



# CHAPTER 2: VISION & ENGAGEMENT



City of Detroit  
**Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan**  
2022-2032





## **OVERVIEW**

In this chapter, we present our vision for the next 10 years at Parks & Rec that guided our process of developing strategies and capital allocations. Next we discuss the findings from an extensive community engagement process including two surveys, a series of focus groups, and a public review period. All of this feedback contributed our understanding of Detroiters needs and priorities and the development of community specific targets for accomplishing our goals.

### **Vision & Process Overview:**

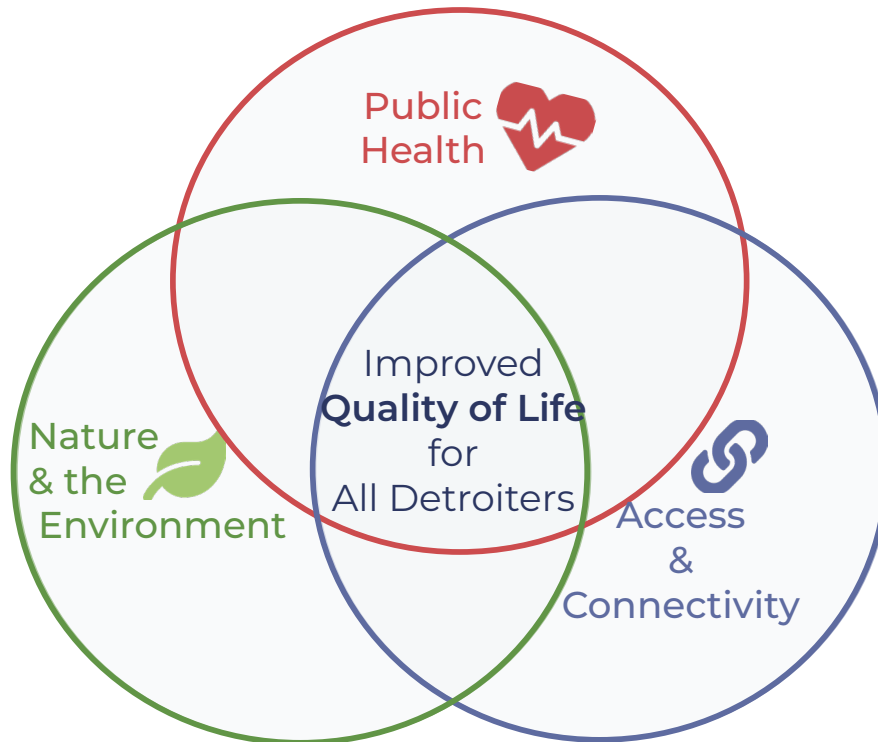
Envisioning the Future of Detroit Parks & Rec, Overview of Process

### **Community Engagement:**

PRSP Survey, Community Needs Assessment, Focus Groups, Public Review

# ENVISIONING THE FUTURE of Detroit Parks & Recreation

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## Quality of Life lies at the Intersection of Our Goals

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### VISION

The vision of the **2022 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan** is to improve the quality of life for all Detroiters through parks, greenways, recreation centers, and programs, using an equity framework.

### GOALS

Working toward the vision, the plan puts forth three main goals. DPRD strives to:

- Improve **Public Health**
- Protect and connect residents with **Nature & the Environment**
- Increase **Access & Connectivity** to parks & recreational opportunities

### STRATEGIES

Each strategy addresses one or more of DPRD's goals. A full description of each strategy is featured in Chapter 3.

- 1.1 Marketing: Get the Word Out
- 1.2 Invest in Staff
- 1.3 Strengthen Partnerships
- 2.1 Encourage Fitness & Athletics
- 2.2 Improve Recreation Centers
- 2.3 Facilitate Permitting & Programming
- 3.1 Focus on Maintenance
- 3.2 Integrate Environmental Design
- 3.3 Support Stewardship
- 4.1 Ensure Safe Access
- 4.2 Create an Inclusive Parks & Rec System
- 4.3 Connect the System

# ENGAGING WITH DETROITERS

## Process Overview

*The Strategic Plan takes a comprehensive look at Detroit's park and recreational needs through a series of community engagement opportunities, complimenting the data analysis.*

### PRSP SURVEY

The Parks & Rec Strategic Plan (PRSP) Survey asked Detroiters how they use the parks & rec system, and what they do and do not like about it. The survey was distributed through the Parks and Recreation email list and the City's community network. Participants submitted responses between Oct. 2020 and Feb. 2021. DPRD received 714 unique responses. The survey contributed the insights of many who are most active in Detroit's parks and rec programs.

### COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Community Needs Assessment asked Detroiters more specific questions, especially targeting DPRD's programs. This survey went out in the mail in August 2020 and responses came by mail and over the phone through October 2020. The survey received 623 unique responses and is another way for Detroiters to provide input.

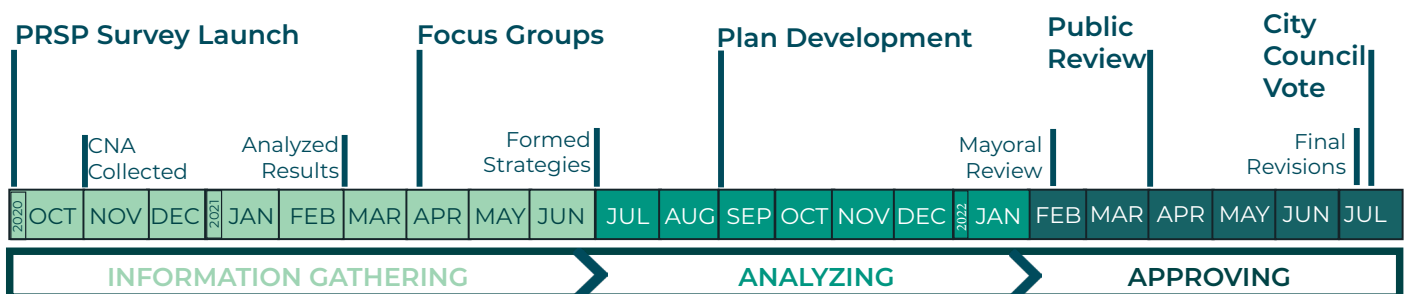
### FOCUS GROUPS

DPRD hosted 14 stakeholder groups, consisting of subject experts, and 6 public groups, to refine and vet expert recommendations, from April to June of 2021. Additionally, DPRD hosted another 7 stakeholder groups and 5 public groups to inform the East Riverfront Asset Study (ERAS). Focus groups took place over Zoom calls with over 490 attendees at the PRSP sessions and 72 at the ERAS public meetings.

### PUBLIC REVIEW

The Parks and Recreation division will be holding Public Review beginning in April 2022. At this time, a draft of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan will be released for public review. A series of presentations and open houses will enable residents to submit comments and discuss the plan with staff.

