

**Plymouth Recreation Department  
Focus Group Report**

**May 9, 2024**

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## Background

On April 9, 2024, focus groups were conducted at 1:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. at the Plymouth Cultural Center. Groups were comprised of residents, stakeholders and elected officials of the City of Plymouth. Information gathered from these focus groups will be utilized in conjunction with the Recreation Department's Master Plan and community surveys to assess the communities' overall vision and future direction of the department.

Key topics of focus group discussion included:

- The "ideal" Recreation Department
- Importance of recreation amenities and programs
- Potential funding sources
- Opportunities for private and/or public partnerships

Participation in the focus groups derived mainly from current users of the recreational services/facilities in the city. The afternoon session included 21 pre-registered participants and six participants who attended the open session without prior registration. The evening session had 10 pre-registered participants and five participants who attended without prior registration.

## Summary of Results

The following is a summary of the focus group discussion associated with the questions/recommendations that were posed to the group. These questions/recommendations, along with a brief synopsis of comments and key takeaways that capture consensus among participants, are included in the document.

The focus group participants voiced consensus on the desired attributes of an ideal recreation department. Additionally, the groups expressed robust support for initiatives such as green spaces, trails, and the expansion of program options and facilities, encompassing sports courts, fields, an expanded recreation center, and a community pool. Despite acknowledging the challenges faced by small towns with limited green areas and financial resources, the focus groups emphasized the importance of offering amenities and programs suitable for all age groups. These offerings were deemed vital for attracting and retaining residents, highlighting the community's commitment to enhancing recreational opportunities even within resource-constrained settings.

When the question related to financially supporting community improvements was posed, many of the suggestions, such as partnerships, grants and non-resident fees, are already being

implemented by the department. There was a suggestion to establish a “house removal or knock down” fee that could be dedicated to the department. There are approximately 15 – 20 demolitions in the city annually. The concept of a “knock down fee” would require legal review and likely affect a limited number of sites per year.

Establishing a governmental Parks & Recreation oversight or advisory board was also suggested. However, this is not practical based on the size of the organization staff and small department jurisdiction. Moreover, the city charter indicates that the City Commission establishes policy and budget for the City.

Though vague in nature, the focus groups carefully considered the proposed concept of leasing property for nearly one million dollars over five years, with future escalating costs. Although the question lacked clarity, the groups concluded that the return on investment for the city would be a crucial factor in any rental of private property.

The focus groups highlighted certain desired amenities such as a skate park, recreation center, bike paths, pickleball court, and more. While this input is valuable, it is important to note that a statistically valid survey was conducted last fall as part of the department's master plan preparation, which resulted in an action plan. Statistically valid surveys provide a more comprehensive and representative view of what the community desires. They are structured to reach a broader audience and can be more reliable in guiding decision-making processes. The input of the focus groups is important, but it should not overshadow the community survey results.

In conclusion, the focus groups emphasized unanimous support for key attributes of an ideal recreation department, such as green spaces and expanded program options. While suggestions for financial support and new amenities were discussed, it is important to prioritize statistically valid survey results for a comprehensive view of community desires. Integrating insights from all sources will lead to informed strategies for enhancing recreational opportunities.

Appendices A & B provide all responses to the questions by each table at each focus group and Appendices C are the results from the Survey Monkey survey which was available April 9 – 18, 2024 with 10 respondents. The findings are consistent with the focus group results.

## RECOMMENDATION

Support for a recreation millage appears to be strong as long as there is a well-structured plan in place, complete with detailed information about the projects to be funded, clear financial data, and a dedicated group advocating for the millage. The comprehensive plan, must outline specific initiatives, such as park renovations, sports facilities, and programs for all ages. Financial transparency is crucial, including a breakdown of how the millage funds will be allocated, ensuring accountability and efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Equally important is having a cohesive and vocal group supporting the millage, including community leaders, stakeholders, and residents who understand the benefits of investing in recreation for health, well-being, and community enrichment.

It is also essential that the process is not rushed. An August election date may be premature, providing insufficient time for thorough research, community input, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Adequate time ensures that the proposed projects are well-thought-out, addressing the diverse recreational needs of the community and maximizing the impact of the millage funds. A November election may serve as a better option should the City Commission determine that they want to pursue this ballot initiative in 2024. It is recommended that the City of Plymouth confer with legal counsel regarding election logistics and deadlines. Additionally, a longer planning period enables transparent financial projections and risk assessments, instilling confidence in taxpayers about the responsible use of their contributions.

Again, the need for a governmental parks and recreation oversight committee or advisory board is not recommended or practical. However, establishing a non-governmental ad-hoc committee, consisting of stakeholders and residents, may prove advantageous in gaining input on a potential millage and enhancing the sense of ownership for a successful millage campaign. With ample time, a well-prepared and well-communicated plan, backed by diligent planning efforts, transparent finances, and strong advocacy can significantly boost support for a recreation millage, garnering trust and enthusiasm from the community.

