

CITY OF HILLSBORO PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM PLAN

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

With the guidance of Hillsboro’s first Parks Master Plan in 1985 through the most recent update in 2010, the city has grown its parks and recreation system to include over 30 parks, more than 1,500 acres of designated green spaces, 18 miles of trails, professional baseball stadium and multisport complex, community centers, an aquatic center, and cultural arts venues.

Since the 2010 Parks Master Plan update, many more people now live or work in Hillsboro, thousands of acres have been added to the urban area and with it, tens of thousands more people are projected to find a home in Hillsboro over the next 20 years. At the same time recreational trends continue to evolve and an increasingly diverse populace expands recreational and public space preferences. There is also a need to restructure decision-making and investments to realize our mission and commitments of integrating equity and rectifying disparities.

As Hillsboro continues to grow at a rapid rate and as people from diverse cultures and backgrounds find a home in Hillsboro, there is a need for a comprehensive review of the system and to envision how a fully integrated system of Parks, Trails, Recreation, Natural Areas, Maintenance, Arts & Culture, Events and Public Spaces can best serve the community for the next 50 years.

This document outlines Hillsboro’s strategy and commitments to engaging community members in a process that is inclusive, transparent, and responsive to current and future needs.

Sections included herein:

Why: purpose and goals

Who: decision-making framework and roles

When: timeline and research objectives

What: engagement program

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Creating a System Plan requires a renewed process to broaden and enhance engagement of current community members and to also consider the needs of future system users. This Community Engagement Strategy expands on community interests expressed in prior planning processes and outlines how community needs, and ideas will be integrated with the technical work and formal decision-making process.

Equity-Focused Engagement

The City of Hillsboro is committed to equity. Equity work aims to remove barriers and eliminate social and economic disparities by centering those who have not had equal access to the decision-making process. Historically, parks and recreation plans have not fairly and equitably represented community members' needs, which has resulted in uneven and inadequate service for some communities in Hillsboro.

The System Plan is seeking to change this pattern by actively listening and engaging with underserved communities through every phase of the process. The more community voices are heard, the more effectively the City will be able to serve Hillsboro. The System Plan process will include many opportunities for broad public involvement. Meaningful community engagement means sharing decision-making with communities who have been marginalized and/or previously denied access. The more voices that are heard, the more parks will be a central community asset that's accessible for all users to have fun and make meaningful connections.