## Plan Development Timeline



# BY THE NUMBERS

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A LOOK AT HOW THE PLAN CAME TO BE

A  
system  
of  
**300+**  
PARKS



**& 26**  
REC CENTERS  
GUIDED BY THE PLAN



PUBLIC  
REVIEW  
COMMENTS



**2,700+**  
COMMENTS  
PROVIDED DURING  
FOCUS GROUPS

**1,400+**  
COMMENTS  
ON THE CITY-WIDE  
SURVEY



**1,300+**  
COMPLETED  
SURVEYS



**560+**  
ATTENDEES  
AT FOCUS GROUPS







## PRSP SURVEY

The PRSP Survey was developed to investigate Detroiters' needs, concerns, and current usage of Detroit's parks and recreational sites. The survey asked participants about parks, greenways, recreation centers, and programming. Additionally, respondents were asked about their priorities relating to the three goals of the plan: Improving Public Health, Protecting and Connecting Detroiters with Nature & the Environment, and Increasing Access & Connectivity to Recreational Opportunities. The following chapter displays the findings from this survey, as well as examples of comments left by Detroiters. Resident feedback informed the initial discussion topics for the focus groups and the formation of recommendations. For more information, the full survey response form and data analysis can be found in Appendix A.





## PARKS & GREENWAYS

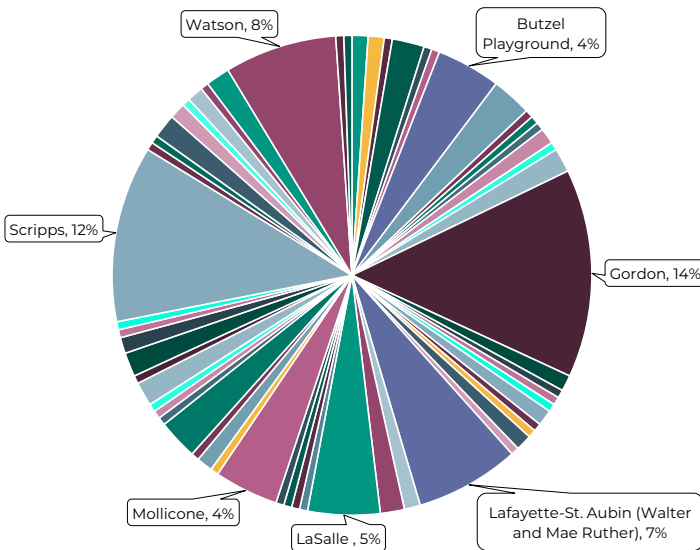
The first section of the survey asked respondents about their usage of Detroit's parks and greenways. This information informed our understanding of Detroiters' preferences and what barriers they may face to using these spaces.

### Most Used Parks & Greenways

#### Neighborhood Park Use

Respondents indicated a myriad of parks for their most used neighborhood park. Gordon and Scripps parks received the most mentions at a rate of 14% and 12% respectively. This varied response demonstrates the great number of parks in Detroit, the difference in preferences among respondents, and the priority of proximity over amenities for some respondents.

#### Which Neighborhood Parks Do You Use Most Often?



#### Most Used Parks

##### Neighborhood Parks:

14%	Gordon
12%	Scripps
8%	John R. Watson
7%	Lafayette - St. Aubin
5%	La Salle
4%	Butzel Playground
4%	Mollicone

##### Regional Parks:

68%	Belle Isle
15%	Palmer Park
11%	wRouge Park
4%	Chandler Park
2%	Eliza Howell Park

##### Greenways:

79%	Riverwalk
65%	Dequindre - Cut
13%	Joseph Campau
3%	Fitzgerald
6%	Conner Creek

## Regional Park Use

Regional parks tend to draw visitors from all across Detroit with their size and array of quality amenities. Unsurprisingly, the iconic Belle Isle was a popular response for the most visited regional park.

## Greenway Use

Many respondents use several of Detroit's greenways, with over half of respondents reporting use of the RiverWalk and Dequindre-Cut. These areas are also popular with bicyclists.

## Use Frequency

Responses indicated that approximately **two thirds** of surveyed individuals use neighborhood and regional parks regularly, while over half use greenways more than once per month.

A considerable number of respondents do not use parks or greenways at all. Many respondents indicated that they either did not know where to find their local park or greenway, or that **none are located near them**.

## What to Do in the Parks?

### Exercise, Socialize, Revitalize

Parks are a place of physical activity, relaxation, and community building for many Detroiters. When asked what respondents like to do in Detroit parks, and allowed to choose multiple responses or write their own response, park activities ranked as shown to the right.

### Key Park Activities

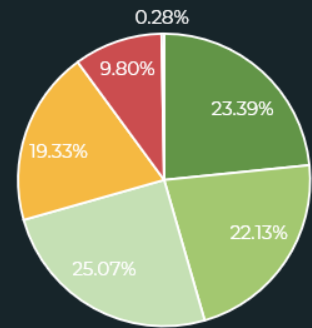
From these responses the importance of key activities can be seen. For example, throughout the survey, respondents expressed a desire for **swimming** opportunities both in parks and recreation centers. Respondents were keen to point out that parks are a great place to host or participate in **community and cultural activities**. Additionally, several

### Preferred Park Activities:

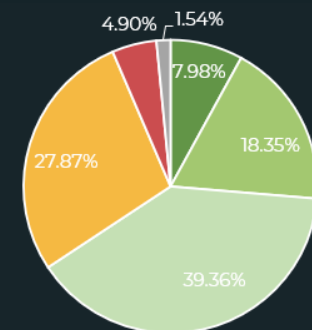
- 87% Walk or bike
- 80% Relax in nature
- 62% Exercise
- 70% Socialize
- 51% Active recreation in nature
- 43% Play with kids
- 40% Athletics / sports
- 30% Pass-through to other places
- 21% Dog walking
- 16% Other
  - Community & cultural events
  - Appreciate nature
  - Swimming and water activities
  - Picnics
  - Educational activities
  - Use amenities (e.g. restrooms)

## USE FREQUENCY

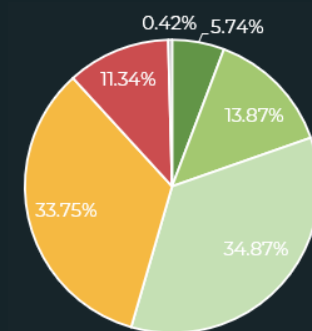
### Neighborhood Parks



### Regional Parks



### Greenways



- Daily
- Once a week
- Few times a month
- Rarely
- Not at all
- No response



## What do Detroiters have to say?

Survey respondents left additional feedback on why they do not visit Detroit parks or what they would like to see improved about their local park.

There are not places to use the restroom

I don't have transportation to and from many parks :( my family only utilizes the ones we can walk or bike to via greenways.

Lack of lighting & sense of safety

Not enough information at the park about the trail system ... flooding or poor maintenance often prevents me from walking on trails

Greenways are important to me as a way to get around the city... Dequindre Cut and Riverwalk are amazing.

Love to have more events, & education, & info

I would love to see these areas preserved

Sometimes I'm unsure if I am supposed to use the area ... A green space that is neglected is hard to distinguish from an over grown lot

respondents expressed an **interest in nature** not only for relaxing, but also for photography, wildlife watching, or educating their children. Making improvements that enable desired activities can increase interest in and use of parks.

