

# Region 2 Planning Commission



## MEMORANDUM #6

To: Joint Oversight Committee  
Joint Recreation Plan & Operations Study

From: Grant E. Bauman, AICP  
R2PC Principal Planner

Date: Friday, December 11, 2009

Subject: **Citizen Opinion Survey Responses and the Joint Recreation Plan**

As we are in the midst of a busy holiday season, I thought it appropriate to bring everyone up to date on the progress of the Joint Recreation Plan and Metro Park Study efforts via memo rather than convening a meeting. Please feel free to contact me regarding any of the matters discussed below at 768-6711 or [gbauman@co.jackson.mi.us](mailto:gbauman@co.jackson.mi.us).

### **Citizen Opinion Survey**

The Citizen Opinion Survey concluded on December 6th with a total of 373 responses. Accordingly, I wanted to release the information to the committee as quickly as possible. Attached to this memo are the pertinent pages from the draft recreation plan which summarize the survey results.

### **Joint Recreation Plan**

Now that the results of the Citizen Opinion Survey are available, the entire document is near completion. Accordingly, it is appropriate for the Joint Oversight Committee to meet in the near future to review the recreation plan prior to its one-month release for public comment. Therefore, the next meeting of the Joint Oversight Committee is:

**Tuesday, December 29, 2009 @ 10:00 am**  
**6th Floor Conference Room**  
**Jackson County Tower Building**  
**120 W. Michigan Avenue**  
**Jackson, MI 49201**

I will mail out copies of the recreation plan as soon as a full draft of the document is completed. In the meantime, plan chapters are posted on the Jackson Metro Park Study webpage of [www.region2planning.com](http://www.region2planning.com) as they are completed.

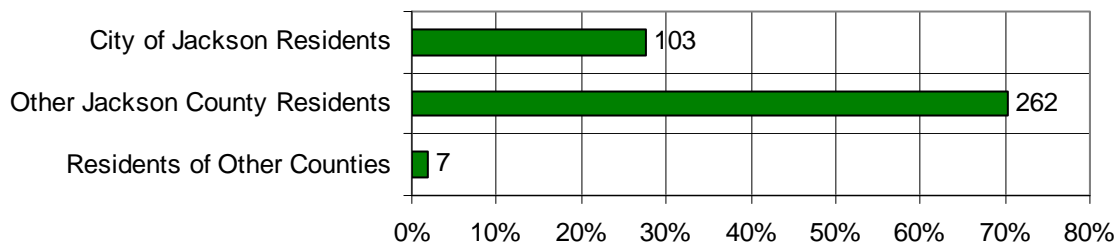
I look forward to meeting with you on December 29th!

### Citizen Opinion Survey

A citizen opinion survey was conducted between November 18, 2009 and December 6, 2009. It contained questions pertinent to both the Joint Recreation Plan and the joint operations study. The survey was conducted online via [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and linked to the websites of Jackson County ([www.co.jackson.mi.us](http://www.co.jackson.mi.us)), the City of Jackson ([www.cityofjackson.org](http://www.cityofjackson.org)), and the Region 2 Planning Commission ([www.region2planning.com](http://www.region2planning.com)). A press release announcing the opportunity to take the citizen opinion survey was released to area media outlets on November 13, 2009. That press release resulted in a brief articles published in the Jackson Citizen Patriot on November 14, 2009 and the Brooklyn Exponent on November 17, 2009 and an interview on JTV’s “Bart Hawley Show” on November 20, 2009. Direct emails soliciting citizen opinion survey participation were also sent out to everyone on the email lists maintained by Jackson County, the City of Jackson, and the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Jackson County. A total of 373 surveys were completed. The answers to the survey questions were then tallied and disseminated as follows:

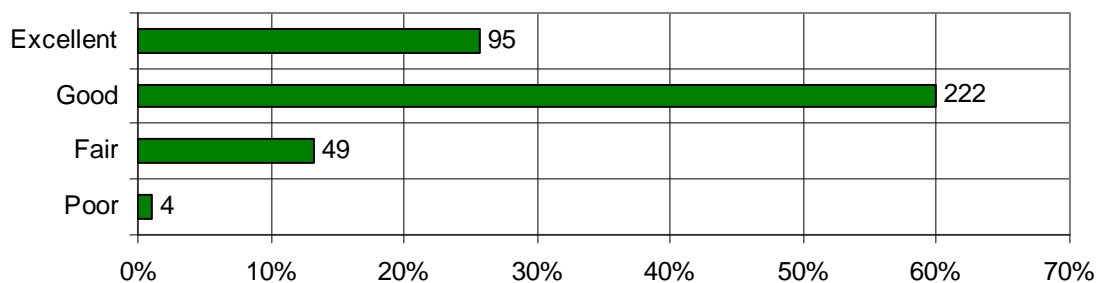
**1. Where do you live?**

Respondents were asked where they live (n=372). Over one quarter (27.7%) of respondents lived in the City of Jackson, which roughly corresponds to the portion (22.9%) of Jackson County residents living in the City in the Year 2000. The overwhelming majority of respondents (70.4%) lived elsewhere in the county. Very few respondents (1.9%) resided in another county.



