

General Plan Update Phase 2 – Oakland Park Survey Report

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Authors: Bebe LeGardeur, Khalilha Haynes, Mariah Padilla

I. Introduction

The City of Oakland is currently working on [updating its General Plan](#). As part of the General Plan Update process, the City wanted to better understand how people use Oakland's parks. We created a survey that asked community members to share how they use their neighborhood parks and what improvements they would like to see at parks throughout the city. The information gathered from this survey will inform the development of the General Plan's land use, open space, and transportation alternatives, and eventually an update to the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) Element. As a complement to the survey, City staff conducted site visits at 22 parks across the city between July and August of 2024, focusing on parks in Environmental Justice communities. The goal of the site visits was to gain a better understanding of the state of park amenities and assess their use by park users to inform the development of the OSCAR. Findings from the site visits are available on the General Plan Update's [OSCAR webpage](#).

The survey was open from August 20, 2024, to September 20, 2024, and was published in English, Spanish, and Chinese. We received 597 responses total, 571 in English, 22 in Chinese, and three in Spanish. The survey included 13 questions related to 1) park accessibility, 2) park amenities and usage, and 3) community perspectives on parks and visions for Oakland parks system. There were eight demographic questions related to age, race and ethnicity, gender, language, zip code, and connection to Oakland. This report outlines the methodology process, analyzes the survey results, describes main themes that emerged from the survey's long-form questions, and concludes with next steps.

II. Methodology

The survey was shared using a targeted distribution approach. It was directly shared with the directors or programmatic staff at each [Recreation Center in the City of Oakland](#). Additionally, the survey was shared with the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, which included it in their monthly newsletter. Through the targeted outreach, individuals were asked to share it with their networks and were provided a link to the digital survey, copies of the physical survey to print, and a QR code to share broadly. All survey materials were provided in English, Spanish, and Chinese to help ensure accessibility and a wide range of responses. The survey was also distributed at in-person events in tandem with the General Plan Update Phase 2 community engagement process.

The survey questions were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative analysis was conducted on questions that encouraged survey respondents to provide short responses sharing their perspectives and lived experience. In addition, quantitative analysis was conducted on multiple choice questions in which respondents had to select an answer from a pre-determined list of answer options.

From the qualitative analysis, there emerged several recurring themes reflecting the community relation to and perception of parks – parks as spaces of community connection and belonging, outdoor recreation and community health, uneven access to green space, park maintenance, improvement, and safety, and evolving community desires that require new infrastructure.

III. Survey Results

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to name the park that they wanted to focus on throughout the survey. There were 54 unique parks mentioned, and the most popular ones were:

- 1) Joaquin Miller Park (168 responses)
- 2) DeFremery Park (129 responses)
- 3) Bushrod Park (61 responses)
- 4) Lake Merritt (40 responses)
- 5) Mosswood Park (22 responses)

There were 22 responses where the park name or intersection entered was unclear.

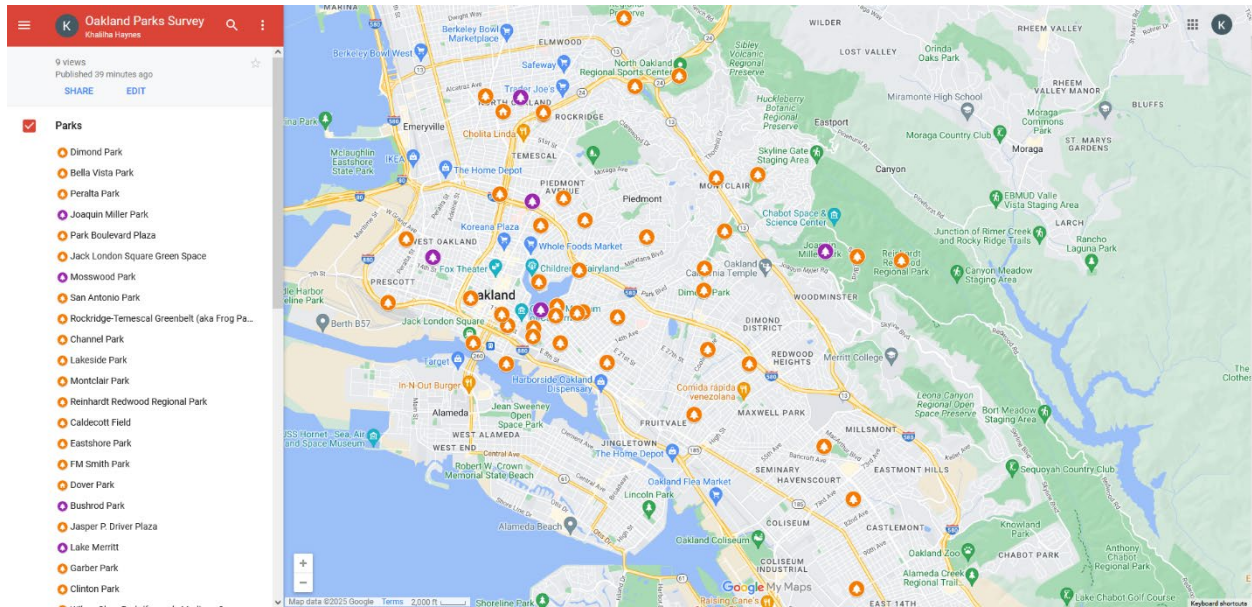


Figure 1: Map of Parks Mentioned. Top 5 visited parks shown in purple. View full map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1DWm-PFcg_8MM0OF3ezNiU9qOftUGyXU&usp=sharing

Table 1: Full list of Parks Mentioned

Parks Referenced	Count
Joaquin Miller Park	168
DeFremery Park	129
Bushrod Park	61
Lake Merritt	40
Mosswood Park	22

Unknown	22
Dimond Park	17
Montclair Park	16
Dover Park	11
Bella Vista Park	9
Lincoln Square Park	8
Eastshore Park	7
San Antonio Park	7
Wilma Chan Park	7
Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt (aka Frog Park)	6
Snow Park	6
Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park	5
FM Smith Park	4
Lakeside Park	4
South Prescott Park	4
Arroyo Viejo Park	3
Jasper P. Driver Plaza	3
Sausal Creek	3
Temescal Regional Recreation Area	3
All Parks	2
Burckhalter Park	2
Garber Park	2
Hardy Dog Park	2
Lafayette Square	2
Morcom Rose Garden	2
Oakland Davie Tennis Stadium	2
Peralta Park	2
Roberts Regional Recreation Area	2
Allendale Recreation Center	1
Athol Plaza	1
Brooklyn Basin	1
Caldecott Field	1

Cesar Chavez Park	1
Channel Park	1
Clinton Park	1
Concordia Park	1
Dimond Canyon	1
Elmhurst Park	1
Estuary Park	1
Glen Echo Park	1
Grove Shafter Park	1
Gwen Jackson Park	1
Jack London Square Green Space	1
Jefferson Square Park	1
Montclair Railroad Trail	1
Oak Park	1
Park Boulevard Plaza	1
Pine Knoll Park	1
Raimondi Park	1

A. Park Accessibility

There were three questions related to park accessibility that sought to understand how people get to their local parks.

1. How long does it take you to get to this park?
2. How do you usually get to the park?
3. How would you prefer to get to the park?

Question 1: How long does it take you to get to this park?

Response Options:

- a. *Less than 5 minutes*
- b. *5-10 minutes*
- c. *10-15 minutes*
- d. *15-20 minutes*
- e. *20-25 minutes*
- f. *25-30 minutes*
- g. *More than 30 minutes*

We asked respondents how long it takes them to get to the park they identified. Over 50% of people said it took them 10 minutes or less to get to their local park, with most respondents, 27%, taking between five and 10 minutes to get to their park.

