

Rainbow Beach Park 2015 Survey Summary Report sponsored by Rainbow Beach Park Advisory Council

The Rainbow Beach Park user survey was created by members of the Rainbow Beach Park Advisory Council to better understand the needs of park users. The [RBP 2015 survey](#) was distributed via email and social media in early 2015. Paper copies were also available in the Rainbow Beach Park fieldhouse and users were encouraged by park staff to complete a survey.

We asked users how they used the park and what improvements they wanted to see. Respondents ranked their satisfaction on several issues and were invited to expand on their opinions in a comments section.

55 responses were recorded. The raw data are not publicly available because they contain personal information, but the [survey response analytics](#) are available. [Comments were compiled](#) and organized somewhat into topic categories. We hope the CPD will take these suggestions seriously.

Demographics

All respondents had visited the park at least once. While some visitors are infrequent, more than 10% visit every day and 20% visit in all seasons of the year, not just summertime.

From the list of activities in the survey (“How do you and your family use Rainbow Beach Park?”), the most popular were running/walking (for which 47.3% of respondents use the park), nature area (40%), recreation (37.4%), events (32.7%), and fitness (27.3%).

Topics people care most about (lowest % no opinion)

Of the topics listed in Question 4 (“Please rate your satisfaction in the following...”), the topics that seemed most important to respondents, as indicated by a low proportion of “no opinion” responses, were condition of walking paths, condition of landscaping and park cleanliness. In these most important topics, respondents were consistently dissatisfied (~30% dissatisfied with each of these issues, some of the highest levels in the survey).

- *Walking paths:*
 - The park needs better light along the walkways
 - Walking paths are in poor condition and flood.
 - The path all along the front of beach by the sea wall needs to be repaired and resurfaced.
 - All of the walkways / paths should be re-paved. In the winter, a BETTER job of plowing / salting the paths / walkways. Better drainage so the paths and walkways don't flood so much when it rains
- *Landscaping*
 - The bushes need trimming, the weeds need to be pulled and the sidewalk need to be swept. Some new trees need to be planted.
 - The evergreen garden near Cheltenham Place needs to have all the invasive trees and shrubs removed. It could be a beautiful spot but the landscapers don't seem to know what they're doing or else they just don't care.
 - Litter is sometimes a problem. Bushes near walking paths need to be trimmed, as they threaten to poke passing folks in the eye, or scratch a face
- *Park cleanliness*

- Rainbow beach is not very well taken care of by the Park district especially on the 75th street side. The sand is just piled up all in the street. The area where the buses turned around need to be cleaned of all the sand and trash
- I also don't like the amount of trash and debris around the ground.
- I would like a cleaner park, plenty of trash cans and someone frequently making sure trash is picked up and disposed.
- Cleaner sand.
- Cleanup could be better. Lots of bottles under bushes that never get cleaned up.

Outdoor activities are important

While respondents thought there was ample space for activities, they indicated that they wanted outdoor spaces that are more conducive to use—there were requests to improve the condition and accessibility of these spaces and better promote their use through events (e.g. Summerdance, movies in the park, outdoor fitness groups, social events).

Safety and accessibility

The topics of safety and accessibility garnered lots of comments, with mixed responses. Some respondents felt safe in the park, while others commented that safety and accessibility in fact prevented them from using the park.

- Safety:
 - I'd like to see better, more visible security, the grounds kept up better, especially holes in the ground filled in (I've nearly twisted my ankle in them),
 - Walking path need mile markers and better lighting. There also needs to be more police on the paths.
 - I have lived on the edge of Rainbow Park for thirty years. We no longer feel safe walking in the park. People allow their dogs to run unleashed. They don't pick up their droppings! There should be signage for dog owners re: these laws. There isn't sufficient lighting at the entrance on 79th and Southshore. It's pitch black in the evening.
 - I have to walk through the grass with my dogs where there's always a lot of broken glass
 - I am concerned about safety.
- Accessibility:
 - It's difficult to access the park except by driving in from the south. Biking through the park is also a challenge because of poor and non-connecting paths, sand dunes, flooding, lack of curb cuts, etc
 - Barriers to entering and leaving park.
 - Just want to enjoy a clean safe park. Don't like the parking meters.
 - Parking meters need to be removed. What happened to the "open, FREE and clear" concept? Why do we need them when Calumet Park doesn't?
 - I also have a general issue with paying for parking at the park since my taxes already pay for the park then I have to pay again to use it.
 - Also, for those who do not have a car, the distance is too far for seniors to walk. Accessibility for senior is poor.
 - I would use the workout room with the exercise machines if it was open so that working people could use it, like until 9pm some nights.
 - Lack of biking access and rack parking storage keeps me from using the park
 - the [traffic] light to the entrance from 79th Street need to be fixed for leaving the park- it is too long.
 - Fewer barriers!

Topics of less importance (highest % no opinion)

Of the topics listed in Question 4 (“Please rate your satisfaction in the following...”), the least important to respondents, as indicated by a high proportion of “no opinion” responses, were kids programs (60%), fitness programs (45.5%), and adult programs (43.6% “no opinion”). However, of those who had an opinion, more than half were not satisfied with the adult programs offered.

- *Adult programs offered:*

- There should be more activities for adults. Yoga etc.
- Need senior activity.
- There are no classes for adults like yoga.
- More senior citizen programs such as knitting, crochet and chair exercises
- Early access to the gym to walk for seniors.
- Physical activities with supervision for sixty (60years and above)
- Art and Dance classes

Communication

Not surprisingly, since the survey was primarily distributed electronically, the majority of respondents wanted to be notified of events and news via email, indicating an important role for the PAC to distribute information to users. A non-negligible proportion of respondents also wanted information to be announcement in the park itself, either in the Field House, or in information kiosks.

Conclusions

Nearly all respondents wanted to attend events in the future (more than 90%) and the majority of respondents were interested in attending PAC meetings. A large proportion of respondents had a special interested or experience in event planning, community outreach, and fundraising. There seems to be a critical mass of park users who are ready to get involved and make a difference in the RBP! The Park District and PAC should leverage this enthusiasm to mobilize users to improve the park.

Finally, a few comments that seemed to capture the spirit of many of the users: respondents think the park has great potential and want to be involved, but feel it has been neglected in many areas.

“Rainbow beach is an beautiful park that isn't being utilized to it's full potential... The space, privacy, and beach is an ideal place for many summer activities for the youth... Yet instead, it is dangerous in the summer months due to irresponsible adults overtaking the park with overly parked cars of weed smoking, drinking, violence, ect...”

“I don't feel safe anymore when we go to the park, the park district has not made it accessible to be in the park, not clean, no security present and to use the park district facilities it very expensive, the park need a lot of improvement and a total Reconnection with the community and the residents. Also more programs for the senior population in the area and special needs community accessibility.”

“The entire park could use a serious overall of outdoor benches, beach game equipment, outdoor security, meditation places, and better, wider walking paths. It's could be more colorful, get some local artists to work with you on both the exterior grounds and interior of the park. Where are our opportunity to rent cabanas and lounge chaises like other beaches on the north shore? Can we have a few movies in the park, concerts and intentional programs that would attract community residents? A labyrinth to walk on would be awesome as well.”