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KULPMONT POCKET PARK SURVEY RESULTS



For the Borough of Kulpmont

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Introduction

The borough of Kulpmont and Kulpmont-based organizations are actively engaged in a range of projects and initiatives that both spur community engagement and further revitalization efforts. One such example is in the continued improvements to Veterans Memorial Park. Despite such efforts, there is community interest in increasing greenspace and parks within the borough.

The need for green space is important, as such assets provide an outlet for residents to rest, increase social interactions among community members, and reduce stress. Not only do parks improve the well-being of the general community, but they also aid the landscape by incorporating plants and other types of biodiversity that enhances the environment. One way to include these spaces is through the reclamation of vacant lots.

Kulpmont has numerous abandoned lots and buildings, but a notable one lies on the 900 block of Chestnut Street. These spaces are underutilized and offer potential for revitalization. By reclaiming these lots, the borough can turn them into beneficial spaces for the entire community to enjoy. The current property owner intends to convert these two adjacent vacant lots (totaling 9,000 square feet) into a neighborhood asset, with community input. Through community outreach and engagement, it is possible to design a neighborhood park that can be a resource for recreation, community socializing, and a demonstration of ecological projects like native plants and/or community food gardens.

A survey was conducted to begin the process of understanding community preferences with amenities and design for the double vacant lot on the 900 block of Chestnut Street. The results show that there is community interest in developing this lot as a neighborhood asset, and that families with young children and households without children do have different preferences as to design and amenities.

What do you think is the most important issue that needs to be addressed in Kulpmont?

"Taking down condemned and vacant structures and then proper revitalization of those vacant lands."

Community Outreach

A survey was conducted in order to understand how residents view Kulpmont generally, and what amenities specifically they'd like to see in a park. The survey was open from mid-November 2022 to January 1, 2023, and distributed through social media and community fliers yielding a total of 85 respondents. The majority of respondents have lived in Kulpmont more than 15 years, with a fairly even distribution between households with and without children living at home (see Table 1). The majority of respondents were women (63%), and the majority were also less than 45 years old (59%). In addition to this survey, an interactive community feedback strategy was conducted to gain additional comments on the proposed park. Please see Addendum 1 for the findings from this interactive strategy.

Table 1: Household Demographics

Length of Residency	
Less than 15 years	36%
More than 15 years	64%
Children	
No children living at home	52%
Children living at home	48%
Household Size	
3 or fewer people within the household	64%
4+ people within the household	36%

Perceptions of Kulpmont

Overall, respondents' perceptions of Kulpmont show the intrinsic value of community and a sense of pride, as 73% of participants are proud to live in Kulpmont. However, only 64% of respondents feel connected to other residents. With the implementation of a park, this figure could increase; this reveals a disconnect that a new park could address. See Table 2 for a summary of responses about perceptions of Kulpmont and parks. As a note, there was no difference in these responses based on length of residency, number of children in household, or household size.

Table 2: Perceptions of Kulpmont

Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with these aspects of Kulpmont:	
I am proud to live in Kulpmont.	73%
I am hopeful about Kulpmont's future.	71%
I feel connected with other Kulpmont residents	64%
I am concerned about environmental issues in Kulpmont	59%

Preferred Park Amenities

Among the responses to amenity options within the proposed park, respondents had a range of views. To start, the majority of respondents agreed that they would like to see benches (86%) and walkways (82%) (see Figure 1). Differences in responses became apparent when asked about amenities targeted to children. Of the responses, 53% agreed that they would like to see a splash pad and 51% are in favor of lawn games. The findings show that families with children are more likely to value the splash pad, playground, lawn games, and a wall mural (see Figure 2). Residents residing in Kulpmont for over 15 years are less likely to be in favor of these amenities, as they would prefer a quiet spot to enjoy.