Plymouth Recreation Department  
April 9, 2024  
Recommendation and Summary of Focus Group Results

1. Think about an ideal Recreation Department, what words come to mind in describing that department?

*The ideal recreation department is innovative, flexible, well-funded/well-supported, providing a vibrant, dynamic, inclusive and diverse array of offerings for all ages in a cost-effective and transparent manner.*

2. If the City of Plymouth Recreation had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department.

*Green space, trails (biking and walking), expanded program offerings, sport courts/fields, recreation center, pools, effective promotion and communication were frequently mentioned. Skatepark, pickleball, better public/private partnerships, more personnel also came up in both groups.*

3. On a scale of 1 – 5 (with one being the lowest and five the highest) how important is the development of new amenities? Why?

*Ratings varied but the groups recognized the challenges of a small town with limited green space and funding. Participants recognized the importance of amenities to attract and retain residents and properly maintain existing facilities and services.*

*\*Ratings for specific focus group session and table numbers can be found in the question and response report.*

4. On a scale of 1 – 5 (with one being the lowest and five the highest) how important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community? Why?

*All tables in the afternoon session rated parks as 5. Comments included that parks draw people to the community if they are clean and well maintained and provide a connection to friends, family and the community.*

*The afternoon session rated the Cultural Center as a 3 or 4. Comments included that it's not large enough to be utilized and not everyone uses it but it's still viable.*

*The evening session provided a consistent rating of 5 for both, noting that they are an outward and direct reflection of the community, providing community pride and it's important to keep them current and safe.*

5. What is your recommendation on how we financially support community improvement and maintenance projects?

*Examples may include upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, bathrooms at Massey Field, new pathways in Kellogg Park.*

*Partnerships, sponsorships, grants, millage, increase tax, community fundraising, increase user fees, increase "knock down" fees and dedicate to the department, increase fees for non-residents, establish a Parks & Recreation Board to determine funding opportunities.*

6. What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

*Transparency and clarity in communicating cost and information, create specific story of how each demographic would benefit, improvements in value of living in Plymouth and property values.*

7. What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

*Funding not available, inflation is a challenge, taxes are already high, fixed income, concerns of limited participation, lack of understanding how the money would be used, not equitable, neighborhoods may feel they would compete, taxes may not apply equally relative to who use services. No guarantee of commitment was mentioned as a concern specific to sponsorships along with the need for matching funds for grants.*

8. What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage.

*Comments included: how much revenue is generated and how it will be spent, specifics in purpose, knowing that a multi-year plan exists, transparency and clarity, details about improvements, equal attention to areas of Plymouth, success and failure of previous millages, establish advisory board for community involvement, detailed, realistic and sustainable proposals that are easy to understand, how much will it cost taxpayers.*

9. On a scale of 1 – 5 (with one being the lowest and five the highest) how important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

*Ratings and responses varied significantly in each group, however there was a general view that more information was needed to determine an answer*

10. What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth Community?

*All groups felt they played an important role as they create community, attract young families and are an expectation in a community.*

11. Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

*Overwhelmingly, all groups responded that recreation for all age demographics is very important to serve the diverse demographics of the community.*

12. Do you think the City should fund improvement projects on private property?

*The afternoon group response included: dependent on case-by-case basis, must have legal protection and benefit the community.*

*The evening group generally felt that it may be okay if it was the most cost-effective way to provide service to the city.*

*Individuals in both groups expressed greater tolerance for a not-for-profit entity.*

13. Should the recreation department:

a. Rent property for an approximate cost of one million dollars over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest in upgrades to the private property.

or

b. Continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site.

*Both groups felt that more information was needed before providing an answer, however if an answer was required then most tables would choose B.*

14. Any additional thoughts that you would like to share?

*One group recommended using college kids/volunteers for summer playgrounds at the parks.*



**. Appendix A -  
. 1:30 p.m. Focus  
Group Responses  
by table**

Plymouth Recreation Department  
April 9, 2024  
1:30 p.m. Focus Group  
Responses by Table

1. Think about an ideal Recreation Department, what words come to mind in describing that department?

Table #1 – Responsive, kids – multigenerational, creative – innovative, diversity of offerings, efficient, current, well-funded, transparent, proactive – grant searching, public & private partnerships, engaged with the community, all seasons, women on rec

Table #2 – Vibrant, activities, balance, inclusive, hi-tech, creative, variety, friendly, organized, dynamic, local focus

Table #3 – Inclusive, active, across the age spectrum, variety of options, affordable, futuristic, fiscally responsible, transparent, communicative, participative, responsible, representative of Plymouth in a positive way

Table #4 – Varied, availability for all – dealing w/overflow, efficient (cost/management), aware of opportunities, add activities for wait listed

Table #5 – Responsive, representative, organized, hard-working, adaptive to changing times and needs, creative, friendly and professional

Table #6 – Accessible and available, options, inclusive and diverse, competent, tech savvy, fun, generational, practical, flexible, good communication, cost effective.

