

Creating the Future of Golf Manor Parks Together

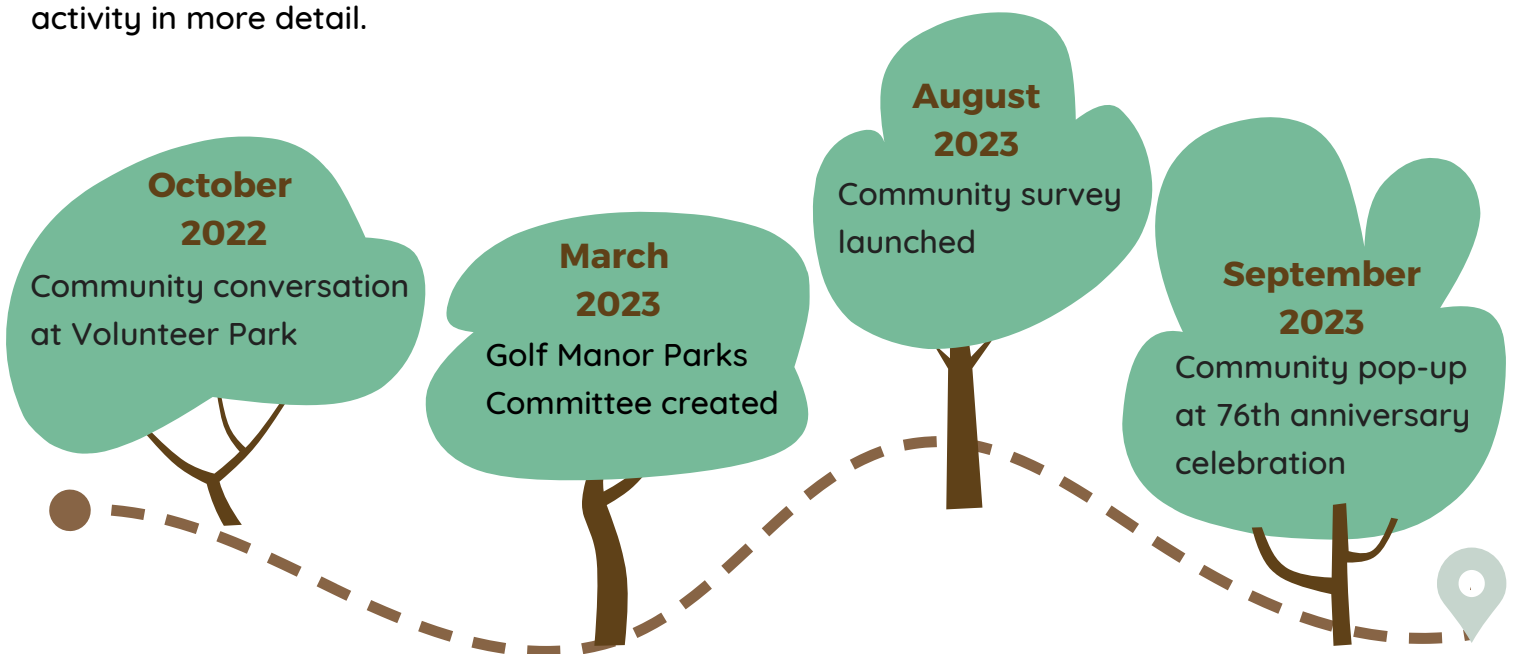
Key insights from community listening sessions

Introduction

Between Fall 2022 and Fall 2023, leadership within the Golf Manor Village hosted several opportunities for gathering community input on the village parks. The purpose of this process was to document past successes of the parks, identify community barriers or needs to access, and chart a new direction for the future of the parks within the village: Volunteer Park & Veterans Park. This document summarizes key steps within the process and findings from community listening sessions.

Timeline of Activities

Several opportunities for gathering community input were hosted by the Golf Manor Community Engagement Committee and the Golf Manor Parks Committee. Sections that follow describe each activity in more detail.



Key Insights from Community Conversation at Volunteer Park

In October 2022, the Golf Manor Community Engagement Committee hosted a community conversation for residents to share their perspectives on the Golf Manor parks, focused on documenting past successes and identifying barriers or needs to accessing the parks.

The conversation included:

10 Community Residents

3 Village Representatives

1 Facilitator
(Community Resident)

Participants described the value and impact of Golf Manor parks

Residents reflected on the recent and prior successes of the Golf Manor parks, and their added value to the community. The following themes and topics emerged from the discussion:



The parks are a beautiful & welcoming gathering space.

Residents shared that the parks are a nice area for families to enjoy and can serve as an important gathering space for the community. The park was also described as well-maintained, convenient, clean, safe, and welcoming.



Recent community events are valued.

Residents shared appreciation for recent celebrations and events hosted in the Golf Manor parks, such as: 4th of July, Juneteenth, 75th Anniversary, live music, and circus performances. Residents described that these community events are well attended.



The park has important features.

Residents shared the value of the recently updated play equipment and the picnic areas in Volunteer Park. Some also commented that they "love the greenspace."



Past successes of the park are remembered.

Residents reflected on past events and features of the parks, and their importance for bringing the community together, including the community pool, basketball, and tee-ball.

Participants identified barriers to overcome

Although residents valued the existing park spaces, they also shared some barriers that limit the use of Golf Manor parks, including:

Limited accessibility

Some residents shared that the park is not fully accessible to all community members. Improved access and parking for people with different physical abilities are needed.

