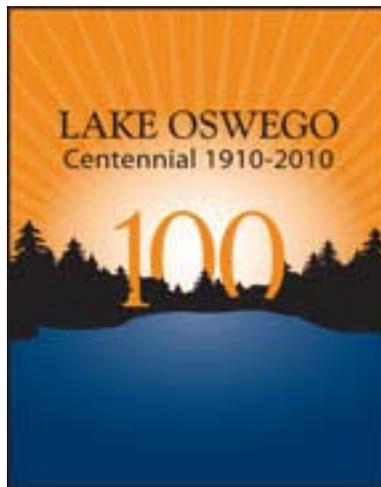


# Parks Plan 2025

## Statistically Valid Survey Summary



City of Lake Oswego  
Parks and Recreation Department  
November 11, 2011

## 1 | INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM Research) conducted a telephone survey of Lake Oswego residents to assess support for the 2025 Park Plan Goals, developed through a planning and public involvement process, as well as resident priorities within each of the goals. All participants in the survey were over 18 years of age and lived in the City of Lake Oswego.

Research Methodology: Between November 14 and 17, 2011, DHM Research conducted a telephone survey of 400 residents in Lake Oswego that took an average of 13 minutes to administer. The sample size is sufficient to assess residents' opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups, including age, gender, zip code, income, and households with children.

Residents were contacted through Random Digit Dialing (RDD), targeted, and wireless (cell phone) lists for a representative sample. In gathering responses, a variety of quality control measures were employed, including questionnaire pre-testing and validations. To achieve a representative sample, DHM Research set quotas for age, gender, and area of the city based on the total population of residents ages 18 and older living in the city.

Statement of Limitations: Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error, representing the difference between the sample and the total population. The margin of error is a standard statistical calculation that represents differences between the sample and total population at a confidence interval, or probability, calculated to be 95%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the sample taken for this study would fall within the stated margins of error if compared with the results achieved from surveying the entire population.

For a sample size of 400, the margin of error for each question falls within the range of +/- 2.6% and +/- 4.9% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error differs for each question depending upon the response patterns to individual questions. When response categories are relatively even in size, each response is numerically smaller and thus less able to approximate the larger population.

**DHM Research:** DHM Research has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for over three decades. The firm is non-partisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy making. [www.dhmresearch.com](http://www.dhmresearch.com)

## 2 | SUMMARY & OBSERVATIONS

### **Residents are generally satisfied with parks and recreation services in Lake Oswego, and place above average urgency for goals in the Parks Plan.**

- Survey results reflect residents' widespread use of Lake Oswego's natural areas and recreational facilities. A large majority (81%) had visited natural areas in Lake Oswego within the past year, and an even larger number had visited parks (93%).
- Residents tended to assign a medium level of priority to most items associated with the Park Plan Goals. The absence of urgency may indicate residents' broad satisfaction with the city's recreational resources.
- Upkeep of the parks and facilities, and clean restrooms were the highest priority for residents.
- The lowest priorities were building a skate park and adding more dog parks – a common result found in many communities.

### **Maintenance projects takes priority for residents over expansion.**

- The largest amount given during a budget building exercise was toward keeping parks, playgrounds, sports fields and courts up-to-date and maintained. Almost \$36 out of \$100 was assigned to this maintenance goal.
- The next highest amount was \$28 for another maintenance goal – maintaining and managing more natural areas in Lake Oswego.

### 3 | KEY FINDINGS

#### 3.1 | Park Usage and Overall Satisfaction

More than nine in ten families (93%) reported visiting a Lake Oswego park in the past year, eight in ten (81%) had visited a natural area, and three quarters (74%) had used a trail (Table 1). Fewer families, but still a majority, reported using athletic centers and sports fields: 56% had gone to the Tennis Center, Adult Community Center, West End Building, or Lake Oswego Golf Course, and 52% had used a sports field or court.

