

# Play Your Heart Out in Winchester Parks



## Community-Wide Recreation Needs Assessment City of Winchester, Virginia

February 2015

**CITY OF WINCHESTER**  
**CITY-WIDE RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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**FEBRUARY 2015 (FINAL DRAFT)**



# Acknowledgements

## **Winchester, Elected Officials**

Elizabeth Minor, Honorable Mayor  
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Milt McInturff, Council Vice President  
Les Veach, Vice Mayor  
Kevin McKannan, Council Member  
Evan H. Clark, Council Member  
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**With input and feedback through participation of residents across Winchester, the success of the Community Recreation Needs Assessment is attributed to the interest and engagement of the community.**

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# I. Executive Summary

## A. Introduction

The Winchester *City-Wide Recreation Needs Assessment* is designed to help the City allocate appropriate resources to parks and recreation services and amenities, providing a high level of service to residents while maximizing the resources available to the department. In doing so, areas of service strengths and weaknesses have been identified, along with what can be built upon to improve the delivery of parks, recreation, cultural arts, open space, and trail facilities, as well as programs and services.

The plan includes an evaluation of community demographics and trends; a comprehensive public input process encompassing public meetings, focus groups, a statically valid survey, and an online community engagement site (MindMixer); along with an analysis of current programs and facilities; and consideration of the financial resources of the City. This plan builds a foundation for an eventual Master Plan.

### Demographics

Although the future of population growth cannot be predicted with certainty, it is helpful to make assumptions about it for planning purposes. Winchester's population is predicted to increase by annual rate of 1.19 percent to 28,497, from 2013 to 2018. This is up from a population of 26,203 in 2010. This compares to an annual growth rate of .96 percent forecast for the State of Virginia as a whole.

The highest ranking age cohort in the City is 25-34 (15.4% of the population) followed by the age 45-54 cohort (12.8 %). Additionally, the 55-85+ cohort is expected to grow from 24.9 percent in 2010 to 28.3 percent in 2018. Planning for the next ten years suggests a growing demand for programs and services for young adults, Baby Boomers, and seniors.

Other demographic highlights include:

- The estimated 2013 median household Income for residents of the City of Winchester was \$46,289, compared to \$60,893 for the State of Virginia as a whole. Median income for Winchester is forecast to grow to \$52,045 by 2018.
- The African American population in Winchester is at a little over 10.8%, compared to 19.5% for the State of Virginia as a whole.
- Winchester has a small Asian population (2.3%) with the percentage of Asians in the State of Virginia as a whole slightly higher at 5.7%.
- Winchester's Hispanic population (18.4%) is significantly higher than the percentage of Hispanics in the State of Virginia as a whole (8.9%).

### Trends

Identification of current park and recreation resources, as well as recreation trends, community demographics, and needs provide a better understanding of future recreational opportunities and allow for identification of the unique niche of the City of Winchester. The historic values and standards that the Parks and Recreation Department brings to the community, along with park and recreation trends, work together to create a unique opportunity for Winchester to plan for and implement future park and recreation facilities.

It is a challenge and an opportunity for parks and recreation providing agencies to continue to understand and respond to the changing recreation interests of their constituencies. In this fast-paced society, it is important to stay on top of current trends. Trends were researched at the local, regional, and national level relevant to the somewhat younger and growing multi-cultural demographic of Winchester and interests including special events, trails, outdoor “gyms,” dog parks, and aquatics. Programming trends reflect partnerships with the health community and higher education, nature-based activities, and individual and group activities, including more purposeful use of outdoor areas. Improved funding for parks and recreation in general is being widely reported following the decline during the recession.

### **Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

It was important to reach out to as many groups and individuals as possible in order to gain the most diverse input possible. The community input process included participants from Shenandoah University, Winchester Public Schools, Winchester Wheelman, Winchester Baseball, Winchester Swim Team, Blue Ridge Youth Soccer, Frederick County Parks and Recreation, Korean War Veterans, Winchester Rugby, Rolling Thunder, Shenandoah Valley Runners, Winchester Frederick County Youth Football, Valley Health, and the Winchester Parks Foundation.

### **Focus Groups/Public Meetings**

Citizens recognized that the City of Winchester provides a wide variety of facilities, programs, and services to City residents, and that the City Council and City staff place an exceptionally high value on the parks, open space, and trails available for use in the community. There was also significant appreciation for specialty facilities such as the Jim Barnett Park, BMX Track, Outdoor Pool, athletic fields, Shawnee Springs Preserve, Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve, and Green Circle Trail. Seniors also expressed that AARP had chosen Winchester as a Top 10 place to live and retire.

Focus groups, public meetings, stakeholder and staff interviews provided important input used as the basis for developing a statistically valid survey.

### **Mind-Mixer On-line Community Engagement**

This project included the establishment of an online community engagement site at [www.playyourheartout.mindmixer.com](http://www.playyourheartout.mindmixer.com). The MindMixer online engagement tool was designed to enhance community involvement and obtain additional feedback from people who may not necessarily attend meetings. Community members were asked to respond to questions and submit ideas regarding parks, recreation, and trail services in the City. The site was up and running from June 2014 through October 2014. A total of 2,273 users logged into the system, and **36** individuals participated in the web-based community dialogue, providing ideas on a variety of different topics related to parks and recreation.

### **Citizen Needs Assessment Survey**

Results from a statistically-valid community survey are summarized and highlighted in the main report. A compilation of the detailed survey data and cross tabulations has also been provided separately as a staff resource document. All of this information provides a framework to understand Winchester’s context, park and recreational needs, and direction for the future.

The survey was conducted using three primary methods: a mail-back survey, an online, open link survey, and an invitation-only web survey. A total of 3,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Winchester residents in June 2014. As with the participants in the focus groups and public meetings, the survey respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction relative to the majority of parks, recreation, trails, facilities, programs, and services provided by the City. Priorities for future development were identified by survey respondents and closely mirrored those of the earlier public input opportunities. Survey respondents also showed a desire to maintain what is currently available in Winchester and to preserve the natural and historic assets of the city.

### **Inventory and Analysis of Current System**

The City of Winchester has 13 parks totaling around 270 acres. The parks vary in size (with Jim Barnett Park being the largest at 170 acres) and are distributed widely throughout the City. The parks offer a variety of amenities that include playgrounds, picnic facilities, sports fields, and restrooms. Specialized amenities are also distributed throughout the City.

The Department provides a variety of recreation programs and services to members of the Winchester community focused on a range of core service areas. A number of special events throughout the year provide the community the opportunity to gather and celebrate the City's history and cultural diversity.

### **Financial Analysis**

Like most cities across the United States, Winchester has been forced to reduce budgets for most City services including parks and recreation. Since, the Winchester Parks and Recreation Department is no exception and has made every effort to maintain its high quality facilities, programs, and services with fewer resources and a cost recovery philosophy.

The Parks and Recreation Department seeks to achieve fair and equitable cost recovery levels through a system of fees and charges to supplement its tax base. The Department should revisit these levels to ensure that it is moving in a direction that seeks to sustain the quality of its facilities, programs, and services now and into the future.

For 2012/13, the recreation services fund cost recovery, which is primarily for recreation programming, Child Care, memberships and admissions as well as facility rentals is approximately 53 percent. This does not include General Fund expenditures for Supervision or Maintenance. If these were included, the cost recovery would be about 25 percent.

## **B. Summary of Key Findings**

Generally, findings from the public input process consistently identified an appreciation of existing facilities and programs. Concern was expressed over a need for additional facilities to supplement those currently operated by the City. Aquatic facilities, athletic fields, and a desire to complete construction of the Green Circle Trail were familiar themes supporting future development. Stakeholders expressed the desire for the City to preserve the parkland at the South End of Jim Barnett Park. Perceived lack of adequate recreational opportunities in North and South ends was identified as a weakness. Additionally, a greater commitment to maintenance of athletics and facilities along with a development plan for McCormac Amphitheater were seen as opportunities.

## C. Summary of Overall Analysis

Public leaders in the United States are recognizing more and more that public recreation facilities and related “Quality of Life” amenities are not secondary services provided by governmental agencies but are in fact integral to creating communities where people want to live, work, learn, and visit. These services should be seen as investments in the long-term vitality and economic sustainability of any vibrant and attractive community. Winchester’s Parks and Recreation Department recognizes these factors and seeks to make recreational and services improvements, enhancing the community for years to come.

### Areas of Focus and Action Steps

Areas of Focus with Action Steps are outlined in the main document create a process to move forward. Over the next five to ten years, many influences will impact the success of the development of future facilities, programs, and services. Funding availability, staff buy-in, and political and community support will play significant roles in future planning efforts.

The action plan identifies specific objectives for the following areas of focus:

- **Area of Focus 1:** *Ensure continuation of the high quality recreation facilities, parks, trails, open spaces, programs, and services residents of Winchester have come to expect.*
- **Area of Focus 2:** *Evaluate our resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy and process to ensure financial stability.*
- **Area of Focus 3:** *Develop comprehensive marketing, communication, and community engagement strategy for Parks and Recreation programs and services.*
- **Area of Focus 4:** *Evaluate current program and service delivery to ensure that it reflects the cultural diversity and needs of the City of Winchester.*

## II. The Planning Context

### A. Mission

The Winchester Parks & Recreation Department is dedicated to providing *comprehensive*, quality, and safe recreation and park *programs*, facilities, and services that enrich the quality of life for the Winchester community and beyond.

### B. Purpose of the Needs Assessment

Specific items that were undertaken as part of this study included:

1. Providing meaningful and useful opportunities for the public to engage in this project.
2. Understanding the current and future demographic makeup of the community.
3. Identifying satisfaction levels as they relate to current facilities, maintenance standards, safety, programs, etc.
4. Identifying and prioritizing unmet needs of the community.
5. Identifying willingness to pay for facilities, programs, and services.
6. Identifying additional revenue streams and budgeting strategies.
7. Identifying potential partners.

### C. Methodology of this Planning Process

This project was guided by a team of managers and key staff within the City of Winchester that included Parks and Recreation, Planning, Finance, and GIS. The project team provided input to consultants throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort fully utilized the consultant's expertise while incorporating local knowledge and institutional history. The project consisted of the following tasks.

#### Needs Assessment and Public Involvement:

- Reviewed previous planning efforts and City historical information
- Considered a demographic profile of the community, including anticipated population growth
- Provided an extensive community input process utilizing:
  - Consultant facilitated focus groups
  - Consultant facilitated key stakeholders interviews
  - Consultant and Winchester staff facilitated community-wide public meetings
  - Consultant facilitated statistically-valid survey
  - Online MindMixer community engagement tool
- Researched trends and statistics related to American lifestyles to help guide the efforts of programming staff
- Considered the current market and potential gaps in service
- Identified potential partners and collaborators within the service area

## D. Timeline for Completing the Needs Assessment

Start-up	April 2014
Community Meetings	May 2014
Community Needs Assessment Survey	July – November 2014
Presentation of Findings	December 2014
Data Review and Analysis	December 2014
Presentation of Final Report	February 24, 2015

# III. What We Want – Our Community and Identified Needs

Understanding community demographics and needs is an important component of planning for future parks and recreation services and facilities in Winchester. This section of the *City-Wide Recreation Needs Assessment* first provides a demographic overview of Winchester and then highlights results of the statistically-valid survey and the public process, along with highlighting pertinent parks and recreation trends research that may impact Winchester.

## A. Demographic Profile

Demographics provided below are provided by ESRI Business Analyst Forecasts based on the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau Data.

**Table 1: Summary Demographics for Winchester, Virginia – 2013**

Summary Demographics	
Population	26,864
Number of Households	10,843
Avg. Household Size	2.39
Median Age	35.5
Median Household Income	\$46,289

Source: 2010 U.S Census, ESRI Business Analyst forecasts for 2013

### Population Projections

**Table 2** illustrates the population trend for Winchester, Virginia. The City’s population is predicted to increase by annual rate of 1.19 percent to 28,497, from 2013 to 2018. This is up from a population of 26,203 in 2010. This compares to an annual growth rate of .96 percent forecast for the State of Virginia as a whole.

**Table 2: Population Projections for Winchester, Virginia**

US Census (2000 and 2010) and ESRI Projections	
2000 Population	23,585
2010 Population	26,203
2013 Estimated	26,864
2018 Projected	28,497

Source: U.S. Census and ESRI Business Information Solutions.

### Population, Age Ranges, and Family Information

Comparative data was collected with regard to the City of Winchester and the State of Virginia, based on 2010 US Census data for: Age Distribution, Median Age, Average Household Size, and Median Income.

**Table 3: 2013 Demographic Overview of Winchester compared to the State of Virginia**

	Median Age	Average Household Size	Median Income
Winchester	35.5	2.39	\$46,289
State of Virginia	37.9	2.54	\$60,893

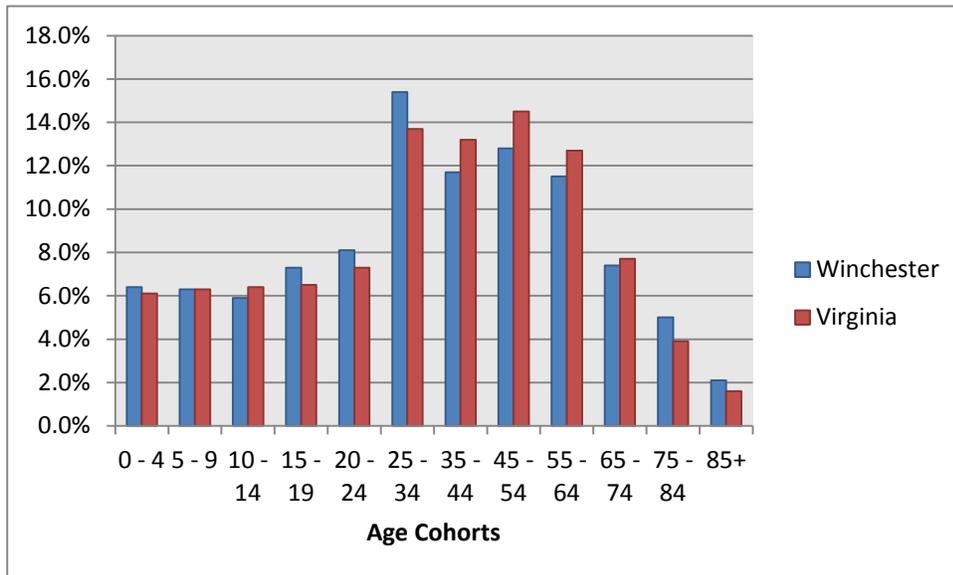
*Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions forecasts for 2013 based on the 2010 U.S. Census.*

- The median age for Winchester (35.5) is younger than that of the State of Virginia as a whole (37.9).
- Winchester’s median household income is significantly lower that of the State of Virginia.

**Age Distribution**

A comparison of the population breakdown by age for Winchester and the State of Virginia is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1: 2013 Breakdown by Age**



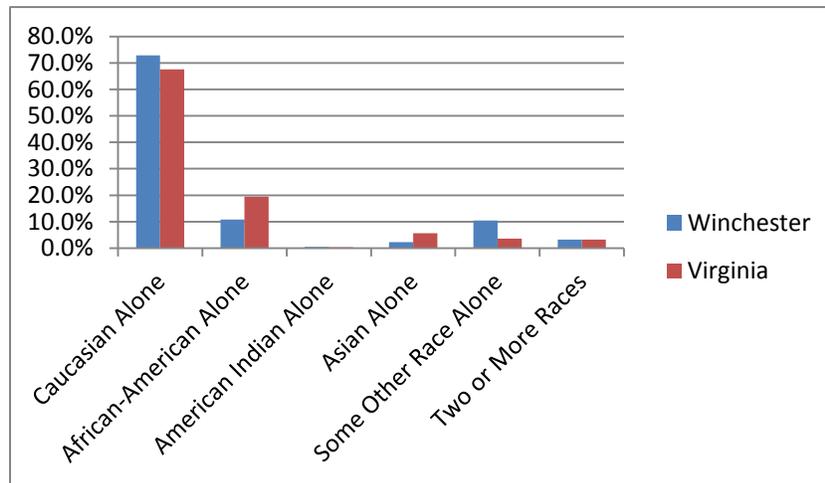
*Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2013 estimates provided by ESRI Business Information Solutions.*

- **Winchester’s highest population is in the in the 25-34 age cohort (15.4%), while Virginia’s highest population is in the 45-54 age cohort (12.8%).**
- Winchester has higher populations in the youth/young adult populations, 15-34 age range (30.8%), compared to 27.5% for Virginia.
- Virginia as a whole has a higher population in the 35-74 age range (48.1%), while Winchester’s older population is somewhat smaller (43.4%).
- Winchester’s elderly population (7.1%), however, is higher than that of the State of Virginia as a whole (5.5%).

## Race/Ethnicity

While over 70 percent of Winchester’s population is Caucasian, that percentage is expected to decrease from 74.5 percent in 2010 to 69.1 percent in 2018. **Moreover, the Hispanic Origin population (any race) is expected to grow significantly from 15.4 percent in 2010 to 24.4 percent in 2018.** *Figure 2* illustrates the 2013 racial makeup of the population for Winchester compared to Virginia as a whole, with the specific percentages for 2013 set forth in **Table 4**, including data with regard to the Hispanic population (any race).

**Figure 2: 2013 Breakdown by race/ethnic population**



Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2013 estimates provided by ESRI Business Information Solutions.

A comparison of the racial/ethnic population breakdown for Winchester and Virginia reflects the following ethnic profiles.

- The African American population in Winchester is at a little over 10.8%, compared to 19.5% for the State of Virginia as a whole.
- Winchester has a small Asian population (2.3%), with the percentage of Asians in the State of Virginia as a whole slightly higher at 5.7%.
- Winchester’s Hispanic population (18.4%) is significantly higher than the percentage of Hispanics in the State of Virginia as a whole (8.9%).

**Table 4: Ethnicity Statistics (2013)**

	Winchester	Virginia
Caucasian Alone	72.8%	67.6%
African-American Alone	10.8%	19.5%
American Indian Alone	0.5%	0.4%
Asian Alone	2.3%	5.7%
Some Other Race Alone	10.5%	3.6%
Two or More Races	3.2%	3.2%
*Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	18.4%	8.9%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2013 estimates provided by ESRI Business Information Solutions, 2013.