2. If the City of Plymouth Recreation had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department.

Table #1 – Skatepark – skateboard, real path along Tonquish Creek, bike paths, tennis courts, outdoor pool, dog park, recreation center & pool, outdoor skate rink, preserve green space, expand offerings of parks (sensory parks), maintain parks, greater offerings of programming (classes, lessons, activities), better communication with website

Table #2 – Comprehensive recreation center, soccer on PARC field, build better relationships w/facility owners to coordinate programs, hire coaches, more things for families to do

Table #3 – Yes for sure! Benefits all ages of community because all ages live here, multi-generational and cross – generational programs have huge benefits to both groups

Table #4 – Yes – absolutely!

Table #5 – Yes

Table # 6 – Yes and no – not an easy answer, yes without redundancy

12. Do you think the City should fund improvement projects on private property?

Table #1 – To be determined by an advisory board, PARC? – soccer field for city would need funds; probably not or a for-profit company – no; depends on case-by-case basis determined and reviewed by advisory board

Table #2 – Yes, agreement defined that benefit the community, MUST BE CLEARLY DEFINED BENEFIT

Table #3 – Lower priority then maintaining our own facilities, would need to have legal protections for city/taxpayers, benefits to city members

Table #4 – Yes! It depends on the project and has a solid contract for usage, we all would support tax \$ spent on PARC tennis courts, etc.

Table #5 - It depends, maybe (at best) to non-profit community based, advisory board to research, vet, etc.

Table #6 – Maybe

13. Should the recreation department:

a. Rent property for an approximate cost of one million dollars over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest in upgrades to the private property?

or

b. Continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

Table #1 – We don't have enough info to make a decision, explore both options & option C

Table #2 – B: needs change – getting locked in with escalating rates is not palatable, B allows for flexibility

Table #3 – More information helpful to make decision, we don't own property in either scenario, B option better based on info we have

Table #4 – Need more info but it's best to not be locked into something too long-term

Table #5 – No answer

Table # 6 - B

14. Any additional thoughts that you would like to share?

Table #5 - College kids/volunteers for summer playground at parks

**. Appendix B –  
. 6:00 p.m. Focus  
Group Responses  
by table**

Plymouth Recreation Department  
April 9, 2024  
6:00 p.m. Focus Group  
Responses by Table

1. Think about an ideal Recreation Department, what words come to mind in describing that department?

Table #1 – What works: programs & facilities match demand of community. Appropriate facilities (space needed), variety of available activities & facilities, diverse age groups, accessibility (responsive), well-supported (support staff) & organized (reliable), meet current needs/interests of community

Table #2 – Engaged, accessible, varying age groups, forward thinking, responsive, open, agile, cost effective

Table #3 – Efficient, good mix of offerings, inclusive, accommodating, good value, visible, financial, responsive to changes in interest

Table #4 – Inclusive, flexibility, accessibility for all, programmed for other parks, schedule, organization, activities

2. If the City of Plymouth Recreation had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department.

Table #1 – Indoor swimming pool (PARC limited), pickleball, non-reliance on PARC and other organizations, more fields

Table #2 – Maintain current facilities, community center w/outdoor pool, more fields, community outreach, splash park, zip line, skate park, more to engage kids

Table #3 – Scaled down Summit?, continued/expanded support for ice arena, more fields, disc golf course

Table #4 – Community Garden, sport courts, more sports space, different activities and spaces, adaptive equipment, pop up events, full-time dedicated staff for coordination, 5-year capital improvement plan

3. How important is the development of new amenities? Why?

Table #1 – 5: Important to develop new amenities if they provide services, 2: Lower importance for brand new (for sake of new) of existing (if they are functional)

Table #2 – 5: New or renew improved options

Table #3 – 5, 3, 4, 4: Need more diverse age group (geared for kids), concern about maintaining existing parks – can't even keep water fountain working, repurpose existing spaces

Table #4 – 4: Upgrading vs new, draws people to live/play/work, spurs economic development, if not new they're being dated – need upgrades

4. On a scale of 1 – 5 (with one being the lowest and five the highest) how important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community? Why?

Table #1 – 5: Use walkable park (playground and public space), safe, clean

Table #2 – 5: Outward and direct reflection of our community as a whole providing community pride and engaging others as well as safety

Table #3 – 5 for both: keep parks current, parks w/varying offerings best

Table #4 – 5 for both

5. What is your recommendation on how we financially support community improvement and maintenance projects?

Examples may include upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, bathrooms at Massey Field, new pathways in Kellogg Park.