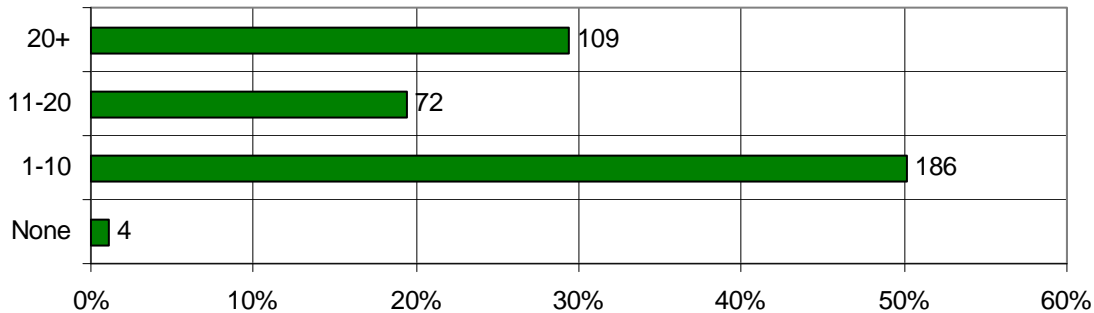
**2. How do you rate the City and County parks and recreation facilities?**

Respondents were asked to rate the city and county park systems (n=370). A quarter of respondents rated the city and county park systems as excellent (25.7%). The overwhelming majority of respondents rated the systems as good (60.0%). Only a few respondents rated the systems as fair (13.2%) or poor (1.1%).



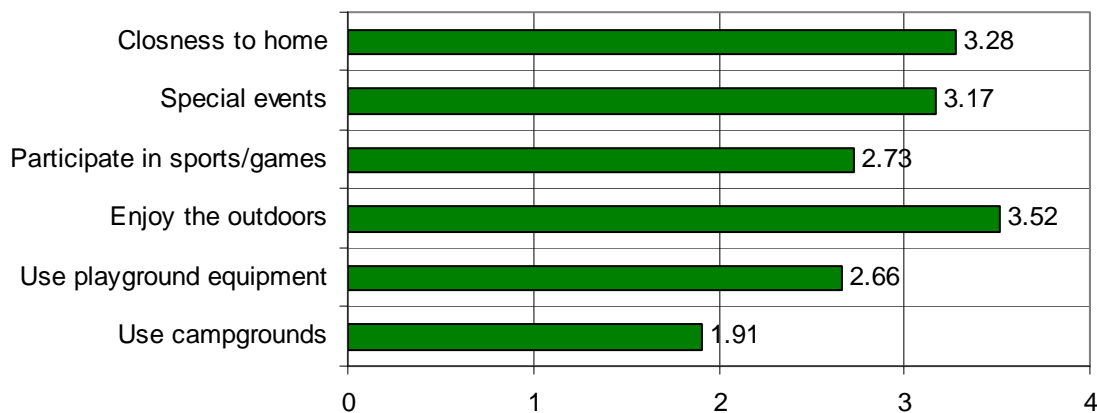
**3. How many times have you visited any of the City of County parks or recreation facilities within the last year?**

Respondents were asked how many times they visited a city or county park in the past year (n=371). Approximately half (50.1%) of respondents visited a city or county park between 1 and 10 times within the last year. More than a quarter of respondents (29.4%) visited a park more than 20 times and less than a quarter (19.4%) visited a park between 11 and 20 times. Only a few respondents (1.1%) did not visit a park in either system.



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

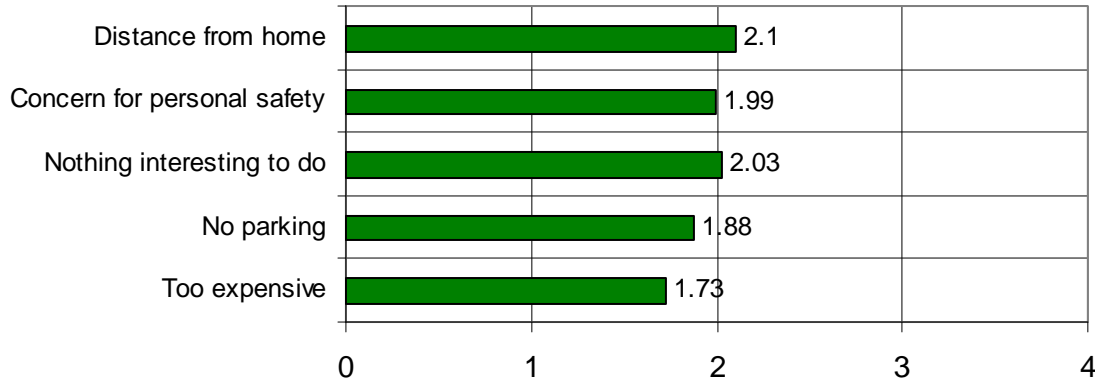
Respondents were asked if they strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), or strongly disagree (1) with how much various factors influence their decision to visit a park or recreation facility (n=373). The “enjoy the outdoors,” “closeness to home,” and special events” factors had average rankings between 3 and 4, indicating their importance. The “participate in sports / games” and “use playground equipment” categories had average ranking between 2 and 3, also indicating some influence. The “use campgrounds” category had an average ranking between 1 and 2, showing that this factor was not very important.