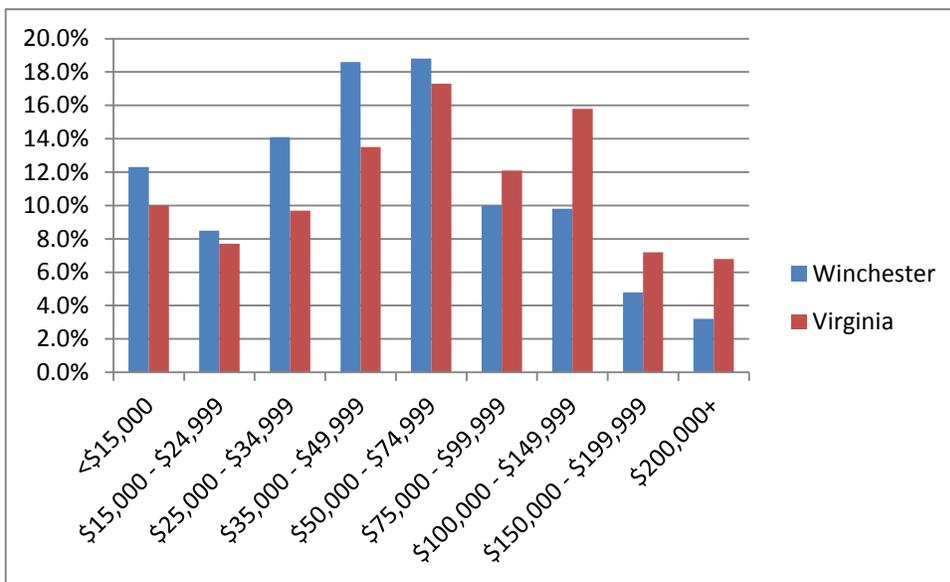
\*Note: Hispanic Origin is a separate look at the population, irrespective of race.

## Household Income

The estimated 2013 median household income for residents of the City of Winchester was \$46,289, compared to \$60,893 for the State of Virginia as a whole. Median income for Winchester is forecast to grow to \$52,045 by 2018. **Figure 2** illustrates the full income distribution for Winchester compared to Virginia, as estimated for 2013.

- Winchester has a high percentage of lower income residents, with 53.5% of residents earning under \$50,000, while in the State of Virginia, 40.9 percent of residents earn under \$50,000.
- Most Winchester residents have incomes in the \$35,000 – \$49,999 and \$50,000 – \$74,999 ranges – about 18 percent each.
- The highest income ranges for the State of Virginia are the \$50,000 – \$74,999 income range (17.3 %) and the \$100,000 – \$149,999 income range (15.8%).

**Figure 3: Annual Household Income Distribution Comparison (2013)**



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions, 2012.

## Transportation to Work

The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) found that between 2007 and 2011, 72.3 percent of workers in Winchester (aged 16 or older) drove alone to work, while 14.2 percent carpoolled. Six percent of workers walked to work, while two percent took public transportation (bus or trolley). Taxicabs, motorcycles, and bicycles were used by .9, .7, and .5 percent of workers, respectively. Three percent of workers worked at home.

## B. Trends

It is a challenge and an opportunity for parks and recreation providing agencies to continue to understand and respond to the changing recreation interests of serviced populations. In this fast-paced society, it is important to stay on top of current trends. The following highlights relevant local, regional, and national recreation trends relative to the Winchester Neighborhood demographic and identified interests. A full report on trends can be found in **Appendix A**.

## Demographic Trends

- Millennials lead structured lives filled with rules and regulations. Less accustomed to unstructured play than previous generations and apprehensive of the outdoors, they spend most of their time indoors, leaving home primarily to socialize with friends and families. With an upbeat and “can-do” attitude, this generation is more optimistic and tech-savvy than its elders.
- With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults. Boomers are second only to Gen Y/Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999) in participation in fitness and outdoor sports. Boomers will reinvent what being a 65-year-old means.
- Hispanic participants and non-participants alike cite a lack of access to nearby places to participate in outdoor activities as a barrier to participation more often than other ethnicities.
- Minority youth participants cite school work as the top reason they do not get out more often – a barrier they cite more prominently than Caucasian youth.
- The most popular outdoor activities among African-Americans are: running and jogging; fishing; and road, mountain and BMX biking.
- Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults in age brackets 30 and older. It is also a fact that minority Americans lead the way when it comes to mobile internet access.

## Facility Trends

- In 2013, dog parks were the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities in the country for the second consecutive year. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with “designed-for-dogs” amenities like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few.
- That a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity in a community has been scientifically demonstrated through the Trails for Health initiative of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active.
- Park and recreation agencies have begun installing “outdoor gyms,” with equipment comparable to what would be found in an indoor workout facility, such as leg and chest presses, elliptical trainers, pull down trainers, etc. Such equipment can increase the usage of parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities while helping to fight the obesity epidemic and increase the community’s interaction with nature.
- There is an increasing trend toward indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional amenities such as “spray pads” are becoming increasingly popular as well.

## Programming Trends

- Figures from the Association for Interpretative Naturalists demonstrate that nature-based programs are on the rise. The growth of these programs is thought to come from replacing grandparents as the teacher about the “great outdoors.” It is also speculated that a return to natural roots and renewed interest in life’s basic elements was spurred as a response to September 11, 2001.
- Participation in walking for pleasure and family gatherings outdoors were the two most popular activities for the U.S. population as a whole as reported in a 2012 report. These outdoor activities were followed closely in popularity by viewing/photographing wildlife, boating, fishing, snow/ice activities, and swimming. There has been a growing momentum in participation in sightseeing, birding, and wildlife watching in recent years.

- Some of the top ten athletic activities ranked by total participation include: exercise walking, swimming, exercising with equipment, camping, and bicycle riding.
- A national trend in the delivery of parks and recreation systems reflects more partnerships and contractual agreements reaching out to the edges of the community to support specialized services.
- The majority of Americans agree that preserving undeveloped land for outdoor recreation is important. A large percentage of outdoor participants also believe that developing local parks and hiking and walking trails is important and that there should be more outdoor education and activities during the school day.

### Festivals and Events

- In the context of urban development, from the early 1980s, there has been a process that can be characterized as “festivalization,” which has been linked to the economic restructuring of counties and cities, and the drive to develop communities as large-scale platforms for the creation and consumption of “cultural experience.”
- There are a growing number of smaller, more local, community-based festivals and events in communities, most often supported by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals will often re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value.

### Nature Programming

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of public parks and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and 61% have nature-based facilities.
- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important, followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90 percent indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.

*“There’s a direct link between a lack of exposure to nature and higher rates of attention-deficit disorder, obesity, and depression. In essence, parks and recreation agencies can and are becoming the ‘preferred provider’ for offering this preventative healthcare.”*

– **Fran P. Mainella**, former director of the National Park Service and Instructor at Clemson University

### Trail Recreation and Cycling Trends

- The 2013 Outdoor Recreation Topline Report indicates a positive three-year trend for trail running, running/jogging, hiking, and mountain biking, but a slightly negative trend for road/surface bicycling.

- Urban bike tours, popular in cycle-friendly cities in Europe, are taking hold in the United States. Bikes and Hikes LA, an eco-friendly bike and hike sightseeing company founded in September 2010, offers visitors the opportunity to “see the city’s great outdoors while getting a good workout.” In New York, a hotel and a bike store are partnering to offer guests cruisers to explore the city during the summer of 2014.<sup>1</sup>
- Participation in BMX bicycling is up significantly over the past three years (12.2%).

## C. Community and Stakeholder Input

This project incorporated substantial effort to engage the public with sufficient and meaningful mechanisms allowing for frank and open discussions about the current state and the future of parks, recreation, open space, and trails in Winchester. The process was designed to gain valuable insight into the needs and desires of the community and included:

- Six (6) focus group/stakeholder meetings
- One (1) public meeting
- MindMixer to provide ongoing community input via website ([www.playyourheartoutwinchester.com](http://www.playyourheartoutwinchester.com))
- Statistically-valid needs assessment survey
- Open link needs assessment survey
- Focus groups and stakeholder meetings including community members, City staff, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members, and partner agency representatives, with a total of 32 participants.

The following is an overview of opinions expressed by members of the Winchester community with regard to strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for parks, recreation, open space, and trails facilities, programs, and services.

### Focus Groups, Stakeholder Interviews, and Public Meetings

Focus group, stakeholder, and public meeting participants were asked a variety of questions related to parks, recreation, open space, trails, facilities, programs, and services available to those living in Winchester. Some sample responses to questions about current strengths and issues/needs/problems that the City can address are listed in the boxes that follow in alphabetical order.

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<sup>1</sup> Michelle Baran, “New trend: Urban bike tours in Los Angeles and New York,” *Budget Travel Blog*, <http://www.budgettravel.com/blog/new-trend-urban-bike-tours-in-los-angeles-and-new-york,11772/>, accessed on March 24, 2014

### Key Strengths

- Affordability
- Aquatics
- BMX track
- Do more with less
- Great ballfields
- Great staff
- Jim Barnett Park
- Nature Preserves
- Neighborhood parks
- Parks are safe
- Total acreage of parks (270)
- Variety of programs offered
- Veteran-friendly spaces

### Key Weaknesses

- Aging infrastructure
- Communication with outside groups
- Inconsistent customer service
- Indoor pool at capacity
- Lack of consistent brand (signage)
- Lack of park space in North & South Ends
- Lack of trail connection: Green Circle
- Limited program space
- Turf maintenance
- Under staffed in Parks

Other questions asked of the focus group participants were:

- What community issues/needs/problems exist in the City that recreation programs, parks, open space, and trails can impact?
- What do you believe to be the most essential services that the Parks and Recreation Department provides?
- What improvements/changes would you make in the parks, opens space, trails, cultural arts, and recreation facilities, programs, and services in City of Winchester?
- How can the City work to responsibly address improvements/changes, given its resources?

Those responses are summarized in alphabetical order in the boxes that follow.

### Positive Impact

- Bilingual/cultural diversity
- Coordination w/ Frederick County
- Health
- Preserve history and culture
- Socialization with others
- Walkability and Bikeability in city
- War Memorials

### Essential Services for Parks and Recreation

- Affordable programs and opportunities
- Aquatics
- Athletics
- Facilitator of organizations that provide programs and services
- Maintain what we have to highest level possible
- Parks and open space preservation
- Preservation of the South End of Jim Barnett Park
- Youth and family programs

### What Improvements Would You Like to See?

- Acquire park land in the North End
- Complete Green Circle Trail
- Expand usage of neighborhood parks
- Hire more maintenance staff
- Improve grass fields
- Increase awareness of opportunities
- Increase partnerships
- New aquatics center
- Ongoing planning process with citizen engagement
- Upgrade building and facilities

### How to Address Improvements

- Create better awareness
- Collaborate with Frederick County
- Encourage citizen engagement
- Increase local business contributions
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Tap into volunteers
- Use Winchester Parks Foundation more

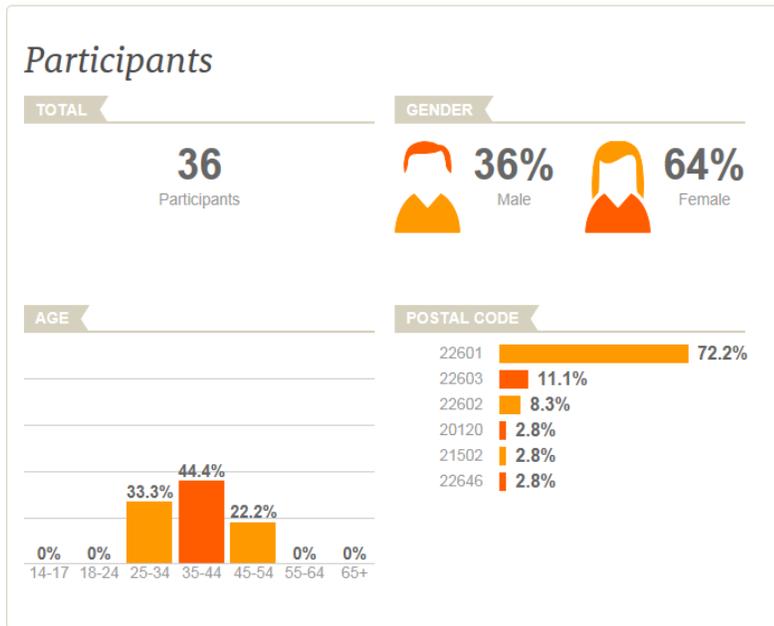
### MindMixer Online Community Engagement

This project included the establishment of an online community engagement site at [www.playyourheartout.mindmixer.com](http://www.playyourheartout.mindmixer.com). The MindMixer online engagement tool was designed to enhance community involvement and obtain additional feedback from people who may not necessarily attend meetings. Community members were asked to respond to questions and submit ideas regarding parks, recreation, and trail services in the City. The site was up and running from June 2014 through October 2014. As shown in **Figure 4** and **Figure 5**, a total of 2,273 users logged into the system, and 36 individuals participated in the web-based community dialogue, providing ideas on a variety of different topics related to parks and recreation. The majority of participants were women, and the average age of the participant was 44.4 years.

**Figure 4: MindMixer Participation Data**



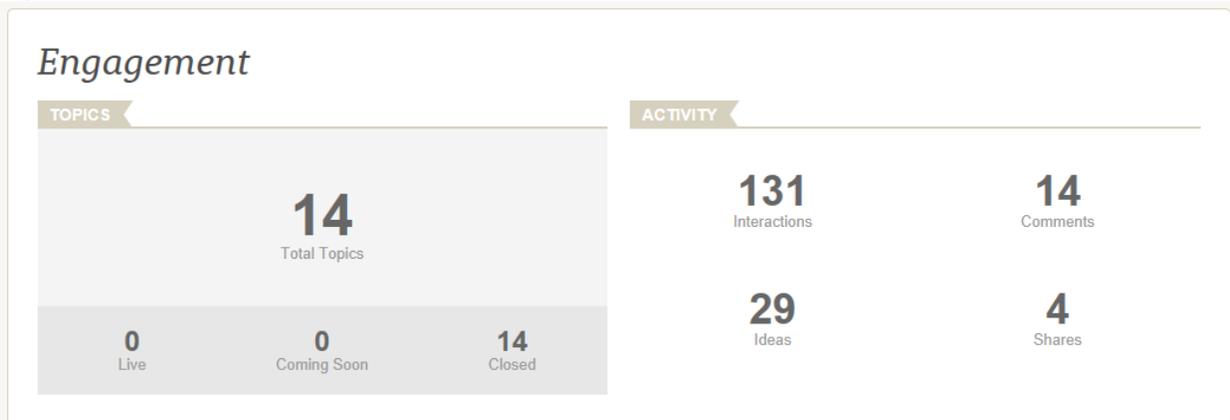
**Figure 5: MindMixer Participant Data**



As shown in **Figure 6**, the site resulted in 131 interactions that generated 29 ideas and 14 comments from the community. While there were many topics discussed, the primary ones were:

- The need complete the Green Circle Trail.
- A desire to develop additional winter activity facilities (ice skating rink).
- Maintaining current parks and facilities.
- Preservation of park land.

**Figure 6: MindMixer Idea Data**



Specific comments to the Winchester MindMixer site have been compiled and provided to the City as a staff resource document.

## **Community Engagement Summary**

The City of Winchester provides a wide variety of facilities, programs, and services to City residents. Citizens recognized that the City, City staff, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board place an exceptionally high value on the parks, open space, and trails available for use in the community. There was also significant appreciation for specialty facilities such as Jim Barnett Park, Green Circle Trail, Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve, the outdoor pool, and the Veterans' Memorials.

Citizens and staff members alike touted the value of the Parks and Recreation Department, in that the facilities, programs, and services it offers promote a healthy community and positive activities for youth, historical preservation, and an economic impact for the City. Comments were shared regarding the importance of preserving natural spaces and how park and recreation programs and services can positively impact the community and the region.

Multiple stakeholders expressed concern over the maintenance and condition of the turf at athletic facilities in the City and the time required to complete the Green Circle Trail. Both of these issues are a priority of the City; however, this is dependent on additional skilled maintenance staff and the ability to pay for improvements. Another significant concern was the shrinking amount of undeveloped space, and to a smaller degree, overall safety in the parks and on the trails.

Beyond the more significant items like athletic field conditions and the completion of Green Circle Trail, other suggested improvements include more aquatic facilities, renovation of the McCormac Amphitheater, preservation of park land, and improved amenities at parks. The veteran community would like to see improvements to the Veterans' Memorials at Jim Barnett Park.

## **E. Citizen Needs Assessment Survey**

The purpose of this study was to gather public feedback on City of Winchester parks and recreation facilities, amenities, and programs. This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist the City of Winchester in the creation of a master plan for existing and possibly future enhancements, facilities, and services.

The survey was conducted using three primary methods: 1) a mail-back survey, 2) an online, invitation-only web survey to further encourage response from those residents already within the defined invitation sample, and 3) an open-link online survey for members of the public who were not part of the invitation sample. The open link survey was distributed through several different methods, including the City E-newsletter, social media, the Department website, and school flyers. The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation sample unless otherwise noted. However, open link responses are discussed, particularly when they differ from the invitation sample.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Melissa Data Corp., a leading provider of data with emphasis on U.S., Canadian, and international address and phone verification as well as postal software. Use of the Melissa Data list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists.

A total of 3,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Winchester residents in June 2014. In August, 3,381 reminder postcards were sent (thus including residents who did not receive the initial round of surveys). The final sample size for this statistically valid survey was 164, resulting in a margin of error of approximately +/- 7.7 percentage points calculated for questions at 50 percent response.<sup>2</sup> The open link survey received an additional 267 responses.

The underlying data were weighted by age to ensure appropriate representation of Winchester residents across different demographic cohorts in the sample. Due to variable response rates by some segments of the population, the underlying results, while weighted to best match the overall demographics of residents, may not be completely representative of some sub-groups of the population, including those in the Latino community. *A full survey report is found in Appendix B.*

## **Demographic Profile of Respondents**

This section of the report discusses the respondent and household demographics of both the invitation and open link samples. By understanding how the characteristics of these two groups differ, it is easier to understand contrasting response patterns for various questions on the survey.

### **Gender**

Most invitation sample respondents are female (65%), while just over a third of respondents are male (35%). Open link respondents also skewed female (70%).

### **Age**

Nearly a third of invitation respondents are under the age of 35, compared to 18% of open link respondents. In addition to having a higher share of representation within the youngest age cohort, there is also a higher share of invitation respondents aged 65 or older (20%) as compared to open link respondents (11%). Meanwhile, open link respondents are much more likely to be aged 35 to 64 (71%) than invitation respondents (49%).