## Barriers to Park Use

### Greatest Challenges

The most common barrier to park use is a lack of information, including the locations, activities, and amenities of Detroit's parks. Marketing and signage may remedy this issue. Nearly one third of respondents also indicated safety concerns or disinterest in parks.

### Other Common Concerns

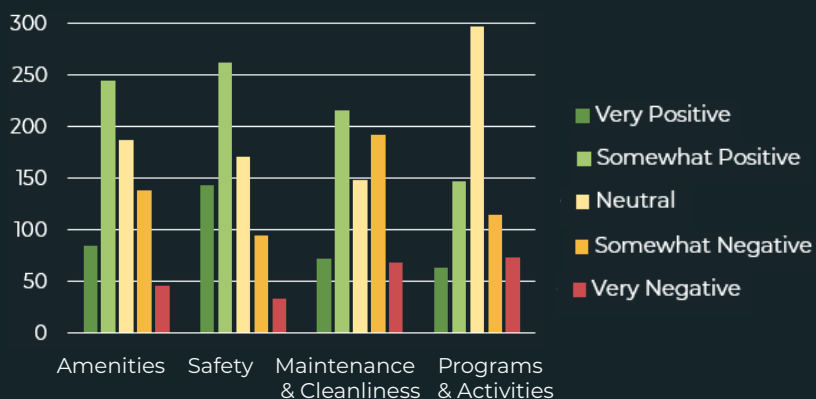
Over one third of respondents included their own write-in response for this question. 1 in 10 of whom commented on **cleanliness and maintenance** concerns.

Many respondents also stated concerns related to the undesired behaviour of other park users such as **alcohol and drug use, noise at inappropriate hours, indecent exposure, and a lack of pet supervision.**

### What keeps you from using Detroit parks:

35%	Lack of info
28%	Safety issues
25%	Lack of interest
11%	Lack of Transport
8%	Personal Health
35%	Other
11%	Cleanliness & Maintenance
3.4%	Social Discomfort
3.6%	Location

## PARK EXPERIENCE RANKINGS





## REC CENTERS & PROGRAMS

The second section of the survey asked respondents about their usage of Detroit's recreation centers as well as parks & rec programming. This information improved our understanding of the coverage and gaps in recreational opportunities across Detroit.

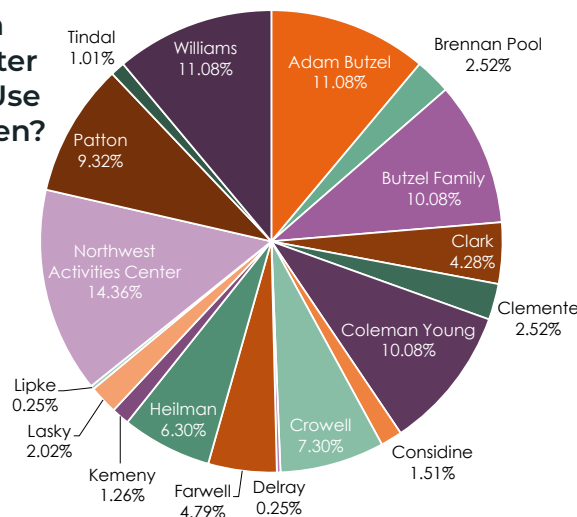
### Most Used Rec Centers

Detroit's rec centers are spread across the city. The most popular rec center is Northwest Activities Center, followed by Williams and Adam Butzel rec centers with 11% of responses each, and Butzel Family and Coleman Young with 10% each. Many of these rec centers offer access to gyms, weight rooms, and swimming pools.

#### Most Used Rec Centers:

- 14.4% Northwest Activities Center
- 11.1% Adam Butzel
- 11.1% Williams
- 10.1% Butzel Family
- 10.1% Coleman Young
- 9.3% Patton
- 7.3% Crowell
- 6.3% Heilmann
- 4.8% Farwell
- 4.3% Clark
- 2.5% Brennan Pool
- 2.5% Clemente
- 2% Lasky
- 1.5% Considine
- 1.3% Kemeny
- 1% Tindal
- .25% Delray
- .25% Lipke

Which Rec Center Do You Use Most Often?





## Use Frequency

Responses indicated that over 80% of surveyed individuals do not use rec centers on a regular basis. Similarly, just over 50% of respondents indicated that they have never participated in a recreational program. The following section covers survey responses that indicate why many Detroiters do not use rec centers. These responses reveal an important area of growth for Detroit's parks and recreation system.

## Parks & Recreation Programming

### Raise a Glass and Take a Dip

The City of Detroit and its partners host a variety of programs in both rec centers and parks ranging from sports to celebrations to resource sharing. When asked which programs respondents and their families have participated in, Detroiters indicated as shown in the table below.

Less than half of respondents (49.72%) have participated in a Parks & Rec program as shown in the chart on the right.

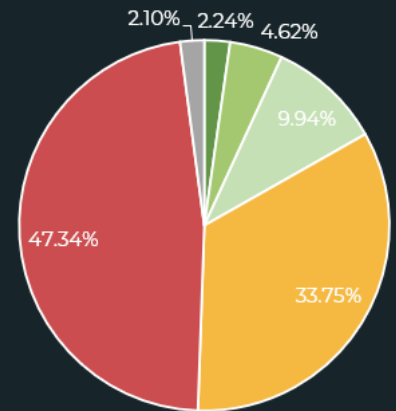
### Key Programs

Nearly one quarter of respondents indicated that they have participated in either special events, swimming, or both. Notably 25 unique individuals mentioned participating in civic activities, community meetings, or voting, while 18 individuals called attention to specific sports and activities such as holiday parties, arts or practical skills classes, and specialty sports like archery.

### Program Participation:

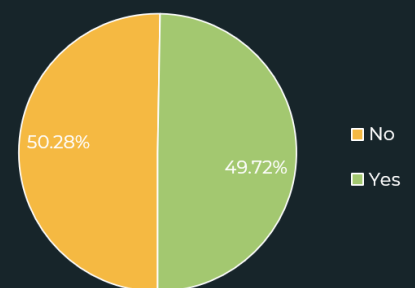
26%	Special events
24%	Swimming
19%	Sports / athletics
12%	Senior prgms
9.1%	Summer day camp
8.9%	After school prgms
7%	Summer fun centers
6%	Nature / overnight camping
6%	Summer lunch prgms
8%	Other
43%	Civic activities
31%	Specialty programs
10%	Resource programs
9%	Fundraisers

### Rec Center Use Frequency



- Daily
- Once a week
- Few times a month
- Rarely
- Not at all
- No response

### Have You Ever Participated in a Rec Program?



Adam Butzel

## What to Do in a Rec Centers?

### Expanding to Meet Community Needs

Detroit Rec Centers offer a myriad of activities, resources, and indoor spaces. Survey respondents envision a bright future for Detroit's rec centers. While usage rates indicate that many Detroiters do not currently use rec centers, nearly one half to one third of respondents have interest



in several rec center activities. When asked what respondents would like to do at Detroit recreation centers, respondents indicated the given activities as shown to the right.

