

## Bastrop County Open Space Master Plan Update September Public Meetings Summary

Bastrop County and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program hosted two digital public meetings in late September 2020 to gather public feedback that will guide the update of the Bastrop County Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The first meeting was held on Wednesday, September 23 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, and the second on Thursday, September 24 from 2:30 to 4:30 pm.

The meetings included attendees from Bastrop County, Bastrop County Cares, Texas AgriLife, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Pines and Prairies Land Trust, as well as residents of Bastrop, Cedar Creek, Double Eagle Ranch, Elgin

The first hour of the meetings consisted of a presentation reviewing the current conditions of Bastrop County parks and the master plan update process. It included the following sections:

Section	Presenter
Welcome/Introductions	Gibran Lule (NPS) / County Judge Pape
State of the County Parks	Shawn Harris (Bastrop County)
Overview of 2001-2011 Master Plan	Julia Cleary (Bastrop County)
Overview of Master Plan Update Process	Julia Cleary (Bastrop County)
Survey Results	Sydney Garcia / Gibran Lule (NPS)
Green Infrastructure	Josh Tuck (NPS)
County Park System Interviews	Sydney Garcia (NPS)

The last hour of the meetings consisted of interactive sections, where attendees were encouraged to provide feedback through polling, written comments, and open discussion.

### Interactive / Feedback (60 min)

Item	Goal	Format
Master Plan Goals	Review eight goals for master plan update and poll attendees on their opinion of each.	Polling and open discussion
Project Ranking Criteria	Review sixteen project ranking criteria and poll attendees on their opinion on each.	Polling and open discussion
Potential Partners and Volunteer Organizations	Brainstorm additional community partners and organizations to consult for planning, volunteering, and implementation.	Facilitated brainstorm

## Master Plan Goals

Participants reviewed the eight goals proposed for the master plan update and voted on each. After voting, participants were able to share comments and propose changes through audio or the chat box.

### Goals:

- **Goal 1.** Parks and recreational facilities should be accessible to all county residents.
- **Goal 2.** Open spaces and natural habitats should be preserved for future generations.
- **Goal 3.** Public recreation should be integrated with all public services
- **Goal 4.** Public recreation should be coordinated with other community recreation providers to avoid duplication and promote innovation.
- **Goal 5.** Park planning should be coordinated with new development.
- **Goal 6.** Parks and recreational planning should be incorporated into tourism and economic development efforts.
- **Goal 7.** Parks and recreational programs must find ways to celebrate the variety of cultures within the community.
- **Goal 8.** Bastrop County needs to put appropriate organizational mechanisms in place to ensure the long term sustainability of the County Parks system.

### Voting options:

- a. Great
- b. Good, but could use some changes
- c. Needs major changes
- d. I don't like this goal at all

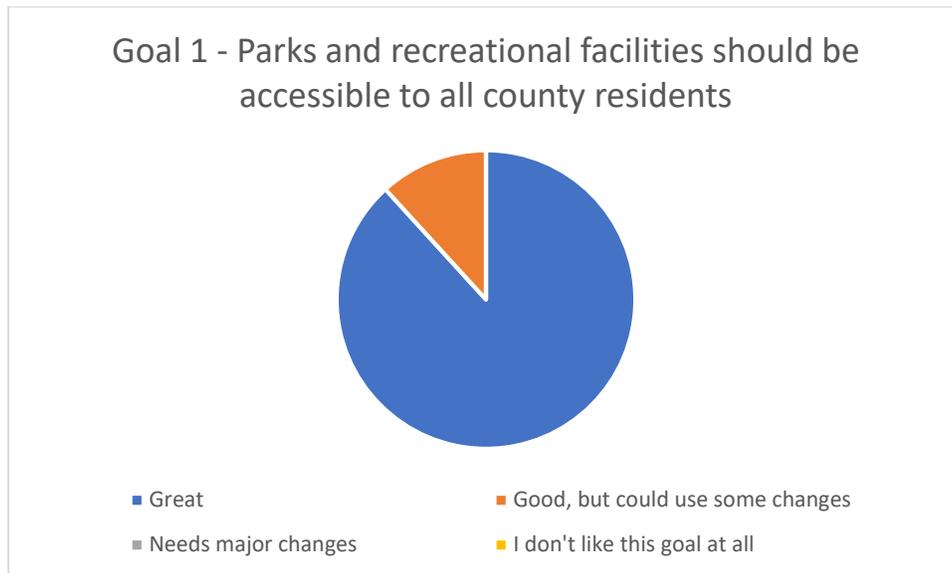
## Polling Results and Comments

### Goal 1.0

#### Parks and recreational facilities should be accessible to all county residents

- **Objective 1.1** All recreational facilities should be designed to provide access regardless of age, sex, income, cultural differences, location in the county, and handicap status.
- **Objective 1.2** Parks should be developed in tandem with incorporated communities so that existing resources can be leveraged to address the recreational deficiencies of rural residents
- **Objective 1.3** Parks planning should take into account population distribution and growth in the county so new parks can be placed where the population concentrations are the highest.
- **Objective 1.4** Where feasible, all parks should be equipped with sufficient supporting amenities such as bathrooms and accessible parking.

Goal 1 - Parks and recreational facilities should be accessible to all county residents	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	7	8	15	88.24%
Good, but could use some changes	2	0	2	11.76%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	9	8	17	



#### Comments:

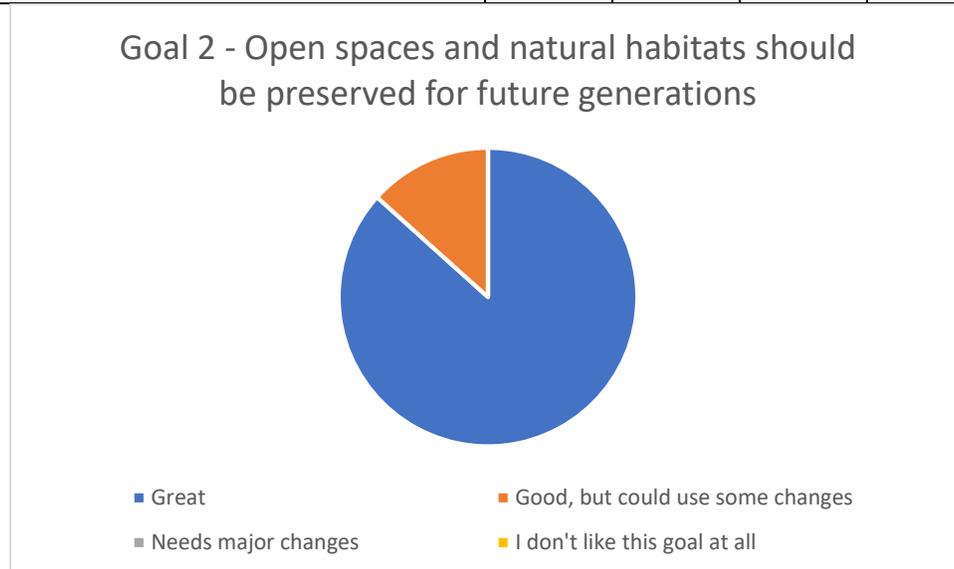
- Keep equity in mind

**Goal 2.0**

**Open spaces and natural habitats should be preserved for future generations.**

- **Objective 2.1** Parks should be integrated with the preservation of endangered species including, but not limited to, the Houston Toad and the Eastern Blue Jay.
- **Objective 2.2** Interpretive displays and other educational displays need to be incorporated with parks so that future generations do not lose the Bastrop legacy of its natural resources such as the Lost Pines.
- **Objective 2.3** Wetland and native species preservation should be considered during the acquisition and development of County Parks.