Table #1 – Take incremental tax revenue from knock downs to fund maintenance/new rec facilities, millage, work w/Township? – subsidizing Township enough, higher user fees, higher demolition home fees

Table #2 – Grants, transparency in proposals for millage increases to support the above, targeted fundraiser even via e-mail

Table #3 – Millage, tax, fundraise, grants, outside money, non-preventative user fee, User fee – some for high-cost activity

Table #4 – Millage, grants – TAP, MNRTF, community fundraising for smaller scale needs, paid parking

6. What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

Table #1 – Transparency in cost and info – but how get attention, creating specific story of what each demographic will gain (but show story for specific demographic – how they will benefit

Table #2 – Clarity in communication to improve community support, community best foot forward – improves, property value improves

Table #3 – Re: Incremental property tax – value of living in Plymouth – no property tax increase, people who profit on Plymouth support, better explain uses of \$, just covering what citizens said they want

Table #4 – Millage – get matching funds for grants

Grants

Community fundraising – pride

Paid parking

7. What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

Table #1 – Taxes aren't low now – fixed income and limited participation, what do you prioritize – many items to use for tax money, how do you know where it goes

Table #2 – Grant process is time consuming, miscommunication among citizens can lead to difficulties in funding being successful, doesn't apply to me - i.e. I don't have kids, ambiguity in how funding is applied/used

Table #3 – Millage: already pay very high taxes

User Fees: Why pay more when I already pay taxes, concern with competing with competing w/private

Table #4 – Millage: lack of understanding what the money is going toward

8. What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage.

Table #1 – Previous proposal good – plans (exact), how impacts your address, priorities and how they were decided

Issue – Not many people read/saw the info



Table #2 – How much will it bring in, how much will be allocated to the project – the park, the roads, the work, millage field = \$\$

Table #3 – Clarity and purpose, how much, unintended consequences – shift in demographics, volunteer to offset increased costs, aren't they paid for now?

Table #4 – Knowing a multi-year plan exists, awareness & signage, a website I can check out

9. On a scale of 1 – 5 (with one being the lowest and five the highest) how important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

Table #1 – 2.5: Operating vs. capital millage, once in – won't be removed, more important what it was doing, some flexibility

Table #2 – 5: People may use step and start to calculate dollars out and relevance to their family, lives, timeline

Table #3 – 5, 3 & 1: What portion is maintenance? - affects score – long term, built set time, has millage ever gone away? – fixed

Table #4 – 1,3, 2: Not important as long as it's not extreme likely not concerned but still important to know how it will be used over time

10. What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth Community?

Table #1 – Large – smaller private school made wide group of friends (local), united and meet new people, private & competitive – probably wouldn't have done it

Table #2 – 5: The future of the community potentially our youth also attracts young families

Table #3 – Build community, meet other neighbors, comparison to other towns

Table #4 – For people w/kids highly important knowing this is available

11. Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

Table #1 – 5: Very important, supports community (adults too), opportunity to socialize and do activities you can't do on your own

Table #2 – 5

4/9/2024, 6:00 p.m.

Table #3 – Yes! 5

Table #4 – 5: we have a very diverse demographic (we think), inclusivity if fundamental

12. Do you think the City should fund improvement projects on private property?

Table #1 – If private property is most cost-effective way to provide service to city – then ok, if not accessible to public or limiting then no

Table #2 – Collaboration possibly? ROI? – can that happen? Cost? If not, probably no

Table #3 – PARC example

Non-profit – Ok – protect if change in status

For Profit – concern

Table #4 – Maybe, circumstantially, size of project & purpose

13. Should the recreation department:

a. Rent property for an approximate cost of one million dollars over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest in upgrades to the private property.

or

b. Continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site.

Table #1 – Situational – what’s the purpose? What is the impact? Can it increase our services?

Table #2 – Are these our only choices? These are too ambiguous of options to respond

Table #3 – We don’t understand the questions – too unclear!

Table # 4 – This is a bizarre and vague question. If we must choose, not A so B

14. Any additional thoughts that you would like to share? N/A

Parking Lot Items:

Small % use list serve

Challenge is few people get info

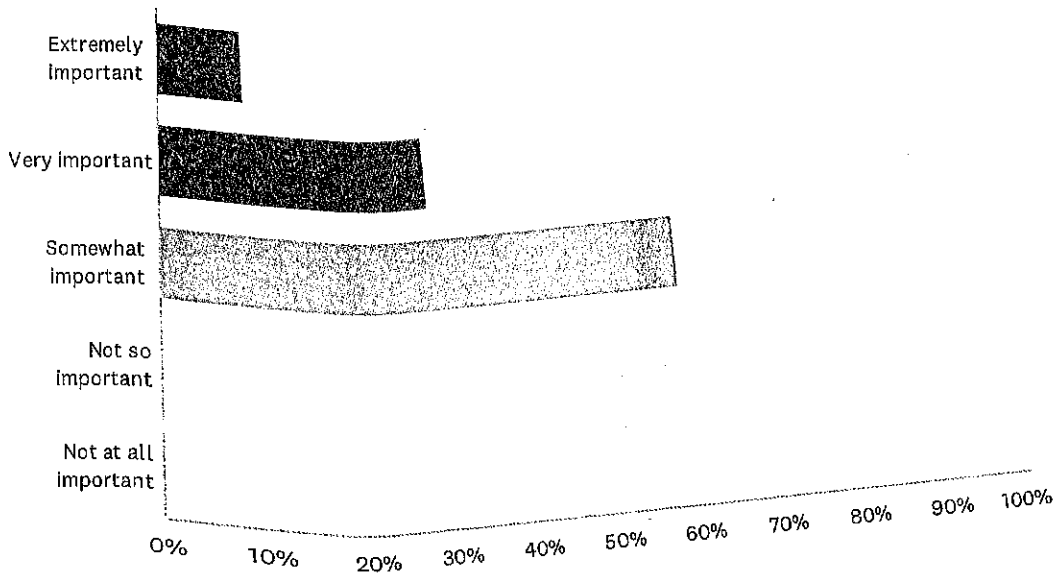
4/9/2024, 6:00 p.m.

