



Center for Urban Initiatives and Research

City of Brookfield: Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department: 2010 Community Opinion Survey

Results Report

November 2010

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Acknowledgements

The UWM Center for Urban Initiatives and Research wishes to express their sincere gratitude to the staff of the City of Brookfield Department of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry who gave their time and input into this important project. The researchers would also like to thank the Brookfield residents who completed the survey and provided valuable information for their community.

Executive Summary

The following presents a summary of results from a mail survey of City of Brookfield households authorized by the Parks and Recreation Commission. The purpose of this survey was to identify Brookfield residents' perceptions and opinions about the current and future needs related to existing and future parks, enhancements, developments, and recreation programs. This information will provide the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department with resident input related to ongoing and future planning and operations.

The Center for Urban Initiatives and Research (CUIR), an evaluation and applied research center located at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, collaborated with the City of Brookfield Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department in all phases of this project. This included survey design, administration, data collection, analysis, and preparation of this report.

The 2010 Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Opinion Survey was largely an update of a similar instrument used in 1998. The rationale for this was to make the two instruments essentially identical for the comparison of results, which is included in the full report. The 2010 survey consisted of twenty-five items which were mainly closed-ended, with one open-ended question.

The survey was mailed in a single mailing in mid-September 2010 to 3,000 randomly selected residents of the City of Brookfield — including both apartment dwellers and home-owners — using addresses provided by the City of Brookfield Assessor's Office. Only those with addresses within the City of Brookfield were used for this survey. A total of 568 completed surveys were returned by the October 28, 2010 closing date, for a response rate of 18.9% and a sampling error of plus or minus 4.03%.

Importance of Facilities, Services, and Programs to Household Quality of Life

Nearly nine out of ten respondents (86%) reported that the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department facilities, services and programs are "very" or "somewhat" important to their household's quality of life.

About Parks and Forestry

Satisfaction with Parks and Public Spaces in the City of Brookfield. Nearly nine of ten respondents were either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with the parks and public spaces in the City of Brookfield.

Perceived Quality of Parks, Public Spaces, Recreational Areas, and Facilities. In terms of quality, Wirth Aquatic Center was rated highest by respondents, and the sand volleyball courts were the rated lowest.

Highest Rated

1. Wirth Aquatic Center
2. Skate Park
3. Nature Areas and Trails
4. Soccer Fields
5. Baseball / Softball Fields

Lowest Rated

1. Sand Volleyball Courts
2. Sledding Hills
3. Cross Country Ski Trails
4. Basketball Courts
5. Skating Rinks / Ponds

Frequency of Household Visits to Parks (Past 12 Months). Nine out of ten (89%) reported at least one visit to a City of Brookfield park during the past twelve months.

- About one-third (28%) reported 1 to 5 visits.
- Nearly one in five (17%) reported 6 to 10 visits.
- Two of five (41%) reported 10 or more visits.

Parks Visited in the City of Brookfield during the Past 12 Months. Wirth Park was the most visited park in Brookfield, while Westchester Park was the least visited park.

<u>Most Visited</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Least Visited</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Wirth Park	80%	1. Westchester	<1%
2. Mitchell	72%	2. Cardinal	1%
3. Wirth Park South	32%	3. Brookfield Manor	1%
4. Beverly Hills	17%	4. Kinsey	1%
5. Soccer Park	17%	5. Ruby	3%

Park Closest to Home. In 2010, nearly one-third (29%) of respondents identified Wirth Park as the park closest to their home.

<u>Closest Park</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Wirth Park	29%
2. Mitchell	16%
3. Beverly Hills	7%
4. Lilly Heights	7%
5. Fairview	7%

Reasons for Park Visits. The most frequently identified reason to visit a park was for exercise or fitness, with three of five respondents (60%) including this reason in their response. Over half also reported that they visit the park to enjoy nature and the outdoors (54%) and self-directed or non-organized activities (50%). Other frequently reported reasons were personal relaxation and rest (48%) and attendance at a community special event or activity (43%).