Goal 2 - Open spaces and natural habitats should be preserved for future generations	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	8	5	13	86.67%
Good, but could use some changes	1	1	2	13.33%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	9	6	15	



**Comments:**

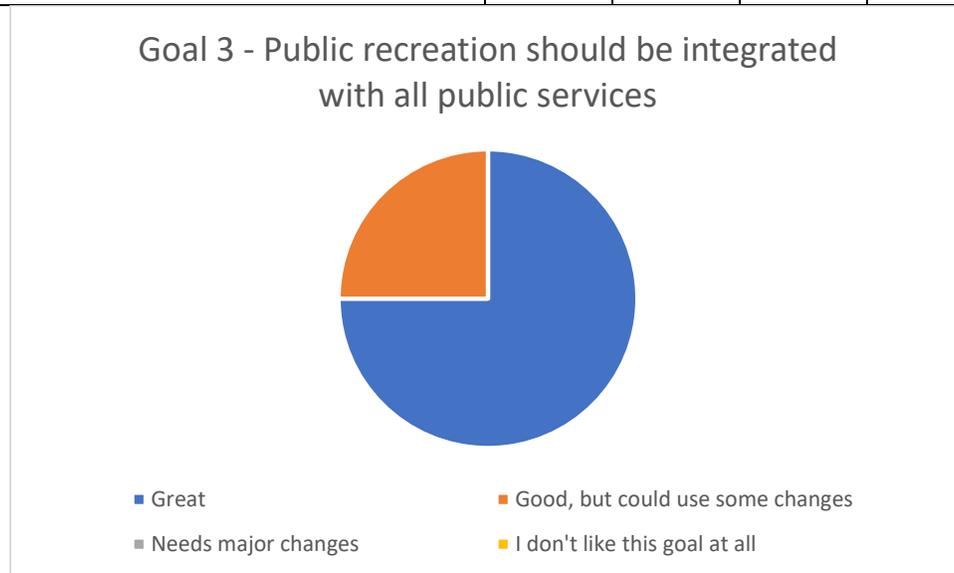
- Correction: eastern blue jay should be eastern bluebird
- Include other declining species like cougars, bobcats, armadillos
- Important to include environmental education in master plan
- 2.2 is the most important - interactive interpretive displays build a love of space in young children which starts their passion for nature early

**Goal 3.0**

**Public recreation should be integrated with all public services**

- **Objective 3.1** Park planning and management should be coordinated with the Sheriff’s Department to ensure the safety of existing and future parks.
- **Objective 3.2** All transportation programs need to be linked to facilitating access to future County Parks. Transportation services need to be considered for residents who live in outlying areas.
- **Objective 3.3** The County should promote active transportation by identifying sidewalk projects which will link existing parks to nearby neighborhoods.
- **Objective 3.4** The County should develop partnerships with existing recreation providers to provide programming opportunities

Goal 3 - Public recreation should be integrated with all public services	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	6	6	12	75.00%
Good, but could use some changes	3	1	4	25.00%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	9	7	16	



**Comments:**

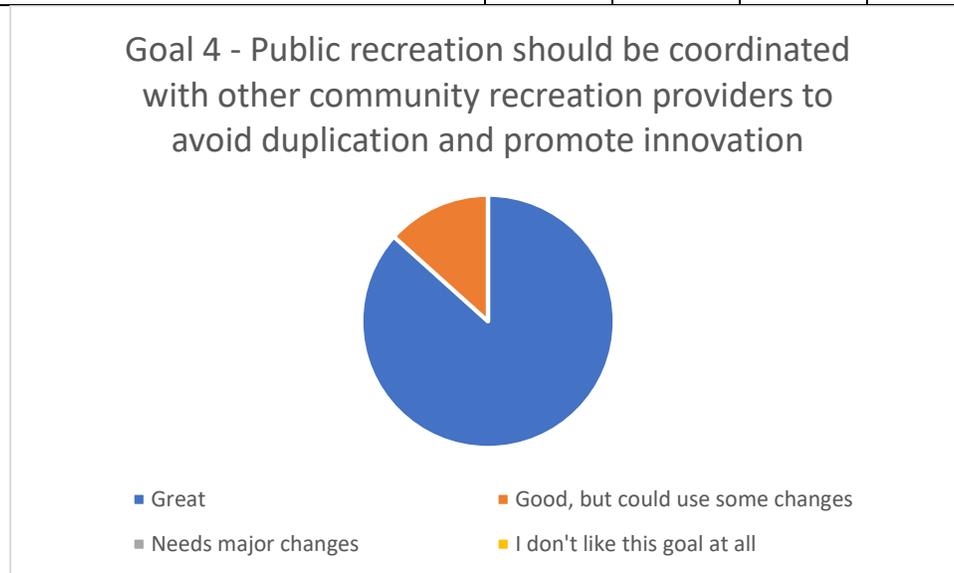
- Sidewalk construction is an expensive and difficult goal that may be unrealistic
- The majority of population in the county are closer to city parks than county parks currently
- Safety and security should come from within the community
  - community watch with leads
  - community mentors for previously incarcerated or at-risk groups
- Specify departments/organizations other than the sheriff’s department for security
- Ensure parks are a welcoming gathering space, not punitive places
- Include connections with Public Health officials or local Hospitals (ParksRx)
- Integration of bike signage and bike lanes

**Goal 4.0**

**Public recreation should be coordinated with other community recreation providers to avoid duplication and promote innovation**

- **Objective 4.1** With limited financial resources, the County needs to consider joint venturing with incorporated communities, school districts, State installations and other non-governmental community organizations so that their resources can be leveraged to provide recreational opportunities in the County.
- **Objective 4.2** The County should coordinate with other public entities to identify surplus land that can be used for park development

Goal 4 - Public recreation should be coordinated with other community recreation providers to avoid duplication and promote innovation	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	8	5	13	86.67%
Good, but could use some changes	0	2	2	13.33%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	



Comments:

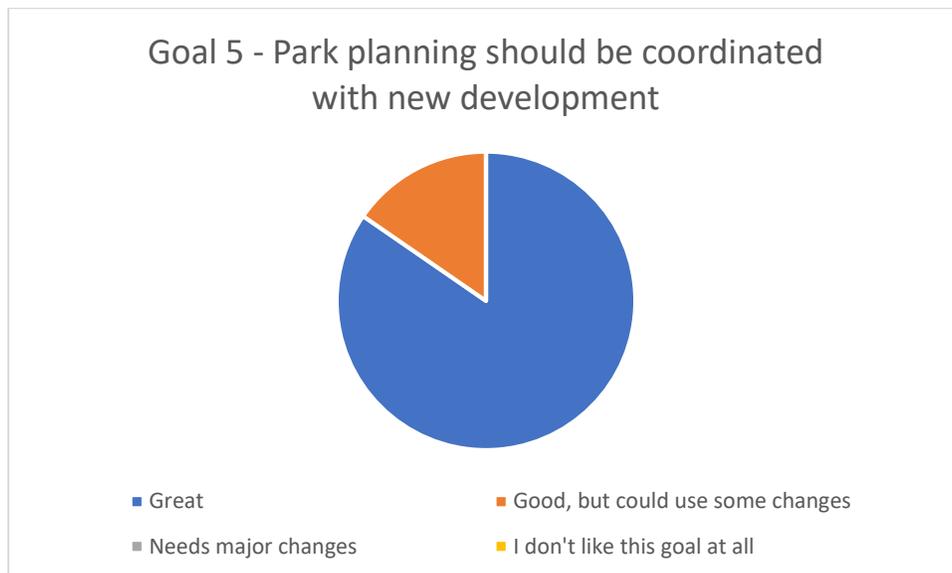
- Consider bike share system
- Not necessary to avoid duplication if it is serving community more fully

**Goal 5.0**

**Park planning should be coordinated with new development**

- **Objective 5.1** As appropriate, the County should collaborate with developers to provide for the recreational needs of the future residents. The County should be open to accepting appropriate park and open space dedication in new subdivision plats.
- **Objective 5.2** Flood plains make ideal locations for open space recreational activities – the County should consider park and open space opportunities in the floodplain when approving new subdivisions and when contemplating buyouts for flood mitigation purposes.
- **Objective 5.3** Not all parkland is created equal – the County should develop a “Parkland Acceptance Policy” that identifies the criteria for accepting new parkland into the County system which considers both the long term maintenance burden on the County and the potential benefits to the wider community.

Goal 5 - Park planning should be coordinated with new development	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	6	5	11	84.62%
Good, but could use some changes	0	2	2	15.38%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	6	7	13	



**Comments:**

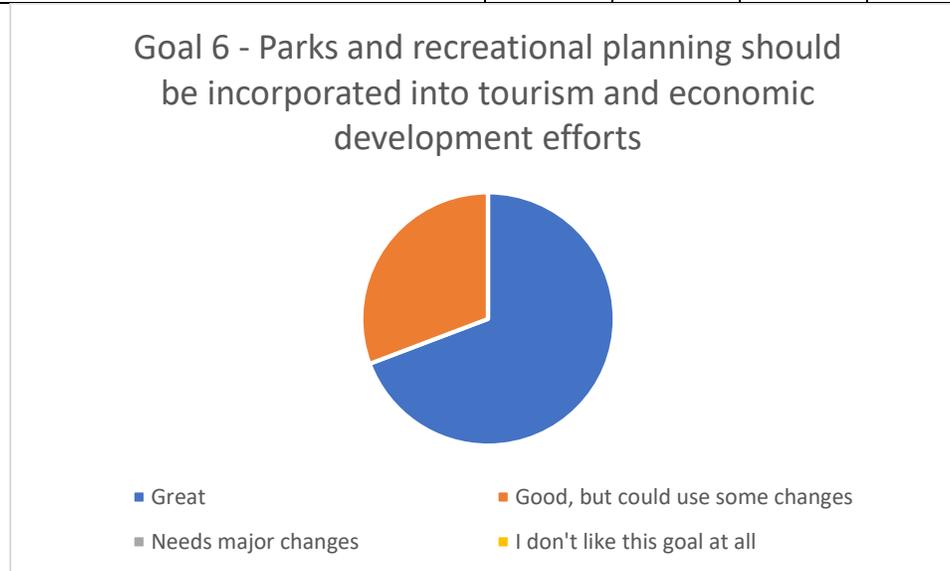
- County should be able to monitor where parks are developed and ensure they are open to community
- Should we consider staying outside of the floodplain to prevent increased maintenance costs due to flooding/climate change?
- There are low-impact, low-development uses for areas in floodplains compatible with and resilient to flood events
- 5.3 is very important – consider fees in lieu of land if it is an option

**Goal 6.0**

**Parks and recreational planning should be incorporated into tourism and economic development efforts.**

- **Objective 6.1** Parks and recreation facilities are economic development issues that affect a company or industry’s locational decisions – the County should partner with organizations that will promote activities in the park and attract visitors, and clearly market all of its parks to the public.
- **Objective 6.2** Broadband development is critical to the economic resiliency of unincorporated Bastrop County. County parks should provide Wi-Fi connectivity to the public.
- **Objective 6.3** Bastrop County Parks should enhance and maintain public access to, and stewardship of, the Colorado River.

Goal 6 - Parks and recreational planning should be incorporated into tourism and economic development efforts	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	6	3	9	69.23%
Good, but could use some changes	2	2	4	30.77%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	



**Comments:**

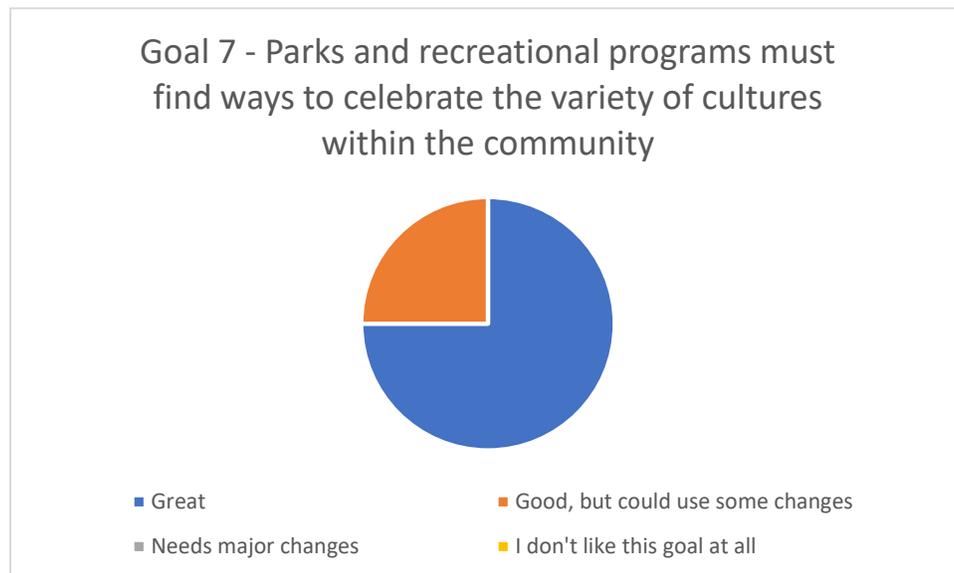
- Consider which parks have wi-fi (prioritize for parks in communities with limited internet connectivity, but reconsider in parks meant to remain natural or undeveloped)
- There is a group in Austin that focuses on wireless internet systems for parks. Should meet with them to see if systems can be used in Bastrop.
- Prioritize wireless internet connectivity as ten-year master plan should look to the future to remain relevant and it is a key utility for access and economic development.
- Wi-fi in the park would encourage families to visit parks more frequently and stay longer, while also allowing them to connect to nature discovery and citizen science apps

