

**Appendix 10**  
**Summary of Public Input**

# BREC ADA Transition Plan

## Findings Report from Public Outreach

Public Open House #1, Online Survey & Public Open House #2



# OVERVIEW

This findings report compiles the results from the first and second rounds of public outreach for BREC's ADA Transition plan, including results from two public open houses, in-person interviews onsite at a BREC park and the online survey.

The team began the project by developing a large database of stakeholders who represented East Baton Rouge Parish residents of all ages and abilities, with emphasis on reaching organizations that serve people with disabilities. The public open houses and the survey were promoted through a variety of communications vehicles including: advertising in The Advocate newspaper, press releases, flyers at public libraries and BREC facilities, social media posts and promotion as well as direct individualized outreach to stakeholders.

In preparation for the public open houses and the on-site outreach, the team prepared several large-format colorful display boards. The display boards for the first open house served several purposes: **1) to educate the public about the need for a BREC ADA Transition Plan; 2) explain that accessible design benefits everyone; and 3) provide the public with opportunity to indicate preferences, list concerns and comment on the following questions:**

- 1. What types of facilities being accessible are most important to you?**
- 2. What elements within a park are most important to you?**
- 3. What elements within a building are most important to you?**
- 4. What type of BREC programs and services are most important to you?**

The first public open house was held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Ballroom at the BREC Headquarters building, 6201 Florida Boulevard in Baton Rouge.

Following the open house, the team conducted in-person interviews at the BREC Independence Community Park Playground, 7500 Independence Boulevard, and the East Baton Rouge Parish Independence Park Main Library, 7711 Goodwood Boulevard, on Saturday, May 5, 2018 from 9 a.m. until noon. Approximately 65 stakeholders provided input during the open house and Independence Park outreach.

The planning team prepared an online survey and encouraged individuals who attended the public open house meeting and those in the stakeholder database to share the survey link with constituents and those interested in BREC programs and facilities.

The online survey was also promoted through social media, the press and via a series of emails sent to the stakeholders during the period of May 2, 2018 until July 13, 2018. 215 people completed the survey during that time.

The online survey asked the public to comment on the following areas:

- 1. Please prioritize specific types of BREC facilities that are most important to you.**
- 2. Within a park, please prioritize elements that are most important to you.**
- 3. Within a building, please prioritize elements that are most important to you.**
- 4. Name three BREC facilities that you use the most.**
- 5. Name three BREC programs/services/events that you use/attend the most.**
- 6. Please list any facility, park or program that you feel should be made more accessible for people of all abilities.**

Following are the results of these public outreach opportunities along with some notable public comments.



# OPEN HOUSE #1 AND ON-SITE INTERVIEWS

The following findings are derived from 65 participants in the public open house and in-person interviews at Independence Park playground and the East Baton Rouge Parish Main Library.

## What types of facilities being accessible are important to you?

Open house attendees and in-person survey respondents indicated that parks and recreation centers were the facilities they most preferred to be accessible, followed by special use facilities and trails. Examples of special use facilities provided at the open house were the Bluebonnet Swamp, Liberty Lagoon, Magnolia Mound or the Zoo. Sports facilities and aquatic facilities followed in importance, with golf courses and the BREC headquarters listed as the least important in terms of accessibility.

| TYPE OF FACILITY       | MAY 1 <sup>st</sup><br>OPEN HOUSE @ BREC HQ | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>INDEPENDENCE PARK | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>MAIN LIBRARY | TOTAL |
|------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------|
| PARKS                  | 24  | 3  | 7                                   | 34    |
| RECREATION CENTERS     | 26  | 1  | 4                                   | 30    |
| SPECIAL USE FACILITIES | 21  | 1  | 6                                   | 28    |
| TRAILS                 | 20  | 2  | 4                                   | 26    |
| SPORTS FACILITIES      | 16  | 2  | 1                                   | 19    |
| AQUATIC FACILITIES     | 14  | 0  | 4                                   | 18    |
| GOLF                   | 3   | 0  | 1                                   | 4     |
| BREC HEADQUARTERS      | 4   | 0  | 0                                   | 4     |



