee members (through the SWCPC and PMAC); to neighborhood group email lists; and, through contacts at several buildings close to the Rose Garden and Northampton Green, to residents of those buildings. Flyers were also posted around the vicinity of the two gardens. A survey link was also posted on the Southwest Corridor Park’s website and social media sites. We were pleased with the results, with 161 responses.

The following summary highlights key results and some next steps.

Full results can be seen at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-263MNP MH8/>

One first step will be a **Saturday morning volunteer event in April** (with date to be determined based on weather). We plan to replant ground covers in the circle around the Japanese Maple in the Rose Garden. We will also have some flip charts and pens and paper for brainstorming about plantings, including roses, companion plantings and other ideas. We will send out an email and post the date on the Southwest Corridor Park Facebook page.

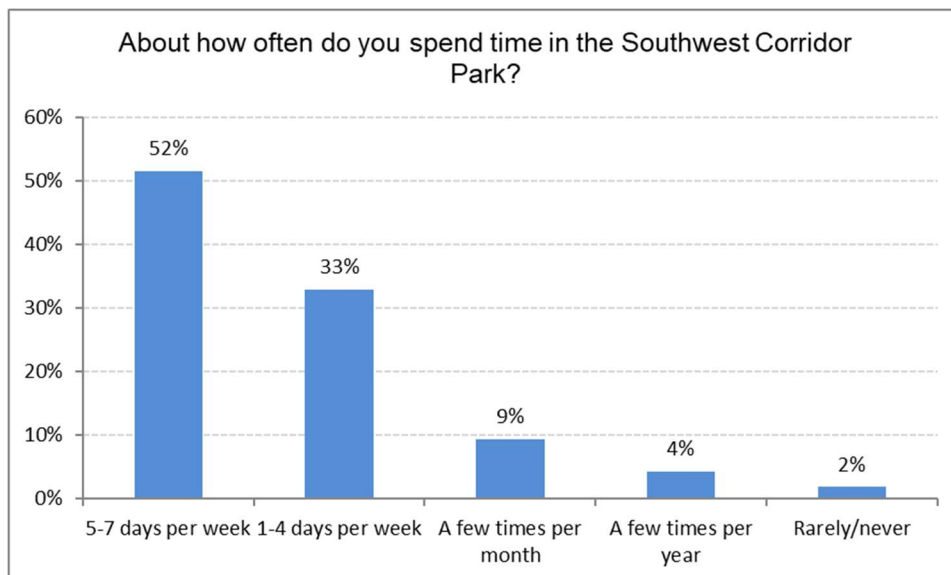
There will be additional opportunities to get involved during the year, both in the Rose Garden and Northampton Green.

Many people provided an email address in the last question of the survey; or joined the PMAC mailing list; or liked/retweeted the Southwest Corridor Park Facebook page; or indicated that they were already connected via email or social media. If you haven’t done one of those things yet and would like to be involved, please email info@swcpc.org and say how you would like to be involved.

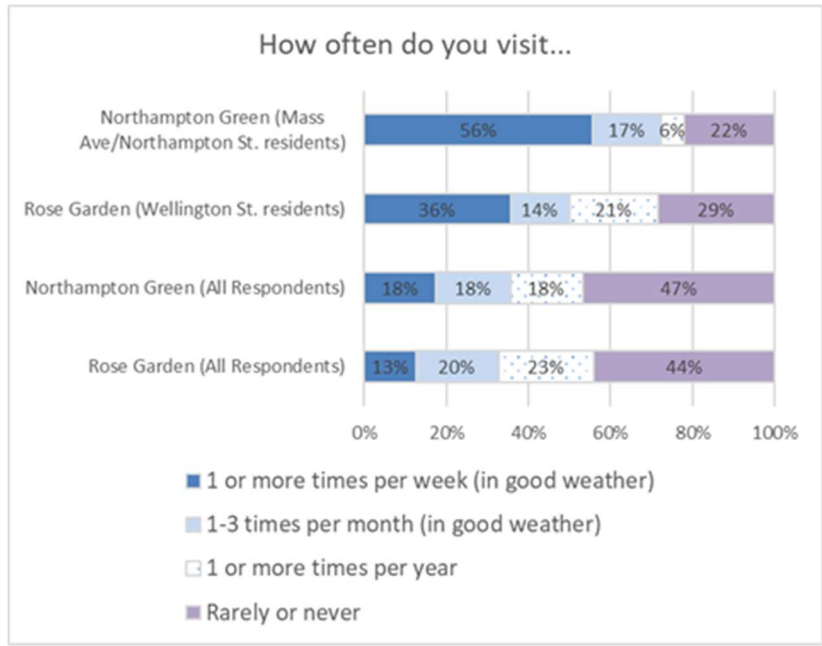
Feel free to respond to this email as well to info@swcpc.org to share thoughts about the summary and steps outlined here.