**Goal 7.0**

**Parks and recreational programs must find ways to celebrate the variety of cultures within the community.**

- **Objective 7.1** Parks need to be sensitive to the special contributions made by certain population groups in the county.
- **Objective 7.2** Special occasions or festivals that celebrate events in the County should be incorporated into park planning.

Goal 7 - Parks and recreational programs must find ways to celebrate the variety of cultures within the community	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	5	4	9	75.00%
Good, but could use some changes	2	1	3	25.00%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	



**Comments:**

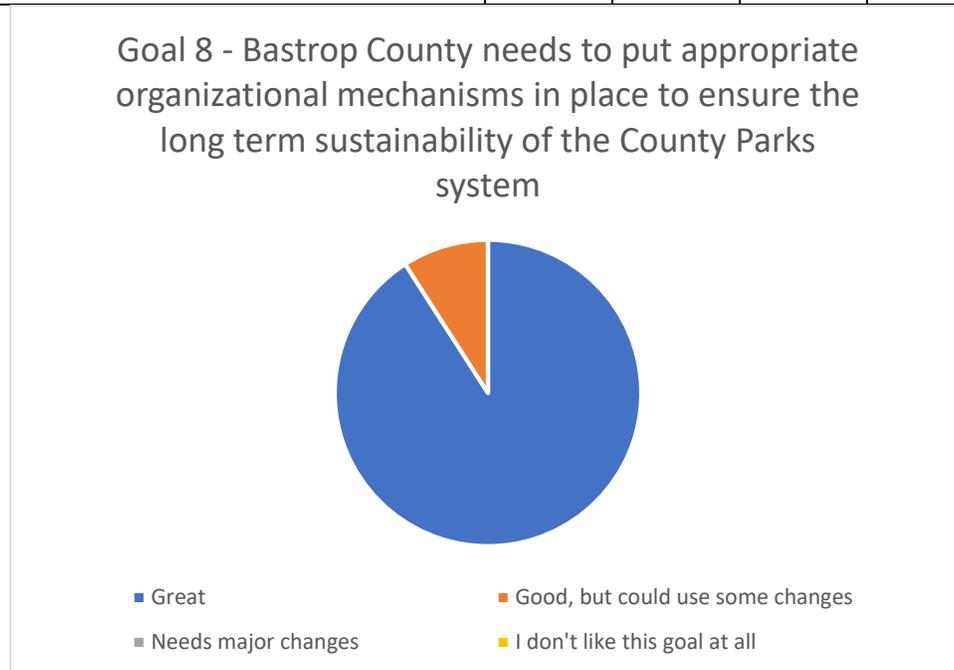
- Objective 7.2 should include promotion of events
- Clarify objective 7.1
  - “Parks need to be sensitive to the cultural contributions made by all population groups in the county.

**Goal 8.0**

**Bastrop County needs to put appropriate organizational mechanisms in place to ensure the long term sustainability of the County Parks system.**

- **Objective 8.1** The Department of General Services should be renamed “Department of Parks and General Services” to clearly identify its role within the maintenance and management of existing and future County parks.
- **Objective 8.2** Fund raising for parks and recreational programs needs to be an ongoing effort.
- **Objective 8.3** Volunteers are critical to the long term sustainability of the Parks system. Bastrop County should establish and support a network of volunteers in partnership with local nonprofits, and develop a “Park Host” program to assist in the maintenance and security of the park system.

Goal 8 - Bastrop County needs to put appropriate organizational mechanisms in place to ensure the long term sustainability of the County Parks system	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Great	6	4	10	90.91%
Good, but could use some changes	1	0	1	9.09%
Needs major changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't like this goal at all	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	



**Comments:**

- Volunteers are critical. Utilize platforms like Bastrop County Connects to build volunteer base.
- Support for “Parks and General Services” name change
- Learn from and build Stony Point Park’s informal park host program

## Project Ranking Criteria

Participants reviewed the sixteen proposed criteria for ranking potential parks projects to be included in the master plan update and voted on each. After voting, participants were able to share comments and propose changes through audio or the chat box.

### Criteria

Number	Criteria	Goal	Proposed Weighting
1	Project provides an essential amenity in the park.	1	5
2	The project provides a new facility in an underserved area	1	15
3	The project will actively support or restore sensitive ecosystems and incorporates elements that cultivate support for natural resources, including the Houston Toad.	2	10
4	Project will promote active transportation by providing bike/ped infrastructure linking parkland to nearby residential neighborhoods and/or other parks.	3	5
5	Project will improve public safety within the parks.	3	5
6	The project will be undertaken in partnership with another organization.	4	10
7	Project will have a positive impact on the floodplain	5	10
8	The project will promote broadband connectivity within the parks.	6	5
9	The project will promote Tourism within Bastrop County	6	5
10	The project will enhance access to the Colorado River	6	5
11	The project actively protects and increases awareness of existing cultural resources	7	5
12	Project has a low ongoing maintenance requirement	8	5
13	Project will improve the efficiency and sustainability of park operations	8	5
14	Project is identified as a Top 10 need in the Bastrop County Parks Survey	n/a	10
15	Project improves facilities already located within an existing park.	n/a	5
16	Project does not require additional utility hookups (with the exception of “essential amenities”)	n/a	5
		Total	<b>110</b>

### Voting options:

- a. Good as is
- b. Should be weighted lower
- c. Should be weighted higher
- d. Needs some changes
- e. I don't think this criterion should be included

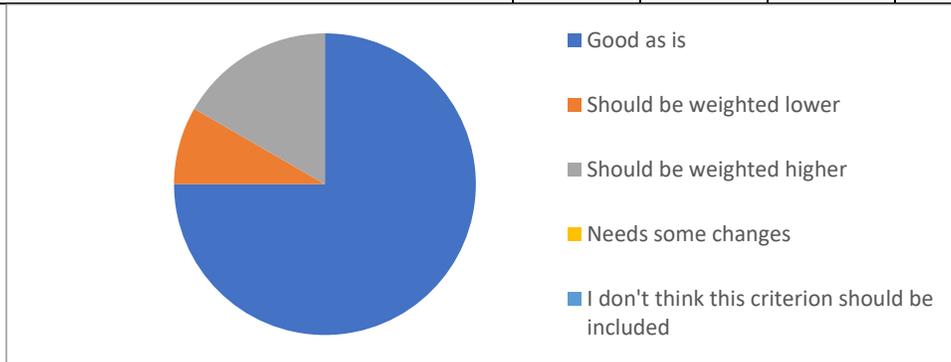
## Polling results and comments

### Criterion 1

**Project provides an essential amenity in the park (bathrooms, parking, waste infrastructure).**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 1	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	5	4	9	75.00%
Should be weighted lower	1	0	1	8.33%
Should be weighted higher	0	2	2	16.67%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	6	6	12	

