

The Town of Concord Recreation Department
Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan





Harvey Wheeler
Community Center

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE

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Introduction

The Concord Recreation Department worked with Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc. and Sasaki Associates to develop a Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a planning document that assesses current facilities and projected needs for active and passive recreation. This will assist the Department in future planning for services and programs and the allocation of resources for capital improvements. The Department Mission Statement is:

Concord Recreation is a leader in providing activities that enhance personal development, promote healthy life styles, and encourage greater community involvement.

As dedicated professionals we strive to promote lasting experiences, while creating fun, unique, inclusive opportunities in excellent facilities.

Concord Recreation is a self-supporting operation that continues to meet the needs of the community by delivering the highest quality customer-focused programs, events and services.

The Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan will assist the Department in accomplishing its mission. The Department offers a variety of programs and services, including successful and longstanding programs such as Concord Carousel Preschool, before and after school programs, summer day camps, swim lessons for youth and adults, adult group exercise programs, tennis, and youth sports. In addition, a variety of community events are held, including The Shamrock Ball and Middle School Dances. The Department oversees all of the Recreation programming in the Town. The Town's Public Works Department has responsibility for maintenance of parks, facilities, and athletic fields. As a result, the two Departments work closely together.

In 1981 Town Meeting authorized the creation of a Recreation Department "Revolving Account" designed specifically to enable the Department to charge fees for recreation program services. At that time the small amount of tax funding that was approximately \$30,000 was eliminated. Since then the Recreation Department has operated all of its programs and services on a user fee basis without tax support.

The Concord Recreation Department (CRD) is managed by a director and two assistant directors. Supporting staff include administrative assistants, registration coordinators, aquatics director, assistant aquatics director, fitness director, recreation supervisors, and custodians. During the summer months CRD employs approximately 60 additional seasonal staff for the various camp programs that are offered. The staff members oversee programming at a variety of facilities and parks including Hunt Recreation Center, Harvey Wheeler Community Center, Beede Swim and Fitness Center, 105 Everett, Emerson and Rideout Playgrounds.

All of the Recreation Department’s programs and services including the Beede Swim and Fitness Center operate on a user fee basis without tax dollar support. Total annual revenues for the Department approximate \$4M. The success of the Department’s programs and services enable CRD to provide over \$200,000 a year in financial support to Concord families participating in the programs.

The Department produces a variety of community special events such as the Shamrock Ball parent/daughter dance, the Minuteman Classic Road Race held on July 4th, the Concord Open Golf Tournament in August and the Touch a Truck event held in the spring.

In discussions with staff, intended outcomes of the study included:

- Identification of appropriate Level of Service Standards for the Concord Community
- Identification of changing demographics, including an aging population
- Optimizing utilization of existing facilities
- Ensuring resident input into the planning process
- Striking an equitable balance between passive and active services
- Strengthening services

Review of Process

The process included the following tasks:



Executive Summary

The first step in the process was a review of existing data. This included the 2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan, the 2006 Recreation Field Needs Analysis, the Town Manager's Proposed Budget for FY 2014, the 2004 Open Space and Recreation Plan, CC at Play, Inc. information, Concord Healthy Communities Planning and Implementation, and a variety of Departmental information including the Concord Recreation Program Guide, the Town Website, and Recreation Department facility, parks and program information.

The Executive Summary lists the Strategic Recommendations that are included at the end of the report. For the purposes of this Summary, the Recommendations are listed according to three time priorities, short term, mid term and long term as follows:

SHORT TERM 2014-2015

- The Department receives a minimal amount of tax support. The Department receives 5.9% of expense budget from taxes, as compared to the average agency receiving 70-75% from taxes. It is recommended that the agency establish a goal of 50/50, or an equal split between tax support and reliance on fees and charges.
- There were many public input and survey comments relating to the cost of memberships for Beede. The Beede fees should be reviewed to identify if lower prices may increase revenues with additional members joining.
- Develop a foundation to assist with raising funds for improvements.
- Work with the Planning Department to improve parking throughout the system.
- Continue working with the Concord Healthy Communities Planning initiative and offer programs that can reduce stress.
- Work with the Concord Carlisle Regional School District in improving the scheduling of outdoor and indoor facilities as well as establishing a use agreement for the renovated fields and tennis courts at the High School.

MID TERM 2016-2017

- Consider the addition of two group exercise rooms at Beede, one for rowing and spinning in which equipment can be left out, the other for group exercise and dance, which would result in not having to use 105 Everett and Ripley. There may be opportunity to use Everett and Ripley for offices for other Town Departments or agencies.
- Give attention to active adult age group as the community continues to age, possibly working with other neighboring communities in offering sports/active programs.

- According to the survey results, the greatest barriers to participation include: too busy, program times, and people have too far to go. Identify ways of reducing these barriers such as shorter program lengths, adding more weeknight and weekend activities. Complete a series of focus groups to identify solutions to program barriers.
- Start up an outdoor recreation and environmental program based on trends and Market Potential Index, including kayaking, canoeing, etc. This includes the need for boating access and rentals.
- Continue meeting seasonally with heads of sport groups to evaluate field use and scheduling.
- Explore public swimming park.
- Consider a dog park to assist in the control of dogs in other public areas.

LONG TERM 2018 OR BEYOND

All of the Long Term recommendations relate to the recreation facility deficits noted throughout the report. The recommendations for additional park land and amenities include:

- Neighborhood parkland/development; according to the survey results, very high level of interest, as well as need for more amenities within parks such as water fountains, benches, and bike racks. The Level of Service Standards shows a need for 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland/thousand population. Currently, Concord's system for neighborhood parks includes .62 acres per thousand population.
- Comparative data shows a need for 2.9 additional playgrounds. An additional playground is being considered at South Meadow.
- Youth and adult softball fields. There is a deficit of 1.8 adult fields and 1.2 youth fields.
- Multi-purpose and youth soccer fields. There is a deficit of 1.8 fields. Phase 3 of the CC at Play project at the High School will help to remedy this as a multi-purpose field is included in the plans.
- There are no picnic pavilions throughout the system. The recommended standard is one pavilion per 5,000 population.
- While the need for additional gymnasium space did not show much of a deficit on the Level of Service Standards, this was discussed in the public input sessions as a need for more open gym. Additionally, the staff members have commented there is a great need for an additional gymnasium.

Community Input Summary

An integral part of the process included a series of meetings with community residents. As a result, the Consulting Team facilitated focus groups, key leader meetings, and a public meeting to gain insight on current levels of satisfaction toward services, programs and facilities. The summary of the community input is located in the appendix.

Community Survey Results

In addition to the community input process, a survey was distributed to residents in order to acquire additional information from the public. Surveys were distributed at Recreation Department facilities. Surveys were also sent online to various organizations. There were 121 completed surveys. The survey instrument listing all of the questions is included in the appendix.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

- Many survey responders wrote a variety of comments relating to the questions. Of the 108 comments offered, 43 of them related to Beede membership price being too high and a feeling that some classes should be included in the membership fee.
- Harvey Wheeler Community Center, Hunt Recreation Center, Beede Swim and Fitness Center, and Emerson Playground all rate well in terms of quality of the condition. Conversely, Ripley School Recreation Area and 105 Everett score lower.
- Most important amenities to households are: walking/biking trails, indoor fitness, indoor swimming and large community parks.
- Most important programs are: adult fitness, youth sports, adult community education, and summer camps.
- 76% either very satisfied or satisfied with value.
- There is a wide distribution of ways household find out about Recreation Department programs and services, with 21% finding out from the program guide, 19% from friends and neighbors, 14% from the newspaper, and 12% from the Website.

- Amenities with the greatest unmet need include the following items. It is important to note the percentage of households who have a need for these amenities, which is included next to each one:
 - Indoor track (households having a need: 41%)
 - Outdoor volleyball (12%)
 - Mountain bike park (19%)
 - Platform tennis (12%)
 - Outdoor swimming (41%)
- The programs with the greatest unmet need include:
 - Special events (households having a need: 55%)
 - Water fitness (37%)
 - Youth fitness (29%)
 - Gardening (34%)
 - Nature programs (51%)
- The Concord Healthy Communities project included the development of a Steering Committee, with representation from the Concord Recreation Department. The project included a public outreach project and a 900 response community survey. Two priority areas were identified: Stress Reduction program and a Road Safety initiative. The Recreation Department can play a major role in ensuring program offerings provide residents with opportunities to reduce stress.

Demographics and Trend Report

The following report is a summary of information derived from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and Physical Activity Council (PAC). This information compiles results for age, gender, race, ethnicity and household income of the Town of Concord residents and compares the data to state and national statistics. Demographic projections from ESRI give an outlook through 2017. Recreational trends are explored at the local and national levels to direct future planning.

METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data were acquired in October 2013, and reflect actual numbers as reported in the 2010 US Bureau of the Census and demographic projections for 2012 and 2017 as estimated by ESRI. The Town of Concord was utilized as the demographic analysis boundary.

AGE SEGMENT AND GENDER

Age segments appear to remain relatively constant from the 2010 U.S. Census through 2017 with a slight decrease in ages 15-24 and the greatest decrease occurring for ages 35-54 by 2017. The percent distribution of youth 14 and under remains virtually unchanged, or .2% decline by 2017.

The greatest increases by 2017 will be ages 55+, a testament to the aging baby boomer population. This population percentage will grow from 34.8% from the 2010 Census data to 38.5% in 2017. Nationally, 24.7% of the population is 55 or over. From a program and services perspective, this suggests a need to expand services for the active adult population (50s and 60s) and older seniors. As for gender, males represent 50.7% of the population and females represent 49.3 %.

