

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Updated Survey Results
- Draft Vision
- Draft Goals and Opportunities
- Park Improvements "Toolbox"
- Park Champions / Successes
- Next Steps



Project Committee

Laura Ballek Cole	Mayor's Office
Rebecca Kiss	COA Board of Recreation
Nancy Wilt	COA Board of Recreation
Dave Snyder	COA Board of Recreation
Candida Affa	City Council
CeCe Gerlach	City Council, Parks & Recreation Committee Chair
Natalie Santos	City Council
Christian Brown	COA Shade Tree Commission and Planning Commission
Tony Hanna	Resident
Carol Robb	Volunteer
Darren Benson Jr	Allentown A's (AYOUTH)
Shaniqua Leak / Rashard Wilkerson	H.D.Y.A. (AYOUTH)
Kevin Ervin / Marlon Thomas	East Side Youth Center (AYOUTH)
Jessica French / Peter Allen	Mountainville Memorial Association (AYOUTH)
Kim Schaffer	Community Bike Works

ALLENTOWN PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT – 610.437.7757

Mandy Tolino, CPRP, Director
Mandy.Tolino@allentownpa.gov

Lucinda Wright, Deputy Director
Lucinda.Wright@allentownpa.gov

Bryne Heffner-Bair, Project Coordinator
Bryne.Heffner@allentownpa.gov



Committee, continued...

Scott Slingerland	CAT Lehigh Valley
Simon Moore / Ruffian Tittmann	Parknership
Rosaria Stoops	Friends of Allentown Parks
Rick Daugherty	Lehigh Valley Active Life
Leslie Billowitch / Neil Novak	Lehigh Valley Road Runners
Ana Tiburcio / Randy Atiyeh	Allentown School District
Janet Roth	Trexler Trust
John Leonard	COA Police
Efrain Agosto	COA Fire
Julio Guridy	Allentown Housing Authority
Becky Bradley, AICP	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Christian Martinez	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Scott Greenly	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Susan Myerov	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Liz Rosencrans / Brit Kondravy	D&L Heritage Corridor

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Committee, continued.....

Darian Colbert	Cohesion
Shannon Fugate	Allentown Arts Commission
Andrew Atiyeh	KNT Basketball
Kyle Edwards	A True L.O.V.E. Story
Daniel Bosket	Community Action Development Allentown
Samantha Shaak	Leonard Parker Pool Institute for Health
Flor and Robert Velez	Puertorican Culture Preservation
Carmen Bell / Jose Rivera	United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley
Fatima Nabavian	Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living
Marci Klinger	Lehigh Valley Disc Club
Christina DiPierro	Valley Youth House
Abigail Goldfarb	Conference of Churches

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Parks and Recreation Team

Mandy Tolino, Director of Parks and Recreation
mandy.tolino@allentownpa.gov

Lucinda Wright, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation
lucinda.wright@allentownpa.gov

Bryne Heffner-Bair, Project Coordinator
bryne.heffner@allentownpa.gov

Chris Hendricks, Recreation Manager
chris.hendricks@allentownpa.gov

Priscilla Reyes, Special Events Manager
priscilla.reyes@allentownpa.gov

Christian Bianco, Parks Superintendent
christian.bianco@allentownpa.gov



Project Team

SIMONE COLLINS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE – 610.239.7601

Pankaj Jobanputra, AICP, Project Manager

pjobanputra@simonecollins.com

Robert Gladfelter, RLA, ASLA

Project LA, Natural Resources Analyst

rgladfelter@simonecollins.com

Toby Levin, RLA, ASLA, Staff LA

tlevin@simonecollins.com

Jordan Upadhyay, Staff LA

jupadhyay@simonecollins.com

William Collins, RLA, Principal

wcollins@simonecollins.com



CERTIFIED PARK & RECREATION
PROFESSIONALS

Derek Dureka, CPRP

derekdureka@gmail.com

Kathleen Muller, CPRP

muller.recreation@gmail.com




Public Opinion Survey: Results

Public Opinion Survey



<https://qrco.de/allentownrecplansurvey>

<https://qrco.de/allentownrecreacionencuesta>



City of Allentown Open Space & Recreation Plan

Survey Introduction

Thank you for your interest in assisting with the planning of the City of Allentown's Park system, recreation programming, and open space needs. Over the next year, the City will develop a Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, which will serve the following purposes:

- Determine growth opportunities for the parks and recreation system.
- Evaluate the city's management of its recreation programs and facilities.
- Establish goals and objectives for the city and its Parks and Recreation Department.
- Identify the steps needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan.

In addition, the City is also developing separate master site plans for Bucky Boyle Park, Fountain Park and Roosevelt Park.

This opinion survey is a vital part of the planning process and will take **approximately 15 minutes to complete**. The survey asks residents to consider existing strengths and future opportunities for the City's parks, recreation, and open space needs. The survey will be available until July 31, 2025.

Residents will also have the opportunity to provide feedback at several public meetings to be held during the course of the planning process. Please check the City's website and notices for meeting dates.

Speak up for Allentown Parks and get a \$5 Gift Card courtesy of the Allentown Parknership! Share your email address at the end of the survey to claim your reward. Already taken the survey but still want a gift card? Feel free to take it again and add your email address this time.

Gifts cards include Amazon, Target, Walmart and many more! This is a limited time offer while supplies last.

Thank you for your time and participation!

Please take me !!!

