The Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules

The Active Communities Tool (ACT): An Action Planning Guide and Assessment Modules to Improve Community Built Environments to Promote Physical Activity

https:www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/community-strategies/active-communities-tool

MODULE 5:

PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

» This module assess the plans, policies, environments, and resources for park and recreational facility access.

» Note: Due to the focus of the Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules, the Parks and Recreational Facilities Module covers the plans, policies, environments, and resources for park and recreational facility access. The quality of the park or programming available in the park and recreational facility are not addressed. These are important factors to consider, but are beyond the scope of this tool.

» Who should be involved – technical experts with knowledge of the community's parks and recreation and planning policies, plans, and resources; specifically experts in parks and recreation and planning.

» Approximate time to complete – 40 minutes.

Community/ Municipality: _____

Term	Definition
Comprehensive plan	The adopted official statement of a governing body of a local government that sets forth (in words, maps, illustrations, and/or tables) goals, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social, and economic development that occurs within its planning jurisdiction and that includes a unified physical design for the public and private development of land.
Connectors	A short road, path, trail or sidewalk that connects an area to park and recreation facilities.
Dwelling units	A structure or part of a structure that is used as a home, residence or sleeping place by one person who maintains a household or by two or more persons who maintain a common household.
Health disparities	Particular types of health differences closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health and/or a clean environment based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.
Health equity	When everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.
Open space	Any open piece of land that is undeveloped (has no buildings or other built structures) and is accessible to the public. It can include green space (land that is partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation.
Open streets	Initiatives or programs that temporarily open streets to people by closing them to automobile traffic. Also referred to as ciclovias.
Park	Delineated open space areas, with significant vegetation and/or water, and generally reserved for public use. Parks can refer to public parks, beaches, lakes, swimming pools, boardwalks, playgrounds, recreation centers, and sports fields.

Please answer these questions based on the community/municipality selected.

PLANS & POLICIES

The **Plans** referred to in this module are those written and adopted by a local or regional authority. Plans can stand alone (e.g., Park Master Plan, Open Space Plan) or be part of a Comprehensive Plan (e.g., Master Plan, General Plan). "Plan" is capitalized to indicate that it is a document adopted by a local or regional authority.

The **Policies** referred to in this module are those written and adopted by a local or regional authority. Policies include local ordinances (including zoning regulations, subdivision ordinances, street design guidelines, etc.) which are passed by local or regional governing authorities, such as a city council or board of commissioners.

5.1 Does your state have planning or policy guidance/requirements that affect local or regional products or processes related to parks and recreational facilities?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.2 **In the community, is maintenance, repair, and upgrade of existing parks and recreation facilities facilitated through a Plan?**

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 0–<5 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 5–<10 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 10 or more years ago

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.3 **In the community, is maintenance, repair, and upgrade of existing parks and recreation facilities facilitated through a policy?**

Yes, and the policy is routinely enforced

Yes, but the policy is not routinely enforced

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.4 **In the community, is development of new parks facilitated through a Plan?**

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 0–<5 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 5–<10 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 10 or more years ago

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.5 **In the community, is development of new parks facilitated through a Plan?**

Yes, and the policy is routinely enforced

Yes, but the policy is not routinely enforced

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.6 **In the community, is safety in parks facilitated through a Plan?**

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 0–<5 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 5–<10 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 10 or more years ago

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.7 In the community, is safety in parks facilitated through a policy?

Yes, and the policy is routinely enforced

Yes, but the policy is not routinely enforced

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.8 In the community, is preservation of open space and protected green infrastructure (e.g., land, water supply, farms, forests, viable wildlife habitats, etc.) facilitated through a Plan?

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 0–<5 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 5–<10 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 10 or more years ago

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.9 In the community, is preservation of open space and protected green infrastructure (e.g., land, water supply, farms, forests, viable wildlife habitats, etc.) facilitated through a policy?

Yes, and the policy is routinely enforced

Yes, but the policy is not routinely enforced

No

Not applicable

Don't know

PLANS

5.10 Does the community have a Park Master Plan focused on the park system?

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 0–<5 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 5–<10 years ago

Yes, and the Plan was adopted 10 or more years ago

No → skip to #5.13

Not applicable → skip to #5.13

Don't know → skip to #5.13

5.11 In the past year, how often was this Plan consulted when making relevant decisions?

Always

Usually

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Not applicable

Don't know

5.12 In the past year, were any of the park system goals or priorities specified in this Plan accomplished?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

The next question refers to health equity and health disparities. Health equity is when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Health disparities are particular types of health differences closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health and/or a clean environment based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

5.13 During the planning process for parks and recreation facilities, does local government or its consultants try to engage individuals experiencing greater obstacles to health or who may be hard to contact?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

POLICIES

5.14 Does the community have a policy that publicly accessible parks, squares, or plazas be located within a certain distance of all residents?

Yes

No → skip to #5.16

Not applicable → skip to #5.16

Don't know → skip to #5.16

5.15 What is the distance between residents and publicly accessible parks, squares, or plazas according to this policy?

0.25 miles or closer

0.5 miles or closer

0.75 miles or closer

1.0 miles or closer

Other: _____

Not applicable

Don't know

5.16 Park siting

Does the siting of parks:	Yes	Sometimes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Whether residents can access the park easily by walking or bicycling?					
b. Existing or planned shared-use paths, trails, and sidewalks to enhance connectivity to the park?					

5.17 Building of parks, open space, paths, and connectors

Does the community have a policy that requires or suggests the building of parks, opens space, paths and connectors in:	Requires	Suggests	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Residential developments?					
b. Commercial developments?					
c. Any redevelopment?					

