



ZENCITY TEMPERATURE CHECK REPORT

Parks and Recreation

Prepared for the City of Lorain, OH

Introduction

The following report provides a review and insights on residents' concerns and priorities related to Lorain's parks and recreation facilities. The report comprises an analysis of resident responses to a sustainability survey designed by Zencity and deployed by the City of Lorain. The survey was conducted between March 15 and April 30, 2021, and included 12 closed-ended and 1 open-ended question.

The survey received a total of 1,309 responses, 513 (39%) of which came from an online form and 796 (61%) of which came from a printed version which was distributed by and whose responses were tabulated by the City. Zencity combined both forms of responses and used the resulting totals as the basis for all calculations in this report.

The following analysis includes: Results of each closed-ended question; Results of the open-ended question; Related social media discourse analysis; Main takeaways and recommendations.

Executive Summary

- Most respondents visit Lorain parks at least once a month.
- More respondents were dissatisfied than satisfied with park maintenance, programming, and amenities.
- While most respondents voiced support for a hypothetical \$5 park levy, the support significantly dwindled when posed as a theoretical \$10 or \$20 tax.
- Although most residents believe that the City should equally allocate any resources for park improvement projects, respondents identified Lakeview, Oakwood, and Central Parks as some of the City's most important parks.
- Conversations on social media surrounding recent events and improvement projects at local parks have thus far been well-received in the online discourse.

Demographics

Residents and Non-Residents Distribution

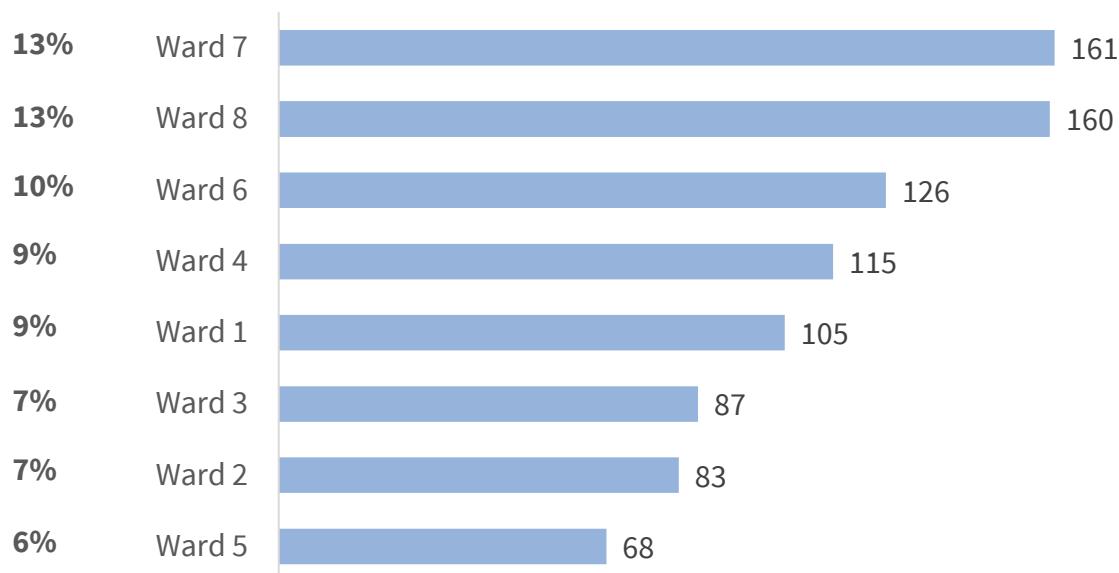
(Out of Total Respondents)



95% of the respondents were residents of the City of Lorain. The remainder of the analyses below **exclude responses of non-residents**.¹

Ward Residency

(Out of Total Resident Respondents)