<i>Population by Age</i>	<i>Census 2010</i>		<i>2012</i>		<i>2017</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
0 - 4	748	4.2%	754	4.2%	781	4.2%
5 - 9	1,098	6.2%	1,104	6.2%	1,142	6.1%
10 - 14	1,301	7.4%	1,301	7.3%	1,362	7.3%
15 - 19	1,134	6.4%	1,095	6.1%	1,085	5.8%
20 - 24	543	3.1%	555	3.1%	535	2.9%
25 - 34	1,261	7.1%	1,279	7.2%	1,307	7.0%
35 - 44	2,141	12.1%	2,117	11.8%	2,113	11.4%
45 - 54	3,300	18.7%	3,250	18.2%	3,116	16.8%
55 - 64	2,596	14.7	2,736	15.3%	2,948	15.9%
65 - 74	1,577	8.9%	1,694	9.5%	2,083	11.2%
75 - 84	1,231	7.0%	1,226	6.9%	1,301	7.0%
85+	738	4.2%	770	4.3%	814	4.4%

RACE AND ETHNICITY

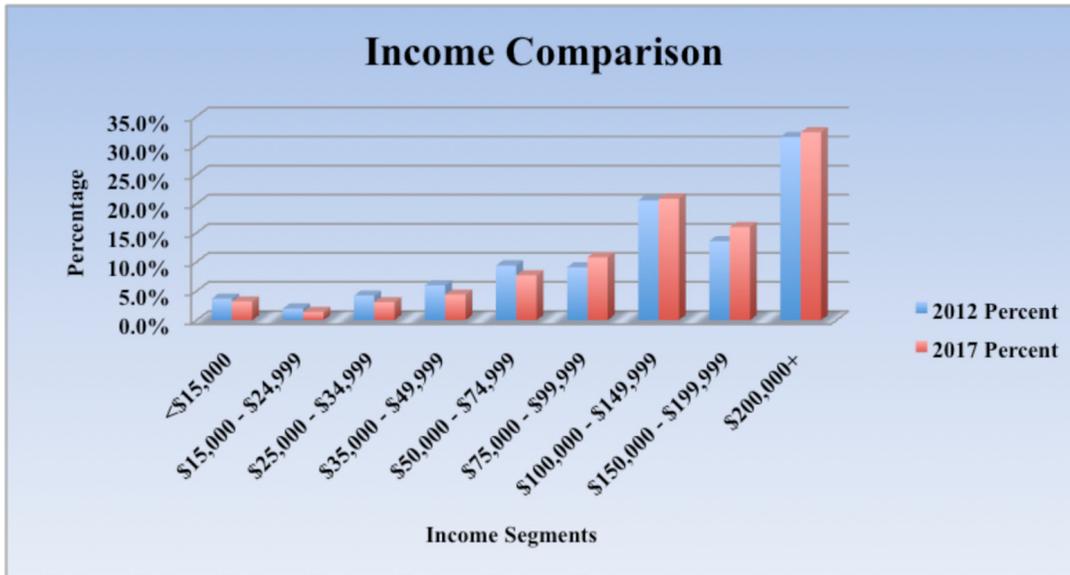
Race and ethnicity for the Town of Concord according to the Census 2010 is 89.7% of the population is White, 4.0% Asian, 3.8% Black, and 3.7% Hispanic. It is projected that the Town of Concord will continue to become slightly more diverse, with a 2.5% reduction for the white population by 2017. Additionally, the Asian population is expected to increase from 4.0% to 5.1%, the Hispanic population increase from 3.7% to 4.8% and the Black population increase from 3.8% to 4.5% by 2017. The following chart represents race and ethnic percentages by 2017.

<i>Race and Ethnicity</i>	Census 2010		2012		2017	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
White Alone	15,850	89.7%	15921	89.0%	16,216	87.2%
Black Alone	673	3.8%	716	4.0%	842	4.5%
American Indian Alone	14	0.1%	14	0.1%	17	0.1%
Asian Alone	709	4.0%	771	4.3%	953	5.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	170	1.0%	185	1.0%	230	1.2%
Two or More Races	252	1.4%	274	1.5%	329	1.8%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	655	3.7%	714	4.0%	885	4.8%

HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOME

Based on the Census 2010, 6,484 households are within Town of Concord Recreation Department boundaries with an average household size of 2.46 persons. The median age is 46.9 aging to 48.2 through 2017. Of these households, 4,490 were identified as families, representing 69.2% of the total households. According to the demographic and income profile, households identified as families will decrease slightly (.2%) by 2017.

<i>Summary</i>	<i>Census 2010</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2017</i>
Population	17,668	17,881	18,587
Households	6,484	6,554	6,813
Families	4,490	4,521	4,693
Average Household Size	2.46	2.47	2.48
Owner Occupied Housing Units	4,987	4,974	5,205
Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,497	1,580	1,608
Median Age	46.9	47.4	48.2



The median household income is currently estimated as \$134,162 and is projected to increase to \$144,377 by 2017.

<i>Households by Income</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>%</i>
<\$15,000	242	3.7%	215	3.2%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	130	2.0%	98	1.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	276	4.2%	213	3.1%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	392	6.0%	303	4.4%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	613	9.4%	528	7.7%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	598	9.1%	738	10.8%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1,348	20.6%	1,425	20.9%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	891	13.6%	1,093	16.0%
\$200,000+	2,064	31.5%	2,200	32.3%

AREA, STATE AND NATIONAL COMPARISON

The Town of Concord area rate of population growth from 2012 to 2017 is projected to be higher than the state and national averages. The number of households, families and homeowners will also increase at a higher rate than the state and national levels. The median household income is projected to increase in each income segment above \$75,000. Most other income segments will see a decline by 2017. The Town of Concord's median household income rate of increase will be less than the state and national rate by 2017. These statistics can be viewed in the graph titled *Income Comparison* (previous page).

2012 Median Household Statistics:

- Town of Concord median household income: \$134,162
- National median household income: \$51,017
- Massachusetts' median household income: \$66,658

RECREATION TRENDS

LOCAL TRENDS

Recreation trends information was also derived from ESRI and comes from a report entitled Sports and Leisure Market Potential. These data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to the local demographic composition of the Town of Concord Recreation Department area. Usage data were collected by Growth for Knowledge Mediamark Research and Intelligence, LLC. (GfK MRI) in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults in the specified area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average.

Based on projected population, the top recreational activities the Town of Concord residents will participate in (based on percentage of population as well as above the national average with an MPI over 100) include:

<i>Product/Consumer Behavior</i>	<i>Expected Number of Adults</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>MPI</i>
Participated in walking for exercise	5,890	42.30%	142
Participated in swimming	3,719	26.70%	137
Participated in weight lifting	2,608	18.70%	158
Participated in jogging/running	2,363	17.00%	159
Participated in backpacking/hiking	2,296	16.50%	174
Participated in aerobics	2,195	15.80%	158
Participated in bicycling (road)	2,072	14.90%	154
Participated in golf	2,066	14.80%	144
Participated in bowling	1,714	12.30%	105
Participated in yoga	1,714	12.30%	210
Participated in basketball	1,157	8.30%	89
Participated in tennis	1,116	8.00%	187
Participated in downhill skiing	1,066	7.70%	260
Play golf 1+ times a month	1,046	7.50%	141
Participated in fishing (fresh water)	1,014	7.30%	56
Participated in boating (power)	989	7.10%	116
Participated in canoeing/kayaking	935	6.70%	141
Participated in Frisbee	935	6.70%	123
Participated in Pilates	927	6.70%	201
Play golf < once a month	804	5.80%	145
Participated in bicycling (mountain)	733	5.30%	142
Participated in soccer	725	5.20%	120
Participated in football	655	4.70%	76
Participated in baseball	635	4.60%	88
Participated in ice skating	618	4.40%	153
Participated in fishing (salt water)	587	4.20%	92
Participated in horseback riding	570	4.10%	135
Participated in volleyball	441	3.20%	90
Participated in softball	432	3.10%	79
Participated in target shooting	432	3.10%	81
Participated in snowboarding	346	2.50%	128
Participated in motorcycling	335	2.40%	66
Participated in hunting with shotgun	247	1.80%	42
Participated in hunting with rifle	240	1.70%	36
Participated in martial arts	188	1.40%	96
Participated in archery	170	1.20%	47
Participated in roller skating	131	0.90%	45

Therefore, the most popular activities for Concord residents (those activities scoring above 140) include:

- Downhill skiing
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Tennis
- Backpacking/hiking
- Jogging/running
- Aerobics
- Weight lifting
- Bicycling
- Ice skating

In addition to these activities, there are additional ones that have popularity with Concord residents, particularly younger residents. These include:

- Deck hockey
- Outdoor skating
- Pick-up basketball

NATIONAL TRENDS

Additional recreational trends were derived from the Sports, Fitness & Recreational Activities Topline Participation Report (2012) developed by The Sports & Fitness Industry Association, a top national researcher in the sports and fitness industry. The data reflecting the national trends stem from a statistically valid survey which over 38,000 online responses were compiled and analyzed. These surveys were then weighted against a total population of 283,753,000 ages 6 and up. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, household size, region, and population density.

Overall, many activities are experiencing a slow increase and/or decline due to the recent poor economic conditions, including those that have a cyclical pattern. However, a few activities have made a foothold and are increasing in participation. In general, the survey reveals the following:

- Fitness sports remain the most popular physical activity and includes activities such as yoga, boot camp-style training, and other classes
- Increased participation among a number of key sports and activities
- An expressed desire to increase the amount of travel done for participation in favorite sports and recreational activities
- Aspirational activities show a desire and demand to participate in the coming year
- An expressed desire to participate in favorite sports and recreational activities with some areas showing an increase in spending
- Niche sports such as racquet sports shows a slight increase
- Significant opportunities to engage inactive populations in swimming and working out
- Smart phone apps for fitness and nutrition recording

In particular, the categories of participation include individual sports, racquet sports, team sports, outdoor sports, winter sports, water sports and fitness sports. As the chart below reveals, individual, team, and winter sports have slightly decreased while water and fitness sports have held steady.

Other categories despite their slight decrease have remained steady and are expected to gain participation with the economy.