## What elements within a park are most important to you?

Parking and restrooms were the top priorities for elements within a park being accessible, followed by routes and trails and playgrounds. Of lesser importance, in order, were drinking fountains and trash cans, picnic tables, sports courts and fields, seating and bleachers and fitness equipment.

| FEATURE                            | MAY 1 <sup>st</sup><br>OPEN HOUSE @ BREC HQ | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>INDEPENDENCE PARK | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>MAIN LIBRARY | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------|
| ACCESSIBLE PARKING                 | 26  | 1  | 3                                   | 30    |
| RESTROOMS                          | 21  | 3  | 5                                   | 29    |
| ROUTES AND TRAILS                  | 18  | 2  | 6                                   | 26    |
| PLAYGROUNDS                        | 16  | 0  | 3                                   | 19    |
| DRINKING FOUNTAINS /<br>TRASH CANS | 8   | 1  | 4                                   | 13    |
| PICNIC TABLES                      | 5   | 1  | 4                                   | 10    |
| SPORTS COURTS / FIELDS             | 8   | 1  | 1                                   | 10    |
| SEATING / BLEACHERS                | 5   | 0  | 2                                   | 7     |
| FITNESS EQUIPMENT                  | 3   | 0  | 2                                   | 5     |

## What elements within a building are most important to you?

Within BREC facilities, the public priorities were an accessible route from transportation to the facility, accessibility to special use amenities such as auditoriums, museums, classrooms and fitness centers, restrooms and parking. Of less importance were features such as drinking fountains and telephones, interior routes, reception areas or points of sale and entrances.

| FEATURE   | MAY 1 <sup>st</sup><br>OPEN HOUSE @ BREC HQ | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>INDEPENDENCE PARK | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>MAIN LIBRARY | TOTAL |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------|
| ACCESSIBLE ROUTE FROM<br>TRANSPORTATION                                 | 26  | 0  | 3                                   | 29    |
| SPECIAL USE: AUDITORIUM,<br>MUSEUM, CLASSROOMS,<br>FITNESS CENTER, ETC. | 21  | 3  | 4                                   | 28    |
| RESTROOMS   | 18  | 3  | 5                                   | 26    |
| ACCESSIBLE PARKING  | 17  | 2  | 4                                   | 23    |
| ADDITIONAL: DRINKING<br>FOUNTAINS, TELEPHONES...                        | 7   | 0  | 3                                   | 10    |
| INTERIOR ROUTE  | 9   | 0  | 0                                   | 9     |
| RECEPTION OR POINT OF SALE  | 3   | 0  | 3                                   | 6     |
| ENTRANCES   | 4   | 1  | 0                                   | 5     |

### Notable Comments:

*“Wi-Fi and Technology.”*

## What types of BREC programs are the most important to you?

BREC programs for health and wellness, adults and seniors, children and arts and cultural programs were all listed as important to the public. These were followed by science and nature programs, sports programs and leagues and community programs. Of least importance to the public outreach participants were adventure programs.

| PROGRAMS & SERVICES      | MAY 1 <sup>st</sup><br>OPEN HOUSE @ BREC HQ | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>INDEPENDENCE PARK | MAY 5 <sup>th</sup><br>MAIN LIBRARY | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------|
| HEALTH/WELLNESS PROGRAMS | 22  | 2  | 4                                   | 28    |
| ADULTS/SENIORS PROGRAMS  | 19  | 3  | 6                                   | 28    |
| CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS      | 21  | 1  | 3                                   | 25    |
| ART & CULTURAL PROGRAMS  | 11  | 2  | 8                                   | 21    |
| SCIENCE/NATURE PROGRAMS  | 11  | 0  | 3                                   | 14    |
| SPORTS PROGRAMS/LEAGUES  | 13  | 0  | 1                                   | 14    |
| COMMUNITY PROGRAMS       | 9   | 0  | 4                                   | 13    |
| ADVENTURE PROGRAMS       | 6   | 1  | 1                                   | 8     |

### Notable Comments:

*"Karate."*

*"Summer Social Clubs."*

*"Zip lines."*

*"See the Iowa Sports Foundation - Adaptive Sports Iowa does a great job."*

During the open house and in-person surveys, participants were encouraged to provide additional comments or list concerns. Those comments can be found after the results of the surveys.

