



**OFFICE OF THE  
CITY COUNCIL**

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**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HEMMING PLAZA SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES**

April 3, 2012  
12 p.m.

**Location:** Conference Room 3112, Ed Ball Building, 214 North Hogan Street

**In Attendance:** Jamie Hill, COJ Special Events; Don Robertson, COJ RWGM; Michelle Cook, JSO; Kelley Boree, COJ Parks and Recreation; Jim Baily, Bailey Publishing; Jason Teal, COJ OGC; Marilyn Allen, City Council; Ron Chamblin, Chamblin's Uptown; Jerry Moran, La Cena; Vikki Wilkins, The UPS Store; Steve Patterson, Florida Times-Union; Scott Wilson, COJ ECA District 4; Ava Barrell, Library; Tiffany Dailey, COJ Mayor's Office; Karen Nasrallah, JEDC; Dean Hinson, The Salvation Army; Emily Lisska, Jacksonville Historical Society; Sarah Ausherman OSE; and Amy Harrell, DVI.

**Meeting convened:** 1:30 p.m., March 30, 2012

Chair Kelley Buree called the meeting to order and began by discussing the final draft of the subcommittee's suggestions.

She began by addressing the permanent tables and chairs. Amy Harrell of DVI showed photographs and a chart of the permanent tables and chairs that are in need of repair. She noted that many of them are located near Laura Street. Those near the fountains also showed excessive rust. She expected that 15 to 20 sets of tables and chairs would need to be removed.

She suggested using temporary tables (24-inch) and chairs to augment those permanent ones that are removed. The temporary chairs would be set up between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and that a DVI employee would set them up as well as clean them after each use. Cost for the employee was estimated at \$30,000 and up to \$50,000 for the portable tables and chairs.

The committee voted to remove the damaged tables and chairs and use temporary tables and chairs in their place.

Parking on Monroe Street was the next topic. Ms. Buree said studies have shown that as many as eight and as few as three parallel parking spaces can be installed on Monroe Street. These spaces would have to encroach on park space as there is no room on Monroe Street itself for parking. Light poles would be a variable that would determine the exact number of spots. Business owners Vikki Wilkins and Jerry Moran advocated for short term (30 minute) meters.

The sub-committee voted in favor of adding the parking places.

On the subject of trees, arborist Don Robertson said that the Laurel Oaks are stressed and 6 to 7 trees need to be immediately removed.

Emily Lisska of the Historical Society was concerned about the removal of all of the trees and she wanted a statement in the report that addressed replacing trees.

A motion was made and passed to remove trees of concern as defined by the city arborist and install new trees as part of the overall park redevelopment.

Discussion then went on to address the question whether Hemming Plaza is a passive park or a walk through park. A variety of opinions were offered to the point that the Chair allowed a motion to reconsider the previously passed motion on the chairs and tables. This motion failed by a 6-4 vote. The original motion remained unchanged.

The sub-committee took up the question of placing short fencing around the planted areas as a way to keep people from standing or walking in these areas. A motion to install such fencing died due to a lack of a second.

Concerning the report that the sub-committee would present to the Ad Hoc Committee a motion was passed that emphasized that the recommendations of the sub-committee are to be considered short term solutions to the park and that the sub-committee recommends the implementation of a long-term plan that that contracts with a professional consultant that will create a new design for the park with input from the public.

The Chair notified the sub-committee that she will be unable to attend the next scheduled Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Both Terry Lorince and Amy Harrell of DVI also said they would be unable to attend. Karen Nasrallah of the JEDC volunteered to present the report.

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Dan Macdonald, ECA District 8.

Included:

Minutes

Sign-in Sheet

Recording

Photos of damaged tables and chairs

Chart of damaged tables and chairs

Final results of Hemming Plaza Survey

Draft of Hemming Plaza Sub-Committee Recommendations

# Hemming Plaza Ad Hoc Sub-Committee

## March 30, 2012

(Please print information)

Name	Business/COJ Department	Address	Phone	Email
Janice Hill	COJ Special Events	117 W Duval St Suite 280	680-3690	janiche@coj.net
Don Robertson	COJ RWM	ST Johns Bluff Rd	472-2952	DonR@coj.net
Michelle Cook	ISO	501 E. Bay St	424-4172	Michelle.Cook@jacksonville.com
Bellel Bone	COJ		955-7908	KBone@coj.net
Jim Budy	Bailey Publishing	6 W. Newland St	356-2446	JimB@coj.net
Jason Teal	COJ/DGC	117 W. Duval St. St 480	630-1087	JasonTeal@coj.net
Marilyn Allen	City Council	42	630-1409	MAllen@coj.net
Ron Chamblin	Chamblin's Optom	215 N. Laura St	477-0416	ronchamblin@coj.net
Jeery Means	LD CEN	211 N LAURA	633-9255	jeerymeans@coj.net
VIKI WILKINS	The UPS STORE	221 N. Hogan St	355-4190	VIKI@coj.net
Steve Peters	Fla. Theater Bureau	PO Box 1949 Jacksonville	359-9463	StevePeters@coj.net
Scott Wilson	City Council 4	111 West Duval St 425	630-1394	ScottWilson@coj.net
Ava Barrett	Library	303 N Laura Street	630-1989	ava@coj.net
Tiffany Dailley	COJ-Mayors Office		630-1273	Tdailley@coj.net
John Morrison	JEDC		630-2872	JohnM@coj.net
Dean Hinson	THE SAVANNAH ARMY	328 OCEAN ST.	309-4850	Dean.Hinson@army.mil
Emily Liska	Jacksonville Historical	317 A. Philip Randolph	665-0064	emilys@coj.net
Sarah Ausherman	OSE	117 W Duval Suite 280	430-3690	sarah@coj.net
Paul Haral	DVI	244 Hogan St #120	634-0308	PaulHaral@coj.net

