

Part I: Pre-Workshop Survey

Overview

The Oakland County Parks Commission was asked to complete an online survey (Crowd Signal) in preparation for the Visioning Workshop that will take place on April 6, 2022. The survey consisted of three questions:

1. How important do you feel are each of the following actions to the Oakland County Parks Commission in 2023-2027
2. Where should Oakland County Parks focus its investment of time and resources first? Please select 5
3. What is important to you as you consider the future of Oakland County Parks and Recreation?
4. Commissioners were also asked to provide their name and zip code (not included in this report).

Full Text of Action Statements

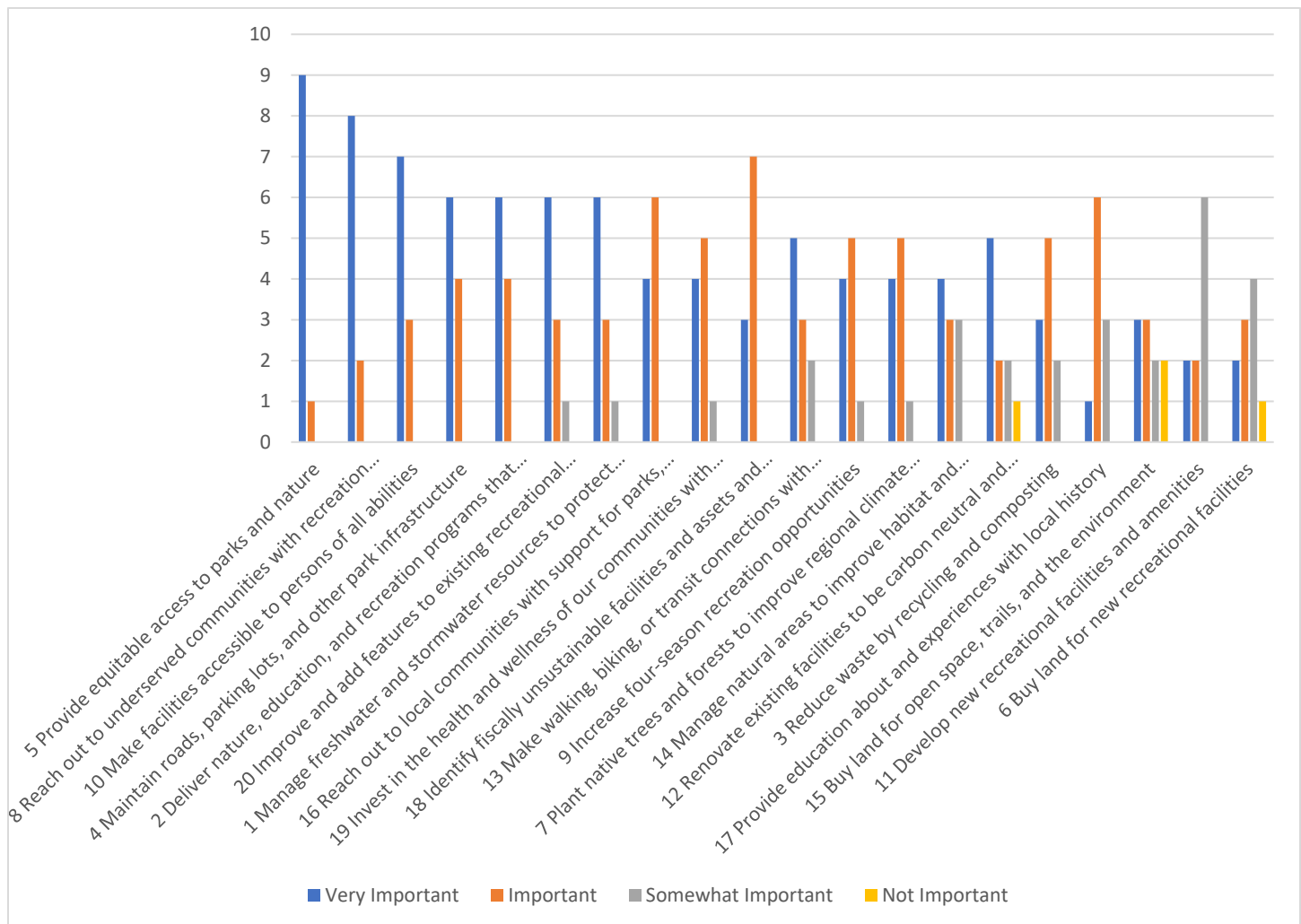
1. Manage freshwater and stormwater resources to protect water quality and reduce flooding
2. Deliver nature, education, and recreation programs that welcome everyone
3. Reduce waste by recycling and composting
4. Maintain roads, parking lots, and other park infrastructure
5. Provide equitable access to parks and nature
6. Buy land for new recreational facilities
7. Plant native trees and forests to improve regional climate resiliency and reduce carbon
8. Reach out to underserved communities with recreation programs and mobile recreation services
9. Increase four-season recreation opportunities
10. Make facilities accessible to persons of all abilities
11. Develop new recreational facilities and amenities
12. Renovate existing facilities to be carbon neutral and environmentally sustainable
13. Make walking, biking, or transit connections with neighborhoods and other parks
14. Manage natural areas to improve habitat and connectivity for wildlife
15. Buy land for open space, trails, and the environment
16. Reach out to local communities with support for parks, trails, and natural resources management
17. Provide education about and experiences with local history
18. Identify fiscally unsustainable facilities and assets and remove from service
19. Invest in the health and wellness of our communities with active outdoor programs
20. Improve and add features to existing recreational facilities and amenities