### Key Activities in Detroit Rec Centers

Two thirds of respondents like to use rec centers to exercise, while over half use them as spaces in which to connect with other community members.

Respondents submitted 82 write-in responses, nearly half of which referenced swimming. Additionally, 14% of write-in responses indicated a desire for activity programming including board game and movie nights, book clubs, and the arts. Another 13% of write-ins requested programming for specific groups including kids, stay-at-home mothers, special needs individuals, as well as no cost and evening programs.

## Barriers to Rec Center Use

### Greatest Challenges

Similar to with parks, the most common barrier to rec center use is a lack of information about program availability and space rental opportunities. Many respondents stated that rec centers lacked programs of interest to them, which may also be an issue of ineffective communications. Ensuring consistent offerings as well as deploying robust marketing and easy to use websites may remedy these issue.

### Preferred Activities:

67%	Exercise
51%	Community connection
45%	Socialize (youth)
44%	Art classes
38%	Open gym time
38%	Socialize (adults)
38%	Adult education
37%	Music classes
36.7%	Resource center
36.6%	Team athletics / sports
34%	Youth education
29%	Physical health services
25%	Food and personal care distribution
22%	Mental health services
11.5%	Other
47%	Swimming
14%	Activity programming
13%	Group programing
10%	Specific resources
9%	Organized sports
7%	Community meetings

## What do Detroiters have to say?

When asked what programs respondents have tried, many responded that they have not participated in Detroit rec programs. They left these comments.

This is not intended as a negative comment, I'm just not very interested in what a rec center has to offer.

We use the outdoor park because [the] building is often closed.

I've tried to participate in programs but it's hard to find clear information.

I love playing futsal every week at Clemente Rec Center and also the free yoga classes ...are so wonderful.

It's been a long time since any of these services [summer camp, sports, swimming] were really accessible.

### What keeps you from using rec centers:

49%	Lack of info
20%	Lack of interest
17%	Cleanliness
11%	Safety issues
8%	Staff friendliness
6.1%	No transportation
5.9%	Cost / affordability
3.6%	Personal health
3.2%	No childcare
15%	Other
35%	Location
10%	Maintenance
9%	Alternatives
8%	Age & inclusivity



### Other Common Concerns

Over 100 individuals raised concerns outside of the provided options including issues of rec center location in 37 unique responses, indicating a desire for rec centers in gap areas. Many individuals expressed concern over building maintenance, lack of center inclusivity, or simply a preference for alternatives.

## Barriers to Program Participation

### Greatest Challenges

The most common barrier to program participation is also lack of information. Specifically respondents indicated a lack of knowledge about program availability and timing due to inconsistency of offerings. This can also be seen in the write-in responses, 17% of which related to inconsistency of programming. Respondents also frequently indicated an inability to attend programs at their currently scheduled times and a lack of programs suiting their interests.

### Other Common Concerns

One quarter of write-in responses indicated a lack of programming in their area. A significant number of respondents also had cleanliness and maintenance concerns, especially regarding pools, shared exercise equipment, and bathrooms.

### What keeps you from participating:

48%	Lack of info
18%	Time of program
17%	Lack of interest
10%	Age group
9%	Safety issues
6%	Cost/affordability
5.7%	No transportation
3.8%	Past negative experience
3.6%	Personal health
9.4%	Write-Ins:
25%	Location
17%	Inconsistency
14%	Cleanliness & maintenance
14%	Lack of time

## What do Detroiters have to say?

When asked why they do not use rec centers or to leave other comments, respondents provided the following write-in responses.

Last rec [center I used] was Kronk, it was a great place.

Not near where I live. Would like to have one close to my area.

Not inviting to residents of all ages

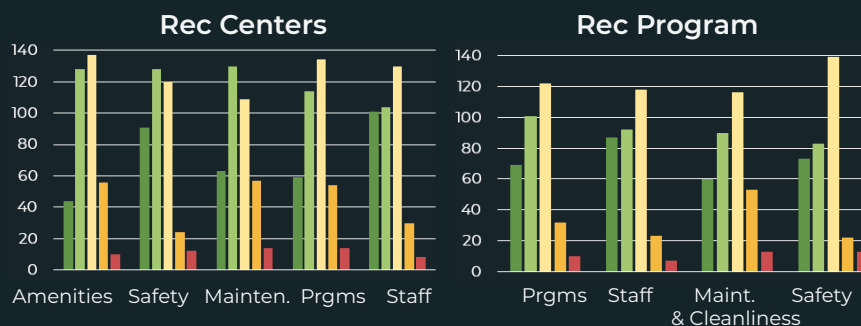
Building from outside does not have an inviting look. Building with no windows.

Lasky Recreational Center is a family friendly environment.

I would like to use modern exercise equipment. ...Commercial/private options are more convenient

Not consistent with programs offered

## EXPERIENCE RANKINGS





## PUBLIC HEALTH

The third section of the survey asked respondents to consider their priorities related to their family's health and wellbeing while using Detroit parks, recreation centers, and greenways.

### Clean & Safe

Survey responses indicate that clean amenities and facilities, and having safe spaces to go to are very important to Detroiters. Clean amenities and facilities ranked highest among very important public health concerns, followed closely by safe places to go. Year-round fitness and safe social-distancing were indicated as either very important or important by most respondents. Mental health services received the lowest rankings of importance and the highest rate of neutral responses.

### Building Community & Traveling Safe

Common write-in responses relayed a strong interest in cultural activities and other community connection opportunities to increase public health. Building strong community networks lays the groundwork for a successful response to future emergencies. Respondents also noted the need for transportation that is clean, safe, and reliable. For Detroiters, accessibility and public health go hand in hand. Concerns about health and safety in transportation can prevent residents from reaching parks and recreational opportunities.

### What do Detroiters have to say?

When asked what else is important to maintaining public health, respondents left the following comments.

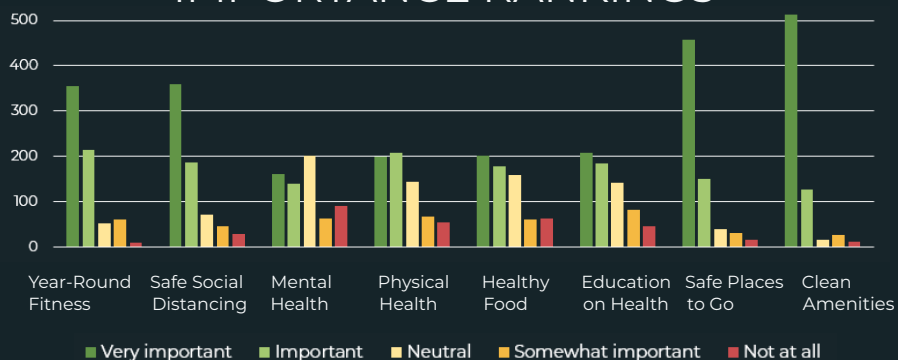
Education and connection for the community. Real things that bring different communities in Detroit together for common identity and interest as Detroiters.

A healthy environment! Healthy trees, maintained grounds, trash and debris removal.

It would be nice to have transportation available for neighborhood families. Many children, & families without.