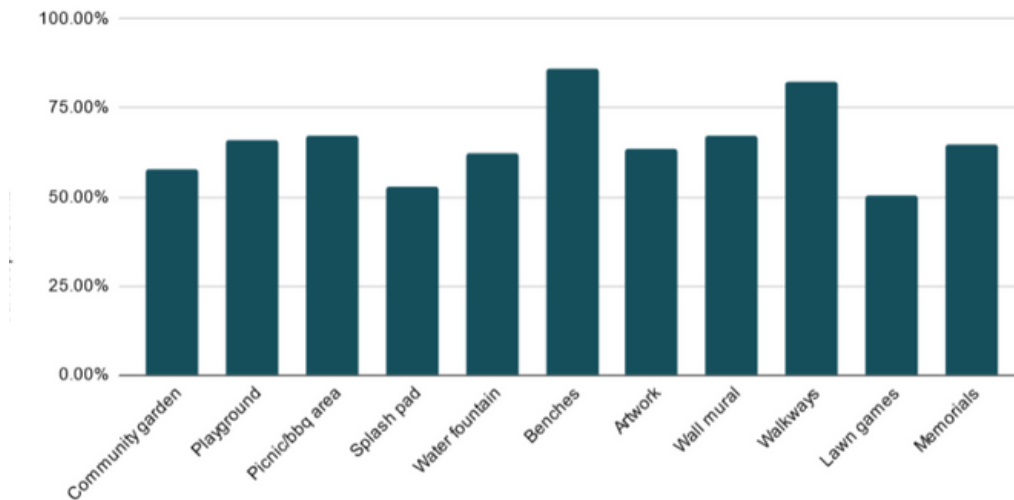


Figure 1: Preferred Amenity Options
 Participants rated their preferred amenity options on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This figure shows the percent of respondents who answered 4 or 5 to the listed options.

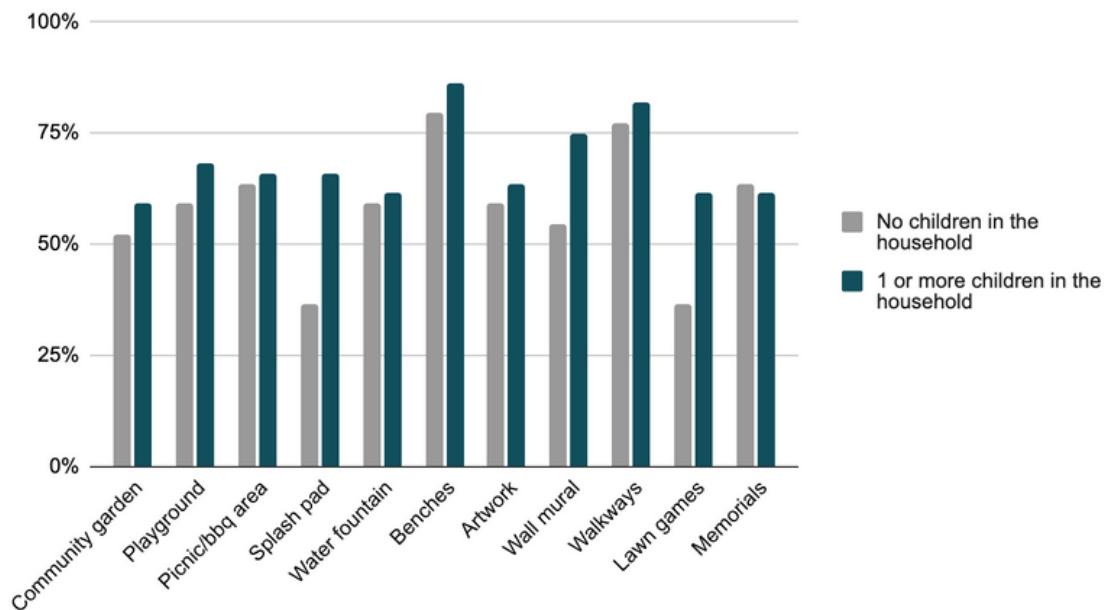


Figure 2: Differences between households with and without children.
 Participants rated their preferred amenity options on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This figure shows the percent of respondents with and without children at home who answered 4 or 5 to the listed options.

Preferred Plants and Greenery

With regard to plant options, 85% preferred shade trees, followed closely by 84% in favor of flowers. Pollinator plants (74%) and native plants (71%) were also ranked high. Such results indicate that respondents are partial to both aesthetic and ecological considerations. Bushes and hedges, which could be used to create visual barriers and privacy, were least preferred. See Figure 3.