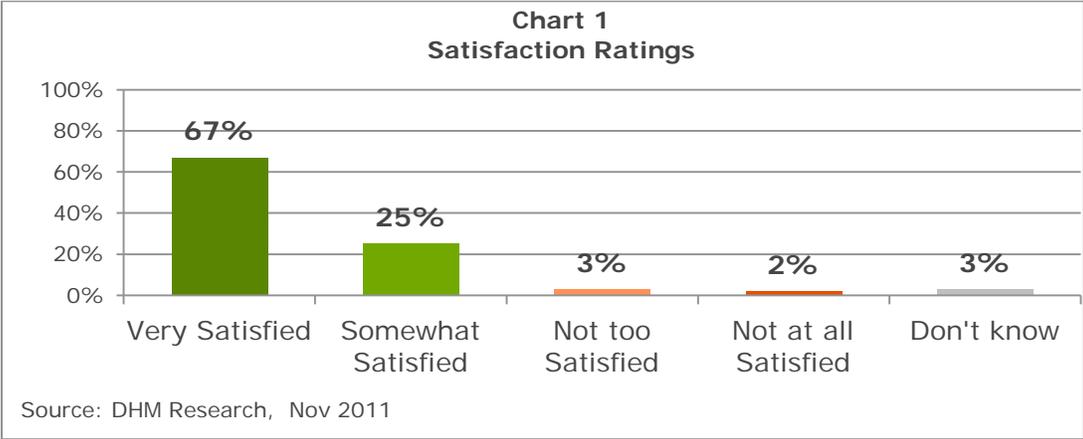
**Table 1**  
**Lake Oswego Park Usage**

Recreation Opportunities	Used	Have not used	Don't know
Gone to a park	93%	7%	0%
Visited a natural area	81%	16%	3%
Used a trail	74%	25%	1%
Gone to the Tennis Center, Adult Community Center, West End Building, or Lake Oswego Golf Course	56%	44%	0%
Used a sports field or court	52%	46%	1%

**Demographic differences:** Approximately nine in ten or more in each age group had visited a park in the city, as had most households, regardless of whether or not they had children. Majorities across all demographic groups had also visited a natural area and used a trail.

Use of the Tennis Center, Adult Community Center, West End Building, and Lake Oswego Golf Course and sports field was higher among households with children under 18, those ages 35 to 54, and households with incomes above \$50k.

Overall satisfaction with the services offered by the Lake Oswego Parks and Recreation Department was very high: two-thirds (67%) reported being very satisfied with services and another quarter (25%) said they were somewhat satisfied, for an overall of 92% (Chart 1). Only 5% said they were “not too” (3%) or “not at all” (2%) satisfied.



Responses to other questions in the survey validated that residents enjoy a high level of satisfaction with Lake Oswego’s Parks and Recreation. When asked what the Department could start doing to better serve residents’ recreation needs, two in ten referred to maintenance and upkeep, another two in ten said they were satisfied with existing resources, and 16% had no comment. All other responses earned mentions from 6% or fewer residents (Table 2).

