

CITIZEN SURVEY

Introduction

The Platte County Parks and Recreation Department conducted a Community Interest and Needs Survey during the summer of 2008 to establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities and services within the County. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results **from households throughout Platte County**. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with Platte County officials and members of the BWR project team in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

Leisure Vision mailed surveys to a *random sample* of 2,000 households throughout Platte County. After the surveys were mailed each household received an electronic voice message and follow up phone calls encouraging them to complete the survey. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys from County households. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 405 surveys having been completed. The results of the sample of 405 households have a **95% level of confidence** with a precision of at least +/-4.9%.

Visitation of Platte County Parks, Trails and Recreation Facilities.

Seventy-three percent (73%) of households have visited at least one Platte County park, trail or recreation facility during the past year. This is higher than the national benchmarking average of 70%. The County facilities visited by the highest percentage of households are: Platte County Community Centers/ YMCA's (40%), Springs Aquatic Center (29%) and Weston Bluffs Trails (23%).

Recreation amenities within Platte County parks and recreation centers that have been visited by the highest percentage of households are:

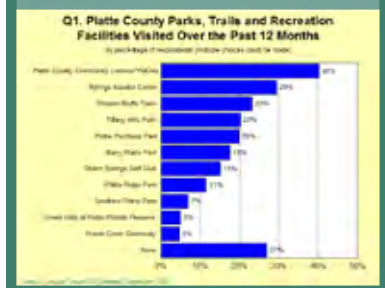
- walking and hiking trails (48%)
- swimming pools/playgrounds (35%)
- fitness centers (30%)
- playgrounds (30%)

Need for parks and recreation facilities

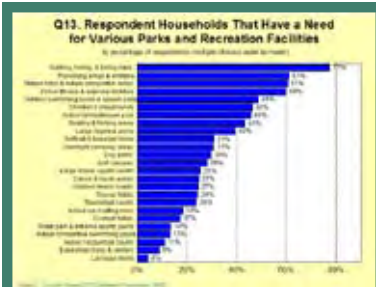
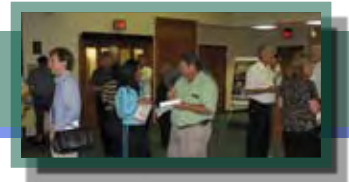
The parks and recreation facilities that the highest percentage of households

“Your survey looks right on with our own beliefs”

– Developers Roundtable
Focus Group
November 14, 2008



Citizen Input



have a **need for** are walking, hiking and biking trails (77%), picnicking areas and shelters (61%), nature trails and nature interpretive areas (61%), and indoor fitness and exercise facilities (60%).

Need for recreation programs

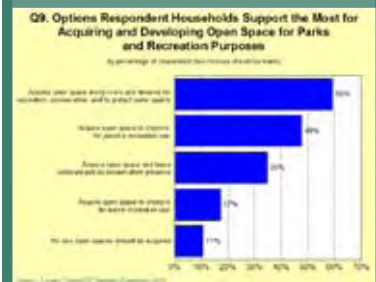
The programs that the highest percentage of households have a need for:

- adult fitness and wellness programs (54%)
- music and culture festivals (47%)
- family recreation – outdoor adventure programs (36%)

MOST important department functions

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the function that residents feel it's most important for the Platte County Parks and Recreation Department to provide are:

- operating and maintaining County parks and facilities (62%)
- providing safe and secure facilities and programs (61%)
- providing opportunities for passive activities (45%)
- providing and maintaining nature areas and conservations areas (41%)

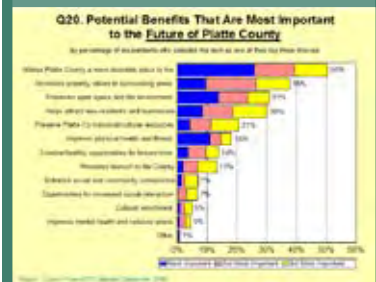


Options for open space

The most preferred options for acquiring and developing open space of County residents are: acquire open space along rivers and streams for recreation, conservation, and to protect water quality (59%), and acquire open space to improve for passive recreation use (48%).

Benefits of parks and recreation facilities that are most important to the Future of Platte County

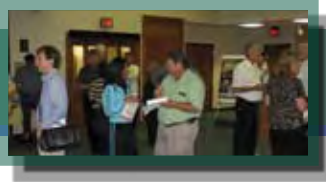
Based on the sum of their top three choices, the benefits received from parks that are most important to the future of Platte County are: they make Platte County a more desirable place to live (50%), increases property values (36%), and preserves open space and the environment (31%).