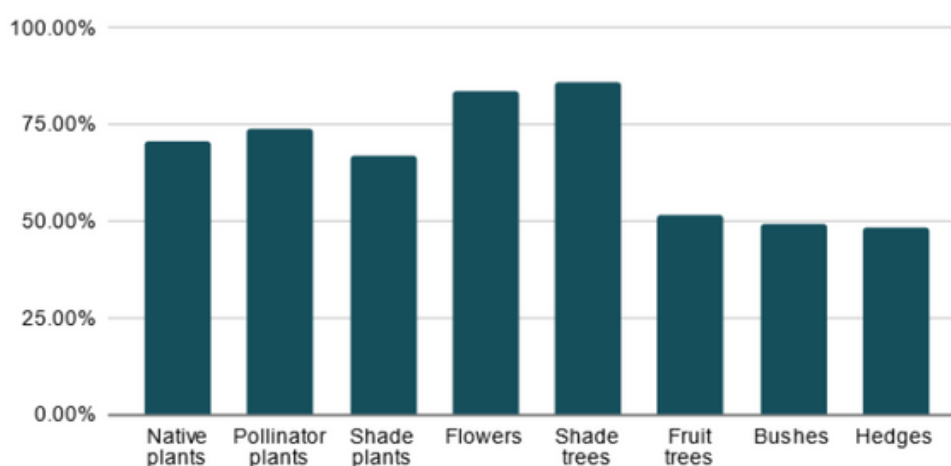


Figure 3: Preferred Plant Options

Participants rated their preferred plant options on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This figure shows the percent of respondents who answered 4 or 5 to the listed options.

What's the best part about living in a small borough like Kulpmont?

"Getting to know your neighbors and a sense of community."

"The camaraderie shared amongst the community."

"The community really comes together when it matters the most."

Demand for Parks and Projected Use

The results of the survey show a strong demand for parks and revitalization, as 79% noted that the inclusion of these spaces would benefit Kulpmont. When asked about vacant lots, an additional 79% of respondents noted that revitalization of these spaces would benefit the overall community. Around 75% agreed that they would like more places to gather as a community, showing that the inclusion of a park would not go unnoticed by community members. See Table 3. Additionally, 61% of respondents believed they would use this park bi-weekly or more frequently.

Table 3: Revitalization Efforts

Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with these aspects of revitalization efforts in Kulpmont:	
I am satisfied with the current efforts to repurpose vacant buildings and lots	40%
Revitalization and use of vacant buildings or lots benefits the overall community	79%
I would like to have more places to gather as a community	75%
Having more parks would benefit Kulpmont	79%

Open Response

In the various open response sections, respondents had a lot to say. When asked about their thoughts on the most important issue needed to be addressed in Kulpmont, many brought up the need for revitalization and wanting things to do, as well as seeing new businesses. Multiple respondents noted that they would like more police coverage. When asked to share the best thing about Kulpmont, most respondents said that they love the sense of community and the close-knit feel. There's a sense that residents generally look out for one another. In the general comments and concerns section, the responses noted above circulated frequently. A few respondents had some pushback against the park, noting that they believe it to be a "waste of money". The overwhelming amount of respondents who are in favor park development vastly outweigh skeptics.

"I love Kulpmont and want to see it flourish in the years to come."

"Let's make Kulpmont a better place for the residents!!"

"Kulpmont is a quiet town with people who look out for one another."

Key Findings

- While respondents are proud to live in Kulpmont (73%), fewer feel connected to their neighbors (64%). Acting on the preference for more places to gather as a community (75%) by creating neighborhood parks could help address this disconnect.
- A majority of respondents (79%) would like to see vacant lots repurposed
- A majority of respondents (79%) would like to see more parks in Kulpmont
- The findings show differences in the needs of amenity options for families compared to residents who live alone and/or don't have younger children
- In regard to plants, respondents would prefer to see flowers and shade trees over other plants like fruit trees and bushes



Addendum 1: Findings from the Interactive Community Feedback Strategy

At the K100 sponsored picnic on July 22, 2023, a community outreach strategy was conducted to gain supplemental feedback on the proposed pocket park, which yielded 15 additional respondents. Participants were asked to place stickers next to amenity and plant options they favored the most. There was also space for people to write down additional comments, including a “What did we miss?” section. Among the amenity options, the majority of respondents preferred a community garden, playground, and benches. While it was clear that families with children preferred a playground, one participant noted that the playground might be “too close to the main highway (Route 61) for children”. Among the listed plant options, the participants favored flowers and pollinator plants the most.

The findings from this interactive feedback session and the community-wide survey are both similar and different. Benches were rated highly in both instances, but the community garden and playground were rated lower in the survey. This could be a function of more families being in attendance at the community picnic, thus reaching a different audience than the survey. In both instances, flowers were rated highly while pollinator plants followed closely. This may show participants’ want for a colorful, more vibrant park, as flowers and pollinator plants typically offer a wide array of coloring. Listed below are the amenity and plant options, and how highly they were rated among the interactive strategy participants.

- Amenity Options
 - Artwork, walkways (0)
 - Lawn games (1)
 - Picnic/BBQ area (2)
 - Splash pad, water fountain (3)
 - Wall mural, memorials (4)
 - Benches (7)
 - Playground (9)
 - Community garden (10)
- Plant Options
 - Native plants, bushes, hedges (0)
 - Shade plants (1)
 - Fruit trees (2)
 - Shade trees (3)
 - Pollinator plants (5)
 - Flowers (7)