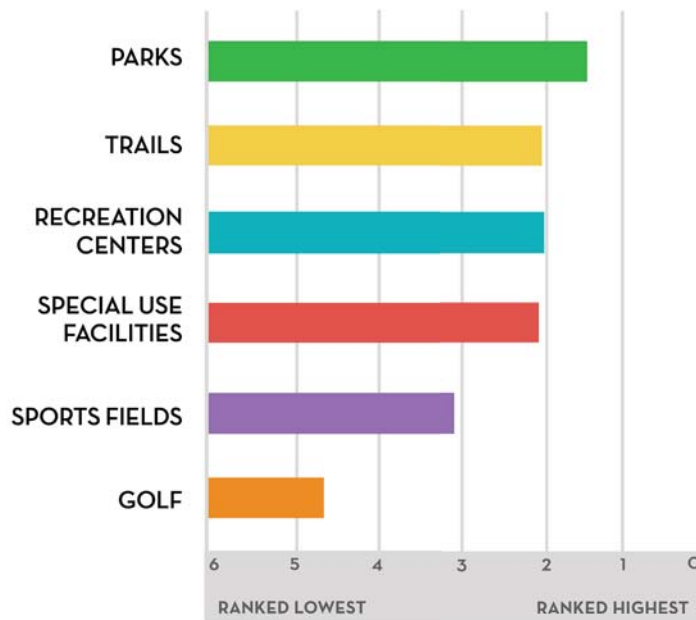


# ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The following findings were derived from 217 respondents to the online survey.

**Q1. Please prioritize specific types of BREC facilities that are the most important to you. (With 1 being the most important and 6 being least important.)**

The online survey results mirror those from the open house and in-person interviews. Respondents again indicated that parks, recreation centers and trails are all very important facilities to them with golf facilities being the least important.

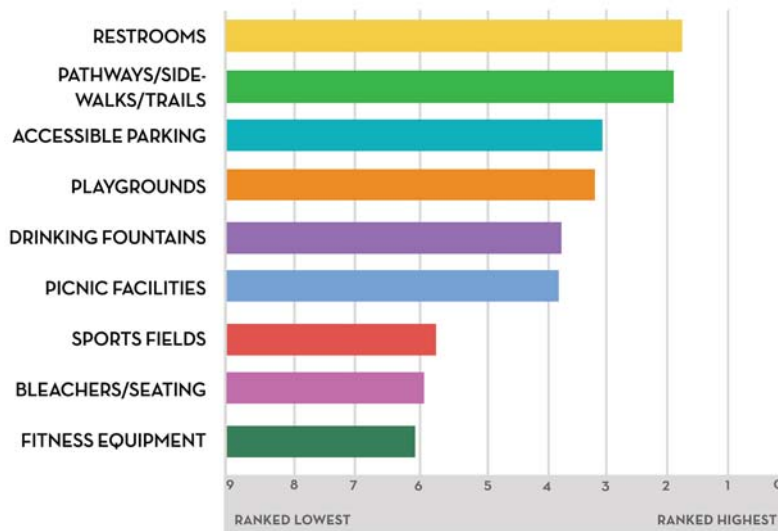




**Q2. Within a park, please prioritize the elements that are most important to you. (With 1 being the most important and 9 being least important.)**

**Q3. Within a building, please prioritize the elements that are most important to you. (With 1 being the most important and 6 being least important.)**

The survey results confirmed that pathways and sidewalks, accessible parking, restrooms and playgrounds ranked highest among their priorities within a park, while restrooms, accessible parking, pathways and sidewalks were priorities within buildings. The survey respondents indicated a slightly higher priority placed on entrances and doors within buildings than did the attendees at the open house meeting.