Not aligned with current lifestyle

Some residents shared that the parks are not relevant to them or their current needs. For example, some shared that they don't have children or enough opportunity to use the parks.



Participants began to envision the future of Golf Manor parks

Within the community conversation, residents shared collective visions of ways the parks can be enhanced to better serve village residents. The following ideas emerged from the discussion:

More opportunities to gather in the parks

Residents desired more events and activities within the parks, such as group meet-ups, sports teams or leagues, festivals, or shared learning.

Enhanced physical features & equipment

Residents would like to see new enhancements to the park to make the space more enjoyable.

Improved information & decision-making

Residents desired improved communications and engagement opportunities to promote park usage, such as how to rent the space, a calendar of events or community board.

Golf Manor Parks Committee was formed

In response to the emerging community interest in the parks, the Golf Manor Community Parks Committee was formed in Spring 2023. The group was launched to build on the findings of the community conversation and explore new directions for the future.

Together, the group co-created a vision for the committee:

The purpose of the Golf Manor parks committee is to provide park improvement recommendations to promote gathering, collaboration, and unity within our community while considering the diversity, equity, and inclusion of all people.

From Spring to Fall 2023, the committee hosted several meetings to plan additional opportunities for community engagement opportunities including a community survey and pop-up event. The committee also aimed to identify further needs that should be addressed.

Key Insights from the Community Survey & Pop-up Event

In summer of 2023, the Golf Manor Parks Committee launched a community survey and pop-up event for residents share their perspective on potential park enhancements.

Responses included:

95 Residents participated in the online survey

10 Residents participated in the newsletter survey

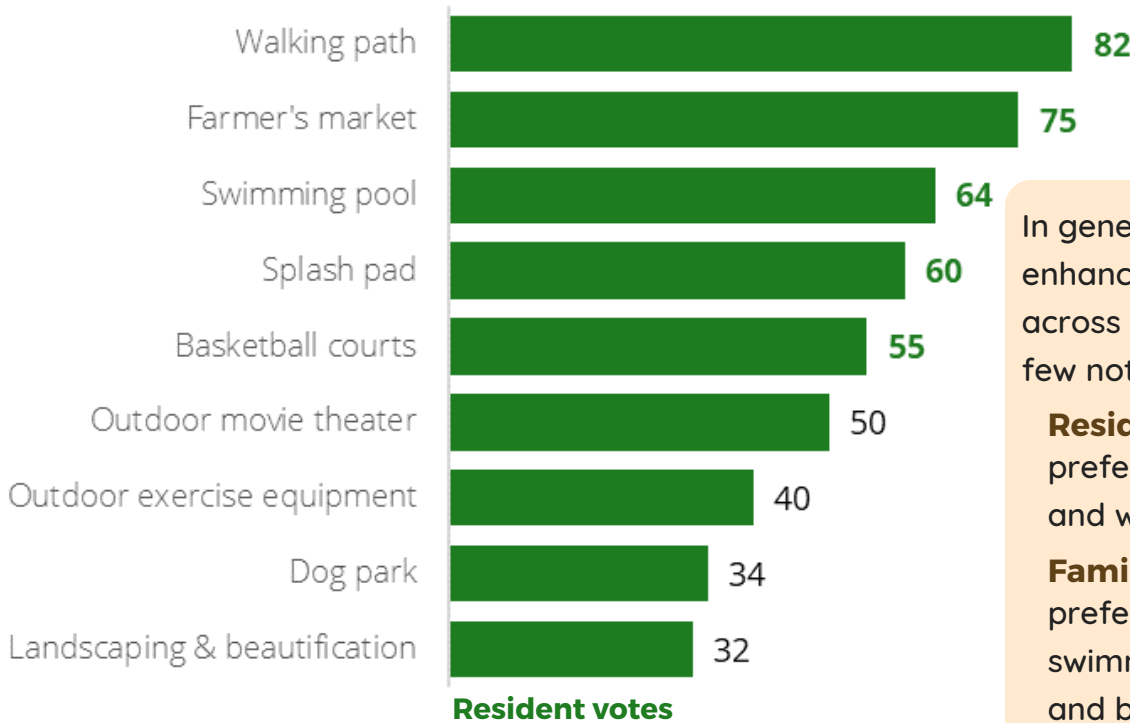
50 Residents participated in the pop-up event



Understanding the needs of the community

Both the community survey and pop-up event was an opportunity to gather resident input on the top five enhancements they would most like to see within the village. Among the total 155 residents that participated, several priority improvements were identified - the figure below shows the top responses.

Top voted park enhancements focus on opportunities for play, movement, and connection within the community.



In general, the top voted enhancements were consistent across participant groups. A few noted differences included:

Residents aged 65+ preferred farmer's market and walking path.

Families with children preferred walking path, swimming pool, splash pad, and basketball courts.

Participants were also able to share additional insights that could inform the future of the parks. A few themes emerged from these responses, including:

Many people shared the importance of improved bathrooms.

More accessibility during regular park hours/events and a gender neutral option were requested.

Young people would like opportunities to play football.

Within the community pop-up event, several young people added this option.

Improving general maintenance and security would have a big impact.

Park flooding, vandalism, litter were all raised as barriers that impact park usage.

Together, these results from several community engagement efforts can help shape a future of Golf Manor parks that meet the needs of the entire community, as described by a youth resident:

"[A] place where people [can] play, have fun, relax, and be happy."