### Hemming Plaza Sub-Committee Recommendations

The Council appointed committee to address Hemming Plaza design, chaired by CM Denise Lee, appointed an ad-hoc subcommittee on 1/19/12. The sub-committee was made up of local businesses surrounding Hemming Plaza and staffed by the Department of Parks & Recreation. The Sub-Committee met on 1/25/12, 2/8/12, 2/22/12, and 3/14/12 and 3/30/12 to discuss recommendations for improvements of Hemming Plaza. These recommendations are the consensus of the ad-hoc subcommittee and are not the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Lynden B. Miller mentions in her book *Parks, Plants, and People* that *beautifying your city brings environmental, social, and economic benefits. But to create successful public spaces you need energy, determination, and above all a belief in the powerful connection between people and nature.* Ms. Miller also continues to say *People respond to beautiful surroundings by respecting and protecting these places and by sharing this beauty with one another.*

Hemming Plaza is located across from City Hall in the heart of downtown Jacksonville. First established as a public square by the City's founder Isaiah D. Hart around 1857, it is Jacksonville's oldest park. Known first as City Park and then St. James Park, it was renamed Hemming Park in 1899 to honor Civil War veteran Charles C. Hemming, who donated the park's Confederate monument (the City's oldest and tallest) the previous year. At various times the park contained bandstands, fountains, comfort stations, and Tourist and Convention Bureau buildings, along with many beautiful trees. In 1978, the City converted the park into a brick-paved plaza, and completed additional work in 1986 that transformed the area into a single-level, pedestrian-oriented mall. Due to its centralized location, the plaza has long been a part of the downtown experiences for both tourists and local citizens.

More recently, JaxPride facilitated a charette in 2002. The summary sketch from the event is attached as **Exhibit A**. In 2006, CM Suzanne Jenkins initiated a master planning meeting discussing the fountain and redesign of the plaza. Meeting notes and sketches are attached as **Exhibit B**.

In 2009, the City contracted with HDR Engineering, Inc. to provide a conceptual design to improve the functionality of the space and enhance the user experience with landscape, paving, site furnishings and signage improvements within the eastern half of the plaza (improvements will include removal of the fountain located on the east side of the site, along Laura Street). The conceptual estimate of probable cost was \$545,862. The 60% preliminary design and cost estimate is attached as **Exhibit C**.

Committee Recommendations:

1. Complete a park usage survey. **Exhibit D**.
  - a. Target participants for the survey would include surrounding businesses, residents and neighborhoods and park users;
  - b. It is recommended to have an independent organization to complete the survey for park users;
  - c. DVI would do a survey on a survey monkey survey of surrounding business.

- Links would be ~~we~~ provided to the local businesses/restaurants for customer survey participation, as well as Downtown residents and surrounding neighborhoods. The library also linked the site from their website.
- COJ would ~~provided~~ survey link for employees to include JEA and the Public Defender's Office
- ~~Independent survey~~ should include numbers of people that decline the survey
- ~~DVI would do a survey monkey of surrounding~~
- ~~DVI would assist in identifying organizations to complete survey~~

2. Improvement recommendations:

- Close a portion of the park to complete short-term improvements
- Remove distressed trees and understory from planters. Replace mid-level bushes with ground cover and low growing plants. Keep healthy trees to maintain tree canopy.
- Replace with low growing plants
  - Identify local garden clubs to adopt-a-planter for installation and maintenance
    - The Garden Club of Jacksonville, Inc.  
1005 Riverside Avenue, Jacksonville  
(904)355-4224
    - Ribault Garden Club  
705 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North, Jacksonville Beach, FL  
(904)246-4641  
[www.ribaultgardenclub.org](http://www.ribaultgardenclub.org)
    - Mandarin Garden Club  
2892 Loretto Road, Jacksonville, FL  
(904)268-1192
    - Duval County Cooperative Extension Office  
Master Gardener Program  
(904)387-8902
    - The Florida Native Plant Society IXIA Chapter  
[bjack2804@ao.com](mailto:bjack2804@ao.com)
  - ~~Move benches to perimeter of park, eliminating~~Eliminate 'groupings' of benches and spread the benches throughout the park. – bBenches are bolted into pavers.
  - ~~The sub-committee was split on tables/chairs. Some prefer to remove all tables/chairs and replace with movable tables/chairs, some prefer to remove some in the NE corner of park and some prefer to leave them as-is.~~Replace broken tables and chairs with moveable furniture. Most broken/damaged tables and chairs are on the east side of the park. Keep existing permanent furniture that is in good condition (mostly on west side of the park).
    - Moveable tables and chairs are best practice in downtown and urban parks i.e. New York's Bryant Park, Atlanta's Woodruff Park and Houston's Market Square Park
    - While the maintenance is higher, they are usually worth the effort