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

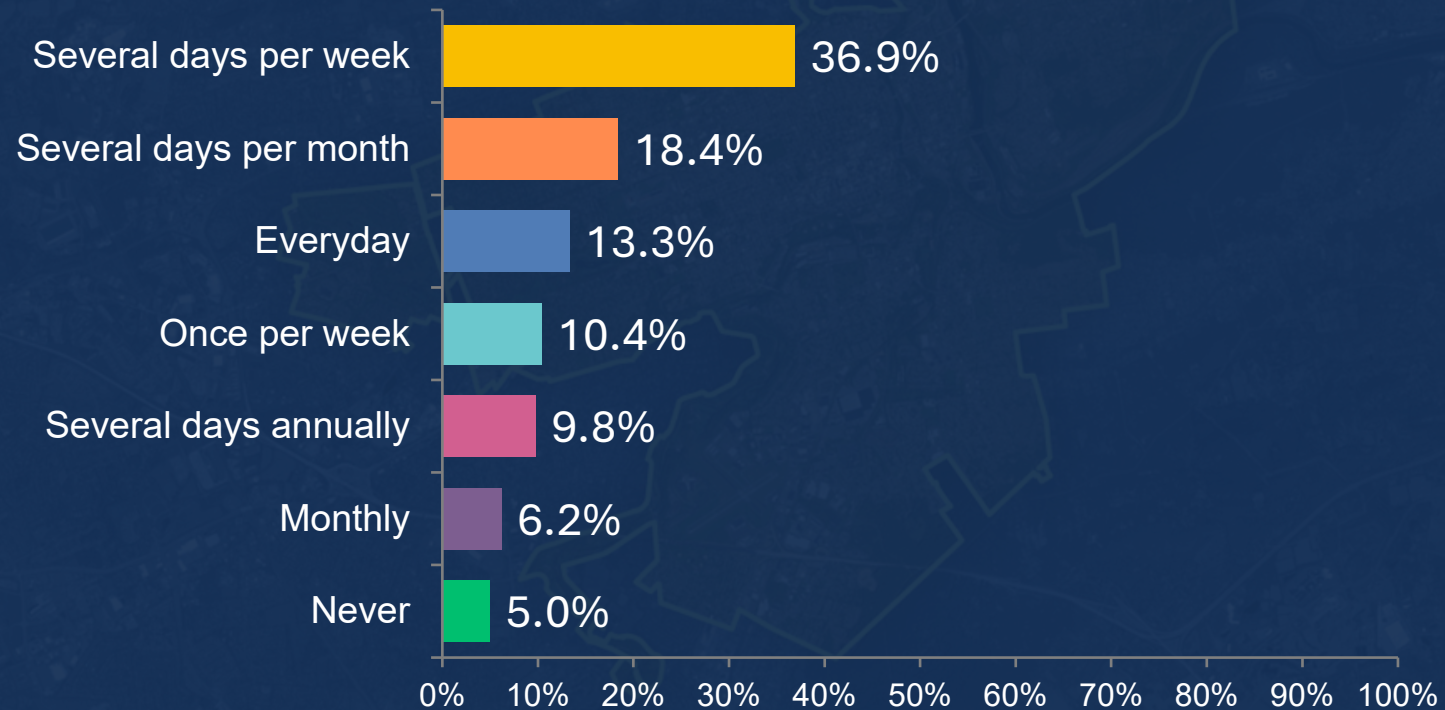
- **1888 responses as of June 10** (1140 responses since 5/10/25)
 - 1815 English language survey
 - 73 Spanish language survey
- **25% reside in 18104 Zip Code**
 - Parks include: Allentown Golf Course, Cedar Creek Parkway, Cedar Beach Park, Daddona Lake and Terrace Park, Rose Gardens, Trexler Memorial Park
- **24% in 18103**
 - Parks include: Roosevelt Park, Alton Park Playlot, Lehigh Parkway, Mack Pool, Percy Ruhe Park, South Mountain Reservoir
- **27% in 18102**
 - Parks include: Bucky Boyle Park, Fountain Park, Franklin Park, Jackson St. Community Park, Jordan Meadows, Old Fairgrounds Playground/5th St. Spray Park, Stevens Park, West Park
- **51%** of respondents have lived in their communities for 20+ years



Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q1: Generally, how often do people in your household visit parks in the City of Allentown?

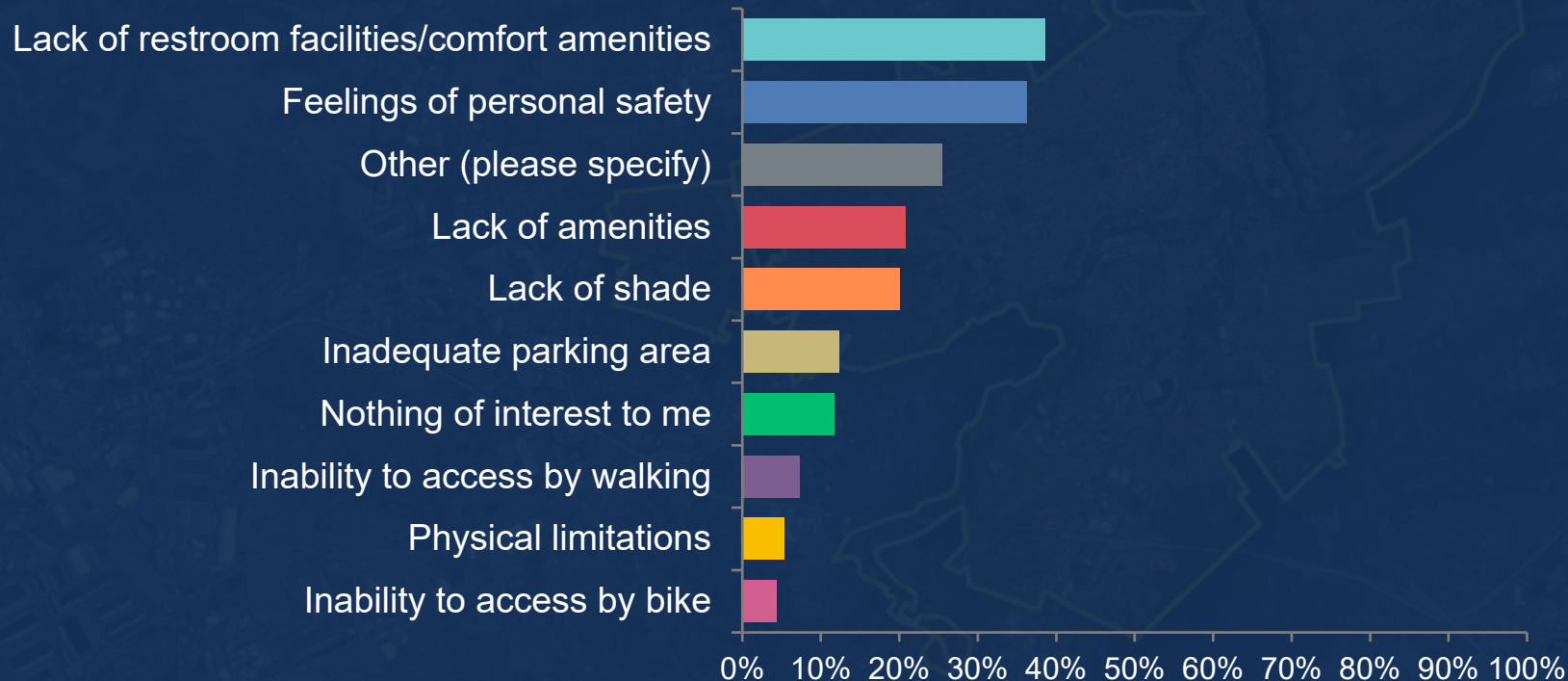
Answered: 1885 Skipped: 3



Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q2: If you answered 'Never' in Question 1, what are the primary reasons that you DO NOT visit parks in the City of Allentown? Select all that apply.