To have sidewalks in Lafayette Plaisance cleared of snow in winter. The sidewalks are typically too treacherous to use.

## IMPORTANCE RANKINGS







## NATURE & THE ENVIRONMENT

*The fourth section of the survey asked respondents about the importance of green infrastructure, nature education, wildlife habitat, and use of natural spaces. This information informed our understanding of Detroiters' environmental goals.*

### What to Do in Detroit's Natural Spaces?

#### Versatile Active Spaces

Over three quarters of respondents indicated that they like to use natural spaces for active recreation including walking and hiking. Many other specific physical activities were also provided by respondents in write-in responses with common responses such as biking and dog walking.

#### Key Natural Space Activities

Respondents indicated use of these spaces for specialized activities including yoga and meditation, skiing, hammocking, swimming, and riding horses. Many respondents also wished to state their appreciation of nature and mentioned activities including plant identification, drawing, and camping. Natural spaces are a great place to have a picnic or enjoy one's lunch, as several respondents commented. These write-in responses highlight the versatility of natural spaces.

#### Activities in Nature:

77%	Walking / hiking
59%	Relaxing
40%	Play for children
36%	Photography / wildlife watching
6%	Other
23%	Enjoying nature
17%	Biking
16%	Dog walking
14%	Other exercise
10%	Picnicing
8%	Educational activities
8%	Socializing
4%	Running

#### Learning & Loving Nature

Opportunities for nature education received the highest rate of positive response, followed closely by trees in parks and greenways, accessible natural spaces, and maintenance. Respondents feel that these issues are important or very important. Write-in responses throughout the survey reflect respondents' desire for more educational opportunities in nature including informational signage and youth education.

# Barriers to Natural Space

## Greatest Challenges

The most common barriers to natural space use are a concern about dumping and trash and a lack of awareness about where these areas are. Over one third of respondents held these concerns, while nearly one third also had concerns about visibility, lines of sight, and general safety in these areas. Many respondents also indicated that they do not know how to use such spaces.

## Other Common Concerns

Respondents submitted 79 comments concerning other reasons that they do not use Detroit's natural spaces. The most common issues include cleanliness and maintenance concerns, such as **mowing and trail conditions**, as well as social discomfort from other park visitors, such as vehicles driving on the grass, **inappropriate behaviors**, weapon possession, noise, and camping. Lack of nearby natural spaces or transportation to existing spaces was mentioned by 14 individuals. Natural space **amenities**, such as benches, bathrooms, and lighting received a total of 10 comments.

### What keeps you from using natural spaces:

- 36.7% Dumping / trash
- 36.6% Unknown location
- 28% Visibility /sight lines
- 9% Unknown use
- 7% Animals / wildlife
- 11% Other
  - 23% Cleanliness & maintenance
  - 22% Social discomfort
  - 14% No info / signage
  - 13% Dogs, birds, bugs
  - 13% Amenities
  - 10% Location
  - 8% No transportation
  - 5% Lack of time

## What do Detroiters have to say?

When asked what else is important to maintaining nature and the environment, respondents left the following comments.

I love the flowers especially DAFFODILS, that bloomed in local parks this year.

Maintain historic structures such as the Palmer Park Log Cabin.

Place cards to tell about the species found in area

Live streams of natural phenomenon or social media updates

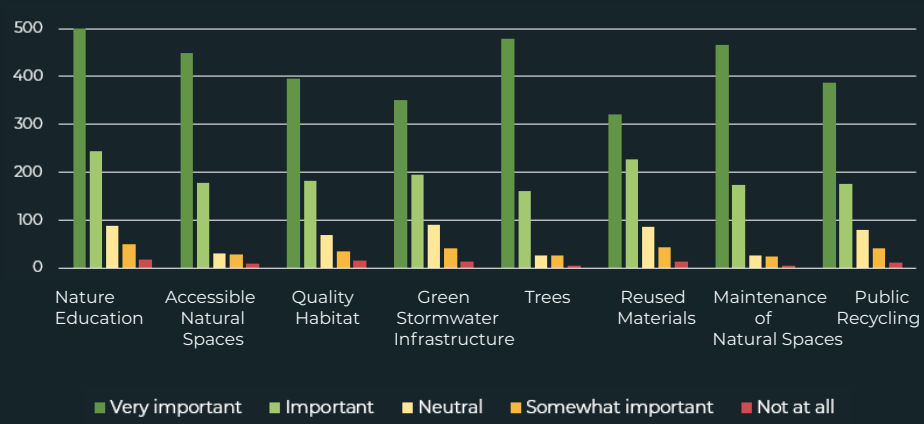


Creating urban designs that accommodate wildlife, pollinator gardens, and creative stormwater management ... Edible, native landscaping



Information stations, [that are] well lit with a human to help!

## IMPORTANCE RANKINGS





## ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY

The fifth section of the survey asked respondents about the importance of pathways and connections to and through Detroit, as well as walking and biking habits. These responses helped to inform our understanding of Detroiters' accessibility needs when it comes to parks and recreation.

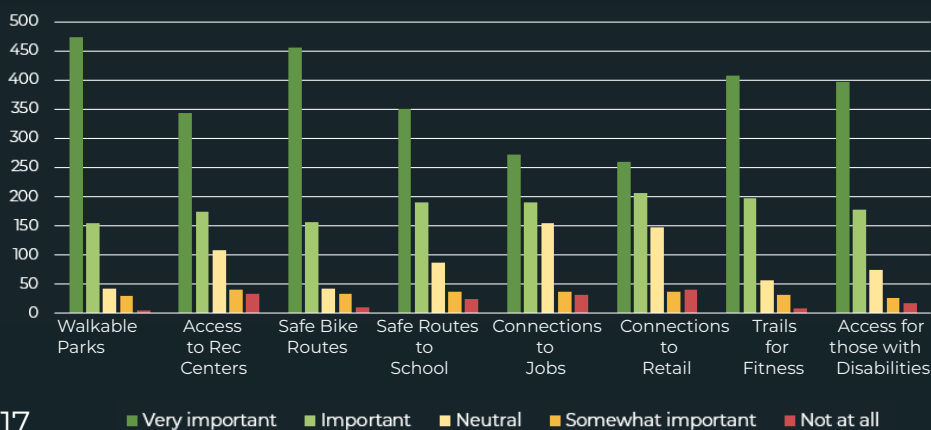
### Pathways to an Active Lifestyle

Survey responses indicate that walkable access to parks is a top priority, followed by safe bike routes, trails for fitness, and access for those with disabilities. Respondents are least concerned about walkable and bikeable connections to jobs and retail compared to other categories. However, these categories all received rankings of generally high importance.

### Different Modes for Different Folks

Detroiters access destinations around the city through many different modes of transportation. Many respondents indicated an interest in active transportation and public transit for short trips and multimodal trips. Continued improvements to greenway connections can improve mobility and physical activity for those on wheels and on foot. Additionally, improved public transportation, including bus routes to parks, well-lit, comfortable waiting structures, and increased stops near park and rec center entrances can improve access.

## IMPORTANCE RANKINGS





## Walking to Parks

### On the Move

The survey revealed that a very high percentage (82%) of respondents have walked to a local park at least once.