Top selections for questions 1 and 2

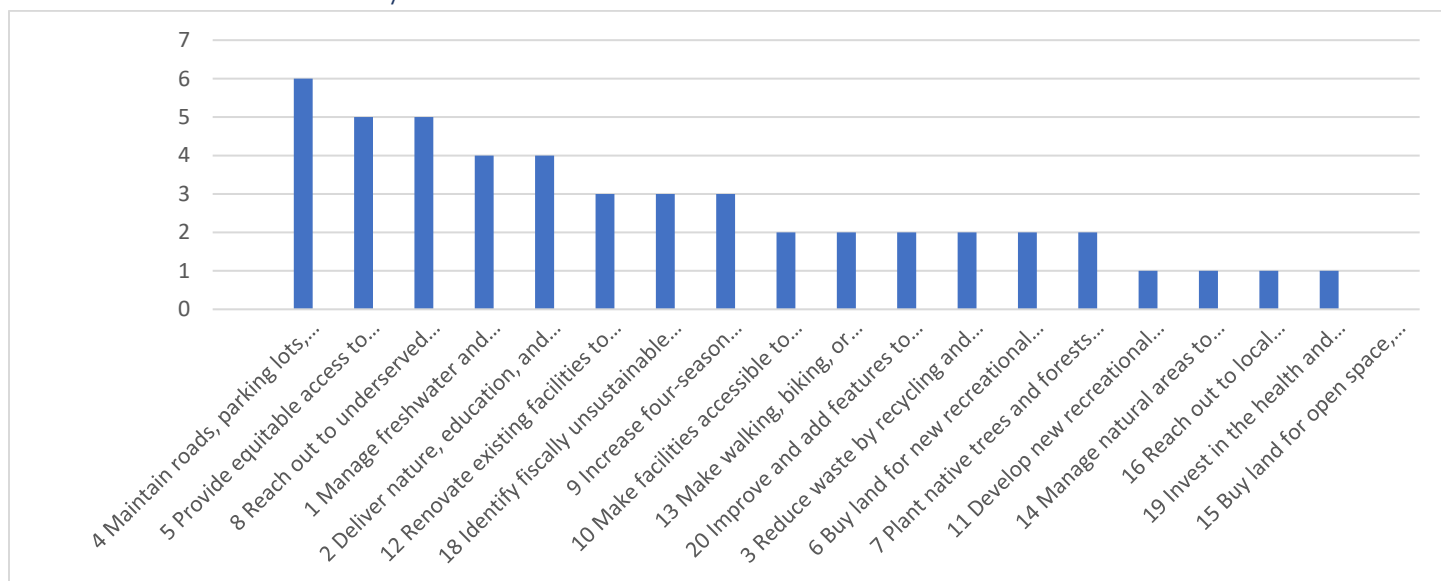
Top Selections	Importance Rating: Top 8	Resource Focus: Selected by 6, 5, or 4 Commissioners
5. Provide equitable access to parks and nature	Ranked 1	selected by 5
8. Reach out to underserved communities with recreation programs and mobile recreation services	Ranked 2	selected by 5
10. Make facilities accessible to persons of all abilities	Ranked 3	Selected by 2
4. Maintain roads, parking lots, and other park infrastructure	Ranked 4	selected by 6
2. Deliver nature, education, and recreation programs that welcome everyone	Ranked 5	selected by 4
20. Improve and add features to existing recreational facilities and amenities	Ranked 6	Selected by 2
1. Manage freshwater and stormwater resources to protect water quality and reduce flooding	Ranked 7	Selected by 4
16. Reach out to local communities with support for parks, trails, and natural resources management	Ranked 8	Selected by 1
18. Identify fiscally unsustainable facilities and assets and remove from service	Ranked 11	Selected by 3