Quick Looks

- The most frequently mentioned ways that residents learn about County Parks and Recreation programs and activities are from friends and neighbors (59%).
- The single most popular recreational facility in the County, visited most often, is Parkville's English Landing Park (51%).
- Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents feel it's very important (62%) or somewhat important (24%) for Platte County to work in partnership with cities and non-profits in the County to provide parks and recreation programs.
- Future Funding: 72% of Platte County residents favor extending, in some form, the dedicated Parks and Recreation Sales Tax.





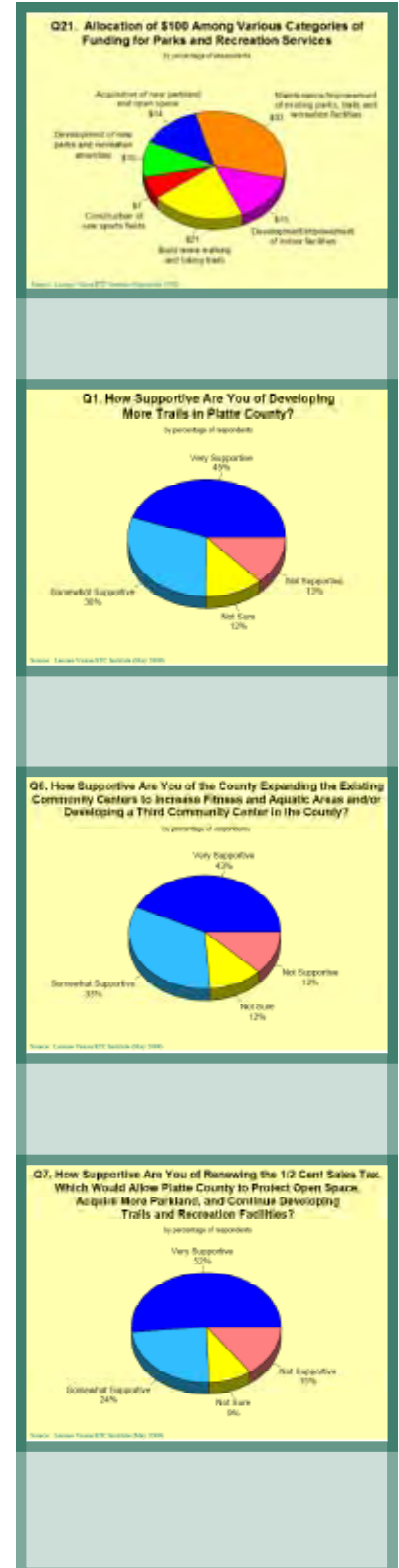
Prioritizing Funding for Parks and Recreation Services

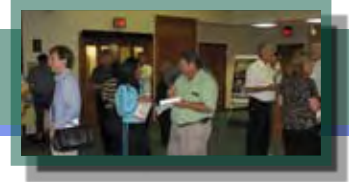
Residents would allocate \$33 out of \$100 to the **maintenance/improvement** of existing parks, trails and recreation facilities. The remaining \$67 were allocated as follows: build more walking and biking trails (\$21), development/improvement of indoor facilities (\$15), acquisition of new parkland and open space (\$14), development of new parks and recreation amenities (\$10) and construction of new sports fields (\$7).

Second Citizen Survey Results

In April 2009 the Parks and Recreation Department again worked with Leisure Vision and BWR to conduct a second citizen survey to “test” the results of the first survey and the preliminary goals of the plan that had been developed. The survey was sent to a combination of Platte County residents who had participated in the first survey as well as those who had not. The results were very similar between the two groups, both expressing continued strong support for the key goals of the plan.