Importance of Various Factors about Parks and Recreation Areas. Respondents were asked: “When you consider the quality of life in your neighborhood, please indicate how important each of the following statements about parks and recreation areas are to you.” A majority of respondents indicated “very” or “somewhat” important for each of the six factors, as shown below.

- Making neighborhoods more attractive places (92%)
- Protecting open space from development (90%)
- Providing play areas for our youth (87%)
- Preserving environmentally sensitive areas (86%)
- Offering recreational facilities for adults (76%)
- Creating areas where neighbors can get to know each other (65%)

Priorities for the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department. Across four issues, respondents were asked to select between two possible policies and actions of the City of Brookfield Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, identifying which they would prefer to prioritize and/or implement. Missing responses are not included in this analysis.

- A slight majority (56%) selected smaller neighborhood parks over the larger parks (44%).
- A vast majority of respondents selected maintenance/expansion of existing parks or recreational areas (89%) over development of vacant or undeveloped parklands (11%).
- Respondents also selected increased spending on the development of parks and recreational areas (77%) over increased spending for supervised recreational activities (23%) – a difference of three to one.
- A slight majority preferred to allow citizen groups and independent recreation organizations to develop, program, and maintain park and recreation areas (57%) rather than making the City of Brookfield solely responsible for maintenance and operation of all city-owned parks (43%).

Importance of Providing Various Parks, Public Spaces, and Recreational Areas. Respondents were asked to indicate how important the provision of various parks, public spaces, and recreational areas are to their households. The most important category of spaces was biking, walking, and running pathways, and the least important category was in-line skating facilities.

Most Important

1. Biking/Walking/Running Pathways
2. Nature Areas and Trails
3. Farmers' Market
4. Landscaping within Medians on Main Roads
5. Improved Maintenance of Public Trees

Least Important

1. In-line Skating Facilities
2. Skate Park / Facilities
3. Sand Volleyball Courts
4. Basketball Courts
5. Pet Exercise Areas

About Recreation

Satisfaction with Recreational Programs Offered by the City of Brookfield. Just over three-quarters of respondents (76%) were “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with the recreational programs offered by the City of Brookfield.

Participation in City-sponsored Recreational Programs during the Past 12 Months. About half (51%) reported household participation in one or more recreational programs sponsored by the City of Brookfield’s Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department during past twelve months. Of those who participated:

- About two of five (38%) reported participating in 1 program.
- Almost one-quarter (23%) reported participating in 2 programs.
- Less than one in five (17%) reported participating in 3 programs.
- Under one-quarter (22%) reported participating in 4 or more programs.

Reasons for Non-Participation in City-Sponsored Recreational Programs. Among respondents who did not participate in any city-sponsored recreational program during the last twelve months, the most frequently indicated reason was being too busy (45%). Other reasons were cited by 21% as a reason for non-participation. Lack of interest was indicated by 19%, and lack of awareness of programs was indicated by 10%.

Of the respondents in who specified the “other” reason (or reasons) for non-participation, the most frequently response was age – respondents felt that they were too old for the existing programs (25%). Respondents also reported that they did not participate because their children are grown (22%).

Participation in Other Recreational Activities. When asked to identify the other (non-city) forms of organized recreation that they participate in, respondents most frequently indicated commercial recreation (33%). The second most frequent response was participation in membership organizations such as tennis, golf, or fitness centers (27%). About one in five respondents identified each of the following: cultural organizations (23%), churches (22%), community service organizations (22%), community sports organizations (21%), and schools (21%).

Under the “other” category, respondents most frequently indicated participation in activities sponsored activities by other communities (e.g., Waukesha, Menomonie Falls, Wauwatosa), making up 15% of responses. Respondents also reported participation in animal-related organizations.

More City-Sponsored Recreational Opportunities for Specific Groups. When asked to rate how many city-sponsored recreational activities are needed for various specific groups, the overall average response for all groups was “same amount.” Respondents were most supportive of increasing the number of recreation activities for families (45%). The full list is shown below, with the responses “a few more” and “many more” were combined into a single category (“more”).