- Existing tables and chairs are pedestal type secured in concrete and would cost approximately \$500 per set to remove includes labor & materials.
- Temporary chairs and tables should be utilized if all permanent tables and chairs are removed to replace any existing furniture that is removed.
  - i. Recommend DVI oversee utilization and storage of tables
  - ii. ~~Tables would be placed during lunch hours 11-2~~
  - iii. Recommend purchasing 30 tables and 100 chairs based on previous use of moveable furniture or amount equivalent to number of permanent tables and chairs that are removed due to damage. Exhibit E.
  - iv. Recommend purchasing furniture made of powder-coated steel with UV protection to maximize longevity. Aluminum furniture is not recommended due to increased theft probability.
  - v. Recommend light-weight furniture for ease of moving/storing
  - vi. Furniture Schedule
    - Furniture would be distributed, cleaned and stored daily in the park by a Downtown Ambassador.
    - Recommended hours: Monday – Friday from approximately 10:30am to 2:00pm, depending on use; weekends to be determined based on use; special events as needed
    - ~~Monday – Friday: Distribute furniture at 11am~~
    - Clean furniture after each use (as possible)
    - ~~Put furniture away at 1:30-2:00pm (depending on use)~~
    - ~~Saturday & Sunday: TBD depending on use of park on weekends (need to talk to Library/MOCA/surrounding businesses).~~ Recommend distributing only a few chairs during peak park hours until trend is developed
    - Events: Furniture available for event use w/ prior contact to DVI (to unlock prior to event and put away after event). City and security guard could also have keys to access for events, if needed, but they would be responsible for securing.
  - vii. Furniture Storage
    - Stack and lock (lengths of cable and padlocks) adjacent to planter with electrical boxes across the street from Dalton Agency
  - viii. Staffing
    - Approximately 30 hours per week (daily distribution, cleaning and storage). May increase depending on event demand.
    - Ambassador would be stationed in the park during the time the tables are out and would also be able to provide light cleaning (litter/graffiti removal, wiping fixtures & furniture) in the park during hours while chairs are distributed.

- Staffing Cost: \$29,795 annually (including 30 hours/week Ambassador coverage, cleaning materials, light equipment, management & supervision)
- 3. Recommended to increase the Hope Team presence
- 4. Mental Health Resource Center has offered to provide outreach services in the park
- 5. Overwhelming response of increasing JSO presence or utilize outside security firm within the park
  - a. Prefer outside security firm as officers would be assigned to park and not be pulled to other assignments
  - b. JSO agreed to increase active role
  - c. Police and/or security should mingle and talk with visitors
  - d. Hours of increased presence would be 7am – 7pm, seven days per week
  - e. If JSO was present, decided no need for installing camera, but would like to investigate views of current building cameras and review in six months
- 6. There were no recommendations to changing the existing park rules
- 7. Cleaning – improve regular maintenance in the park to include litter removal, pressure washing, etc.

7.8. Programming

- a. Implement lunch time programming
- b. Requires additional staff to manage scheduling and set up – staff cost would be approximately \$30,000 plus benefits.
- c. Improve PA system in park
- d. Local schools utilize stage area for lunch time performances
- e. Local artist utilize park areas for demonstrations or art classes
- f. Allow MOCA to have outdoor exhibits within park
- g. Allow library to have reading/programming in park
- h. Encourage businesses to have staff luncheons in areas of the park
- i. Encourage surrounding businesses to encourage coffee breaks/meetings in the park
- j. Encourage running clubs, etc. to have expos within the park
- k. Consider ‘food trucks’ and higher quality food vendors
- l. Market park activities to attract positive use and encourage organizations to plan additional third-party events in the park

9. Long term – implement HDR design for east side of park

8.10. Schedule

- a. Recommendation plan completion ..... March 2012
- b. Council and Administration acceptance ..... April 2012
- c. Council identifies/appropriates funding ..... June 2012
- d. Close plaza for renovation (Short term) ..... July 2012
- e. Renovation & Clean up (Short term)..... August 2012
- f. Opening Ceremony (Short term) ..... September 2012
  
- g. Complete design (Long term)..... September 2012
- h. Close plaza for renovation (Long term) ..... January 2013

- i. Renovation (Long term) ..... July 2013
- j. Opening Ceremony (Long term) ..... August 2013

9.11. Cost Overview

Short Term – one-time costs:

a. Outside agency survey of park users .....	\$3,500
b. Remove NE corner tables (~12) .....	\$6,000
c. Remove all broken/damaged tables/chairs (~37).....	\$18,500
d. Purchase movable tables & chairs .....	\$50,000
e. Relocate benches .....	existing staff
f. Remove distressed trees (~20) .....	\$18,000
g. Remove & replace planter material (annually).....	\$20,000
h. Repair planter borders .....	\$2,000
i. Program/scheduling/marketing staffing.....	\$40,000
j. Programming expenses.....	\$60,000
k. Maintenance staff.....	\$30,000
.....	
DVI staffing for tables/chairs.....	\$29,795
<b>Total: \$94,500</b>	

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Short Term – annual costs:

a. Remove & replace planter material (annually).....	\$20,000
h. Program/scheduling/marketing staffing.....	\$40,000
i. Programming expenses.....	\$60,000
j. Maintenance staff.....	\$30,000
k. DVI staffing for tables/chairs .....	\$29,795
.....	
<b>Total: \$179,795</b>	

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Long Term – one-time costs:

a. Finalize existing conceptual design .....	\$92,820
b. Construction Estimate.....	\$546,000
c. Remove remaining trees (~12).....	\$10,800
d. ....	
.....	
<b>Total: \$649,620</b>	