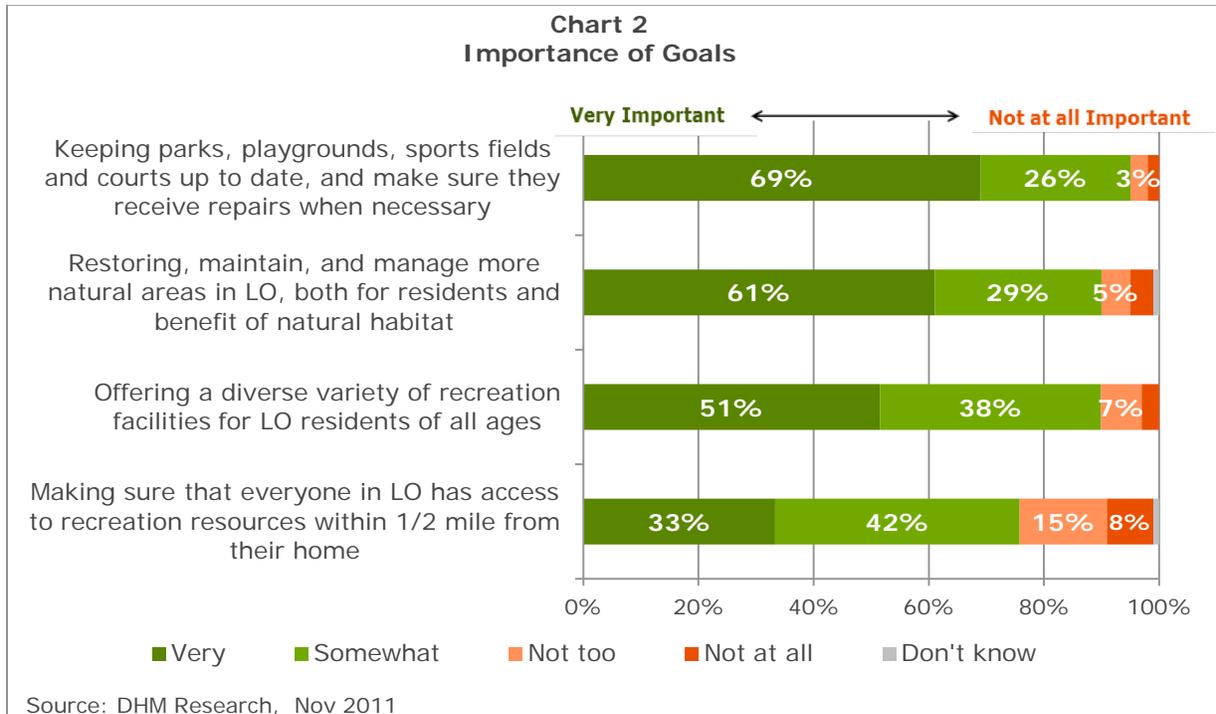
**Table 2**  
**Ways to Better Serve Residents’ Recreation Needs**

<b>Ideas</b>	<b>N=400</b>
Satisfied with existing resources	20%
Maintenance/upkeep	20%
Sports field	6%
Swimming pool	6%
Take care of natural habitat/trails	5%
Walking paths	5%
Better tennis courts	4%
Upgrade facilities	4%
Budgeting money wisely	4%
Water ways/ponds/boating	3%
Exercise rooms	3%
All other responses	2% or less
None/Nothing	16%
Don’t know	4%

When asked what the Parks and Recreation Department should *stop* doing to better serve recreation needs, half of the sample (49%) had nothing to suggest and another 10% expressed satisfaction and no complaints. One in ten said to stop wasteful spending, 5% wanted to stop acquiring land and adding parks, and 4% asked for less focus on sports fields.

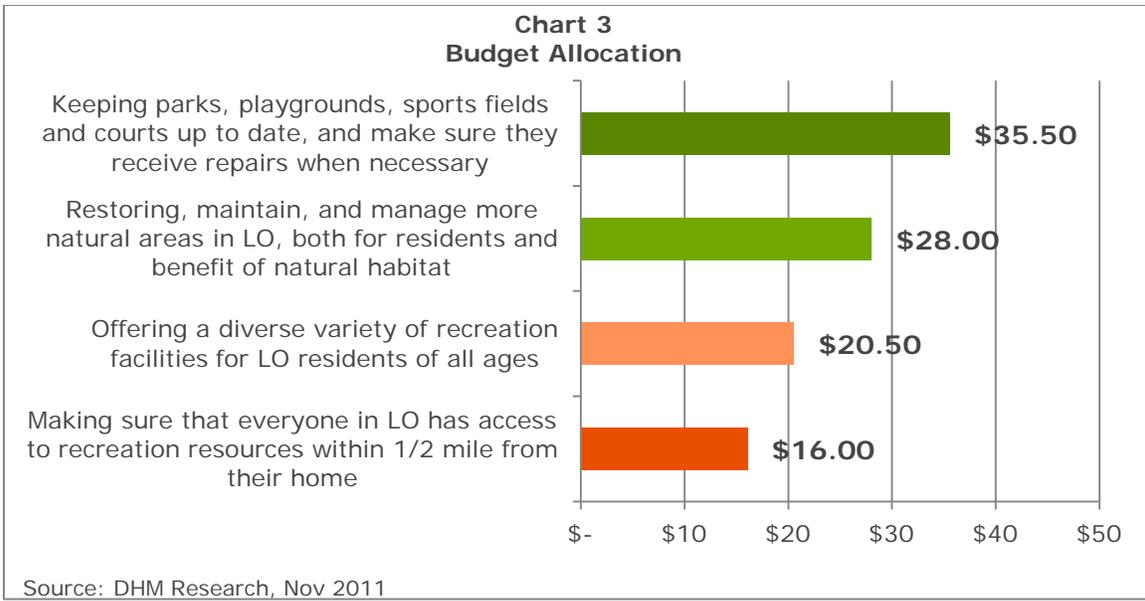
### 3.2 | Importance of Goals and Allocation of Funds