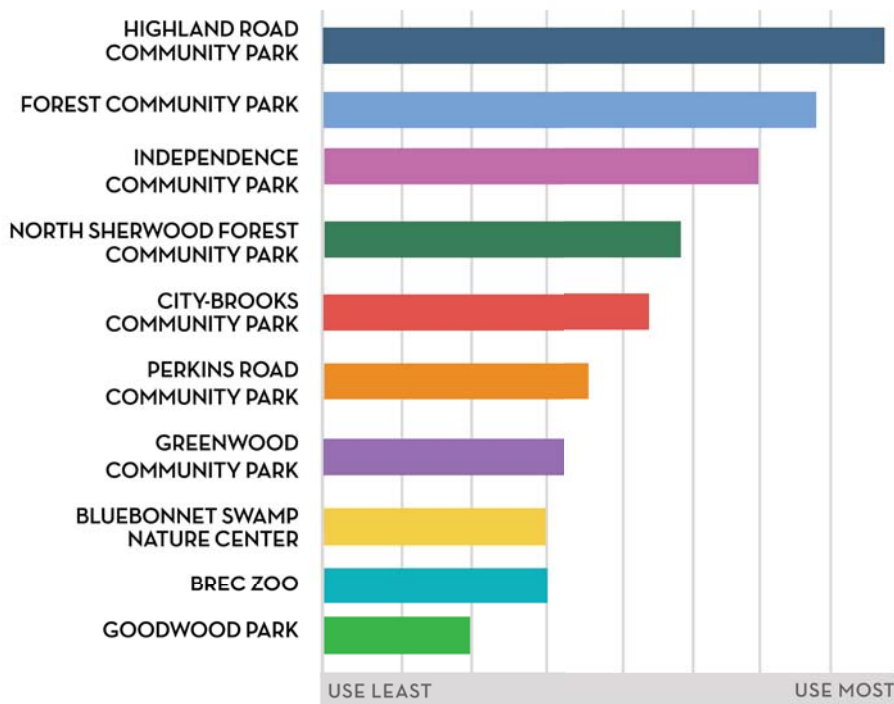
Q2.



Q3.

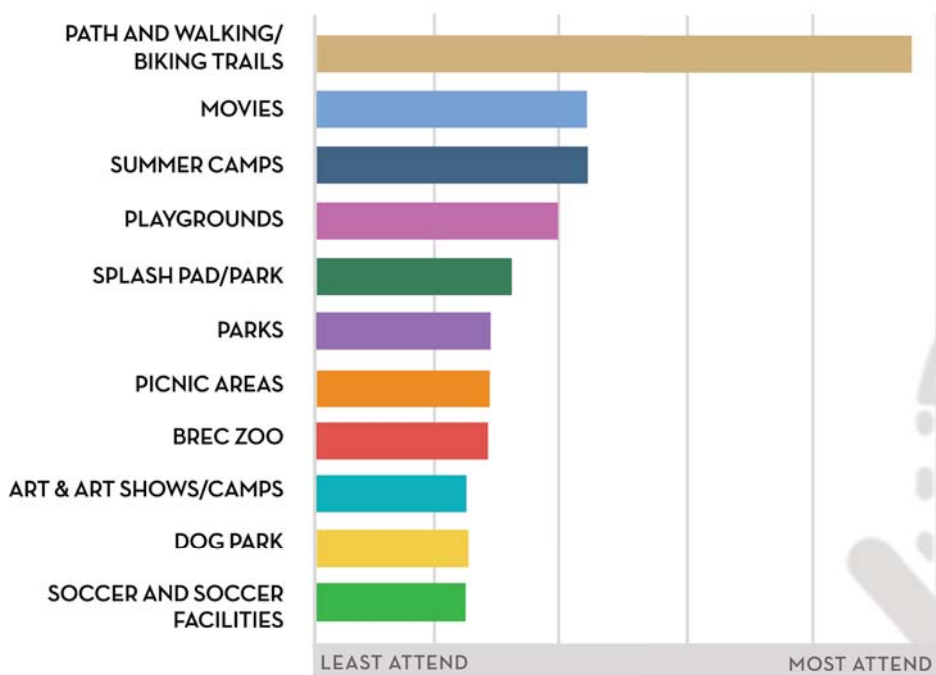
**Q4. Name three BREC facilities that you use the most.**

When survey respondents were asked to name three BREC facilities that they use the most, the Highland Road Community Park ranked highest, followed by Forest Community Park and Independence Community Park. The second tier of priorities included North Sherwood Forest Community Park, City-Brooks Community Park and Perkins Road Community Park. Also mentioned were Greenwood Community Park, Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, BREC Zoo and Goodwood Park.