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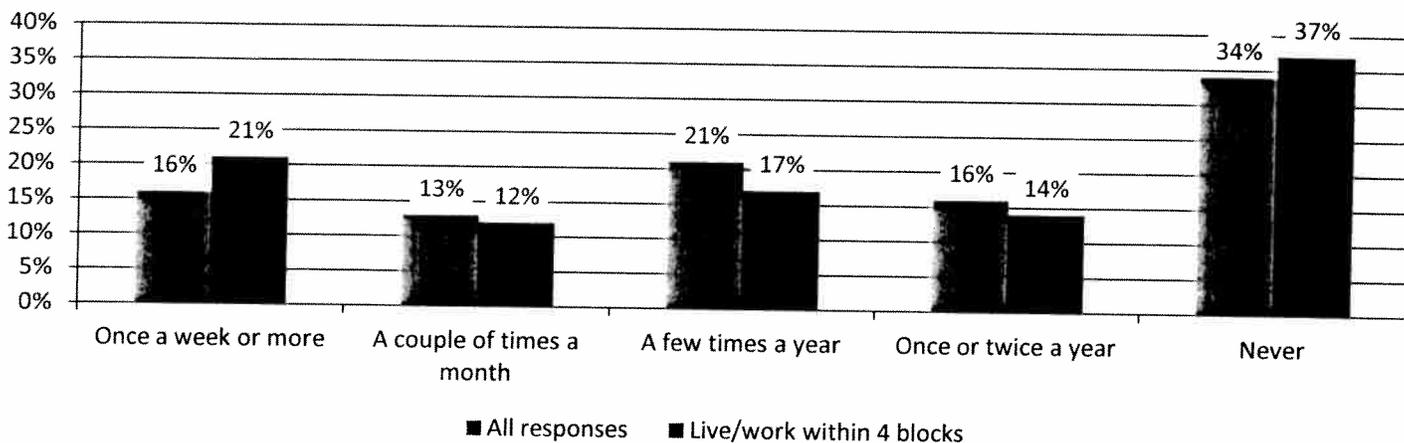
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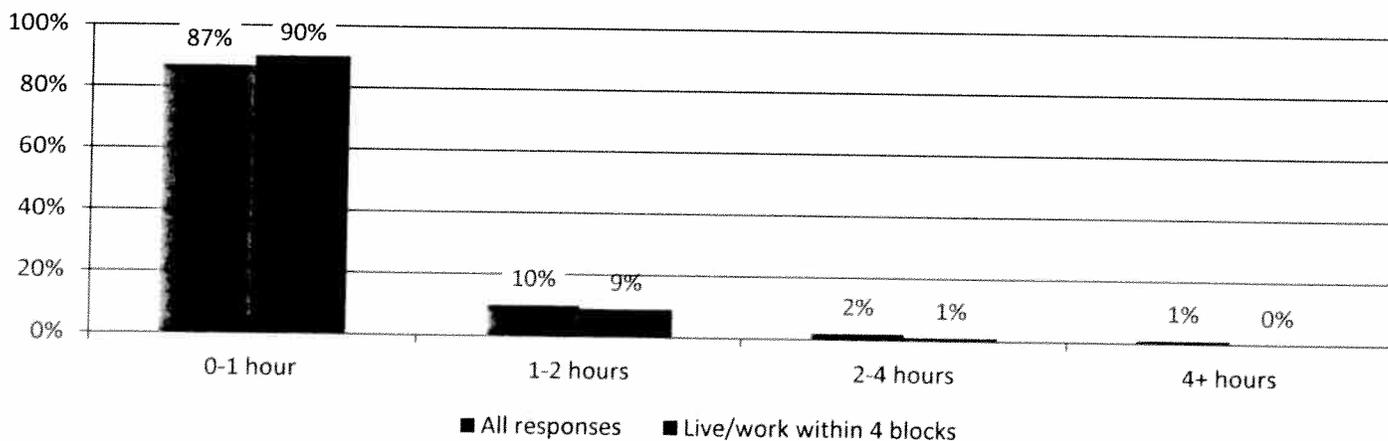
**Hemming Plaza Survey**  
**Final Results**  
**3/28/2012**

<b>Methodology:</b>	See Attachment A
<b>Total responses:</b>	1,654
<b>Total completed surveys:</b>	1,424 (answered all questions)
<b>Total living/working within 4 blocks:</b>	858 (60% of completed surveys)
<b>Range of error:</b>	+/- 4.9% or 95% level of confidence