When we asked residents how important each of four main Parks and Recreation goals were to them (Chart 2), the strongest support came for keeping parks, playgrounds, sports fields and courts up-to-date and maintained: 95% of respondents said this goal was very (69%) or somewhat (26%) important to them. The other goals were important, but not to the same intensity. Six in ten said that management of natural areas was very important, compared to just over half (51%) who thought a diversity of recreational programs was very important.



**Demographic differences:** While majorities of all demographic groups said maintaining parks is important, households with minor children felt more intensely about this importance.

Overall results about recreation goals were further validated when we asked participants to build a budget for the Parks and Recreation Department (Chart 3). We gave residents \$100 in dedicated parks funding and asked how they would divide this money among the four overall goals.



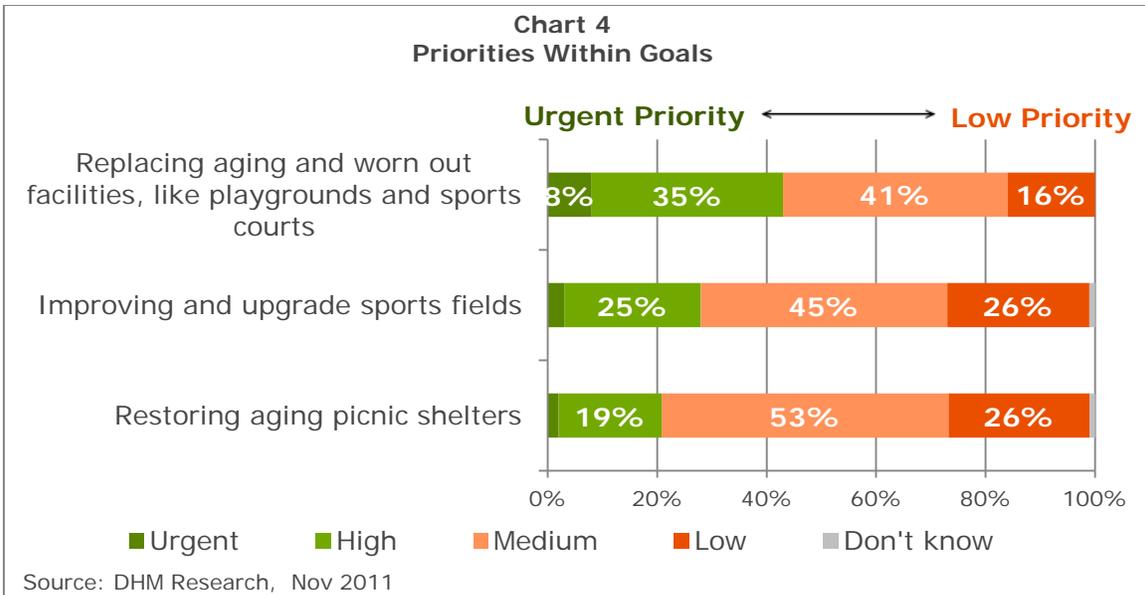
Participants assigned the most to keeping parks, playgrounds, fields and courts up-to-date and in good repair and to restoring, maintaining, and managing natural areas—also reflected in above. Findings are similar by demographic group.