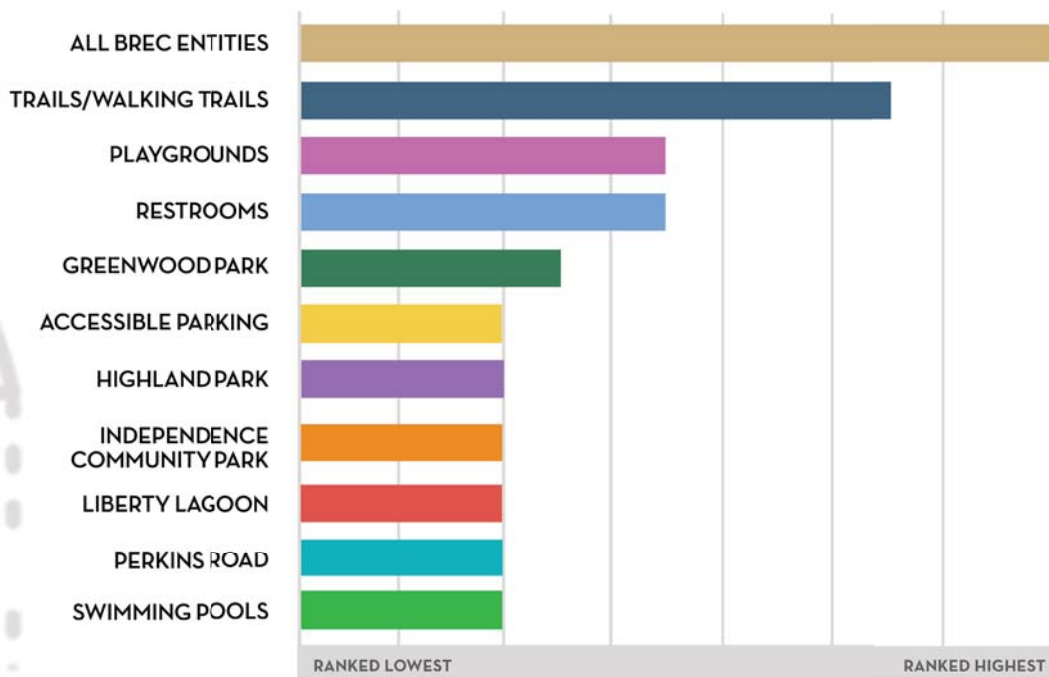
**Q5. Name three BREC programs/services/events that you use/attend the most.**

Survey respondents indicated that paths and walking/biking trails were used most by them by a large margin, followed by movies, summer camps, and playgrounds. Almost mentioned were the splash pads and park, BREC Zoo, picnic areas, parks in general, art shows and camps, soccer facilities and the dog parks.



**Q6. Please list any facility, park or program that you feel should be made more accessible for people of all abilities.**

Survey respondents expressed a strong desire for all BREC facilities to be made more accessible, with trails and walking paths their top facilities, followed by restrooms, playgrounds and restrooms. Other facilities named were Greenwood Park, Highland Road Community Park, Independence Community Park, Liberty Lagoon, Perkins Road Community Park and the swimming pools.



