

PARKS LISTENING TOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is there a Parks Listening Tour?

The purpose of the Parks Listening Tour is to start a citywide conversation about our parks. The City of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy have spent the past year reviewing the condition of the parks. They are in need of our help. We want to share with City residents the specifics about the parks that matter most to them and learn first-hand in what ways Pittsburghers want to see improvements in their parks. Park conditions and resident feedback will drive an equitable investment strategy.

How can I share my feedback, questions, or comments about Pittsburgh parks for the Parks Listening Tour?

There are many ways you can join the conversation about Pittsburgh parks through the Parks Listening Tour. On this webpage, you can take the online survey, watch our presentation, or find out where to attend an in-person Parks Listening Tour community event near you. We will even be popping up at events throughout the city.

How did you collect the data you shared in the Parks Listening Tour presentation?

The City's departments of Public Works and Planning provided baseline data about every park in Pittsburgh. Data also came from existing plans such as the Open Space Plan. Other park information came from the City's Department of Parks and Recreation, the Office of Management and Budget, and agencies including the Sports and Exhibition Authority, Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh Public Schools and local nonprofit organizations. Data related to socioeconomic, health and environmental factors within the park walksheds came from a large number of publicly available sources.

Who are you engaging with on the Parks Listening Tour and how?

We want to reach as many Pittsburghers as possible through the Parks Listening Tour. Here's how:

- Community Events (such as Earth Day, August Wilson Block Party, Futurefest)
- Parks Conservancy and City-coordinated public meetings
- Neighborhood-specific community meetings
- On-the-ground tabling events
- Online engagement
- We are spreading the word about these activities through the media, local City officials (Mayor's office, City Council, Citiparks, etc), advertising, social media, website, flyers, door hangers, and partnering with community organizations

The Parks Listening Tour presentation identifies the greatest areas of need throughout the city. How will my input help?

Our work to identify park need is only one half of the solution. The other half is learning what the community wants to see in their parks, recreation programs and park assets, and what maintenance and improvements in parks are most important to Pittsburghers. The two sides of this process will create an equitable investment strategy.

In addition to parks, does this process include City greenways?

Greenways are wonderful assets to our City and region and allow for more recreational opportunities such as hiking and mountain biking. They provide an array of benefits to our natural environment, including mitigating natural disasters like landslides and flooding. The Parks Listening Tour and the equitable investment strategy will be focused solely on existing Pittsburgh parks, or land that is already in the pipeline to become a new Pittsburgh park — such as Hays Woods.

Where will funding come from to make the needed improvements in the Pittsburgh park system?

Traditionally, park funding has come from the City of Pittsburgh through the General Fund (tax dollars) and other park trust funds; Allegheny County Regional Asset District (RAD) (County sales tax, but legally restricted to parks that are 200 acres or larger); the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy; grants; sponsorships; fees; donations; endowments; rental income; fundraising events; corporate and individual giving, and more.

The dollars invested through these methods is not enough to adequately maintain or improve what we have. In addition to developing an equitable investment strategy for all Pittsburgh parks, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and the City of Pittsburgh, are identifying innovative options for generating more dollars for our parks in Pittsburgh – dedicated funding from private sources as well as a possible tax dedicated to Pittsburgh parks.

A sustainable, long-term source of parks funding is essential for the people of Pittsburgh to rely on the myriad of benefits our public parks provide. While private dollars are an incredible help to park systems, private funding is not adequate to sustain a park system. Other cities have reinvested in their parks through additional tax revenues and are investigating options for doing the same.

What is "equity," and what does it mean to the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh to this planning process?

Fundamentally, parks are for all and are the most democratic spaces in our country. Park investments therefore need to ensure that high-quality parks exist in every neighborhood for all Pittsburghers. The project's equity-focused approach to investment relies on the following:

- **PEOPLE:** Determining which parks serve Pittsburgh's most vulnerable and historically underserved residents and are historically the most underfunded parks
- **COMMUNITY:** Determining which parks sit in communities that have seen prolonged disinvestment and the greatest threats to public safety
- **ENVIRONMENT:** Determining which parks sit in high priority areas for improving tree cover and air and water quality
- **HEALTH:** Determining which parks serve the largest proportion of residents who suffer from poor physical and mental health conditions

When it comes to parks, what roles do the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh play?

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy is an independent non-profit. The City of Pittsburgh is a government agency. These two separate organizations have worked in close partnership since 1996 to improve the quality of Pittsburgh's parks.

Is the Three Rivers Heritage Trail a city park?

It is not a park, but it is a tremendous asset to our region for walking, running, biking, and more. However, the trail does run through some parks, such as the Northshore Riverfront Park, Allegheny Landing Park, and Southside Riverfront Park.

How can we invite you to attend and present at a community meeting or event? Where else are you scheduled to present?

The Parks Listening Tour will be running through the end of April 2019. To inquire about scheduling a meeting or event, please contact Erin Tobin, Community Engagement Manager, at etobin@pittsburghparks.org or 412-682-7275.

For a current list of scheduled meetings and events, check the list of upcoming events at www.pittsburghparks.org/listening-tour.

Do we know how many people visit the parks each year? How are we factoring in non-resident use of our parks?

We currently do not have the resources to count how many people visit the 165 parks and park sites within the city. Park usage is hard to estimate because parks are free, have many entry points, and are in use year-round. Because our parks are regional assets, we welcome city and county residents alike to give feedback about the parks, whether at a tour event or through our survey.

I'm really interested in getting more involved in my parks. How else can I help?

We're looking for residents to speak up for their parks through our new Park Champions volunteer program. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Who can I call about specific park issues?

- Animal Control 412-255-2036
- City Council Office 412-255-2142
- City of Pittsburgh Forestry Division 412-665-3625
- Emergency 911
- Graffiti Busters (will remove it) 412-255-2626
- Mayor's Office 412-255-2626
- Mayor's Response Line 311
- Park Facility Rentals 412-255-2370 or <https://registerparks.pittsburghpa.gov>
- Public Works 412-255-2790
- Refuse/Recycling 412-255-2790
- Recreation Center 412-622-7357
- Senior Community Centers 412-422-6401
- Swimming Pools 412-323-7928