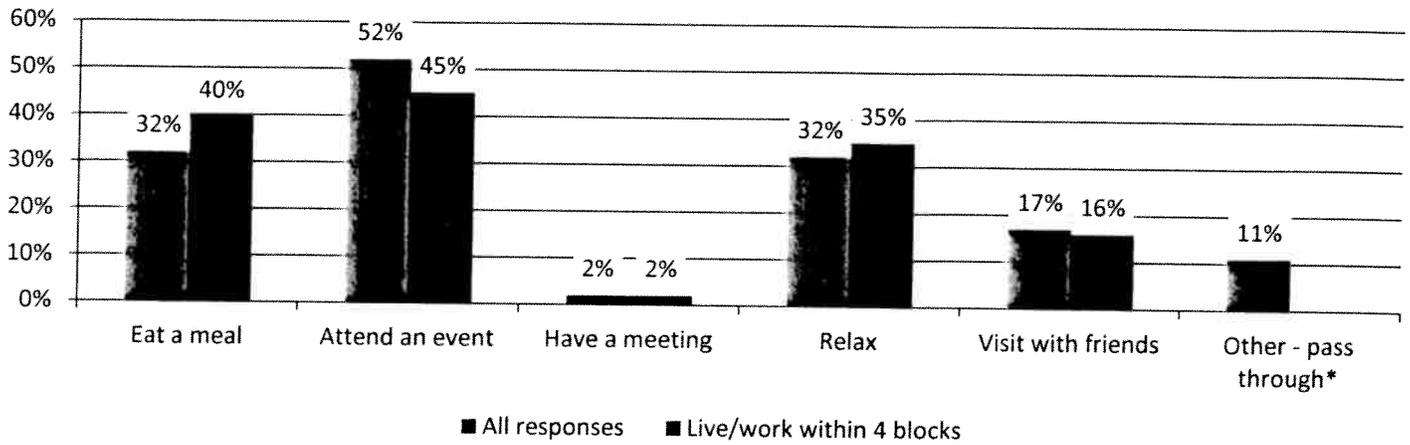
**1. How often do you visit Hemming Plaza (other than walking through the park on your way to another destination)?**



**2. When you visit the park, how long do you generally spend in the park?**



### 3. What do you do when you visit the park?

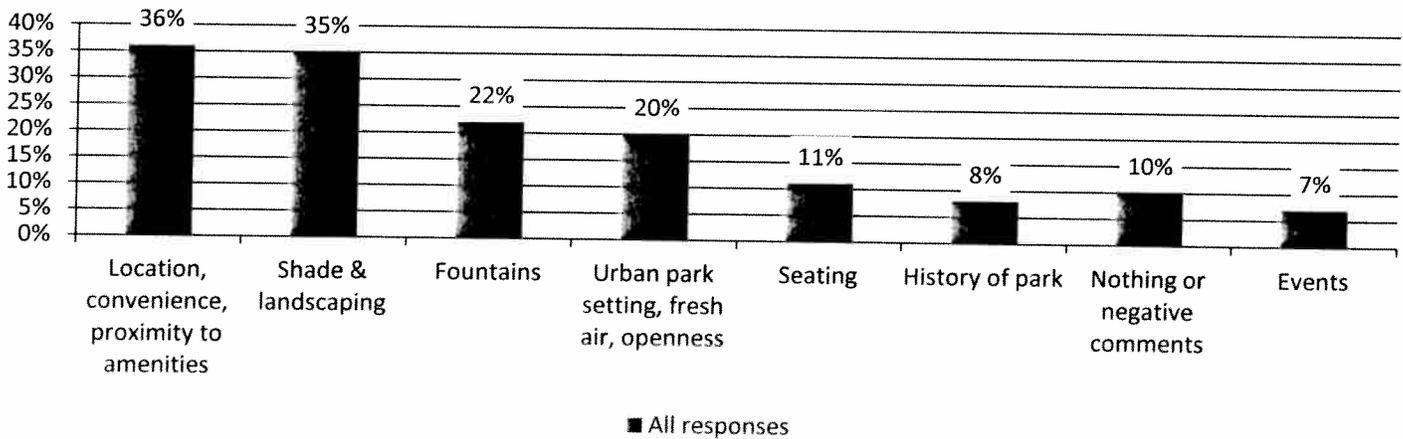


\* "Other" responses not cross tabbed by location.

#### Highlights of "other" responses:

Wait for ride, read, work, attend event, attend protest or rally, exercise, tours or sightseeing, take photos, walk dogs, access Skyway, building evacuation point, patronize vendors, bring children to play, feed homeless, walk around, pray, talk to people in the park.