# GENERAL COMMENTS PROVIDED AT OPEN HOUSE #1, ON-SITE INTERVIEWS AND ONLINE SURVEYS

Comments received at the Open House are in black text, those received at the Independence Park/Main Library are in green text, ■ - those from the online survey are in blue. ■

## BLIND/VISUALLY IMPAIRED NEEDS

*“Available assistance for the blind”*

*“Well-marked restrooms – English, Braille, Drawing”*

*“Braille on every sign”*

*“Signage – audible and otherwise”*

*“Better wayfinding signs at trails”*

*“Audible ped-push buttons”*

*“Zoo – something tactile to touch to give feel for animals if can’t see them”*

*“City Park open area at Picnic Hill – visual impairment safety issues, platform no barriers to protect”*

## DEAF/HEARING IMPAIRED NEEDS

*“Closed Captioned Shows”*

*“Sports facilities – Closed captioned”*

*“Zoo – guided tour (zookeeper – private tour or headphones)”*

*“Accessible community for HOH and Deaf: videophone access, tablets (Apple) if need to share info and no interpreter is available; sign language interpreters for public events”*

*“Make facilities deaf friendly with LED display banner if specific place uses a P.A. system or TV’s with closed captions turned on at all times”*

*“P.A. system accessible by using LED screen/sign-language interpreter”*

*“Plan to organize Deaf group (i.e. adult education) together”*

*“Sign language interpreters available”*

## LANGUAGE

*“Bilingual brochures and interpreters”*

*“Language interpreters for programs”*

## PLAYGROUND NEEDS

*“Tactile map of park/playground – tactile difference in play surface to guide to entrance/exit”*

*“Playground equipment for all abilities and ages – an example is FitLot in New Orleans”*

*“Foam under all playground equipment – no mulch, rocks, barriers around equipment”*

*“Inclusive playgrounds – need more”*

## AQUATIC NEEDS

*“More inclusive sports programming, aquatics especially”*

*“Pool lifts and adaptive equipment”*

*“Hot tubs that are accessible”*

*“Provide a smooth entry option to all areas (for example, Highland Splash Pad is surrounded with pavers and wheels get stuck!”*

*“Jefferson Highway – would like that pool ADA”*

*“Accessible slides, features at Liberty Lagoon for wheelchairs”*

### **“Swimming Pool”**

***“There should be more locations like Liberty Lagoon. I have visited several other parks within neighborhoods that have nice grassy relaxing spaces but they are not easily located nor do they have adequate lighting or signage. Please take a look at the park models in Gwinnett County GA. The middle schooler’s and teen’s must have a place to go that is nice.”***

## WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

*“Low impact exercise classes done in wheelchair/walker”*

*“Access to Indoor Tennis Courts at Independence – Wheelchair tennis can’t fit through door.”*

*“Wheelchair access to Independence Theatre without going outside.”*

*"I can think of one thing that is likely not doable until/unless the tennis courts are reworked at Highland Park ... but there are courts along the back side (#12-15) that are built up from the sidewalk, and those courts are difficult to access or wheelchair players without significant help. When we host our October "Hallowheel" tournament, which includes Up-Down wheelchair/able bodied tennis doubles, we cannot use those courts because of their height difference." Submitted via email by Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association.)*

***"All parks should have a wheelchair swing and adapted equipment to facilitate exercise and enjoyment of the outdoors for our students."***

***"I would love to see more accessible, clean bathroom facilities (Spanish Town park and Bluebonnet swamp could both use this). Also, I know there's construction, but the set up at the swamp last time we went was impossible. Walking in thick, sticky mud around in circles just to get to the trail was ridiculous. We haven't been back recently."***

***"I have a 400 pound motorized wheel chair. I avoid gravel. I'm not saying get rid of the gravel, but please make sure you also have concrete or very packed walk ways."***

***"Hard to roll grandparent's wheel chairs and walkers to watch soccer games."***

***"I would love to see wheelchair swings at the playgrounds. That would be a huge draw to those of us that have kids in wheelchairs that can't quite use the handicap swings."***

***"Highland Road Park playground accessibility of City Park (limited convenient parking for people with disabilities)"***

## **TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING NEEDS**

*"Highland Road/Perkins Road – Bus stops"*

*"Transportation – Ride share, Uber"*

*"Wheelchair events @ locations that are accessible by CATS public transportation not at locations that are not"*

*"Don't set up events, activities and tents in accessible parking"*

*"Coordinate programs for people with disabilities with local bus routes"*

*"Parking so elderly who bring children don't need to walk far"*

*"Paved, covered and nearby parking for people in wheelchairs, etc. to load and unload"*