[1.] There were 161 respondents, with 83% from the Back Bay/South End, 7% from Fenway/Roxbury, and 10% from Jamaica Plain and other neighborhoods. Most respondents are frequent users of the SWCP, as shown in the graph below. When asked how they travel in the park, 94% said walking, and 20% also said bicycling, 15% said jogging/running and 20% said dog walking.

The survey asked respondents for the street where they live or work. The most common streets listed were Wellington Street (14 respondents); Mass. Ave. (12 respondents); Greenwich Park (12 respondents); St. Botolph St. (7 respondents); Northampton St. (7 respondents) and Columbus Ave. (5 respondents).



[2.] The survey asked how often respondents visited the Rose Garden and the Northampton Green area, and what activities they enjoyed. Only 33% of respondents visit the Rose Garden one or more times a month and only 36% of respondents visit Northampton Green one or more times a month. Use of Northampton Green varies by street and mode of park use; with people living nearby most likely to use these spaces; and with dogwalkers more likely to use both and bicyclists more likely to travel through Northampton Green.



For the Rose Garden, most respondents said they enjoy viewing roses, followed by dog walking, sitting and talking, and photography. For the Northampton Green area, most enjoy walking or biking through, followed by dog walking, photography and sitting and talking. Overall, one-third of those who visit the Rose Garden or Northampton Green at least once per month say that they enjoy dog walking in those places.

The survey suggested a variety of options for enhancing the two areas under study.

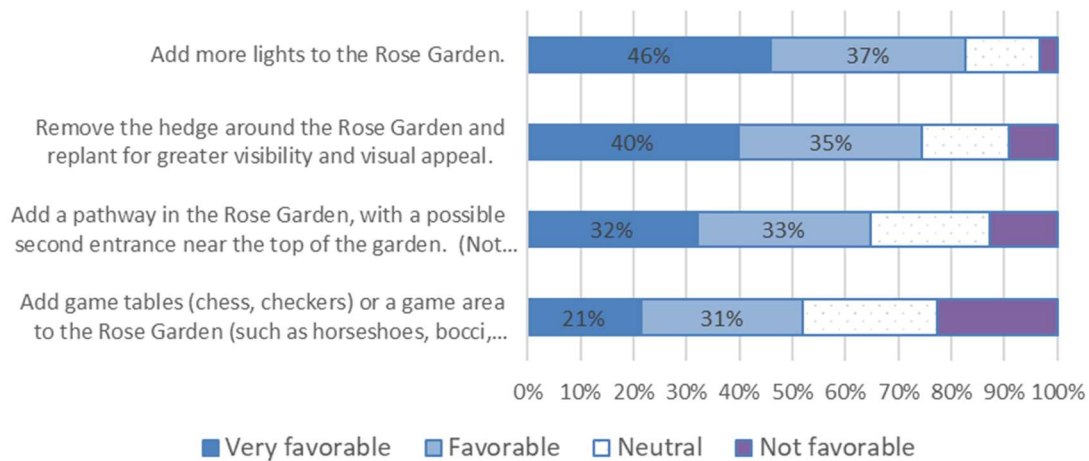
[3.] For the Rose Garden: Survey questions 10-13 presented a variety of options about the Rose Garden, and there was a mixture of responses as shown below. Respondents added many comments about enhancements they would like to see in this garden, with some saying that they haven't spent time there, and didn't really know it was part of the park. Respondents offered suggestions about plantings, including support for native plants, edible landscaping and permaculture and other planting ideas.

(a.) We expect to proceed first with some clear first steps – such as more lighting at night, new signage, more roses, fresh companion plantings and groundcovers. We will add some low fencing around the Japanese maple to allow replanted groundcover to grow and some along some of the planted beds. This will be just wooden posts with rope at first (as seen around other new plantings in the park); eventually perhaps a simple metal post and chain.

