

Parks, Trails and Public Spaces: Health & Wellness Goals

A Guide for Master Plans

Overview

Park and recreation agencies are appropriately positioned to improve public health through the built environment with a particular focus on safe and easily accessible places and spaces to engage in physical activity. While many factors such as diet and level of physical activity influence obesity, **(P&R Agency)** is partnering with the public health community and other service providers to promote a healthy, active lifestyle among residents.

Parks provide measurable health benefits, from encouraging direct contact with nature and a cleaner environment, to opportunities for physical activity and social interaction. Throughout the master planning process, the _____ community has indicated a desire to focus on public health and wellness through parks, trails, facilities and programs. National trends indicate that rates of obesity and obesity-related diseases, especially among children and adults, are rising in Michigan, emphasizing the important role that parks and recreation services can continue to play in keeping _____ a healthy and vibrant community.

Recommended Policies

- All department services will emphasize the important and unique mission of the department to enhance the public health and wellness of the community.
- The department shall provide for _____ community members' health and wellness through deliberate and thoughtful design of programs, facilities, parks and services.
- The department shall serve as a facilitator, collaborator and leader with local organizations in efforts to improve the community's health and wellness.
- In collaboration with local health department(s) and other public health entities, the department shall use a community needs approach in recreation programming and facility asset management to ensure service provision remains aligned with community interests.
- Park and recreation services shall be available and accessible to all.
- The Department shall continue to promote health and wellness through programs in partnership with healthcare providers such as _____ and _____.
- The Department shall continue to invest in walking and biking trails that the community utilizes for exercise.
- The Department shall continue to offer programs that promote access to nature and improve physical, mental, and social wellbeing.
- The Department shall insert wellness categories into program reviews.
- The Department shall align with _____ County Health Department efforts to improve community health.
- The Department shall continue to provide healthy food choices through programs such Healthy Food Service Guidelines in Parks and Recreation, Farmers' Markets, and Community Gardens.

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- The Department shall continue to incorporate traditional and innovative marketing and branding strategies to promote health and wellness by encouraging participation in Department programs and use of Department facilities.

Recommended Goals & Initiatives

Long-term Goals	Initiatives
Park and recreation services remain aligned with the public interest in health and wellness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct park user satisfaction and use survey. 2. Conduct annual review and evaluation of existing park programs to ensure alignment with improving community health and wellness. 3. Review new programs and innovations with various partners to improve health and wellness.
Parks and facilities will be provided to meet and/or exceed proximity standards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partner with the regional Transportation Division and Greenways Program to enhance connectivity and safe routes to parks and schools. 2. Review population data to determine distribution by age, gender, income and ethnicity. 3. Partner with other agencies to ensure parks and playground facilities are within ½ mile of residents.
Analyze, report and advocate the health impacts of department services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Health Impact Assessment (HIA) best practices with service provider roundtable members and together develop health measurements and integrated program objectives. 2. Communicate annual data findings to community members and partners. 3. Leverage data and impact to advocate for funding and support.
Use data to evaluate departments services in partnership with local health department and other public health agencies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annually review research on best practices, local and national health trends as they relate to parks and health. 2. In partnership with public health agencies, implement standardized measurement and evaluation processes based on shared measurable program objectives. 3. Enact a best practice that requires partners to record and report information and data that is compatible with local health department evaluation frameworks.
Leverage partnerships with health providers and other public health agencies that contribute essential components to the overall health of community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize regular roundtable discussions with key stakeholder agencies and organizations to coordinate provision of park services and activities as they pertain to community health and wellness.

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Best Practices & Resources

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

Making the Case: Parks and Health

<http://www.nrpa.org/our-work/three-pillars/health-wellness/parksandhealth/>

- Active Transportation Parks and Public Health
- Park Programming and Better Health
- Parks and Chronic Disease Management
- Parks and Healthy Kids
- Parks and Improved Mental Health and Quality of Life

Safe Routes to Parks

<http://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/safe-routes-to-parks/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Parks and Trails Health Impact Assessment Toolkit

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/parks_trails/

Healthy Places – Physical Activity

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/physactivity.htm>

National Park Service (NPS)

Parks, Trails, and Health Workbook

https://www.nps.gov/public_health/hp/hphp/resources.htm

The Trust for Public Land

The Health Benefits of Parks

http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/benefits_HealthBenefitsReport.pdf

Park Prescription

Park Rx

<http://www.parkrx.org/>

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

Tobacco-Free Parks and Beaches Toolkit

http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2955_2973-340373--,00.html

Active Living Research

Park Prescriptions in Practice

http://activelivingresearch.org/files/2014_ParksTrails_Wheeler-Razani.pdf

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