- **Trails & Open Space:** 75% of Platte County residents were either “very supportive” (45%) or “somewhat supportive” (30%) of developing new walking and biking trails in the County. The greatest opportunities to develop these paths are along our waterways in Platte County, including the Missouri and Platte Rivers. 73% of residents were either “very supportive” (44%) or “somewhat supportive” (29%) of the county acquiring up to 500 acres of open space for parks and trails.
- **Park Amenities:** Passive recreational opportunities in parks continue to be a priority for County residents when asked about their preferences for new facilities for children. 63% believe more playgrounds should be built, while 61% of residents believe more family picnic areas and walking paths should be built at area parks.
- **Community Centers:** Residents continued to show strong support for enhancing recreation and wellness programs through the community centers. 76% of residents were either “very supportive” (43%) or “somewhat supportive” (33%) of expanding the existing centers and studying the development of a third center to address increased growth in Platte County.
- **Funding:** Residents were asked about their willingness to continue funding parks and recreation through the half-cent dedicated sales tax. Support was strong, with 76% reported being supportive of a 10 year extension.





“We need to keep Platte County kids playing here.”

*– Chris Seibenmorgan
Youth Sports and Recreation
Programs Focus Group
November 18, 2008*

“Our parks help us build community.”

*– NE Area Focus Group
October 7, 2008*

“Our neighborhoods are only as strong as our parks.”

*– Mike Lacey, CT Member,
May 28, 2008*

FOCUS GROUPS

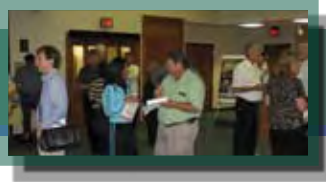
Groups who participated included the Business Community, Developers, Youth Sports, groups with special interests and expertise on the topic of sustainability, Senior Citizens, Dog Parks, West Platte Students, Park Hill South Students, Platte County Students, Water Trails, Trails, Equine, Performing & Visual Arts, Park Hill Students, North Platte Students, and Community Recreation.

Following the discussion by each Focus Group of potential new park projects that could be considered in the new master plan, each group was asked to rank in priority order their preferences.

The table below represents the park improvement types, the total points awarded by all participating groups, and the priority ranking.

Table: Focus Group Priority Rankings

Park Improvement Type	Total Points	Priority Ranking
Natural Resource Protection	123	1
Trails	113	2
Community Parks	112	3
Community Centers	106	4
Indoor Sports Center	105	5
Youth Sports (outdoor)	97	6
Swimming Pools	86	7
Dog Parks	58	8
Tennis	44	9
Extreme Sports	36	10



FIRST OPEN HOUSE

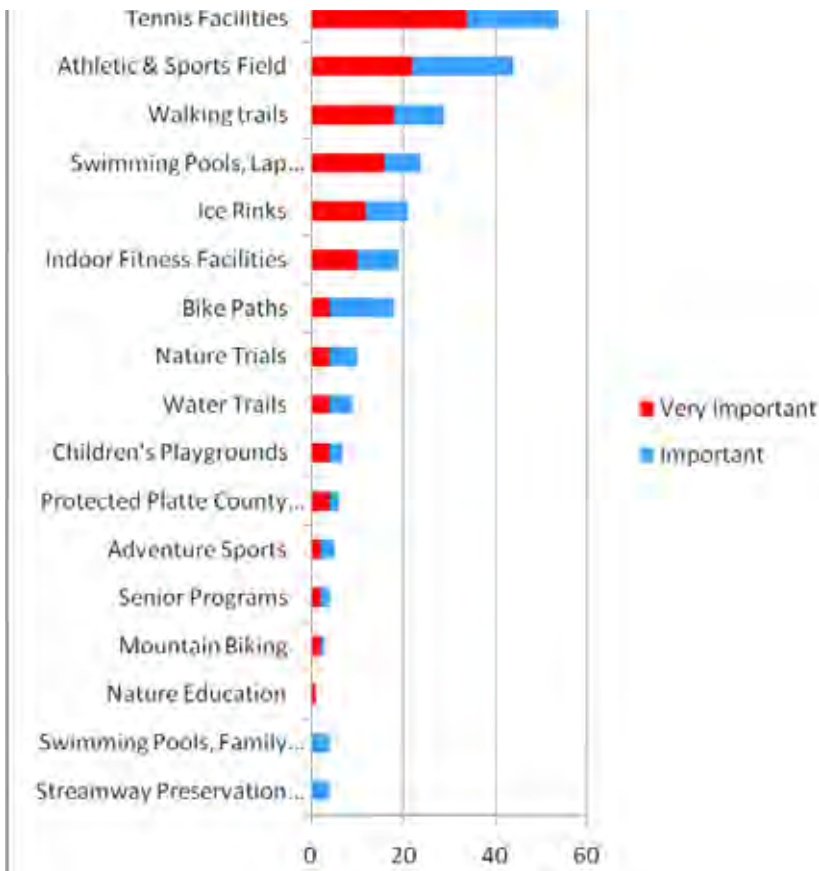
Introduction

On September 30th, 2008, the Platte County Commission hosted an open house for the purpose of gaining feedback from citizens on the future of parks and recreation in Platte County.

Over eighty residents turned out to share their ideas and highest priorities with the Commission, parks staff, and members of the County Parks Board. In addition to sharing their comments, residents had the opportunity to note which potential future parks, trails, or recreation programs were most important to them (chart on right).

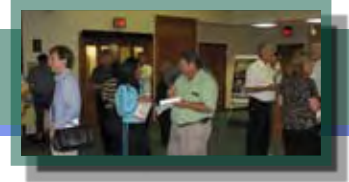
Summary

The input that was received was very diverse, from the need for new tennis courts, to more trails and programming for youth and seniors. The open house is one of many ways citizens are taking an active role in shaping the future of the parks system. For complete results and more information, visit the master plan website, www.platteparks.com.



Residents speak out at parks open house...





“Biking, hiking and walking trails are great opportunities for families to spend time together. Trail connections are very important because they help to create opportunities.”

– Scott Schleisman
Multi-use Trails Focus Group
12/2/08

Trails and Clean Water Issues...

Mega Themes:

- Seventeen citizens indicated the need to connect walking and bicycling trails around the County as their highest priority
- Thirteen citizens connected the need to protect our water quality and the opportunity to build trails along stream buffers for our creeks and rivers

Key Comments and Feedback:

- Feel good about water quality in streams today by Prairie Creek Greenway. Lots of water comes down the branch of I live by
- Country roads are dangerous for walking, biking, and running.
- Need Brush Creek Trail north to Tiffany Springs – shared use path
- Maybe nature trail along bluffs near Farley
- Connection of trail system for safe biking and running
- Want to preserve streams because important to flood control.
- Connectivity of trails English Landing to Riverside – West from English Landing along Missouri River – Parkville English Landing to Community Center South
- Platte River near Platte City – would like to see walking trail along there
- Would like more nature trails like Prairie Creek Greenway – scenic/wide
- Equestrian trails – ride with other and do family rides – coordinated rides
- Bee Creek Corridor preservation for trails and water quality since soybeans right up next to the creek
- Like the concept of streams doubling for floodways and trails
- Anytime you can get a trail near the river, it's great
- Line Creek trail for biking
- Want nature trail on west side of Parkville along the river towards 45 Hwy/ Weston. Bluffs are a great natural resource

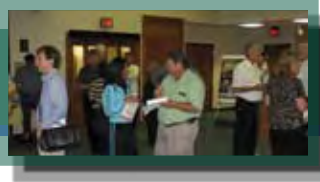
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Issues...

Mega Themes:

- Nineteen residents expressed a priority need for new recreation amenities at local parks
- Five citizens commented on the importance of good MAINTENANCE and SAFETY at local parks

Key Comments and Feedback:

- Always like greenspace, trails and park for now and in future; very supportive of what you are doing
- If we have more open spaces set aside – the other amenities will follow



Citizen Input

- Minor improvements go a long way at Shiloh Springs.
- Maintain the ball field and walking trails that we have
- Small lake or large pond at West Platte Park
- New Parkville park soccer and boat areas
- Parkville river bottom – would like to leave natural – it could become a nature preserve/laboratory.
- Continue to maintain existing facilities at a high level. Promote new facilities to expand rec. options for families. We appreciate your concern and attention to have the best parks and rec. facilities and option of any county in the state
- Great job with the new facilities, keep pace with the growth of Platte County
- Average, but I've been to smaller communities with fewer financial resources that have much nicer parks with far more amenities. There is a huge need for facilities like tennis courts
- Nice parks but need football fields
- I like playgrounds more because you can climb on things
- and do more fun things
- Parks are good but they can be better; more restrooms
- I think we have excellent parks and facilities except we need an excellent skate park also. Every weekend, my friends and I meet with our kids and have to go to Penn Valley skate park

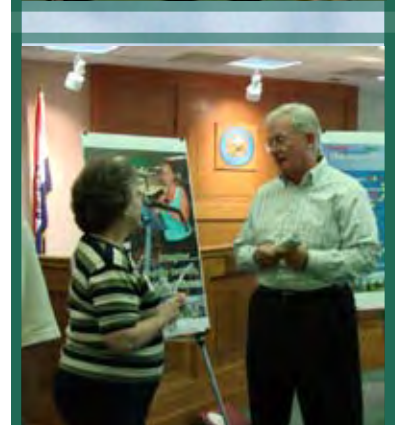
Community Centers, Health and Wellness Issues...

Mega Themes:

- Nine residents expressed strong support for expanding the northern community center and adding diverse indoor recreational amenities and facilities

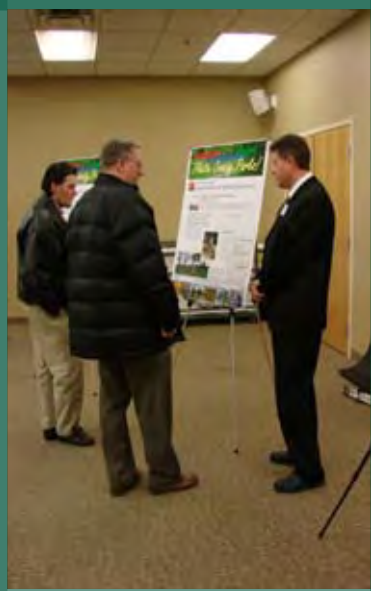
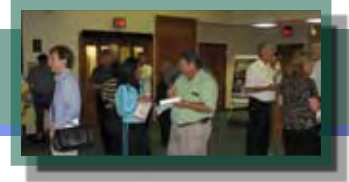
Key Comments and Feedback:

- Indoor basketball and volleyball facility – I-29 & 152
- more lap lanes at the community centers/YMCA
- Expand North Community Center
- Tennis courts & expand community center
- I enjoy the facilities
- Expand northern community center/ YMCA
- Indoor special needs facility inside and existing park
- It would be nice to have an indoor facility to be used by kids and adults. Young people in Platte County enjoy swimming.
- YMCA is too costly and wasn't built large enough to use in the busier times; want swimming lap lanes and there are just two.
- Great job with the new facilities, offer a variety of options (ice skating, trails, etc.)
- Shortage of ice sheets in Platte County and Kansas City metro area, hockey, figure skating and community public skating needs are underserved
- We need Hockey and Ice Skating. This is a sport enjoyed by people of all ages. Getting better every year. An Ice Rink would be an awesome and needed addition



"If we build a new indoor sports center it will create lots of new ways for all of the existing service providers to cooperate with each other."

*– Andy Smith
Youth Sports and Recreation
Programs Focus Group
November 18, 2008*



Open House Attendees, in their own words...

"I would prefer the stability and assurance of a permanent tax to ensure the continued maintenance and development of a comprehensive park and trails system well into the future."

"Acquiring land for future park development and protecting the current park property would be my personal choices for resources."

"Would like to see the trails in place currently connecting up."

"Developing great emphases on water ways, their recreational value and value to the environment should also be a priority. Canoeing kayaking etc., protecting and enhancing these resources are a must."

SECOND OPEN HOUSE

Introduction

On March 3, 2009, the Platte County Commission hosted the second public open house for the update of the long range plan for parks and recreation. Over 50 residents turned out to see the draft goals and action strategies and give their comments.

"I was very pleased with the turnout" noted Platte County Commissioner Betty Knight, "we received many good comments on plans for things like trails and renewing the parks tax. I think we are on the right track".

Summary

At the meeting the County unveiled new "foundation principles" that will guide the future of the parks program. The top three areas under which all new initiatives will be based are:



protecting natural resources,



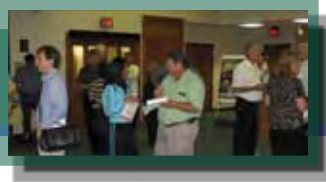
providing health and wellness opportunities, and



creating new safe recreation places for children.

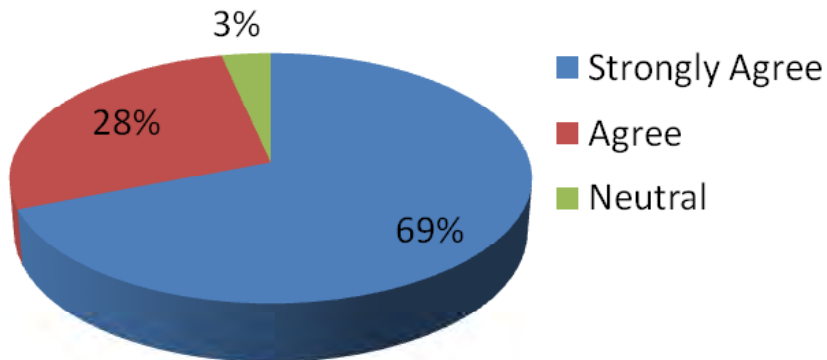
Specific action items such as increasing the miles of new trails (from 15 to 60) and expanding the community centers were also presented at the forum.

Surveys taken during the meeting showed strong support for a diverse set of goals for the Parks and Recreation Department. Out of thirty people responding to the survey, 97% agreed that the principles of the updated plan were on target (see next page) and 92% agreed that maintenance of county parks and facilities should be the absolute number one priority. Citizens attending the open house also agreed with the need to extend funding through the parks sales tax. 96% of responders said they were "very supportive" of a renewal of up to twenty years to continue the park program. This second open house is one of many ways citizens are taking an active role in shaping the future of the park system.

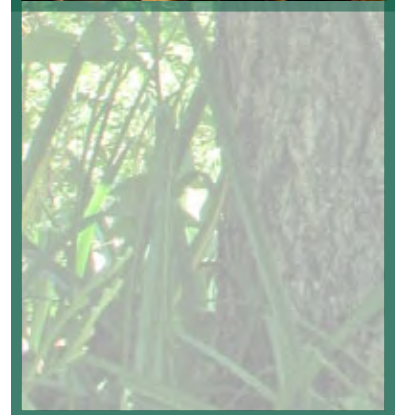
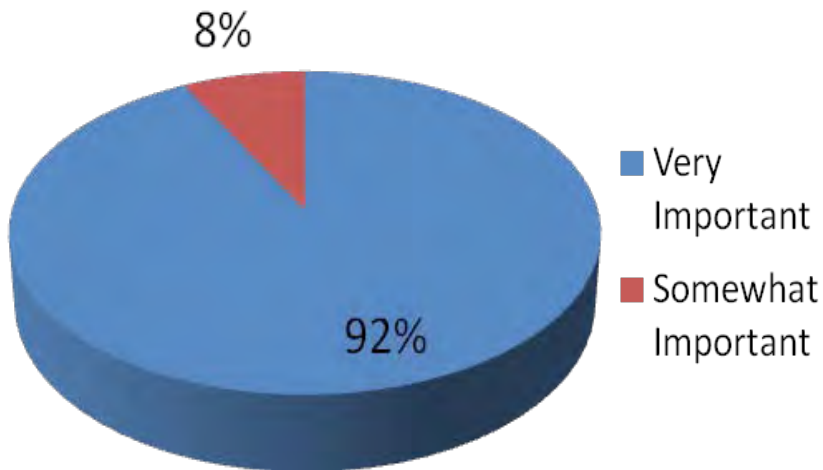


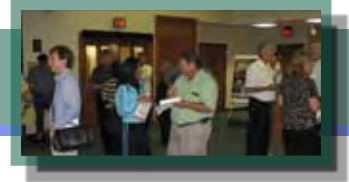
Citizen Input

Question: Our foundational principles for the updated parks plan are to focus on protecting our natural resources, providing health and wellness opportunities, and to create safe recreation places for our kids. How much do you agree with these as the foundation for the parks plan?



Question: How important do you think it is for Platte County to make maintenance and safety at parks and recreational facilities our number one priority?





“Platte County Parks has totally changed the footprint of the Northland.”

– Business Roundtable Focus Group

November 14, 2008

CITIZEN INPUT SUMMARY

The message sent by citizens in the citizen survey, focus groups, public meetings, and steering committees is clear and consistent. There is very strong support for three Guiding Principles; namely:

- protection of natural resources
- providing health and wellness opportunities
- creating safe recreation places for children

Representative projects which would respond to the three Guiding Principles would include:

- High level of maintenance for facilities
- land acquisition to protect natural resources while providing passive recreation opportunities such as trails and picnicking
- development of new trails (land and water based)
- expansion of the community park system
- expansion of indoor recreation opportunities

Citizens have expressed a willingness to invest financially in the park system as expressed in the statistically valid citizen survey and in the public involvement venues that were offered during the development of this master plan update.