The survey reveals that 76% of Americans have participated in some activity in the last four years; however, the general trend is that Americans have become more inactive with the rate of inactivity increasing from 21.5 percent in 2007 to 23.9 percent in 2011. Inactivity increased among young adults aged 18 to 24 and 35 to 54. Conversely, inactivity rates fell slightly among children ages 6 to 12 from 16.6 percent in 2010 to 16 percent in 2011. This decrease may be a result of efforts towards the fight against childhood obesity. Additionally, for adolescents ages 13 to 17, inactivity fell from 16.7 percent to 16.4 percent which, although modest, is a positive step in the right direction.

Increased spending areas will likely be seen in lessons, instruction, and camps (24.5 percent); individual sports events (23.1 percent); and team sports at school (22.8 percent).

	<i>Spend More</i>	<i>Spend Same</i>	<i>Spend Less</i>
Team Sports at School	22.8%	64.6%	12.6%
Team Sports Outside of School	21.6%	66.3%	12.4%
Travel for Sports and Rec.	22.5%	64.2%	13.3%
Lessons, Instruction and Camps	24.5%	62.9%	12.2%
Gym Membership/Fees	20.7%	67.6%	11.7%
Individual Sports Events	23.1%	65.1%	11.3%
Golf Membership/Fees	15.5%	71.4%	13.7%
Tennis Membership/Fees	9.9%	76.2%	12.9%
Winter Sports	17.6%	66.8%	15.5%
Outdoor Recreation	20.7%	70.1%	9.2%
Sports/Rec. Clothing	16.5%	69.2%	14.1%
Sports/Rec. Footwear	16.4%	70.4%	13.2%
Sports/Rec. Equipment	16.0%	66.7%	17.3%

HOW TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

The Survey revealed that one of the best ways to increase activity and participation later in life is to encourage casual play at the younger ages and in school through Physical Education. The survey points out that an adult who participated in physical education while in school is four times more likely to participate in a racquet sport and about three times more likely to participate in team, outdoor and winter activities, and golf.

In particular, the survey examined the difference between Generation X and Generation Y population. “Generation Y (born 1980-1999) individuals are twice as likely to take part in team sports than Generation X (born 1965-1979) individuals. Although much is explained by the age difference, the psychological tendency of Generation Y is more positively disposed to team sports than their Generation X predecessors who are more individual in nature. Generation Y are also more social in their interactions in terms of:

- The way they play (gravitating towards team sports)
- The way they exercise (including a tendency to participate in group exercise)
- The way they communicate (Social Networking, Facebook, Twitter)

Fitness sports remained the most popular physical activity. The participation rate has held steady at 60% over the last 4 years. There are also opportunities to engage the inactive populations. Swimming ranks as a popular “aspirational sport” for inactive participants ages 6 to 12 and 45 and older. Working out with weights and fitness machines are the top “aspirational sports” for inactive participants ages 13 to 44.

The economy has also had a slight impact on sports and recreation spending. While many active people are still not spending money on sports and recreation, more people spent the same amount or increased spending, rather than spending less.

In order to increase participation, knowing the trends and what various users groups are interested in participating is crucial. Significant changes in specific activities (both increases and decreases) over the past 2 years are summarized and listed in table on the following page. This data is extracted directly from the PAC study, 2012, SGMA Participation Topline Report © 2012 SGMA Research.

TEAM SPORTS

Over the last 2 years, there has been a slight rebound in the traditional team sports area. Trending growth in the newer more evolving transplant sports like Lacrosse continue to grow at significant rates.

Baseball	-6.0%
Basketball	-1.4%
Football	-4.0%
Gymnastics	22.1%
Ice Hockey	5.6%
Lacrosse	29.1%
Roller Hockey	-13.3%
Soccer (outdoor)	-2.1%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	-3.1%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	-14.9%
Wrestling	-37.8%

Recently the Wall Street Journal published an article regarding the decrease of participation in baseball, basketball, football and soccer; better known as the four most popular U.S. team sports. Participation decline highlights as noted by Athletic Business magazine are:

- Combined participation in the four most-popular team sports listed above fell among boys and girls aged 6 through 17 by about 4 percent.
- The population of 6- to 17-year-olds in the U.S. fell just 0.6 percent during that same time period, according to the U.S. Census.
- Participation in high school football was down 2.3 percent in 2012-2013 compared to the 2008-2009 season, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations.
- Participation in high school basketball was down 1.8 percent.
- Little League baseball reports U.S. participation in its baseball and softball leagues was down 6.8 percent.
- The survey by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association and the Physical Activity Council found that 2012 participation in organized football by players aged 6 through 14 was 4.9 percent below that in 2008.
- Basketball participation fell 6.3 percent in the 6-to-14 group during that period, according to the survey of nearly 70,000 households and individuals.
- The percentage of inactive 6- to 12-year-olds — youths involved in no physical activities over a 12-month period — rose to near 20 percent in 2012 from 16 percent in 2007, according to the SFIA/Physical Activity Council survey.
- Inactive 13 to 17-year-olds rose from 17 to 19 percent.

Highlights of increase in participation in team sports include:

- Participation in youth lacrosse was up 158 percent according to the SFIA/Physical Activity Council Survey.
- Participation in hockey was up 64 percent among 6 to 18-year-olds.

FITNESS

Fitness sports remain the most popular physical activity and include activities such as yoga, boot camp-style training, and other classes. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, the top predicted 2014 trends include:

- High intensity interval training (HIIT)
- Body weight training
- Educated and experienced fitness professionals
- Strength training
- Exercise and weight loss
- Personal training
- Fitness programs for older adults
- Functional fitness
- Group personal training
- Yoga
- Increased interest in indoor rowing

Class-based fitness and exercise programs like Zumba continue to drive positive participation performance for these types of fitness activities. Many agencies around the country have moved these classes outside and are using parks as programming space. Several systems have also advertised the availability of park space for contractual instructors to use for various class activities.

Another recent trend includes “functional fitness” as reported in the April 22, 2013 New York Times article Gyms Move from Machines to Fitness Playgrounds. Sandbags, ropes and climbing areas are taking over the floor space as part of a functional fitness movement. Companies such as Lifetime Fitness are removing weight machines and are replacing them with open areas of space for people to use as more natural strength training, rather than being locked in a machine.

“Fun” fitness is a current trend. Exercises like “P90x,” “Insanity,” or “Crossfit” has proven that you don’t need a lot of equipment to look and feel good. Since these programs have become popular, newer versions have become available, some cutting the time in half to look and feel fit. These types of classes have been and will continue to grow in popularity at park districts, parks and recreation Departments and fitness centers.

Group cycling continues its rapid growth as the younger fitness enthusiasts embrace this high performance group exercise activity as well as program variations to attract the beginner participant are developed. For most age groups, swimming for fitness or weight training are the two most frequently mentioned activities that people indicate they would like to participate in.

While Pilates has shown an incredible 10 year growth trend, the past 2 years have seen a decline in participation. Perhaps participation migrated to Yoga, as participation is up across all levels for the year. Yoga is more class-based while Pilates is more of an individual activity. The Gen Y fitness participants are showing a higher propensity to go with group oriented programs.

Running and Walking for Fitness continue to show strong and consistent growth. Running is up 17% year/year growth.

Aerobics (High Impact)	23.4%
Aerobics (Low Impact)	4.1%
Elliptical	14.8%
Running/Jogging	17.8%
Stationary Cycling (Group)	29.2%
Treadmill	5.7%
Walking for Fitness	1.7%
Abdominal Machine	-4.9%
Pilates	-3.0%
Stretching	-4.4%
Free Weights	11.3%
Home Gym	1.8%
Weight/Resistance Machines	1.2%

INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

Much like the trends for individual fitness participation, sports are showing significant declines across most levels of participation.

Billiards/Pool	20.0%
Golf	-5.2%
Martial Arts	-24.2%
Roller Skating	-18.6%
Scooter Riding	-15.7%
Skateboarding	-16.7%
Badminton	-4.5%
Table Tennis	1.7%
Tennis	-4.2%

OUTDOOR SPORTS

Compared to previous years, outdoors sports have experienced significant increase in participation. BMX has seen the greatest growth with an increase of over 30% in the last two years.

Bicycling	5.4%
Camping	-10.1%
Fishing (fresh)	-4.4%
Target Shooting	6.5%

Level of Service Summary

CONCORD’S PARK RESOURCES

Concord is home to approximately 76 acres of Town owned and managed parks. This translates to 4.3 acres per thousand residents (2010 census), which is considerably lower than the national standard for towns with a similar population (12 acres per thousand residents). This standard is based on the National Recreation and Park Association database of reporting agencies.

Concord’s park land acreage amount does not reflect a true deficit of recreation opportunities for residents as the Town is also home to a robust network of Town owned forests and agricultural land, State and Federal parklands, accessible conservation lands and private club and school spaces. Seen collectively, these lands provide over 220 acres of the publicly-accessible open space per thousand residents. As a result, the acquisition of addition parkland should not be a priority for the Department. If any efforts are made for park development, it should include adding to the inventory of neighborhood park land. Additionally, the Department efforts should focus on the quantity, quality and distribution of park amenities.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Park amenities are the built elements within a park that support various forms of recreation (both active and passive). For many users these are the primary reason they visit parks. It is critical that Concord’s parks supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of residents. The following level of service assessment compares Concord’s amenities to national standards. This data was derived from the National Recreation and Parks Association, PRORAGIS (Park and Recreation Operating Ratio and GIS) database. Thirty-six agencies were selected as benchmark comparatives. All of the comparative agencies have a population of between 10,000 and 20,000.