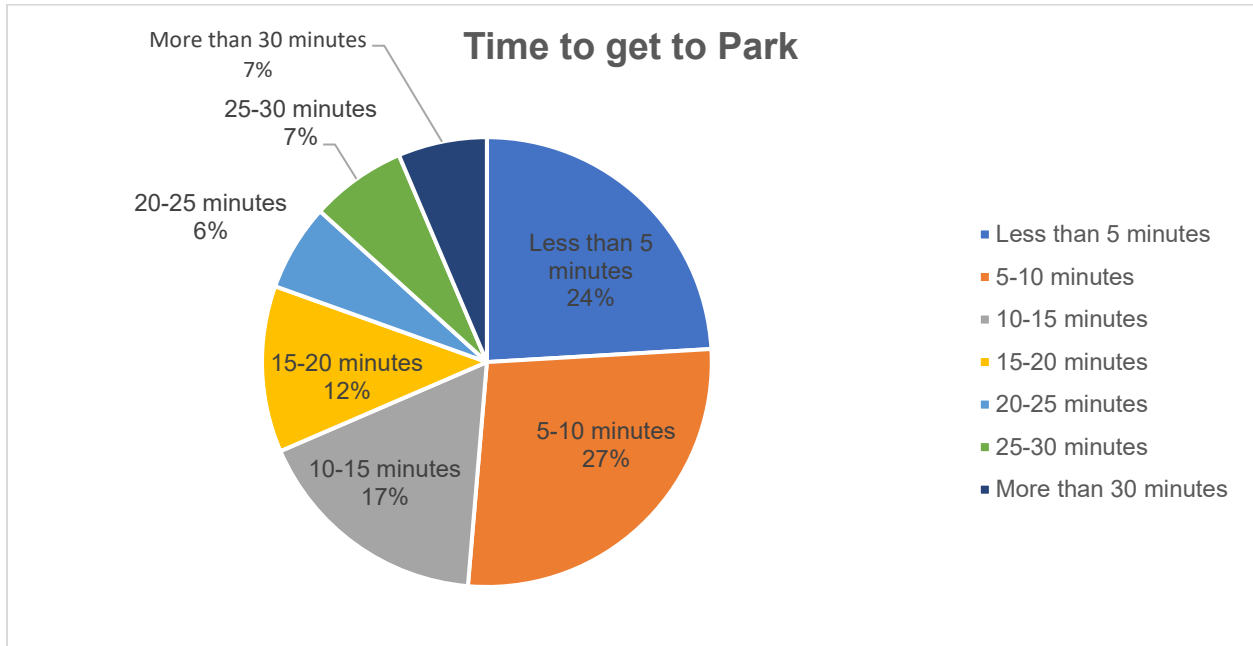


Figure 2: How long does it take you to get to this park?

Question 2: How do you usually get to the park?

Response Options:

- a. Car
- b. Carpool
- c. Walk
- d. Run
- e. Bike
- f. E-Scooter
- g. Transit (Bus, BART, etc.)
- h. Wheelchair
- i. Skateboard
- j. Other

The second question asked respondents to identify the way they usually get to their park, whether walking, biking, driving, taking public transit or some other method. Most respondents drive, with walking and biking being the second and third most common methods.

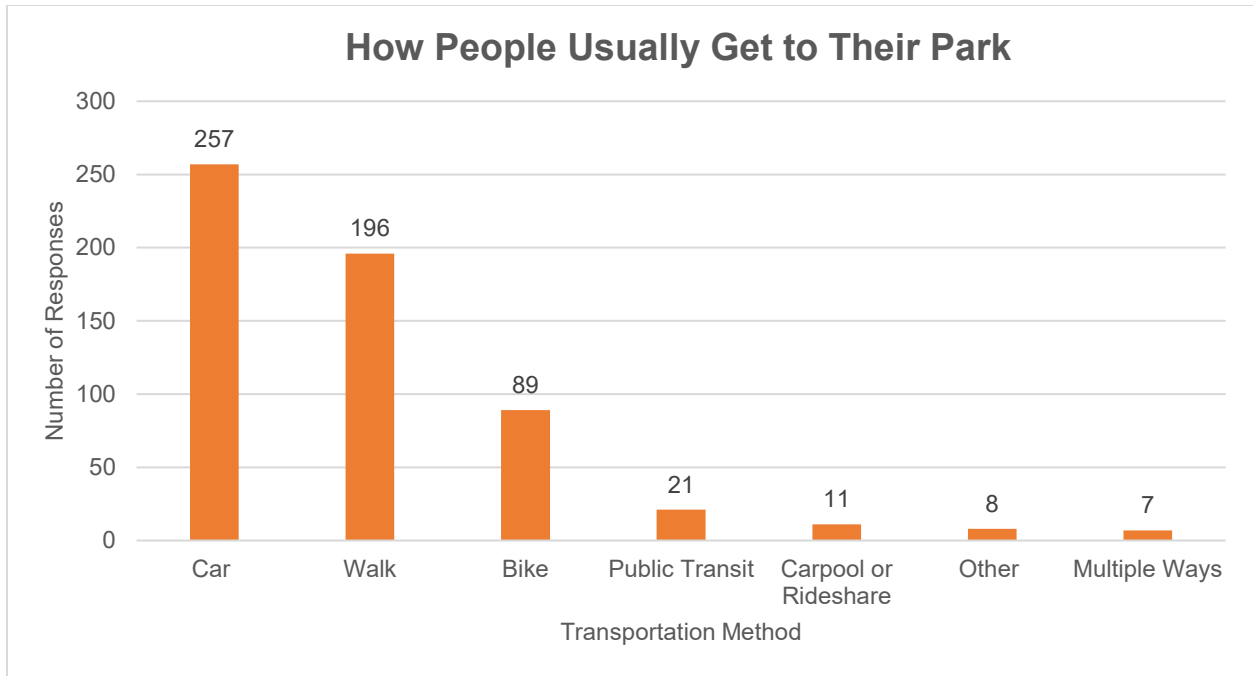


Figure 3: How do you usually get to the park?

Question 3: How would you prefer to get to this park?

Response Options:

- a. My current method of transportation to the park is ideal.
- b. Other

In response to the question “How would you prefer to get to this park?”, most people (87%) responded that their current way of getting to their park is ideal. Approximately five percent of respondents stated that they would like to get to their park with reliable public transit, whether bus, train, or shuttle and four percent wanted to get to their park via bicycle, skateboard, or roller skates. There were eight respondents who selected “Other,” but did not elaborate. Only one respondent wanted to get to their park by driving, which results in the “0%” sliver shown on the pie chart in Figure 4.

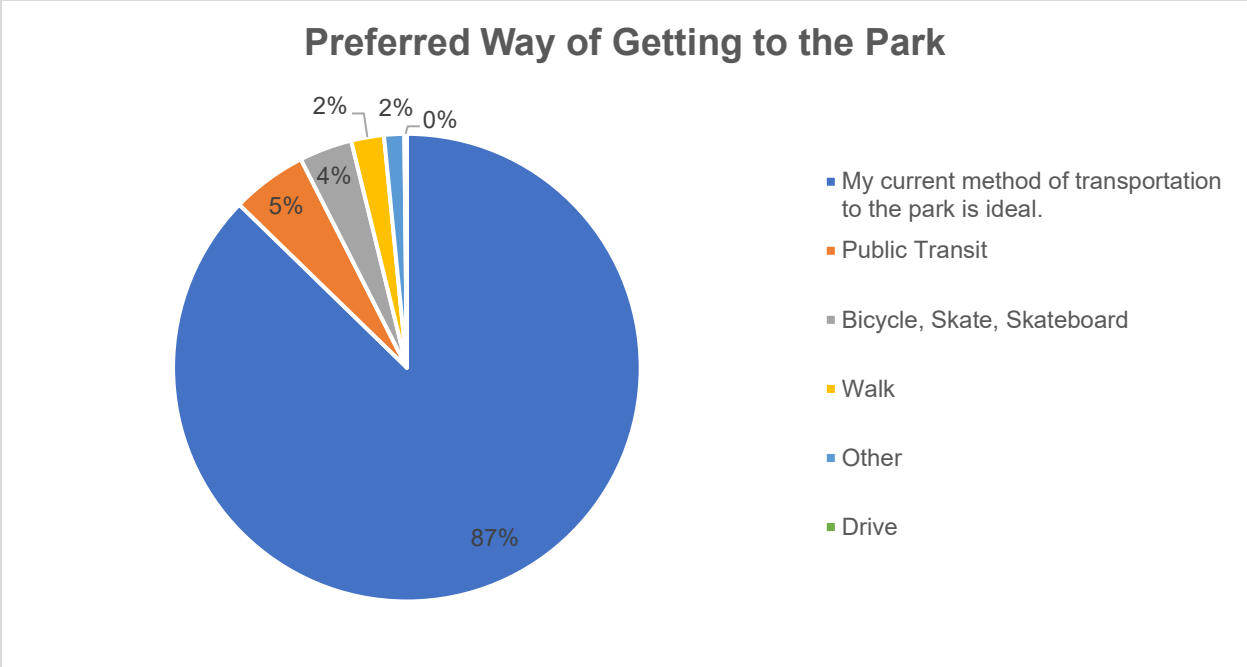


Figure 4: How would you prefer to get to the park?

B. Park Amenities and Usage

There were six questions related to park amenities and usage that sought to understand how people use their neighborhood parks – what they do when they are there, what they would like to see improved, and the types of events that draw them to the park. We specifically asked about restroom access, which has been a recurring theme in community feedback throughout the General Plan Update process.

4. How often do you go to the park?
5. What amenities do you use the most at this park? (Select top 3 in order of use)
6. What are things you would like to see improved about this park?
7. Have you been able to use the restroom at this park when you need to?
8. What other amenities would you like to see at this park?
9. Does this park host community and/or cultural events? If yes, what types of events do you attend?

Question 4: How often do you go to the park?

Response Options:

- a. Once per week
- b. 1-3 times per week
- c. 1-3 times per month
- d. 3-5 times per month
- e. 1-3 times per year
- f. 3-5 times per year

g. Every day

This question assessed how often respondents use the park they indicated. The goal was to understand how different parks are used and the role they fill in residents' daily, weekly, or monthly recreation habits. Parks in Oakland play an important role in respondents' recreation habits. Over 65% of respondents indicated that they visit the park at least once a week while another 25% indicated that they visit the park at least once a month.