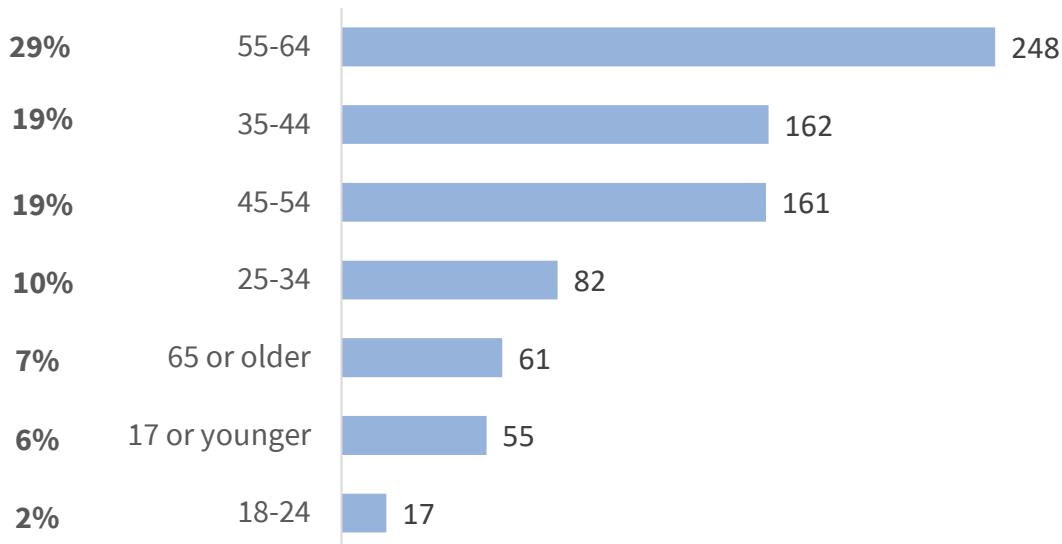


Residents of Wards 7 and 8 each accounted for 13% of all respondents, while Ward 5 only accounted for 6%.

¹ Additionally, all blank and N/A responses from the printed survey are excluded from the totals shown in all of this report's graphs. In other words, the displayed percentage is the share out of all resident respondents (1,242) and not the share out of all who gave a completed answer. For this reason, the percentage totals in all graphs in this report may add up to less than 100%.

Age-Group

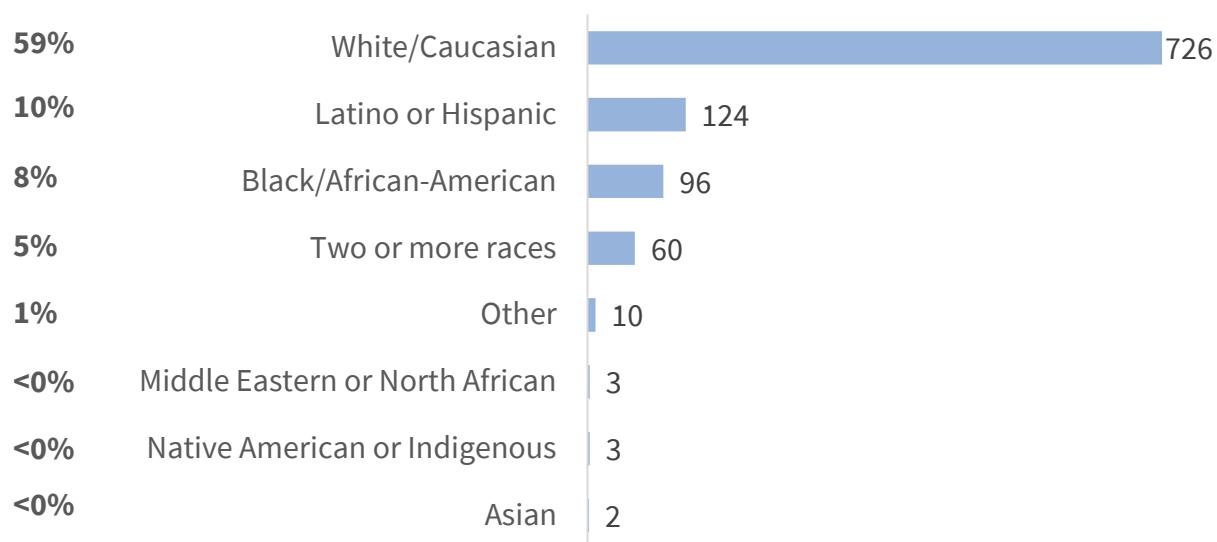
(Out of Total Resident Respondents)



At nearly a third of all respondents, **the 55-64 age group was the most represented in the survey**. Overall, 18% of respondents were below 35, while 55% were above 45.