<i>Amenity Item</i>	<i>Recommended</i>	<i>Concord</i>	<i>Surplus/Deficit</i>
Fitness Center	1.31	1.0	-0.3
Playground	5.89	4.0	-1.9
Outdoor Tennis Court	8.83	8.0	-0.8
Outdoor Basketball	3.21	4.0	0.8
Indoor Swimming	0.88	4.0	3.1
Outdoor Swimming	1.18	1.0	-0.2
Spray Fountain	0.71	1.0	0.3
Indoor Skating Rink	1.22	0.0	-1.2
Outdoor Skating Rink	1.18	2.0	0.8
Regulation size Soccer/Football/Lacrosse	8.83	7.0	-1.8
Youth size Soccer	4.42	3.0	-1.4
90 ft. Baseball Field	2.08	2.0	-0.1
60 ft. Baseball Field	5.05	5.0	0.0
Adult Softball	1.47	0.0	-1.5
Youth Softball	1.77	0.0	-1.8
Gymnasium	1.77	1.5	-0.3
Community Garden	1.68	3.0	1.32

School playgrounds not included

SURPLUS AND DEFICITS

The primary gaps in service are in playgrounds and field sports – specifically, adult baseball, adult softball, youth soccer and regulation size soccer/football/lacrosse. The playground which is being considered for South Meadow Field will help address the gap in playgrounds. A similar upgrade to Cousin Field would help close the gap further. Similarly, Cousins Field and South Meadow Field have the greatest potential to address the need for field sports. Adding sports fields to these parks would formalize their current use as flexible playfields for youth sports teams. In both parks, expanded parking would be required to support the added programs.

The only significant surplus is in indoor swimming. The four pools at The Beede Center exceed the standard .88 found in Concord’s peer towns. Given the popularity of swimming and aquatic fitness among residents this surplus is negligible.

PARK SCORECARD

In addition to the quantitative level of service analysis, a qualitative assessment of each park was conducted as part of the plan. The assessment scored parks’ design and usability based on 17 metrics, which were grouped in the following categories:

- Access, Linkages and Information
- Comfort and Image
- Sociability
- Uses and Activities

For each metric, parks could receive a score of 0 (N/A), 1 (poor), 2 (needs improvement) or 3 (good). The highest possible score a park could receive was 51 points. The parks scored as follows:

– Artificial Turf	26
– Cousins Field	27
– Emerson Playground	43
– Rideout Playground	44
– Ripley School	31
– South Meadow Field	23

Rideout and Emerson Playgrounds scored the highest due to the diversity of amenities in these parks. Conversely, South Meadow Field, Cousins Field and the Artificial Turf Field at the high school received lower scores due to the singular uses provided in each park. Detailed scorecards for each park are available in a separate spreadsheet document.

Park Descriptions

ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELD (AT CCHS)

The Artificial Turf field at the Concord-Carlisle High School is a synthetic sports field. The park is located south of the high school and adjacent to Rt. 2. The park includes two full-sized synthetic lacrosse/soccer fields, lighting, bathrooms and maintenance facilities. There is a dedicated parking lot, which includes accessible parking spaces. This park is new and in very good condition.

COUSINS FIELD

Cousins Park is an open play field. The north and east edges of the park abut residential parcels. The west edge is defined by Brown Street. The southern edge of the park abuts the wooded bank of the Assabet River. A small community garden is adjacent to the park. The park has very few amenities: benches, picnic tables and limited signage. The condition of the field is moderate. There appears to be some ponding that occurs at the north end of the park. The trees surrounding the parks are mature, with a few instances of new planting.



EMERSON PLAYGROUND

Emerson Playground is a community park with multiple recreation amenities. The west side of the park is bordered by residential parcels. The remaining edges are lined by streets: Stow, Everett and Thoreau Streets. The park includes multiple field and court sports, a running track, a swimming pool and a playground. During the winter months a temporary ice rink is installed on one of the fields. The park includes a flag pole. Street parking is available around the park. Overall the park is in good condition.



RIDEOUT PLAYGROUND

Rideout Playground is a community park with a variety of recreation amenities. The east and west edges of the park abut residential parcels. The north end of the parks is defined by Laws Brook Road. The southern edge of the park abuts the commuter rail corridor. The park includes multiple field and court sports, as well as a new playground. The playground includes a small structure with bathrooms and a kitchen. There are two parking areas along adjacent roads.



An adjacent parcel has been acquired by the Town for the purpose of expanding the park. Overall the area is in good condition. The trees are varied in age. The White Pines along the west side of the park are attractive.

RIPLEY SCHOOL

Ripley School is a small outdoor recreation area associated with the school. The site is publicly accessible during off-hours. The school is surrounded by residential and agricultural land uses. The park includes a baseball field, a multiuse field and a natural playscape. The condition of the park is good.



SOUTH MEADOW FIELD

South Meadow Field is an open play field. The southwestern edge of the park is adjacent to Route 2. The remaining edges abut residential parcels. The park is accessed from Pilgrim Road. About half of the site is wooded. The remaining space is turf. The park does not have any physical structures or amenities, though a playground is being considered. The trees and turf are in good, natural condition.



Concord Indoor Facilities

INDOOR FACILITIES AND DESCRIPTIONS

HUNT RECREATION CENTER is a well-known and iconic facility in Concord. The Center is nicely located, adjacent to Emerson Playground and located close to the center of Town. The Center is located in a neighborhood and is easily walkable by neighborhood patrons. There is a parking lot across Stow Street and on-street parking in front of the facility. Hunt is used for group exercise programs, group cycling, youth basketball, youth dances, and a variety of other programs and includes 10,000 square feet. Facility spaces include:

- Gymnasium
- Large multi-purpose room
- Smaller conference room
- Women and Men's locker rooms
- Staff offices
- Front desk
- Restroom



HARVEY WHEELER COMMUNITY CENTER is located in West Concord. The Department shares space with the Council on Aging. The building has a nice exterior look and image and includes 2,650 square feet of space. The Recreation Department utilizes classrooms for Concord Carousel Preschool programs and after school programs. In addition, the program utilizes the building's auditorium during inclement weather conditions. There is a shared outdoor playground with one of the sites of the Concord Children's Center. The Center has 114 parking spaces and is convenient to public transportation. Facility spaces include:

- Four classrooms
- Teacher's office
- Auditorium shared use and used partially for preschool and after school programs



BEEDE SWIM AND FITNESS CENTER is a showcase facility for the community and focuses on aquatics and fitness activities. The facility is 35,000 square feet and is located next to Concord Carlisle High School.

Programs include swim lessons, diving, Family Fun Fridays, swim team, and adult water fitness classes. The facility elements include:

- Two story facility with locker rooms downstairs
- Sufficient parking
- Small front desk area
- Locker rooms
- Family changing rooms
- On-site child care
- Separate weight area and cardio equipment area, 1,600 square feet each
- Aquatics
 - Deep water diving well
 - 25 yard by 25 meter pool
 - Therapy pool
 - Youth play pool
 - Locker rooms and two family changing rooms
 - Four staff offices



105 EVERETT is a small 994 square foot facility located on a residential street, within close proximity to the Hunt Recreation Center and across the street from Emerson Playground. The Department has a long term lease of the space from the University of Massachusetts. The center serves as a yoga and Pilates studio. There are two rooms for yoga and a private Pilates studio. The space is insufficiently sized, but its small size creates an intimate space for programs requiring a calm and quiet environment. It is easily accessible with parking behind the building as well as on street parking.



RIPLEY GYMNASIUM is located in an elementary school consisting of 2,891 square feet. The school now serves as the school district administrative offices. The gym is used for high intensity cross training, indoor rowing and strength conditioning.



Core Recreation Program Identification

In addition to reviewing recreation facilities, recreation program offerings were also reviewed. A strategic plan for facilities needs to be closely connected to current and future program offerings.

The ability to align program offerings according to community need is of vital importance to successfully delivering recreation services, particularly for a Department that receives very little tax support. At the same time, it is also important to deliver recreation programs with a consistent level of quality, which results in consistent customer experiences. Core programs are generally offered each year and form the foundation of recreation programs. In assessing the categorization of core programs, many criteria are considered. A list of the criteria includes:

- The program has been provided for a long period of time
- Offered three to four sessions per year or two to three sessions for seasonal programs
- Wide demographic appeal
- Includes 5% or more of recreation budget
- Includes tiered level of skill development
- Requires full-time staff to manage the program area
- Has the ability to help solve a community issue
- High level of customer interface exists
- High partnering capability
- Facilities are designed to support the program
- Evolved as a trend and has resulted in a “must have” program area
- Dominant position in the market place
- Great brand and image of the program

Core programs, by definition meet at least the majority of these criteria. The establishment of core programs helps to provide a focus for program offerings. This focus, in turn, creates a sense of discipline for quality control of these program areas and helps to reduce variation of service for the program participants. It must be noted that the designation of non-core programs does not suggest they are unimportant. It just means there may be less focus and fewer programs compared to core programs. A Core Program Assessment is attached as a tool to use in determining future core program areas.

During discussions with staff and reviewing the core programming criteria, the following programs were identified as core program areas. The numbers next to the program identify the number of points assigned according to the above listed criteria:

- Concord Carousel Pre-School and After School 63
- Day Camp/Summer Clinics 61
- Fitness Memberships 59
- Personal Training 53
- Youth Basketball 51
- Swim Team 51
- Swim Lessons 49
- Water Fitness/Coached work out 47

Special events, while not a core program, are also extremely important to the Department, as they represent an additional involvement and support of creating community.

The survey results showed the four most important programs to households responding to the survey were: Adult fitness, youth sports, adult general education, and youth summer camp programs. Aside from the adult general education programs, all of the rest of these important programs are represented well with program offerings.

As mentioned previously, the Demographics and Trend Report listed top recreational activities for the Concord Region. This information is based on Sports and Leisure Market Potential in geographic areas of the country. For the Concord region, the top 10 activities include:

- Downhill skiing
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Tennis
- Backpacking/hiking
- Jogging/running
- Aerobics
- Weight lifting
- Bicycling
- Ice skating

Program Mix

The program mix or the distribution of types of programs offered should represent the programming needs of the residents. Therefore, this should be evaluated annually through an assessment process. In addition, the program offerings should include emphasis on the delivery of core programs.