### **Household Profile**

Households with children at home comprised the largest share of invitation sample respondents (44%), distantly followed by empty-nesters (25%), singles without children (16%), and couples without children (14%). Most respondents reported being in a couple, either with or without children (68%).

Open link respondents were also mostly comprised of households with children at home, but much more notably than what was reported within the invitation sample. Sixty-four percent of all open link respondents indicated having children at home. Eighty-five percent (85%) of open link respondents reported being in a couple, either with or without children, and 15 percent of open link respondents are singles.

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<sup>2</sup>For the total invitation sample size of 164, margin of error is +/- 7.7 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is "50%" —the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

**Ethnicity/Race**

Five percent of invitation respondents and four percent of open link respondents consider themselves to be of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. An overwhelming majority of invitation respondents consider themselves to be white (95%). The open link sample also skewed white (87%) but less dramatically than the invitation sample.

**Household Income**

Most invitation sample households (73%) earn an annual income of less than \$100,000 per year, with a bulk of those respondents reporting an annual household income of under \$50,000 (33%). An additional 14 percent of respondents earn between \$100,000 and \$150,000, while 13 percent earn \$150,000 or more per year.

Open link respondents skewed slightly more affluent, with nearly a quarter of respondents earning between \$100,000 and \$150,000 (24 percent) and an additional 16 percent earning \$150,000 or more per year.

**Number of People in Household**

Invitation sample respondents reported an average of 2.7 persons living in the household. Seventeen percent (17%) of invitation respondents reported living alone, 58 percent live in households of 2 to 3 people, and 25 percent live in households with 4 to 10 people.

Open link respondents indicated living in larger households, on average (3.2 members), due to a greater share of couples with children at home within the household profile. Forty-four percent (44%) of open link respondents reported having between 4 and 7 household members.

**Years in the Winchester Area**

Invitation sample respondents have lived in the area for 21.8 years, on average. Open link respondents have lived in the area for less time on average (20.2), but have still lived in the area for a considerable amount of time. Overall, residents of Winchester have lived in the area for long periods of time, on average.

**Own or Rent**

A majority of respondents own their residence, both in the invitation sample (70%) and open link sample (85%).

**Figure 7: Demographic Profile (Part 1)**  
*Invitation Sample vs. Open Link*

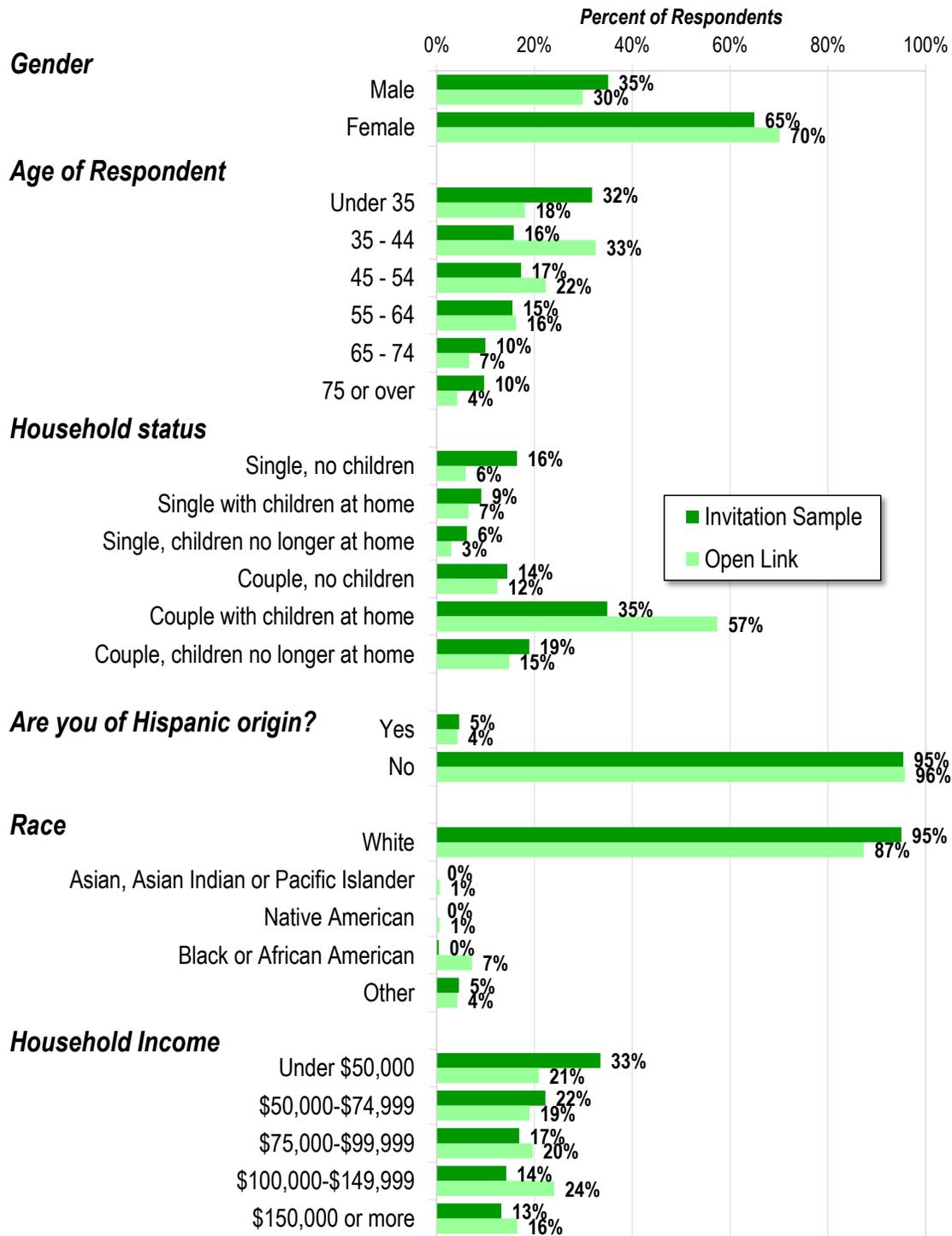
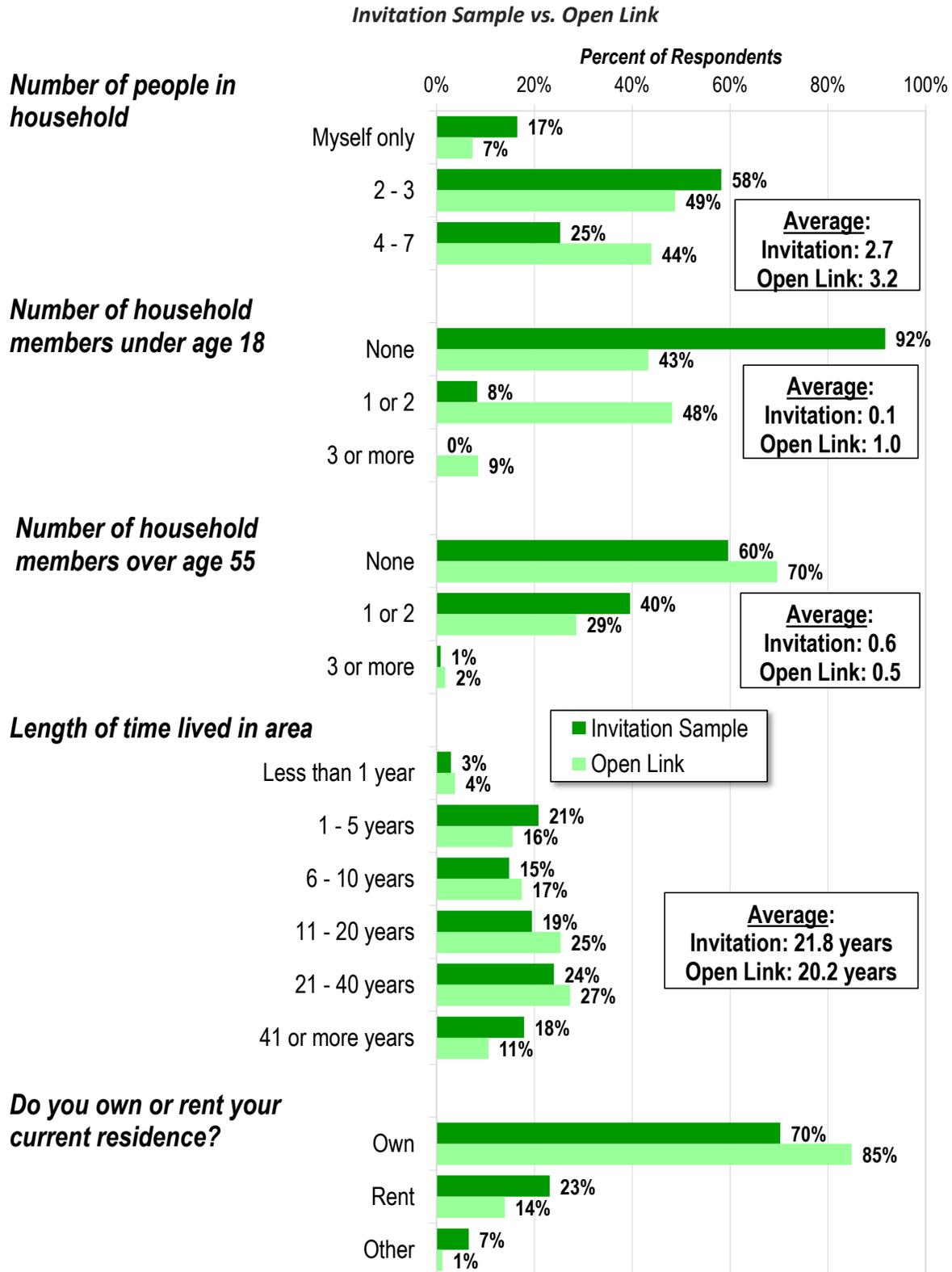


Figure 8: Demographic Profile (Part 2)



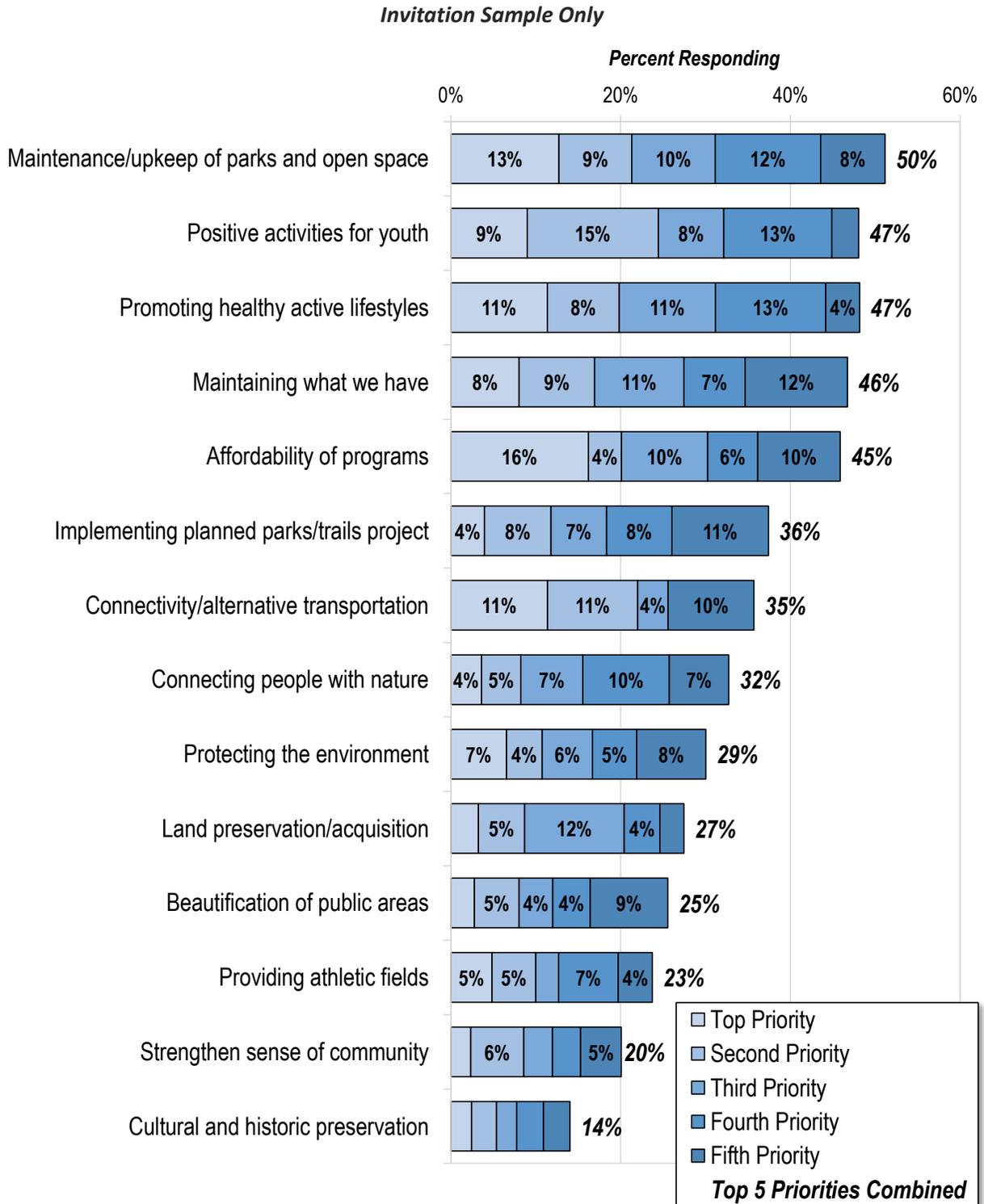
## Values and Vision

Respondents were asked to indicate the top five community issues that the Parks and Recreation Department should focus on improving. **Figure 9** shows the percentage of invitation respondents who reported each value as a first, second, third, fourth, or fifth priority. **Figure 9** also shows the combined ranking of each value—in other words, the percentage of respondents who included the category as one of their top five priorities. This provides the opportunity to see how respondents prioritize various values in relation to one another. As shown, maintenance/upkeep of parks and open space is the top priority among invitation respondents, with 50 percent of respondents including this category as one of their top five priorities. However, several other categories were closely reported as top priorities, including positive activities for youth (47% of respondents including this category as one of their top five), promoting healthy active lifestyles (47%), maintaining what we have (46%), and affordability of programs (45%). Affordability of programs had the highest share of respondents noting this to be the number one community issue to focus on improving (16%).

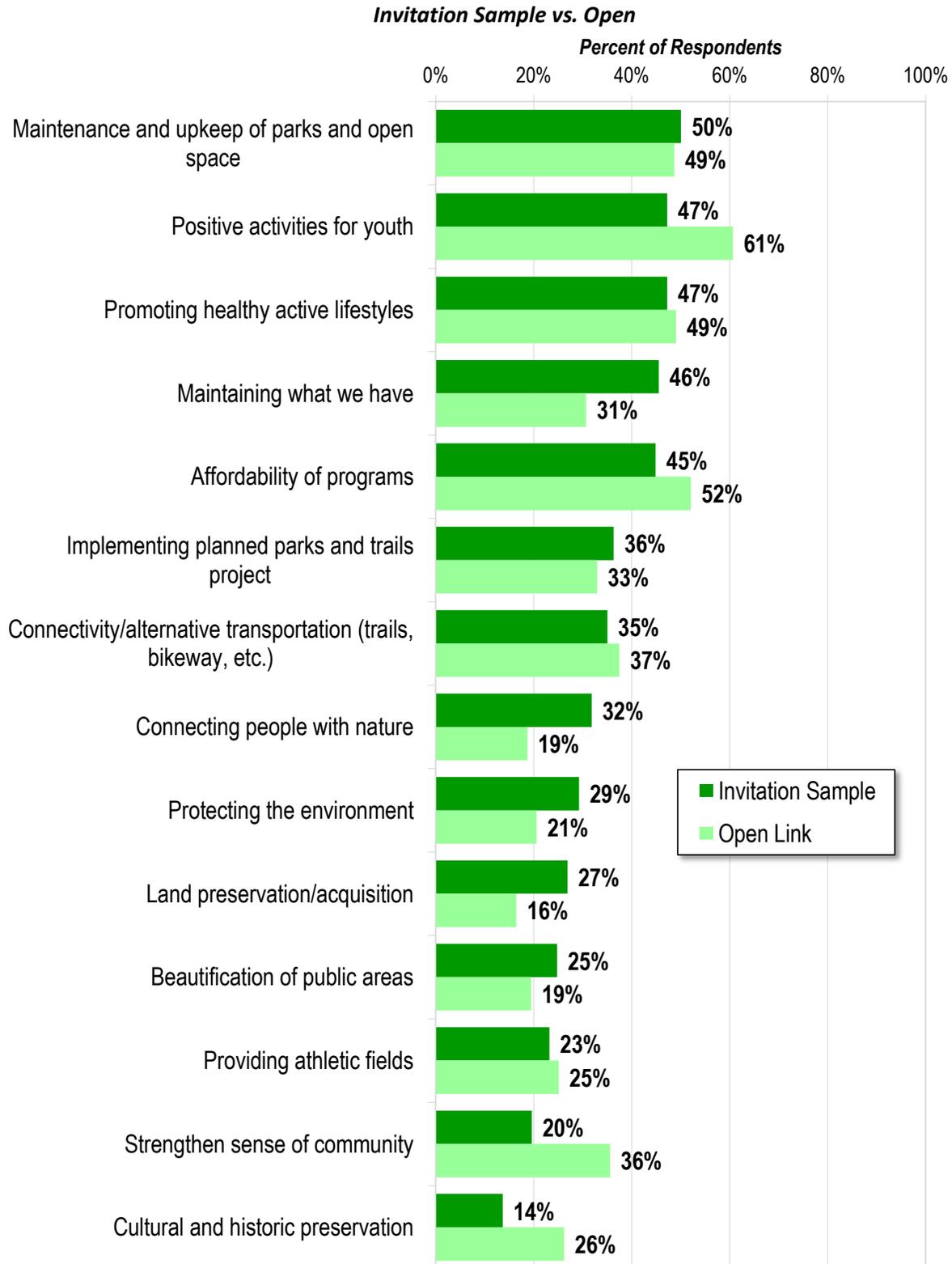
**Figure 10** explores the top five overall priorities between the invitation and open link samples. Among open link respondents, positive activities for youth were identified as the top community issue (61%), followed by affordability of programs (52%), maintenance and upkeeps of parks and open space (49%), and promoting health active lifestyles (49%). Invitation respondents were more likely to prioritize maintaining what we have, connecting people with nature, protecting the environment, and land preservation/acquisition. Meanwhile, open link respondents were more likely to be in favor of positive activities for youth, affordability of programs, strengthening the sense of community, and cultural and historic preservation.