Consider mailing or delivering info for items such as millages, etc.  
Do not rely on them to "opt-in"

**. Appendix C –  
Survey Monkey  
responses**

### Q3 How important is the development of new amenities?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely important	10.00%	1
Very important	30.00%	3
Somewhat important	60.00%	6
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

#2



**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, April 09, 2024 6:58:16 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, April 09, 2024 7:07:15 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:08:58  
**IP Address:** 174.207.227.207

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

Lots of enrichment, sports and activities for all Plymouth residents.

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

A rec center with a fitness aspect, kids club, meeting rooms for rent. Something like the Livonia rec. center even on a smaller scale. Affordable programs like aquatics.

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Very important,**

Why?:

It would be great to have a place for lower cost option activities.

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Extremely important,**

Why?:

We love the green spaces that parks provide.

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

Temporary tax increased or private sponsorships of each park to help with the improvement projects.

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

The cost will increase community involvement because their money will be used to maintain them.

**Q7**

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

The tax increase could not be approved and then we don't have a plan.

**Q8**

What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

A clear plan for the cost. No surprises, no grey area.

**Q9**

**Not at all important**

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

They are essential for young children to at least try.

**Q11**

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Extremely important,**

**Why?:**

All demographics and ages should be able to find something they'd like to participate in at the rec.

**Q12**

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**Yes,**

**Why?:**

If needed, then I support

**Q13**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?

**Q14**

**Yes**

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**Q15**

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

It would be nice to utilize local school fields and baseball diamond with help improving them through the city. For example, Smith has a baseball diamond. It would be great if the city could help us improve it so tball teams can use it.



#3

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, April 09, 2024 7:16:29 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, April 09, 2024 7:20:28 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:03:58  
**IP Address:** 68.37.148.228

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

Clean, progressive, fresh, inclusive, wholesome

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

Add dog parks, soccer field, make soccer accessible for older kids through parcels and rec

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Very important,**

**Why?:**

Having a secure place to gather and learn is a valuable aspect to community

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Extremely important**

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

**Respondent skipped this question**

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q7** Respondent skipped this question

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

**Q8**  
What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

Where the funding is being spent

**Q9** Very important

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**  
What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

Very important

**Q11** Respondent skipped this question

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Q12** Respondent skipped this question

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**Q13** Respondent skipped this question

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?

**Q14** Yes

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**Q15** Respondent skipped this question

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

#4



**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, April 09, 2024 9:16:19 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, April 09, 2024 10:28:11 PM  
**Time Spent:** 01:11:51  
**IP Address:** 68.41.223.206

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

community-building, health-supporting, teen- adult- and senior-friendly, supportive of non-elite athletes, inclusive (age, abilities)

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

improved pedestrian/bike access to Hines Park, skateboard park (even a simple non-bowl one), more classes/activities/facilities for seniors, family pool center (like Canton's or Livonia's)

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Somewhat important,**

Why?:

It depends WHICH amenities.

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Very important,**

Why?:

Because they support people connecting with eachother and getting outside.

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

Seek out private/public partnerships and government program/grant support; develop a more reasonable plan to propose to the voters;.

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

- We have businesses that benefit from what the community offers, so businesses can be appealed to to help support what helps them draw business and employees. - Voters are willing to vote yes on a millage, just not a huge out-of-bounds proposal.

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q7**

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

I can't think of any.

**Q8**

What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

I would need to know that the proposal is reasonable.

**Q9**

**Not so important**

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

It is important, especially for kids who just want to play and can't or don't want to be elite travel athletes.

**Q11**

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Very important,**

Why?:

We all suffer from isolation these days and we all can benefit from opportunities for interaction and healthy activity.

**Q12**

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**No,**

Why?:

I'm unsure on this one. It seems to hold a lot of risk, but smarter minds than me would need to sort this out.

**Q13**

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?

**No**

**Q14**

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**No**

**Q15**

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

Questions 12, 13 and 14 are annoying. Just ask about the particular project you are obviously referring to instead of asking us to answer yes or no to vague inferences.

#5

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, April 10, 2024 8:06:39 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, April 10, 2024 8:29:30 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:22:51  
**IP Address:** 97.156.95.27

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

Listening to what the city residents want

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

Unlimited staff and funding are not necessary to listen to what city residents want.