Age Segments

Park and recreation systems should strive for an equitable balance of offerings for various age segments, including:

- Youth age 5 and under
- Youth ages 6-12
- Youth ages 13-17
- Adults 18-54
- Adults 55-69
- Seniors 70+

The percentage of program offerings in each age category should closely match community demographics.

The following chart shows the age segment percentages of program offerings. This information was calculated by reviewing the 2013 spring/summer Program Brochure and counting the number of programs offered for each segment, some overlapping age categories. Programs and events offered for all ages, such as family special events, were not included in the list. The age distribution of programs is as follows:

<i>Age Segment</i>	<i>Number of Programs</i>	<i>Percentage of Programs Offered</i>
Youth age 5 and under	71	11%
Youth ages 6-12	73	11%
Youth ages 13-17	64	10%
Adults 18-54	155	24%
Adults 55-69	142	22%
Seniors 70+	142	22%

The following chart shows the age segment percentages of program offerings by reviewing the 2013 fall/2014 winter Program Brochure. The age distribution of programs is as follows:

<i>Age Segment</i>	<i>Number of Programs</i>	<i>Percentage of Programs Offered</i>
Youth age 5 and under	78	10%
Youth ages 6-12	121	15%
Youth ages 13-17	114	15%
Adults 18-54	157	20%
Adults 55-69	157	20%
Seniors 70+	157	20%

On average, agencies offering recreation programs have approximately 70-80% of programs offered to youth 12 and under. For Concord, this percentage is 25%; therefore, the types of programs offered according to various age segments are significantly different in Concord. Forty percent of programs are offered to older adults/seniors ages 55 and older. This actually compares fairly well to the demographics of the community as 34% of Concord's population will be 55 and over in 2017. So, the current program offerings are skewed slightly too much to older adult programs and services.

As can be seen on the prior charts, 293 programs were offered in the Spring/Summer of 2013. Of that number, the following numbers of programs were offered:

- Swim lessons 31%
- Fitness Memberships 23%
- Water Exercise 16%
- Youth Tennis 10%
- Adult Tennis 6%
- Swim Team 5%
- Day Camp/Summer Camp 4%

These seven programs represent 95% of the program offerings.

Brochure and Website Review

As part of the Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan, the Consulting Team reviewed the program guide and the Website. This review provided the team with an opportunity to review program offerings and how they are marketed. Along with Level of Service Standards, this information is provided to guide the Department's future programming efforts.

BROCHURE REVIEW

The 2013 spring/summer and 2013-2014 fall/winter brochures were reviewed. Comments about the brochure are followed by some recommendations for future marketing techniques. Typically park and recreation brochures are the best marketing tool agencies use to communicate services, programs and information to customers. According to a database of park and recreation agencies nationwide from a survey firm, Leisure Vision, that does park and recreation needs assessment surveys around the country, 52% of households find out about programs from their park and recreation Department brochures. According to the Concord survey, 21% of households find out about programs from the Department's brochure.

The brochure is distributed to households twice a year and is available online in individual sections in PDF format. Having the entire brochure as a PDF available on the Website and also using a "virtual" program guide, would be helpful for customers. Creating a virtual or flipbook style guide online, other than the PDF version, would be more visually appealing and easier to read. These types are also available to read on smart phones and tablets. According to National Recreation and Park Association data, more customers will be accessing park and recreation agency Websites through smart phone than through desktop or laptop computers.

The program guide is printed in black and white, other than the front and back covers, which are full color. The program guide's contents and theme are simple and consistent throughout and information is easy to find due to the table of contents listing of programs and other information/headers. The brochure is attractive to the eye with appropriate use of photographs on the front cover. Above the pictures lists "Concord Recreation" and what season the brochure is. The Concord logo is at the top. The photographs depict a fun and entertaining picture for Concord residents and other potential customers. Most agencies have a clever title for their program guide. This may be something the Department may want to consider in the future as part of the Department's branding efforts.

The inside cover in the 2013 spring/summer program guide has membership information for the Beede Swim & Fitness Center, including rates, hours of operation, address and phone number. It lists the Center's amenities with two small pictures. Typically, the beginning of the program guide has general information and an overview for the Department. It's unusual to begin the guide with information about a facility. The four "covers;" front, inside front, back and inside back are usually printed on a higher quality glossy paper. Utilizing these "covers" to promote information of high importance is beneficial.

Given the fact the Department receives nominal tax support, it may be helpful to have a limited amount of advertisements within the program guide to defray the cost. This can be done tastefully, without negatively affecting the visual feel of the program guide.

The font used is very simple. Changing the font for both the descriptions and headers can be an easy way to add a catchy new look. A fresh look is an enhancement for marketing programs and events. Fonts are also an attention-grabber for readers. Changing the font for both the descriptions and headers can be an easy way to add a catchy new look to draw interest. Each interior page includes a small header which is repeated throughout the program guide, stating page number, Concord Recreation and the edition's season/year. This consistency is helpful.

The Department's mission statement could not be located in the 2013 spring/summer brochure. A suggestion would be to include the mission statement and a director's message at the beginning that may focus on Department's recent program updates, special events, and acknowledgements. The strategic placement of information and photos throughout the guide is essential to the overall design.

Customers generally look to the price of a program and then the program title as a means of determining whether or not they will register for a class. Therefore, creative program titles are important. Swimming with a Porpoise is a good example of a creative title. Many others simply state what the program is about. The goal should be to develop more creativity in the program titles.

After price and title, the third element of importance that customers use to select programs is the description. Descriptions should include features, attributes, and benefits. Some of the text included in program descriptions is informational, rather than promotional. Identify the unique value propositions for each program and identify the "hook" that will entice people to register.

It is also suggested to try to keep the descriptions brief, no longer than six or seven lines, as readers lose interest in programs if they read too much. A good example is on page 70 of the 2013 spring/summer brochure. The program Arts and Rec uses a creative title while the description captures the interest of the reader as well as provides all basic information for participating in the program. Another program is Gentle Yoga. A detailed title and very informative description highlights the benefits of the program. Most other descriptions are very lengthy and others are purely informational, without creating incentive for a person to be interested in registering. Overall, the program guide is text heavy.

While reading through the guide, the location of programs is listed in general sections, but not listed individually on program listings. Therefore, potential customers need to flip through pages to determine the program location. Having this information included on each page of program listings would be helpful to the reader.

Currently, the Concord Recreation staff is listed in the brochure, but no contact information is included. A recommendation would be to include phone numbers and/or email addresses. This would show customers that the staff is available and accessible.

In a variety of program areas, the brochure highlights instructors, including personal trainers and football coach. This brings a personal and approachable touch to the programs they teach/instruct. Information on some instructors was missing, such as tennis pros, for example. Along with pictures, a contact person, number, and/or e-mail should also be included in this section. If instructors have twitter accounts or Facebook pages, provide contact information.

It is also helpful to have customer testimonials, as word of mouth is an important form of marketing. A great example is on page 90 in the spring/summer brochure with a parent testimonial. In addition to testimonials, another helpful technique is to create community bloggers, of youth and/or adult participants. This can be for areas such as preschool or youth sports, with a passionate parent writing about experiences of his/her child, or adult yoga participants.

Other key highlights from the brochures:

- The Facebook and twitter logos on page six of the spring/summer Brochure show readers continuous information, and updates are available with these features.
- The Stay Connected page, using the Facebook and twitter logos and QR codes to scan to receive information and/or subscribe to news on the user's smart phone is effective.
- The use of photos from actual programs and events help provide interest from the reader and sell the experience.
- Highlighting personal trainers with photos and experience helps "sell" a program, which CRD employs.
- Employment Opportunities ad in the spring/summer Brochure is a great tool to attract new employees.
- The NEW program listing is a good technique to use, not only for potential customers, but also for staff as a reminder to constantly innovative.
- The 15% off coupon is a great incentive for patrons to register for programs and save money.
- Picnic in the Park Chairman letter is useful.
- Use of customer testimonials is beneficial.
- Advertisement page for The Beede Swim and Fitness Center in the spring/summer Brochure is effective.
- The page in the spring/summer Brochure congratulating the Concord Carlisle High School Swimming and Diving team promotes a connection to the community.

Recommendations for future publications:

- There is an abundance of white space on pages. Consolidating information and programs can cut down on the number of pages and save money. The savings could be used to provide a full-color guide, which is visually pleasing to the reader.
- Utilize the inside front and back covers to promote exciting opportunities for the reader, since these pages are printed in color.

- Provide contact information of staff and instructors.
- Although the font is readable, it is very plain. Highlighting program titles with a different font can be eye-catching.
- Programs that do not have a program number should have that column removed, so it does not confuse the reader.
- Create incentives for a person to be interested in registering for a program by listing the benefits of what the participant will receive in the program descriptions.
- Flyers promoting events are plain and not visually eye-catching. They do stand out because the look is inconsistent from the rest of the brochure pages.
- Many pages are without photos; use of photos will enhance pages.
- Too many registration forms are provided. Provide one and inform the reader they can access additional ones on the Website.
- Grammar and language consistencies are also important, including: the same amount of spaces after times/dates, using the “age” or “ages” term, phone number consistencies and using consistent order for program descriptions
- Include phone numbers, where applicable, of the parks and facilities on the map page. Or direct readers to the Website where they can find this information.

WEBSITE REVIEW

Parks and Recreation Websites are becoming increasingly important as a marketing tool as an identification of brand and image, and an avenue to provide government transparency.

The Recreation Department homepage has a consistent look to the rest of the Town’s Website. It is very generic and simple, but has a compelling call to action. There are several opportunities for improvement for this important marketing and informational tool.

The header of the page reads “Recreation” with staff contact information including address, phone number and office hours just below. Clicking on the staff member’s name opens their email address. A large Department logo is featured to the right of the contact information. To the left is Recreation News and links to open to the page. Below Recreation News are tabs linking the rest of the Town’s Website.