Top Selections	Importance Rating: Top 8	Resource Focus: Selected by 6, 5, or 4 Commissioners
9. Increase four-season recreation opportunities	Ranked 12	Selected by 3
12. Renovate existing facilities to be carbon neutral and environmentally sustainable	Ranked 15	Selected by 3

How important do you feel are each of the following actions to the Oakland County Parks Commission in 2023-2027



Where should Oakland County Parks focus its investment of time and resources first? Please select 5.



Open-ended comments: What is important to you as you consider the future of Oakland County Parks and Recreation?

Access, equity, and diversity of park portfolio/amenities.

Environmental sustainability in all aspects of the Parks systems--including but not limited to--purchasing, operations, and community engagement/education, etc.

Upgrade Catalpa Park. The way it currently exists is a statement of inequality in our County as well as an embarrassment.

Ensure OCPR has programs that are inviting to seniors and youth. OCPR should consider taking activities and mobile trucks into the municipalities when it is possible. If an opportunity to collaborate with the local governments the department should. One of the goals is to give the citizens of Oakland County the best recreational experience within the county.

Setting examples for sustainability and educating the public about sustainability, climate change, climate mitigation and resiliency.

Provide more Family Recreational programing. Eliminate features that are under used and come up with new innovative ideas that will attract more people to our parks. Have some programs where we pick up families in their communities with our buses and take them out to one of our great parks (Nature Centers, Walking trails, Wave Pool, Beaches and Picnic areas all for \$15 per family to enjoy a "Day of Fun for the Family".

I want to see visioning and investment in Catalpa. The park is primarily used by Soccer players and I would wager that most of them are not even from (residents/citizens) of Southfield/Oak Park or Berkley. What can be done with Catalpa? How can we engage the residents within a 3-mile radius of Catalpa? How can we include people from South Oakland in North Oakland parks (transportation; coordinating with SMART etc.) and vice versa.

It is important to me that we invest equally in all areas and demographics making sure that all of Oakland County families have close access to a variety of recreational opportunities and that all those facilities are maintained with equal vigor and investment.

We cannot be all things to all people. We should look at these options in terms of our Mission Statement. We also should examine who we are. We know we are not federal parks, state parks, metropolitan parks, or municipal parks. We have wrestled with the definition of a county park before in terms of size and service area. Additionally, our visioning should have an eye to the future. We should be looking out 25 years from now and thinking about what the County will look like, and what will be the role of parks and open spaces. County Executive, David Coulter, delivered his 2022 State of the County address Tuesday, March 15, 2022. His address

included the following: "Green places-and-spaces also contribute to a quality life. Our 14 parks and 138 miles of trails provide everything from respite to recreation. They allow us to connect with nature and reconnect with ourselves. The voters of our County once again demonstrated their enthusiastic support by expanding the parks millage. Our parks system is vital to preserving our green space for future generations. Working in collaboration with local communities, I hope to have 400 miles of Oakland County trails linking our parks, our communities and our region for all to enjoy." This should be a top priority. The County Executive's speech also stated that, "Maintaining fiscal discipline and ensuring the county lives within its means is a fundamental principle of good government." Likewise, our visioning should include a priority of staying within our budget.