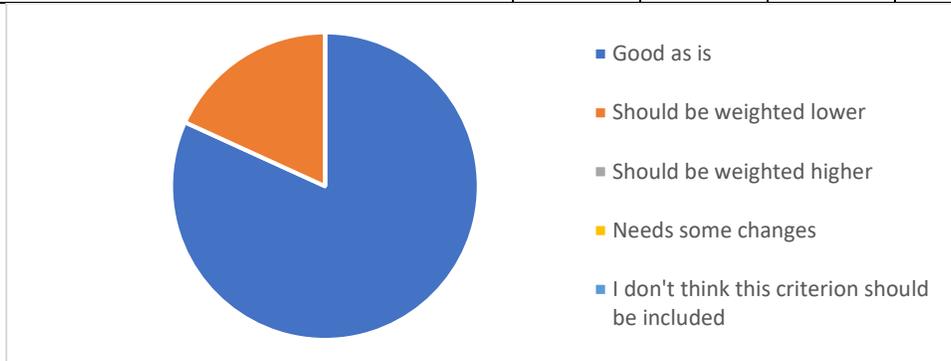


### Criterion 2

**The project provides a new facility in an underserved area**

*Draft weighting: 15 points*

Criterion 2	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	5	9	81.82%
Should be weighted lower	1	1	2	18.18%
Should be weighted higher	0	0	0	0.00%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	5	6	11	

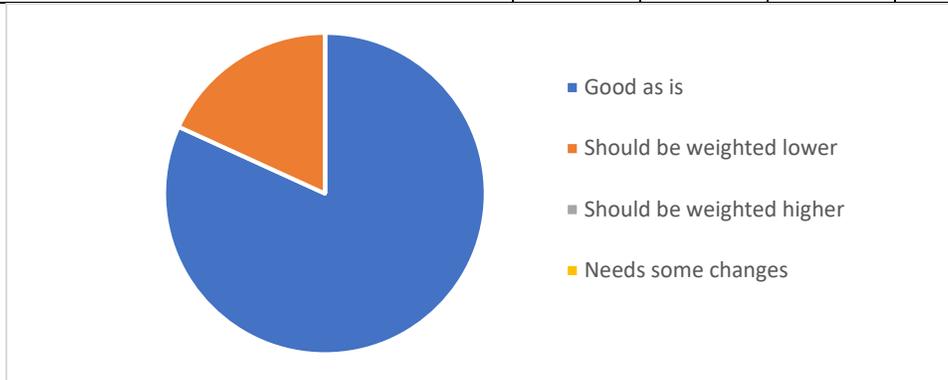


**Criterion 3**

The project will actively support or restore sensitive ecosystems and incorporates elements that cultivate support for natural resources, including the Houston Toad.

Draft weighting: 10 points

Criterion 3	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	5	9	81.82%
Should be weighted lower	1	1	2	18.18%
Should be weighted higher	0	0	0	0.00%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	



Comments:

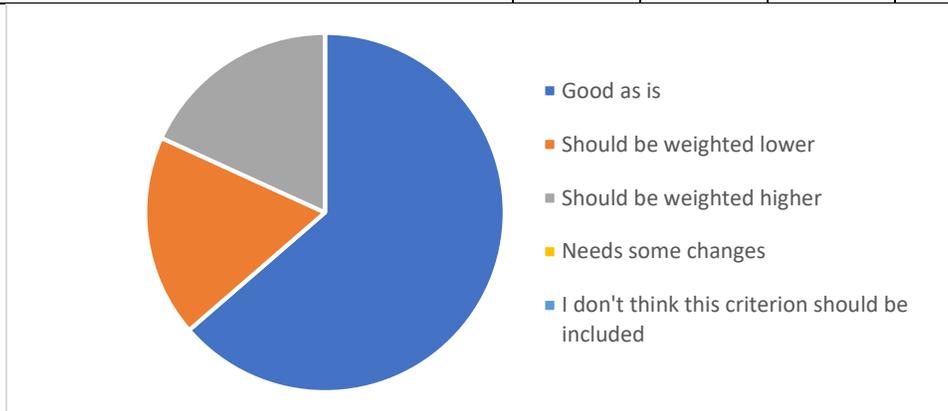
- Change to read “including endangered species”

**Criterion 4**

Project will promote active transportation by providing bike/ ped infrastructure linking parkland to nearby residential neighborhoods and/or other parks.

Draft weighting: 5 points

Criterion 4	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	3	4	7	63.64%
Should be weighted lower	2	0	2	18.18%
Should be weighted higher	0	2	2	18.18%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	

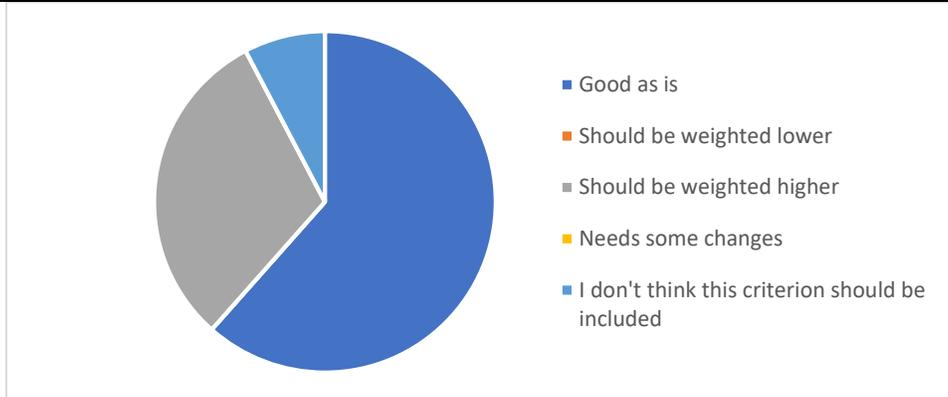


**Criterion 5**

**Project will improve public safety within the parks.**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 5	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	4	8	61.54%
Should be weighted lower	0	0	0	0.00%
Should be weighted higher	2	2	4	30.77%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	1	0	1	7.69%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	