### Barriers to Walkability

Of the 117 respondents that have not walked to a Detroit park before, 63% indicated that their local park is too far away to walk to. Over half of respondents also indicated that crime and blight along the route to parks has prevented them from walking. Nearly one third of respondents also indicated other reasons for not walking to parks including fear of stray dogs, poor path conditions, inappropriate behavior from other users, and other safety concerns. Given that approximately 25% of Detroiters do not own personal vehicles, achieving walkable access to parks is crucial.

### Have you ever walked to your local park?

82%	Yes
16%	No
2%	No response

### Why not walk?

63%	It's too far
56%	Crime
51%	Blight
44%	Traffic
22%	I prefer not to walk
18%	I don't spend time in parks
30%	Other

## Biking to Parks

### New Wheels on the Road

Just over two thirds of survey respondents have biked to their local park in Detroit at least once.

### Barriers to Bikeability

The greatest barrier to respondents' ability to bike to parks is a **lack of access to a functioning bike**, with 45% of non-biking respondents indicating they do not have a bike. Several respondents commented that their bicycle is in need of repairs. Detroiters may benefit from bike repair stations along routes to parks.

Additionally, respondents noted that traffic is often a deterrent, due to a **lack of designated bike lanes** and inappropriate driver behavior. Bicycle infrastructure such as protected bike lanes, bikeshare services, safe bike storage, air pumps, and repair stations could increase the use of bicycles as an affordable transportation option.

### Have you ever biked to your local park?

64.6%	Yes
33.6%	No
1.8%	No response

### Why not bike?

45%	I don't have a bike
28%	Traffic
20%	Crime
18%	I prefer not to bike
17%	Blight
11%	It's too far
4%	I don't spend time in parks
22%	Other

## What do Detroiters have to say?

When asked what inhibits Detroiters' ability to access parks and recreation centers, respondents indicated the following.

Lack of trees and greenspace along the way making it hot and feeling too exposed.  
...though I would bike if there was more greenway connections between parks and river walk.

Lack of bike stands to lock bike to. Streets littered w broken glass and garbage.  
...My tires are flat and I don't have a pump.



Parks and Rec has really done an incredible job with ... the new bike lanes along Pontcharin. I ride this area weekly on my commute to work.



I rarely walk alone because men sometimes catcall [or] follow me in this area and it's scary







## **Community Needs Assessment**

The Community Needs Assessment survey inquired about the concerns and experiences of Detroiters regarding public spaces, especially concerning recreation centers and programming. Respondents were also asked about their modes of transportation and how they usually receive information about Detroit happenings. Demographic questions attest to the representative quality of this sample. Unlike the PRSP survey, the Community Needs Assessment was specifically administered to collect a representative sample of Detroiters. Findings from this survey underscore the results in the previous section. This strengthens our understanding of both highly concerned citizens and the residents of Detroit at large.

## Issues of Importance

### Seniors, Safety, & Access

When asked to about the importance of a variety of issues, Detroiters most frequently ranked public safety as their top concern followed by job training, accessibility for those with disabilities, and quality education for school aged children. However, when looking at a composite of Detroiters' top four choices, involvement in local decision making also received the popular vote.

The greatest concern reported in this assessment included the following, in order from most to least frequently indicated: Access to safe outdoor spaces, Services and programming for seniors, quality after school or summer programs, access to indoor recreational programming, and access to outdoor programming. More details are available in the chart on the next page.

### Number 1 Issue:

- 40% Public safety
- 14% Job training
- 8.8% Accessibility
- 6.3% Quality education
- 4.3% Healthy food access
- 4.0% Health care access
- 3.9% Senior programs
- 3.2% Healthy food cost

### Top 4 Issues:

- 68% Public safety
- 35% Involvement in local decisions
- 34% Quality education
- 30% Job training
- 27% Healthy food access
- 27% Safe outdoor spaces
- 27% Health care access
- 21% Senior programs

## Getting Around Detroit

### Transportation Modes

Responses revealed that while an overwhelming majority of Detroiters use personal vehicles get around the city, over one third of Detroiters also walk. Combined, 46% of Detroiters use a form of public transit and 7.1% use of bicycles and scooters.

### Unmet Transit Needs

Over half of respondents indicated that they do not use or need public transit. Nearly one quarter of respondents indicated an unmet public transit need.

### Does Public Transit Fulfill Your Needs?

- 19% Yes
- 23% No
- 52% I don't need or use it
- 5% No response

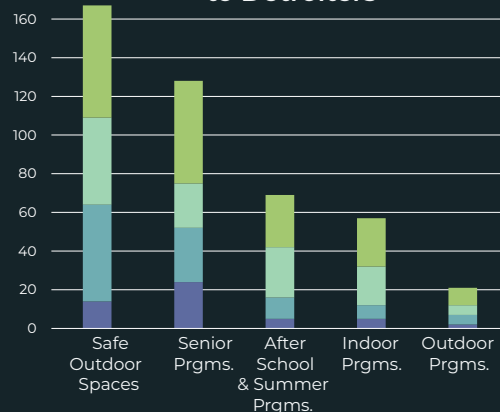
### Transportation Modes:

- 91% Personal vehicle
- 37% Walking
- 23% DDOT buses
- 23% Ride share
- 19% Personal bicycle
- 13% SMART buses
- 7.5% Cab/taxi services
- 7.4% QLINE streetcar
- 4.2% Electric scooter
- 2.9% MoGo bikeshare
- 2.6% Megabus
- 1.1% Skateboard
- 1.4% Other
- 2.8% None of these

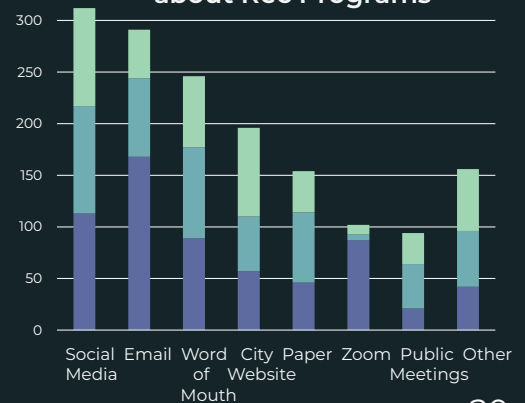
## LEARNING ABOUT DETROITERS

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th

### Issues Important to Detroiters



### How Detroiters' Learn about Rec Programs





## Communication & Information

Email is the top way that Detroiters receive information about recreational programming. Respondents also indicated that **social media** and **word of mouth** are frequent methods of information sourcing. Discussion during *Public Focus Group #6; Equity in Parks & Rec* reaffirms these findings. This information, along with identified marketing gaps, can help inform the creation of effective marketing strategies and other informational campaigns.

## Satisfaction Ratings

Responses indicate that Detroiters are the most satisfied with Detroit's parks and the least satisfied with the availability of information about the parks and recreational services. This response from the representative sample confirms the findings from the City-Wide Survey and Focus Groups.

The lower satisfaction rate and lower overall response rate to questions about rec centers and programs reflects a lack of knowledge about program offerings and the low rate of use already seen in the City-Wide Survey.