Beneath the staff information are additional links to a variety of options for the reader. The Summer Camp link takes the reader to a new Web page that is more visually pleasing and has a different look than the main Recreation Department page. On this page there are several links regarding summer camp opportunities.

Back to the main Webpage, readers can subscribe to email updates and information by clicking on a specific link. Just below, is the list of the Recreation Commission representatives and minutes from previous meetings. Soon, customers will be able to register online, which will be extremely beneficial for the Department.

The mission statement of Concord Recreation is at the bottom of the page, along with a “like” button for the Department’s Facebook page.

The main Webpage is very simple and concise. A majority of readers using the Web do not want to read a large amount of text. However, the insertion of pictures or even videos of users can help “sell” programs and add flair to a generic site. Pictures are missing from the main page.

A Website assessment should be completed minimally on an annual basis. The assessment should include external customer feedback through focus groups. In addition, it is helpful to have recreation program staff and contractual instructors review the site and provide suggestions in areas of improvement, based on their use of the site and suggestions they hear from customers.

It is projected that within the next five years, there will be an equal number of users who may access Websites through smart phones (iPhones, Androids, Blackberries, etc.) and tablets (iPad, Samsung Galaxy, HP Slate, etc.). In order to maximize outreach to its target market, the Town of Concord should develop applications and a WAP (wireless application protocol) enabled Website that can be easily viewed by potential users on smart phones or tablets and also that allows them to make online reservations.

Technology has given us endless opportunities to promote agencies. Therefore it is important for the District to continuously evaluate user satisfaction with the Website. An evaluation process should occur on an annual basis with a review of the Website:

- Content (promotional as well as informational; not too much text)
- Maintainability (up to date information)
- Accessibility
- Customer Usage (tracking usage)
- Internal Support (process for content updates, technology glitches, etc.)

Strategic Recommendations

The final part of the report includes a listing of recommendations for the Town of Concord Recreation Department, based on the information generated from the study. The recommendations were developed based on a variety of data including Level of Service Standards from the National Recreation and Park Association database, public input process, survey results, and discussions with Department staff. The recommendations are categorized according to three timeframes: short term, mid-term, and long term.

SHORT TERM 2014-2015

- Increase the tax subsidy of Department. According to data from the National Recreation and Park Association, the average park and recreation agency receives a tax subsidy of approximately 70-75% of their expense budget. This equates to about 25-30% of revenues come from fees and charges. Currently, the Department's FY13 budget includes \$1,633,100 in expenses. Of that amount, \$96,742 is allocated from the General Fund. Therefore, 5.9% of the General Fund budget comes from taxes, as compared to the typical Department receiving 70-75% of expenses from taxes. It is recommended that the agency establish a goal of 50/50, or an equal split between tax support and reliance on fees and charges.
- Work with Public Works and Planning Departments to develop a plan for connectivity among parks/facilities. The public input process and survey results support the importance of trails for walking and biking among facilities and parks. This is currently underway.
- Review pricing of Beede; price sensitivity appears as a significant issue. Options can include offering a three month membership category, pricing, and loyalty rewards for memberships. Additionally there was interest in including programs as part of membership fees. There may be potential to offer a limited base level of program(s) to include as part of membership fees. While the Beede Swim and Fitness Center offers a limited tiered membership, it would be necessary to receive additional funding from the Town to expand this option.
- Develop a foundation to assist with raising funds for improvements. This includes the development of a 501(c)3 organization to attract donors.
- Improve the Website and make it more promotional and less informational and expand the use of social media.
- Improve the program guide, as noted within a previous section of the Plan.
- Work with the Planning Department to improve parking throughout the system. Specifically, this includes Rideout, Emerson, Cousins, Hunt, and South Meadow. This is currently ongoing.
- Condense program guide information to make the program guide more easily readable.
- Continue working with the Concord Healthy Communities Planning initiative and continue to offer programs that can reduce stress. This is an important consideration for future programming as well.

- There were many comments during the public input process regarding the need for a trail map. The Natural Resource Commission has developed a map, but there is not a high level of awareness.
- Work with school district both public and private in improving the scheduling of outdoor and indoor facilities.
- Work with CCRSD (Concord Carlisle Regional School District) to establish a use agreement for the renovated fields and new tennis courts at Concord Carlisle High School (CCHS) for the community.
- Involvement with the CC at Play, Inc. initiative. CC at Play is a not-for-profit organization created by local citizens working toward creating improved athletic fields at CCHS. The initiative includes three phases of improvements including new tennis courts, upgraded varsity baseball and softball fields, a synthetic turf field, walking track and other improvements.

MID TERM 2016-2017

- There is significant potential for the addition of two group exercise rooms at Beede, about 1,800 square feet to 2,000 square feet each. One for rowing and spinning in which equipment can be left out, the other for group exercise and dance, which would result in not having to use 105 Everett and Ripley. There may be opportunity to use Everett and Ripley for offices for other Town Departments or agencies.
- Virtual/flip brochure online to accommodate smart phone Web access and registrations
- Attention to active adult age group as the community continues to age, possibly working with other neighboring communities in offering sports/active programs. In addition, there are many active adult Beede members. Work with them to identify ways to satisfy their needs, including consideration for starting meet up groups for older adults.
- According to the survey results, the greatest barriers to participation include: too busy, program times, and people have too far to go. Identify ways of reducing these barriers such as shorter program lengths, adding more weeknight and weekend activities. Complete a series of focus groups to identify solutions to program barriers.
- Start up an outdoor recreation and environmental program based on trends and Market Potential Index, including kayaking, canoeing, etc. This includes the need for boating access and rentals.
- Continue meeting seasonally with heads of sport groups to evaluate field use and scheduling.
- Explore public swimming park.
- Consider a dog park to assist in the control of dogs in other public areas.

LONG TERM 2018 OR BEYOND

All of the Long Term recommendations relate to the recreation facility deficits noted throughout the report. The recommendations for additional park land and amenities include:

- Neighborhood parkland/development; according to the survey results, very high level of interest, as well as need for more amenities within parks such as water fountains, benches, and bike racks. The Level of Service Standards shows a need for 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland/thousand population. Currently, Concord's system for neighborhood parks includes .62 acres per thousand population.
- Playgrounds show a need for 2.9 additional playgrounds. There is a playground at South Meadow being considered.
- Youth and adult softball fields. There is a deficit of 1.8 adult fields and 1.2 youth fields.
- Multi-purpose and youth soccer fields. There is a deficit of 1.8 fields. Phase 3 of the CC at Play project at the High School will help to remedy this as a multi-purpose field is included in the plans.
- There are no picnic pavilions throughout the system. The recommended standard is one pavilion per 5,000 population. Therefore, Concord has a deficit of 3.5 picnic shelters. The recommendation would include three smaller pavilions for a group size of up to 50 and one larger pavilion for groups over the size of 50. The larger shelter can be used for summer day camps to get out of the weather. Possible locations for picnic shelters include Anderson, Rideout, and South Meadow.
- There is no standard for outdoor sand volleyball courts, but this amenity typically exists in most park and recreation systems. This may be a nice amenity to add to the system.
- While the need for additional gymnasium space did not show much of a deficit on the Level of Service Standards, this was discussed in the public input sessions as a need for more open gym. Additionally, the staff members have commented there is a great need for an additional gymnasium, perhaps in West Concord so that there is a balance of resources.
- An Indoor track would be great to have for the older population; though, it scored low on the survey as far as need goes. Indoor tracks for running and walking are typically the number one indoor space amenity desired by the public. This is an important amenity for a growing older population.

Appendix 1 : Community Survey

A Few Minutes of Your Time Will Make Concord a Better Place to Live

Dear Town of Concord Resident:

Your response to the enclosed survey is extremely important...

The Town of Concord Recreation Department is conducting a Community Survey to establish priorities for the future improvement of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services within the community.

We appreciate your time...

We realize this survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete, but each question is important. The time you invest in completing this survey will assist the Recreation Department in taking a resident-driven approach to making decisions that will enrich the future of our community.

Please complete and return your survey within the next two weeks...

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Laura Lunig of the Town of Concord Recreation Department _____. Please take this opportunity to let your voice be heard.

Sincerely,

1. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has used any of the following parks and recreation facilities listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the park/facility.

If YES, please indicate how you would rate the condition of the parks and recreation facility by circling the corresponding number to the right of the facility.

Name of Facility	Do You Use this Facility?		If YES You Use, How would you rate the condition of the facility?			
	Yes	No	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
A. Beede Swim & Fitness Center	Yes	No	5	4	2	1
B. Harvey Wheeler Center	Yes	No	5	4	2	1
C. Hunt Recreation Center	Yes	No	5	4	2	1
D. Pilates & Yoga Studios	Yes	No	5	4	2	1
E. Rideout Playground	Yes	No	5	4	2	1
F. Ripley School	Yes	No	5	4	2	1
G. South Meadow Field	Yes	No	5	4	2	1

2. Which THREE of the FACILITIES from the list in Question #1 have you or members of your household used the most during the past year? [Using the letters in Question #1 above, please write in the letters for the facilities you use most.]

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____

3. Please CHECK ALL the reasons that prevent you or other members of your household from using parks, recreation and sports facilities or programs offered by the Town of Concord.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Facilities are not well maintained | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Poor customer service by staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Program or facility not offered | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) I do not know locations of facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Facilities lack the right equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) Not accessible for people with disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Security is insufficient | <input type="checkbox"/> (14) I do not know what is being offered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Lack of quality programs | <input type="checkbox"/> (15) Facility operating hours not convenient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Too far from our residence | <input type="checkbox"/> (16) Registration for programs is difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Class full | <input type="checkbox"/> (17) Lack of parking by facilities and parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Program times are not convenient | <input type="checkbox"/> (18) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Use facilities in other towns | <input type="checkbox"/> (19) None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Use facilities of other facilities in Concord | |

4. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has a need for each of the parks and recreation facilities listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the park/facility.