(b) We see potential support for public art in the park, in the Rose Garden and Northampton Green and elsewhere and will research options; and

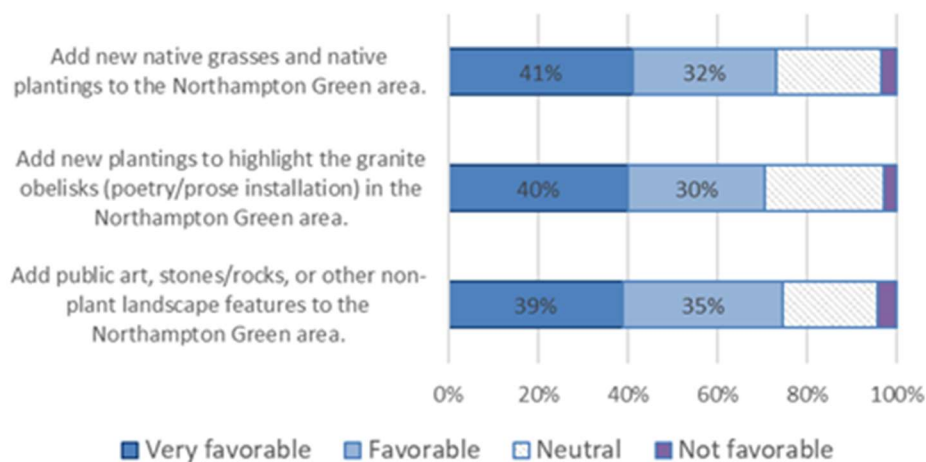
(c). We will continue to study the suggested landscaping changes, such as potentially a second entrance and pathway and/or changing the hedges. There were some helpful comments about these potential changes. Many people like the idea of opening up the garden visually; but some also said that they like the way the garden is enclosed by the hedges. These bigger landscaping changes require more review, both from a park-neighbor-perspective and a landscape-design-and-cost-perspective, and the survey results are just a first step.

Questions 10 - 13 / Rose Garden Ideas

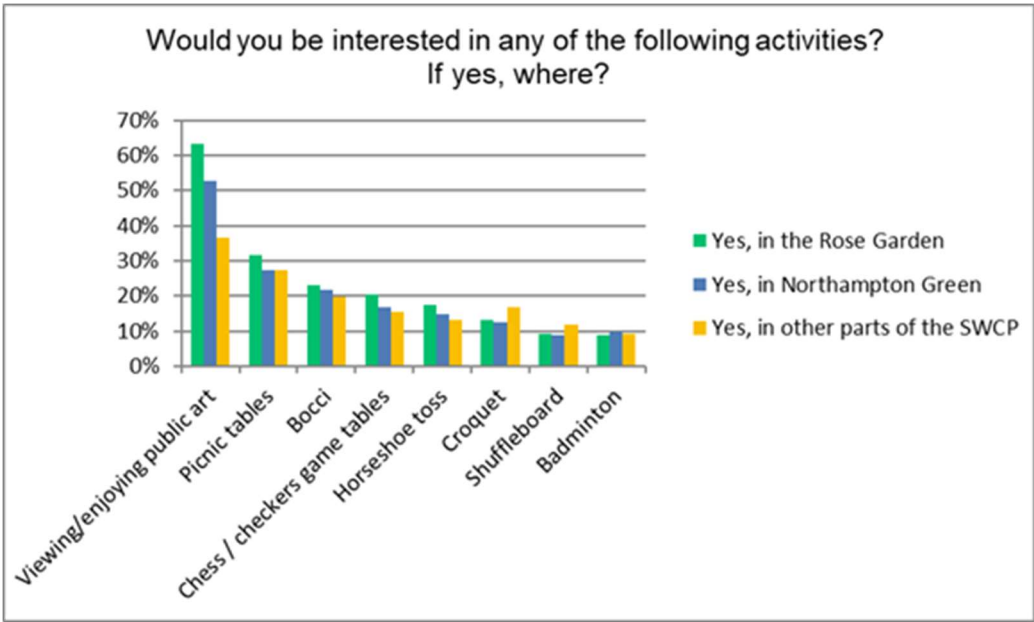


[4.] Survey questions 14 to 16 presented options for Northampton Green. There was broad support for the suggestion of new native plantings and public art and/or a rock garden installation around Northampton Green, as shown below. Several respondents provided specific suggestions about these options (including considerations about maintenance; litter, stones); others mentioned edible gardening and permaculture; others emphasized the value of native plantings; and we will keep these suggestions as a guide for next steps. Some responses highlighted the area around the MBTA station, suggesting improvements for the area around the station. (Our early steps will include further communication with the MBTA. As many neighbors know, the Southwest Corridor Park land has overlapping jurisdictions, with DCR providing care and control of the corridor, which owned by the MBTA, and with the MBTA taking the lead on the areas adjacent to each orange line station.)

Questions 14-16 / Northampton Green Ideas



[5.] Question 8 in the survey asked about public art, picnic tables and a variety of game options, including chess/checker tables and games such as bocci or horseshoes. There was wide interest in public art and we plan to study and pursue some options for public art. There was some interest in picnic tables, chess/checkers tables and game options, but no consensus. We will keep these options under study for other parts of the park or games for special events.