Answered: 510 Skipped: 1378



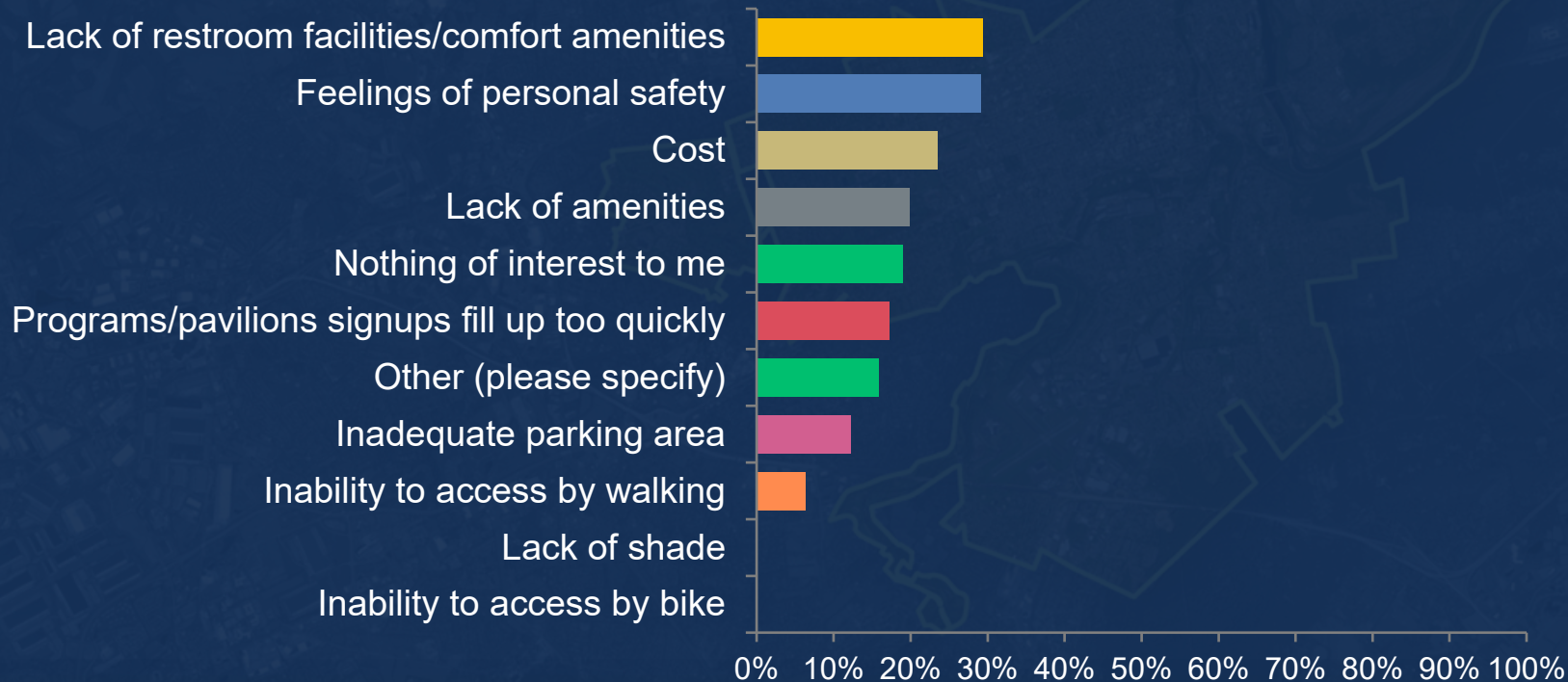
Other responses include:

- “Just [doesn’t] feel safe for my daughter to play there”
- “High grass near the water”
- Distance from home
- Lack of accessible amenities
- Lack of bike trails to get to the parks.
- Unclean

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q3: If you answered 'Never' in Question 1 (How often do people in your household visit parks in the City of Allentown?), what are the primary reasons that you DO NOT participate in Allentown programs or rent facilities in the City of Allentown ? Select all that apply.

Answered: 443 Skipped: 1445



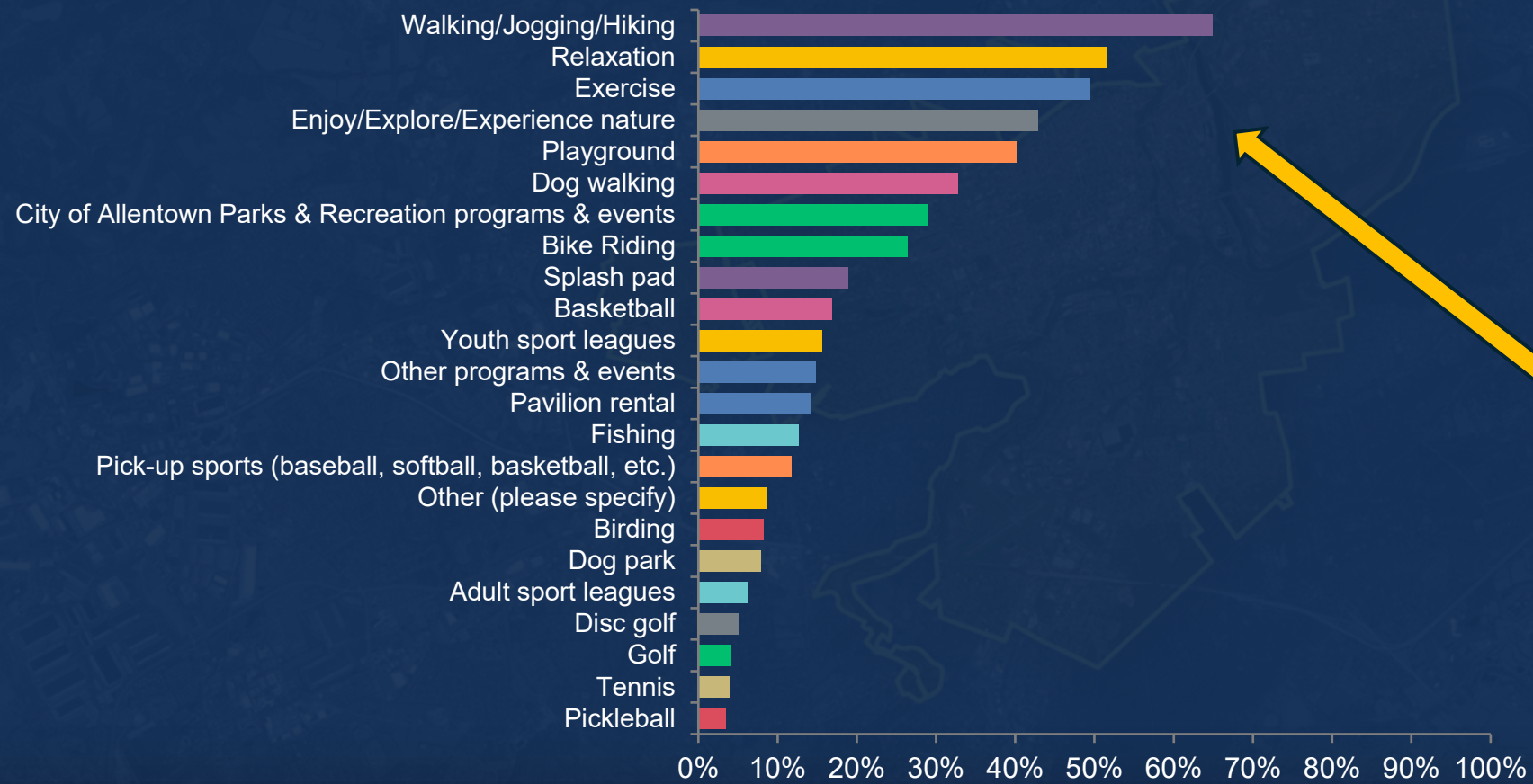
Other responses include:

- *“Not wheelchair friendly with flat and stable surfaces and access”*
- *“Too far to drive”*
- *Lack of knowledge of events*
- *Noise*

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q5: For what purpose(s) do people in your household visit park/recreation sites in the City of Allentown? Select all that apply.