If YES, please rate ALL the following parks and recreation FACILITIES of this type in Town of Concord on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 means "100% Meets Needs" and 1 means "Does Not Meet Needs" of your household.

Type of Facility	Do You Have a Need for this Facility?		If YES You Have a Need, How Well Are Your Needs Being Met?				
	Yes	No	100% Met	75% Met	50% Met	25% Met	0% Met
A. Youth soccer fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
B. Youth baseball and softball fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
C. Youth football and lacrosse fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
D. Outdoor tennis courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
E. Adult soccer fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
F. Adult softball fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
G. Off-leash dog park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
H. Outdoor swimming pool	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
I. Playground equipment	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
J. Outdoor basketball courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
K. Disc golf	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
L. Skateboarding park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
M. Walking and biking trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
N. Nature center and trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
O. Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
P. Senior center	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Q. Indoor sports fields (baseball, soccer, etc.)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
R. Indoor lap lanes for exercise swimming	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
S. Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
T. Indoor running/walking track	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
U. Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
V. Small neighborhood parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
W. Large community parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
X. Platform Tennis Court	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Y. Greenspace and natural areas	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
1. Mountain bike park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
2. Other: _____	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

5. Which FOUR of the facilities from the list in Question #4 are most important to your household? [Using the letters and numbers in the left hand column of Question #4 above, please write in the letters and numbers below for your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices, or circle 'NONE'.]

1st. _____ 2nd. _____ 3rd. _____ 4th. _____ NONE

6. Please indicate if **YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD** has a need for each of the sports and recreation programs listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the recreation program.

If YES, please rate the following recreation PROGRAMS on a scale of 5 to 1, where 5 means “100% Meets Needs” and 1 means “Does Not Meet Needs” of your household.

Type of Program	Do You Have a Need for this Program?		If YES You Have a Need, How Well Are Your Needs Being Met?				
	Yes	No	100% Met	75% Met	50% Met	25% Met	0% Met
A. Youth Learn to Swim programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
B. Preschool programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
C. Before and after school programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
D. Youth summer camp programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
E. Youth sports programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
F. Youth fitness and wellness programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
G. Programs for teens	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
H. Adult fitness and wellness programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
I. Water fitness programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
J. Tennis lessons and leagues	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
K. Youth art, dance, performing arts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
L. Adult art, dance, performing arts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
M. Adult sports programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
N. Adult programs for 60 years and older	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
O. Programs for people with disabilities	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
P. Birthday parties	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
Q. Adult continuing education programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
R. Kayaking and canoeing lessons and trips	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
S. Special events, i.e. concerts, movies, etc.	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
T. Nature programs/environmental education	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
U. Trips and Travel programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
V. Gardening	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
W. Programs with your pets	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
X. Other: _____	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

7. Which **FOUR** of the programs from the list in Question #6 are **most important** to your household? [Using the letters in Question #6 above, please write in the letters below for your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th choices, or circle 'NONE'.]

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ 4th: _____ NONE

8. From the following list, please check ALL the organizations that you or members of your household have used for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities during the last 12 months.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) School District facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Private clubs (tennis, health, fitness, golf) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Churches | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Concord Recreation Department |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Boys and Girls Club | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Private youth sports league |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) YMCA | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Home associations/apartment complex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Other towns | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Federal or State Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) None. Do not use any organizations. |

9. Please check ALL the ways you learn about the Town of Concord Recreation Department programs and activities.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Recreation program guide | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) From friends and neighbors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Town of Concord Website | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Flyers distributed at school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Newspaper articles | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Conversations with Rec staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Radio | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Newspaper advertisements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Cable access television | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Recreation Department newsletters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Flyers/posters at Recreation facilities | |

10. Please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "Very Satisfied" and 1 means "Very Dissatisfied", with the overall value your household receives from the Town of Concord Recreation Department.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Very Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Somewhat Dissatisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Somewhat Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Very Dissatisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Don't Know |

Demographics

11. Counting yourself, how many people in your household are?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Under age 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 15-19 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 65-74 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ages 5-9 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 20-24 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 45-54 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 75+ <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ages 10-14 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 55-64 <input type="checkbox"/> | |

12. Your gender: (1) Male (2) Female

13. Do you live within the Town of Concord Parks and Recreation Department boundaries? [If you own property in the Town of Concord and pay Town property taxes you are a resident.]

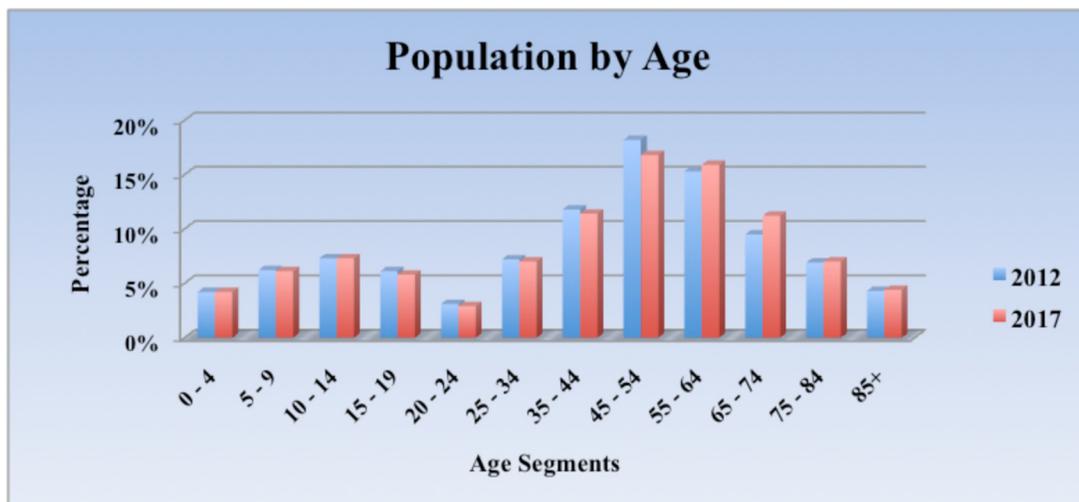
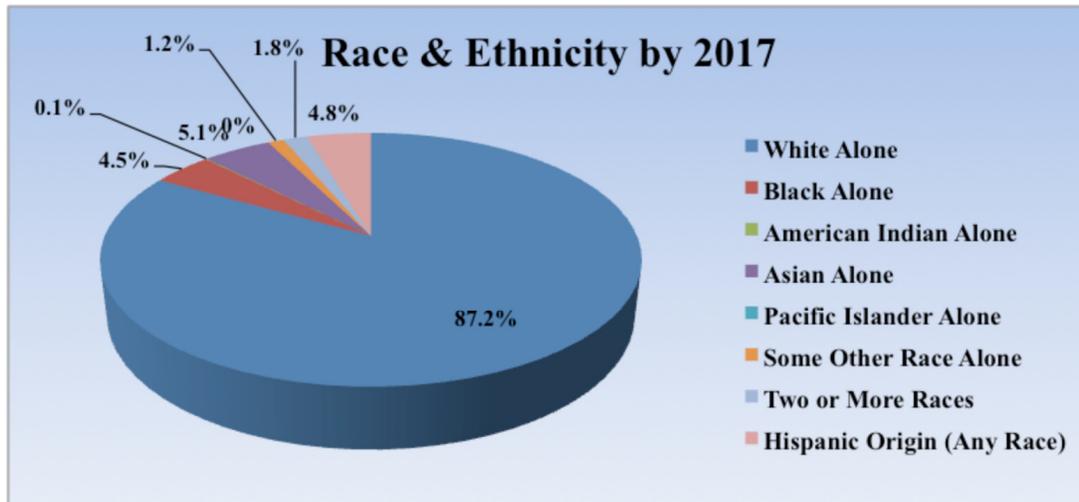
- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Not Sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) No | |

14. Please share any additional comments that could assist the Town of Concord recreation Department in improving parks, trails, open space, or recreational facilities and services.

This concludes the survey; thank you for your time.