Regardless of survey version, results indicate that all respondents place importance on affordability of programs. Both invitation (16%) and open link (22%) respondents had the highest shares of respondents noting this area of focus to be the number one priority.

**Figure 9: Top Five Community Issues to Focus on Improving**



**Figure 10: Top Five Community Issues to Focus on Improving**



## **Current Use and Ratings of Programs and Classes**

### **Importance of Local Recreation Opportunities**

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the availability of local parks and recreation opportunities to their household on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “not at all important,” and 5 meaning “very important.” As shown in **Figure 11** to follow, local recreation opportunities are considered very important, with 84 percent of invitation respondents providing a rating of “4” or “5” and an average rating of 4.2. Open link respondents were even more likely to indicate these opportunities were important, with 91 percent of respondents providing a rating of “4” or “5” and an average rating of 4.5.

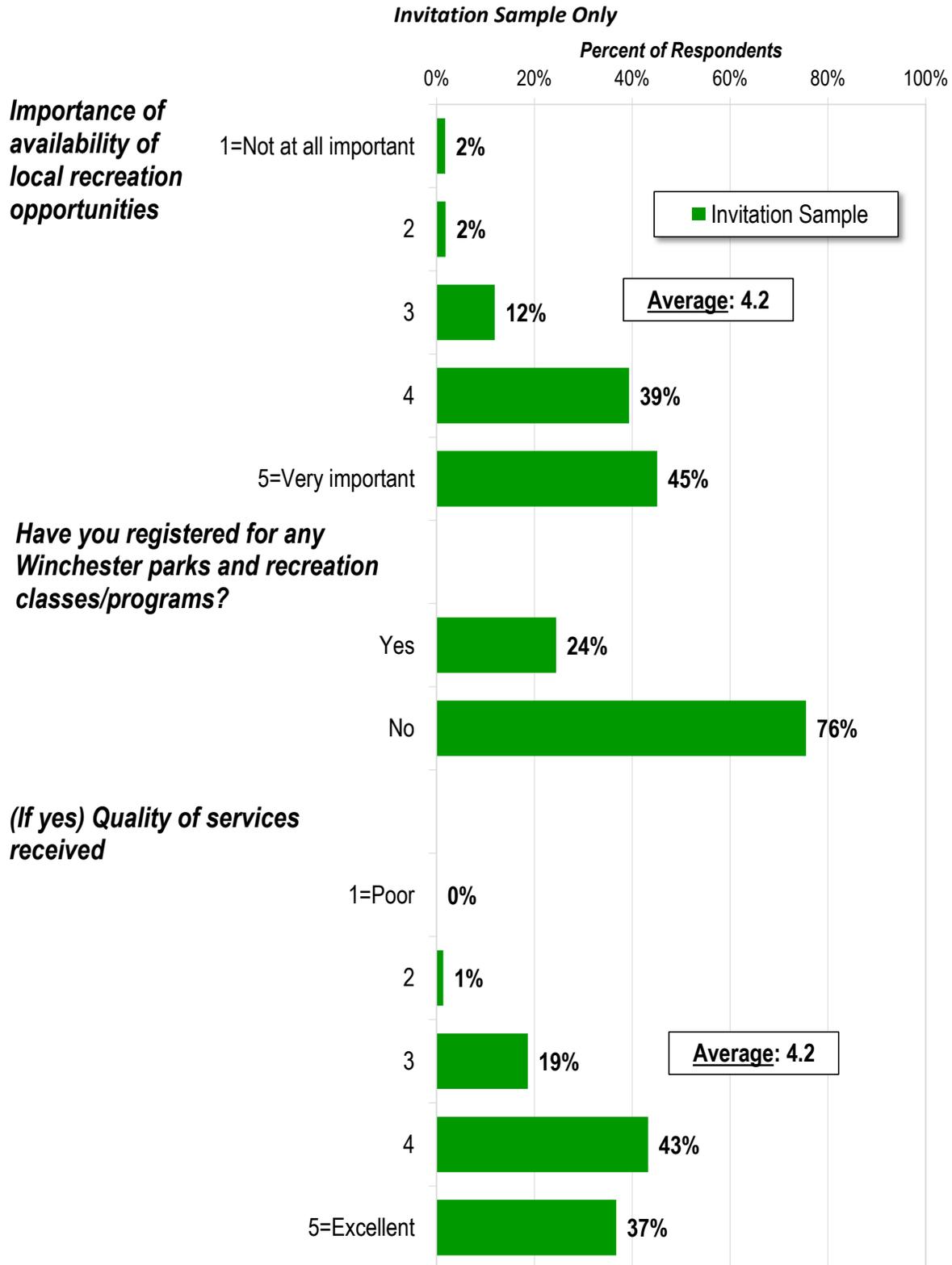
### **Participation in Winchester Parks & Recreation Classes and Programs**

When asked if respondents or members of their household have participated in Winchester recreation classes or programs, just under a quarter of all invitation respondents reported that they had (24%). Meanwhile, open link respondents skew more currently active, with 47 percent of respondents indicating they had registered for classes or programs in the past 12 months.

### **Ratings of Service Received**

Respondents who indicated they had registered for classes or programs in the past year were asked to rate the service they received on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “poor” and 5 meaning “excellent.” Invitation respondents gave an average rating of 4.2, with most respondents providing a rating of “4” (43%), and 37 percent indicating the quality was “5” (“Excellent”). Open link respondents provided an average rating of 4.2, with most giving a rating of “5” (43%). Overall, respondents who had previously utilized Winchester classes and programs had a high degree of satisfaction with the experience.

Figure 11: Current Programs and Facilities: Importance, Use, and Satisfaction



## Use of Winchester Parks and Facilities

Respondents reported the number of times their household used parks and facilities owned and/or operated by Winchester Parks and Recreation in the last 12 months from a list of 24 parks and facilities amenities. Results indicate that respondent households use amenities with varying degrees of frequency. Interestingly, however, invitation and open link responses show the same general ranking of facilities used. Among both groups, Jim Barnett Park was used by the highest share of respondents, followed by the War Memorial Building (Rec Center). Additionally, the pavilions, Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve, outdoor and indoor pools, Green Circle Trail, athletic fields, and Wilkins Lake were used more widely by both invitation and open link respondents than other parks and facilities.

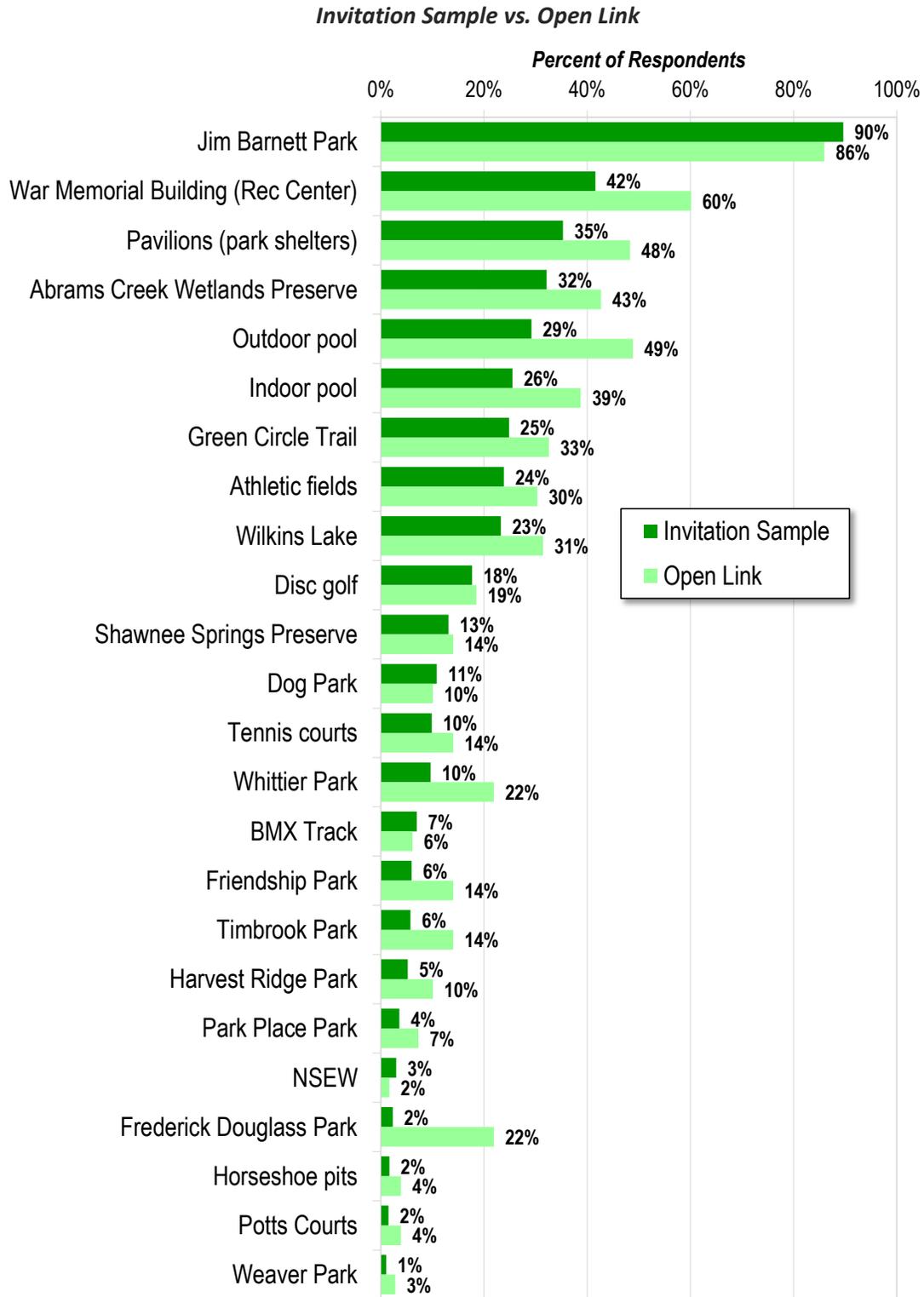
However, across-the-board, higher shares of open link respondents reported using facilities and parks than did invitation respondents. In particular, open link respondents were more likely to have utilized the War Memorial Building (60% vs. 42% of invitation respondents), pavilions (48% vs. 35%), Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve (43% vs. 32%), outdoor pool (49% vs. 29%), indoor pool (39% vs. 26%), athletic fields (30% vs. 24%), Wilkins Lake (31% vs. 23%), Whittier Park (22% vs. 10%), Friendship Park (14% vs. 6%), Timbrook Park (14% vs. 6%), and Frederick Douglass Park (22% vs. 2%).

Respondents also reported the average number of times they used each of these facilities and parks. It is important to evaluate average use in addition to the percentage of households that have used a given facility or park. Although some facilities and parks may be used by a large share of households, they may not be used very frequently. Conversely, a small share of residents may use a park with high frequency.

The following were used at least five times on average by invitation respondents: Jim Barnett Park (27.1 times in the past year on average), War Memorial Building (12.5), indoor pool (12.3), Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve (9.4), disc golf (7.0), Harvest Ridge Park (6.1), and Green Circle Trail (7.4). Invitation respondents had greater average use of Abrams Creek, disc golf, Harvest Ridge Park, Green Circle Trail, pavilions, Park Place Park, and Shawnee Springs Preserve than did open link respondents. Therefore, while open link respondents had a greater variety of use of Winchester parks and facilities, they did not necessarily have a higher average use.

Meanwhile, open link respondents reported greater average use of Jim Barnett Park, the War Memorial Building, Green Circle Trail, outdoor pool, athletic fields, dog park, Wilkins Lake, and Frederick Douglass Park than did invitation respondents. In general, open link respondents are much more likely to utilize Frederick Douglass Park than invitation sample respondents.

**Figure 12: Current Parks and Facilities—Average Frequency of Use in Past Year**



## Importance of Parks and Facilities

Respondents rated the importance of each of the parks and facilities to their household, regardless of having used the park or facility, using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “not at all important” and 5 meaning “very important.” The following had the most frequently reported “4” or “5” ratings and highest averages:

- Jim Barnett Park (with an average rating of 4.6, 93 % of respondents provided a rating of 4 or 5)
- War Memorial Building (4.2 average; 77% rated 4 or 5)
- Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve (4.0 average; 68% rated 4 or 5)
- Pavilions (3.9 average; 67% rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor pool (3.9 average; 65% rated 4 or 5)
- Indoor pool (3.9 average, 63% rated 4 or 5)
- Green Circle Trail (3.9 average, 59% rated 4 or 5)
- Athletic fields (3.7 average, 59% rated 4 or 5)

Second tier of amenities and services includes:

- Wilkins Lake (3.6 average; 47% rated 4 or 5)
- Tennis courts (3.4 average; 43% rated 4 or 5)
- Shawnee Springs Preserve (3.3 average; 38% rated 4 or 5)
- Disc golf (3.2 average; 37% rated 4 or 5)
- Dog park (3.2 average; 35% rated 4 or 5)

Average ratings were lower across the board among open link respondents as compared to invitation respondents. However, open link respondents did have the same top and bottom choices as invitation respondents did, giving the highest average rating for Jim Barnett Park (4.7) and lowest average ratings for Weaver Park (2.2) and NSEW (2.3).

### Comments/Suggestions Regarding Parks and Facilities

A follow-up question asked respondents to provide comments or suggestions for how the parks and facilities could be improved to better meet the needs of their household and/or the community. Both invitation and open link respondents provided a full range of insightful comments, the full set of which should be viewed to fully understand community member desires and needs. However, a few common themes did appear in the comments:

- *Maintain what we have, improve cleanliness of facilities, and fix areas that have gone into disrepair...*
- *Improve safety by paying attention to maintenance of parks and facilities...*
- *Improve and expand aspects of the indoor and outdoor pools. In particular, expanded hours and renovation of the indoor pool...*
- *Improve communications to foster awareness of facilities and services...*
- *Expand trails in the area. In particular, finish the Green Circle Trail...*
- *Expand the availability of restrooms...*

### **Three Most Important Areas that (if Improved) Would Increase Utilization of WPRD Facilities**

In an effort to better understand obstacles to participation, residents were asked to identify the areas that would increase their utilization of WPRD facilities if improved by the City. They were able to select up to three choices from a list of 10 options. The most identified areas for improvement include:

- Awareness of programs/communications (60%)
- Pricing/user fees (42%)
- Additional facilities and amenities (32%)
- Programs I want (30%)

Second tier of areas for improvement:

- Condition/maintenance of parks or building (22%)
- Quality of equipment (16%)
- Hours of operation (15%)
- Customer service/staff knowledge (13%)
- Accessibility (10%)
- Safety (5%)

Open link respondents had generally similar response patterns to invitation respondents. However, open link respondents were more likely to identify the following as areas that would increase their utilization of WPRD facilities:

- Price/users fees (46% open link vs. 42% invitation sample)
- Quality of equipment (24% open link vs. 16% invitation sample)
- Customer service/staff knowledge (15% open link vs. 13% invitation sample)
- Personal safety (9% open link vs. 5% invitation sample)

The results from the invitation survey participants clearly show that improving communications and addressing concerns with pricing/user fees would have the greatest impact on increasing participation. Meanwhile, on the other end of the spectrum, accessibility and safety do not have a great impact on potential future participation.

### **Importance of Future Indoor and Outdoor Facilities over next 5 to 10 Years**

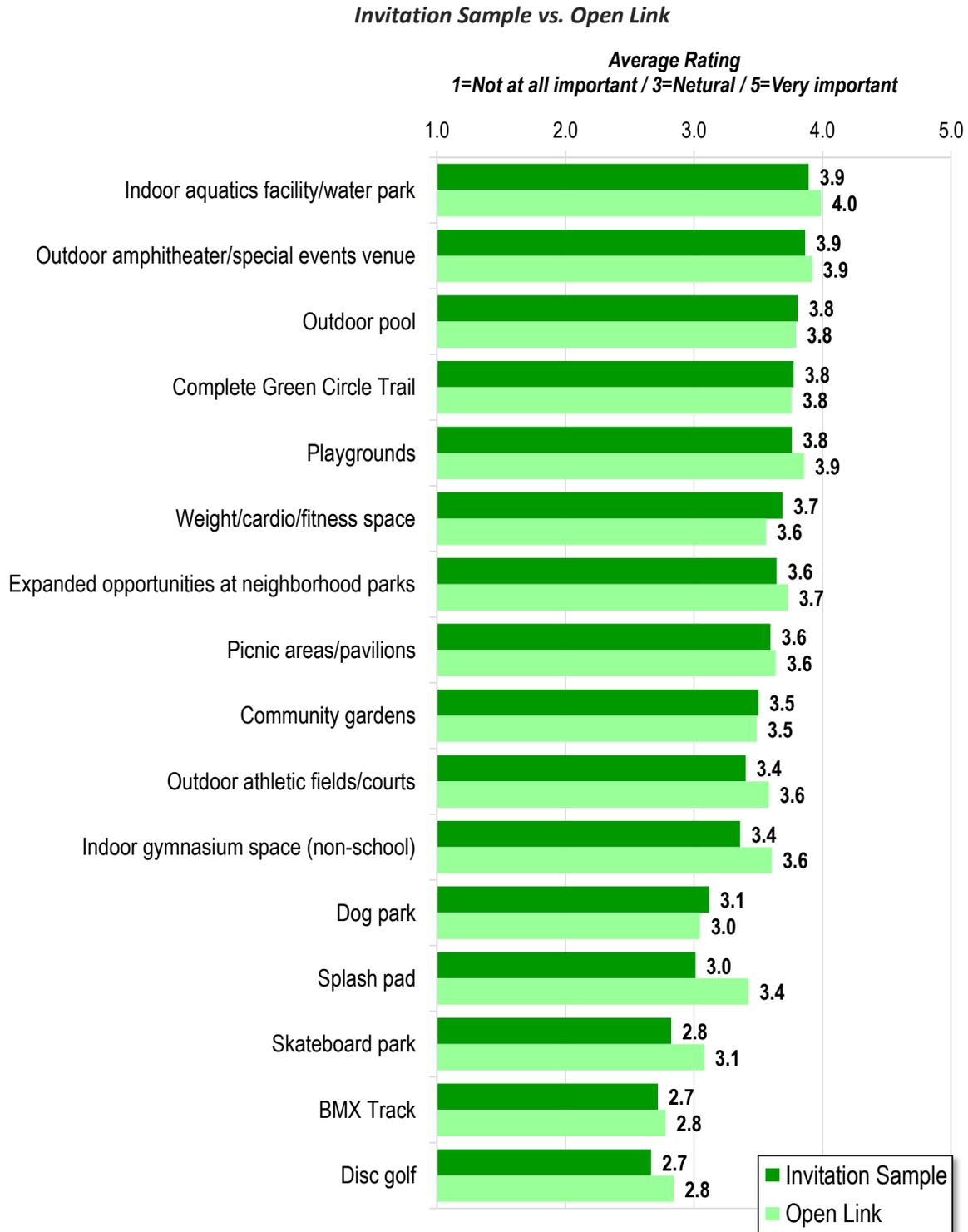
Using a 5-point scale, with 1 meaning “not at all important” and 5 meaning “very important,” respondents rated the importance of adding or improving a list of indoor and outdoor facilities within the City over the next 5 to 10 years. The following had the highest shares of respondents providing a rating of “4” or “5” (“important”):

- Outdoor amphitheater/special events venue (71% of respondents providing a rating of “4” or “5”)
- Indoor aquatics facility/water park (65%)
- Outdoor pool (63%)
- Complete the Green Circle Trail (60%)
- Weight/cardio/fitness space (60%)
- Expanded opportunities at neighborhood parks (56%)
- Playgrounds (53%)
- Community gardens (52%)
- Picnic areas/pavilions (51%)

A few facilities had higher shares of respondents noting the facility was unimportant (providing a rating of “1” or “2”) than important (“4” or “5”). These include disc golf (43 percent not important vs. 26 percent important), skateboard park (40 percent not important vs. 26 percent important), and BMX track (35 percent not important vs. 19 percent important). Splash pad closely followed suit (28 percent not important vs. 30 percent important).