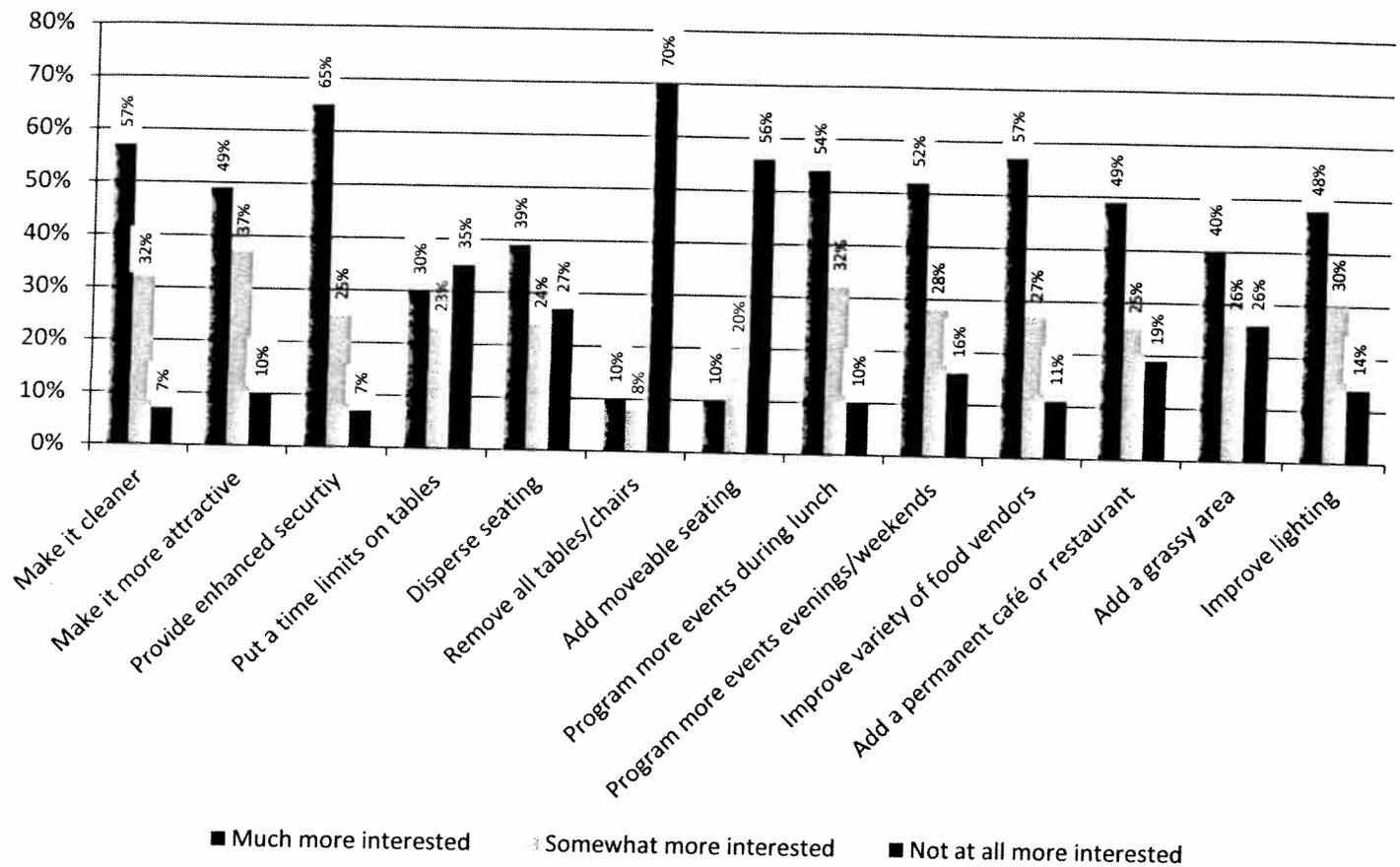
### 4. What do you like about the park? (open-ended question; 872 responses)



#### Highlights of "other" comments (less than 5% of comments):

Statues, police, vendors, meeting place, stage, people watching, peaceful.

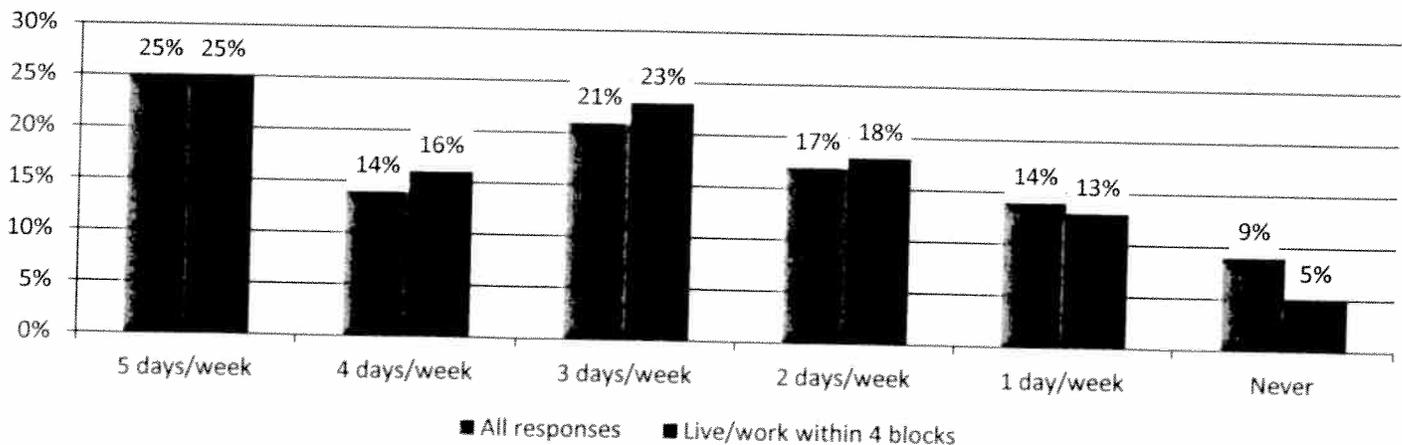
**5. Please indicate whether the following improvements would make you more interested in visiting Hemming Plaza.**