Part II: Workshop Discussion

On April 6, 2022, the Oakland County Parks Commission held the Visioning Workshop at the end of the regular Commission meeting. This workshop was the first step in a longer strategic planning process that is part of the Commission's update to the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Prior to the workshop, Commission members responded to a survey containing several statements that they were asked to rank the importance of each statement and select the top 5 for implementation. The results of the survey served as the structure for the Visioning Workshop discussion.

We are grateful to our three guest experts who presented information in the first half of the Workshop and participated in the discussion with the Commission:

- Robin Carter-Cooper, Oakland County Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
- Tyler Klifman, SEMCOG Planner, Economic and Community Vitality
- Erin Quetell, Oakland County Environmental Sustainability Officer

The following narrative summarizes the discussion from April 6 by the Parks Commission.

"Provide equitable access to parks and recreation"

- *Ranked 1 out of 20*
- *Selected in Top 5 by 5 people*

Parks are for all humanity.

Parks help people to be healthy.

Parks should be close to home and without obstacles.

We need to provide the same standard of quality to parks across the entire county.

We need to evaluate our parks for how welcoming they feel to diverse groups of people and know that access may mean different things to different people. Is the signage welcoming to everyone and the same across the county? Does the park feel secure and safe?

When deciding what we offer in our parks, we need to be aware that stereotypes exist and ask people what they want instead of making assumptions based on age, race, or other characteristics.

We want to help people access the benefits of nature and introduce kids to nature. We can work on getting people from the more urbanized parts of the county to our northern parks to experience nature by providing transportation. But we also need to understand that this is not the same as having nature close to home that you can access independently. Bussing alone is not the answer.

We understand that not everyone may be comfortable driving from southern to northern Oakland County to visit our larger parks. Rural areas may feel less safe and not inviting to people of color. Everyone needs to feel safe and secure and welcome when visiting.

We need to develop partnerships in underserved areas, sit down and talk with the local communities.

We can look at land use in the local communities and at planning and zoning regulations to see what opportunities there are for further park development.

We need to understand where the gaps are in equitable park access. One is regional trail connectivity.

“Reach out to underserved communities with recreation programs and mobile recreation services”

- *Ranked 2 out of 20*
- *Selected in Top 5 by 5 people*

“Deliver nature, education, and recreation programs that welcome everyone”

- *Ranked 5 out of 20*
- *Selected in Top 5 by 4 people*

We have a role in supporting local special events and helping provide better access to events

Events are the reason people visit parks and are how we introduce people to Oakland County Parks

While it is important to provide services to communities, our main focus is getting people to our parks

Food trucks at the parks are a great idea and provide one of the basic things people enjoy

Kids are the main reason a lot of people visit our parks. We need to do focus groups with kids.

We need to ask people what they want, what experiences they would like to have.

We have a role in education and interpretation and working with schools.

Accessing marketing tools that use geolocated data will help us understand people’s needs and behaviors.

We need to seek out culturally diverse opportunities and engage with new groups.

“Make facilities accessible to persons of all abilities”

- *Ranked 3 out of 20*
- *Selected in Top 5 by 2 people*

Plan our facilities for all ages and abilities. Consider the following:

- Communication and signage: colors, braille, accessible language
- Body sizes – seating options
- Blind and low vision
- Audio cues and audio interpretation
- Translations for non-English speaking guests. Would this be park-specific depending on the population in the local community?

We may need to prioritize accessibility of existing facilities. We should identify the main services the park provides and make those upgrades first.

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