**Figure 13** compares average importance ratings between the invitation and open link samples. Overall, responses patterns are similar, with both groups identifying indoor aquatics facility/water park as most important and BMX track and disc golf as least important. The only area in which invitation respondents provided a higher average importance rating than open link respondents was with regard to a dog park (3.1 vs. 3.0). Meanwhile, open link respondents provided higher average ratings for most of the indoor and outdoor facilities listed. A few areas stood out as more important to open link than invitation respondents. These include outdoor athletic fields/courts (3.6 vs. 3.4), splash pad (3.4 vs. 3.0), and skateboard park (3.1 vs. 2.8).

**Figure 13: Importance of Future Indoor and Outdoor Facilities—Average Rating**



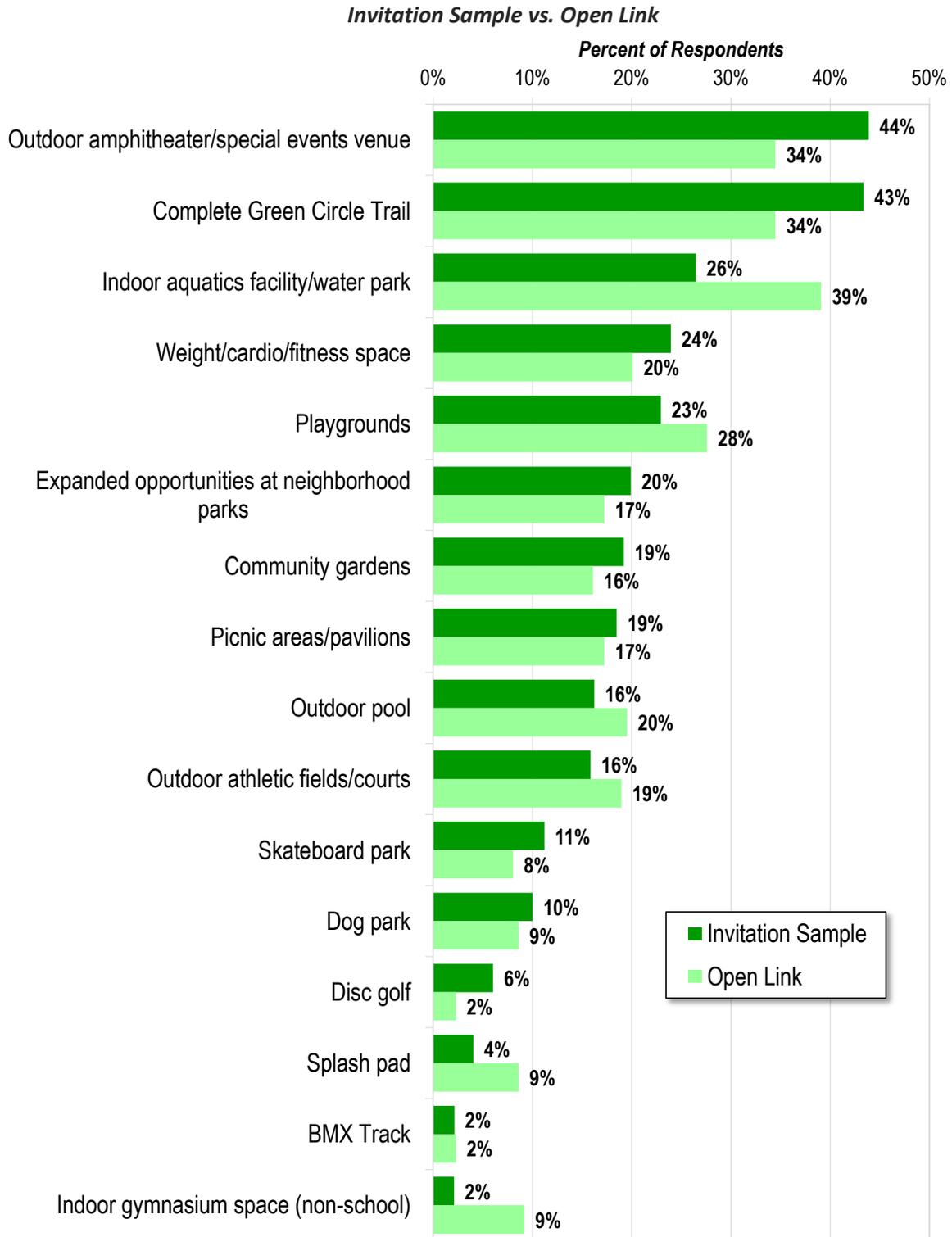
### **Top Priorities for Additions or Improvements of Facilities**

Respondents were asked to indicate their top three priorities for additions or improvements to indoor and outdoor facilities within the City over the next five to ten years. An outdoor amphitheater/special events venue is the top priority, with 44 percent of invitation respondents including this category as one of their top three priorities. This was closely followed by completing the Green Circle Trail, with 43 percent of invitation respondents including this category as one of their top priorities. This choice also had the highest share of respondents noting that it was their number one priority (18%).

A second tier of choices included indoor aquatics facility/water park (26% of respondents indicating this as one of their top three priorities), weight/cardio/fitness space (24%), playgrounds (23%), expanded opportunities at neighborhood parks (20%), community gardens (19%), picnic areas/pavilions (19%), outdoor pool (16%), and outdoor athletic fields/courts (16%). Meanwhile, several choices were selected relatively less among respondents, including skateboard park (11%), dog park (10%), disc golf (6%), splash pad (4%), BMX track (2%), and indoor gymnasium space (2%).

**Figure 14** explores the top three overall priorities between the invitation and open link samples. Several key differences emerge between the two groups. Invitation sample respondents were noticeably more likely than open link respondents to prioritize outdoor amphitheater/special events venue and completing the Green Circle Trail. Meanwhile, open link respondents were more in favor of an indoor aquatics facility/water park, playgrounds, an outdoor pool, splash pads, and indoor gymnasium space. Given that the open link sample has a much greater share of respondents with children in the home (64%) than invitation respondents (44%), the preference toward aquatics and play facilities is not necessarily surprising.

**Figure 14: Future Facilities – Top Three Priorities Combined**



### **In-Need vs. Needs-Met Matrix – Programs, Activities, and Special Events**

It is informative to plot and compare the programs, activities, and special event scores for households in need and needs being met using an “In-Need vs. Needs-Met” matrix. Scores are displayed in this matrix using the mid-points for both questions to divide into four quadrants. **Figure 15** depicts the matrix for invitation respondents. The In-Need scale midpoint was 40 percent (40 percent of households indicated having a need for a program); the Needs-Met midpoint was 48 percent (households indicating a need rated this need as being 48 percent met). The positioning of each program is detailed below.

The upper right quadrant shows the programs, activities, and special events that had more households in need of a program and that program need was being well met. These programs present less urgency, because needs are generally being met. However, given that households report a high level of need, upkeep and continued attention is warranted. The following programs have a high percentage of households in need and are meeting those needs well:

- Swim lessons/aquatic programs
- Outdoor recreation

Programs located in the upper left quadrant are programs with relatively high importance that could be improved. Improving these programs would have a strong impact on the degree to which needs are being met overall.

- Cooking/enrichment classes
- Public art space
- Volunteer opportunities
- Fitness and wellness programs
- Special events
- Arts and crafts programs

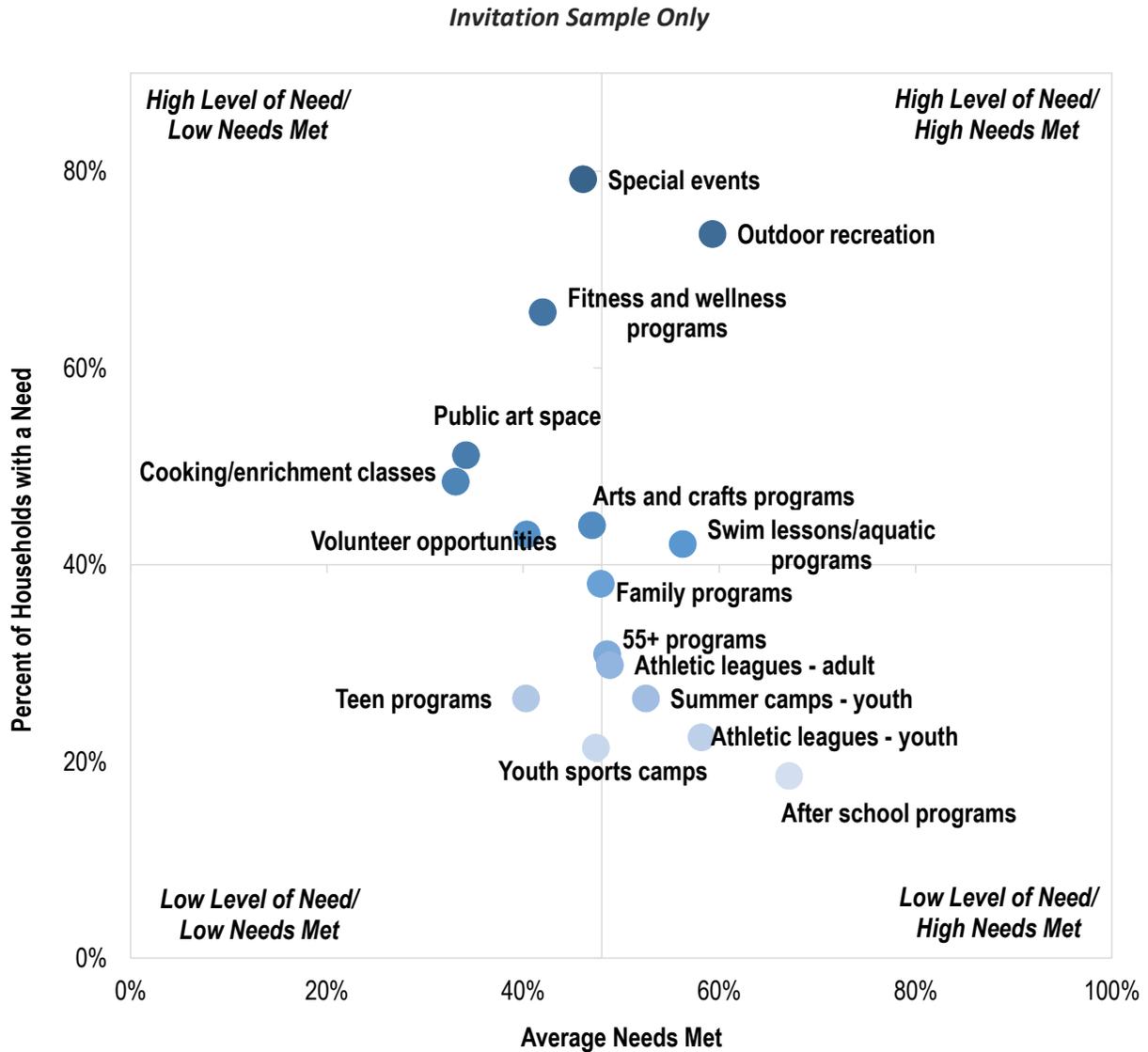
Programs found in the lower left quadrant, further below the in-need midpoint, are programs not meeting needs well; however, they are important to fewer members of the community. These “niche programs” have a small but passionate following; therefore, there is merit to measuring participation and planning for potential future enhancements accordingly.

- Teen programs
- Youth sports programs
- Family programs (on the cusp of needs being met and need not being met)

The lower right quadrant shows programs that are lower importance to many households, yet are meeting their needs very well. It would be beneficial to evaluate whether the resources supporting these programs outweigh the benefits. If a considerable amount of resources are being used to support these programs, reallocating them to the programs in the upper left quadrant may be more productive.

- 55+ programs (on the cusp of not having needs met)
- Adult athletic leagues (on the cusp of not having needs met)
- Youth summer camps
- Youth athletic leagues
- After school programs

Figure 15: Programs, Activities, and Special Events – In-Need vs. Needs Met Matrix



Given that the open link sample differs in many ways from the invitation sample, it is worthwhile to additionally plot and compare open link respondents’ preferences with regards to programs, activities, and special event scores for households using the “In-Need vs. Needs-Met” matrix. **Figure 16** depicts the matrix for open link respondents (the In-Need scale midpoint was 39 percent (39 percent of households indicated having a need for a program); Needs-Met midpoint was 42 percent (households indicating a need rated this need as being 42 percent met). Results are detailed below.

The upper right quadrant shows the programs, activities, and special events that had more households in need of them, and that need was being well met. These programs present less urgency, because needs are generally being met. However, given that households report a high level of need, upkeep and continued attention is warranted. The following programs have a high percentage of households in need and are meeting those needs well:

- Special events
- Outdoor recreation
- Swim lessons/aquatic programs
- Youth athletic leagues
- Youth sports camps

Programs located in the upper left quadrant are programs with relatively high importance that could be improved. Improving these programs would have a strong impact on the degree to which needs are being met overall.

- Family programs
- Arts and crafts programs
- Fitness and wellness programs (on the cusp of needs being met and needs not being met)

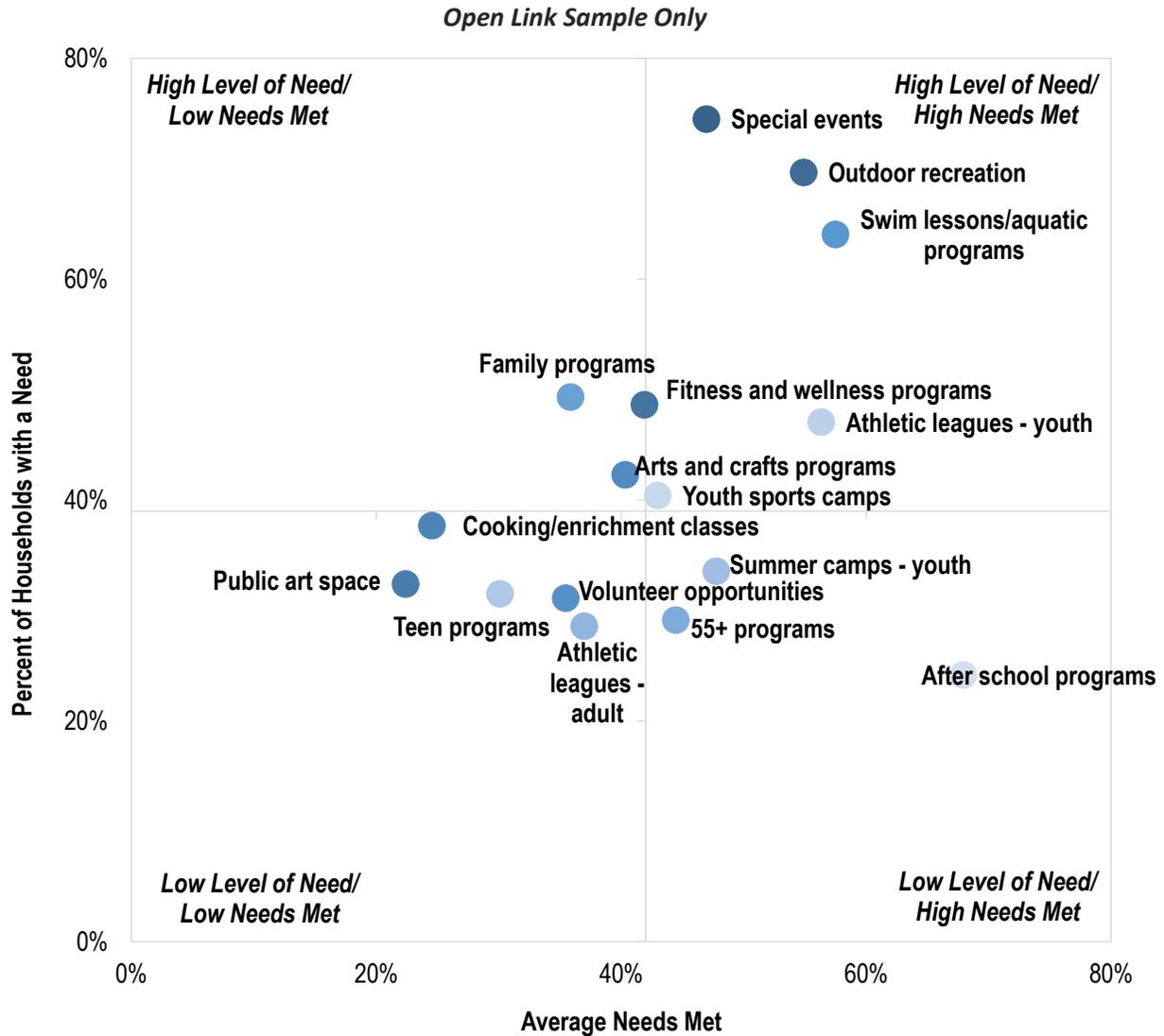
Programs found in the lower left quadrant, further below the in-need midpoint, are programs not meeting needs well; however, they are important to fewer members of the community. These “niche programs” have a small but passionate following; therefore, there is merit to measuring participation and planning for potential future enhancements accordingly.