Race/Ethnicity

(Out of Total Resident Respondents)



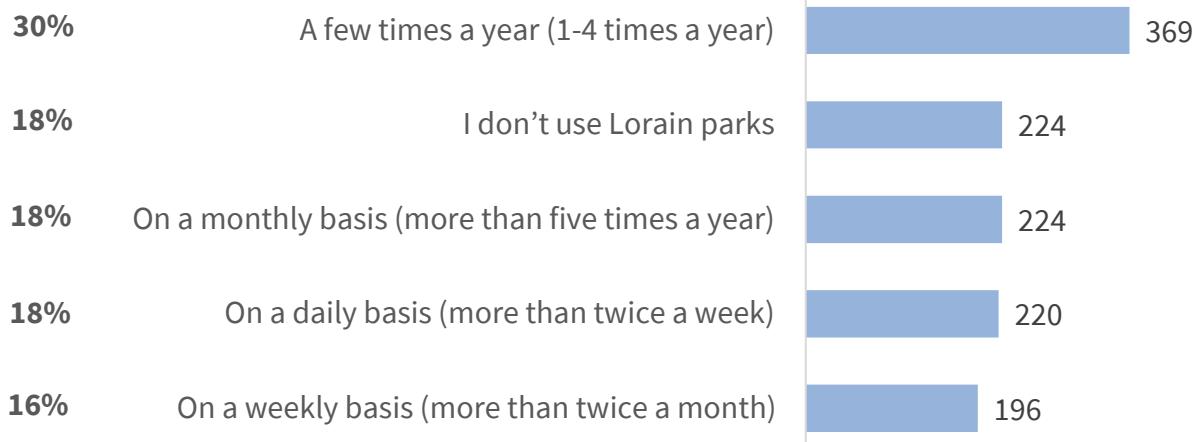
Nearly two-thirds (59%) of all respondents were White/Caucasian, while 10% were Latino/Hispanic, and 8% were Black/African-American.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Closed-Ended Questions Analysis

1

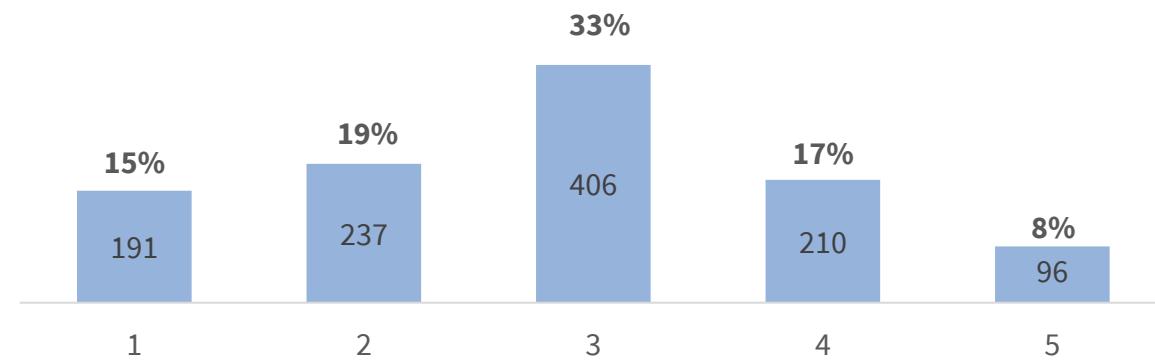
How often do you use Lorain parks?