Answered: 1491 Skipped: 398



- Other responses include:**
- Concerts, seasonal and holiday events
 - Art Spaces
 - Cedar Beach Pool / Swimming
 - Fresh air
 - No interest. Reason: safety

Top 5 Responses

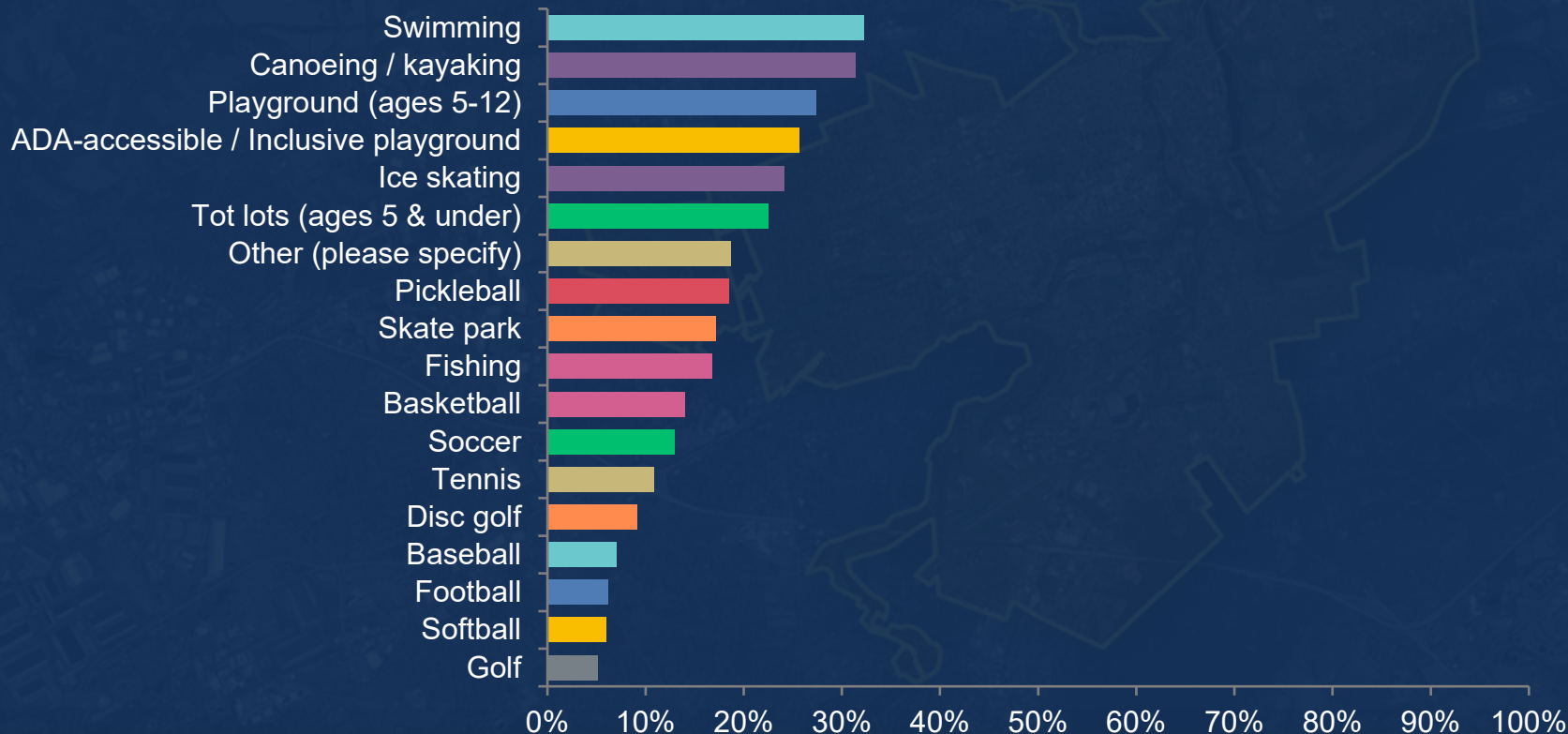
1. *Walking/Jogging/Hiking*
2. *Relaxation*
3. *Exercise*
4. *Enjoy/Explore/Experience nature*
5. *Playground*

29% said they visit for Parks & Recreation programs and events

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q11: Do you believe the City of Allentown needs more active recreational facilities? Select all that apply.

Answered: 1068 Skipped: 821



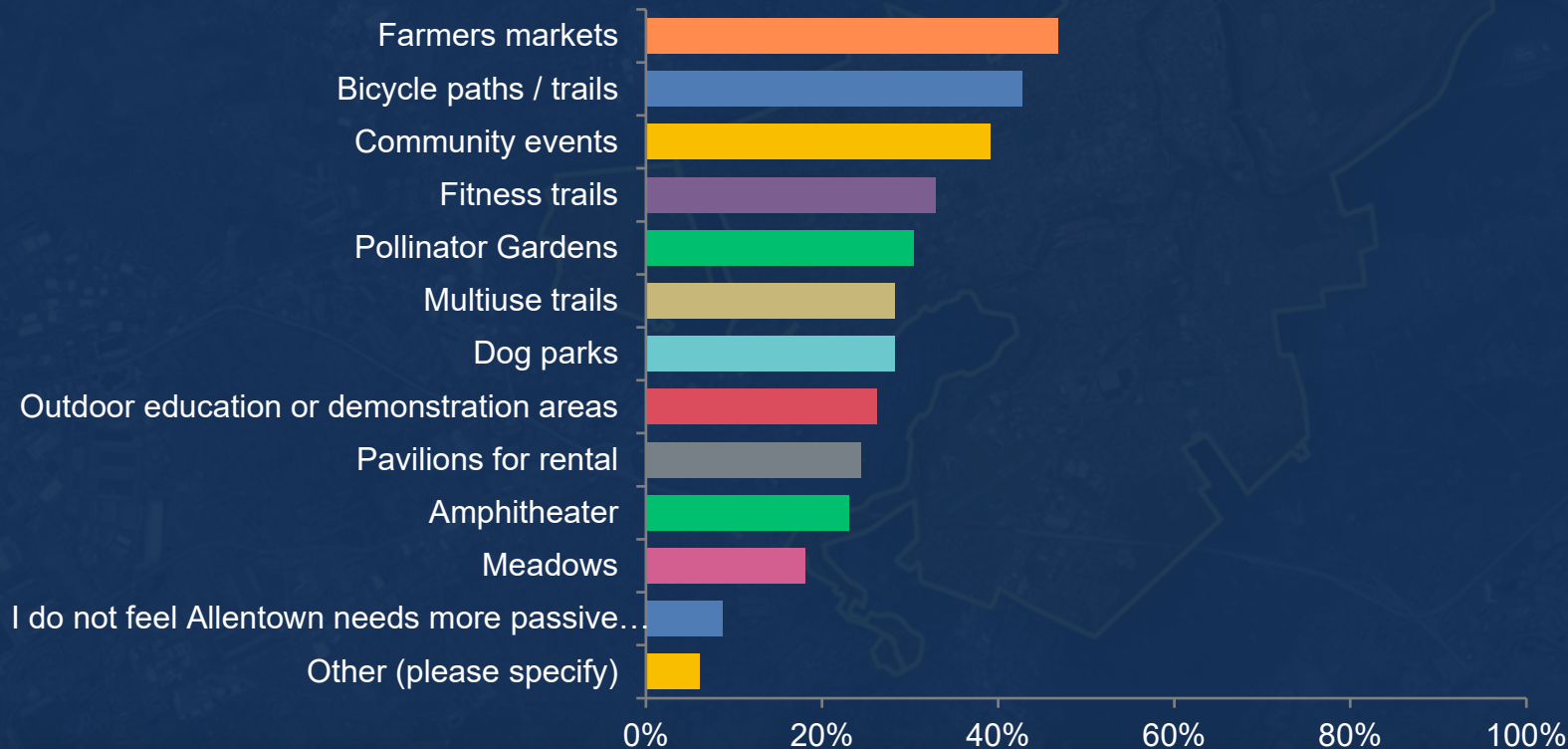
Other responses include:

- Senior activities / programming
- Accessible/inclusive playground
- Indoor community space
- Environmental restoration
- Roller skating
- Trails

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q12: Do you believe that the City of Allentown needs more passive types of activity options? Passive recreational activities are more leisurely and do not require strenuous physical activity. Select all that apply.