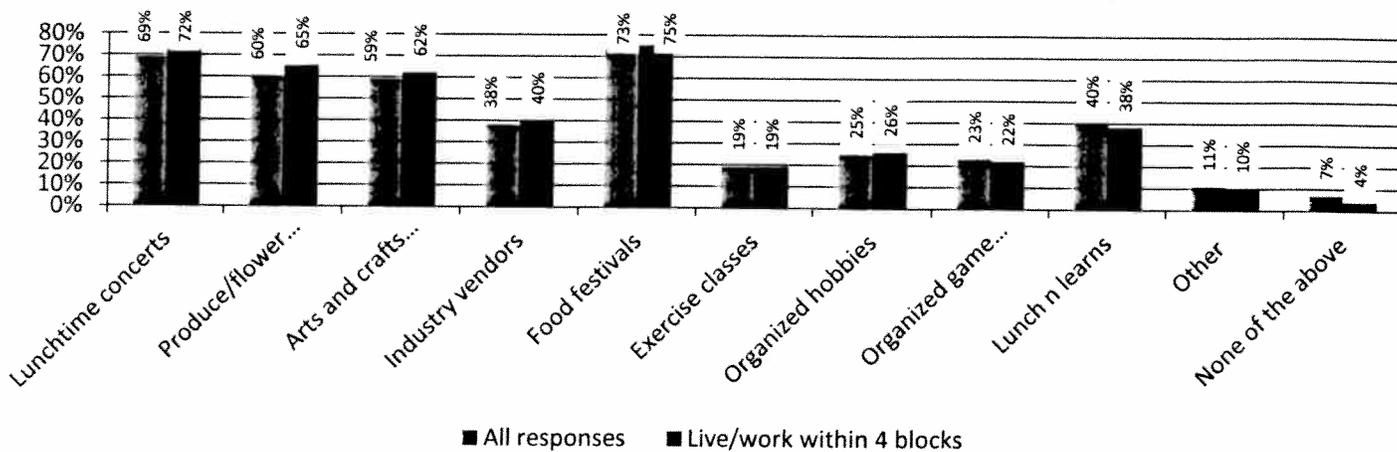
**Highlights of "other" responses: (523 responses)**

- 76% of "other" responses were related to removing the existing people and disruptive behavior from the park.
- Other responses that were not already listed in the chart above include:  
 Banning smoking, food trucks, keeping all the tables, adding more tables, keeping the trees, turning off the electricity, adding public restrooms, turning the fountains on all day, adding parking, opening a daytime resource center, removing the pavers, closing the roads around the park, adding a playground/children's activities, making the stage bigger, adding dog water fountains, adding wifi, adding emergency call boxes, creating better signage to direct people to the park and adding more businesses and cafes to the buildings surrounding the park.

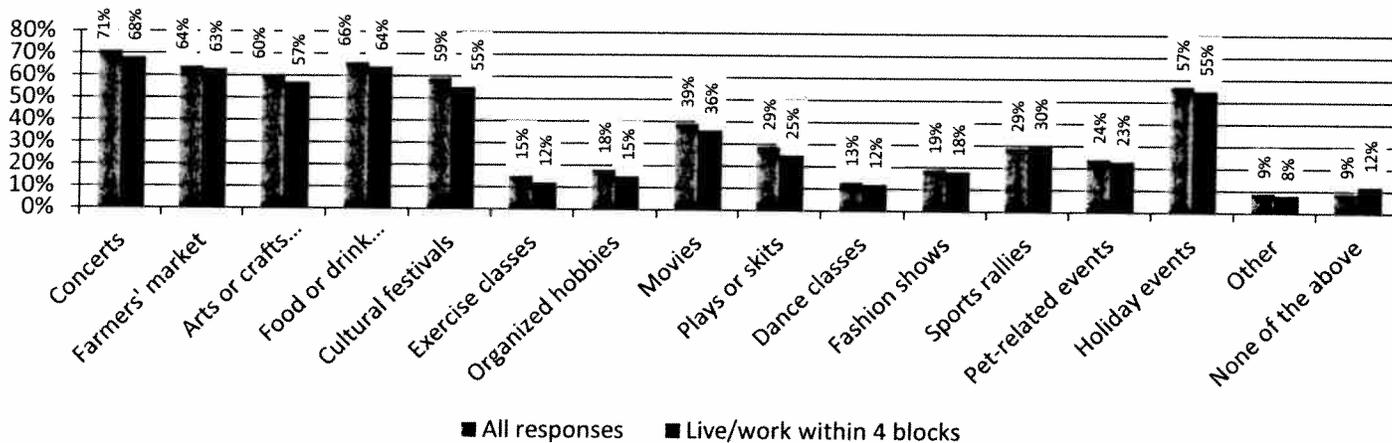
**6. On average, how many days per week do you leave your office for lunch?**



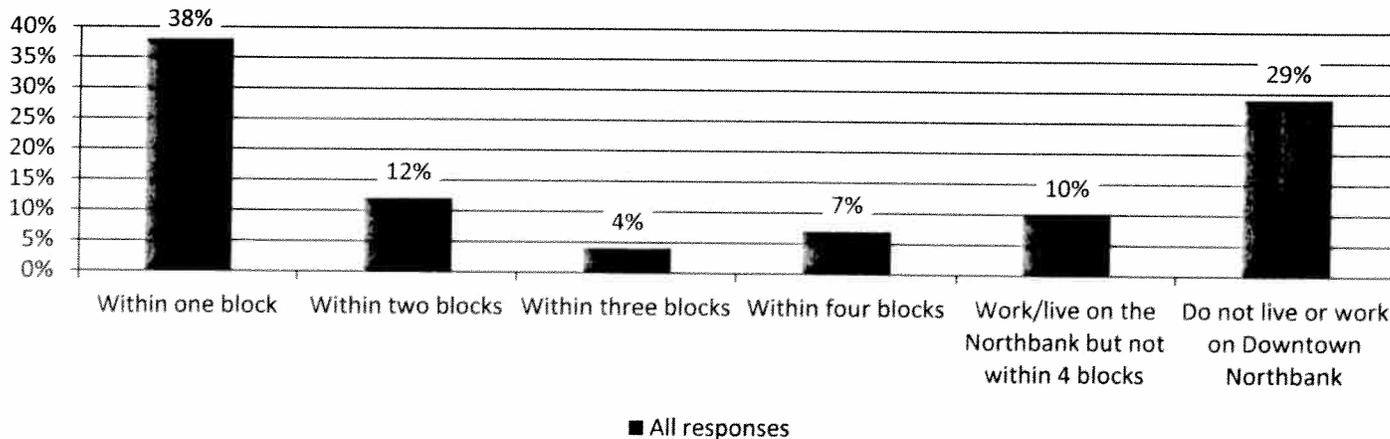
**7. What types of free events or activities would you be likely to attend at a Downtown park during your lunch break?**