Although the most popular response was “A few times a year” (30%), **more than half (52%) of all respondents indicated that they use Lorain parks at least once a month**. Additionally, more than a third (34%) use them on at least a weekly basis.

2

How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the maintenance, programming, and amenities of Lorain parks? (1 – very dissatisfied; 5 – very satisfied)



At a third of all responses, neutral satisfaction was the most popular response. However, **more respondents expressed some level of dissatisfaction (34%) than satisfaction (25%)** with the maintenance, programming, and amenities of Lorain parks.

3

If the City had a plan to invest in park beautification and improvements, paid for by a new tax that costs your family \$5 per month, would you...

62% Support this plan  769

36% Oppose this plan  453

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of all respondents supported paying a \$5 monthly tax to support park beautification and improvements.

4

Now, if this same plan costs your family \$10 per month, would you support or oppose it?

30% Support this plan  371

67% Oppose this plan  837

However, when the hypothetical tax doubled to \$10 per month, **the level of support dwindled to less than a third (30%) of all respondents.**

5

And finally, if this plan costs your family \$20 per month, would you support or oppose it?

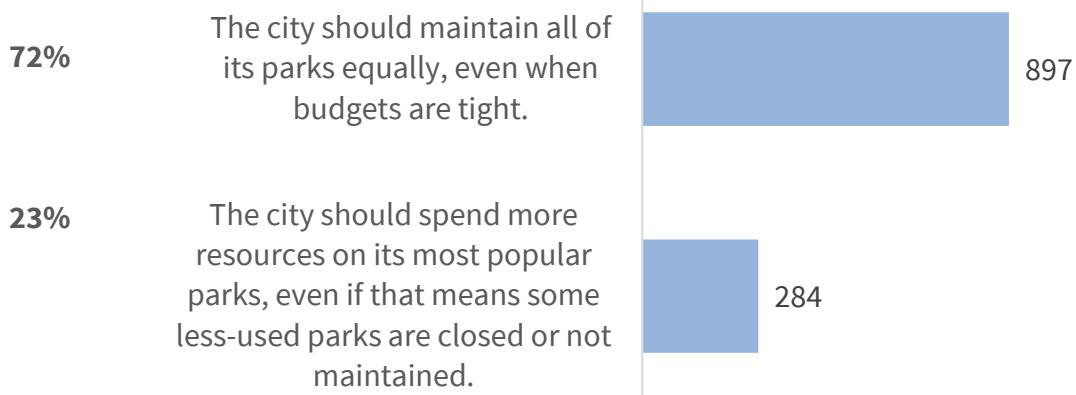
12% Support this plan  144

86% Oppose this plan  1,067

Finally, when the hypothetical tax doubled again to a proposed \$20 per month, **the level of opposition increased to an overwhelming majority of all respondents (86%), which measured more than 7x that of those in support (12%).**