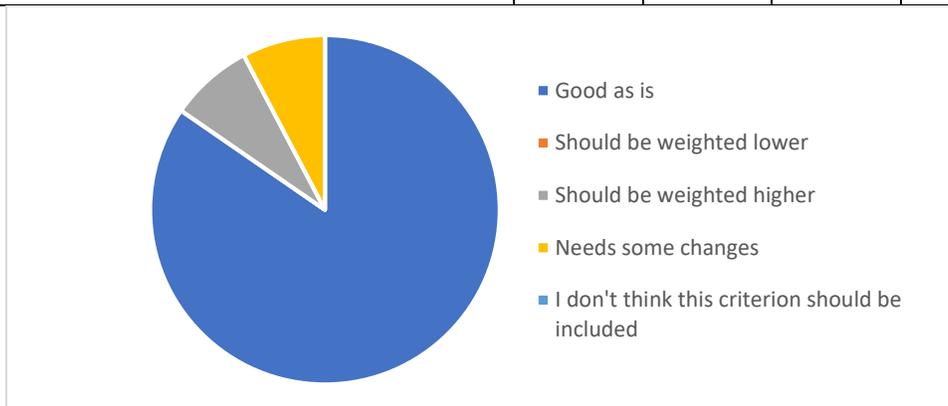


**Criterion 6**

**The project will be undertaken in partnership with another organization.**

*Draft weighting: 10 points*

Criterion 6	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	5	6	11	84.62%
Should be weighted lower	0	0	0	0.00%
Should be weighted higher	1	0	1	7.69%
Needs some changes	1	0	1	7.69%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	



Comments:

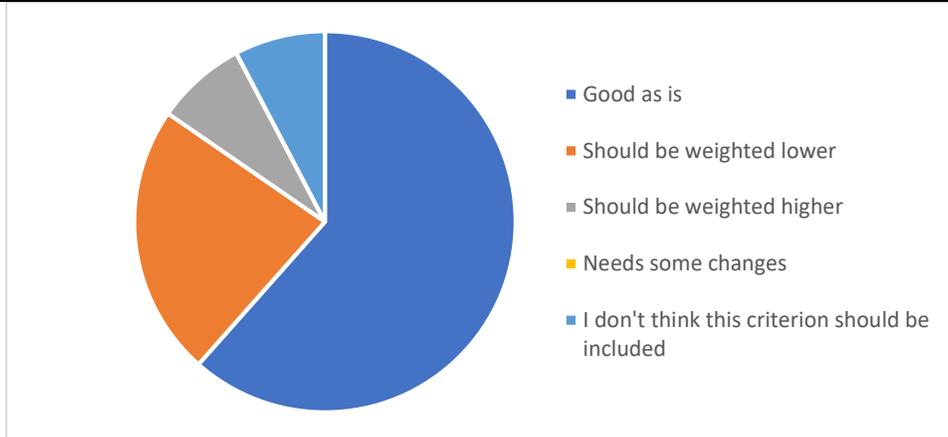
- Should consider if project/proposal includes details on funding and maintenance from other organization

**Criterion 7**

**Project will have a positive impact on the floodplain**

*Draft weighting: 10 points*

Criterion 7	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	5	3	8	61.54%
Should be weighted lower	1	2	3	23.08%
Should be weighted higher	0	1	1	7.69%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	1	0	1	7.69%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	

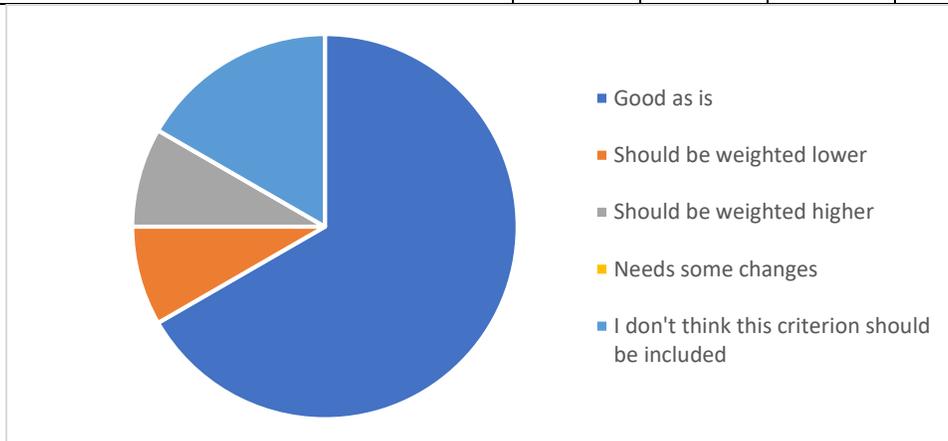


**Criterion 8**

**The project will promote broadband connectivity within the parks.**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 8	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	5	3	8	66.67%
Should be weighted lower	1	0	1	8.33%
Should be weighted higher	0	1	1	8.33%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	2	2	16.67%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	

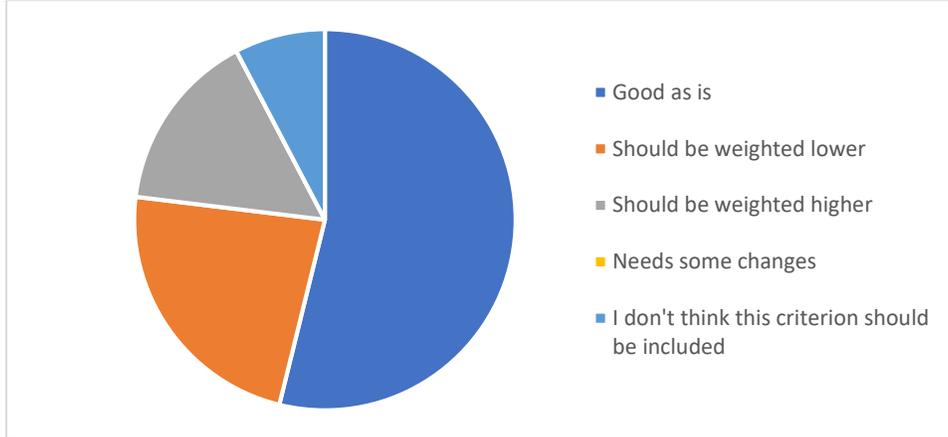


**Criterion 9**

**The project will promote tourism within Bastrop County**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 9	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	3	7	53.85%
Should be weighted lower	2	1	3	23.08%
Should be weighted higher	1	1	2	15.38%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	1	1	7.69%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	