- Cooking/enrichment classes
- Public art space
- Teen programs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Adult athletic leagues

The lower right quadrant shows programs that are not important to many households, yet are meeting their needs very well. It would be beneficial to evaluate if the resources supporting these programs outweigh the benefits. If a considerable amount of resources are being used to support these programs, reallocating these resources to the programs in the upper left quadrant may be more productive.

- Youth summer camps
- 55+ programs
- After school programs

Figure 16: Programs, Activities, and Special Events – In-Need vs. Needs Met Matrix



Among respondents in both samples, the following similarities exist:

- Outdoor recreation and swim lessons/aquatic programs have a high level of need and a high level of needs being met
- Teen programs have a low level of need and a low level of needs being met
- After school programs, youth summer camps, and 55+ programs have a low level of need but a high level of needs being met

Meanwhile, invitation and open link respondents have differing priorities with regard to high levels of need but low levels of needs being met. Invitation respondents are generally oriented toward arts and volunteer opportunities and classes, while open link respondents are more oriented to youth and family programs.

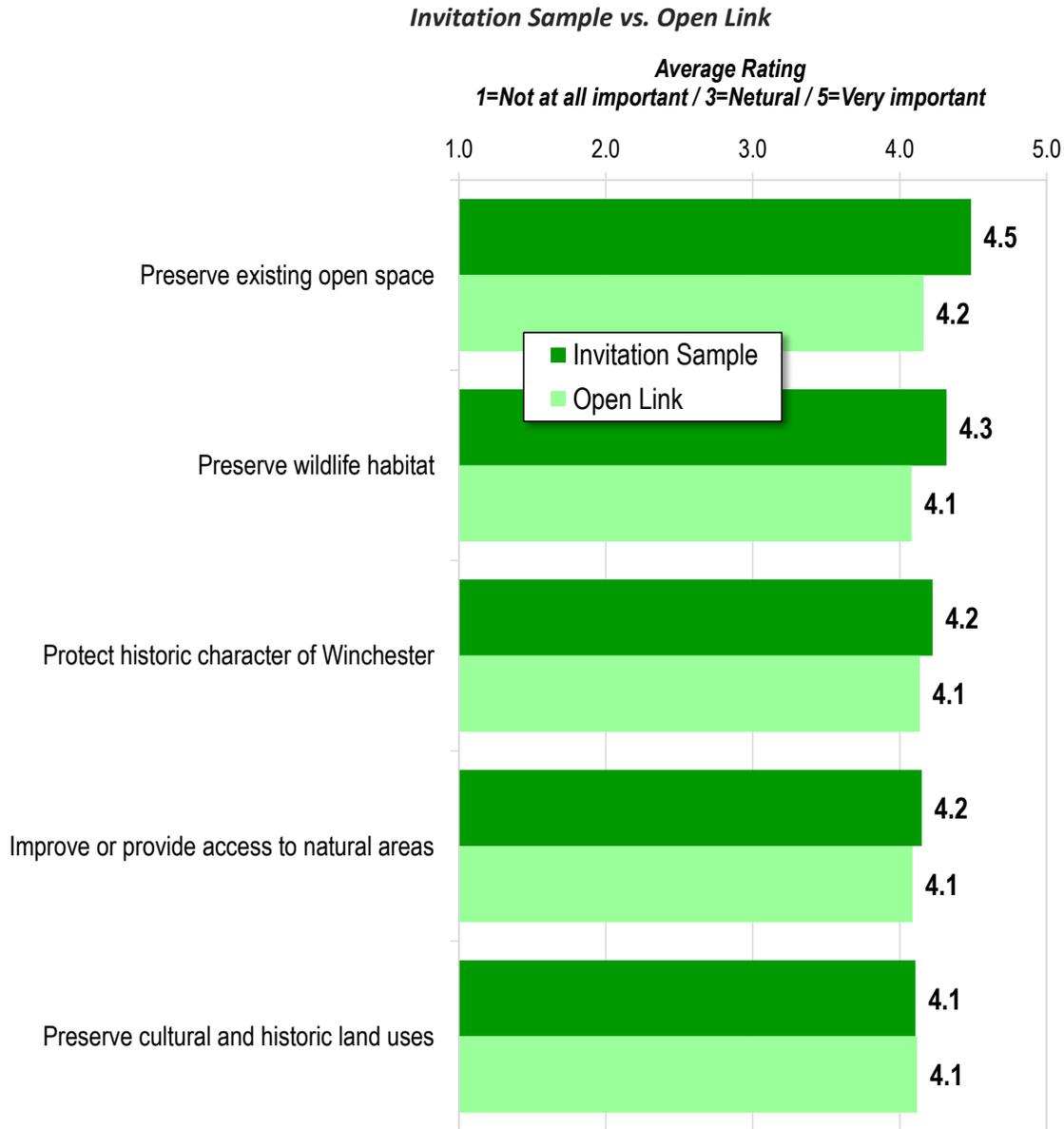
### **Importance of Aspects of Open Space**

Respondents noted how important five different aspects of open space were to them and their household using a 5-point scale, with 1 meaning “not at all important” and 5 meaning “very important.”

Among invitation respondents, all aspects explored earned high importance ratings, with very few respondents providing a rating of “1” or “2” (not important). Preserve existing open space (87% of respondents providing a rating of “4” or “5”) and preserve wildlife habitat (82%) were reported as most important among invitation respondents.

**Figure 17** compares the average ratings for each aspect of open space between invitation and random sample respondents. Ratings are generally similar between the two groups, with preserving existing open space earning the highest average rating and preserving cultural and historic land uses toward the bottom of the list. Overall, invitation respondents provided slightly higher average ratings for each aspect probed. In particular, invitation respondents were more likely to note that preserving existing open space and wildlife habitat were important than open link respondents.

**Figure 17: Importance of Aspects of Open Space—Average Rating**



**Opinions Regarding Program and Facility Fees and Potential Impact of Fees Increases**

**Program Fees**

Most invitation respondents felt that program fees currently charged directly to them by WPRD were acceptable (37%). One percent of invitation respondents reported that they were underpriced, and 15 percent indicated that they were too high. If respondents who did not know/were unsure (46%) are removed, results show that two percent felt that program fees were underpriced, 69 percent felt that they are acceptable, and 28 percent reported that they were too high. Open link respondents were much more likely to note that program fees are acceptable (64%). When don't know responses are taken out (17%), 78 percent of open link respondents noted that fees were acceptable.

### **Facility Fees**

Respondents were also prompted to assess the fees charged for facilities. Overall, invitation respondents noted that facility fees were acceptable (40 percent including don't know/not applicable and 69 percent excluding those respondents). Two percent of respondents noted that fees were underpriced (3 percent when don't know responses are removed), and 16 percent noted that they were too high (28 percent when don't know responses are removed). Open link responses were more similar to invitation responses with regard to facility fees than with program fees. Fifty-four percent (54%) of open link respondents noted that facility fees were acceptable (71 percent when don't know responses are excluded).

### **Potential Impact of Fee Increases**

Respondents were asked what impact, if any, fee increases would have on their current level of participation in programs, services, or use of facilities. Among invitation respondents, results are split across-the-board: 27 percent of respondents said it would not limit their participation, 25 percent said it would limit their participation some, and 21 percent noted it would limit their participation significantly. Meanwhile, 27 percent of respondents were uncertain. Open link respondents were more likely to note that it would not limit their participation (38%). Thirty-one percent (31%) noted that it would limit their participation some, and 17 percent reported that it would limit their participation significantly.

### **Suggestions/Open-Ended Comments**

Respondents were given the opportunity to list any additional comments or suggestions regarding recreation facilities and programs in Winchester. The full set of comments, provided under separate cover, should be viewed in order to understand the extent of issues covered. Several themes emerged from the comments (both invitation and open link) below:

- *Expand trails, increase connectivity, and foster the use of alternate transportation...*
- *Improve communications to increase awareness of offerings...*
- *Better maintain current facilities, including the putt putt and disc golf courses...*
- *Expand parks and open space acquisitions...*

Many took the opportunity to compliment the work of the Winchester Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Summary of Survey Responses**

As with the participants in the focus groups and public meetings, the survey respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction relative to the majority of parks, recreation, trail, facilities, programs, and services provided by the City. Priorities for future development identified by survey respondents (i.e. completing Green Circle Trail, aquatics venue, and trail connection) closely mirror those of the earlier public input opportunities. Survey respondents also showed a desire to maintain what is currently available in Winchester and to preserve the natural and historic assets of the City.



## IV. Public Facilities, Programs, and Financial Analysis

The following is an overview and analysis of the Department's parks and recreation facilities and programs. First, the parks and facilities are reviewed. Second, recreation programs and services are analyzed, and finally, financial information is reviewed.

### A. Parks and Amenities Analysis

The City of Winchester has 13 parks totaling around 270 acres. The parks vary in size (with Jim Barnett Park being the largest at 170 acres) and are distributed widely throughout the City. The parks offer a variety of amenities that include playgrounds, picnic facilities, sports fields, and restrooms. Specialized amenities are also distributed throughout the City, including:

- 50 meter outdoor pool
- Dog park
- Skate board facility
- Disc golf course
- Lighted tennis courts
- Horseshoe courts
- BMX track

#### Highlights of the parks and amenities in the City of Winchester

##### **Jim Barnett Park**

The premier park in Winchester and the largest at 170 acres. Its amenities include War Memorial Recreation Center, the outdoor pool, athletics fields, fitness trails, picnic shelters, horseshoe courts, the skateboard pavilion, BMX track, fishing, playgrounds, basketball courts, a disc golf course, a dog park, and tennis courts. In both the focus groups and survey, Jim Barnett Park is considered the greatest asset and the greatest priority to preserve.

##### **Fredrick Douglass Park**

Located in the North section of the city, park amenities include athletic facilities, picnic shelters, trails, and a playground.

##### **Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve**

The Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve is a permanently protected 25-acre wetland and natural area. Although bisected by railroad tracks and surrounded by homes and other developments, the wetlands support a remarkable diversity of plant and animal life that has attracted considerable attention from biologists. The Winchester Green Circle path crosses wetlands here that are home to over 100 bird species and more than a dozen plants on Virginia's Rare Plants List.

### **Shawnee Springs Preserve**

Shawnee Springs Preserve is a 14-acre natural area that was donated to the City of Winchester Department by the Thomas Scully family. Shawnee Springs is the site of the largest field hospital during the Civil War and its overall history chronicles the development of Winchester. The landscape is also as diverse as its history, containing forested uplands, once-quarried limestone outcroppings, alluvial floodplains, and open fields, along with wetlands and a number of springs. A 1738 linear foot trail has recently been constructed through the wooded portion of the area.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

Winchester has a variety of Neighborhood Parks well distributed around the city. Some of the parks only offer green space, while others have athletics fields, pavilions, playgrounds, and trails. When asked about the importance of open space on the survey, the top two responses were preserve existing open space (87 percent of respondents providing a rating of “4” or “5”) and preserve wildlife habitat (82%) were reported as most important among invitation respondents.

## **B. Recreation Programs and Services**

### **Recreation Programming**

The City of Winchester Parks and Recreation Department provides a variety of recreation programs and services to members of the Winchester community. Recreation programs and services focus on a range of core service areas that include:

- Youth Athletics
- Adult Athletics
- Aquatics
- After School Programming
- Health and Wellness
- Enrichment
- Environmental Education
- Special Events
- General Recreation Service and Outreach

The Parks and Recreation Department uses a variety of facilities to house recreation programs such as:

- City athletic fields
- School District gymnasiums
- War Memorial Building
- City parks
- Outdoor pool

Recreation programming highlights include:

- Total classes offered in fiscal year 13/14 was 205
- Total resident enrollment was 2,113
- Total non-resident enrollment was 370
- Percentage of slots filled was 88.5%
- Drop-in visits to the War Memorial Building was 23,717

### Survey Input

On a scale of 1 to 5, where community needs were ranked between 1= Not at All Met, and 5 = Completely Met, 69% of survey respondents rated After School Programming as 4 (mostly) or 5 (completely) meeting the needs.

### Special Events (Community Celebrations)

The Parks and Recreation Department hosts a number of special events throughout the year that provide the community the opportunity to gather and celebrate the City's history and cultural diversity.

Events include:

- Rockin' Independence Eve Fireworks – July 3<sup>rd</sup>
- World Explorer Obstacle Course
- Splash Bash
- 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Library 5K and Kids Run
- Movies on the Mall
- Spring Fling
- Alice in Wonderland Tea

### Survey Input

- Alice in Wonderland Tea Party

When asked to rank the most important, second most important, and third most important programs and activities needs to their household, the majority of respondents indicated special events as the most important, followed by outdoor recreation, and fitness and wellness programs.

### Communication

The Department uses various media to communicate the availability of its programs and services to residents, non-residents, and visitors. These resources include: prior registration data, *The Winchester Star*, Parks and Recreation Activity Guide, word of mouth, local cable (Cable Channel 6), the City website, Facebook, news releases, email, CitE-News, ActivitE-News, posters, and flyers. The Parks and Recreation Activity Guide is considered the primary form of marketing for all programs and services.

## C. Financial Analysis

Like most cities across the United States, Winchester has been forced to reduce budgets for most city services. The Parks and Recreation Department is no exception and has made every effort to maintain its high quality facilities, programs, and services with fewer resources and a cost recovery philosophy.

The Winchester Parks and Recreation Department budget information for fiscal years 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 is provided in **Table 5** along with cost recovery and subsidy.

## Expenses

The Winchester Parks and Recreation Department's expenses are broken down into eight Divisions:

- Supervision
- Maintenance
- Recreation Activities
- Outdoor Swimming Pool
- Indoor Swimming Pool
- War Memorial and Additions
- School Age Child Care
- Athletic Programs

## Revenues

Revenues generated through Parks and Recreation Department facilities, programs, and services provide the bulk of non-tax revenue for the Department. The sources of revenue are:

- Facility Rentals
- Recreation Activities
- Indoor Pool
- Outdoor Pool
- Memberships
- Athletics
- Child Care
- Concessions

## Cost Recovery

**Table 5** shows budget and cost recovery information for Winchester Parks and Recreation Department.

**Table 5: Winchester Parks and Recreation Department – Recreation Services Budget Information**

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
<b>Expenses</b>			
Recreation Services*	\$1,138,495	\$1,138,828	\$1,201,090
<b>Revenues</b>			
Recreation Services	\$577,980	\$540,781	\$633,000
<b>Recreation Fund Subsidy</b>	(\$560,515)	(\$598,047)	(\$568,090)
<b>Recreation Fund Cost Recovery</b>	51%	47%	53%
<b>*Budget does not include Supervision or Maintenance</b>			

For 2012/13 the recreation services fund cost recovery, which is primarily for recreation programming, Child Care, and facility rental is approximately 53 percent (**Table 5**). This does not include General Fund expenditures for Supervision or Maintenance. If these were included, the cost recovery would be about 25 percent.





## V. Summary of Overall Analysis

Public leaders in the United States are increasingly recognizing that public recreation facilities and related “Quality of Life” amenities are not secondary services provided by governmental agencies but are in fact integral to creating communities where people want to live, work, learn, and visit. These services should be seen as investments in the long-term vitality and economic sustainability of any vibrant and attractive community. Winchester’s Parks and Recreation Department recognizes this and seeks to make recreational and services improvements, enhancing the community for years to come.

### A. Areas of Focus and Action Steps

The following Areas of Focus with Action Steps are outlined to create a process to move forward. Over the next five to ten years, many influences will impact the success of the development of future facilities, programs, and services. Funding availability, staff buy-in, and political and community support will play significant roles in future planning efforts.

<i>Area of Focus 1: Ensure continuation of the high quality recreation facilities, parks, trails, open spaces, programs, and services residents of Winchester have come to expect.</i>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Resource Impact/Budget Requirement</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<p><b>1.1</b> Complete a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete quantitative and qualitative inventory and map of parks, trails, open space, and recreational facilities, including level of service and gap analysis.</li> <li>• Provide an analysis of current programs and services in relation to survey results, identified gaps and unmet needs, market conditions, and alternative providers.</li> <li>• Identify priorities of future development of parks, programs, and facilities (including: outdoor amphitheater, aquatics center, additional recreation center, trails, bikeways, etc.).</li> <li>• Review Feasibility Study for McCormac Amphitheater (for if/when funds become available).</li> <li>• Develop capital improvement plan, cost, and phasing recommendations and implementation plan for priority items/projects.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Time/Professional Services (\$40,000 to \$60,000)</p>	<p>2015/2016 Research</p> <p>2016/2017 RFP &amp; Bid Process; Master Plan Development</p>
<p><b>1.2</b> Create a short term plan to address immediate staffing needs and priority projects in coordination with the FY16 Budget Development and capital improvement project (CIP) annual review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase park maintenance staffing to meet current demand for services and develop plan for future growth.</li> <li>• Address park maintenance backlog of projects and annual maintenance needs.</li> <li>• Address aging infrastructure.</li> <li>• Work with Public Services and Planning to complete the Green Circle Trail.</li> <li>• Brand Parks and Facilities: signage and style.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Time/Professional Services (TBD)</p>	<p>2015 – 2016</p>

<p><b>1.3</b> Identify strategies for maintaining the quality of current programs and services in a cost effective manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Public Services to maximize cost savings in parks, trails, open park spaces, and facilities.</li> <li>• Utilize various evaluation methods and instruments to measure level of services in programs offered to the community.</li> <li>• Emphasize continued training and mentoring of staff to ensure continuous improvement and customer satisfaction.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Time/Staff Training/TBD Public Services</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><b>1.4</b> Nurture and promote relationships to maximize partnerships and agreements with community based organizations and businesses, as well as Fredrick County and Shenandoah University.</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	<p>On-going</p>

**Area of Focus 2: Evaluate our resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy and process to ensure financial stability.**

Actions	Resource Impact/Budget Requirement	Timeframe to Complete
<p><b>2.1</b> Develop a resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy, model, and policy that is grounded in the values, vision, and mission of Winchester.</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	<p>2015 – 2016</p>
<p><b>2.2</b> Establish a pricing methodology that continuously reflects community values, while generating adequate revenues to sustain the City of Winchester facilities, and Parks and Recreation Department’s programs and services.</p>	<p>Staff Time/Professional Services if needed</p>	<p>2015 – 2016</p>

**Area of Focus 3: Develop comprehensive marketing, communication, and community engagement strategy for Parks and Recreation programs and services.**

Actions	Resource Impact/Budget Requirement	Timeframe to Complete
<p><b>3.1</b> Develop and implement a plan for increased registrations, user participation, and community engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community awareness of programs and services offered.</li> <li>• Utilize technology to provide convenient consumer based access to registration and other services.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Time/Marketing Funds</p>	<p>2015 – 2016</p>

Actions	Resource Impact/Budget Requirement	Timeframe to Complete
<p><b>3.2</b> Identify, analyze, and enhance communication methods to best suit the needs of the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with City PIO to increase use of web based and social media for cost effective communications.</li> <li>• Focus improved “storytelling” on the value of parks and recreation programs and services to the community.</li> </ul>	Staff Time	On-going
<p><b>3.3</b> Conduct focus group meetings (work sessions) with various stakeholder groups on an annual basis to identify and analyze changing interests, trends, and needs. Focus groups might include identified markets such as active adults, teens, seniors, sports associations, and preschool parents, etc.</p>	Staff Time	Ongoing
<p><b>3.4</b> Integrate and coordinate program offerings reflective of the city-wide initiatives, recreation programs, services, and opportunities. <i>Play Your Heart Out – Winchester.</i></p>	Staff Time/Program Materials	Ongoing

**Area of Focus 4:** Evaluate current program and service delivery to ensure that it reflects the cultural diversity and needs of the City of Winchester.