6

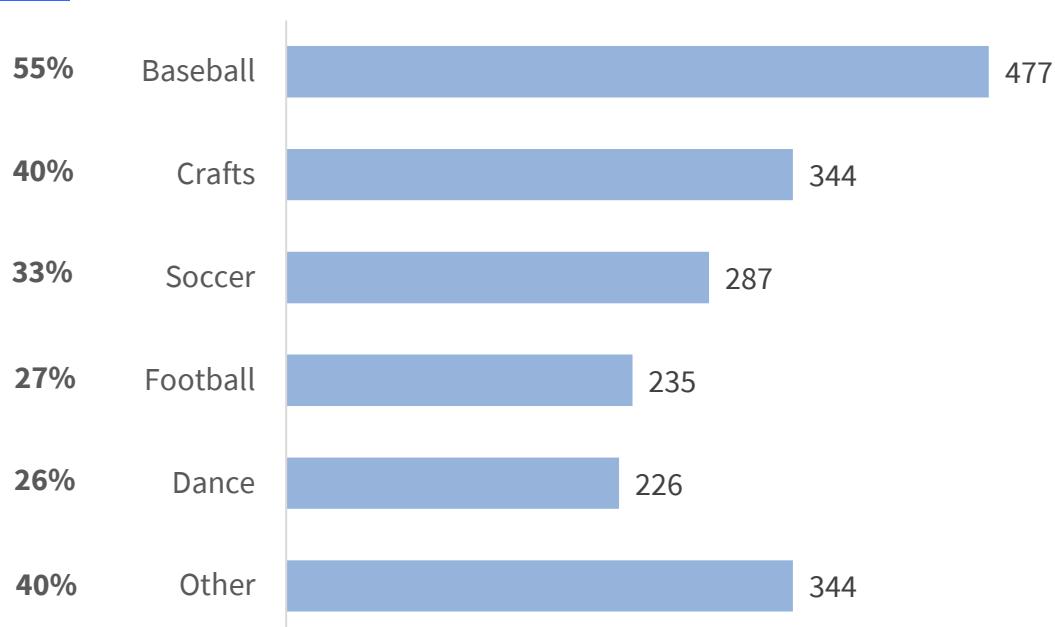
Which of these two statements do you agree with more?



Nearly three-quarters (72%) of all respondents believe that the City should maintain all parks equally despite budget constraints. Less than a quarter (23%) believe that the City should prioritize its most popular parks, even at the expense of the less-used ones.

7

What types of park programming would you like to have in the park?²

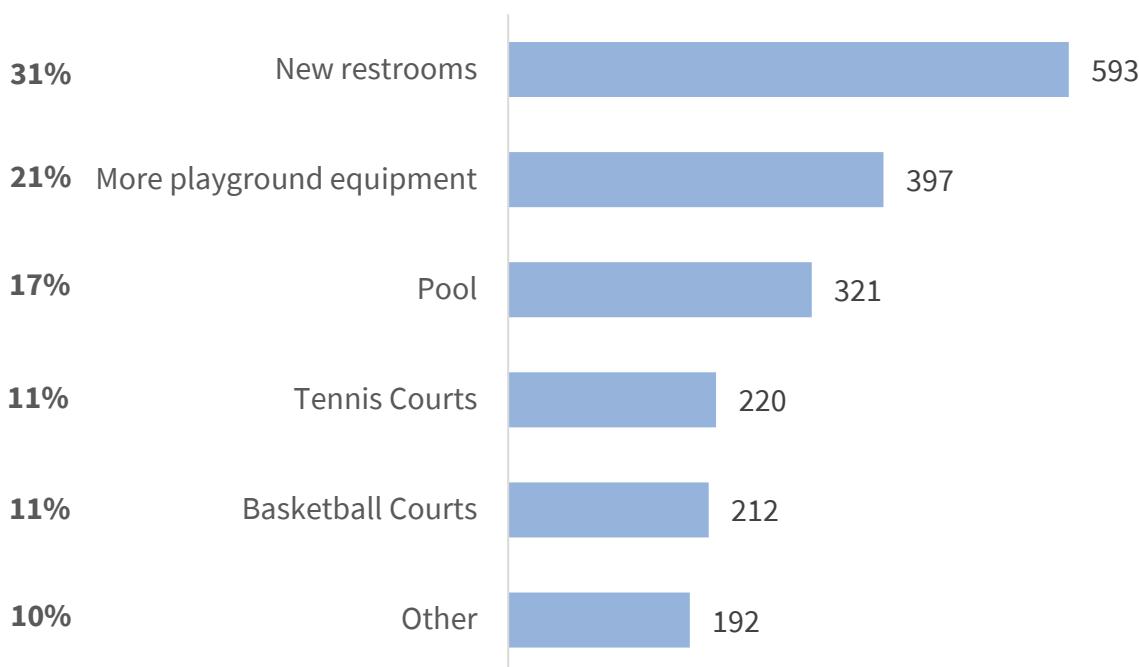


More than half (55%) of all respondents would like to see baseball activities organized in local parks, while more than a third also expressed interests in crafts (40%) and soccer (33%). Additionally, 40% chose “Other”, though not all offered written input about specific programming.