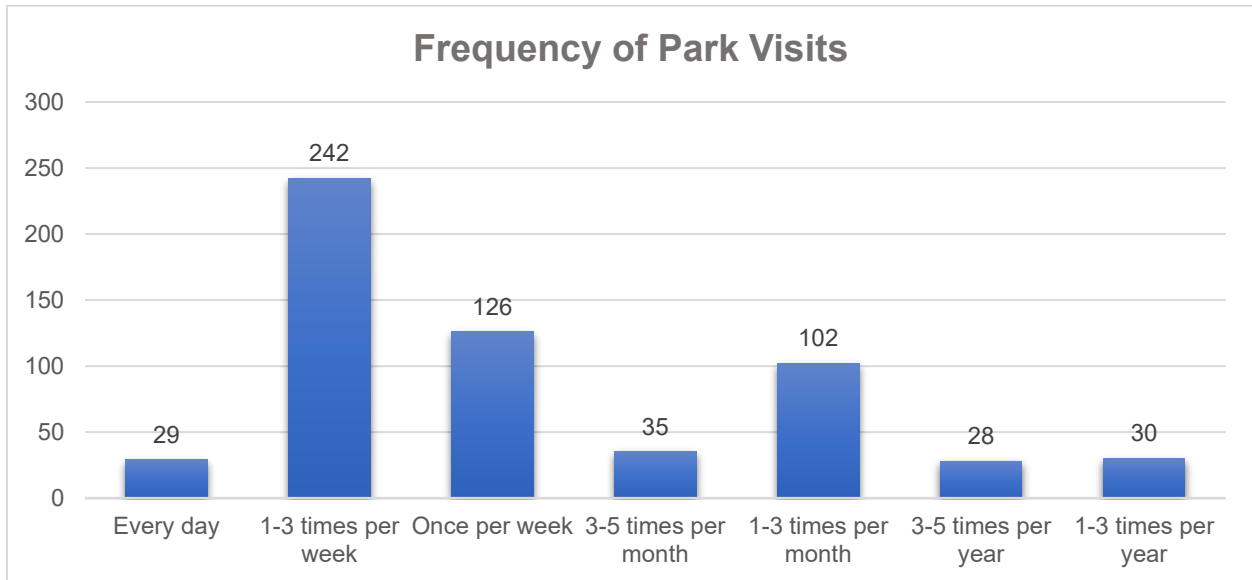


Figure 5: How often do you go to the park?

Question 5: What amenities do you use most at this park (Select top 3 in order of use).

Response options:

- a. Benches
- b. Basketball Courts
- c. Tennis Courts
- d. Walkway/Trail
- e. Picnic Tables
- f. Barbeques
- g. Tot Lot
- h. Playground
- i. Trashcans
- j. Recreation Centers
- k. Dog Parks
- l. Athletic Fields
- m. Flexible Grass Space
- n. Other _____

The purpose of this question was to get a better understanding of how people use the amenities in their local parks. This understanding can be used to better target resource allocation to maintain or enhance the most used amenities at each park. We asked respondents to rank their top 3 amenities from a list developed through a review of amenities listed on the Oakland Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development Department [website](#), and on the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation’s “[Parks Guides](#),” and through observation of parks facilities. However, the responses options for the question included only official uses that have facilities in Oakland Parks. For instance, though pickleball is an observed activity at many parks, only “Tennis Courts” was included as a response option because there are no official pickleball courts at this time.

The “Walkway/Trail” option was ranked 679 times and was by far the most used amenity indicated by respondents. The second most used amenity was “Basketball Courts” (ranked 277 times), followed by “Flexible Grass Space” (ranked 105 times). These responses reflect a preference for both active (basketball courts, tennis courts, playgrounds) and passive uses (walkways/trails, flexible lawns, benches), suggesting a need for both types of programming in future planning efforts.

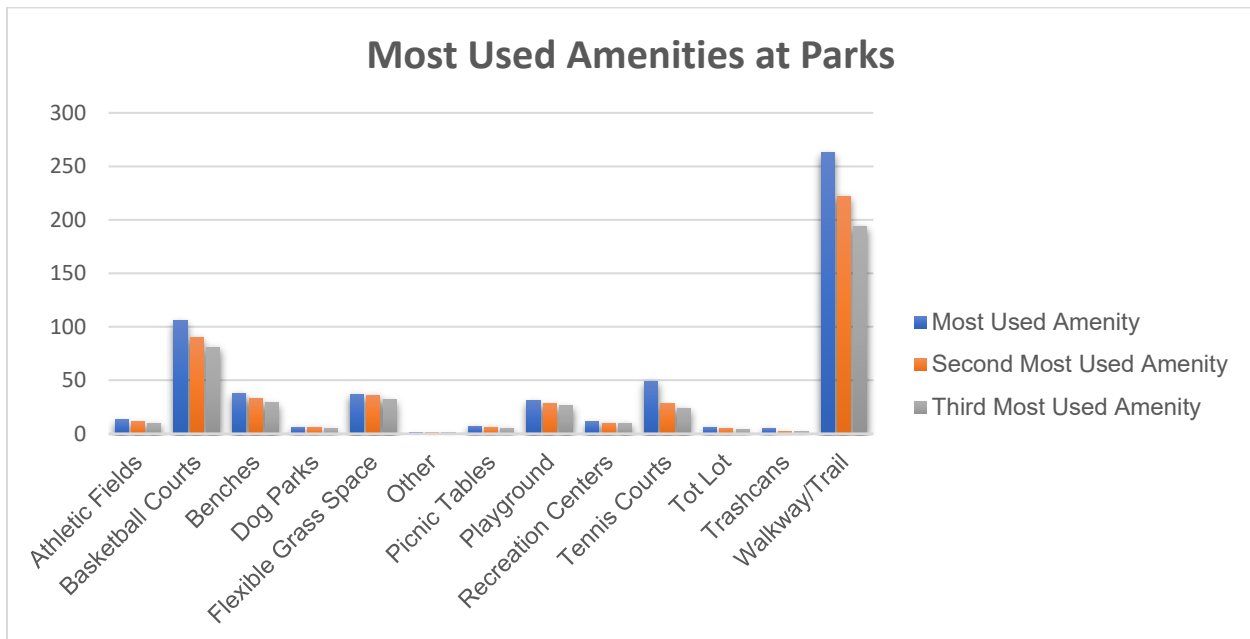


Figure 6: What amenities do you use most at this park?

Question 6: What are things you would like to see improved about this park?

Response options:

- a. Amenities
- b. Tree maintenance
- c. Landscaping/lawn maintenance
- d. Litter

- e. Restroom maintenance
- f. Restroom access
- g. Programming
- h. Other _____

This question asked respondents to reflect on what they would like to see improved at the park they selected. This question provided an opportunity for respondents to share what would improve their experience of Oakland parks and provide feedback on specific interventions they would like to see. Respondents were able to select multiple options, as well as write-in specific improvements that they would like to see. We analyzed each respondent’s answer to develop an understanding of what improvements Oaklanders most want to see in their parks.

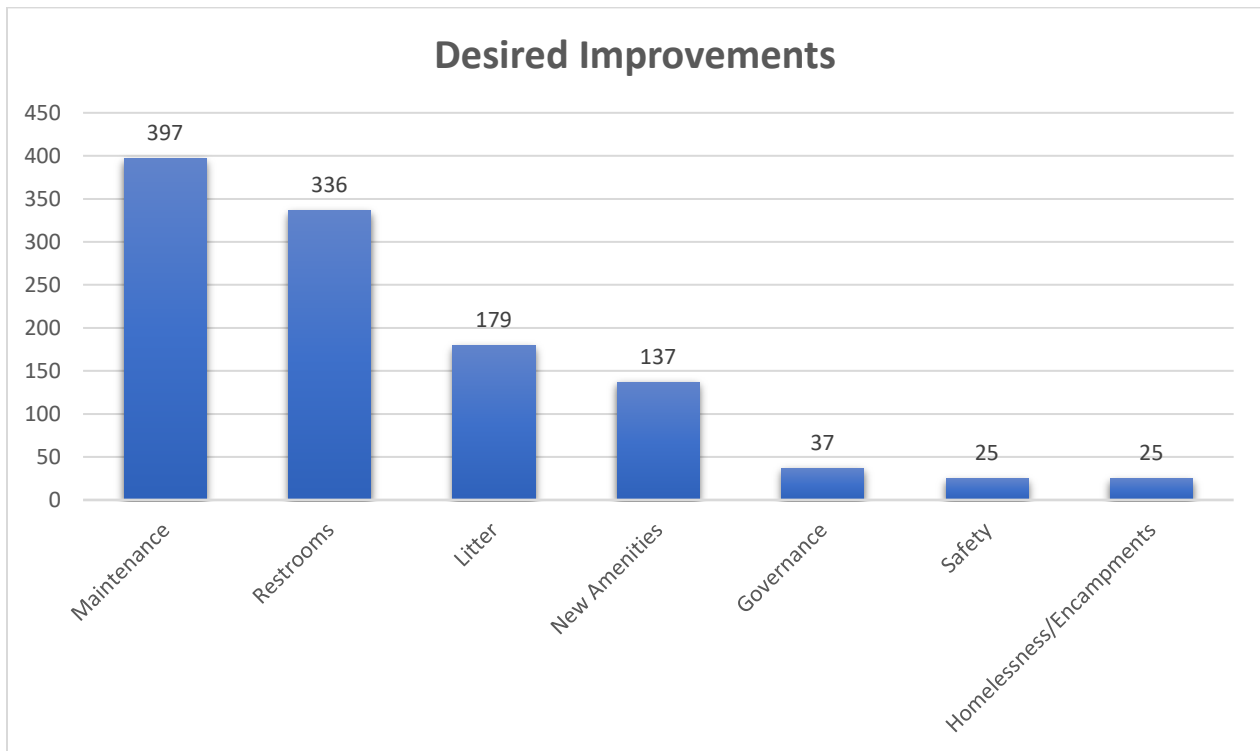


Figure 7: Improvements Desired at Parks

Key insights from answers to this question include:

1. **Quality and Maintenance of Existing Amenities (397 references):** Quality/maintenance of existing features was the most common concern among survey respondents. Answers in this category included concerns about tree maintenance, bathroom maintenance, trail maintenance, and playground maintenance. Respondents concerned about maintenance referenced Joaquin Miller Park and DeFremery Park more than all other parks combined.
2. **Access to Restrooms (336 references):** Respondents see access to restrooms as a key area for improvement, with over half of respondents indicating dissatisfaction with either the state of the restrooms or the availability of restrooms at their parks. Calls for

improved restroom access were focused on DeFremery Park, Joaquin Miller Park, Bushrod Park, Lake Merritt, and Mosswood Park.

3. **Litter (179 references):** Litter, illegal dumping, and insufficient supply of garbage cans at parks was cited often as an area for improvement.
4. **New Amenities that Support for Diverse Activities (137 references):** User groups, specifically roller skaters at DeFremery Park, pickleball players, and mountain bikers, called for improvements to parks to support these activities.
5. **Governance over Competing Uses and User Groups (37 references):** Governance was a clear concern at parks with competing user groups. Conflicts that appeared include those between mountain bikers and hikers; people with dogs and people who don't have dogs; and people using parks for loud gatherings and those using them for quiet reflection and recreation.

Question 7: Have you been able to use the restroom at this park when you need to?

Response Options:

- a. Yes
- b. No

In the Oakland Park and Recreation Foundation's [2018 Park Maintenance Survey Report](#), access to restrooms at parks emerged as a key issue, consistent with feedback received during engagement for Phase 1 of the General Plan Update. The 2018 survey found that a significant number of the freestanding restrooms at inspected parks were either locked or otherwise unusable. This question expanded on the previous survey by asking respondents if they were able to use the restroom at their park when they needed.

Over half of respondents (332, 56%) indicated that they were not able to use the restroom at the park when they needed to. Lack of access to restrooms represents a significant challenge when it comes to increasing park usership and maintaining parks. Lack of restrooms deters users, cuts trips to the park short, or encourages park users to use the park as their restroom, exacerbating the maintenance challenges faced by Oakland's Public Works Department.

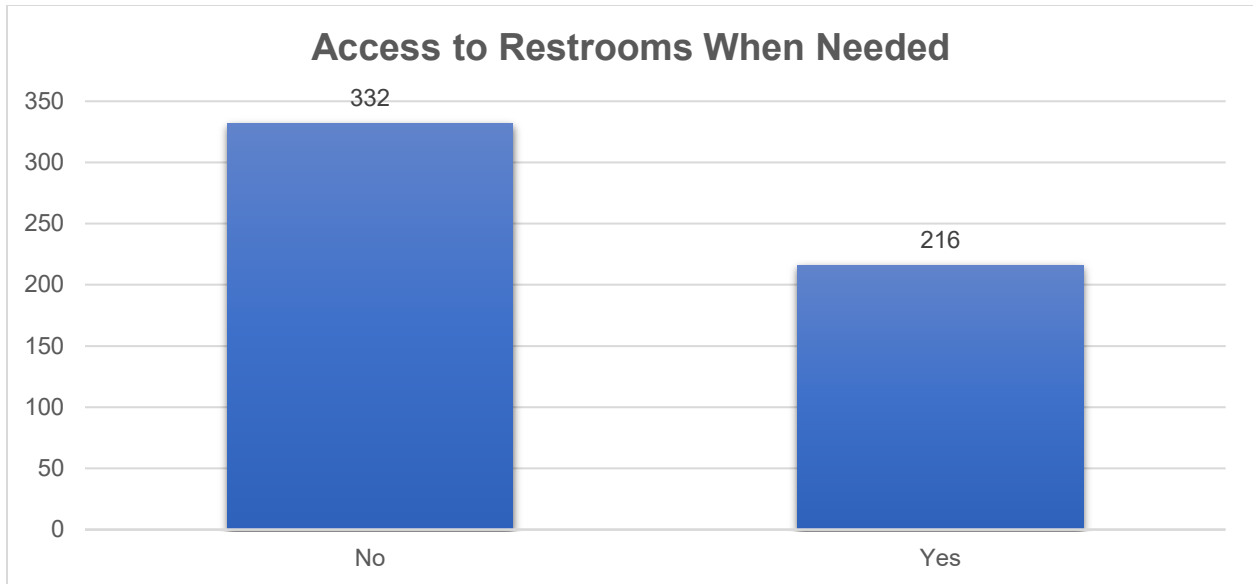


Figure 8: Have you been able to use the restroom at this park when you need to?

Question 8: What other amenities would you like to see at this park?

This open-ended question provided an opportunity for respondents to discuss additional amenities they would like to see at the park they indicated, or to provide more information on the answers they already provided.

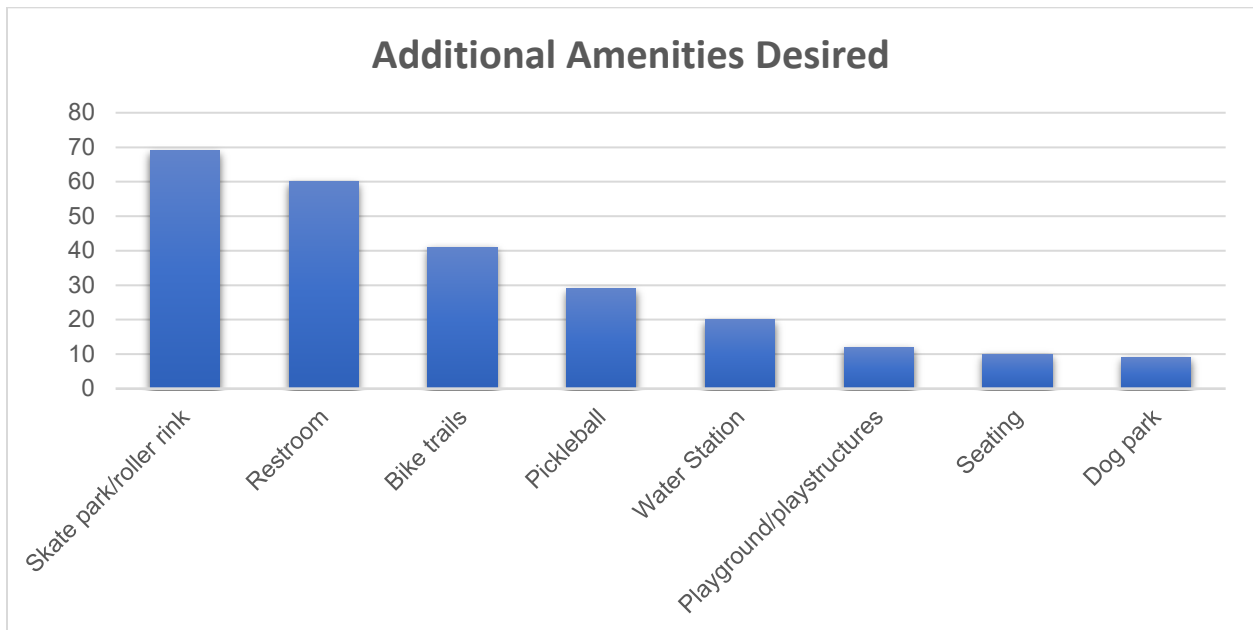


Figure 9: What other amenities would you like to see at this park?

The themes that emerged in the answers to this question were like those discussed in the analysis of Question 6. Responses mainly focused on specific enhancements people wanted to

see in their parks, maintenance concerns, and desired clarity about park operations and governance.

Park Improvements: 254 responses focused on desired improvements to the parks, ranging from the construction of new mountain biking trails to the installation of new water fountains. The most frequently recurring themes were calls for the creation of a roller-skating rink, new restrooms, new bike trails, and dedicated pickleball courts.

Park Maintenance: 71 respondents also pointed to maintenance and quality of life improvements they wanted to see at their park. Statements in this category largely fell into four categories: 1) improving or maintaining existing facilities or structures such as restrooms and playgrounds, as well as park assets like lighting and fencing; 2) providing more regular trash pick-up and more trashcans; 3) providing more regular trail work and landscaping; and 4) removing or mitigating the impact on recreational park users of encampments.