Answered: 1160 Skipped: 729



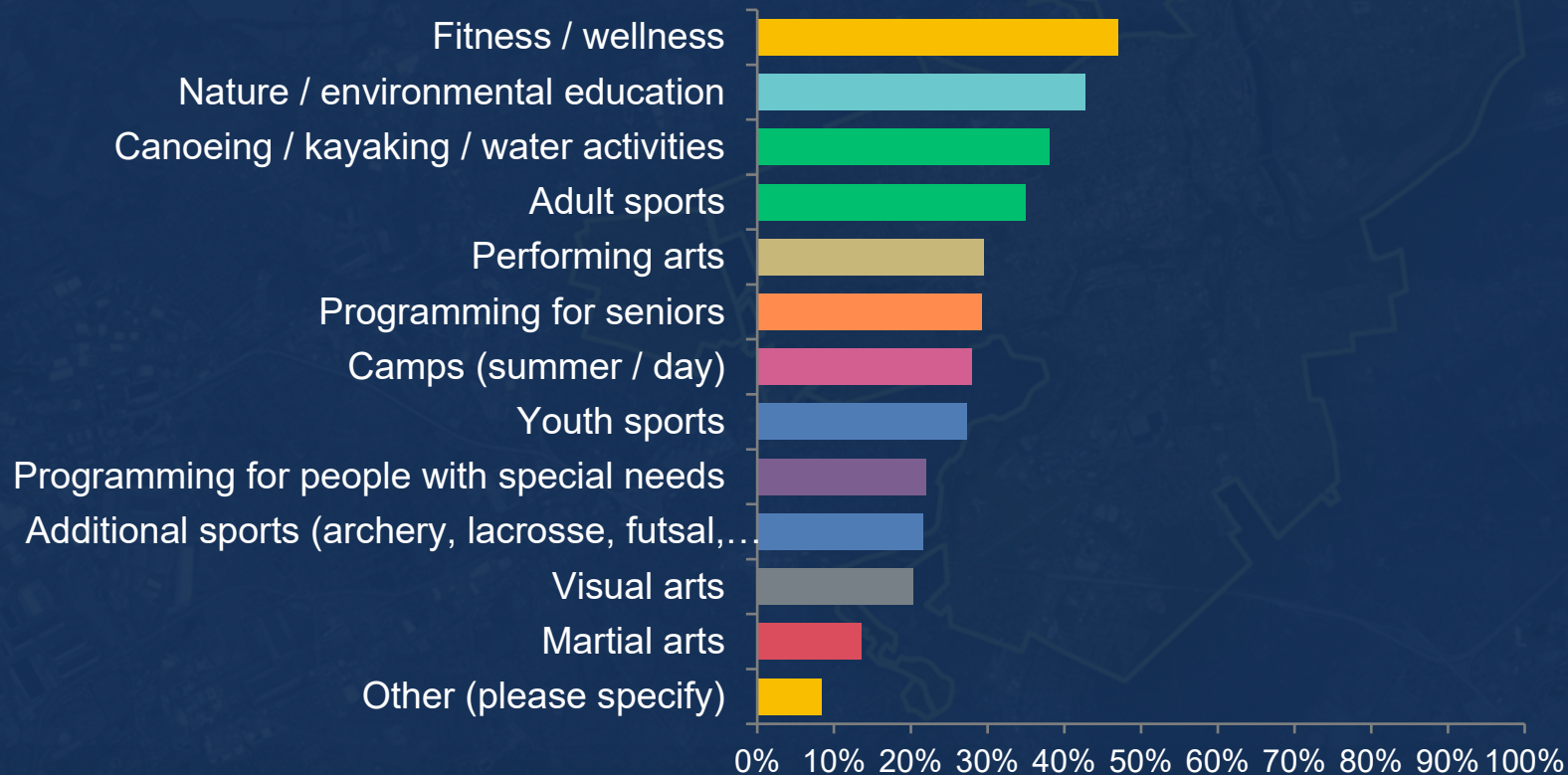
Other responses include:

- More shade
- More seating
- ADA-accessible trails
- Community gardens

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q14: What additional programming opportunities would you like to see introduced in the City of Allentown Parks & Recreation System?

Answered: 1076 Skipped: 813



Other responses include:

- “More things offered on the East side of Allentown.”
- Concerts and amateur musicians
- Ice skating/hockey
- Programs for young kids

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q20: What types of facilities or activities would you like to see available at Bucky Boyle Park?

Answered: 589 Skipped: 1300



Other responses include:

- Restrooms
- Nature education
- Security
- Pickleball
- Dog park
- Lighting

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q24: What types of facilities or activities would you like to see available at Fountain Park?

Answered: 530 Skipped: 1359



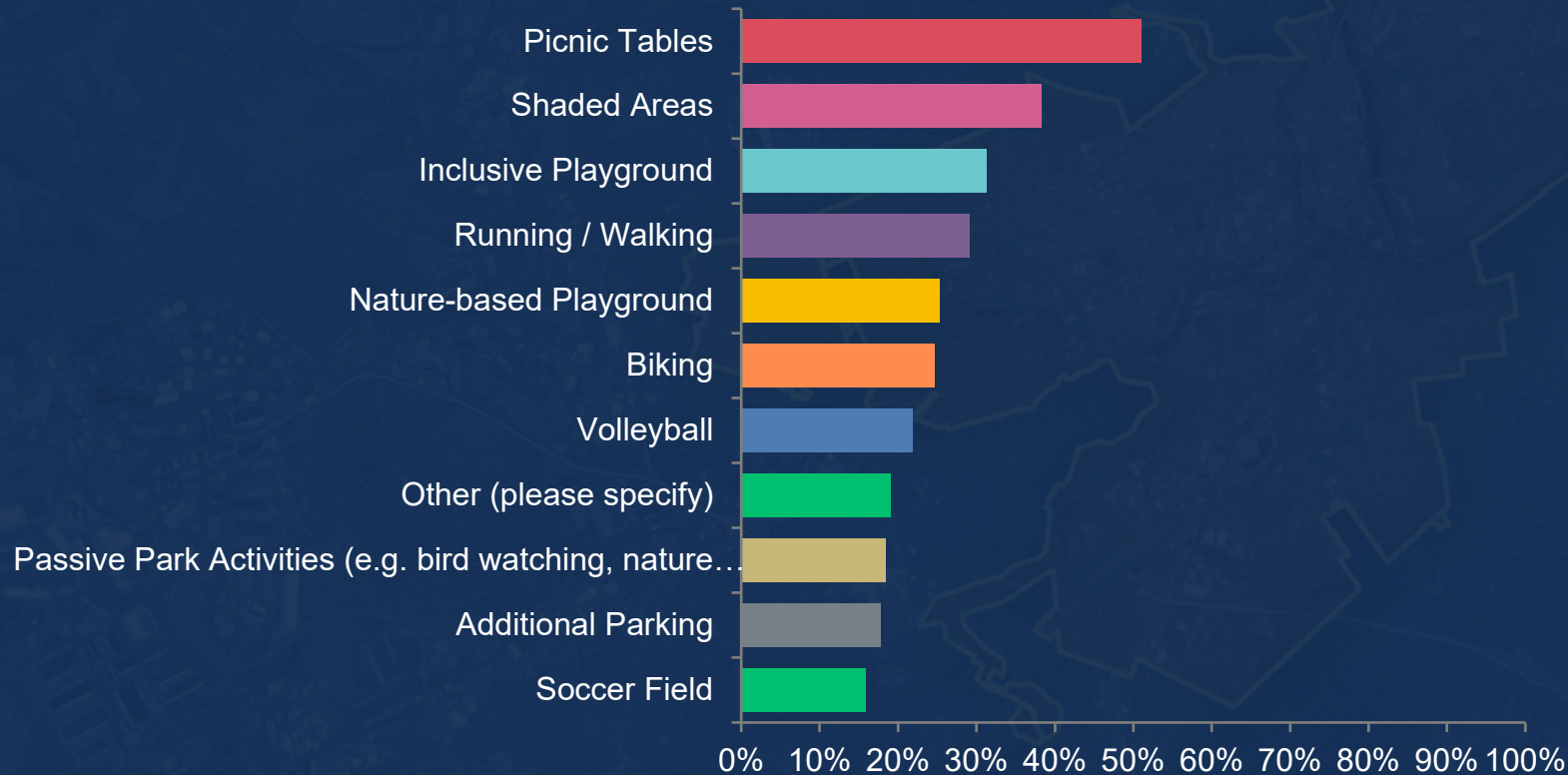
Other responses include:

- Indoor facility
- Lighting
- Sand park
- Safer parking
- Gardening

Public Opinion Survey Preliminary Results

Q28: What types of facilities or activities would you like to see available at Roosevelt Park?

Answered: 316 Skipped: 1573



Other responses include:

- 3D walkable map of U.S.
- Pavilion
- Safety
- Pickleball
- Yoga
- Tennis
- Demolition of pool house

Draft Vision Statement:

*“We, Citizens of Allentown, Pennsylvania cherish
our **“City in a Park.”**”*



Draft Vision Statement, cont...

We understand the original foresight and investments to create our world-class system of public green spaces throughout our City.

We recognize and value the stewardship required to maintain our extraordinary common ground for the benefit of all.



Draft Vision Statement, cont...

Our City parks represent physical resources, our collective cultural heritage of events, and the generations of people of Allentown.



Draft Vision Statement, cont...

Features of our Allentown Parks system are tightly woven into the fabric of our City landscape and are inseparable from our many other civic “systems” including: our roads, sidewalks, transit, street trees; waterways, stormwater, and the City water and wastewater systems.

We know collaboration is possible to ensure that any improvements to these systems will conserve and improve Allentown Park resources.



Draft Vision Statement

Allentown residents see good works underway to make improvements needed to rehabilitate treasured parks and open spaces – and we share in a united commitment to help City leaders and staff to:

- care for, keep clean, and conserve, maintain existing parks; and*
- increase access to open space and facilities; and*
- ensure that recreation resources and programs are universally-accessible.*



Draft Vision Statement

As residents we have and will continue to actively keep our parks clean and safe – and will:

- *plan, improve, and protect their ecologies; and*
- *support investments in recreation facilities and low cost/free programs; and*
- *continue to participate proudly in the rich cultural programs that bring our City in a Park to life.*





Draft Goals and Opportunities

Draft Goals

Goal 1: Safety

- Envision modern, safe and accessible City parks

Goal 2: Public Access

- Link parks to neighborhoods via safe pedestrian and bike routes

Goal 3: Recreation Facilities

- Pursue multi-functional infrastructure improvements

Goal 4: Ecology

- Protect and promote the natural resources

Draft Goals

Goal 5: Open Space

- Increase availability and access

Goal 6: Recreation / Education Experiences

- Continue recreation programming excellence

Goal 7: Operations & Maintenance

- Continue to deliver efficient and sustainable P&R management, maintenance and administration

Goal 8: Governance

- Develop policies and ordinances that support recreation needs

Goal 9: Finance

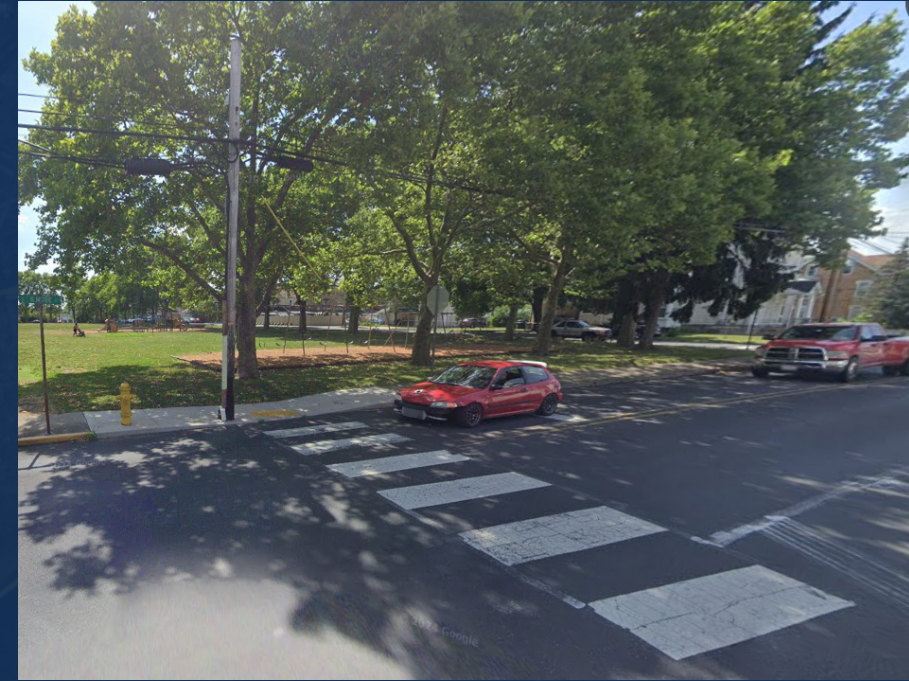
- Identify strategies to create funding partnerships

Draft Opportunities: Infrastructure

1: **Safety** Allentown parks are modern and safe.

Opportunities for parks-related safety improvements desired by Allentown residents include:

- **Safe, accessible crosswalks / walkways / trails**
- **Traffic-calming measures** – adjacent to parks
- **Defensible spaces** – including: restrooms, lighting, security, and other features
- **Systematic inspection / maintenance** / repairs of facilities
- **Clearly-delineated safe water's edge-access locations**
- **Clearly-stated park system rules** – with “context” explanations to encourage public participation
- **Police and park ranger presence** – regularly at park sites to deter vandalism; coordinate with community ambassadors to assist with outreach



Draft Opportunities: Infrastructure

2: **Public Access** Allentown parks are linked to our neighborhoods and to each other via safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit routes.