² In the printed survey, some respondents chose more than one option.

8

What type of park amenities would you want to see in Lorain parks?³



The most popular request among respondents for park amenities was new restrooms (31%), while the least interest was expressed for new tennis and basketball courts (11% each).

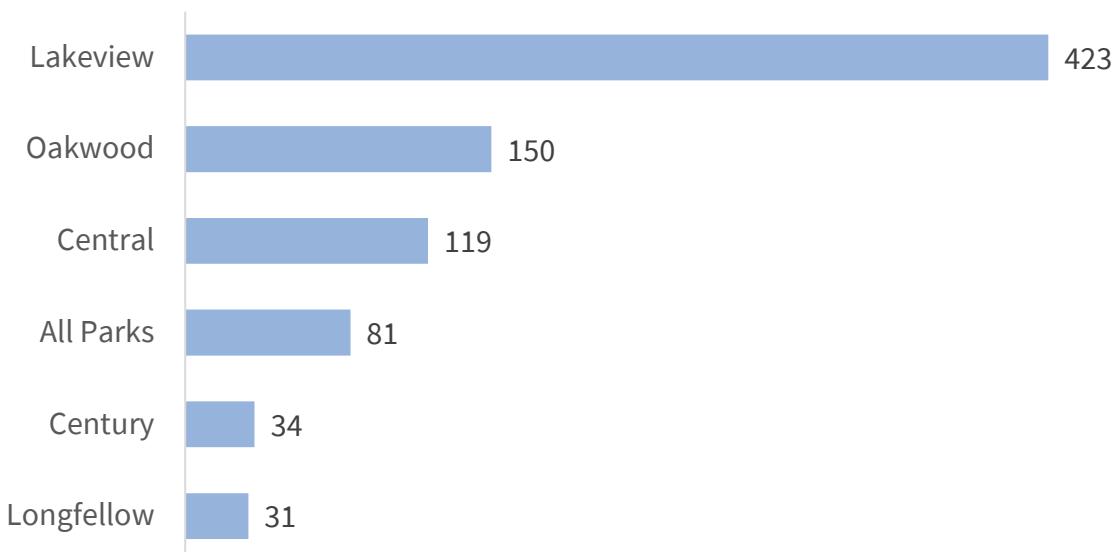
³ In the printed survey, some respondents chose more than one option.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Open-Ended Question Analysis

9

Which park is most important to you and why?



Residents were asked which local park was most important to them and why, with the following parks receiving the most responses:

- **Lakeview (423 responses):** More than a third of all respondents named Lakeview Park as the one most important to them, primarily due to its proximity to residents' homes, its lakefront view, and overall beauty.

“Lakeview, because it is closest to my home and it is the showpiece of the city.”

- **Oakwood (150 responses):** Many also chose Oakwood Park because of its location, potential, and size.

“Oakwood. It is our largest park by size and with the most services and potential. I think any parks investments should start there as it will impact the most amount of people who could benefit from the City of Lorain’s recreation services and infrastructure.”

- **Central (119 responses):** Most who chose Central Park cited its proximity, though some expressed concerns about its maintenance and overall safety.

“I live across from Central Park and use this park the most. My family and so many others use it daily for exercise. The basketball court is always packed, and the playground is used every day – it is nice.”

- **All Parks (81 responses):** A significant number of respondents viewed all local parks as equally important and argued for the equal maintenance of all facilities.

“They are all equally important! There are parks near every neighborhood, which offer outdoor space for all citizens.”

- **Century (34 responses):** Some identified Century Park as the most important because of its playground equipment and family-friendliness.

“Century Park. It’s a wonderful place for families to gather to play, cookout and enjoy the lake.”

- **Longfellow (31 responses):** Others chose Longfellow Park and pointed to the benefits of its multipurpose field.