Governance: Respondents referenced governance issues as an area for improvement. Comments in this category included requests for clearer signage to set expectations around mountain biker/pedestrian access to trails, more transparency around park resources and hours of operation, and stronger enforcement of existing rules governing the use of parks.

Question 9: Does this park host community and/or cultural events? If yes, what types of events do you attend?

We asked this question to learn more about the types of programming organized by individual parks, volunteer groups, and individual park users, as well as the appeal of the provided programming to respondents. Through the write-in response option, we sought to provide insights into the activities that bring respondents to the park.

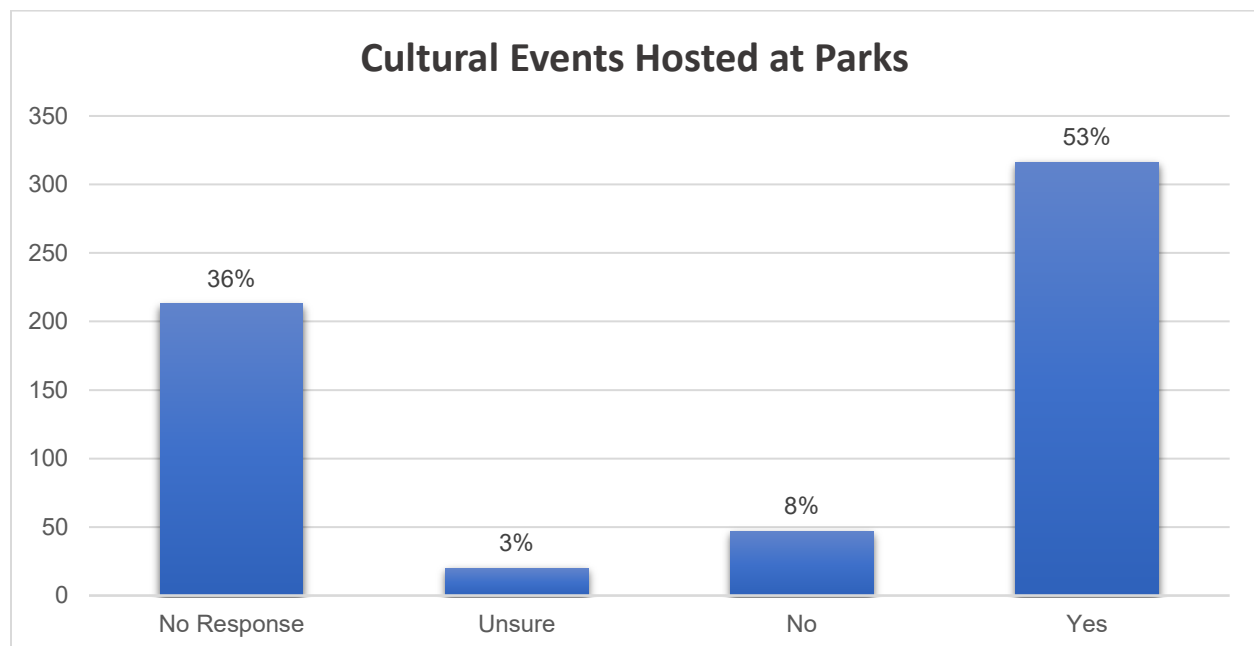


Figure 9: Presence of community and/or cultural events hosted at the park.

Answers to this question highlighted two key themes. The first is that most of the events referenced by respondents are not City-sponsored programming, but community-initiated meetups, classes, and celebrations. This theme speaks positively to the role that parks play in community life in Oakland because residents feel empowered to regularly activate parks to meet their needs. In contrast, the responses also indicate that the “unofficial” nature of some of these gatherings, and the potential for them to get out of hand, leads to alienation and feelings of unsafety among some residents. Five respondents stated that they used to attend events at parks but now feel unsafe doing so. Another respondent shared their frustration with not being able to find a calendar of events that would help them get involved in community activities. Respondents also stated that they would like to see more events in parks. This dynamic suggests that the City has a greater role to play in activating parks and using them as a space to celebrate Oakland’s culture. This also points to the importance of having open green space that can be used in several different ways and that designated athletic fields and/or courts are not necessarily needed for people to find ways to use a park.

The second theme to emerge was the connection between recreation and park use. Many respondents called out specific activities, such as roller-skating nights, mountain bike classes or group rides, and pickleball tournaments as the sole event that they take part in at their park. This highlights the role of organized activities with dedicated facilities or natural features as a driver of visitation to Oakland parks.

C. Perspective on Parks and Community Visioning

We asked respondents to share their perspective on the personal and community benefits of parks, as well as their ideas on how to create a safe and connected network of parks in Oakland. The four questions in this section are listed below.

10. Do you think that access to parks has a positive impact on your physical, social, and mental health?
11. Do you believe that this park benefits your community? Why or why not?
12. Is there another park in Oakland that you visit more often? If so, which park(s)?
13. What does a safe and connected Oakland Park system look like to you?

Question 10: Do you think that access to parks has a positive impact on your physical, social, and mental health?

Response Options:

- a. Yes
- b. No

To better understand the role of parks in promoting, physical, social, and mental health, we asked respondents to respond yes or no to the above statement. We found that 99% (584 out of 589 responses) of respondents believe that access to parks has a positive impact on their physical, social, and mental health.

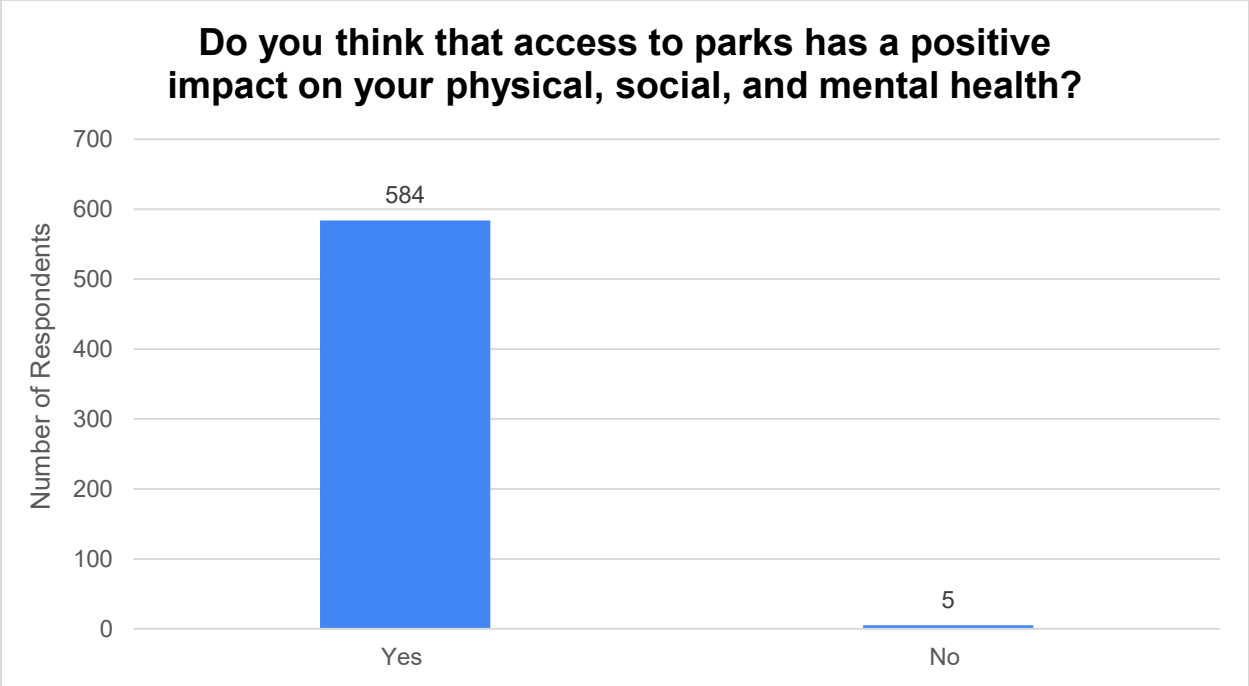


Figure 10: Parks impact on physical, social, and mental health.

Question 11: Do you believe this park benefits your community? Why or why not?

This question provided survey respondents the opportunity to share their perspective on the role of parks in their community. Through this question we sought to understand the shared benefits that park users received from local green spaces, as well as existing challenges or barriers that park users are facing that limit the positive impact of parks on local communities.

Respondents highlighted the role of parks in facilitating community connection, enhancing safety, improving community health, and providing access to nature and outdoor recreation. 202 survey responses focused on the role of parks in fostering community connectedness, 33 responses highlighted the role of parks in activating spaces and promoting community safety, 171 responses focused on the ability of parks to provide access to nature and outdoor recreation spaces, and 78 responses focused on positive health impacts.

