



# Bennie Hargrove Park Plan

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*Prepared by*

**RANA**   
RAYNOLDS ADDITION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



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*Section 1*

# INTRODUCTION



Bennie Hargrove Park is the neighborhood park for the Reynolds Addition Neighborhood. It is located at the northeast corner of 10th & Park Ave SW. It is adjacent to Washington Middle School and is owned by Albuquerque Public Schools and managed by the Parks & Recreation department.

In 2002, 135 students from Washington Middle School participated in a project to create tiles for the iconic pillars that now stand at the entrance to the park. This project brought families and neighbors together and made the connections between the park and the school and neighborhood even stronger.

Recently, the Reynolds Addition Neighborhood Association (RANA) has decided to focus on activating the park. Our goal is to encourage more people of all ages to use the park throughout the day. We think this will improve the quality of life for the neighborhood and take full advantage of our beautiful park.

Last year, with the use of a Popup Park grant from the Parks and Recreation department, we held five family-friendly events throughout the year to bring people to the park. In addition, we have held our annual National Night Out event in the park for the past four years. We also hold our summer monthly meetings in the park.

In May of 2023, the park was renamed in honor of Bennie Hargrove, a student at Washington Middle School.

In September of 2023, Parks and Recreation fulfilled our long-standing request for a dog park as another way to increase usage of the park. This has been a great success and heavily used by the neighborhood.



*Section 2*

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

The park currently has plentiful green grass and many large shade trees. In May of 2023, the Parks and Recreation department removed several older trees and added seven new trees. In the center of the park is a playground geared toward young children. There are two trash cans in the park. In the southwest quadrant there is a concrete structure and a hill that create a type of amphitheater that is convenient for holding meetings and musical events. The concrete structure is good for playing games on.

There is a paved walkway that circles the playground area. There is a bench along the sidewalk placed to honor Bennie Hargrove. There are two picnic tables near the playground area.

There is now a small dog park in the southwest corner of the park between the fence surrounding Washington Middle School and the sidewalk.





*Existing conditions continued*

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## *Strengths*

- Large grassy areas
- Large shade trees
- Amphitheater-like structure
- Dog park
- Easy access for the neighborhood

## *Weaknesses*

- Interior of the park is not well lit
- Lighting is not pleasant after dark
- The playground is outdated
- Trash often litters the ground
- Trash cans often become full
- No place to sit near the sidewalk

## *Opportunities*

- The park is adjacent to a middle school.
- The park is adjacent to a large apartment complex.

## *Threats*

- Perceived danger after dark
- Perceived lack of maintenance



Dog park (left) and main park (right) at night.



