

Metro Parks Department Public Opinion Survey

A survey of 451 residents of Nashville/Davidson County was conducted May 5–10, 2016, by SSI of Shelton, Conn., for the Metro Department of Parks and Recreation. The survey, which was designed, written and analyzed by MP&F Public Relations, randomly polled a cross section of residents on their opinions and attitudes regarding the Metro Parks system. The survey has an error rate of plus or minus 4.6% for the total sample at a 95% confidence level.

The survey used a blended methodology, with 176 responses coming from a random sample of online panels provided by SSI and 275 telephone interviews, of which 60% were conducted over landlines and 40% on cellphones.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Visitation and Use:

- 64% say they visit a park or park facility on some kind of regular basis; 37% visit a park/facility once a week (19%) or more (18%), while 27% say they visit a park once or twice a month. Occasional visitors represent 21% of the sample, and only 15% say they “very seldom” or “never” visit a park (10% and 5%, respectively).
 - Of those who regularly or occasionally visit parks, 43% say they mainly come to walk, run, hike or ride a bicycle, and 22% say they come to just relax and enjoy nature.
- Of the 21% of respondents who said they have participated in a parks program (such as art classes, athletics, naturalist presentations, fitness programs, etc.), 88% rated their quality as either excellent or good.

Facilities and User Experience:

- 82% rated the value, appearance and recreation opportunities of Metro parks and greenways as excellent (36%) or good (46%).
- 68% said the department is doing an excellent or good job of maintaining the overall physical condition of Metro parks and greenways given its budget constraints.
- 79% say they are satisfied with the sports and aquatic facilities at Metro parks (29% “very satisfied” and 50% “somewhat satisfied”).
- 90% say they feel either “very safe” (41%) or “somewhat safe” (49%) when they go to a Metro park.
 - A smaller percentage (79%) indicate they feel safe on greenways; still, only 11% said they feel either “somewhat” or “very” unsafe.

Investment and Distribution of Park Land:

- Nashville residents across the board highly value the preservation of natural areas near their residences and across the city, with 77% saying they value it a great deal and 22% saying they value it “somewhat.”
- 94% agree that having high-quality parks available to people from all walks of life across the city is important to them personally; 71% strongly agree with that statement.
- 61% said they would “strongly support” the parks department’s preserving more green space and acquiring additional property to develop new parks and greenways, with another 33% saying they would “somewhat support” such an initiative (total 94% support).
- When asked specifically if the department should use any additional funding to improve existing parks and facilities or develop new ones, 65% favored new investment at existing parks and facilities, compared to 29% which favored new development.
- 49% agree that Metro Parks should consider increasing fees for some programs so that those using them are paying a bigger share of the costs; 29% disagree, and 20% were neutral.