Actions	Resource Impact/Budget Requirement	Timeframe to Complete
<p><b>4.1</b> Provide additional programming for families, seniors, and teens that are culturally diverse.</p>	Staff Time/Program Materials	2015 – 2016
<p><b>4.2</b> Increase programming of aquatics, wellness/fitness, cultural programming, and special events, and for special needs populations.</p>	Staff Time/Program Materials	2015 – 2016



# Appendix A – Trends in Parks and Recreation

The following information highlights relevant regional, and national outdoor recreation trends from various sources that may influence the City of Winchester’s recreation planning for the next several years.

The highest ranking age cohort in the City is 25-34 (15.4% of the population) followed by the age 45-54 cohort (12.8 %). Additionally, the 55-85+ cohort is expected to grow from 24.9% in 2010 to 28.3% in 2018. Planning for the next ten years suggests a growing demand for programs and services for young adults, Baby Boomers, and seniors.

## Demographic Trends in Recreation

### Multiculturalism

Our country is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In May 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that non-white babies now account for the majority of births in the United States. “This is an important tipping point,” stated William H. Frey,<sup>3</sup> the senior demographer at the Brookings Institution, describing the shift as a, “...transformation from a mostly white Baby Boomer culture to the more globalized multi-ethnic country that we are becoming.” Cultural and ethnic diversity adds a unique flavor to communities expressed through distinct neighborhoods, multicultural learning environments, restaurants, places of worship, museums, and nightlife.<sup>4</sup>

In the United States, the Hispanic population increased by 43 percent over the last decade, compared to five percent for the non-Hispanic portion, and accounted for more than half of all the population growth. According to Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the California State University at Chico, the growing racial and ethnic diversity is particularly important to recreation and leisure service providers, as family and individual recreation patterns and preferences are strongly shaped by cultural influences.<sup>5</sup>

As the recreation field continues to function within a more diverse society, race and ethnicity will become increasingly important in every aspect of the profession. More than ever, recreation professionals will be expected to work with, and have significant knowledge and understanding of, individuals from many cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

Winchester’s demographic profile indicates that 18.4 percent of the population is Hispanic (any race), 10.8 percent is African-American alone, 2.3 percent is Asian alone, and 10.5% is some other race alone.

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<sup>3</sup> Adam Serwer, “The End of White America,” Mother Jones, <http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/05/end-white-america>, May 17, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Baldwin Ellis, “The Effects of Culture & Diversity on America”, [http://www.ehow.com/facts\\_5512569\\_effects-culture-diversity-america.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_5512569_effects-culture-diversity-america.html), accessed on Sept. 20, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Emilyn Sheffield, “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today,” Parks and Recreation, July 2012 p. 16-17.

**Outdoor Participation varies by Ethnicity:** Participation in outdoor activities is higher among Caucasians than any other ethnicity and lowest among African Americans in nearly all age groups.

**Minority Youth, More Focused on School:** Minority youth participants cite school work as the top reason they don't get out more often – a barrier they cite more prominently than Caucasian youth.

**Hispanics, Looking for Nearby Outdoor Recreation:** Hispanic participants and nonparticipants alike cite a lack of access to nearby places to participate in outdoor activities as a barrier to participation more often than other ethnicities.

### **Recreational Preferences among Ethnic/Racial Groups (Self-Identifying):**

Nationwide participation in outdoor sports in 2012 was highest among Caucasians in all age groups and lowest among African-Americans, according to the 2013 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report."<sup>6</sup> The biggest difference in participation rates was between Caucasian and African American adolescents, with 64 percent of Caucasians ages 13-17 participating and only 46 percent of African Americans in the same age group.

#### **African-Americans**

African American youth ages 6-17 (54% participation), are the only age group in this demographic to participate in outdoor recreation at a rate of more than 50 percent. By comparison, Caucasians in four of the five age groupings participated in outdoor sports at rates of 60 percent or more, with only those aged 45+ (40% participation) participating at under 50 percent. According to the 2013 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report," the most popular outdoor activities among African-Americans are: running and jogging (19%), fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (11%); road and mountain biking and BMX (11%), birdwatching/wildlife viewing (5%), and camping (car, backyard, and RV) (4%).

#### **Caucasians**

According to the 2013 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report," the most popular outdoor activities among Caucasians are: running and jogging (18%), fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (17%), road and mountain biking and BMX (16%), camping (car, backyard, and RV) (16%), and hiking (14%).

#### **Hispanics (Any Race)**

Participation in outdoor sports among those who identify as Hispanic is at seven percent nationwide, according to the 2013 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report."<sup>7</sup> Those who do get outdoors, however, participate more frequently than other outdoor participants, with an average of 43 outings per year. Hispanic youth (ages 6-17) are the most likely age group to participate in outdoor recreation, in the Hispanic demographic, followed closely by those in the 25-44 age range. The most popular outdoor activities among Hispanics are: running and jogging (22%), road and mountain biking and BMX (17%), fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (14%), camping (car, backyard, and RV) (11%), and hiking (9%).

### **Multiculturalism and Marketing**

Today the marketplace for consumers has dramatically evolved in the United States from a largely Anglo demographic, to the reality that the United States has shifted to a large minority consumer base known as "new majority."

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<sup>6</sup> "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2013," Outdoor Foundation, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2013," Outdoor Foundation, 2013.

The San Jose Group, a consortium of marketing communications companies specializing in reaching Hispanic and non-Hispanic markets of the United States, suggests that today's multicultural population of the United States, or the "new majority," is 107.6 million, which translates to about 35.1 percent of the country's total population. The United States' multicultural population alone could essentially be the 12<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world.<sup>8</sup> Parks and recreation trends in marketing leisure services continue to emerge and should be taken into consideration in all planning efforts, as different cultures respond differently to marketing techniques.

## Parks and Recreation Facilities Trends

### Aquatics/Water Recreation Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), swimming ranked third nation-wide in terms of participation in 2012.<sup>9</sup> Outdoor swimming pools are not typically heated and open year round. Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for "inactives" in 6 of 8 age categories in the SFIA "2013 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report," representing a significant opportunity to engage inactive populations. Nationally, there is an increasing trend toward indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional indoor and outdoor amenities like "spray pads" are becoming increasingly popular as well. In some cities and counties spray pools are popular in the summer months and turn into ice rinks in the winter months.

The 2013 "Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report" provided nation-wide trends for various outdoor activities, including the following water recreation activities: board sailing/windsurfing, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, stand-up paddling, and wakeboarding (**Table 6**). Among water recreation activities, boardsailing/windsurfing has had the largest increase in participation in the past three years (17.6% increase) followed by whitewater kayaking (13.3% increase). Participation in fly fishing is up while other fishing activities are down in the past three years. Stand-up paddling had the highest number of new participants of all sports rated in the past year, while rafting participation is down over the past three years.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "SJG Multicultural Facts & Trends," San Jose Group, <http://blog.thesanjosegroup.com/?p=275>, posted October 25, 2010

<sup>9</sup> National Sporting Goods Association, "2012 Participation – Ranked by Total Participation," 2013.

<sup>10</sup> "Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2013," Outdoor Foundation, 2013.

**Table 6: Water Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands)  
(6 years of age or older)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	3 Year Average Change
Boardsailing/Windsurfing	1,307	1,128	1,607	1,151	1,593	17.6%
Canoeing	9,935	10,058	10,553	9,787	9,839	-0.6%
Fishing (Fly)	5,941	5,568	5,478	5,360	6,012	2.6%
Fishing (Freshwater/ Other)	40,331	40,961	38,860	39,071	39,135	-1.5%
Kayaking (Recreational)	6,240	6,212	6,465	8,229	8,144	10.1%
Kayaking (White Water)	1,242	1,369	1,842	1,546	1,878	13.3%
Rafting	4,651	4,318	4,460	3,821	3,690	-4.8%
Sailing	4,226	4,342	3,869	3,725	3,958	-2.8%
Stand Up Paddle Boarding	no data	no data	1,050	1,242	1,542	no data
Wakeboarding	3,544	3,577	3,645	3,389	3,348	-2.1%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2013 (numbers in thousands).

### Dog Parks

Dog parks are a rising trend for parks and recreation. In 2013, dog parks were the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities for the second year in a row. *Recreation Management* magazine<sup>11</sup> suggests that they can represent a relatively low-cost way to provide an oft-visited a popular community amenity. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with “designed-for-dogs” amenities like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few. According to *Dog Fancy* magazine, an ideal dog park should include the following:

- One acre or more surrounded by a 4- to 6-foot fence
- Shade and water
- Adequate drainage
- Parking near the site
- A double gated entry
- Benches
- Pet-waste disposal stations with pickup bags and covered waste receptacles

### Fitness Programming

There have been many changes in fitness programs in the last 15 years. What clients wanted in 2000 is not necessarily what they want today. The American College of Sports Medicine’s (ACSM’s) *Health and Fitness Journal*<sup>12</sup> has conducted an annual survey since 2007 to determine trends that would help create a standard for health and fitness programming. **Table 7** shows survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry. Strength training remains solid at number two for the second year in a row, and body weight training appears for the first time in the top 20. Zumba and outdoor activities appeared in the top 10 for the first time in 2012 and remain at 12, one of the biggest trends in fitness over the past three years.

<sup>11</sup> Emily Tipping, “2013 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation,” *Recreation Management*, June 2013.

<sup>12</sup> “Walter R. Thompson, “Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012,” *Health & Fitness Journal*, American College of Sports Medicine, 2011.

**Table 7: Top 10 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2007 and 2013**

2007	2013
1.Children and obesity	1. Educated and experienced fitness professionals
2.Special fitness programs for older adults	2. Strength training
3.Educated and experienced fitness professionals	3. Body weight training
4. Functional fitness	4. Children and obesity
5. Core training	5 Exercise and weight loss
6 Strength training	6. Fitness programs for older adults
7. Personal training	7. Personal training
8. Mind/Body Exercise	8. Functional fitness
9 Exercise and weight loss	9 Core training
10. Outcome measurements	10. Group personal training

Source: American College of Sport Medicine

### Shade Structures

Communities around the country are considering adding shade structures as well as shade trees to their parks, playgrounds, and pools. In a June 2011 article in *USA Today*, Liz Szabo notes that such structures serve as, "...a weapon against cancer and against childhood obesity."<sup>13</sup> Such structures both reduce future cancer risk and promote exercise among children. A 2005 study found that melanoma rates in people under 20 rose three percent a year between 1973 and 2001, possibly due to a thinning of the ozone layer in the atmosphere. It is recommended that children seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., but with so little shade available, kids have nowhere to go. Additionally, without adequate shade, many play areas are simply too hot to be inviting to children. On sunny days, the playground equipment is hot enough to scald the hands of would-be users.

Trees would help, as tree leaves absorb about 95 percent of ultraviolet radiation, but they take a decade or more to grow large enough to make a difference. So, many communities are building shade structures instead. The non-profit Shade Foundation of American is a good resource for information about shade and shade structures, [www.shadefoundation.org](http://www.shadefoundation.org).

### Festivals and Events

In the context of urban development, from the early 1980s there has been a process that can be characterized as "festivalization," which has been linked to the economic restructuring of counties and cities, and the drive to develop communities as large-scale platforms for the creation and consumption of "cultural experience."

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<sup>13</sup> Liz Szabo, "Shade: A weapon against skin cancer, childhood obesity," *USA Today*, June 30, 2011, [usatoday.30.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011/06/Shade-serves-as-a-weapon-against-skin-cancer-childhood-obesity/48965070/1](http://usatoday.30.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011/06/Shade-serves-as-a-weapon-against-skin-cancer-childhood-obesity/48965070/1), accessed 5/23/3013.

The success rate for festivals should not be evaluated simplistically solely on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), and/or size (numbers of events). Examination by the European Festival Research Project (EFRP)<sup>14</sup> indicates that there is evidence of local and city government supporting and even instigating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, tourists, etc.). There are also a growing number of smaller more local community-based festivals and events in communities, most often supported by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals often will re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value. For more information on the values of festivals and events, see the CRC Sustainable Tourism research guide<sup>15</sup> on this topic.

In 2014, festivals are growing in popularity as economic drivers and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the January 2014 issues of *Governing* magazine: “Municipal officials and entrepreneurs see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences and the like as a way to spur short-term tourism while shaping an image of the host city as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive.”<sup>16</sup> Examples of successful festivals include:

- South by Southwest (SXSW) – this annual music, film, and digital conference and festival in Austin, Texas, is a leading example. Launched in 1987, the festival’s economic impact has grown steadily over recent years. In 2007, it netted \$95 million for Austin’s economy. In 2013, the event topped \$218 million.
- Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California – this two-week cultural event draws big-name bands, music fans, and marketers, attracting 80,000 people per day.
- First City Festival in Monterey, California – Private producer, Goldenvoice, launched this smaller music event in August 2013 with marketing support from the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau, drawing on the city’s history as host of the Monterey Jazz Festival. Adding carnival rides and local art, furniture, and clothing vendors to the live music performances, the event drew 11,000 attendees each of its two days.
- The City of Chicago launched a new festival in the fall of 2014 called the Great Chicago Fire Festival. It included a parade, live music, and a centerpiece of fifteen floats, representing local neighborhoods destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871, that were burned in effigy in the Chicago River. The hope is that the event will become Chicago’s “Mardi Gras.”

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<sup>14</sup> EFRP is an international consortium seeking to understand the current explosion of festivals and its implications and perspective, <http://www.efa-aef.eu/en/activities/efrp/>, accessed October 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Ben Janeczko, Trevor Mules and Brent Ritchie, “Estimating the Economic Impacts of Festivals and Events: A Research Guide,” Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, 2002, <http://www.sustainabletourisonline.com/1005/events/estimating-the-economic-impacts-of-festivals-and-events-a-research-guide>, accessed October 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Chad Kaydo, “Cities Create Music, Cultural Festivals to Make Money,” *Governing*, January 2014, <http://www.governing.com/topics/finance/gov-cities-create-music-festivals.html>.

## Natural Environments and Open Space

### Conservation

The top ten recommendations of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Conservation Task Force were published in the November 2011 issue of *Parks and Recreation* magazine.<sup>17</sup> These recommendations are a compilation of best practices used by trend-setting agencies.

- 1) Take a leadership role in the community to promote conservation. Park and recreation agencies have a unique opportunity to bring governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, community leaders, and the public together for the cause of working together on community wide conservation objectives – clean water, wildlife habitat preservation, reducing energy use, and improving environmental quality. Park and recreation agencies must lead the way in promoting conservation to diverse and underserved audiences.
- 2) Lead by example in employing best management conservation practices in parks. Park and recreation agencies should become the catalyst in the community for conservation by showing how best practices can be adopted-not mowing what you don't need to mow; stopping wasteful energy consumption; and reducing pesticide use for example. Show the public how conservation practices can benefit everyone.
- 3) Engage volunteers in conservation and stewardship. Create a sense of belonging and stewardship for parks by creating a personal sense of ownership and value. Enable people to identify with their parks and natural resources, and to care about their future. Sustain stewardship by creating meaningful public participation in implementation of conservation principles and practices.
- 4) Establish a strategic land acquisition strategy based on knowledge and awareness of significant natural and cultural resources (watershed protection, unique ecological characteristics, and sensitive natural areas deserving protection). As the largest owners of public land within most communities, park and recreation agencies should lead the way in developing a strategic vision for preserving open space and conserving important landscapes and natural features.
- 5) Engage youth in conservation. Get kids and teens outdoors and enjoying their parks. The experience of nature is inherently rewarding for youth. Set as a goal to connect kids in the community to nature and the outdoors. Children and youth will be fascinated by nature and will develop a lifelong affinity as well as a conservation ethic if they have early opportunities to enjoy nature and recreate outdoors in a safe, rewarding way.
- 6) Conserve energy in all ways. Park and recreation agencies must lead by example, showing the public how and why they should adopt practices that they can see demonstrated in parks and recreation facilities. Park and recreation agencies should adopt energy conservation measures that make sense and save public taxpayer funds.

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<sup>17</sup> "Conservation Leaders in our Community," *Parks and Recreation* magazine, November 2011, pages 85-101, published by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), <http://digital.parksandrecreation.org/launch.aspx?referral=other&pnum=&refresh=Fj302M1i0bE7&EID=8201df86-57c9-428c-b31c-18125a54265c&skip=>

- 7) Protect natural resources in parks and in the community. A core mission of public parks is to protect land and water resources and to be stewards of natural resources. This means committing personnel and resources to protect natural and cultural resources and creating sustainable long-term methods of funding this conservation mission. Parks and recreation agencies are entrusted with some of the most important public assets of a community and the conservation and long-term protection of this public trust is and should be a core component of every parks and recreation agency's mission.
- 8) Create sustainable landscapes that demonstrate principles of conservation. Utilize sustainable landscape practices to save taxpayer funds, to measurably improve conservation benefits, and to educate the public about conservation. For example, agencies can reduce turf grass and mowing frequency; replace turf with native plants; manage floodplains for multiple uses including conservation and public recreation; enhance wetlands for water filtration and groundwater recharge; plant model landscapes of drought tolerant native plants adapted to climate and culture; and promote parks as food sources through edible landscapes and community gardens.
- 9) Forge partnerships that foster the mission of conservation. The greatest and most beneficial conservation successes most often occur as a result of collaboration. Park and recreation agencies should partner with non-profit and community service organizations, universities and colleges, school systems, other governmental agencies, and non-traditional partners for conservation outcomes. Promote health, education, and other goals while working toward a common mission of conservation.
- 10) Utilize technology to promote conservation. Park and recreation agencies need to embrace technology to promote conservation. This is not only in applications such as GIS, but in utilizing social media to engage the public, especially youth. Technology is not to be feared as something that detracts from the conservation mission of parks agencies, but rather it is to be accepted as a means of sharing knowledge and connecting people to conservation and stewardship.