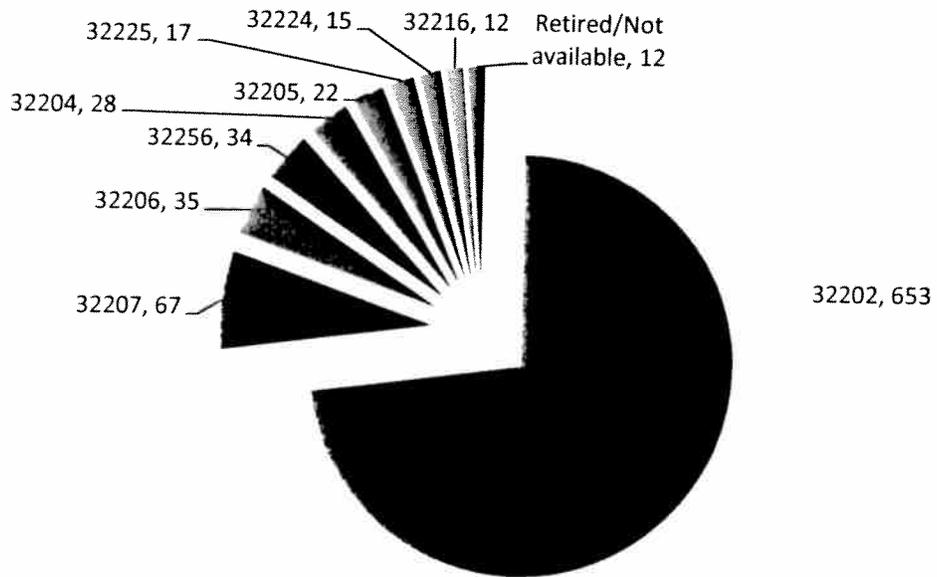
**8. What types of free events or activities would you be likely to attend at a Downtown park in the evenings or on weekends?**



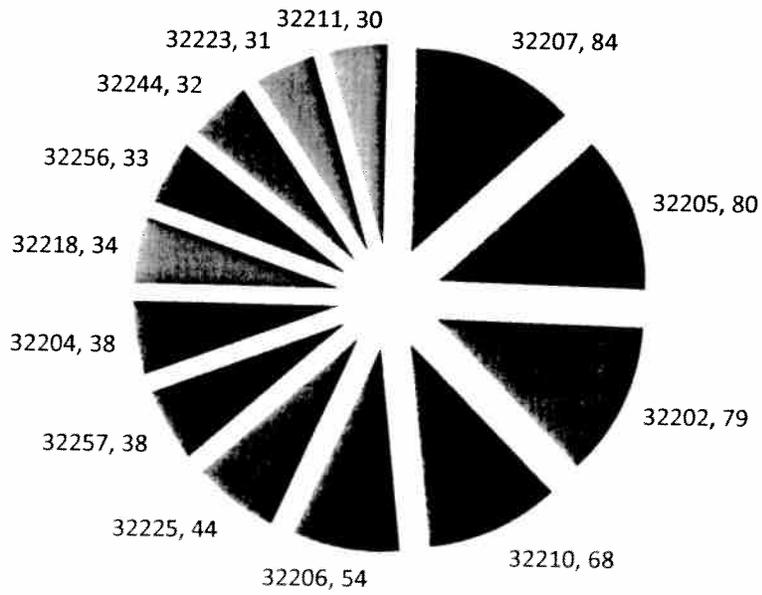
**9. Please indicate how close you work and/or live to Hemming Plaza.**



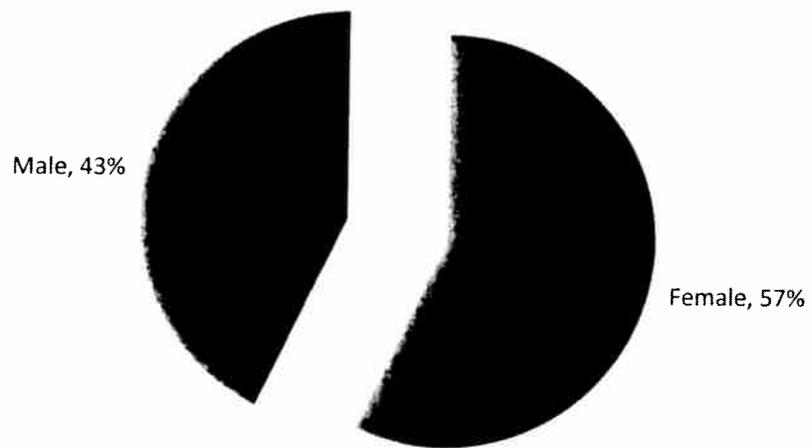
10. Work zip codes (receiving 10+ responses)



11. Home zip codes (receiving 30+ responses)



## 12. Gender



## 13. Age range

