

Lawrence Parks & Recreation Department

A Comprehensive Master Plan

Community Input

Three tools were utilized during this plan to gather input from a cross section of the community. They were individual interviews, public meetings and a survey instrument. The survey instrument was developed at two levels. The first was for the general public, with the second being a survey only for students in the twenty-seven Lawrence schools grades 3-12.

The resident survey was conducted during the fall of 1999. They were mailed to 1,200 randomly selected households in the City. Follow up phone calls were made to those who had not returned their surveys with the goal being to obtain 400 completed surveys. 145 surveys were completed by phone with 397 returned by mail for a response rate of 542 completed surveys. The results for the random sample of 542 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least $\pm 4.4\%$. For the student survey, 373 randomly selected students in 27 schools, grades 3-12 received the instrument. The results for the random sample of 373 students have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least $\pm 5.2\%$.

The specifics of the interviews, public sessions and surveys are included in the appendix. The following documents the major findings from the surveys with additional commentary from the other input sources.

Major Findings – Resident survey

More than one-third (36%) of the households surveyed indicated that at least one member of their household participated in Lawrence Parks and Recreation (LPRD) programs during the previous year. 86% knew the City offered parks and recreation programs.

The sources for information that were most frequently mentioned by residents who participate in parks and recreation programs were: LPRD brochure (54%), newspaper (48%) and friends and coworkers (44%).

More than three-fourths (76%) indicated that at least one member of their household had visited a park during the past year. 98% of those surveyed indicated they knew where the city parks were located.

Of those who visited a park, 86% rated the overall condition of the parks excellent (34%) or good (52%).

The top four reasons residents do not use city parks and recreation facilities more often are that they are too busy to use them (45%), existing facilities are not close to home (25%), hours are not convenient (18%) or they use other facilities (16%).

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Residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the availability of various types of parks and recreation facilities in the city on a five-point scale, where 5 meant “very satisfied” and 1 “very dissatisfied. Satisfaction indicates how well the number of facilities meets the need of the residents; it does not necessarily reflect satisfaction with the condition of the facilities. The percentages have been adjusted to exclude the “don’t know” responses.

<u>Top 5 Items</u>	<u>Combination of very satisfied and satisfied ratings</u>
Public landscaping/flower gardens	71%
Playgrounds for children	71%
Walking and biking trails	68%
Picnic facilities	68%
Neighborhood parks	68%

<u>Bottom 5 Items ratings</u>	<u>Combination of very satisfied and satisfied ratings</u>
Ice skating rinks	15%
Inline skating/hockey facilities	25%
Skateboard facilities	29%
Racquetball courts	31%
Volleyball courts	34%

The most important parks and recreation facilities to the residents are: walking and biking trails (48%), neighborhood parks (31%), public landscaping/flower gardens (25%), playgrounds for children (22%) and nature centers/nature trails.

The most important improvements that residents think should be made to existing parks are: linking neighborhood parks with walking and biking trails (41%), enhancing existing public landscapes (30%), expanding open space (25%) and renovating playgrounds (24%).

Over half (52%) thought LPRD should emphasize improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities over the next ten years, 23% thought the city should acquire more land for new parks and 19% thought the city should emphasize the construction of new parks and recreation facilities.

Nearly half (45%) of those residents surveyed indicated they would be either very likely (22%) or somewhat likely (23%) to register for LPRD classes on the Internet.

Nearly two thirds (63%) think non-residents should be charged more than residents to participate in LPRD programs and to use recreation facilities provided by the City of Lawrence.

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Major Findings – Student survey

More than two-thirds (68%) of the youth surveyed indicated that there is a park within walking distance of their home, 31% indicate they use the park near their home at least once a week. More than half (56%) indicated they use the park closest to their home at least once per month. Of those, 25% use the park nearest their home at least once per month. 31% use the park at least once a week, indicating a high repeat use of facilities by the youth. 71% indicated they use other parks in Lawrence in addition to the one closest to home.

59% use the City's recreation centers.

Based on the percentage of "very interested" responses relative to indoor recreational activities the following were the most popular: indoor swimming (57%), video/arcade games (56%), indoor basketball (45%) and billiards/pool (42%).

Based on the percentage of "very interested" responses relative to natural oriented recreational activities the following were the most popular: canoeing/boating (47%), exploring/playing in the woods (46%) and trail walking/hiking (43%).

Based on the percentage of "very interested" responses relative to outdoor recreational activities the following were the most popular: concerts/entertainment (56%), bicycle riding in the neighborhood (46%), outdoor basketball (46%), bicycle trail riding (45%), baseball (40%), soccer (40%) and in-line skating (40%).

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them"

Albert Einstein