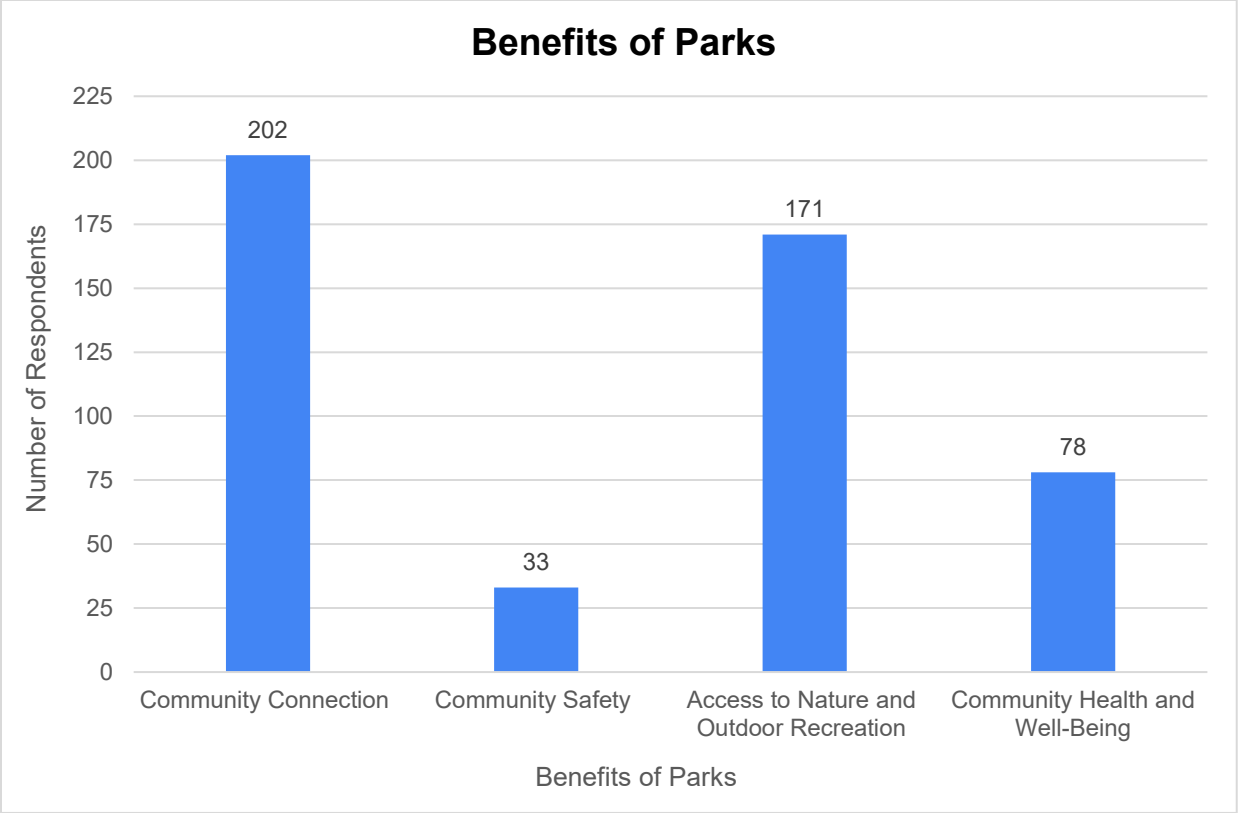


Figure 11: Community Benefits from Parks

Question 12: Is there another park you visit more often? If so, which parks?

We asked this question to provide survey respondents the opportunity to list other parks that they may enjoy visiting or frequent often, in addition to the park they provided feedback on.

Table 2: Full List of Other Parks Respondents Visit More Often

Park Referenced	Count
Lake Merritt	38
Dimond Park	25
Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park	23
Joaquin Miller Park	15
Montclair Park	12
Smith Park	9
Dover Park	8
Bushrod Park	7
Temescal Regional Recreation Area	7

Lincoln Square Park	7
Snow Park	6
Little Frog Park	5
Mosswood Park	5
Lakeside Park	5
Upper Frog Park	4
Sibley Volcanic Regional Reserve	4
Roberts Regional Recreation Park	4
Rose Garden	4
East Bay Regional Parks District	3
Township Commons	3
Martin Luther King Shoreline	3
Pine Knoll Park <i>(temporarily closed)</i>	3
Bella Vista Park	2
Tilden Regional Park	2
DeFremery Park	2
Oakland Hills	2
Wilma Chan Park	2
Bonsai Garden	1
Athol Plaza	1
Skyline Regional Park	1
Sausal Creek	1
San Antonio Park	1
Plum Patch Park	1
The Bay Trail	1
Lower Bobs Skatepark	1
Huckleberry Regional Botanic Reserve	1
Leona Heights Park	1
Splash Pad Park	1
Chabot Park	1
Brookdale Park	1
Knowland Park	1
Kings Estate Open Space Park	1

Linden Park	1
Astro Park	1
Barry Place Parklet	1
Cleveland Cascade	1
Lakeshore Park	1

Question 13: What does a safe and connected Oakland Park system look like to you?

Survey respondents reflected on their hopes for the future of the Oakland Park system, which were focused on enhancing public safety, increasing the accessibility, connectivity, and walkability of parks, and improving parks maintenance and services.

Safety: 146 responses focused on community concerns and hopes for a safer park experience in the future. To improve safety, respondents expressed a desire for improved lighting (especially at night), reducing encampment presence by identifying long-term solutions to support the unhoused community, increasing security or staff presence at parks, providing safe and clean restrooms, preventing drug and alcohol usage, as well as theft and car break-ins, and providing overall safe spaces for children to play.

Accessibility, Connectivity, and Walkability: 67 responses highlighted a desire for improved park accessibility, connectivity between parks, and the ability to easily walk or bike to and from parks. Comments in this category include a desire for improved wayfinding, such as through improved signage and maps, easy public transit connections, safe car and bike parking options, well-maintained hiking and bike trails, and safe pedestrian intersections between parks.

Improving Park Maintenance and Services/Programming: 200 respondents shared that a primary component of their vision for Oakland’s parks are improvements in park maintenance and the increased provision of park services and community programming. Respondents shared a desire for free or low-cost events and open and sufficiently staffed recreation centers that have appropriate activities for all ages.

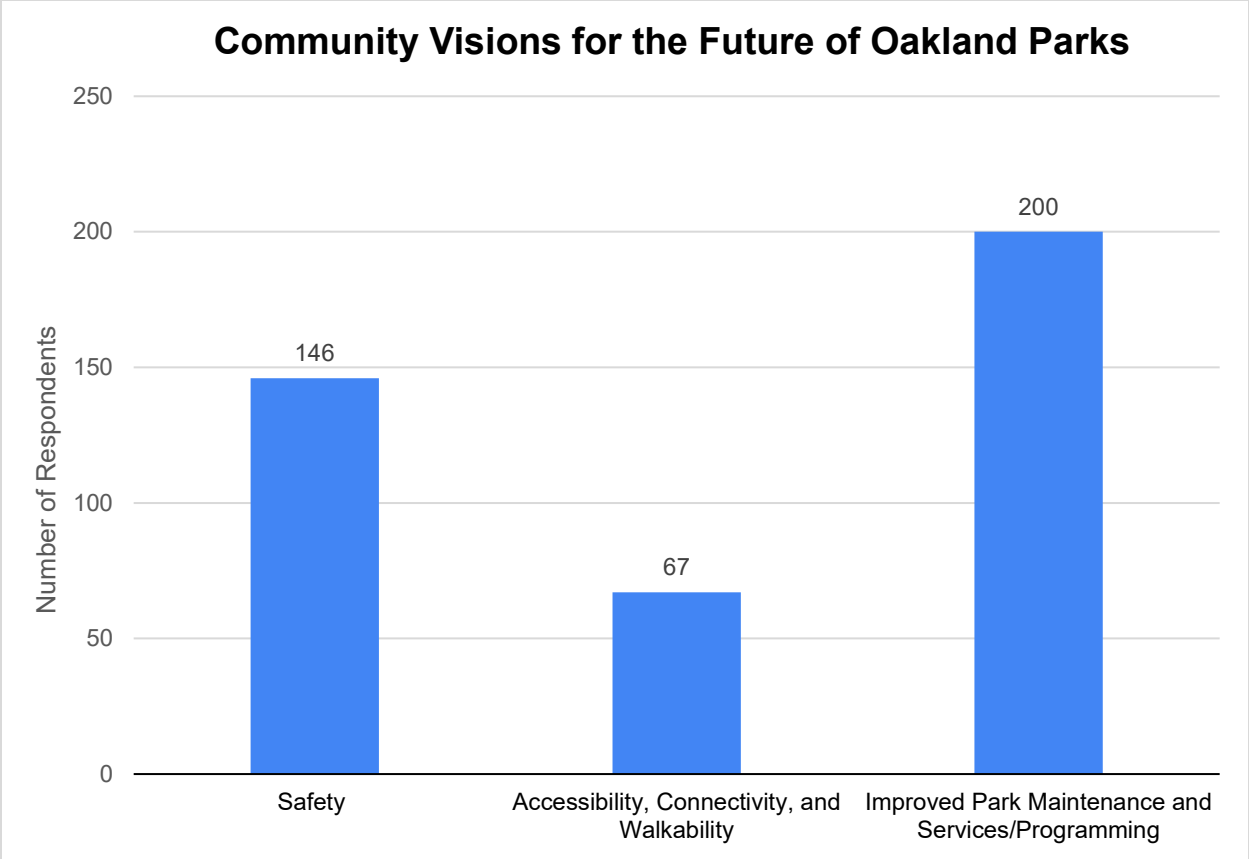


Figure 12: Priorities for a safe and connected Oakland parks system

Creating a Safe and Connected Oakland Parks System

We derived a few key insights from the responses to Question 13 which are presented below and supported by a few quotes from survey respondents.

