August 19, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**City of Columbus   
Wants You To Imagine The Future of Parks and Recreation**

(Columbus, IN) — August 19, 2021 – The City of Columbus is looking to develop its first Strategic Master Plan and an update to its Park System Master Plan.

Columbus is embarking on a journey to create a Strategic Master Plan to shape future parks, recreation and trails / open space needs. Residents are invited to participate in this process with the Parks and Recreation Department to help the City imagine what future parks, programs, special events, recreation facilities etc. could look like.

The City has hired PROS Consulting, INC. a leader in parks and recreation consulting nationwide and their Principal, Neelay Bhatt will be leading this project along with ETC Institute, a statistically-valid survey firm, from Kansas City.

Bhatt states, “People know of Columbus as home to world class architecture and a Fortune 500 company in Cummins. What they don’t know are the wonderful parks, trails and recreation opportunities. We want to maximize community engagement in an innovative and inclusive way so that the community’s values and unmet needs can drive the vision for Columbus’ future.”

The City will conduct a public input meeting to gather feedback from residents. This meeting will be open to all residents and will enable individuals to attend virtually to learn about Columbus’ future demographics and recreation trends while participating through live polling, Q&A, and public comments. The meeting will be on: **Tuesday, August 31st from 5:30 – 6:30pm EST**.

Register Online via Zoom Webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_PJSZDx5cT7SDKifqPrhYQw>

“During the meetings, we will introduce the Strategic Master Plan and engage the community through creative online mediums designed to boost public input. We look forward to the community participating to the fullest extent possible to help guide our efforts to improve Columbus’ fast growing park system and plan for the future of our parks and recreation services, including prioritizing projects, maintenance, policy, and funding,” said Parks and Recreation Director Mark Jones.

The consulting team has also developed an ADA-accessible, multilingual crowdsourcing website to guide this project at [www.ImagineYourColumbusParks.com](http://www.ImagineYourColumbusParks.com). “This site will serve as the one-stop shop to provide all plan updates, list meeting dates, host online surveys and ensure people can share their input any time during the planning process. Additionally, those who are unable to attend the virtual public meeting can also view the meeting recording and share their feedback later,” said Bhatt.

Meetings with key City leaders, staff and user groups will also be conducted in August and this meeting will be followed by a statistically-valid survey mailed to a random sample of Columbus residents.   
  
You can also register for the Virtual Public Meeting at [www.ImagineYourColumbusParks.com](http://www.ImagineYourColumbusParks.com).

For more information about Columbus Parks and Recreation Department, visit

[www.columbusparksandrec.com](file:///\\cocpr\personal%20folders\nmurphy\HR\Hiring%20&%20Employment\Sports%20Programs%20Manager\www.columbusparksandrec.com).

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