



12650 DETROIT AVENUE • 44107 • 216/521-7580 • FAX 216/521-1379 • www.ci.lakewood.oh.us

**NEWS FROM THE
OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YOUTH MASTER PLAN SURVEY RESULTS TO DRIVE THE LAKEWOOD YOUTH COMMISSION INTO ACTION.

Understanding young peoples' needs from their own perspective is essential to developing an effective youth plan. In March and April 2007, the Lakewood Youth Master Plan (YMP) Executive Committee conducted an extensive survey of Lakewood youth. The results provided critical information about how they're doing in school, how they spend their time, how sufficiently active they are, how safe they feel, and much more. The survey was distributed to just over 800 middle school and high school students in Lakewood.

Of those surveys completed, forty-seven percent were male, while fifty-two percent were female. The strongest ethnicity to complete the survey was White/Anglo (82%), with most of the completed surveys by English speaking (86%) students. A strong majority (73%) of those students surveyed have lived in Lakewood for five or more years.

The most popular hobby for both middle school and high school students were organized athletics (30%). Sixty-six percent of middle school students and fifty-eight percent of high school students would like to see some sort of laser tag/paintball center constructed in Lakewood. This was the only response selected for both middle and high school students where the numbers of those who wanted the activity in Lakewood outnumbered those who did not want it. Approximately half of the students surveyed leave Lakewood over six times a month for recreation and entertainment. The majority of students felt that 5 to 10 year olds have sufficient activities available to them in Lakewood. A common assumption about youth was revealed through the surveys. Most middle and high school students learn about and are influenced to participate in activities by their friends. Roughly half of middle school students reported both lack of interest and money prevent them from participating in activities while high school students reported primarily lack of interest (56%) with a lack of variety in activities a close second.

Over eighty-percent of both middle and high school students know who to contact for crises, accidents and crimes. The most important service noted by middle school students (75%) was drug and alcohol treatment. High school students (68%) answered that academic services and drug & alcohol treatment were most important to them. More than half of all middle school students identified four safety areas of concern: theft (61%), gangs (55%), drugs & alcohol (55%), and harassment (54%). High school students only had one category where more than half surveyed agreed it was a safety concern: theft (52%).

The survey results described above, coupled with thoughtful community dialogue, provided the framework for the YMP development. The YMP process and report are completed and will be used as one of many tools to assist the emerging Lakewood Youth Commission. New to Lakewood, the Youth Commission will be made up of community members and appointees from the Superintendent and Board of Education, the Mayor and City Council. The LYC's mission is to effectively foster successful and well-adjusted youth that are responsible and contributing members of the community. Look for more to come on this action-oriented group.

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For more information, contact Dottie Buckon, Director of Human Services, at (216) 529-6687.