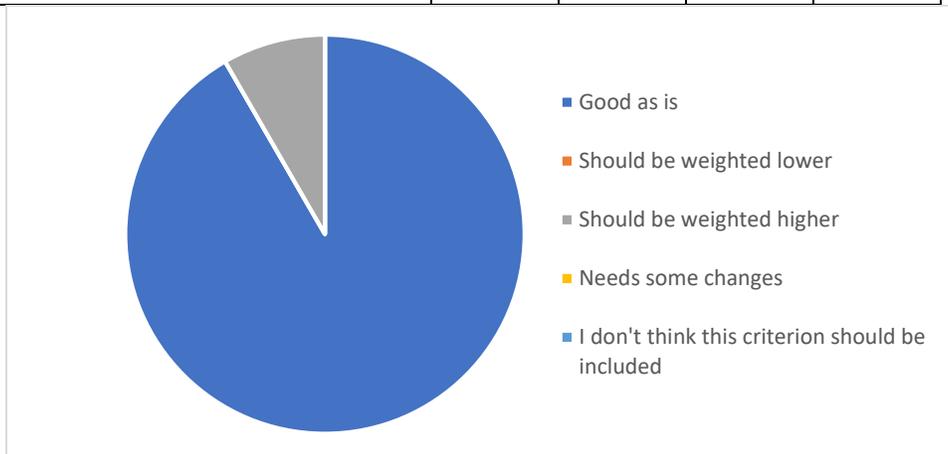


**Criterion 10**

**The project will enhance access to the Colorado River**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 10	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	6	5	11	91.67%
Should be weighted lower	0	0	0	0.00%
Should be weighted higher	0	1	1	8.33%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	

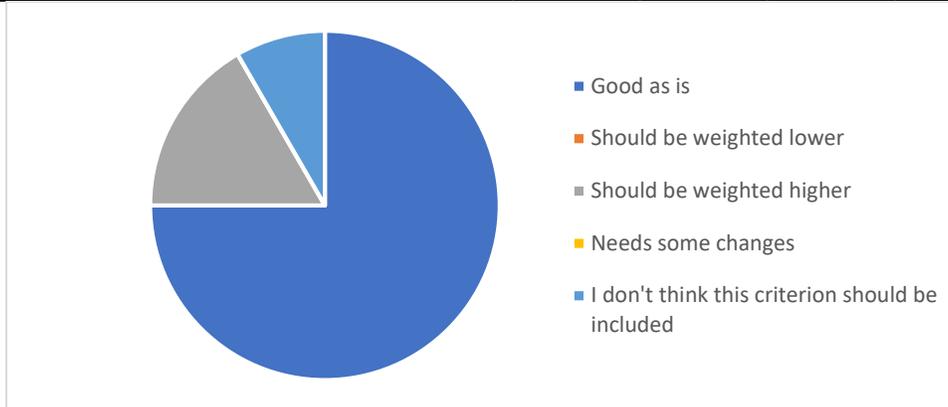


**Criterion 11**

**The project actively protects and increases awareness of existing cultural resources**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 11	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	5	9	75.00%
Should be weighted lower	0	0	0	0.00%
Should be weighted higher	1	1	2	16.67%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	1	0	1	8.33%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	

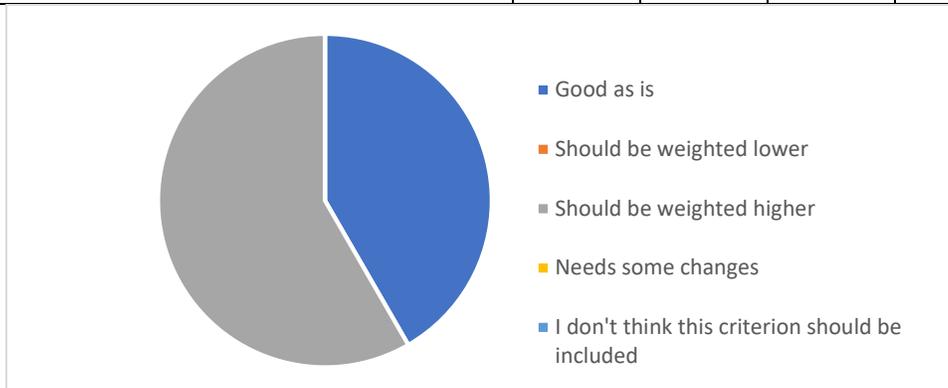


**Criterion 12**

**Project has a low ongoing maintenance requirement**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 12	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	2	3	5	41.67%
Should be weighted lower	0	0	0	0.00%
Should be weighted higher	4	3	7	58.33%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	



Comments:

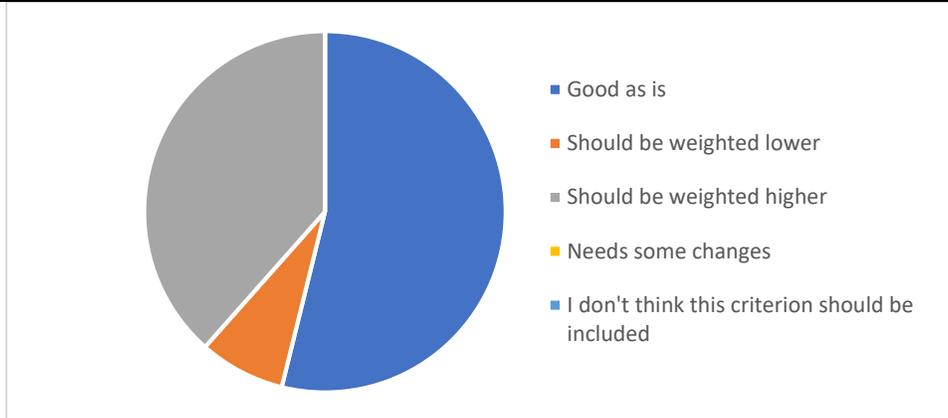
- Important consideration; should be weighted way higher

**Criterion 13**

**Project will improve the efficiency and sustainability of park operations**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 13	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	3	4	7	53.85%
Should be weighted lower	1	0	1	7.69%
Should be weighted higher	3	2	5	38.46%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	

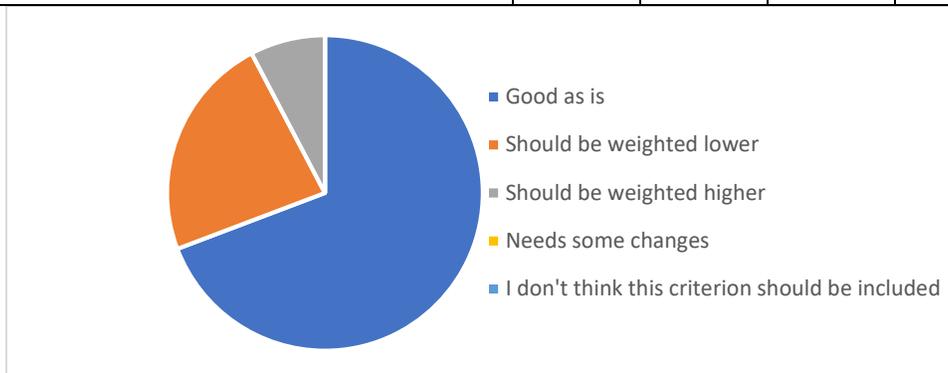


**Criterion 14**

**Project is identified as a Top 10 need in the Bastrop County Parks Survey**

*Draft weighting: 10 points*

Criterion 14	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	5	9	69.23%
Should be weighted lower	2	1	3	23.08%
Should be weighted higher	1	0	1	7.69%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	