Parks as Spaces of Community Connection and Belonging

Community members highlighted local parks as spaces that foster community connection, feelings of belonging and civic pride. Parks are one of the last few gathering places that are free, and they are critical spaces for fostering community cohesiveness. One respondent, whose local park is Lafayette Square, wrote about the role of parks as key to facilitating community connection across diverse groups, saying, "...Parks are important third spaces and bring peace, recreation, community, and engagement between neighbors, elected [officials], city officials, and other nonprofit groups." Similarly, a respondent whose local park is Lincoln Square Park shared that, parks "[allow] more people to go out of their homes and be willing to integrate with the community, have activities, communication, tolerance and unity, bring together different national cultures, and make the community cohesive." Another respondent from Lincoln Square Park described the park as the "heartbeat of the neighborhood," and that it helps people feel rooted and less lonely and isolated. These community statements show that residents value parks as spaces of critical connection, belonging, and community building.

Outdoor Recreation and Community Health

In addition to fostering belonging and connection, residents highlighted that parks play a large role in promoting community health and well-being by promoting outdoor recreation and the opportunity to connect with nature. Outdoor recreational activities identified by community members include hiking, bike riding, mountain biking, pickleball, visiting community and public gardens, exercise, basketball, picnics, dog walking, skateboarding, roller skating, and playing. One respondent, reflecting on Mosswood Park stated "...it's really important as a green space and a place for kids to play (and for adults to play too). For me it's all about the community garden where I have a plot, pretty much my favorite place to be."

Many survey respondents provided feedback on Joaquin Miller Park, naming it as a key outdoor space in Oakland. One park user wrote, "it provides a beautiful outdoor space for all types of social/family gatherings, solo/family/group hiking, trail bike riding, nature observation (birding for example)." A notable finding from the survey responses was recurring comments focused on Joaquin Miller Park as a prime mountain biking location in Oakland and in the larger Bay Area region. Bushrod Park was also cited as a popular recreation area for pickleball, which has gained popularity in recent years. Several respondents also shared that parks can be key to promoting exercise, socialization, and healthier lifestyles in specific populations, such as older adults or renters. A respondent from Cesar Chavez Park responded to the question of whether parks benefit their community with, "yes, there are many renters in this neighborhood in crowded housing. The park is key for kids and adults alike to hang out and be active." Similarly, a respondent from Bushrod Park shared that the park "provides a place for seniors to get exercise and socialize."

With the understanding of parks as key spaces for individuals, families, and communities to spend time outdoors and recreate, many survey respondents highlighted parks as fundamental to promoting physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. This understanding of the link between health and access to parks is seen in respondent statements such as, "Absolutely. We need contact with nature to restore our mental and physical health." Another survey respondent specifically highlighted the role of green space in combatting urban challenges related to climate change, stating "yes it [provides] essential amenities and reduces [the] heat island effect in West Oakland." The urban heat island effect refers to the phenomenon in which urban spaces are warmer than surrounding areas due to the concentration of heat-absorbing infrastructure, such as concrete and buildings, and the lack of greenspace. The concentration of heat can have large impacts on human health, especially for the elderly, individuals with chronic illnesses, the unhoused, and those who lack access to air conditioning or live in older housing.

Uneven Access to Green Space

Despite the many perceived benefits of parks, community responses also highlighted frustration associated with the inequitable access and distribution of green space in Oakland. Due to historical discriminatory land use policies and decisions about public resources, access to green space in Oakland is not equitably distributed. This is not unique to Oakland; many other cities across the country are dealing with the legacy of discriminatory housing, land use and resource allocation policies. Lack of access to green space has been linked to worse health outcomes, such as higher rates of stress, reduced physical activity, and higher rates of mental illness. The disparity in green space distribution is seen in statements such as "Bushrod is one of the few green spaces in North Oakland." Another survey respondent from San Antonio Park wrote "Yes, public space is where humans gather and meet people. We need many more of these types of

opportunities in Oakland.” Lastly, one community response highlighted that the uneven distribution of parks also results in longer commutes to reach parks. One resident put it thusly “Yes. There are no real parks in my neighborhood (the Fruitvale). I have to leave my neighborhood to enjoy the calm and beauty of nature.” This feedback from community members makes it clear that community members see parks as vital to individual and community health and that ensuring equitable access to parks should be a priority for the General Plan Update.

Park Maintenance, Improvement, and Safety

Survey responses also highlighted that two primary concerns of community members are park maintenance and safety. Common concerns raised by survey respondents include litter, illegal dumping, encampments, lack of supervision by City staff or police, park maintenance and cleanliness, bathroom access, lighting, and improved park signage. Survey respondents shared that due to lack of park maintenance and the deterioration of many local parks, the benefits that the parks provide to the community are diminished. One respondent shared a desire for routine park maintenance, stating, “pick up the trash more frequently. Maintain the infrastructure. Cut the grass more frequently. Add bathrooms so people don’t have to use disgusting port of potties.” Another survey respondent from Eastshore Park expressed feelings of frustration due to the inability of neighborhood residents to enjoy the park, saying “this park is a gathering place for so many nearby neighborhoods. But it is underutilized due to lack of amenities and cleanliness.”

Respondents also shared feeling unsafe and uncomfortable at parks due to the presence of encampments at some parks. One survey respondent shared “it is nice to have somewhere to go outside my house, but its value is significantly diminished by the amount of homeless encampments and trash in the park. I no longer feel interested in going there since tents popped up; I feel ambivalent - like I’m intruding on their living space but also like I may be unsafe.” Other responses similarly called for the City to implement long-term actions to support people living in encampments, “the city needs to open up public lots for the unhoused to safely encamp and invest in long term affordable housing for them. No one should have to live at a park. Sweeping encampments is obviously not a good long-term solution.”

Survey responses also highlighted examples of community members working together and pooling resources to improve their local park. For example, a respondent from Dover Park shared how the community worked together to improve the park by pooling money to fix broken swings and patch up holes in the ground.

Evolving Community Desires that Require New Infrastructure

In addition to park maintenance improvement, respondent feedback also highlighted a need for new infrastructure to meet ongoing and evolving community desires. From the comments received, evolving community needs include well-maintained, public, and permanent roller-skating rinks, public restrooms at all parks, more spaces for community gatherings, functional water fountains, pickleball courts, activity-specific trails, and improved infrastructure to make parks more accessible for all users.

The community desire for a permanent roller-skating rink has been shared by many respondents who currently participate in Panther Skate at DeFremery Park in West Oakland. Respondents shared their visions for a future roller-skating plaza in Oakland that is “clean, well attended and offers space to do activities that are popular with the local community. People love roller skating and there are few places that are conducive to roller skating. Smooth, flat, large

enough to skate like one would at a proper rink.” Additionally, another respondent provided thoughts on intermediary actions that can be taken to support the skating community in the meantime, writing “creating a dedicated skating plaza at DeFremery, and until that happens, allowing the lights to stay on past 10pm.” 76 responses highlighted a desire for a permanent roller-skating rink for the skating community.

Survey responses show that there is a growing pickleball community in Oakland that want dedicated pickleball courts. A respondent from Bushrod Park wrote “there are a couple thousand people who come to Bushrod Park to play pickleball. Even more would come if there were permanent courts and players didn’t need to know how to access temporary nets.”

Respondents also highlighted that pickleball has the potential to benefit specific populations, such as seniors and retired individuals, who often need additional support and programming to get exercise and socialize. One respondent shared “on any given day, there are 60 people at a single session with multiple sessions throughout the day. This is Pickleball. The age range is 25 to 85 and a provides a social network for so many people, especially those who are retired.”

These survey responses highlight the need for more pickleball infrastructure to support growing community desires. 64 survey responses highlighted the benefit of pickleball in the community and the need for more formal pickleball courts.

IV. Demographic Breakdown

Survey respondents had the option of answering the following demographic questions.

- What is your age?
- What gender do you identify with?
- Do you _____ in Oakland? Select all that apply.
- If you live in Oakland, which zip code do you live in?
- Which of the following best represents your race? Check all that apply.
- Which of the following best represents your ethnicity?
- Preferred Language

Age of Respondents

Most respondents, 43%, were between the ages of 21 and 44 and 35% were between the ages of 45 and 64. There were few responses from youth, one of our target demographics, which speaks to the need to bolster youth engagement, especially around park and open space priorities.