Opportunities for public access improvements into and within park facilities, that are desired by Allentown residents include:

- **ADA-accessibility within parks**, including: parking, travel routes, restrooms, inclusive play, etc.
- **Coordinated LANTA services** to improve transit access to Allentown park sites
- **New / improved sidewalks, crosswalks** – install at entry “threshold” locations where pedestrian access into parks, or access between parks, is non-existent or where segments of travel routes are deteriorated
- **Bike route system (citywide)** – the Allentown bike system should acknowledge that parks are destinations, not only travel corridors



Draft Opportunities: Infrastructure

3: **Recreation Facilities** Strategic investments in park facilities help reduce maintenance costs and conserve natural resources.

Opportunities for park facilities Improvements that are desired by Allentown residents include:

- **New pools** / aquatic facilities, equitably located (maintenance and staff needs would need to be addressed)
- **New indoor recreation center**
- **Universal play environments** as typical features of City parks
- **Public restrooms** – open, clean, safe, accessible – in all Allentown parks, citywide
- **Regulation soccer pitch** / multi-purpose field
- **Access to natural waterway edges** for safe and legal recreation (viewing sites, fishing/kayak/canoeing access)
- **Additional basketball courts** and other recreational facilities identified through feedback and benchmarking
- **Formalized community gathering spaces**
- **Shade** through increased tree canopy and structures



Draft Opportunities: Infrastructure

4: Ecology

Ecology is fostering the associations of earth's natural systems, including people.

Opportunities for ecological improvements within City parks as desired by Allentown residents include:

- **Manage valley floodplains** to help moderate flooding
- **Protect water quality** with vegetative buffers that benefit habitat for aquatic life
- **Steward tree canopy** to reduce neighborhood heat effects and support multi-species habitats
- **Revegetate City parks / public rights of way** – as a major proactive protection of local air quality
- **Integrate stormwater management features** at all sites, over time



Draft Goals: Infrastructure

5: **Open Space** Allentown's open space areas may be increased and made more effective.

Opportunities to increase open spaces and make existing public sites more accessible were identified by Allentown residents to include:

- **Reclaim previously under-utilized City-owned sites or utilize quasi-public sites** for dedicated public uses (ex. working with a group such as the YMCA or other nonprofit partner to coordinate use of their space), again, keeping maintenance and staff needs in mind
- **Recognize “recreation-desert” areas in underserved neighborhoods**
- **Pursue priority partnerships to add parks/open spaces** in underserved neighborhoods
- **Create, restore missing connections** from underserved neighborhoods to the nearest City park
- **Consider mobile, pop-up and community-driven recreation options** – such as Play Streets and Park in a Truck (a version of which is happening and will support Monday Funday)



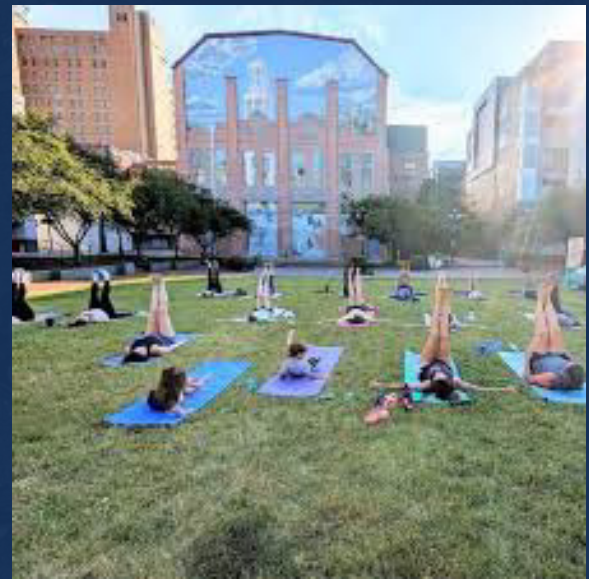
Draft Opportunities: Programs

6: Recreation / Education Experiences

The legacy of recreation, educational, and cultural programs will continue to thrive within the venues of the Allentown park system.

Opportunities to improve recreation / educational programming were identified by Allentown residents to include:

- **Repair, maintain, and improve existing infrastructure** to ensure that recreation programs may function at capacity for each park site
- **Simplify administrative procedures required for non-city partners** to conduct approved programs within City park sites, keeping staffing and maintenance needs in mind
- **Engage with partners who can contribute to events** that benefit both their programs and the City parks system in general
- **Ensure that recreational programs consider and meet the needs of the underrepresented**, including teens, senior residents and individuals with disabilities with the right resources, staffing and partnerships
- **Continue to develop programming that promotes community wellness**



Draft Opportunities: Management

7: Operations & Maintenance

City administrations will continue to build partnerships that help deliver efficient maintenance, facility improvements, and preferred programming throughout the Allentown parks system.



Opportunities to improve operations and maintenance of the Allentown parks system were identified by Allentown residents to include:

- **Increase the number of parks workers** committed to maintenance and streamline the process to hire seasonal workers
- **Educate residents about their civic responsibilities** as Allentown Park users (ex. volunteer groups who assist with litter can help coordinate outreach on keeping parks clean)
- **Conduct outreach and coordination** with recreation-oriented organizations and volunteer groups to manage appropriate work within the park system (ex. volunteers can help with park cleanup, they will not clean restrooms)
- **Continue periodic user surveys** and develop a database to store and manage user comments, suggestions and concerns

Draft Opportunities: Management

8: Governance

Use the recommendations in this Plan as a springboard to strengthen legislative and ordinance language in the City's code to protect and promote parks and natural resources.

Opportunities to improve governance of the City Parks system have been identified by Allentown residents and through "key" persons who were interviewed, including:

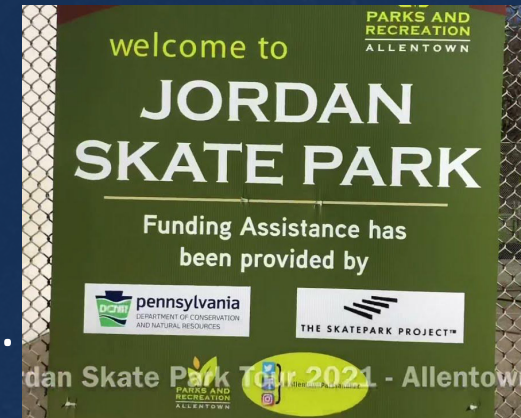
- **Collaborate between Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Planning & Zoning departments** on ordinance updates that strengthen the protections of natural resources, ensure the continued management of stormwater, enhance existing safety measures and tie new development and redevelopment to recreational and community enhancement



Draft Opportunities: Management

9: Finance

The City of Allentown will commit annual municipal resources toward its recreation and open space improvements, maintenance, and programming.



Opportunities to improve financing partnerships dedicated to the Allentown parks system, include:

- **Advocate for additional operating and capital funding in the City budget** as Allentown continues to grow
- **Match transportation funding sources with strategic funding for capital improvements at parks** – where those program goals coincide (eg: stormwater, trails, public right-of-way safety, master plans for larger parks, etc.)
- **Dedicate municipal stormwater fees to leverage other funds for parks improvements** – where program goals coincide (eg: municipal stormwater BMPs inside City park sites, City ROW stormwater improvements at critical missing trail and bike route locations, etc.)
- **Target ecological priorities within the City park system to secure habitat restoration funding** from environmental program partners, such as the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the PA DEP Rivers Conservation Program
- **Require development partners who will benefit from adjacent City parks to contribute** annual financial support for maintenance of Allentown parks (included in the recent Draft Zoning Ordinance rewrite)
- **Align budget cycles with funding guidelines** and park improvement priorities

Toolbox – Icons

SAFETY/ACCESS



Crosswalks, gateways, multi-use trails (6-10' wide trails to and through parks), walkways (3-6' wide pedestrian trails)



Lighting to address safety and/or extend use into the night and/or winter



ADA accessible and universal elements



Signage that includes wayfinding to and through the park, public notice, kiosks for information, and educational



Traffic calming to reduce speeds around the parks for safety



LANTA services to provide access in areas where there are gaps

Toolbox – Icons

RECREATION/PROGRAMMING



Master planning to address all elements of the park – implement ones already completed (some are currently going through the master planning process)



New equipment to replace equipment that is old and/or damaged or add new elements



Repair existing park elements – some areas just need to be fixed like walkways, edges or newer equipment



Safe water access at streams and rivers for recreational use



Upgrade elements so that they can serve more people – full courts, upsize play areas, etc.