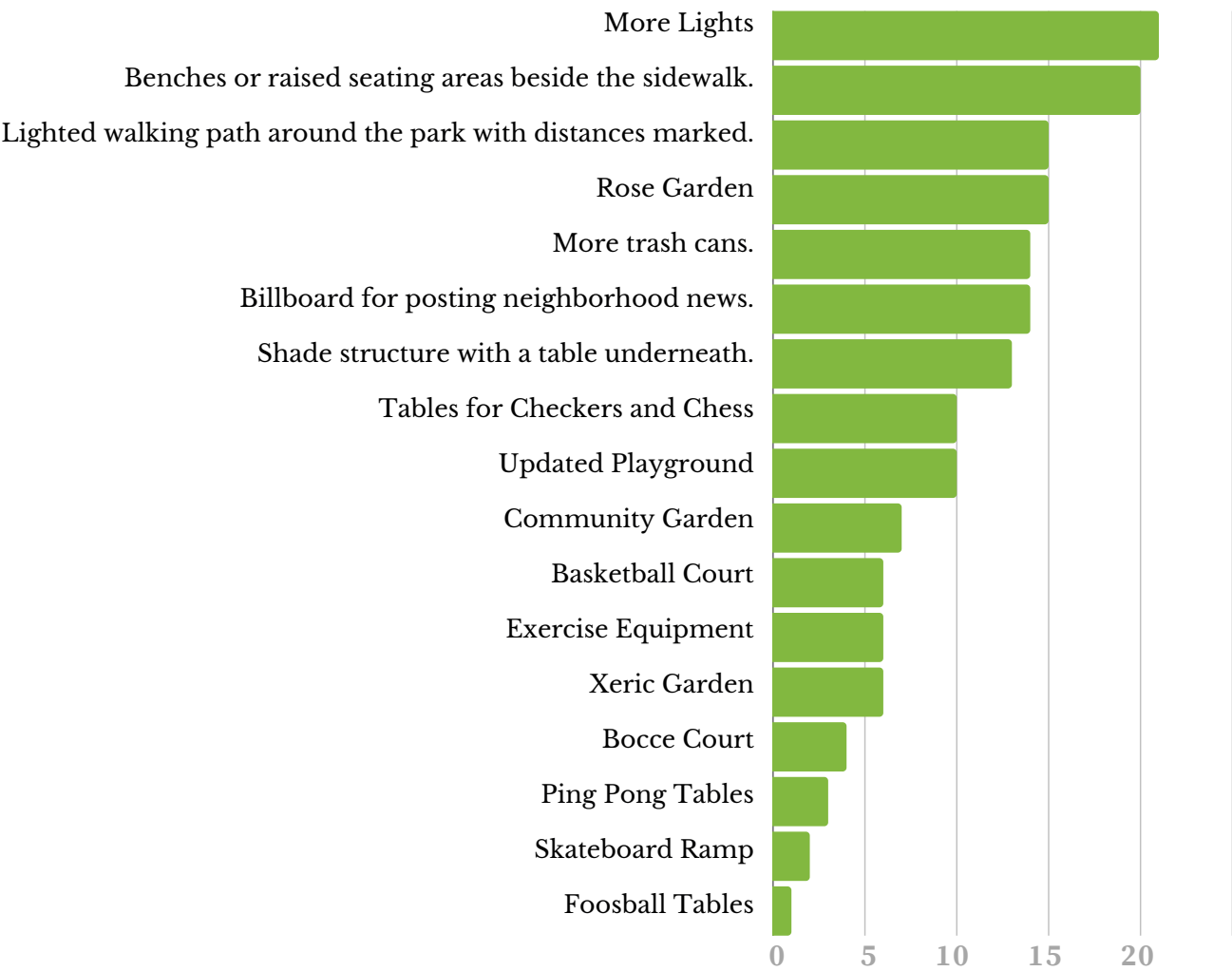
Section 3

RESULTS

We have discussed upgrades we would like to see at the park at various meetings throughout the past year. We used ideas from those discussions to create a Mailchimp survey, which we sent to over 350 subscribers to our email newsletter. The survey asked responders to pick their top three choices for upgrades from the list or to suggest a new one. We received 40 responses, including eight written comments.

These survey results were subsequently discussed at our December 2023 monthly meeting to answer questions and receive more feedback. We also presented a draft of this presentation at our January 2024 meeting to receive feedback and to make sure we were representing the views of the neighborhood.

The choices and number of responses are below:





Survey Results Continued

WRITTEN COMMENTS

<p>Small <b>skateboard park</b>, I always see skateboarders on the concrete stage in the middle of the park.</p>	<p><b>Volleyball court, more flowers, community info board</b> with resources for the <b>homeless</b> as well, more <b>picnic tables</b> dispersed around the park. Definitely more <b>trash cans!</b></p>
<p>I really like it currently with the dead trees removed. <b>The view</b> looking east along Central Ave is spectacular. I hope the grass can remain in the <b>dog park</b>.</p>	<p>Something like at <b>Mary Fox Park</b> with benches and covering for shade with plants and trellises would be cool.</p>
<p>Plants that grow well here with low water. <b>Native plants</b>, including ones for native pollinators, throughout the park. Certify it as an ABQ Backyard Refuge! <a href="https://friendsofvalledeoro.org/abq-backyard-refuge/">https://friendsofvalledeoro.org/abq-backyard-refuge/</a></p>	<p>Also, a shed for borrowing supplies to use outdoors and return (sports, hiking, gardening)."</p>
<p>If there is a way to have more trash cleanup throughout the park, that would be so great. The amount of leftover food on the ground in the last few months has made it hard to come here with my dogs. This may be an ignorant/naive thing to include in here as I don't know who handles the cleanup - or maybe that's something we all need to pitch in on - but this has been the main reason I've stopped using this great neighborhood park. Though I do love the new dog park addition and try to go there as often as possible (so far there's been less trash within the fenced area). Thank you for wanting to upgrade our wonderful neighborhood &lt;3</p>	