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Somewhat important,**

Why?:

I think we have good amenities.

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Extremely important,**

Why?:

Maintenance of city parks and the Cultural Center should be the key focus of the Recreation Department.

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

State and federal grants should be first. I recently saw an email from Haley Stevens showing how \$13 M in federal grants would be spent in Oakland county. Most was for infrastructure but there were also recreational buildings and upgrades in Wixom and Oak Park. In looking at the Recreational budget, it does not appear that you get any state or federal grants.

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

If grant money is available, why not go after it?

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q7** Respondent skipped this question

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

**Q8**  
What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

Details on how the money would be spent. The last mileage proposal was for a lot of money and too vague on how it would be spent.

**Q9** Somewhat important

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10** Respondent skipped this question

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

**Q11** Very important

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Q12** No,  
Why?:  
The city should focus on improving city property

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**Q13** No

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?

**Q14** Respondent skipped this question

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**Q15** Respondent skipped this question

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

#6

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, April 10, 2024 10:44:34 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, April 10, 2024 3:31:25 PM  
**Time Spent:** 04:46:51  
**IP Address:** 12.189.226.250

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

I support a thriving youth recreation program although it should scale with the size and available resources of the community that it serves. It cannot be all things to all people. What are the top programs that the community wants? Perhaps, many have already chosen to live in the community because it has the hockey program or in another community for their soccer program or other. Regardless of what the community does for youth programs, the kids get split up when they go to PCEP anyway and we don't have a continuous sense of community and common teams. For adult programs, make the judgement by what people actually sign up for and PAY for. Look at the cornhole league. I have enjoyed this for 1-2 sessions every year since it started and the program has been full. If there are some activities that cannot fill rosters or teams, then they can be dropped. It would be nice to see things like Lacrosse that is rapidly growing in popularity and the high school level in Plymouth Canton is not as competitive as some programs with youth programs.

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

This survey should start in a different position. What are the programs, activities, facilities that the community want and are willing to pay for. See my comment above.

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Somewhat important,**

**Why?:**

The existing facilities and amenities are not all at max capacity, or the most optimum utilization.

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Very important,**

**Why?:**

These are the parks that we have and many of us chose to purchase homes and raise families in Plymouth because of things like its many parks. Seeing some of these facilities in disrepair for extended periods of time is distressing (e.g. broken equipment at Garden park for many months in 2023).



**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

This depends on the costs of those improvements. Have there been any proposals for a community involvement on building, assembling and putting in the work for these projects? If the City puts out requests for bids there will be hefty design fees, and bloated construction costs etc... Consider some of these projects like the volunteer groups that maintain the gardens at Garden Park or like what some booster clubs or community groups do to come together and do the work together. What is actually wanted, just a functioning toilet at Massey and not a portable, plastic out-house, correct? Treat this as one would on a household budget and consider all DIY or semi-DIY options before making a large funding request from the entire community when a limited number of patrons will actually use the facility.

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

Limited.

**Q7**

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

Many people will say that they want something if it is free to them or provided by someone else. If these additional amenities or facilities are beyond the scope of existing budgets or shifting existing revenues to these priorities, then those that benefit or want these items that are to be funded, need to lead the charge by example with sweat equity, personally funding or leading fundraising activities before the municipality defaults to raising taxes.

**Q8**

What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

Details of current budgets and where all of the property tax revenues and profits from city activities are going. The appearance to the average resident that observes the Tear-Down homes all over town with the erection of much larger footprint houses. Many of these will on average increase the property tax revenue from \$5-8k per year to \$15-20k per year or more simply by valuation and uncapping the assessment increases per the Headlee amendment. There was a recreation department millage that was voted down in 2023 - these were the same voters that voted in the current City Commission. Demonstrate to the property tax paying citizens who just swallowed hundreds of dollars in increases in assessments in 2024 as a "market adjustment" while there are several brand new 2024 GM SUVs driving around town on Municipal "Community Support" business while the playground equipment spent several months at Garden Park with yellow caution tape around it. How has the city tightened its belt among all of the other rising costs during runaway inflation. The Core CPI print today of 3.4% is barely scratching the surface of the increases that we are seeing at the grocery store, auto insurance, home owners insurance, college tuition, fuel, heating and electricity costs and Licensing and registration costs for automobiles in Michigan. These types of taxes become forever taxes, and never ending increases. I would also need to know how any new tax would not become a forever tax and that at the time said new tax was to expire there would not be a misleading call to the city to extend or reapprove said tax or act like their funding is being cut.

**Q9**

**Extremely important**

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

Youth sports are an important part of childhood and community and have been extremely influential in my own life. The community in which I was raised would be more comparable to a Unified Plymouth City and Plymouth Township in size and population and we had a very robust youth sports program, but there was always fund raising associated with each of those programs and when we wanted dugouts for the baseball fields or an outhouse, the community came together to build these things. find the local experts and skilled people who want and will benefit from these new facilities and amenities and work together to make it happen. We cannot just continue to squeeze the tax payer...especially when some tax payers now have new problems of water run-off into their basements because they are surrounded by McMansions with 9' basement and displace all of the new runoff, or build their structures to the edge of property lines and put sheds that hang over property lines, and don't plan their driveways to be at least long enough for their pick-up trucks and they block the sidewalks - all results of new construction that should be brining in considerable new revenue as it is.

