Understanding Usership in Hermann Park

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Presentation Overview

Hermann Park in the Houston Context

The Process

Research Design

Research Questions

The Survey and the Observational Form

Findings

Who uses Hermann Park?

What do they think about Hermann Park?
Hermann Park in the Houston Context

Motivation for study

Master plan

Houston as a unique city

Sprawl

Diverse

Hermann as a unique park

Size

Uses
Process and Methodology

- Background Research
- Research Questions
- Research Design
- Research Implementation
- Data
- Findings
Background Research

Regional park studies and literature

Community meetings

Survey methods research

Meeting with Doreen Stoller, President

Field and pilot testing
Research Questions

What kinds of **demographic groups** use Hermann Park? How does use of Hermann Park vary between them?

Where are Hermann Park users coming from, and how are they arriving? Do **patterns of park use** vary by their previous location and arrival method?

Which **features** of Hermann Park are most well-used by park users? What types of features drive park attendance? (features = activities and amenities)

What user characteristics are related to spontaneous **social interaction**?

What recommendations for **improvement** do park users suggest?
User Survey: Usership on an Individual Level

Captures moments
Provides individual opinions
Offers specific insights
Observational Form: Taking a Snapshot of the Park

Broader patterns
Demographic data
  Age
  Gender
  Race
  Activity
How was park usage divided geographically?

Focus on busier, Western section of the park

- No golf course, no zoo parking lot
- Bayou Parklands - observational

Divided by park amenities

- “Playground,” “Miller Hill,” “Centennial Gardens”

Busier zones surveyed more

Comparison with observational forms
When and where did we collect surveys?

### Surveys Collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Number of Surveys</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekday (8am-12pm)</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend (5pm-8pm)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Zones Represented with Surveys

- Southern Part: 28%
- Wooded Area: 23%
- Reflection Pool: 17%
- Gardens: 16%
- Miller: 16%

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**Background Research**

**Research Questions**

**Research Design**

**Research Implementation**

**Data**

**Findings**
Who uses the park: Race/Ethnicity?

Survey
- Asian: 31%
- Black: 14%
- Hispanic: 13%
- White: 2%
- Multiple/Other: 39%

Observational Forms
- Asian: 32%
- Black: 16%
- Hispanic: 15%
- White: 8%
- Multiple/Other: 29%
Who uses the park: Gender?

Survey
- Male: 58%
- Female: 42%

Observational Form
- Male: 51%
- Female: 49%
How do users get to the park?

![Pie chart showing transportation modes]

- 80% use cars
- 14% use public transit
- 6% walk or bike

Background Research  Research Questions  Research Design  Research Implementation  Data  Findings
Who uses the park: Age?

Survey

- 18-30: 43%
- 30-45: 32%
- 45-60: 17%
- > 60: 7%

Background Research

Research Questions

Research Design

Research Implementation

Data

Findings
What do users love most about Hermann Park?
Why do users come to the park today?

- General Activity: 54%
- Aesthetic: 16%
- Hermann Specific Activity: 11%
- Bring Guest: 19%

Background Research
Research Questions
Research Design
Research Implementation
Data
Findings
How long do users spend in the park?
What do users typically do in Hermann?

- Exercise Activity: 31%
- Leisure Activity: 37%
- Hermann Specific Activity: 32%
How is Hermann used as a social space?
What do users suggest for improvement?

- Suggestion: 38%
- No Suggestion: 62%

Bar chart showing the number of responses for different suggestions:
- Add Feature: 114
- Improve Facility: 98
- Parking: 58
- Nature: 40
- Increase Safety: 39

Flowchart indicating the research process:
- Background Research
- Research Questions
- Research Design
- Research Implementation
- Data
- Findings
How far away from Hermann do users live?

28% traveling from within 3 miles

28% traveling from 3-10 miles

33% traveling 10+ miles, within Houston metro area

11% from outside Houston metro area
How does Hermann compare to other parks?

- **Percent Responses (%)**
  - **Memorial**: 26%
  - **Buffalo Bayou**: 12%
  - **Discovery Green**: 12%
  - **Large Suburban Regional Park**: 22%
  - **Neighborhood Park**: 14%
  - **Park Outside Houston Metro**: 21%

- **Pie Chart**
  - **Positive**: 60%
  - **Neutral**: 27%
  - **Negative**: 13%
Why do users choose Hermann over alternative parks?
How do user characteristics vary based on park activities?

Frequent park users (43%)
- Runners
- Outdoor Gym
- Playground, Splash Pad
- Reflection Pool area
- Walk to park

Occasional park users (40%)
- Photography
- “Family time”
- Hanging out
- Miller Hill area
- Drive to park

First-time visitors (17%)
- Northern sections of park (Gardens area in particular)
How do user characteristics vary based on park activities?

- **Local residents (28%)**
  - Runners
  - Visited for <2 hours
  - Gardens zone

- **Houston-area community (61%)**
  - Visited for >2 hours
  - Picnic Table users
  - Splash Pad users

- **Visitors to Houston (11%)**
  - Came to “sightsee”
  - Gardens, Wooded zones
  - Leisure over activity

**Background Research**
**Research Questions**
**Research Design**
**Research Implementation**
**Data**
**Findings**
What use patterns and user characteristics are related to spontaneous social interaction?

Spontaneous interaction happens uniformly in all park areas - No relation to location within park or commonly used features

Males and elderly more likely to report encountering someone

Common recurring interactions: Petting dogs and kids playing
How do comparisons to other parks vary based on activity usership?

- Memorial
  “Memorial more for fitness, Hermann more for activities/leisure”

- Buffalo Bayou
  “Hermann has more green space, more to do”

- Discovery Green
  “Hermann much bigger, Discovery Green has concerts”
How do comparisons to other parks vary based on activity usership?

- **Suburban Regional**
  Often mentioned in Southern and Wooded sections of park
  “Hermann has more to do, not just a field”

- **Neighborhood Parks**
  Often mentioned in Miller area of park
  “Hermann is much bigger; no comparison”

- **Non-Houston**
  Wide variation of responses - no majority opinion
How do suggested changes for Hermann Park vary between user characteristics?

People who suggested changes in general:
- Have visited the park previously
- Local area residents

People who suggested parking improvements:
- Surveyed in Reflection Pool / Circle area
- Greater Houston metro residents

Restroom/water fountain suggestions, and others, were uniform across the board.
Major Takeaways

Demographic Groups
- Hermann Park’s users are representative of Houston residents

Patterns of Use
- No particular group uses Hermann Park differently
- Gardens attract new users

Features
- People are satisfied with existing features

Social Interactions
- Hermann park facilitating social activity

Improvement
- Parking not a high priority
- New features