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

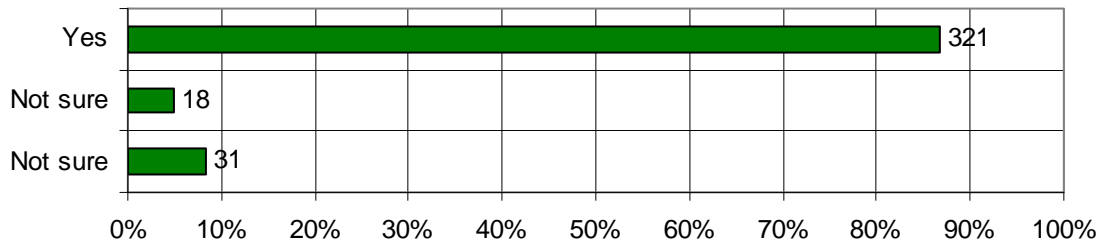
Respondents were asked if they strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), or strongly disagree (1) with how much various factors influence their decision to visit a park or recreation facility (n=351). The “distance from home” and “nothing interesting to do” factors had aver-

age rankings between 2 and 3, indicating some influence. The “concern for personal safety,” “no parking,” and “too expensive” categories had average ranking between 1 and 2, showing that these factors were not very important.



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

Respondents were asked if development of a coordinated trail system should continue to be a goal of the city and county (n=370). The overwhelming majority of respondents (86.8%) said “yes.” The remaining respondents were “not sure” (8.4%) or said “no” (4.9%).



**7. Is there an activity that you would like to see more of in the park/recreation facilities?**

Survey respondents were asked to select 3 out of the 19 suggested recreation facilities (n=326). The facilities are listed below in order of their popularity:

- Community festivals — 57.4% (187)
- Picnicking — 33.7% (110)
- Beaches — 32.8% (107)
- Splash park — 31.3% (102)
- Cross-country skiing — 28.8% (94)
- Fishing — 27.3% (89)
- Ice skating — 26.7% (87)
- Water slides — 25.8% (84)
- Sledding — 22.4% (73)
- Disc golf — 19.9% (65)
- Boat ramps — 14.7% (48)
- Camping — 14.1% (46)
- Volleyball — 13.5% (44)
- Golfing — 12.6% (41)
- Tennis — 11.3% (37)
- Basketball — 7.7% (25)
- Baseball/softball — 7.4% (24)
- Soccer — 5.8% (19)
- Hockey — 4.9% (16)

An opportunity to identify (“write-in”) other recreation facilities was also provided, resulting in 70 additional responses. Many of the suggestions included non-motorized facilities (e.g. horseback riding trails, mountain biking areas, bike lanes, walking/hiking/jogging trails) and events (e.g. walking / fitness programs and running events (5K runs/walks, triathlons, etc.)). Kayaking/canoeing facilities and cultural events (e.g., art and music) were also identified by a number of respondents. The full responses can be reviewed in Appendix D of this document.

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

Survey respondents were asked to comment on city and county parks as they compare to other park systems. A total of 150 suggestions were recorded. Once again, a variety of non-motorized trails ranked very high among all of the suggestions. Water parks and other aquatic facilities were also very popular, as were a variety of festivals and other cultural events. New/updated playground equipment, Frisbee/disc golf courses, and new/upgraded picnicking facilities were also suggestions. Finally, the need for more and better-maintained restrooms was pointed out numerous times. The full responses can be reviewed in Appendix D of this document.

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

Respondents were asked if they strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), or strongly disagree (1) with how much various factors influence their decision to visit a park or recreation facility (n=373). The “prioritize improving existing parks rather than adding new parks,” “cooperate in some other fashion by sharing personnel, equipment, and/or funds,” and “establish a City-County agreement for the operation for a metropolitan system” factors had average rankings between 3 and 4, indicating the greatest support. The “add or increase users fees to generate additional funding” and “add or increase taxes to generate additional funding” had average rankings between 2 and 3, showing the least support.