### 3.3 | Priorities within Goals

We probed residents' views about the priority of particular items falling within each of the four main goals.

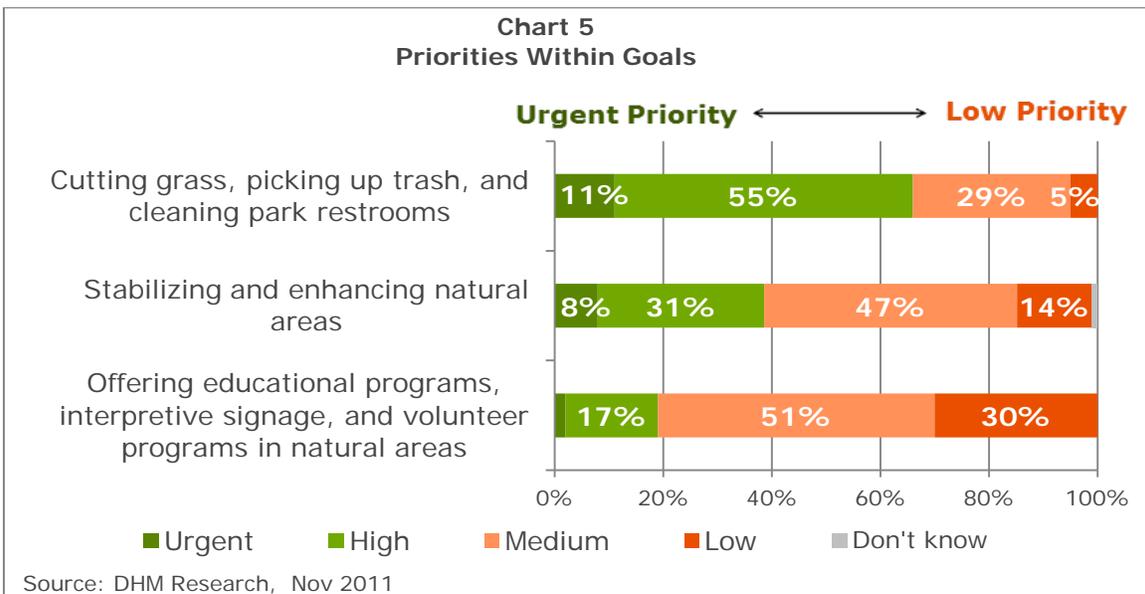
**Goal: To keep parks, playgrounds, sports fields and courts up-to-date, and make sure they receive repairs when necessary** (Chart 4)

The highest priority of the three items within this goal was replacing aging and worn out facilities, like playgrounds and sports centers (43% combined urgent and high priority). Improving and upgrading sports fields was next with 28%, followed by restoring aging picnic shelters at 21%. One-quarter or less thought these were low priorities.



