

Q: What's happening at Hummingbird Park?

A: A group of neighbors around Hummingbird Park are exploring ideas to add amenities to the park, for the enjoyment of the community.

This group, called "The Friends of Hummingbird Park", is working with the City of Asheville Parks and Recreation Department to develop an agreement for these improvements.

Improvements will include additional landscaping and some infrastructure developments, described further below. Some of the enhancements will be done by the City, while others will be done by the community (Montford neighborhood).

In preparation for this project, the City is doing some additional mowing, and the Friends of Hummingbird Park have begun removing invasive plants.

We hope to have an agreement with the City for new plantings and other improvements by the end of September.

Q: What kinds of improvements are planned at Hummingbird Park?

A: The Friends of Hummingbird Park have developed a set of five "Guiding Principles" to be used in evaluating all proposed improvements, as follows:

- **Non-invasive:** No negative impacts to adjoining properties. No significant loss of current park functionality
- **Aesthetic:** Enhance the beauty of the park
- **Green and Sustainable:** Implement improvements in keeping with Asheville's environmental ethic. Preserve existing desirable landscape and features, e.g., mature trees. Utilize native plants and shrubs. Limit the needs for fertilizers, pesticides, etc. Remove all invasive plants.
- **Multi-Use:** Create a more "multi-dimensional" park through new attractions, such as adding native plants that support wildlife; creating additional resting or gathering spaces (benches, picnic tables); creating a small community garden space; providing educational signs; etc.
- **Realistic:** Keep scope of effort and resource requirements small enough to 1) garner City of Asheville support where we need it, and 2) ensure we are able to meet the neighborhood commitments for implementation and maintenance.

Q: Hummingbird Park seems fine as it is. Why make these improvements?

A: One of the biggest concerns the Friends have had about the park is the overgrowth of invasive vines and plants in certain areas. Invasive species are a big concern, as they contribute to soil damage and are the second leading cause of animal population decline and extinction.

As we work to restore the soil and make it a more friendly place to pollinators and other beneficial creatures, we thought it would be a great opportunity to make some relatively small improvements to help the park become even more welcoming and beautiful for our community. Already, we're finding it's a wonderful way to bring our neighbors together!

Q: Who are “The Friends of Hummingbird Park”?

A: “The Friends of Hummingbird Park” is a community group comprised of neighbors in the nearby vicinity of Hummingbird Park. We currently have around 50 households on our mailing list.

Our Steering Team is comprised of the following Friends:

- Elizabeth Dankowski
- William Eakins
- Lizzy Gerson
- Bonnie Gilbert
- Frank Lothschuetz
- Barbara Marlowe
- Zoe Schumaker (Chair)

Additionally, we have working committees for Fundraising, Landscape Design, and Marketing. There are many volunteer opportunities, on these committees and in the future, in the gardens themselves. If you would like to join our mailing list, or volunteer, please email Lizzy Gerson: lizzygerson@gmail.com.

Q: What kinds of investment will the City possibly make in Hummingbird Park?

A: The City of Asheville would be responsible for infrastructure improvements necessary to support the neighborhood's improvements. They might also provide some upgrades that would otherwise not receive priority for a park of this size. Some of the possible City contributions include:

- Provide additional analysis and solutions to improve drainage and reduce standing water after heavy rains.
- Add a “dog waste station”, with bag dispenser and disposal box.

- Add drinking fountain with dog bowl fixture and hose bib (required for new landscaping). Provide city water for irrigation of planting beds.
- Replace picnic tables with city-standard picnic table(s). One picnic table will be ADA-compliant.
- Add limited safety lighting (non-invasive to neighboring properties).
- Install Cumberland Avenue access, with stairs and a railing.
- Upgrade garbage and recycle cans to new square metal design.

Q: What kinds of investment are we (the Friends of Hummingbird Park and the MNA) contributing as part of this process?

A: The Montford Neighborhood Association and Friends have agreed to take on the landscape improvements and the maintenance of these improved areas. We may also provide some additional ornamental or functional items, such as benches and signs. Some of the possible neighborhood-funded efforts include:

- Remove invasive plants currently rampant in the wooded area on the eastern boundary of the park and along Cumberland Ave.
- Add a decorative “Hummingbird Park” sign.
- Enhance the back portion of the [wooded strip](#) on the East border by selectively adding native trees, shrubs, and plants to support birds and pollinators.
- Maintain a mowed path through the wooded area.
- Enhance the front portion of the [wooded strip](#) on the East border by creating with a small “Pollinator-Friendly Garden”, utilizing native blooming plants and shrubs.
- Add a small community herb garden.
- Add benches.
- Install educational “interpretive signage” identifying native plants, describing the pollinator garden, and/or discussing history of the lots prior to conversion to a park.

Q: Don’t my tax dollars cover these improvements to Hummingbird and other parks?

A: The City has a maintenance program for the over 60 parks in the Parks and Recreation system. While from time to time, this program includes implementing landscaping changes or adding new amenities, these projects generally focus on larger, more commonly used parks.

As a small, locally-visited park, Hummingbird Park is not slated for any significant enhancements. However, there is a process by which a community can partner with the city to make the improvements. Through this process, the neighborhood can choose to make the specific improvements that they desire.

That's where we come in, all of us as neighbors working together to create a beautiful space that we will enjoy for many years!

Q: How can I help?

A: The Friends of Hummingbird Park welcome any additional support! There are many ways to contribute, including:

- Complete the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3SZMFX9>
- Sign up for the mailing list by emailing Lizzy Gerson, lizzygerson@gmail.com
- Volunteer to be on one of our committees or to work in the gardens by emailing Lizzy, lizzygerson@gmail.com
- Make a tax-deductible financial contribution by contacting Barbara Marlowe, bmarlowe@charter.net

Q: How are you communicating these proposed changes to the neighborhood, to ensure everyone is informed and has a chance to provide input?

A: The Friends of Hummingbird Park has been engaged in a local outreach effort in the vicinity of the park. This has included door to door canvassing and a posted flyer in the park itself. The project is also highlighted in the August issue of the Montford Neighborhood newsletter and on the MNA website. We will be publishing a link to a survey to collect neighborhood input.

Q: I see survey stakes at Hummingbird Park. Is the park going to be sold or developed?

A: The park has been designated as a public greenspace, in perpetuity. It will not be developed or sold. The survey stakes are a result of the City survey to establish the park boundaries. Establishing the boundaries between public and private property ensures that future improvements can be made with clarity.