### **Nature Programming**

Noted as early as 2003 in Recreation Management magazine, park agencies have been seeing an increase in interest in environmental-oriented "back to nature" programs. In 2007, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public park and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature.<sup>18</sup> Notable results include the following:

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of public parks and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and 61% have nature-based facilities.
- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.

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<sup>18</sup> National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), "NRPA Completes Agency Survey Regarding Children and Nature," [http://www.narpp.org/assets/Library/Children\\_in\\_Nature/nrpa\\_survey\\_regarding\\_children\\_and\\_nature\\_2007.pdf](http://www.narpp.org/assets/Library/Children_in_Nature/nrpa_survey_regarding_children_and_nature_2007.pdf), April 2007.

- When asked what resources would be needed most to expand programming, additional staff was most important followed by funding.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90 percent indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.
- When describing the elements that directly contribute to their most successful facilities, agencies principally listed funding, followed by presence of wildlife and community support.

Figures from the Association for Interpretative Naturalists, a national group of nature professionals, demonstrate that nature-based programs are on the rise. According to Tim Merriman, the association's executive director, the group was founded in 1954 with 40 members. It now boasts 4,800 members, with research indicating that about 20,000 paid interpreters are working nationally, along with an army of more than 500,000 unpaid volunteers staffing nature programs at parks, zoos, and museums. The growth of these programs is thought to come from replacing grandparents as the teacher about the "great outdoors." It is also speculated that a return to natural roots and renewed interest in life's basic elements was spurred as a response to September 11, 2001.<sup>19</sup>

In his book Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder,<sup>20</sup> Richard Louv introduced the concept of the restorative qualities of being out in nature, for both children and adults. This concept, and research in support of it, has led to a growing movement promoting connections with nature in daily life. One manifestation of this is the development of Nature Explore Classrooms in parks. Nature Explore<sup>21</sup> is a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and the non-profit organization, Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, with a mission of helping children and families develop a profound engagement with the natural world, where nature is an integral, joyful part of children's daily learning. Nature Explore works to support efforts to connect children with nature.

### **Economic & Health Benefits of Parks**

There are numerous economic and health benefits of parks, including the following:

- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home.
- Research from the University of Illinois shows that trees, parks, and green spaces have a profound impact on people's health and mental outlook.<sup>22</sup>
- US Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.<sup>23</sup>
- Fifty percent (50%) of Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret Ahrweiler, "Call of the Wild – From beautiful blossoms to bugs and guts, nature programs are growing as people return to their roots" *Recreation Management* magazine, <http://recmanagement.com/200310fe04.php>, October 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> "What is the Nature Explore Program," [http://www.arborday.org/explore/documents/NE\\_FAQ\\_002.pdf](http://www.arborday.org/explore/documents/NE_FAQ_002.pdf), accessed on August 12, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> F.E. Kuo, "Environment and Crime in the Inner City: Does Vegetation Reduce Crime?" *Environment and Behavior*, Volume 33, pp 343-367.

<sup>23</sup> Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," (Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report, in review).

<sup>24</sup> "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2010," Outdoor Foundation, 2010.

The Trust for Public Land has published a report titled: *“The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space.”* The report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space<sup>25</sup>:

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Researchers have long touted the benefits of outdoor exercise. According to a study published in the *Journal of Environmental Science and Technology* by the University of Essex in the United Kingdom, “as little as five minutes of green exercise improves both mood and self-esteem.”<sup>26</sup> A new trend started in China as it prepared to host the 2008 Summer Olympics. The country’s aim was to promote a society that promotes physical fitness and reaps the benefits of outdoor exercise by working out on outdoor fitness equipment.

The United States is now catching up on this trend, as park and recreation departments have begun installing “outdoor gyms.” Equipment that can be found in these outdoor gyms is comparable to what would be found in an indoor workout facility, such as leg and chest presses, elliptical trainers, pull down trainers, etc. With no additional equipment such as weights and resistance bands, the equipment is fairly easy to install. Outdoor fitness equipment provides a new opportunity for parks and recreation departments to increase the health of their communities, while offering them the opportunity to exercise outdoors. Such equipment can increase the usage of parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities while helping to fight the obesity epidemic and increase the community’s interaction with nature.

**The economic benefits of bicycling and walking:**

- Bicycling and walking projects create 11 to 14 jobs per \$1 million spent, compared to just seven jobs created per \$1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to \$11.80 in benefits can be gained for every \$1 invested in bicycling and walking.

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<sup>25</sup> Paul M. Sherer, “The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space,” The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in: Sally Russell, “Nature Break: Five Minutes of Green Nurture,” Green Nurture Blog, <http://blog.greennurture.com/tag/journal-of-environmental-science-and-technology>, Accessed on November 14, 2012.

At the 2013 Walking Summit held in Washington D.C.<sup>27</sup>, presenters called walking a wonder drug with the generic name “physical activity.” While other forms of physical activity work equally well, three factors were cited as making walking the most effective treatment.

1. Low or no cost.
2. Simple to do for people of all ages, incomes, and fitness levels.
3. Because walking is America’s favorite physical activity, we are more likely to stick with a walking program than other fitness or pharmaceutical regimens.

### **Riparian and Watershed Best Practices**

The ability to detect trends and monitor attributes in watershed and/or riparian areas allows planners opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of their management plan. By monitoring their own trends, planners can also identify changes in resource conditions that are the result of pressures beyond their control. Trend detection requires a commitment to long-term monitoring of riparian areas and vegetation attributes.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) suggests the following steps to building an effective watershed management plan. See [Water.epa.gov](http://water.epa.gov)<sup>28</sup> for more information from the EPA.

- Build partnerships
- Characterize the watershed
- Set goals and identify solutions
- Design and implementation program
- Implement the watershed plan
- Measure progress and make adjustments

## **Sports and Recreation Trends**

### **General Sports and Recreation Trends**

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) survey on sports participation in 2012<sup>29</sup> found the top five athletic activities ranked by total participation included: exercise walking, exercising with equipment, swimming, camping, and aerobic exercising. Additionally, the following active, organized, or skill development activities remain popular: hiking, running/jogging, bicycle riding, basketball, golf, and soccer. **Table 8** outlines the top twenty sports ranked by total participation in 2012.

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<sup>27</sup> Jay Walljasper, “Walking as a Way of Life, Movement for Health and Happiness,” The Walking Summit Brochure, October 2013, [http://everybodywalk.org/media\\_assets/WalkingAsAWayOfLife1\\_Final.pdf](http://everybodywalk.org/media_assets/WalkingAsAWayOfLife1_Final.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> “Implement the Watershed Plan – Implement Management Strategies,” US Environmental Protection Agency, <http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/datait/watershedcentral/plan2.cfm>

<sup>29</sup> 2012 Sport/Recreation Activity Participation,” National Sporting Goods Association, 2013, <http://www.nsga.org>.

**Table 8: Top Twenty Sports Ranked by Total Participation (in millions) in 2012**

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Exercise Walking	102.1
2. Exercising with Equipment	57.7
3. Swimming	48.6
4. Camping (vacation/overnight)	45.2
5. Aerobic Exercising	44.8
6. Hiking	42.2
7. Running/Jogging	40.0
8. Bicycle Riding	39.3
9. Bowling	35.5
10. Workout at Club	35.2
11. Weight Lifting	31.1
12. Fishing (Freshwater)	30.8
13. Wrestling	28.4
14. Basketball	25.6
15. Yoga	22.9
16. Billiards/Pool	21.8
17. Target Shooting	21.7
18. Golf	21.1
19. Hunting with Firearms	19.4
20. Boating, Motor/Power	17.0

*Source: NSGA 2012*

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA produces a yearly report on sports, fitness, and leisure activities in the US. The following findings were highlighted in the 2013 Report<sup>30</sup>:

- Overall participation in sports, fitness, and related physical activities remained relatively steady from 2011 to 2012.
- Fitness Sports had the largest increase in participation (2% increase to 61.1%).
- Racquet Sports participation also increased (1% increase to 12.8 %) but still remains the 2008 peak rate of 14%.
- Both team (21.6%) and water sports (12.5%) participation increased slightly while individual (36%) and winter sports (6.6%) participation decreased slightly.
- Outdoor Sports participation remained stable at around 49%.
- Spending on team sports at school and lessons/instruction/sports camp was expected to increase in 2013 as it has in 2011 and 2012.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all Americans are inactive, while 33% are active to a healthy level (engaged in high calorie level sport/fitness activities in a frequent basis). Indiana was among the states with the highest activity levels (from 38% to 43.4%).

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<sup>30</sup> "2012 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report," Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (renamed Sports and Fitness Industry Association in 2012, <http://www.sfia.org/reports/all/>).

## Extreme Sports

Extreme sports are not just a fad. Regardless of the time of year, extreme sports are increasing in participation.<sup>31</sup> A 2008 SGMA report shown in **Table 9**, demonstrates this increase in participation.

**Table 9: Most Popular Extreme Sports in the USA (U.S. population; 6 years of age or older)**

Extreme Sport	# of Participants (participated at least once in 2007)
1. Inline Skating	10,814,000
2. Skateboarding	8,429,000
3. Mountain Biking	6,892,000
4. Snowboarding	6,841,000
5. Paintball	5,476,000
6. Cardio Kickboxing	4,812,000
7. Climbing (Indoor, Sport, Boulder)	4,514,000
8. Trail Running	4,216,000
9. Ultimate Frisbee	4,038,000
10. Wakeboarding	3,521,000
11. Mountain/Rock Climbing	2,062,000
12. BMX Bicycling	1,887,000
13. Roller Hockey	1,847,000
14. Boardsailing/Windsurfing	1,118,000

*Source: Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, 2007*

In recent years, mountain biking, and BMX biking have continued their upward trend while inline skating and skateboarding have trended downward in popularity.<sup>32</sup>

## Trail Recreation and Cycling Trends

For trail-related recreation activities such as hiking, bicycling, and running, the 2013 “Outdoor Recreation Topline Report” indicates a positive three-year trend for trail running, running/jogging, hiking, and mountain biking, but a slightly negative trend for road/surface bicycling. Participation in BMX bicycling is up significantly over the past three years (12.2%).

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<sup>31</sup> Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SMGA), “Extreme Sports: An Ever-Popular Attraction,” [http://www.sgma.com/press/2\\_Extreme-Sports%3A-An-Ever-Popular-Attraction](http://www.sgma.com/press/2_Extreme-Sports%3A-An-Ever-Popular-Attraction).

<sup>32</sup> “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2012,” Outdoor Foundation, 2012.

**Table 10: Trail Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	3 Year Change
BMX Bicycling	1,887	1,904	1,811	2,369	1,547	2,175	12.2%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	6,892	7,592	7,142	7,161	6,816	7,714	2.9%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	38,940	38,114	40,140	39,320	40,349	39,232	-0.7%
Hiking (Day)	29,965	32,511	32,572	32,496	34,491	34,545	2.0%
Running/Jogging	41,064	41,130	43,892	49,408	50,713	52,187	6.0%
Trail Running	4,216	4,857	4,833	5,136	5,610	6,003	7.5%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2013.

The “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report” for 2013 reports a downward trend nation-wide for equestrian participation from 2007 – 2012 (from a high of 4.4% in 2007 to a low of 2.8% participation in 2012).

### Other Cycling Trends

- Bicycle touring are becoming a fast-growing trend around the world, including the US and Canada. “Travelers are seeking out bike tours to stay active, minimize environmental impact, and experience diverse landscapes and cityscapes at a closer level.”<sup>33</sup>
- Urban bike tours, popular in cycle-friendly cities in Europe, are taking hold in the United States as well. Bikes and Hikes LA, an eco-friendly bike and hike sightseeing company founded in September 2010, offers visitors the opportunity to, “see the city’s great outdoors while getting a good workout.” In New York, a hotel and a bike store are partnering to offer guests cruisers to explore the city during the summer of 2014.<sup>34</sup>
- One of the newest trends in adventure cycling is “fat bike” – multiple speed bikes that are made to ride when other bikes can’t be ridden, with tires that are up to five inches wide run at low pressure for extra traction. Most fat bikes are used to ride on snow, but they are also very effective for riding on any loose surface like sand or mud. They also work well on most rough terrain or just riding through the woods. This bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways that wouldn’t be possible otherwise.<sup>35</sup>

### Youth Sports

The 2013 SFIA sports participation report indicates that in 2012 youth (ages 6-12) participation was highest for outdoor (63.1%), team (53.1%) and individual sport (49.8%). Children in this age group have increased interest in camping, while young adults ages 18 – 24 are becoming more interested in running/jogging.

<sup>33</sup> Hope Nardini, “Bike Tourism a Rising Trend,” *Ethic Traveler*, <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/08/bike-tourism-a-rising-trend/>, Accessed on Marcy 24, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Michelle Baran, “New trend: Urban bike tours in Los Angeles and New York,” *Budget Travel Blog*, <http://www.budgettravel.com/blog/new-trend-urban-bike-tours-in-los-angeles-and-new-york,11772/>, accessed on March 24, 2014

<sup>35</sup> Steven Pease, “Fat bikes, how to get the most out of winter cycling,” *Minnesota Cycling Examiner*, <http://www.examiner.com/article/fat-bikes-the-latest-trend-adventure-cycling>, February 1, 2014.

The NSGA “Youth Sports Participation Report” from 2001 – 2011 indicates that specific offerings for children’s fitness are slowly increasing in health and fitness facilities. Facilities are offering more youth-specific exercise equipment. Individualized youth sports training opportunities are becoming more popular as well. In 2011, in-line roller skating experienced the largest percentage decrease in participation. For youth ages 7 to 17 years of age, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming, followed by overnight/vacation camping had the highest number of participants in 2011.<sup>36</sup>

In 2009, an article in the *Wall Street Journal* observed that in recent years lacrosse has become one of the country’s fastest growing team sports. Participation in high school lacrosse has almost doubled this decade. An estimated 1.2 million Americans over age seven played lacrosse in 2009.<sup>37</sup> A 2011 report, “U.S. Trends in Team Sports,” finds that Lacrosse and other niche team sports and volleyball are continuing to experience strong growth for youth and adults.<sup>38</sup>

## Role and Response of Local Government

Collectively, these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Some local governments are now accepting the role of providing preventative health care through parks and recreation services. The following concepts are from the International County/County Management Association.<sup>39</sup>

- Parks and Recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
- There is growing support for recreation programs that encourage active living within their community.
- One of the highest priorities is a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

In summary, the United States of America, its states, and its communities share the enormous task of reducing the health and economic burden of obesity. While numerous programs, policies, and products have been designed to address the problem, there is no magic bullet to make it go away. The role of public parks and recreation as a health promotion and prevention agency has come of age. What matters is refocusing its efforts to insure the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of communities and citizens.

## Administration Trends for Recreation and Parks

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed, and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness.

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<sup>36</sup>“2011 vs 2001 Youth Sports Participation,” National Sporting Goods Association, 2012, <http://www.nsga.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3494>.

<sup>37</sup> Evans and Trachtenberg, “Lacrosse Muscles Its Way West,” *Wall Street Journal*, May, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> “2011 Preview: U.S. Trends in Team Sports, Fall 2011,” SMGA, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> [www.ICMA.org](http://www.ICMA.org), Accessed in 2012.

The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

Listed below are additional administrative national trends:

- Level of subsidy for programs is lessening and more “enterprise” activities are being developed, thereby allowing subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate.
- Information technology allows for better tracking and reporting.
- Pricing is often determined by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.
- More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.

## **Funding**

According to *Recreation Management* magazine’s “2013 State of the Industry Report,” survey respondents from parks and recreation departments/districts reporting about their revenues from 2009 through 2014 reveals the impact of the recession as well as the beginning of a recovery. More than 25 percent of respondents saw their revenues decrease from 2009 to 2010 and 21.8 percent of respondents reported a further decrease in 2011. 43.8 percent of park and recreation respondents reported increases from 2011 to 2012.

## **Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers**

Niche marketing trends have experienced change more frequently than ever before as technology affects the way the public receives information. Web 2.0 tools and now Web 3.0 tools are a trend for agencies to use as a means of marketing programs and services. Popular social marketing electronic tools include:

- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Twitter
- You Tube
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

Mobile marketing is a trend of the future. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults in age brackets 30 and older. Usage rates of mobile applications demonstrate chronologically across four major age cohorts, that millennials tend to get information more frequently using mobile devices such as smart phones. For example, 95 percent of 18-to-29-year-old cell phone owners send and receive text messages, compared to 82 percent of 30-to-49-year-olds, 57 percent of 50-to-64-year-olds, and 19 percent of 65 and older.

It is also a fact that minority Americans lead the way when it comes to mobile internet access. Nearly two-thirds of African-Americans (64%) and Latinos (63%) are wireless internet users, and minority Americans are significantly more likely to own a cell phone than are their white counterparts (87

percent of Blacks and Hispanics own a cell phone, compared with 80 percent of whites).<sup>40</sup> By 2015, mobile internet penetration is forecast to grow to 71.1% for Hispanics compared to 58.8% for whites.<sup>41</sup>

### **Agency Accreditation**

Parks and Recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency's commitment to 150 standards. There are currently 102 agencies around the nation that have received the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation.

Additional benefits of CAPRA accreditation include:

- Boosts staff morale
- Encourages collaboration
- Improves program outcomes
- Identifies agency and cost efficiencies
- Builds high level of trust with the public
- Demonstrates promise of quality
- Identifies best management practices

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<sup>40</sup> Aaron Smith, "Mobile Access 2010", Pew Internet and American Life Project, Pew Research Center, July 7, 2010, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Mobile-Access-2010/Summary-of-Findings.aspx>, Accessed on November 15, 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Erik Sass, "Minority Groups Heaviest Users of Mobile Net", *Media Daily News*, Nov. 18, 2011, <http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/162699/minority-groups-heaviest-users-of-mobile-net.html#axzz2CK9zYGFw>, Accessed on November 15, 2012.



# Appendix B - Winchester Needs Assessment Survey Results