**Q11**

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Somewhat important,**

**Why?:**

More important for youth programs. Perhaps subsidized for those in need, but if you look around a community like Plymouth, if someone wants the facility or program then they should have some skin in the game.

**Q12**

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**Yes,**

**Why?:**

If there is a benefit to the community or if it is a lower cost alternative to a higher cost expense such as purchasing land or developing new construction sites.

**Q13**

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?

**No**

**Q14**

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**No**

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q15**

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

Questions 12-14 are not straight forward or easy to answer. It seems like a set-up to achieve a survey response that can be used as a sound bite. If there is a business case to rent property and improve it, then bring that business case forward, don't ask a loaded question without the proper context.

#7



**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Thursday, April 11, 2024 1:44:54 PM  
**Last Modified:** Thursday, April 11, 2024 2:00:25 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:15:31  
**IP Address:** 107.5.19.231

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

Flexible schedule

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

More offerings at times when working folks (not just retirees) can take advantage.

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Extremely important,**

Why?:

Run down facilities and equipment will turn away many citizens

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Extremely important,**

Why?:

Even if an individual is not utilizing the park, etc. it is a visual part of the neighborhood and is a reflection of the community

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

Specific use, well explained, one-time millages for a proposed project. Not a poorly defined, excessive slush fund.

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

Citizens will support projects to beautify the city if they are specific, well explained, and fiscally responsible.

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q7**

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

Some people may not be able to afford an additional tax burden as some people do not utilize any of the city parks and rec offerings.

**Q8**

What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

Exactly what we are doing, how much it will cost, how much the millage will bring in. Specific use for a limited, onetime millage.

**Q9**

**Extremely important**

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

A big role for young people and families.

**Q11**

**Extremely important,**

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Why?:**

Everyone needs physical activities and a community connection to thrive.

**Q12**

**No,**

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**Why?:**

Unless the project results in public use.

**Q13**

**No**

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?

**Q14**

**Yes**

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**Q15**

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

Questions 12-15 would be easier to answer if I was given additional information. The answers are based purely on speculation of what is being considered and what the facts behind those questions are.

#8

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Thursday, April 11, 2024 4:00:32 PM  
**Last Modified:** Thursday, April 11, 2024 4:39:16 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:38:44  
**IP Address:** 68.179.185.199

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

Providing of many entertaining options for recreation focused on PLY residents and tax payers (not nearby community residents)

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

Our small parks are very good, but it would be great to also have 1 or 2 large parks like Dearborn does (they have about 6, but more residents.)

Nature trails for hiking or trails for bikes and roller blading.

Shelters, shade, picnic tables, pool for kids.

Open lap swimming for adults.

Open swim for families

Open skate and Sticks and pucks at ice rink.

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Somewhat important,**

Why?:

They cost money – tax dollars.

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Very important,**

Why?:

No use having them, if they aren't maintained well.

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

Fees, especially for NON-Plymouth residents and taxpayers. Priority in use, parking or lower fees for residents and PLY tax payers. Higher taxes if necessary and confidence it's a facility residents want. Go slow to get that confidence first.

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

See # 5. Questions are too similar.

**Q7**

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

For some facilities, it's hard to charge fees or determine residence of users. Thus there is a cost to manage that.

**Q8**

What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

How much will cost be or for what recreation options? I will not support it if I believe it will be used as much by non-residents as residents, without a priority or lower fee going to PLY residents and taxpayers. It's no fun to hear my friends outside of PLY brag about significantly utilizing our amenities, but paying lower taxes by living elsewhere. They also have plenty of money.

**Q9**

**Somewhat important**

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

Significant -- maybe 30 to 60% of budget on youth (PLY youth) sports.

**Q11**

**Extremely important,**

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

Why?:

Recreational facilities are desired by all ages, and PLY has all ages.

**Q12**

Why?:

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

Not sure what you mean. Is it the PARC or what?

**Q13**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?



**Q14**

**Yes**

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**Q15**

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

I do not consider a park in a city our size to be a legitimate park if it appears it's prime focus is soccer fields. One maybe, if we had 10 parks of a similar size, could be for soccer, but not more. My previous hometown had that and the parks were considered a joke by residents (no one used them, just soccer teams). We need playgrounds, picnic tables, hiking, walking, biking, roller blading, jogging, shade, and if we could afford it or charged a fee, a pool and/or ice rink, before soccer fields. It would be nice if kids still played unsupervised baseball, but that's rare now days.

#9



**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Friday, April 12, 2024 7:23:50 AM  
**Last Modified:** Friday, April 12, 2024 7:47:06 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:23:15  
**IP Address:** 68.43.191.44

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

Efficient at cooperation and utilizing resources available. Locating new resources to maximize the department's programs.