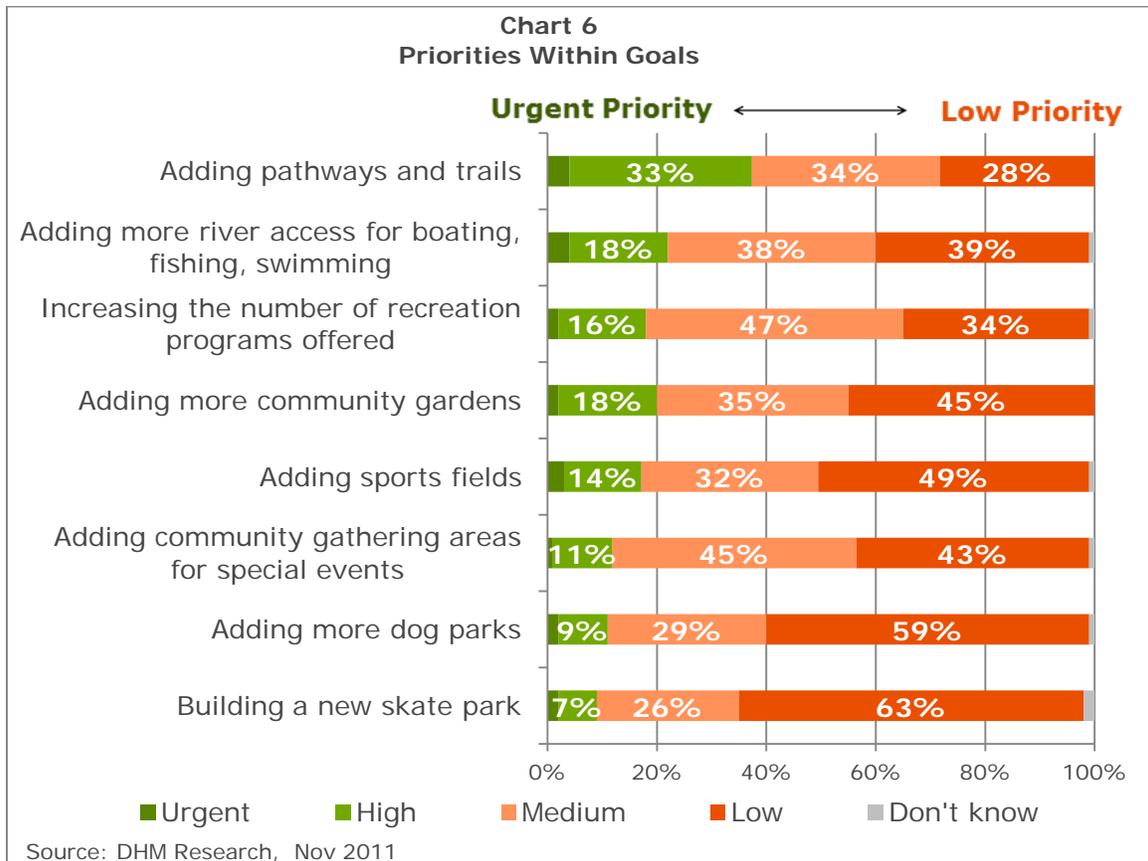
**Goal:** To restore, maintain, and manage natural areas in Lake Oswego for both the use of residents and the benefit of the natural habitat (Chart 5)

The highest priority of the three items falling under this goal—and the highest priority overall of those tested—was cutting grass, picking up trash, and cleaning park restrooms (combined urgent and high priority at 66%). Stabilizing and enhancing natural areas came next at 39% urgent/high, followed by offering educational programs, interpretive signage, and volunteer programs in natural areas at 18%. Women tended to give a higher priority rating for each item than men.



**Goal: To offer a diverse variety of recreation programs and facilities for Lake Oswego residents of all ages** (Chart 6)

We tested eight items under this goal. Residents felt that adding pathways and trails was the most pressing task in the category (urgent/high 35%). Except for adding paths and trails, all of the items under this goal scored lower than the six items associated with the two goals noted above. Many items within this goal spoke to expanding services, which are generally lower priorities for residents than maintaining current services.



**Goal:** To make sure that everyone in Lake Oswego has access to recreation resources within a half mile from their home, such as a park, natural area, play area, or a place to exercise (Table 3)

We explored this goal as an open-ended question, asking survey participants what recreation resources were important to have within half a mile from home (Table 3). We recorded up to three responses.

**Table 3**  
**Recreation Resources Close to Home**

Important Recreation Resources	N=400
Walking trails/trails in general	29%
Park	20%
Nothing/no comment	18%
Satisfied with existing resources	17%
Natural areas	11%
Sports fields (baseball, soccer, football, etc.)	9%
Swimming pools	7%
Playgrounds	7%
Bike trails	4%
Tennis courts	3%
Exercise rooms	3%
Dog park	3%
Water ways/ponds/boating	3%
All other responses	2% or less
Don't know	2%

**Demographic differences:** Households with minor children were more likely than their counterparts to favor parks, sports fields, and playgrounds.