## Desired Improvements

Based on the prompts from the previous question, respondents were asked to indicate which two options they would most like to see improved. Over half of respondents indicated that it is most important to improve the look and feel of parks near them. Many people also wanted improvements for walking loops, rec centers, and information about parks and recreational services.



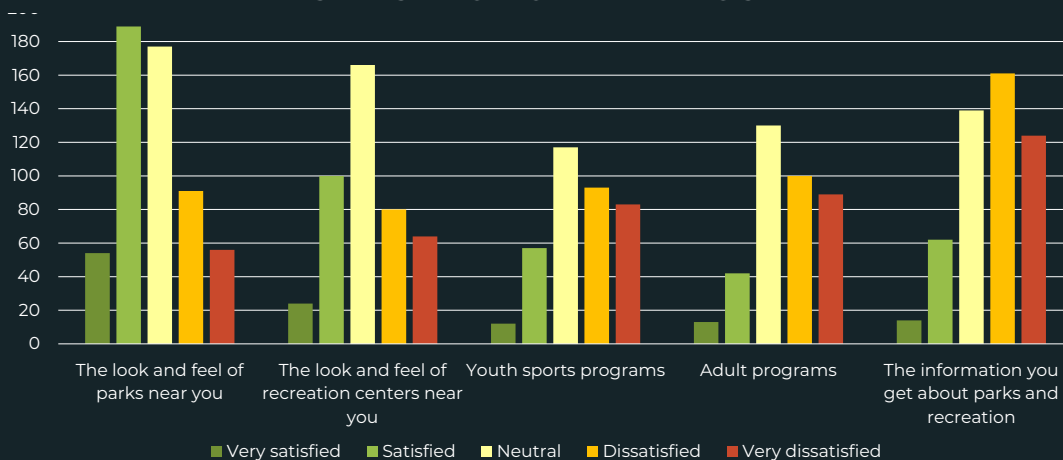
### Most Important to Improve:

- 56% Parks
- 27% Walking loops
- 21% Information about Parks & Rec
- 21% Rec centers
- 19% Youth sports
- 15% Adult programs
- 4% Basketball courts

### Most Important to Add:

- 30% Indoor fitness space
- 22% Spaces for seniors
- 21% Computer labs
- 16% Nature area
- 16% Health clinics
- 16% Outdoor courts
- 15.1% Concessions
- 13% Library
- 11% Food pantries
- 9% Pool

## SATISFACTION RATINGS



# Public Space: Welcoming or Unwelcoming

## Comfort in Good Maintenance

Cleanliness and mowed grass are the greatest factors in Detroiters feeling welcome in a public space. Over two thirds of respondents also appreciate shade from trees. This reflects the sentiments of other community engagement participants, as well as codified research on the design of good public spaces.

## Clean & Bright Spaces

Nearly all respondents indicated that the presence of trash makes a space unwelcoming, followed by other safety concerns. Responses give insight into Detroiters' hierarchy of concerns, with poor lighting ranked above lack of amenities and after hours activity.

## Desired Additions to Public Space

### Top Choice for New Amenities

With nearly 80 responses, outdoor courts was the most requested parks related amenities, followed by concession options, nature areas, and pools. For rec center and programming, over 100 respondents indicated desire for an indoor fitness space, followed by support for computer labs, spaces for seniors, and food pantries.

### That's A Job for Detroit Parks & Rec

Respondents indicated high importance of improving cleanliness, safety, accessibility, and continued engagement with the community. These responses confirm the concerns from the previous survey and following focus groups.

### Welcoming:

- 85% Cleanliness
- 84% Mowed grass
- 67% Close to home
- 59% Shade trees
- 57% Police or security
- 52% Organized activities
- 48% Camera/detectors
- 45% Controlled access

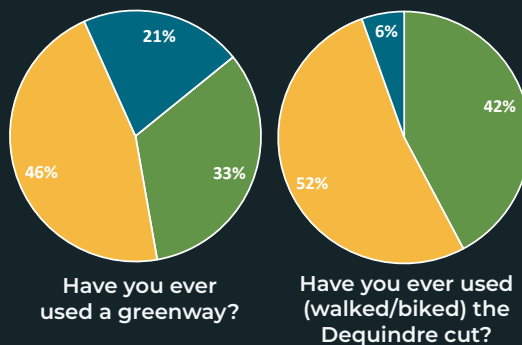
### Unwelcoming:

- 93% Trash
- 83% Poor lighting
- 68% Others' behavior
- 54% No staff
- 51% Crowded facilities
- 49% Lack of amenities
- 44% Poor sight lines
- 39% After hours activity
- 38% This space is not "for me"

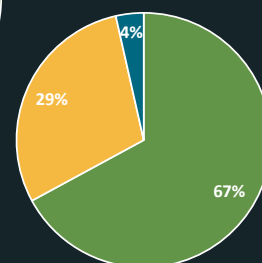
### Very Important Actions for Parks & Rec:

- 89% Clean parks & mowed grass
- 74% Rec centers safety
- 71% Rec center buildings
- 68% Building accessibility
- 65% Program accessibility
- 64% After school/summer programs
- 61% Community engagement

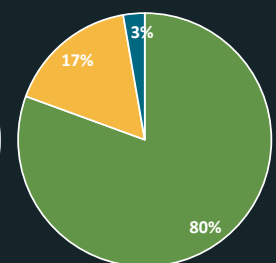
## NATURAL SPACE USE



Did you have access to parks & nature growing up?



Did you use parks & natural areas growing up?



Given that the Dequindre Cut is one of Detroit's greenways, the discrepancy between greenway use and Dequindre cut use indicates that Detroiters' are unaware of what a greenway is and where they are.

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



## Focus Groups

The City hosted 17 Stakeholder focus groups and 6 Public focus groups, to facilitate the development of recommendations specific to Detroiters' wants and needs. Guided by the responses of the City-Wide Survey and the Community Needs Assessment, recommendation categories and guiding questions were developed for the consideration of the Stakeholder Focus Groups. The Public Focus Groups reviewed and refined the initial recommendations of the Stakeholder Focus Groups. These groups voiced the ideas and concerns of the general public. After completing all public focus groups, finalized recommendations were provided for a broader vetting process through Public Review. Specific recommendations from all groups can be found Chapter 3: Strategies, and additional commentary, chat logs, and other materials are in the Appendices.





## STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS

### Procedure

#### Who are the stakeholders?

Attendees included representatives from public organizations, nonprofits, and City departments. Each representative provided expertise in the area of their focus group. For example, representatives from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, the Detroit Health Department, and other public health experts attended the Health Focus Group.

#### Initial Recommendation Development

Focus Groups were conducted virtually through Zoom, to facilitate safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals participated via video, phone, or the chat feature. Each session began with introductions and a brief explanation of the subject under discussion with an interactive PowerPoint presentation. This presentation was shared with participants for later access and documentation. Large sessions used the breakout function to discuss guiding questions in smaller groups. After discussing the assigned topics, led and documented by staff, participants returned to the main session to summarize their discussions and discuss any final comments. Additional commentary was also collected through chat logs, emails, and annotated maps. Firm recommendations were then compiled for public focus groups to review.