*"Zoo accessible by public transportation/CATS"*

*"Increased access by public transportation/CATS to all BREC facilities"*

*“Paved, covered and nearby parking for people in wheelchairs, etc. to load and unload.”*

***“Parking at Main Library not very accessible; too far for handicapped.”***

***“Don’t use any - have to take city bus and the ones with water cannot get there by bus or are not free.”***

***“At this time none. No transportation, but I hear Sherwood is good. For the grandchildren I really liked Howell Park.”***

## **SHADE**

*“More pavilions for shade at parks”*

*“Shade! Provide shade, e.g. pavilions”*

*“Shaded areas”*

## **SIDEWALK NEEDS**

*“Sidewalks and curb ramps”*

*“More sidewalks”*

*“Sidewalks to parks”*

*“Downtown sidewalks”*

*“Spanish Town – pedestrian improvements”*

*“LSU sidewalks”*

*“Jefferson Terrace Park – No accessible route”*

## **SENIOR NEEDS**

*“Arts and cultural activities during the day for older adults, caregivers, individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, acquired brain injury, stroke, head injury survivors, etc.”*

*“My Dream: An elder park with shaded areas for trails, spots for Tai Chi exercises, pavilions, inside space for health and wellness activities, walking paths around water.”*

*“Seniors/adults usually care about: crafts, health and wellness, kids’ adventure”*

*“Activities for adults who are older, or acquired brain injury, lower cognitive ability.”*

■ OPEN HOUSE

■ INDEPENDENCE PARK/MAIN LIBRARY

■ ONLINE SURVEY



## MARKETING/PROMOTION

*“Marketing inclusive and adaptive programming (to) therapists (pediatric)”*

*“Everything should be promoted more. Great services, need to get out to ALL of community”*

*“BREC to host a “Fair” to showcase different programs, resources”*

*“Funding to provide support staff (aides) in Children’s programs (esp. camp)”*

## INCLUSION/COLLABORATION

*“Strengthen Inclusive Recreation Network”*

*“Inclusion Network – ask Katrina”*

*“Include people with disabilities in the development of the plan so that feedback is received. Involve them in the decision-making”*

*“Better collaborative effort with other public (i.e. LAHSD) and private recreation interest stakeholders.”*

***“Recommendation to work with other organizations. If you’re just doing compliance, then piss off – we need programs. Recommend start with three sports – get coaches then recruit. Get LSU Kinesiology Department involved. In this town, things get done at the City Club, old money. In this town, there are pockets between different organizations...but we’re not together BREC has to be part of Adaptive Sports.”***

***“Adaptive Sports! Go to Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital. Says, we don’t go to BREC, we go elsewhere. We want Wheelchair Basketball; Endeavor Games – staff should attend. They have got to have the empathy to do this stuff and I haven’t found that at BREC. It is my dream to have a local adaptive cycling team. Go to Iowa Adaptive Sports. Exercise and sports improve quality of life – higher levels of depression for amputees and more opportunities would be great. Contact Nashville Blade Runners – Mike Boon, Adaptive Sports Iowa.”***

## MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

*“Event Space and Meeting Rooms availability and accessibility”*

*“ADA Signage at all Restrooms (Pictures)”*

*“Need accessible telescope at Highland Road Park Observatory; needs to be fixed and then BREC needs to market that because there are not many in the country”*

*“Quiet rooms at BREC facilities for people on autism spectrum and PTSD”*

*“Bring Karate back to Sherwood Park”*

■ OPEN HOUSE

■ INDEPENDENCE PARK/MAIN LIBRARY

■ ONLINE SURVEY

*“Only 3 fitness facilities – need more”*

***“Concrete trails and routes; more security at trails”***

***“I don’t have any specific recommendations, I think BREC has done a pretty good job.”***

***“When you are on disability cost matters”***

***“Unable to use because they don’t cater to disabilities”***

***“The cost along with the fact if the child needs assistance you have to pay for camp and send a helper. Parents of special needs kids are already stressed out and financially strapped. Also, more events that cater to differently-abled children and teens”***