*Results Continued***WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

*"Our middle schoolers love basketball, soccer, and sitting around with friends... We need to ensure we can see all areas of the park to be able to keep kids safe."*

MODESTA Y. HERANDEZ, PRINCIPAL, WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Student Comments*

Jacqueline Saucedo Olivares, Parent Liaison at Washington Middle School, asked students in one classroom what they would like to see at the park.

Students expressed interest in the following:

- Basketball Court
- Soccer Field
- Book Stall
- Skateboard Area
- Picnic Tables
- Exercise Equipment





## Section 4

# RECOMMENDATIONS



Our goal is to enhance the lives of the neighborhood members by providing an amenity they can use often. Our results indicate that our neighbors would be more likely to use the park if there were increased lighting, more trash pickup and more diverse recreational opportunities they would use on a frequent basis and that encourage interaction between neighbors. A park that can be used at various times throughout the day by different ages of people and for different activities is a safe park and a true asset to the neighborhood.

### OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Seating near sidewalk.

Add benches or raised seating areas along the outer perimeter of the park next to the sidewalk and in the dog park. This would encourage an eyes-on-the-street environment. It also encourages the use of the park as a meeting spot. In addition, many students from Washington Middle School use the corner across the park on the southwest corner of 10th & Park to hang out and wait for parents to pick them up. They appear to choose that location rather than the park because there are low walls on that corner for sitting and chatting together. There is also a hard surface for skateboarding. It is also highly visible from the street and thus safer.

