

Most Important Things We Learned from the Survey and Case Studies

Lakeside Park Exploratory Committee, 2.10.15

The committee members considered this question individually by writing down the things that were standing out to them from the survey results and case studies they had just heard. Then they discussed it in pairs and chose their most important findings to share with the group. The statements below are not in any particular order. The bullet points underneath reference the parts of the survey or case studies that led them to these conclusions.

About the Results

- **A large number of people responded to the survey.**
 - There were 3200 respondents, which is about 1 out of every 12 City residents.
 - Survey respondents represented all demographic groups of the City and user groups of Lakeside Park.
- **Extending the time of the survey for another two weeks brought us more ideas and did not significantly change the results.**
 - An additional 1000 people took the survey during this time, about 800 of them students in middle school and high school.
 - This means an additional 1000 people were engaged in thinking about the future of our park.
 - The only item on the survey to change was respondents' average opinion about a restaurant in the park which went from slightly disagree to slightly agree.
 - On the whole, these additional 1000 people thought similarly to the first respondents.
- **The public wants to build on and improve the kids' activities and family friendly nature of the park.**
 - In answer to Question 25, the favorite amenity/activity/usage of Lakeside Park today that survey respondents listed were playground equipment (1st - 235 people), kids' activities (2nd - 191 people), and rides (5th - 159 people).
- **The public wants more events and festivals in the park.**
 - Weekly bands/concerts/events (107 people) and more festivals (56 people) were the second most listed suggestion for what survey respondents would like to see in the park in the future (Question 26).
 - In answer to Question 25, Walleye Weekend was listed as the third most popular amenity/activity/usage about Lakeside Park today (188 people).
- **We should provide food at the park, including potentially a full-scale restaurant.**
 - When asked what changes they'd like to see in the future (Question 26), the most frequently mentioned responses related to food (323 people).
 - 54.7% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with having standard concessions available (Question 3).
 - 46.1% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with having a full service restaurant and bar available (Question 6).
 - 44.8% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with having a coffee/sandwich shop available (Question 4).

- **Parks are important to quality of life in community and worth investment.**
 - Case studies highlight the success of La Crosse and Shorewood who have invested in their parks and seen increases in public enjoyment and revenue to the city.
 - WI Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2008) indicates that the City of Fond du Lac currently spends 4.8% of spending and investments on parks and recreation compared to an average of 6.95% spent by other cities of a similar size in WI.

- **Adding a public/private partnership can add to revenues, quality of life, increase park utilization, and actually increase public safety.**
 - The Village of Shorewood has worked closely with Vecchio Entertainment Group in a lease agreement to run a Bavarian beer garden in Hubbard Park. This is earning revenue for the Village and drawing visitors off the nearby bike path.
 - Milwaukee County's public/private partnership for the Estabrook Park Beer Garden in Milwaukee has increased the safety of the park, increased revenue to the county, and brought in new visitors.

- **Survey respondents want to preserve historical areas and traditions associated with the park.**
 - When asked what changes they'd like to see in the future (Question 26), the third most frequently mentioned response was no changes to the park (151 people), no commercial development (12 people).
 - In answer to Question 25, the favorite amenities/activities/usage of Lakeside Park today that survey respondents listed were playground equipment (1st - 235 people), kids' activities (2nd - 191 people), Walleye Weekend (3rd - 188 people), rides (5th - 159 people), views of the water (6th - 144), lighthouse (7th - 133 people), and Christmas lights (8th - 113 people).

- **Current favorite amenities in the park were new at one time. We can open our minds to include new ideas.**
 - 46.1% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with having a full service restaurant and bar available (Question 6).
 - 44.8% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with having a coffee/sandwich shop available (Question 4).
 - Food (1st - 323 people), more events (2nd - 163 people), and more water activities (4th - 139) were the top suggestions for what survey respondents would like to see in the park in the future (Question 26).

- **People enjoy the park as a way to get outside and enjoy nature.**
 - "Relaxing: I enjoy nature and being outside" was the most chosen response for activities that survey respondents do at the park for all four seasons of the year.
 - In answer to Question 25, the favorite amenities/activities/usage of Lakeside Park today that survey respondents listed were walking (4th - 183 people) and views of the water (6th - 144).

- **The public would like increased access to the water.**
 - 62.2% of respondents agree or strongly agree with wanting to rent boats/bikes/kayaks when visiting Lakeside Park (Question 8).
 - In answer to Question 25, the favorite amenities/activities/usage of Lakeside Park today that survey respondents listed were views of the water (6th - 144), boat related activities (10th - 84 people), and fishing related activities (12th - 62 people).
 - When asked what changes they'd like to see in the future (Question 26), the fourth most frequently mentioned responses related to water activities like beach (83 people), splash pad (20 people), or a swimming area (19 people).

About the Survey and Research Process:

- It would be useful to have **more case studies**, especially ones that feature any specific changes we may recommend to the City when we get that far in the discussion.
- Many people referenced only the main portion of Lakeside Park in their survey comments, but this effort is also about **Lakeside Park West**. We should continue to mention and describe that part of the park, which includes Supple's Marsh, in future communications.
- 39% of survey respondents strongly agree with having more festivals in the park. 34% strongly disagree with selling alcohol in the park, and 32% strongly disagree with having a beer garden in the park. Since existing festivals like Walleye Weekend include the sale of alcohol and outdoor places to sit and enjoy it, this is confusing. If we do another survey, we should choose the wording carefully and consider how to sort out this **seeming incongruence about alcohol**.
- There are varied opinions about the park and many different ways survey respondents like to use the park. It may be difficult to suggest anything without alienating some respondents. However, we do think it's possible to include all interests. Each person may not like each idea, but we would like there to be **something for everyone**.
- We need to **consider the consequences of adding infrastructure** going forward and work with City staff on this. What would any new ideas mean for parking, restrooms, safety, etc.?

Additional Notes from the Discussion

- The stakeholder sub-committee (Lori Anderson-Lurvey) will draft a press release to thank the public for participating in the survey and include these key points about what the committee learned. This will be sent out before the end of the week.
- The data sub-committee (Luke Wacek) will work on an overview of all survey results that can be used as a guide for anyone studying all 3200 responses and the data analysis. This will be ready in time for the next update that Committee Chair John Short will give to City Council (Feb. 25).