***“More lights, change colors that will not overwhelm autistic children/adults, captioned on all TV and videos, no steps or stairs.”***

***“Each park should have something ALL kids can do, Not one special place. One could focus on adaptability, but also be designed for ALL children. One family I know posted the following on Facebook...If my kid was a dog, he’d have a park where he can play! Pretty telling.”***

***“I’m not sure I have a good answer. I would say splash pads but they feel rather accessible. I’m coming from a lack of disability so I’m not the most knowledgeable on how accessible they feel.”***

***“All children can reach the playgrounds I listed but the playground equipment itself isn’t accessible. There isn’t anything for the children with mobility challenges to do once they reach the playground.”***

***“Drusilla needs to be accessible for online sign-up for classes. It’s very confusing that it’s listed for online sign up - but actually isn’t. Also requiring money orders written to cash for \$50 for the dance costume seems REALLY SKETCHY and extremely expensive!!!”***

***“From what I’ve seen, BREC does a fantastic job with that.”***

***“Wish Ardenwood would have equipment better suited for persons of all abilities!!!”***

***“Harrell’s Ferry has been updated and should remain in great condition - this park has been used and enjoyed for decades by local residents. More parks like this one should be available city-wide.”***

***“BRSC Soccer Complex could use bathroom improvements and regular attention to restocking the bathrooms. Besides this, I appreciate all the diversity of the various parks; hence why we use so many of the parks depending on our interests for the day/month/age of our kids. I believe BREC is serving as a great resource within our community.”***

# GENERAL COMMENTS PROVIDED AT OPEN HOUSE #2

Public Open House #2 was held on Tuesday, September 18th from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at the BREC Headquarters Building at 6201 Florida Boulevard in Baton Rouge. This open house was promoted through a variety of communications vehicles including: press releases, flyers at public libraries and BREC facilities, social media posts, emails and phone calls to those who participated in the first round of public outreach, and several rounds of emails and flyers sent to the stakeholders database developed for the project. 13 individuals attended Open House #2, while stakeholders representing organizations who enthusiastically participated in Open House #1 and/or promoted the online survey to constituents reported during outreach efforts that they were satisfied with earlier opportunities to provide input and trusted BREC to use the suggestions they provided appropriately.

For Public Open House #2, the team prepared several large-format colorful display boards which served several purposes to inform the public about: **1) the top 10 BREC facilities that host the most activities; 2) the Priority Matrix based on federal ADA recommendations and local public input; 3) Sample violations determined from the project team’s inspections; 4) the results of the survey and public input from Open House #1.**

**Additional comments and suggestions provided by those attending were:**

## **BLIND/VISUALLY IMPAIRED NEEDS**

*“Look into audible signage – RAIS (remote audible infrared signage)”*

*“Descriptive signage should be audible or tactile, such as Bluebonnet Swamp, Zoo”*

*“Need more truncated domes and tactile warnings”*

## **PLAYGROUND/PLAYROOM NEEDS**

*“Exercise trails around playgrounds so parents can watch kids while they exercise”*

*“Indoor play rooms like Womack, but make accessible”*

## **WHEELCHAIR ACCESS**

*“Low basketball hoops”*

*“Curb ramps and slopes; drop-offs at sidewalks and trails”*

*“Pay attention to trails, need accessibility”*

## **SENSORY NEEDS**

*“Texture / sensory wall for kids”*

*“Independence Park has a sensory garden that is great”*

## **FITNESS STATIONS**

*“Include rails or rest stops along trails so people can sit or lean”*

*“Fitness stations along trails”*

## **INCLUSION**

*“Partner with Able Academy”*

*“Program guide that lists camps that are inclusive; aide can attend”*

*“Pay attention to demographics in view of minorities and wealth; socio-economics”*

*“All-inclusive parks with fencing”*

*“Socio-economic dispersion is important”*

*“More inclusive runs”*

## **BREC**

*“BREC is a good thing for the community”*

*“Show a sample location and what it would look like once ADA compliant”*