

Maria Hernandez Playground

Brooklyn



Irving Avenue to Knickerbocker Avenue, between Starr Street and Suydam Street



Playground Snapshot 2014

There are over 1,000 playgrounds in New York City, each with a unique pattern of use, from weekend pickup basketball games to afterschool activities. Each playground also has its own needs for capital investment, maintenance, and safety. This snapshot provides an overview of how people use Maria Hernandez Playground and offers the insights and opinions of surveyed park-goers.



Maria Hernandez Playground

- 0.6 acres
- Facilities include: play areas with spray showers for children
- Recent capital improvements: \$1 million in 2004; \$120,000 in 2007. In the fall of 2010, a tornado caused extensive damage to the park, closing it for several weeks. Although the park lost a number of trees in the storm, 74 new trees have since been planted.

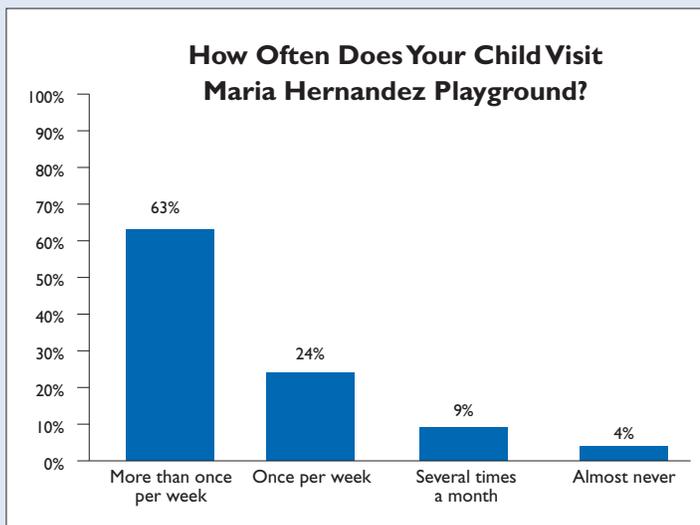
Playground Use

Maria Hernandez Park is a popular seven-acre park in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn. The park serves as a neighborhood gathering square. People fill park benches, enjoy food from sidewalk food carts, shop at a Saturday morning farmers market, and work out at fitness stations and along the running track. Within the park, there is a small playground with play equipment and spray showers for children. We observed 6,755 people in Maria Hernandez Playground over the course of six survey days, including one weekend and one weekday during winter, spring and summer.

We counted 2,086 visitors to Maria Hernandez Playground on a Saturday in May.



Children flock to the spray showers on a summer day.



We spoke with 117 adults about their perceptions of Maria Hernandez Playground, 96% of whom were accompanied by children. This playground is an important recreational resource for neighborhood children:

- 72% said that Maria Hernandez Playground serves as their child's primary outdoor recreation site.
- More than half reported that their children visit other parks only a few times a month.
- 21% of caretakers said that children received school gym class once a week or less.

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Community Concerns

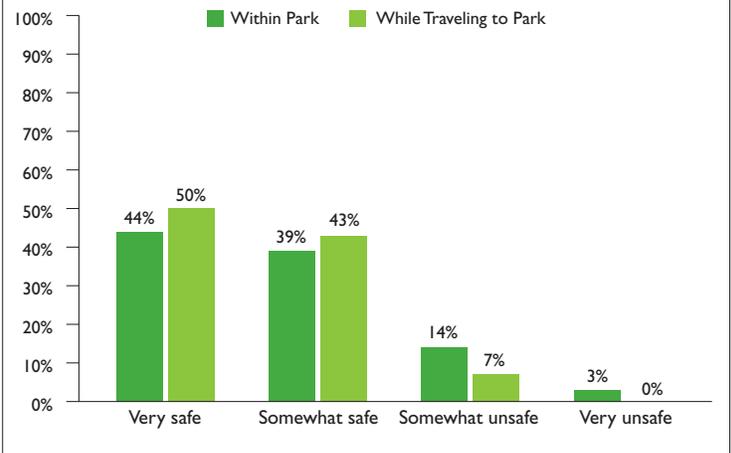
Maria Hernandez Playground users expressed concerns about safety—both within and on their way to the park—specifically citing issues with violence, fights, and intoxicated park users.

Almost half of respondents rated overall playground cleanliness as “fair” or “poor,” and 35% had similar opinions about the maintenance of park equipment.



A quiet spring day in Maria Hernandez Playground.

How Safe Do You Feel?



Maria Hernandez is a park that serves nearby residents and neighbors. 84% of Maria Hernandez visitors with whom we spoke are neighborhood residents, and almost $\frac{3}{4}$ know a neighbor who visits the park. Maria Hernandez Playground visitors suggested ways to improve the park, including:

- Better maintenance of swings and other play equipment
- More frequent bathroom and park cleaning
- Better enforcement of park rules

Get Involved!

With collective effort, residents can follow in the footsteps of park namesake and slain community activist Maria Hernandez, and help keep the park clean and beautiful. Park-goers, parents, neighborhood residents and other park constituents can work together to make Maria Hernandez Playground a safe, clean and vibrant play space.

Know your local representatives:

Brooklyn Community Board 4: (718) 628-8400

Antonio Reynoso, Council Member, Council District 34: (718) 963-3141

Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President: (718) 802-3700



The Study: This project is the result of a partnership between New Yorkers for Parks and researchers at New York University. This research is part of a larger effort to understand the diversity of New York City playground users and uses. Because the New York Department of Parks and Recreation currently has no systematic method to assess park usership, surveys such as this provide important information that can guide park planning, management, expansion, and budget allocation. In the current study, trained researchers visited 10 playgrounds over the course of four seasons during 2010-2011. Researchers counted playground users and interviewed a total of 1,600 adults on both weekend and weekdays in the following playgrounds: Matthews Muliner Playground (Bronx), People’s Park (Bronx), Maria Hernandez Playground (Brooklyn), Rappaport Playground (Brooklyn), Carmansville Playground (Manhattan), Tompkins Square Park Playground (Manhattan), Captain Tilly Playground (Queens), Charybdis Playground (Queens), Jennifer’s Playground (Staten Island), and Levy Playground (Staten Island). The comprehensive results of this study will be published in Winter 2014.

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New Yorkers for Parks
The Arthur Ross Center for Parks and Open Spaces
55 Broad Street, 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10004
(212) 838-9410
www.ny4p.org

New Yorkers for Parks is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods.