

Executive Summary

Background

The Hamilton County Parks & Recreation Department strives to serve citizens through wholesome recreation programs and well-maintained facilities for all ages, abilities, and interests.

The purpose of this study was to determine the efficacy of Hamilton County in achieving this mission, to profile park users, and to determine user constraints and priorities for future park initiatives.

Key Facts

- 67% of Hamilton County residents are satisfied or very satisfied with the park system as a whole, 70% believe that parks have a positive impact on their level of physical activity, 72% agree that parks improve their quality of life, 80% view outdoor spaces as central to Hamilton County's identity and 54% agree that the outdoor amenities are a major reason they reside here.
- The average user makes 88 park visits every year- or ~ 2 visits every week.
- There are four major park user types in the Hamilton County area:
 - 1) Sport, 2) Outdoor Active- run,/bike/climb, 3) Outdoor Passive- fish/camp, and 3) Social- walk/picnic.
 - While Social visitors make up a larger percentage of users, Sport and Outdoor Active users make more frequent visits to parks.
- The top five constraints to park usage include: 1) Too Far Away, 2) Lack of Time, 3) Lack of Information, 4) Safety Concerns, and 5) Rowdy Behavior.
- Park Maintenance Issues were the least mentioned constraint to usage.
- Park users overwhelmingly favor the development and maintenance of Family Spaces (picnicking and playgrounds) and Green Spaces (Walk/bike trails, Greenways, Natural Areas).
- The Riverwalk is the most visited park in Hamilton County.

Implications & Recommendations:

To best impact the local community Hamilton County could:

- Prioritize trails, green spaces, and family areas in future initiatives
- Partner with cities and other organizations to maximize resources & provide linear green spaces, such as the Riverwalk , that have proven successful.
- Partner with local organizations and schools to improve access and information about programs.
- Improve communication with the public (i.e. website) to maximize visitation.
- Promote outdoor physical activity as a way to counter unhealthy regional trends via policy, planning, and education for behavior change.
- Consider implementing a dedicated parks budget to enhance planning.