[6.] Question 9 in the survey asked about public safety concerns, focusing on whether park users feel uncomfortable because of the activities of others, worried about the well-being of others, or were concerned for their own safety. Many survey respondents indicated that they had public safety concerns, especially feeling worried about the well-being of others or feeling uncomfortable. Survey respondents provided many helpful comments about their concerns, including concerns that the rose garden feels isolated.

PMAC has a monthly public safety update with state police, Boston police, and other jurisdictions, and we will share the survey results and comments. We are also working with DCR for more lighting in the rose garden (helpful for those who walk dogs in the evening) and continuing to review the layout of the garden to look at options for more visibility for the garden space.

Question 9: As we work to improve and enliven these park areas, we want to pay attention to public safety concerns within the park. Please complete the following chart to indicate your experiences with public safety concerns. *In the past year, have you...*

	In the Rose Garden		In the Northampton Green area		In the SWCP between Mass. Ave. and West Newton Street		In the SWCP between West Newton Street and Back Bay Station	
... felt uncomfortable because of the activities of others in the park	53	33%	40	25%	57	35%	34	21%
...felt worried about the well-being of other people (i.e., drug use, sleeping outdoors)	71	44%	44	27%	73	45%	48	30%
...felt concerned about your own safety in the park	32	20%	28	17%	51	32%	32	20%
...contacted police because of public safety concerns in the park	16	10%	10	6%	30	19%	16	10%
.... contacted parks and/or neighborhood groups because of public safety concerns in the park	10	6%	8	5%	13	8%	8	5%

NOTE: Percentages are calculated based on the total of 161 survey respondents. Note that not all respondents spend time in or near each area, and so comparisons between areas would not be truly valid.

[7.] Many survey respondents were interested in getting involved, as shown in the chart below. We will facilitate involvement by posting updates about the project via email and social media and by having volunteer days that combine a hands-on task (such as replanting ground covers or transplanting a rose bush) with some landscape design updates and planning questions.

	Number of Respondents
Continue to make suggestions and follow the project via email list	31
Continue to make suggestions and follow the project via social media	25
Participate in volunteer days (weeding, transplanting, etc.)	25
Attend planning meeting(s)	20
Volunteer gardener (ongoing)	19
Make a general donation to the SWCPC	14
Make a donation earmarked to a specific project	11
Help with fundraising	6

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### Conclusion and Next Steps

We were pleased with the survey responses and appreciate the energy, concern and willingness to help provided by respondents. As noted above, if you have not done so already, please email [info@swcpc.org](mailto:info@swcpc.org) to let us know how you might want to be involved or sign up for the PMAC email list at <http://swcpc.org/pmac>

- First steps for the Rose Garden include:
  - An April volunteer event for replanting around the Japanese maple; plus flipcharts, pens and paper for brainstorming and conversation.
  - DCR is working on adding lighting for the Rose Garden.
  - We are working on overall planting design for inside the rose garden, including more roses and companion plantings. We will be guided by survey suggestions, including the suggestion for natives and edible landscaping (such as herb plants as companion plants to roses); and continuing to add color through roses and companion plantings.
  - We will continue working with DCR to look at potential landscaping changes including the ideas of a second entrance and/or changes to the hedge around the garden.
  - We will request new signs for the rose garden to welcome and draw people into the garden.
- First steps for the Northampton Green section include:
  - Develop a planting plan for this section, including native plantings, and possibly a rock feature for a rock garden. Because there is limited access to water, plans will focus on native and drought-tolerant plants.
  - Meet with representatives from a local art school for brainstorming about public art options (for both spaces and elsewhere in the SWCP).
  - Outreach to the MBTA to discuss any planned enhancements to the space around the station.
  - A Saturday morning volunteer day later in the spring/summer.

### About PMAC and the SWCPC

*The Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) and the Southwest Corridor Park Conservancy (SWCPC) work together and seek to have a seamless organization to support volunteers and to support the park. SWCPC is the non-profit organization that can raise funds as well as coordinate volunteer activities, working in partnership with PMAC and the DCR. PMAC is the official advisory committee and is the forum for official community input and decision making. We share the same website and social media and overlapping email lists and work together on this and other projects. If you email [info@swcpc.org](mailto:info@swcpc.org) you will reach both groups.*

*This survey has focused on two garden spaces near Mass. Ave. where the South End, Back Bay, Roxbury and Fenway neighborhoods meet. We also have many projects along the five miles of the Southwest Corridor Park, including volunteer-led gardens in Jamaica Plain. Email [info@swcpc.org](mailto:info@swcpc.org) to be connected with any of our projects throughout the corridor.*