



# Economic Benefits of Recreation in Plano Parks

Plano offers significant recreational value to residents and visitors alike, from access to parks, trails, and open space as well as the recreational facilities that host adult and youth sports tournaments each year.

Trust for Public Land (TPL) analyzed park use patterns to estimate the annual recreation value that Plano Parks & Recreation provides to its residents.

## Recreational Value

Plano parks, trails, and recreational facilities provide access to activities such as walking, hiking, running, jogging, enjoying nature, birdwatching, playgrounds, fitness classes, team sports, pickleball, tennis, and more. TPL measured the value of the annual recreational benefits that accrues to residents who use Plano parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

People are willing to pay for access to outdoor recreation (such as parking fees or admissions tickets). However, Plano Parks and Recreation provides many amenities at low or no cost to residents, generating cost savings and value to people who visit local parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

Visiting parks is a popular activity among Plano residents. According to the 2024 Parks and Recreation Survey conducted by the city, 95% of residents visit the parks and 52% of residents have participated in parks and recreation programs and events in a typical year.

In August 2024, TPL conducted a new telephone survey of Plano residents to update estimates of park visitation and estimate the recreational value of visits to parks, trails, and recreational facilities in the city. Respondents provided information about the frequency and nature of these visits, and shared demographic information that ensured our results were statistically significant and representative of the broader Plano community. The survey accounted for seasonality of some activities, and estimated visits for adults and children by activity.

**TPL found that 80% of adults and 84% of children visit Plano’s parks, trails, and recreational facilities annually, with 12.5 million total visits each year.** This reflects a 3.8% increase in annual visits since TPL conducted the first survey in 2016.

The most popular activities for adults and for children based on the 2024 TPL telephone survey are listed in the table below. Plano residents are consistent in their preferred activities from 2017 to 2024. Walking or hiking remained the most popular activity, with running/ jogging and bicycling rising in popularity over attending exercise classes and using recreation center amenities. General park uses includes visiting playgrounds and relaxing with friends and family and continues to be the second most popular activity for children (after walking/hiking).



Each visit to Plano’s parks, trails, and recreational facilities provides value. The city provides these amenities to residents at low or no cost, and people accrue value when they don’t have to pay to participate in outdoor recreation.

TPL assigned dollar values to visits based on the activities that residents participated in. This methodology is based on the approach used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to estimate the value of park visitation.

**The average value per visit to Plano parks in 2024 was \$4.61, reflecting a 33% increase since the 2017 study.** TPL maintained a consistent per-visit value between analyses (except for adjusting the value of exercise class to reflect the current average of \$10 per class) and adding pickleball as a new activity. An increased average value could also reflect people choosing higher-value activities, such as golfing and attending recreation programs offered by Plano.

**The total annual recreational value accruing to Plano residents who use local parks, trails, and recreational facilities is \$57.4 million.** This reflects a 38% increase since 2017 after adjusting for inflation. The increased value is consistent with the increase in annual park visitation as well as the higher average value of visits.

Activity	Participation (Annual Visits)		
	Adults	Children	Total
Walking or hiking (including dog walking)	3,175,300	450,600	3,626,000
Run or jog on trails	1,311,200	216,600	1,527,800
Ride a bike on trails	805,100	281,500	1,086,600
Attend exercise classes	78,800	127,800	915,700
General park uses	496,600	332,500	829,200



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### Contact Information

Jennifer Clinton  
 Senior Parks and Conservation Economist  
 jennifer.clinton@tpl.org

Ron Smith  
 Director, Plano Parks & Recreation  
 rons@plano.gov