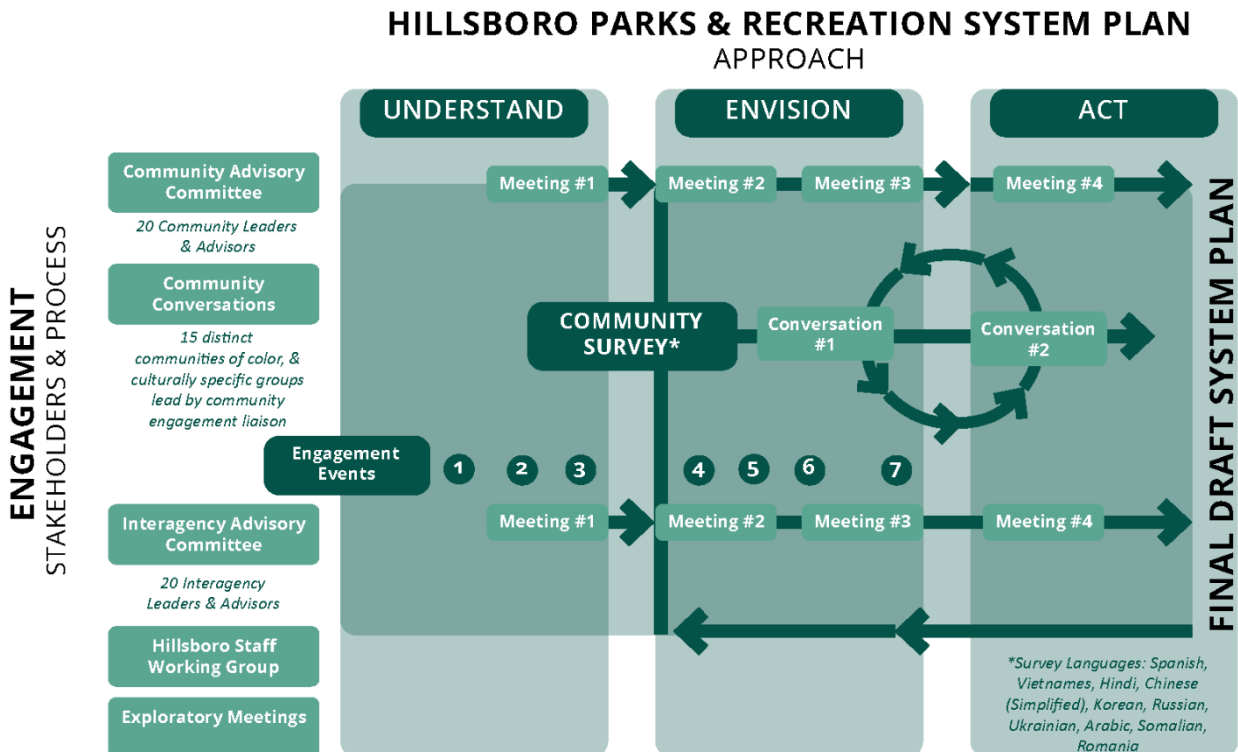
Engagement Goals

1. Provide more opportunities for community engagement to allow everyone's voice to be heard and engage with as many Hillsboro residents as possible.
2. Build public awareness and interest in Hillsboro parks and recreation services and programs and reach out to those who may not currently use parks.
3. Increase equitable involvement in parks and recreation planning by elevating the perspectives, needs, and interests of diverse residents who have been historically excluded, including but not limited to communities of color, people with disabilities, indigenous communities, families with lower incomes, and young people.
4. Prioritize the perspectives, needs, and interests of underserved community members.
5. Restructure decision making and investments, to address disparities and ensure parks, trails, recreation facilities, cultural arts facilities (develop a comprehensive list and use it consistently) and programs are distributed equitably, meaning special investment is made in communities of historic disinvestment in Hillsboro.
6. Begin new relationships and strengthen existing relationships between communities and the Hillsboro Parks and Recreation Department.
7. Involve residents in the process of community engagement, including project design and reviewing results.

8. Expand the number and diversity of people who have an interest and capacity to participate in future Hillsboro planning and policy discussions.
9. Engage City staff and public partners to ensure the System Plan is well-coordinated between departments and agencies, so that the plan is practicable, technically sound, and able to easily move into implementation.

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Developing, coordinating, and integrating the various elements of a Parks and Recreation System Plan requires a decision-making process to continually involve and check-in with the community. This framework has been crafted to meet the project’s schedule, policy and regulatory compliance, and specific stakeholder interests and concerns. Some elements of the project will require a final decision to be made through a formal hearings process, while others will rely on the authority held by city and project management. Ultimately, a proposed plan will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Planning Commission for their recommendations, and then to Hillsboro City Council for their consideration of adoption.



Roles and Responsibilities

Hillsboro City Council

Throughout the project, Councilors will be briefed on the process and progress, and provide guidance for plan development. A summary of ideas, feedback, input, and opinions that come out of the community engagement process will be disseminated to the Council for their deliberation. Hillsboro City Council holds final decision-making authority to steer policy development and adopt changes to the city's official plans, maps, codes, and policies.

Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission is charged with overseeing the management of park and recreation facilities and services. Throughout the project, the PRC will be briefed and will advise as to how well the potential plan and implementation strategies address community needs operations and financial capacity of the system (per municipal code 2.32.020). In their role as a conduit to the community, the PRC will also engage in open and constructive dialogue to help ensure the System Plan meets its community and equity-based objectives. The PRC will review and make recommendations to City Council on the proposed System Plan.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is charged with recommending to City Council any Comprehensive Plan policy, code, or map amendments necessary to implement the vision of the System Plan. The Planning Commission will be briefed and will discuss how best to modify Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan policies to ensure coordination of the Equity-based Parks and Recreation System Plan with other city-adopted plans and land use policies. Ultimately, the Planning Commission will review, hear, and make recommendations to City Council on any proposed comprehensive plan and code amendments.

Advisory Committees and Work Groups

Community Advisory Committee: The CAC will provide advice to the project team and city leadership on how to best hear and reflect community needs and interests in the System Plan. Drawing from their diverse backgrounds, abilities, ages, lived experiences, perspectives, and cultures, the CAC will make recommendations on the methods, research questions, results of community engagement, and how to incorporate the community input. The project team will seek advice of the CAC on strategies to equitably address community needs.

Interagency Advisory Committee: The IAC, comprised of representatives from partner governments or organizations including Tribal government liaisons, will advise the project team on technical issues and coordination with other plans, public investments, and inter-related community needs. The IAC will work closely to provide information, review, and comment on project materials, problem-solve, and share their technical expertise to help build a system that is responsive to community needs and workable for public services and operations. The IAC will also be a place for city and partner agencies to share what they are hearing from the community in other forums and explore ways to incorporate those findings in the plan.