“Longfellow - it's near our house, we love to walk and run around the perimeter and through the park. Our kids love to use the field, especially the field with the football goalpost to play soccer and kick field goals.”

Additionally, 28 respondents said that none of the City’s parks are important to them, while 19 wrote that they have safety concerns that deter them from frequenting Lorain parks.

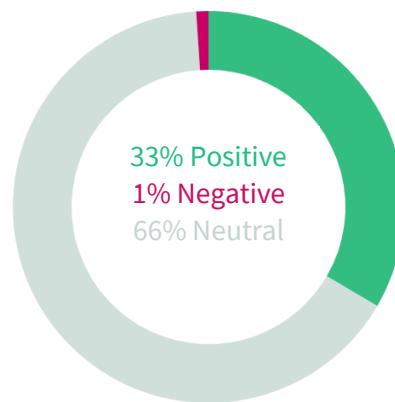
COMPLEMENTARY ANALYSIS

Social Media Discourse Analysis

From January 1-April 30, 2021, [3,105 online interactions](#) — or approximately 1.5% of all online discourse during the four months — concerned Lorain's parks and recreational facilities.

The discourse steadily increased during the four-month period: while January and February averaged 452 monthly interactions, March and April averaged more than double that (1.1K monthly interactions). Official channels accounted for 13% of all interactions, though the overwhelming majority of official interactions came from the Port and Finance Authority and the police department.

Sentiment Overview: Parks and Recreation



Conversations in the Parks and Recreation discourse exhibited a high degree of resident satisfaction, as measured by 33% positive sentiment compared to only 1% negative sentiment. Some of the leading drivers of positive sentiment included Easter festivities at local parks, new trees planted at Lakeview Park, a new dock at Riverside Park, and a city councilmember's post celebrating new equipment at Falbo Park.

Online discourse about the [Parks and Recreation survey](#) itself garnered 68 interactions, half of which came from articles about the mayor's State of the City address, where he talked about the potential for a parks levy on the ballot depending on the outcome of this survey. While most interactions came from “loves”, “likes”, and “shares”, some commenters shared concerns about park upkeep and the need for additional recreational facilities.

Conclusions

The survey results outlined above indicate that residents are both active users of the City's parks and recreational facilities and are eager to provide input on the future of these sites.

Most respondents indicated that they use Lorain parks at least once a month, and more than a third visit them weekly or daily. At the same time, more respondents expressed dissatisfaction than satisfaction with the maintenance, programming, and amenities of Lorain parks, pain points which were also voiced in the free-text responses.

Although Lorain parks are frequented often, many are not satisfied with their current state and believe that there is room for improvement in a variety of areas. For example, baseball, crafts, and soccer emerged as the leading park programming activities residents would like to see. At the same time, calls for new restrooms and more playground equipment led the list of desired park amenities.

In responses to the open-ended question, respondents pointed to Lakeview, Oakwood, and Central Parks as some of the most important parks, largely due to their relative proximity to most residents. However, **most respondents indicated that the City should equally allocate any resources for park improvement projects** and that no one park should be favored at the expense of others.

As such, **residents appear more inclined to see across-the-board changes to local parks than selective improvement projects.** However, should the City need to prioritize certain parks over others due to budget constraints, it may want to first consider the parks residents identified in this survey as the most important.

While nearly two-thirds of respondents voiced support for a \$5 monthly tax to invest in park beautification and improvements, the support significantly dwindled when posed as a hypothetical \$10 or \$20 tax.

Although there is support for some form of a park levy, **the City should be aware that the opposition may outweigh support depending on the tax's size.**

In addition, social media discourse analysis indicates that recent conversations about local parks have been primarily positive and that **the City's efforts to upgrade aspects of certain parks have been well-received thus far.**

To conclude, we encourage the City to close the “feedback loop” around the issues raised by residents through this survey, specifically relating to park programming and amenities, as well as the size of any potential park levy. Our analysis indicates that residents are dedicated park visitors and are deeply invested in park improvement and maintenance.