5.18 The community maintains parks through

a. A scheduled process?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

b. Routine inspections?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

c. At citizen's request?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

d. Other?

Please describe: _____

ENVIRONMENT

The next questions ask about the built environment infrastructure in the community.

5.19 In the last 5 years, has the community permanently closed a park?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.20 How many parks are in the community?

_____ parks

Not applicable – no parks in the community → skip to #5.27

Don't know

5.21 Publicly owned park land

How many acres of public owned park land are owned by the community that are:	# Acres	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Intentionally developed and used as park space?			
b. Undeveloped uses (e.g., no parking, not yet developed for visitors)?			

5.22 Is the usability of park facilities assessed in the community? This could be by governmental employee(s), such as parks and recreation employees, or by community groups. Useable refers to everything necessary for use is present and nothing prevents use (e.g., sidewalks are passable, not locked/fenced, and available for activity).

Yes

No → skip to #5.26

Not applicable → skip to #5.26

Don't know → skip to #5.26

5.23 Usability of park facilities

Does the community's criteria for assessing the usability of park facilities include	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Don't Know
a. Entrances are on all sides of the park?				
b. Park entrances accommodate pedestrians and bicycles?				
c. Sidewalks exist in and around the park?				
d. Sidewalks in and around the park are well maintained?				
e. Park is not locked during daylight hours?				

5.24 Is the assessment used to improve access to park facilities in the community?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.25 What percentage of the parks in your community would you consider useable based on characteristics listed in Question 5.23?

_____%

Not applicable

Don't know

5.26 What percent of dwelling units in the community are located within 0.25 miles of a public park and/or a public recreational facility?

_____%

Not applicable

Don't know

5.27 Does the community close streets to allow residents to use roadways for walking, bicycling, and other physical activities? These events may be referred to as "open streets" or "ciclovias."

Yes, routinely

Yes, occasionally

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.28 Is there a map of the community's parks and recreational areas available to the public? (Include maps developed for the community; do not include web-based maps such as Google Maps.)

Yes

No, and a map is in development

No, and there is no map in development

Not applicable

Don't know

5.29 In the last year, was the quality of park facilities assessed in the community? Park quality refers to things that make a park comfortable and safe for the community to use including but not limited to restrooms, drinking fountains, lights, trash cans, aesthetic features, etc. This could be by governmental employee(s), such as parks and recreation employees, or by community groups.

Yes

No → skip to #5.31

Not applicable → skip to #5.31

Don't know → skip to #5.31

5.30 Was the assessment used to improve the quality of park facilities in the community?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.31 Does the community collect data on park use (e.g., counting park users)?

Yes → describe: _____

No → skip to #5.30

Not applicable → skip to #5.30

Don't know → skip to #5.30

5.32 Does the community have an ongoing assessment program to count park users?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.33 Does the community use the data collected to improve equity among populations experiencing disparities?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

RESOURCES

The next questions ask about resources to support plans, policies, and built environments that impact physical activity in and around parks.

5.34 Does the community have a policy that requires parks, open spaces, paths, etc. to be included in new development projects?

Yes

No → skip to #5.37

Not applicable → skip to #5.37

Don't know → skip to #5.37

5.35 Does the community offer developers the opportunity to pay a fee instead to cover expenses for new parks, open spaces, paths, etc. elsewhere in the community as a substitute for creating those spaces in their new projects?

Yes

No → skip to #5.37

Not applicable → skip to #5.37

Don't know → skip to #5.37

5.36 What is the fee structure or rate?

Fee structure: ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

Not applicable

Don't know

5.37 Are there incentives to developers or landowners (e.g., open space design, density bonuses, storm water credits, or lower property tax rates) to conserve non-regulated land?

Yes → describe: ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.38 Funding resources

Does the community have identified funding resources to:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Maintain and repair existing park and recreation facilities?				
b. Develop new park and recreation facilities?				

The next questions ask about programs or groups in the community that help support, maintain, or promote safety in parks.

5.39 Does the community have an Adopt-A-Parks or similar program that supports resident participation in maintaining parks or promoting safety in parks?

Yes → describe: ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

No → skip to #5.41

Not applicable → skip to #5.41

Don't know → skip to #5.41

5.40 Approximately what proportion of parks in the community has an active resident group that participates in maintaining parks or promoting safety in the park(s)?

⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ %

Not applicable

Don't know

5.41 In the past year, has a local business or non-profit organization partnered with any of the parks in the community to improve the park or increase its use (e.g., maintaining parks, supporting programs or events in parks)?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

5.42 Does the community have a partnership, coalition, or advisory board tasked with advising on parks and open spaces?

Yes

No → End of Module 5

Not applicable → End of Module 5

Don't know → End of Module 5

5.43 Partnership, coalition or advisory board tasked with advising on parks and open spaces

Does the group:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Meet at least quarterly?				
b. Have a public health representative?				
c. Have a planning and/or transportation representative?				
d. Include elected officials?				
e. Have paid staff support to coordinate the meetings?				
f. Have a budget?				
g. Conduct assessments of park and recreation facilities in the community (e.g., quality assessment, mapping of facilities)?				
h. Intentionally address equity?				
i. Have representation by residents with greater obstacles to health in the community?				
j. Have a long-term strategic or sustainability plan?				
k. Conduct an evaluation to assess progress toward meeting goals/objectives?				

Reset MODULE 5   CAUTION: This will clear and reset Module 5.

Notes