### What We Heard

#### Establishing Assets & Needs

Groups explored the who and the how of improvements. Participants considered the practicality of program changes such as healthy food options, mowing schedules to match area types, and extended hours for recreation centers. Many desires expressed in the City-Wide Survey faced logistical challenges. Stakeholders addressed many of these challenges with creative solutions.

#### Gathering Resources

Participants compiled lists of contacts for future partnerships in programming and park stewardship. Additionally, they identified potential groups with relevant expertise and interests to include in proceeding Public Focus Groups.

### Next Steps

#### Definition and Further Revision

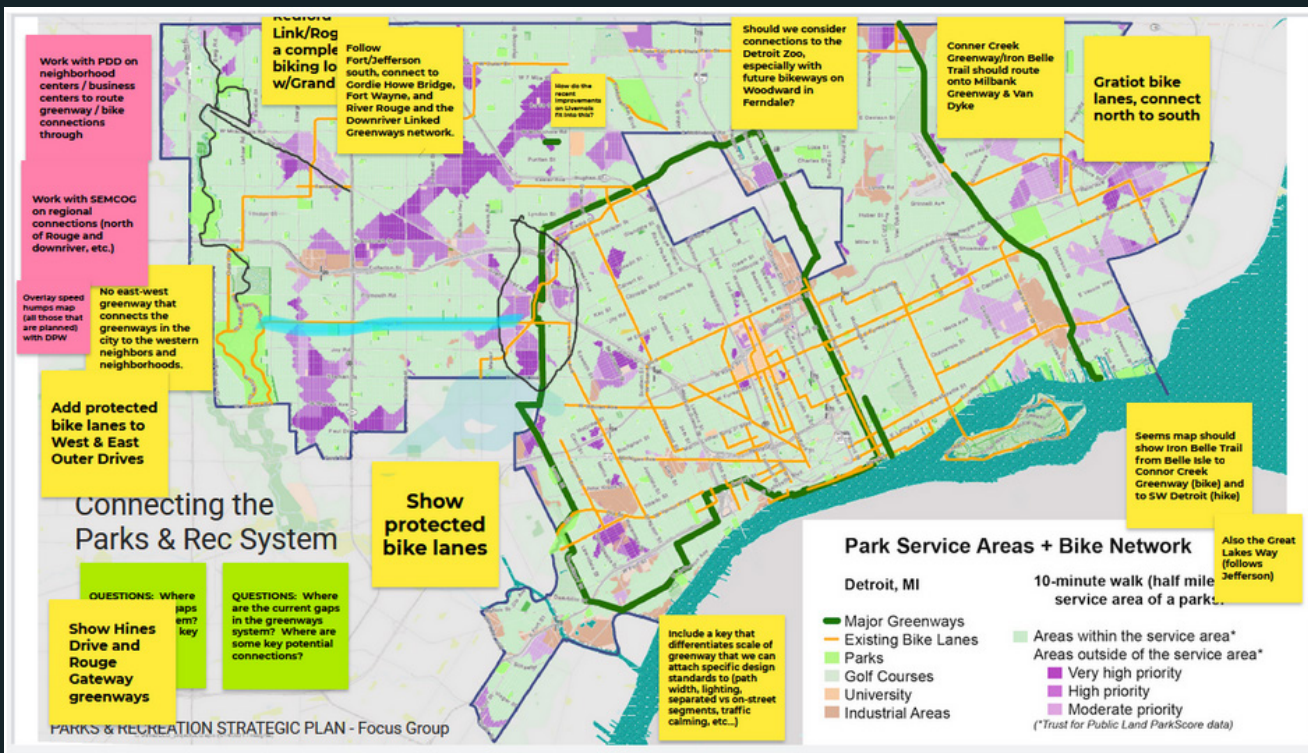
Staff reviewed stakeholder commentary and incorporated it into the initial draft of recommendations for each of the focus areas: **Nature, Stewardship, Fitness & Athletics, Safe Access, Health & Resiliency, and Equity**. Related topics were then combined and presented to the public focus groups for further refining.



# VIRTUAL DISCUSSIONS



# INTERACTIVE MAPS



## ***Developing the Recommendations: Thematic Focus Groups***

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Starting with the three main goals of the Strategic Plan, stakeholder groups were assembled to discuss the following topics. Their contributions informed the initial recommendations, which were then condensed into six areas of focus and vetted by public focus groups.

Goal	Stakeholder Groups: Defining	Public Groups: Refining
<b>NATURE &amp; THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	1. <i>Access to Nature</i> 2. <i>Natural Resource Management</i>	1. Nature
	3. <i>Adaptable Park Maintenance</i> 4. <i>Advocacy &amp; Stewardship</i>	2. Maintenance & Stewardship
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH</b>	5. <i>Year-Round Fitness</i> 6. <i>Neighborhood Athletics</i>	3. Fitness & Athletics
	7. <i>Health &amp; Rec</i> 8. <i>Schools, Libraries, &amp; Rec</i>	4. Health & Centers
<b>ACCESS &amp; CONNECTIVITY</b>	9. <i>Accessibility for Disabilities</i> 10. <i>Safe Walking, Biking &amp; Transit Access</i> 11. <i>Connecting the System &amp; Greenways</i>	5. Safe Access
	12. <i>Equity</i> 13. <i>Security</i> 14. <i>Permitting</i>	6. Equity

Note: Additional focus groups were held during the Community Needs Assessment and the East Riverfront Assessment Survey (ERAS). More information on these studies can be found in Appendices.





## PUBLIC FOCUS GROUPS

### Procedure

#### Who attended the Public Focus Groups?

Public focus group attendees included community leaders, local organization representatives, and concerned citizens. Many attendees represented large, community interest groups, often related to the topic of the session. For example, representatives from the Littlefield Community Association, Friends of Rouge Park, and other community organizations attended the Stewardship Focus Group.

#### Refined Recommendation Development

Public Focus Groups were conducted in the same manner as the Stakeholder Focus Groups. These groups discussed the initial recommendations formed by the stakeholder groups, specifically tasked with contributing constructive feedback and pinpointing any previously unidentified areas of concern and creative solutions. This process helped to ensure that all recommendations were carefully vetted by the public.

### What We Heard

#### Confirming Survey Responses

Public Focus Group commentary reinforced many sentiments expressed in

both surveys, including the prioritization of quality maintenance, increased safety, increased effectiveness of marketing and communications and improved online resources.

#### New Insights

Participants provided many new insights into Detroit's recreational needs including more youth and green job programs. Participants also brought attention to the digital divide, offering a two-pronged solution of sending out rec program catalog mailers and increasing the consistency and ease of use of rec center websites.

### Next Steps

#### Revisions and Additions

Public commentary contributed to the broadening of several recommendations to allow for additional opportunities. For example, the Natural Resources group commented on the necessity of trees, which has now been codified by a recommendation for increasing the tree canopy. These revised recommendations will be open for additional revision in the Public Review process.



## Public Review

The public review section will be developed after Public Review is completed.