

## The Park and Schoolyard Audit Grand Rapids, MI

### SUMMARY

This tool was created to conduct an audit of park attendance and the usage of amenities, in order to understand how a side-by-side park and schoolyard in Grand Rapids were already being used before starting a redesign process.

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### Introduction

As part of the Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) initiative, Grand Rapids developed a citywide plan to increase equitable access to nature. The city's primary strategy is to create green schoolyards in priority areas of the city, where they engage youth and the broader community in the design process. Before the community engagement began, however, they wanted to understand how the pilot schoolyards and parks were currently being used. This Park and Schoolyard Audit tool is inspired by the [Safe Routes to Parks](#) walking audit and modified to suit local needs by partners, including Our Community's Children, Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department and Grand Rapids Public Schools. Please note that this is not a validated tool or process as is.

### Creating the Tool for Their Needs:

The Grand Rapids team identified the following categories as being important to them regarding



current park and schoolyard usage and attendance:

- Date of the observation
- Start and end time of the observation
- Number of people doing each activity
- Gender breakdown of people doing each activity
- Age range of people doing each activity
- Race of people doing each activity
- Activity types observed
- Total people observed during that time frame

Date:	Time:	Number:	Gender:	Age Group:	Race:	Activities:
Wednesday, July 26, 2017	12:15pm	6	Males	Early teens	Latino	Playing soccer at the soccer fields.
		3	Females	Early 20's 6-8 years old 3-5 years old	Latino	Adult was sitting down at a picnic table near the soccer fields with one child while the other child was running.
		2	Male & Female	Early 20's	Latino & African American	Sitting on the bleachers by the softball fields.
Thursday, July 27, 2017	7:32am	0				
Wednesday, August 2, 2017	4:05pm	2	Females	Late teens 3-4 years old	Latino	Playing on the small playground by the parking lot.
Friday, August 4, 2017	7:25am	0				
Monday, August 7, 2017	7:15am	0				
Wednesday, August 9, 2017	8:22am	0				
	4:47pm	3	Males	7-9 years old	Latino	Playing soccer at the soccer fields.
		1	Female	30's	Latino	Walking around the park.

*Sample form, filled out.*

The team created a simple chart of these categories (see example on the following page) and ensured that those filling out the forms had copies with them at any time they would be near the identified locations.

### Using the Tool:

This tool was created to conduct an audit of park and schoolyard attendance and the usage of amenities. In order to use this tool for that purpose, the team created these directions for the park auditors:

1. Obtain a map of the park or area that you wish to audit, including all the park amenities, such as playgrounds, soccer fields, bathrooms, drinking fountains, parking, etc. This map will be used to ensure that all of the usage of amenities is observed.

2. Conduct the park audit for a minimum of two weeks at various times of the day to get a sense of how and when the park or schoolyard is used. For a more complete analysis, the audit can be conducted over longer periods of time and at different seasons throughout the year.
3. Take the audit with you every time you visit the location under study. Record the date and time of each visit as well as the number of people in the park.
4. Once the audit is deemed complete (e.g., a certain number of visits on specific weekdays and weekends), use graphs and other data displays to report results for your intended audience.