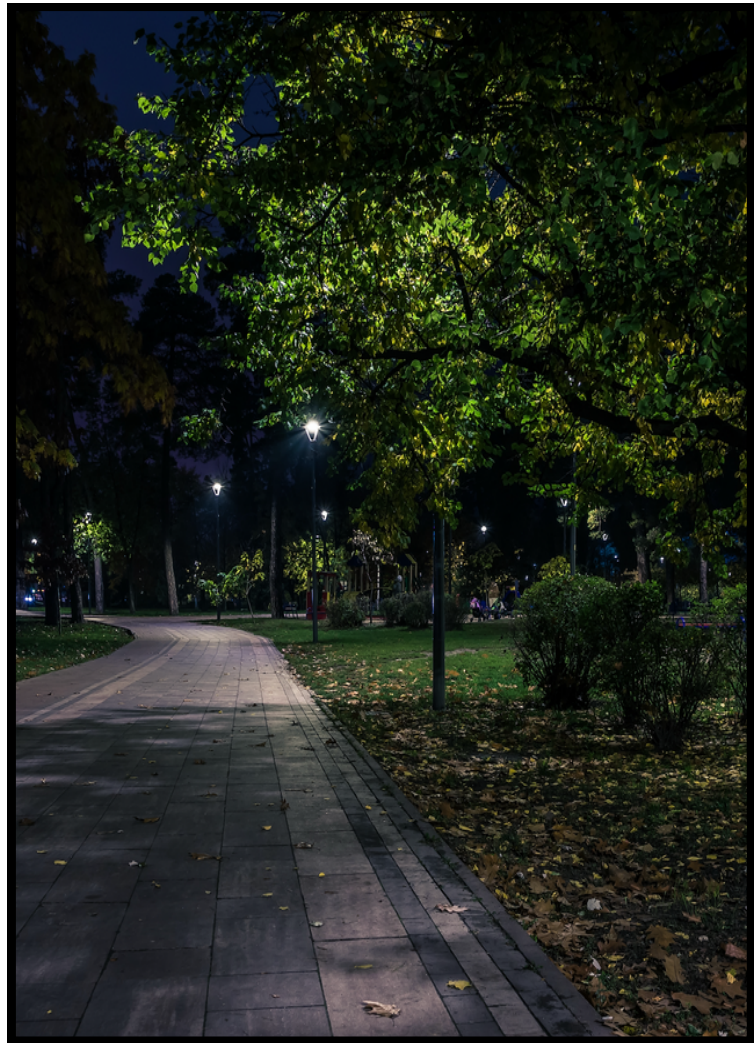


*Example of a seating node near a sidewalk.*



## More lighting

The park is extremely dark after the sun sets. There are bright street lights along the back fence of the park, but there are no other interior lights. There are also no street lights on the corner of the park at 10th and Park. The nearest streetlight is set back from the intersection of 10th and Park to the south along 10th about 100 feet. The result is that even from the side walk, the interior of the park is very dark after the sun sets, which is around 5:30pm in the winter. There is also no lighting around the dog park even though it is open until 10pm. We recommend a set of lamp posts throughout the park that are dimmer than street lights and which make a pleasant and safe environment after dark. These lights would ideally also comply with New Mexico dark sky initiatives. Possible locations for the lamp posts could be around a walking path and around the dog park.



*A park interior illuminated at night.*

## Lighted walking path

A walking path would encourage use of the park at many times during the day, including morning, noon, and evening. A path would also circulate people through much of the park, thus maintaining more activity throughout the park, and more eyes on the park. Lighting of the path would encourage use even after dark during the winter and provide lighting throughout the park. Marking distances on the path would encourage people who want to walk a certain distance each time.



*Distance markers on a walking trail.*



## Shade Structure

Shade structures encourage use of the tables even during the summer. Adding tables with shade structures or adding shade structures to the existing tables would encourage more use of the park, especially during the summer.

## Trash Upkeep

Trash is often littered throughout the park. We often have to walk around and pick up trash before we hold meetings or events in the park. There are two trash cans in the park, but sometimes they are filled to overflowing. Litter discourages use of the park in general because it is unpleasant and makes the park look unmaintained. It also makes parents reluctant to bring their children to the park. We recommend either adding more trash cans or increasing litter pickup.

## Rose Garden

A rose garden or cacti in the back northwest corner of the park would provide a pleasant environment and reduce use of the back corner for illicit use.

## Billboards for Neighborhood News

A billboard for posting neighborhood news would enhance communication between neighbors and increase general neighborhood activities. Our current neighborhood sign, which is across the street, is a closed, locked box and thus cannot be used for posting events by members of the neighborhood. We recommend a neighborhood-style bulletin board for posting papers and posters.



*A shade structure at Mary Fox Park.*



*A small flower garden in League City, TX*



*Example of a new bulletin board.*



## *Recommmendations continued*

### Collaboration with Washington Middle School

Bennie Hargrove Park is technically part of the grounds of Washington Middle School and is owned by Albuquerque Public Schools. There is a historical collaboration between the school and the park.

The grounds of Washington Middle School already contain basketball hoops, a soccer field and a track. In fact, a sign posted on the fence outside the school field that states that the property is an APS Joint Use Park with the city. We could leverage the facilities at the school and increase its benefit to the students and to the neighborhood if the school grounds were accessible outside of school hours. We thus would not need to burden the park with improvements that already exist on the school property next door.

We recommend making the school field grounds accessible to the general public outside of school hours.



*Recommmendations continued*

**Site Plan**







## CONCLUSION

We welcome the opportunity to make our beautiful park even better and even more of an asset to the Reynolds Addition neighborhood and to people visiting from other parts of the city or from out of town. Bennie Hargrove Park is also one of the two parks closest to the downtown core.

We look forward to partnering with the city and the Parks and Recreation Department to achieve our goals. We thank the city and the Parks and Recreation Department for meeting with us to discuss our options and figuring out how we can make Bennie Hargrove Park a model for other successful neighborhood parks.