Comment:

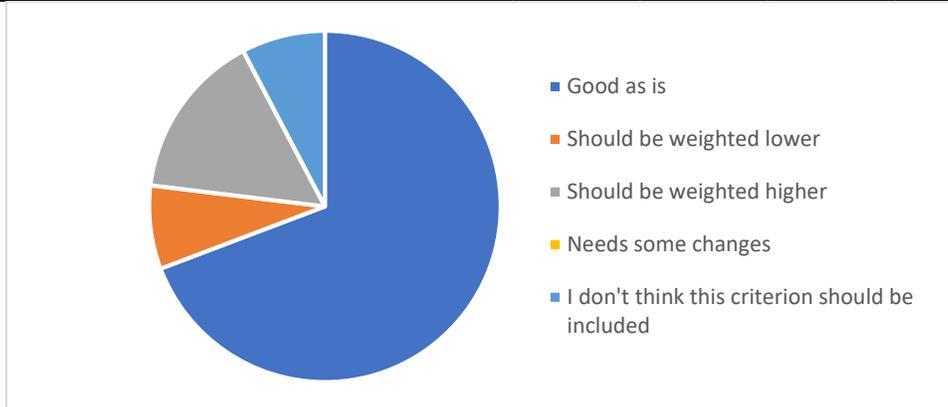
- Should have park survey every year to ensure identified projects reflect community's current desires.

**Criterion 15**

**Project improves facilities already located within an existing park.**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 15	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	5	9	69.23%
Should be weighted lower	1	0	1	7.69%
Should be weighted higher	2	0	2	15.38%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	1	1	7.69%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	

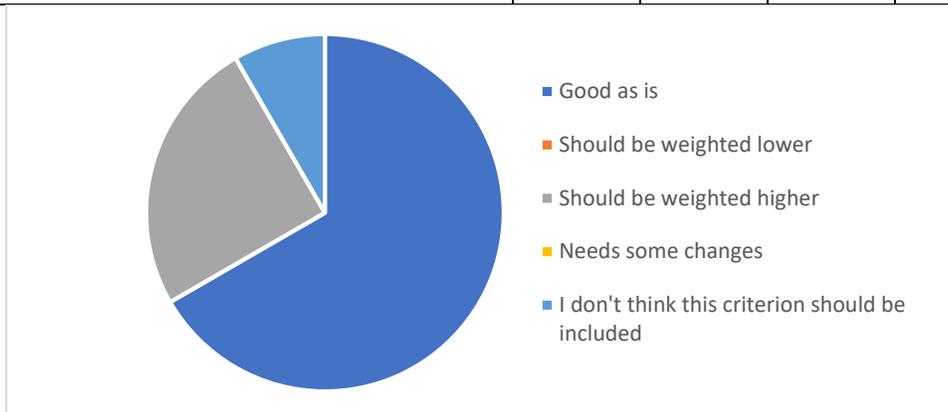


**Criterion 16**

**Project does not require additional utility hookups (with the exception of “essential amenities” [bathrooms, parking, waste infrastructure])**

*Draft weighting: 5 points*

Criterion 16	23-Sep	24-Sep	Total	Percent
Good as is	4	4	8	66.67%
Should be weighted lower	0	0	0	0.00%
Should be weighted higher	2	1	3	25.00%
Needs some changes	0	0	0	0.00%
I don't think this criterion should be included	0	1	1	8.33%
<b>Total voters</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	



## Potential Partners and Volunteer Organizations

During the last portion of the meeting, attendees were presented with a list of organizations already working with the county on parks and the master plan update (Fig. 1). Participants were then asked if they knew of additional potential partners to assist with planning, volunteering efforts, or outreach. The participants on the September 24 meeting generated the list below (Fig. 2).

Fig 1: Groups Already Involved

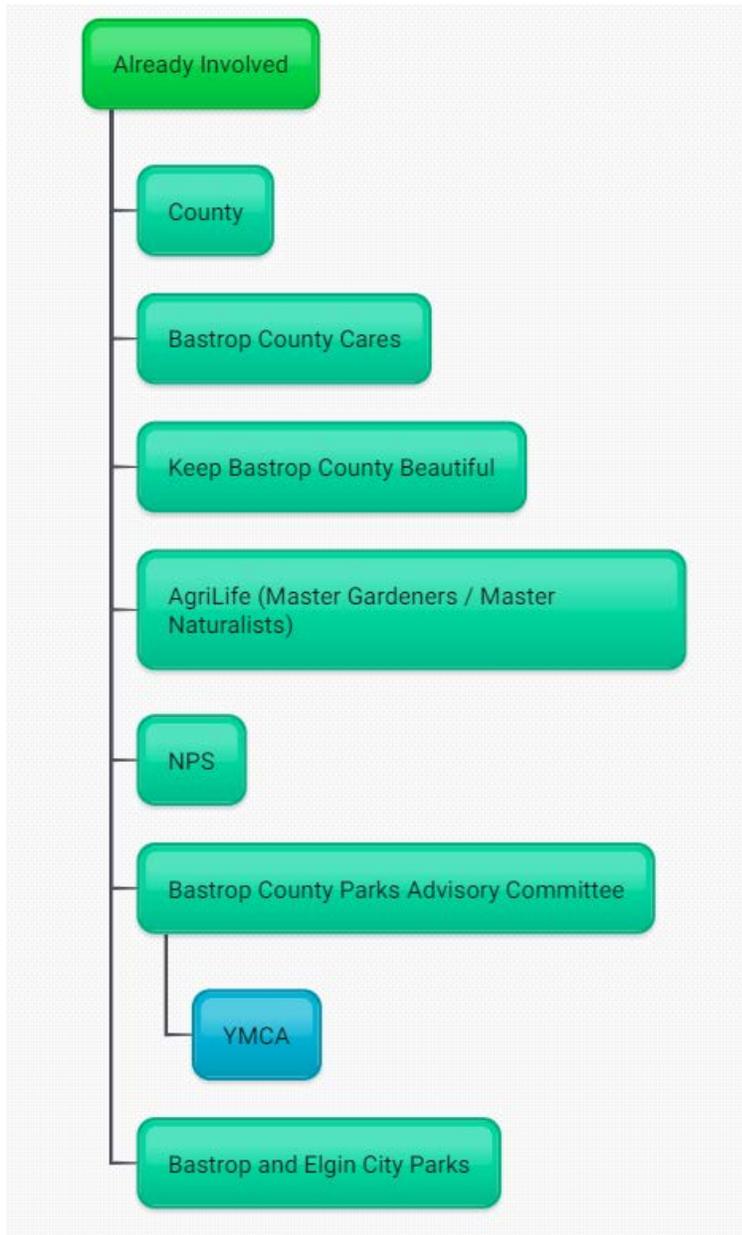


Fig. 2: Potential Partners Suggested by Public Meeting Attendees