Work group: The Workgroup consists of staff from all department divisions and are intended to provide technical assistance for the planning process. In addition to parks and recreation department staff, representatives from other departments within the City will be recruited as technical advisors. The work group will work closely to provide data, review, and comment on project materials, problem-solve, and share their practical and technical expertise to help inform and construct future service delivery.

TIMELINE AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Phase 1 Understand | summer 2022-winter 2023

Learn who is or is not using the parks system and why

- Use existing conditions information, demographic data, and inputs from the early phase of system planning to learn about the Hillsboro community, people who are using the parks and recreation system, and anticipated growth and demographic trends, and who is not.
- Hear which parks, facilities, activities, programs are being used and not used.
- Investigate barriers to use and participation with Hillsboro parks, facilities, activities, and programs, and explore reasons why community members aren't using the system; and consider needs of future residents, employees, and visitors.

Phase 2 Envision | winter-fall 2023

Hear how parks and recreation are part of Hillsboro's social fabric and how they can better support the current and future communities.

- Learn how community members feel about Hillsboro parks and recreation system, what is going well and what can be improved.
- Hear about barriers to accessing the parks and recreation facilities and recommendations for improving access. Barriers include, but are not limited to proximity, transportation, financial, physical, invisible/social barriers, and issues of safety and welcomeness.
- Hear about broader community needs and wants, and ideas about how parks, facilities, and programs can help address those needs and wants.
- Identify opportunities to solidify connections between parks and recreation system and key community assets, placemaking and gathering locations such as schools, places of worship, community centers, or commercial centers.
- Hear Hillsboro residents' specific vision for Hillsboro parks and recreation going forward.

Gather recommendations for improvement

- Seek out community-based solutions and recommendations for parks system-wide and for specific parks, including but not limited to number of parks, trails and recreation facilities, etc. (again – develop a consistent list) locations, conditions, amenities, and programming.
- Collaborate on solutions and strategies to address service disparities and to build a climate-resilient parks system.
- Shape the framework for plan implementation and equitable delivery of Parks and Recreation services.

Phase 3 Evaluate and Act | winter-spring 2024

Hear community feedback on drafts of the Hillsboro Parks and Recreation System Plan

- What is working well? Is the draft System Plan addressing community needs and wants?
- What needs to be adjusted? What is missing?
- What else do decision-makers need to know?

ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The following program of activities to involve, consult, and inform stakeholders has been scaled for the citywide impact that implementation will garner, while also living up to the City's equity goals and ideals.

This specific program has been developed to:

- Start the process by deeply connecting with people whose voices have been underrepresented in many of the planning processes up to this point;
- Embed the needs and hopes of communities of color, people with disabilities, young people, and other underserved community members into the planning process;
- Empower Hillsboro community members to serve as liaisons and conduits of a dynamic conversation between diverse communities and the City;
- Emphasize experiential activities to get real-time feedback from the people who use and need an improved parks and recreation system; and
- Set a sustainable pace that fosters interest, excitement, and momentum for the parks system that can be built upon as the City moves into implementation and sustained for ongoing relationships and partnerships.

Methods

We will engage the community through the following methods:

1. Advisory Committees
2. Community Surveys
3. Online engagement platform
4. Community-led Conversations – Hillsboro community members, serving as engagement liaisons, will lead discussions with specific groups whose voices are not typically heard in planning processes. Conversations will be conducted in up to 10 languages.
5. Tabling and involvement at public events, citywide
6. System Plan workshops or open houses
7. Internal involvement – briefings and work sessions with internal City stakeholders and partner agencies in the technical analysis and plan development
8. Communications– webpage, newsletter, media, informational materials

The matrix below shows how each engagement method supports the planning process. In addition to carrying out the goals and objectives herein, the approach for each activity will be responsive to adopted Public Involvement Inclusion policies (contained in Chapter 7 of the Comprehensive Plan).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	METHODS					
	Advisory Committees	Community Surveys	Interactive Activities	Community Conversations	Public Events	Workshops/ Open Houses
Understand: Learn who is and is not using City of Hillsboro parks system and why	X	X		X	X	
Envision: Hear how parks and recreation can better support current and future communities	X	X		X	X	X
Act: Gather recommendations for improvement	X	X		X	X	
Evaluate: Hear community feedback on drafts of System Plan	X	X		X		X

NOTE: Specific details on the approach and schedule of activities will be determined in collaboration with the Community Engagement consultant.