

Parks and Recreation in Flint:

Needs Assessment

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities initiative, facilitated by the Crim Fitness Foundation (Crim), works to provide safe, inviting and low-cost places for Flint's youth and adults to be physically active. To support this effort, the Crim partnered with the University of Michigan-Flint to use the Trust for Public Land's *Needs Index* to assess where city of Flint parks are located in relationship to where they are most needed in the community.

The following provides highlights of the key findings and recommendations.

Key Finding # 1:

80% of the demand for parks could be met by the existing system, but barriers exist.

Residents and the city of Flint need to work together to develop creative investment approaches to address barriers to park access and use, such as fear of crime and lack of timely and consistent maintenance.

Key Finding # 2:

The North and East sides of Flint have the highest need for parks.

When making decisions about future park investments, these areas should have priority because there is a high percentage of youth and people living in poverty. This will help create a more equitable park system so that all Flint residents' need for play can be met.



**City of Flint Parks System:
Geographic Distribution of Parks – ¼ Mile Buffer**

Key Finding # 3:

60% of the Flint population resides within a 5-minute walk of a park.

Flint adults and younger youth, especially, tend to use parks closer to where they live.



Parks and Recreation in Flint:

Park Use Observations

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities initiative, facilitated by the Crim Fitness Foundation (Crim), works to provide safe, inviting and low-cost places for Flint's youth and adults to be physically active. To support this effort, the Crim partnered with Michigan State University and Transtria, LLC. to look at park use and users' physical activity levels in four city of Flint parks.

The following provides highlights of the key findings and recommendations.

Key Finding # 1:

Flint parks that experience investment have more use than parks that don't.

Parks are an integral part of a community. Investing in parks can increase opportunities for Flint residents to use parks to be active, gather with family and friends, and de-stress from daily life.

Key Finding # 2:

People are more physically active in Flint parks that experience investment.

In Flint, 1/3 of youth do not get enough physical activity and 32% of adults are obese. Investing in park facilities that encourage physical activity, such as walking paths and playgrounds, will help people lead more active, healthy lives.



Investment includes: volunteers who conduct clean-ups, programming and events in parks, and funding for physical improvements such as updates to play structures, ball fields, or general maintenance like lawn mowing.

Key Finding # 3:

Amenities or design can encourage or discourage park use.

Follow established best practices when putting in new or updating amenities, removing hazardous equipment, or re-designing existing space to ensure that parks are safe and useable.



What's Needed?

Summary of Policy Recommendations

The Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (HKHC) initiative, facilitated by the Crim Fitness Foundation (Crim), works to provide safe, inviting and low-cost places for Flint's youth and adults to be physically active. To support this effort, the Crim partnered with University of Michigan-Flint to use the Trust for Public Land's *7 Healthy Habits for an Excellent Park System* to review the city of Flint's park policies.

The following provides highlights of the key recommendations based on the policy review, community input, and feedback from the HKHC partnership .

- Determine strategies for equitable investment, improvement and maintenance in the parks system.
- Implement the 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan goals and work to integrate these elements into the Flint Master Plan.
- Convene citizen advisory committees to encourage consistent citizen input, and help sustain existing parks groups (e.g. Park Tenders).
- Formalize partnerships between the city, and private or nonprofit organizations.
- Remove hazardous equipment that is currently dangerous for use.
- Formulate a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policy.
- Conduct activities and events within the parks to encourage use.
- Explore a community policing approach for parks.
- Devise policies to address vacant properties near parks.
- Encourage the city to publish an annual parks report.

For copies of the full reports outlined within this document, please visit:

www.crim.org/parksreports

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