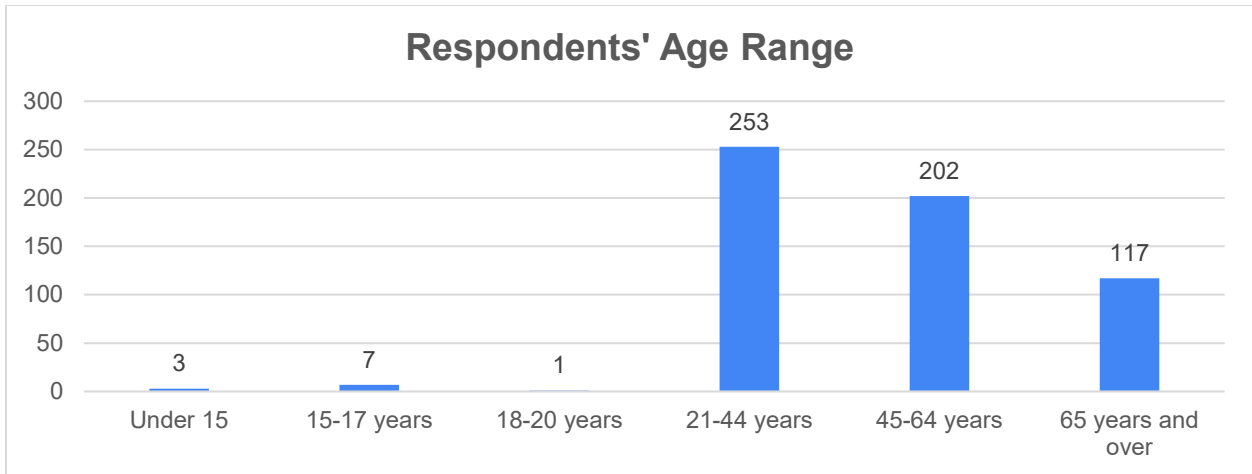


Figure 102: Age Range of Respondents

Gender of Respondents

Over half of respondents, 55%, identified as female and 41% as male. Less than five percent of respondents identified as Transgender or Other.

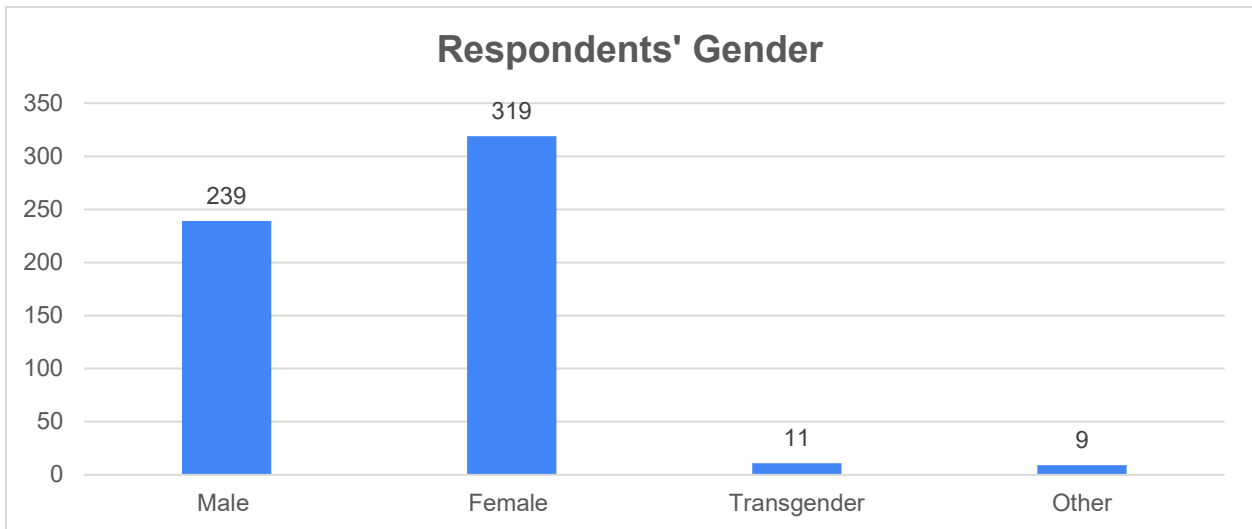


Figure 111: Gender of Respondents

Respondents' Relationship to Oakland

We asked survey respondents to identify whether they live, work, or spend time in Oakland. Respondents were able to select more than one option. Most respondents, 77%, were Oakland residents, and a quarter of respondents live, work, and spend time in Oakland.

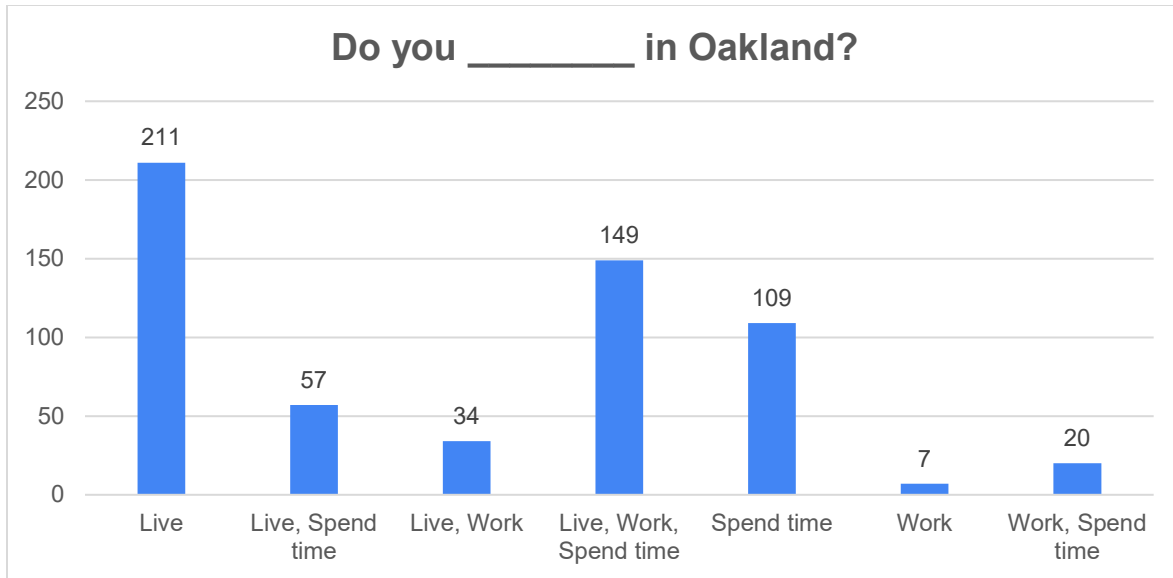


Figure 12: Do you _____ in Oakland?

Zip Codes of Oakland Residents

Most respondents live in three zip codes:

- 1) 94602 – 16%, which includes neighborhoods in North Oakland, such as Glenview and Lincoln Highlands,
- 2) 94610 – 15%, which includes neighborhoods immediately north/northeast of Lake Merritt, such as Lakeshore, Adams Point, and Crocker Highland.
- 3) 94609 – 13%, which includes neighborhoods in North Oakland, such as Telegraph, Temescal, and Rockridge.

There were few respondents living in zip codes representing West and East Oakland, which indicates the need for increased efforts targeting those communities to understand their priorities and concerns regarding parks and recreation.

Respondents' Race and Ethnicity

According to Census data for 2023, the racial composition in Oakland is approximately 41% White, 24% Black, 20% Asian, and 27% Some Other Race. Most survey respondents identified as White. Only 12% of survey respondents identified as Black and 16% identified as Asian. Approximately 30% of Oaklanders identify as Hispanic or Latino, regardless of race. However, over 80% of the survey respondents identified as Not Hispanic or Latine and only 11% as Hispanic/Latino/Latine. This breakdown is skewed compared to the realities of Oakland's populations and does not reflect the targeted populations of the General Plan Update, which include people of color and people who speak English as a second language.

Respondents' Preferred Language

Most respondents, nearly 95%, selected English as their preferred language. This breakdown does not reflect the targeted populations of the General Plan Update, which include people who speak English as a second language. There is an overrepresentation of English speakers amongst the survey responders. Approximately 61% of Oaklanders prefer to speak English predominantly, 21% prefer to speak Spanish and 6.4% prefer to speak Chinese.

V. Conclusion and Next Steps

Through the analysis of the park survey results, we have developed a broad overview of the opportunities and challenges that are facing Oakland's parks. The survey results will be used to inform the development of the General Plan Update, specifically the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) element. By developing a deeper understanding of park user priorities, experiences, and values, we aim to develop planning policies and actions that meet the needs of the community on the ground and help close current gaps in current park policies.

Additionally, the demographic analysis of survey respondents show that we need to make a concerted outreach to understand the park and recreation priorities of residents in East and West Oakland, as well as youth and people of color. As engagement on the General Plan Update ramps up in 2025, outreach will be focused on these communities to get their input into the development of the General Plan.

To complement the park survey findings, we will develop a Park Amenities matrix for the OSCAR that will serve as an accessible and easy to use tool for users to quickly receive key information on park amenities.