Additional programming that address all ages and abilities including educational programming

Toolbox – Icons

ENVIRONMENT / ECOLOGY



Riparian buffers to strengthen areas along waterways for water quality, improved ecology, safety, and stormwater management

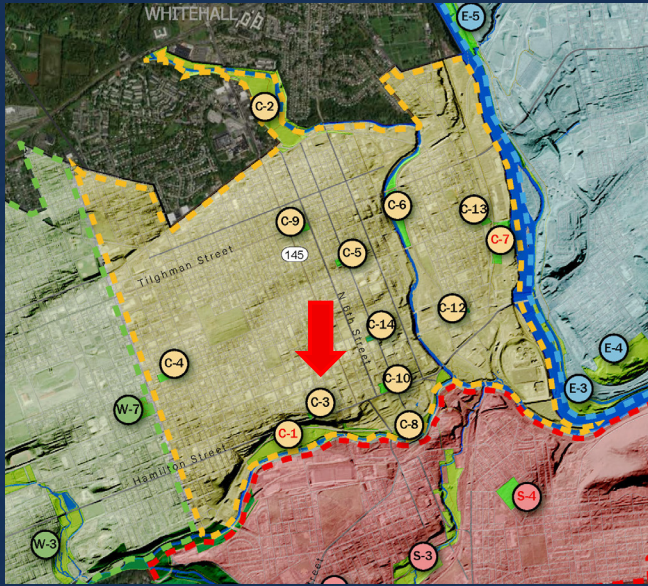


Habitat conservation for improved better ecological functions such as providing food for both us and animals, improved air and water quality, regulating climate and energy cycles



Stormwater management by using naturalized green storm water infrastructure (rain gardens, bioswales, check dams, etc.) and increasing tree canopy

Toolbox – Jackson Street Park (example)



Neighborhood park located in the Central Area C2: 1 pavilion, toddler playground, and walkway – improvements completed in 2015.



SAFETY/ACCESS
RECREATION/
PROGRAMMING
ENVIRONMENT /
ECOLOGY



ADA parking but no universal play elements, non-ADA compliant play surface, active intersection with no stop from Union St.



Open lawn space can handle more play elements, play equipment should be upgraded, benches and walkways repaired.



Reduce lawn on steep hillsides and plant native meadow for stormwater management and increase habitat. Add trees!!!!

Park Champions

(Sample format for report)

Who are other parks champions to recognize ?

Priscilla Reyes, Special Events Manager
Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation

How long have you lived in Allentown?

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What is your favorite park in Allentown?

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What projects are you most proud of?


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What is your biggest hope for Allentown Parks in the next five years?

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PARK CHAMPION



Priscilla Reyes, Special Events Manager
Allentown Department of Parks and Recreation

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Parks Success Story

(Sample format for report)

WFMZ Story on Monday Funday:
“Forget Sunday Funday. Monday is the new fun day in Allentown.”

What additional success stories should be included in the report?

PARK SUCCESS STORY

What: Allentown Monday Funday

Where: Parks throughout Allentown, including Stevens, Bucky Boyle, and Irving Parks

Who: Organized by Parks & Rec staff with community organizations providing additional programming

When: After several years of dormancy, Monday Funday was restarted in Summer 2023. In 2025, Monday Funday events are planned for three Mondays each month throughout the summer.

Why is it a success: Monday Funday is an after-school pop-up series that provides Allentown residents with opportunities to explore new parks and meet new neighbors. Each event includes activities with a focus on Wellness, Active Play, or Community Cookout. Participants connect over activities like painting, lawn games, science experiments, and musical performances.

PARK SUCCESS STORY

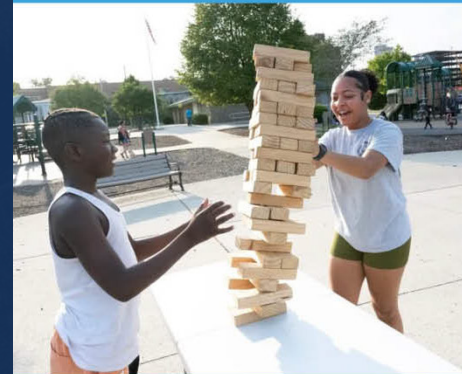
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Next Steps

Project Schedule

Meeting Type	Date	Time
Committee Meeting #1	Wednesday, September 25, 2024	7pm-9pm
Public Meeting #1	Wednesday, November 13, 2024	6pm-8pm
Committee Meeting #2	Monday, December 9, 2024	7pm-9pm
Public Meeting #2	Wednesday, January 8, 2025	6pm-8pm
Committee Meeting #3	Wednesday, January 22, 2025	7pm-9pm
Public Meeting #3	Wednesday, February 26, 2025	6pm-8pm
Engagement for Master Planned Parks <i>Easter Egg Hunt at Bucky Boyle Park</i>	Saturday April 19, 2025	
Engagement for Master Planned Parks <i>Earth Day Celebration at Cedar Beach Park</i>	Saturday April 26, 2025	
Public Meeting #4	Wednesday, April 30, 2025	6pm-8pm
Key Person Interviews (20)	TBD	TBD
Committee Meeting #4	Wednesday, May 14, 2025	7pm-9pm
Committee Meeting #5	Wednesday, June 11, 2025	7pm-9pm
Online Public Opinion Survey	October 2024 – July 2025	
Public Meeting #5	Wednesday, June 25, 2025	6pm-8pm
Committee Meeting #6	Wednesday, September 10, 2025	7pm-9pm
City Council Meeting (to Adopt Plan – TBD)	October 2025	
City Staff Meetings	Estimated 1 per month	Virtual

NEXT

Next Steps - Simone Collins team

- Coordinate with COA re: Park Champions and Success Stories - to include in the report
- Refine draft recommendations
- Finalize cost estimates (order of magnitude)
- Finalize draft report
 - 30-day public review (during August)
 - Review comments at September Committee Meeting
 - Present for adoption by City Council in October



Thank You!

SIMONE COLLINS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE – 610 239 7601

Pankaj Jobanputra, AICP, Project Manager
pjobanputra@simonecollins.com

Anita Nardone, PE, Stormwater Analysis
anardone@simonecollins.com

Robert Gladfelter, RLA, ASLA, Project LA, Natural Resources Analysis
rgladfelter@simonecollins.com

Toby Levin, RLA, ASLA, Staff LA
tlevin@simonecollins.com

Jordan Upadhyay, Staff LA
jupadhyay@simonecollins.com

William Collins, RLA, Principal
wcollins@simonecollins.com

