

Region 2 Planning Commission



MEMORANDUM #3

To: Joint Oversight Committee
Joint Recreation Plan & Operations Study

From: Grant E. Bauman, AICP
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Date: September 29, 2009

Subject: **Public Involvement Strategies**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources mandates some type of public involvement effort during the development of a recreation plan. It is also important to have the support of the general public when considering options for the joint operation of park systems and programs. Accordingly, this memo:

- Proposes an update to the 1995 Citizen Opinion Survey; and
- Explores other options/opportunities for local public involvement regarding the Joint Operations Study and the Joint Recreation Plan.

Citizen Opinion Survey

The following questions are proposed for the update to the 1995 Survey:

1. **Where do you live?** *(please write the name of your city/village/township)*

2. **Generally speaking, how do you rate the City and County parks and recreation facilities?** *(please circle one)*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

3. **How many times have you visited any of the City or County parks or recreation facilities within the last year?** *(please circle one)*

20+ 11-20 1-10 None

(Please answer the next two questions by circling "5" for the most important response; "4" for the second most important response; "3" for the third most important response; "2" for the fourth most important response; and "1" for the fifth most important response)

4. **Why do you visit a park/recreation facility?**

Closeness to home	5	4	3	2	1
Special events	5	4	3	2	1
Participate in sports/games	5	4	3	2	1
Enjoy the outdoors	5	4	3	2	1
Use playground equipment	5	4	3	2	1

5. What discourages you from visiting a park/recreation facility?

Distance from home	5	4	3	2	1
Concern for personal safety	5	4	3	2	1
Nothing interesting to do	5	4	3	2	1
No parking	5	4	3	2	1
Too expensive	5	4	3	2	1

6. Should the City and County continue to develop a coordinated trail system?

Yes Not Sure/Do Not Know No

7. Is there an activity that you would like to see more of in the park/recreation facilities?
(please circle no more than 3)

Soccer	Water slides	Picnicking	Splash Park
Camping	Baseball/softball	Basketball	Boat ramps
Community festivals	Beaches	Volleyball	Disc Golf
Other _____		Other _____	

8. What have you seen at parks or recreation facilities in other cities or counties that you would like to see here?

9. Due to increasing costs and decreasing funding, it is becoming more difficult to provide parks and recreation. Should the city and the county employ any of the following strategies?

(circle "5" if you strongly agree; "4" if you somewhat agree; "3" if you are not sure or do not know; "2" if you somewhat disagree; and "1" if you strongly disagree)

Increase taxes to generate additional funding	5	4	3	2	1
Increase user fees to generate additional funding	5	4	3	2	1
Concentrate on improving existing parks rather than adding new parks	5	4	3	2	1
Consolidate City and County parks into a single metropolitan system	5	4	3	2	1
Transfer City parks into the County system	5	4	3	2	1
Cooperate in some other fashion by sharing personnel, equipment, and/or funds	5	4	3	2	1

The 1995 survey was mailed—along with a self-addressed, postage paid envelope—to 2,600 households in order to get 400 to 500 responses; a total of 524 surveys were returned. The Joint Oversight Committee may also want to consider an online version.

Other Options

Although the updated Citizen Opinion Survey will help to assess support for proposed park projects and changes to administration of the park systems, additional public involvement is warranted.

Public Presentations

Public presentations with a question and answer period are recommended for soliciting information from the following constituencies:

- **Parks and Recreation Employees** — The employees of the city and county parks departments will be directly impacted by any type of consolidation. They deserve to be heard and may have some ideas regarding areas where coordination between the two departments is needed. Accordingly, a town hall style public meeting open to both staffs is proposed.
- **Township Supervisors** — Townships are also interested in the proposal. Accordingly, a representative from the local Township Supervisor's Association is a member of the Joint Oversight Committee. However, a session on the consolidation proposal during a regular meeting of the Association may help to address the concerns of the various townships.

Website

Staff will maintain a webpage on the Region 2 Planning Commission website regarding the development of the Joint Recreation Plan and the Joint Operations Study for the duration of the projects. Access to the white papers, memos, and other documents produced for the Joint Oversight Committee and other audiences will be available for review via the webpage. Links to the webpage from the websites of the City and County will also be established. The direct link to the webpage is www.region2planning.com/website/Committees.asp?CID=23.