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

Three types of questions are why why we got proposal one. What the residents want is a fully funded recreation department within the current budget. Residents don't see the recreation department individually, so it's not a question of artificial turf or playground equipment, but recreation acquisitions versus commissioners pet projects like EV charging stations.

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Somewhat important,**

Why?:

Need to be identified first and then an amenities to fulfill them.

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Very important,**

Why?:

Maintaining current resources under the current budget should be priority One. Adding new amenities when we can't afford maintenance on current ones is irresponsible.

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

The city must first learn to live within its means. When current needs aren't met and commissioners want class 3 charging stations, there's a disconnect between the commission and residence.

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

It's basic budgeting.

**Q7**

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

It's unpopular to say we can't afford it at this time, our proposed fun new projects.

**Q8**

What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

A detailed understanding on why when the residents said Parks were important in 2018, other things were funded instead. Parks were left to deteriorate when the city's report showed other cities our size funded parks within their budget.

Relevant input from the city's residence, not the "If we had unlimited money, what do you want" type questions which lead to irresponsible decisions?.

**Q9**

**Extremely important**

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

Extremely fundamental.

**Q11**

**Extremely important,**

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Why?:**

The city shouldn't pick and choose which age groups it caters to.

**Q12**

**No,**

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**Why?:**

Not without a long-term agreement. The cultural center being the example when it makes sense. There's nowhere near enough information to answer question 13 effectively.

#10

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 10:09:46 PM  
**Last Modified:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 10:20:01 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:10:15  
**IP Address:** 23.28.100.52

Page 1: As a program participant, you are in a unique position to provide us with feedback and ideas.

**Q1**

Think about an ideal recreation department. What words come to mind in describing that department?

Offers a variety of activities at a fair price, with quality facilities. Organized and easy to participate.

**Q2**

If the City of Plymouth Recreation Department had unlimited staff and funding, what are the most important things they should do to be more like the ideal recreation department?

Ice rink open all year, more soccer fields, dog park, basketball courts, free exercise classes

**Q3**

How important is the development of new amenities?

**Somewhat important,**

Why?:

Need to keep a variety of facilities; too expensive to have everything new but can't afford nothing new for 50 years or you won't be able to support growing and changing needs

**Q4**

How important is the maintenance of neighborhood parks and the Cultural Center to the community?

**Extremely important,**

Why?:

Shared green space, community center hosting indoor events

**Q5**

What is your recommendation on how we should financially support community improvement projects? Projects might include, but are not limited to upgrades to neighborhood parks, development of new outdoor multi-use facilities, restrooms at Massey Field, and new pathways in Kellogg Park.

Shared cost, with some money coming from private donations or grants.

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q6**

What are the best arguments in support of these recreation department funding options?

Healthy community that is active build neighborhood friendships and creates a place where others desire to live.

**Q7**

What are the best arguments in opposition to these funding options?

Save the money. Anyone who wants to participant fund it themselves. (This is similar to saying you shouldn't have to pay for public schools if you don't have kids attending them.)

**Q8**

What would you need to know in order to support a new dedicated recreation department millage?

Short, medium and long term plan for how the facilities would be changed and how they would be maintained. Utilization rates/plans.

**Q9**

**Somewhat important**

How important is the millage duration to you when deciding to vote yes or no on a dedicated recreation department millage?

**Q10**

What role does youth sports play in the Plymouth community?

It's a wonderful way for kids to try a variety of sports at low cost. They make friends and learn about teamwork.

**Q11**

**Extremely important,**

Is offering recreational programs for all age demographics important?

**Why?:**

Everyone needs exercise and friendships!

**Q12**

**Yes,**

Do you think the city should fund improvement projects on private property?

**Why?:**

Only if there is a long term agreement about usage and it is open to the public for some events

**Q13**

**Yes**

Should the recreation department rent property for an approximate cost of \$1 million over a period of five years and escalating each successive year, plus invest upgrades to the private property?

City of Plymouth Recreation Department Survey

**Q14**

**Yes**

Should the recreation department continue to investigate opportunities for partnerships at the cost of improvements and maintenance to the potential site?

**Q15**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Please let us know if there are any other thoughts you would like to share.

**. Appendix D –  
About the  
Facilitator – Deb  
Bilbrey-Honsowetz**

## **About the Facilitator**

Deb Bilbrey-Honsowetz has enjoyed a successful career in Parks and Recreation, spanning more than three decades. She spent the majority of her career with Canton Township where she served in a number of capacities, including Recreation & Facilities Manager, Economic Development Manager and as Director of Leisure Services before retiring in 2016. Most recently, she came out of retirement to serve in the role of Interim Parks and Recreation Director for Northville Parks and Recreation, where she successfully led the department through a difficult transitional period in 2023.

Deb is currently performing freelance consulting work, utilizing her decades of invaluable experience to assist other departments and agencies in developing their future vision and strategies that will build a path to success.