<u>Group</u>	<u>Percent “More”</u>
Families	45%
Older Adults – Seniors 55+	43%
Individuals with Disabilities	42%
Youth – ages 13-18	42%
Adults – ages 37 -54	35%
Young Adults – ages 19-25	32%
Children – ages 6-12	30%
Pre-school Children – ages 2-5	30%
Adults – ages 26-36	24%

Perceptions about the Brookfield Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements about actions the Brookfield Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department should take related to various issues. Excluding all missing and “I don’t know” responses, 98% of respondents reported that the

Brookfield Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department has programs which are offered at a fair price. For the full list, see below:

- Should rely more on user fees to fund its activities (68%)
- Should sponsor more community special events such as festivals/celebrations, arts/crafts shows, concerts, etc. (62%)
- Should offer more cultural arts programs and activities (57%)
- Should concentrate more on providing fewer programs of higher quality rather than a larger number of programs (56%)
- Should offer more outdoor recreation programming such as fishing, canoeing/kayaking, trips, etc. (50%)

Reasons for Participation in Any Recreational Program. The top three reasons for participation were enjoyment of the activities, convenient location, and affordable cost.

Reason

1. I/we like the activities
2. Convenient location
3. Affordable cost
4. Time of day offered
5. A chance to learn something new
6. Season available
7. A chance to be with our friends
8. Competition

Importance of Various Recreational Programs and Activities. The two most important programs or activities indicated by respondents were community special events, festivals, and celebrations, and summer programs/activities. The five most important and least important recreational programs are listed below.

Most Important

1. Community special events, festivals, and celebrations
2. Summer programs / activities
3. Adult programs / activities
4. Cultural arts programs / activities
5. Outdoor recreation programs / activities

Least Important

1. Youth programs / activities
2. Pre-school programs / activities
3. League sports for adults
4. Programs / activities offered during breaks in the school year
5. Weekend programs / activities

Sources of Information about City of Brookfield Recreational Activities. The most commonly identified source of information or announcements about City of Brookfield recreational activities in the past twelve months was mail, cited by 86% of respondents. Newspaper was identified second-most frequently, with mention from 49% of respondents, and word-of-mouth was third at 28%. The website was identified as an information source in 17% of responses.

Consistent with these results, the most frequently identified *main source* of information was mailings, in the form of brochures, newsletters, activity guides, or brochures (72%). Newspaper was the second-most identified main source at 17%, including the Brookfield NOW and Journal Sentinel newspapers. The website was cited as the main source of information for 4% of respondents.

About the Survey Respondents

Where They Live. Two-thirds of respondents reported living north of North Avenue.

- One-third (33%) live west of Calhoun Road and north of North Avenue.
- One-third (33%) live east of Calhoun Road and north of North Avenue.
- One in five (20%) live west of Calhoun Road and south of North Avenue.
- One in nine (11%) live east of Calhoun Road and south of North Avenue.

How Long a Resident of Brookfield. Virtually all respondents have been residents of the City of Brookfield for one or more years (98%), ranging from 1 year to 81 years. The mean value (average) of those who provided a response was 22.2 years, and the median value was 20 years, meaning half have lived in Brookfield less than 20 years, and half for more.

Who is in their Households. The median size of households was two members, with a range from 1 to 10 members.

- **Adults.** The median number of adults per household was two adults, with a range from 1 to 5 adults.
 - 14% have adults from 18 to 24 years of age.
 - One in four (25%) have adults from 25 to 44 years of age
 - Nearly half have members from 45 to 64 years of age (48%).
 - About two out of five households have members over 65 years (40%).
- **Children.** One-third (33%) reported having at least one child in their household. The median number of children per household with children was two children, with a range from 1 to 8 children. Just under half of households with children (46%) reported having children in more than one age group. Of the household with children:
 - About two of four (36%) have at least one child age 5 or younger.
 - Almost half (47%) have at least one child ages 6 to 12 years.
 - Half (51%) have at least one child ages 13 to 17 years.

Homeowner or Renter. Nearly all respondents reported being an owner of their current residence (95%), with only 4% of respondents reporting renting.