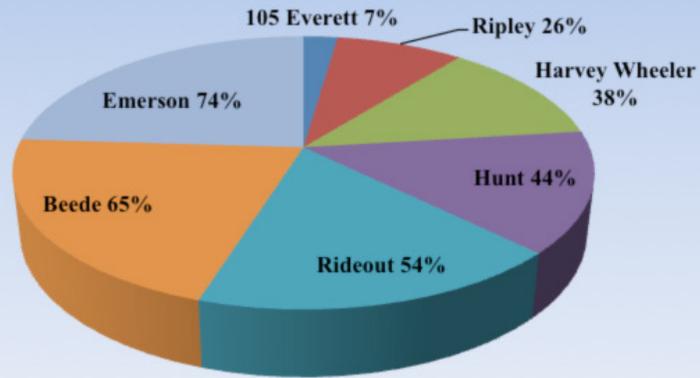
Appendix 2 : Charts

DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS CHARTS

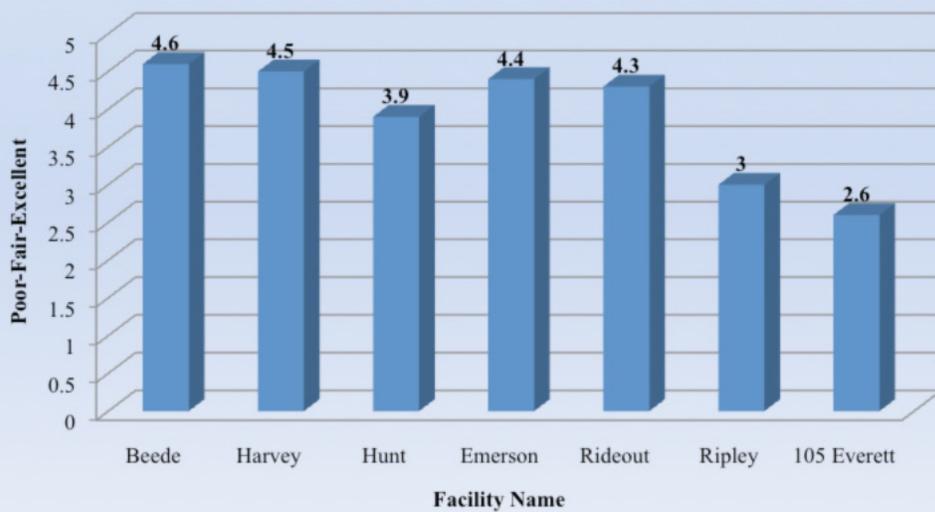


SUREVEY RESULTS CHARTS

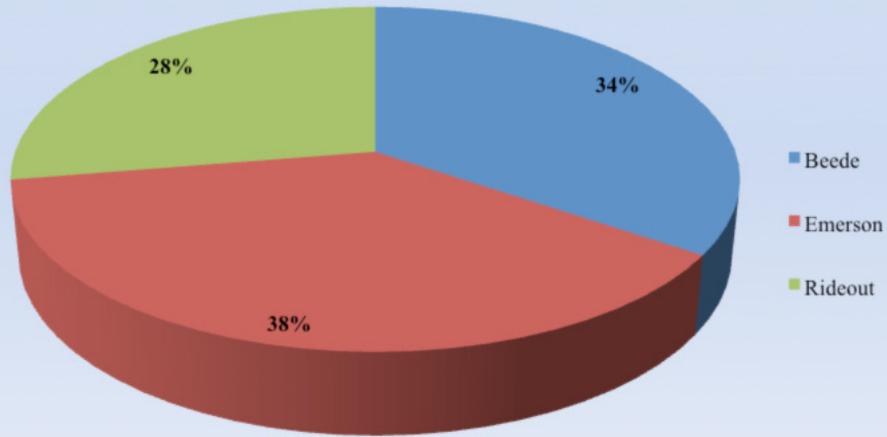
Q1. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has used any of the following parks and recreation facilities listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the park/facility.

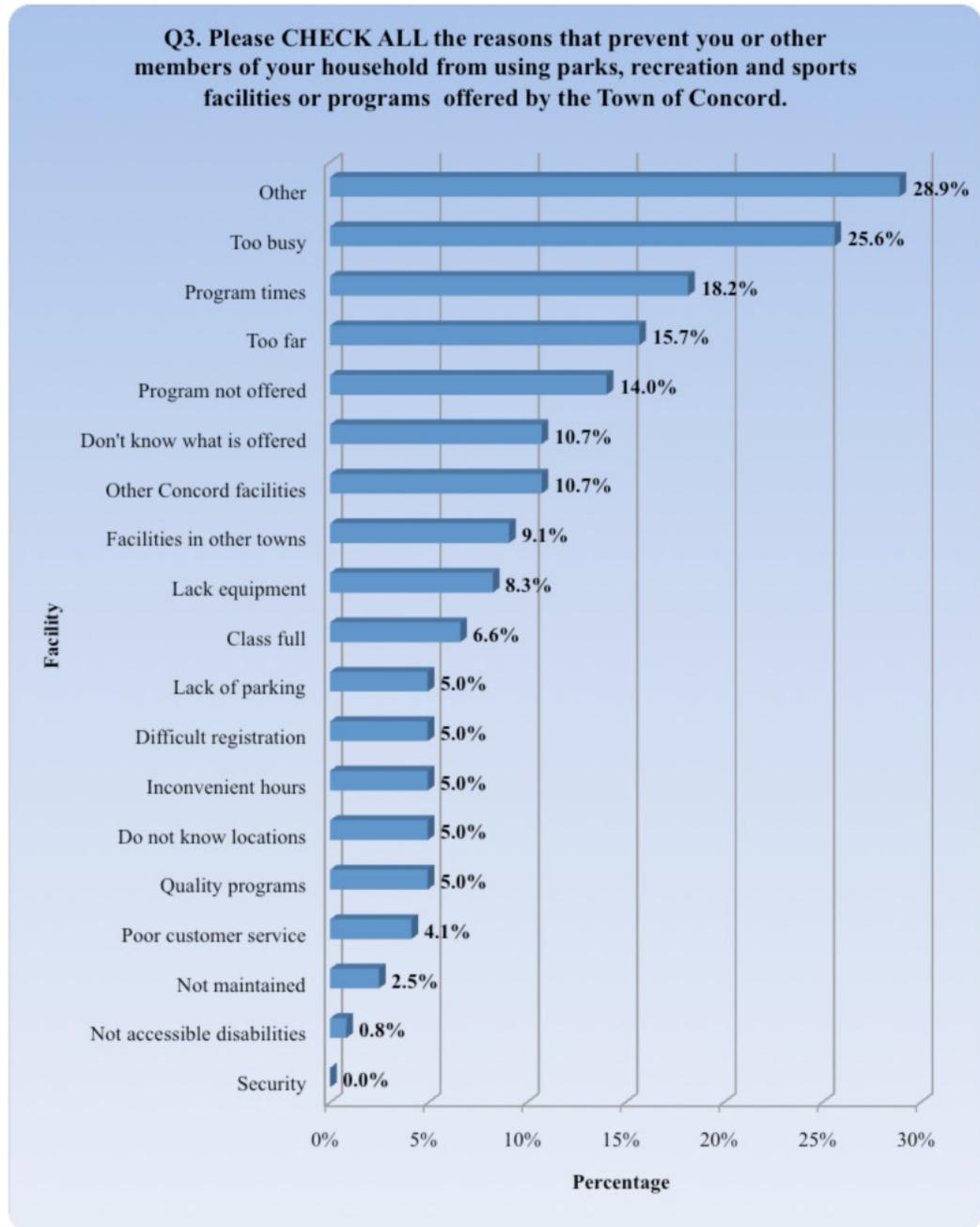


Q1a. If YES, please indicate how you would rate the condition of the parks and recreation facility by circling the corresponding number to the right of the facility.

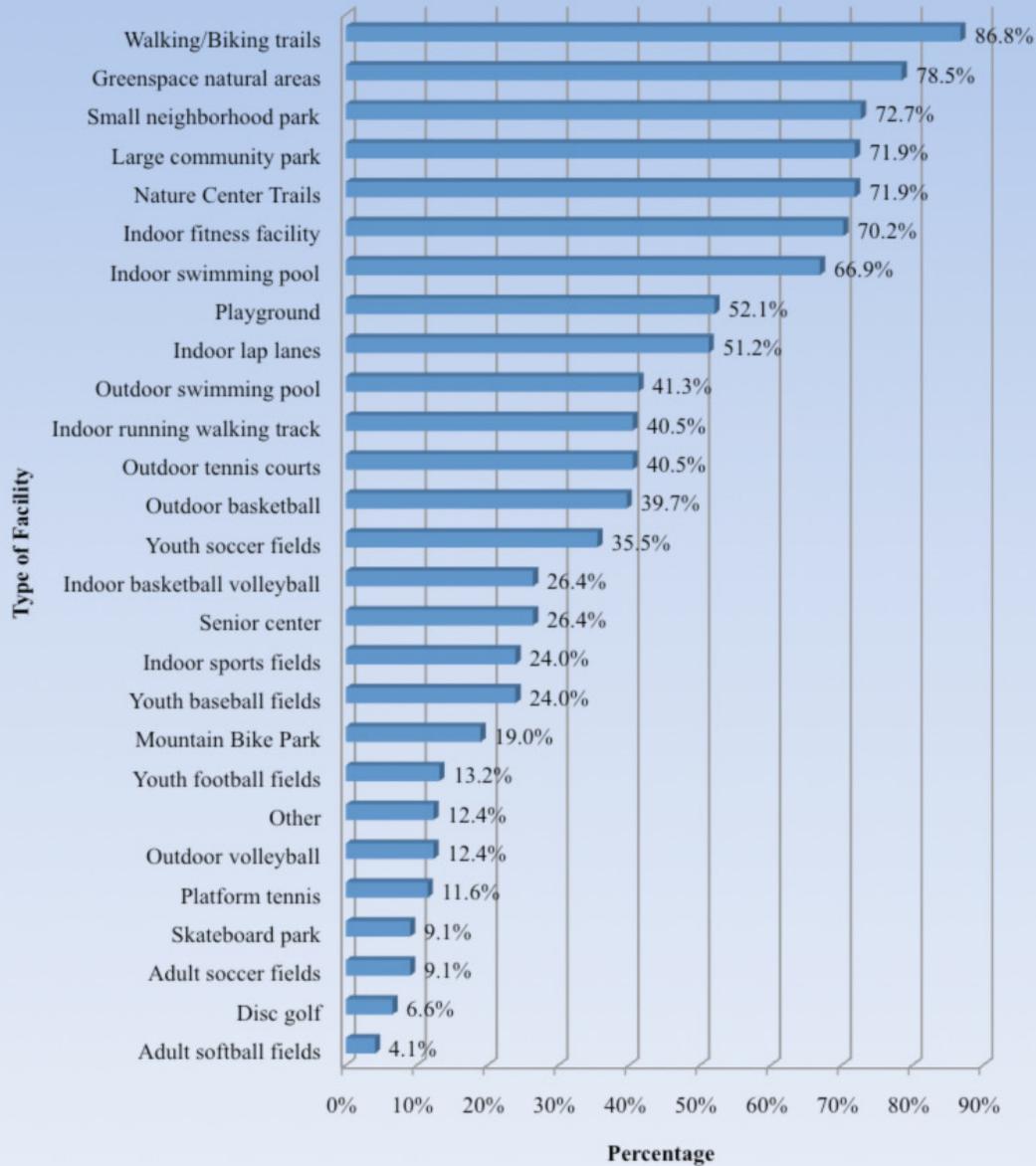


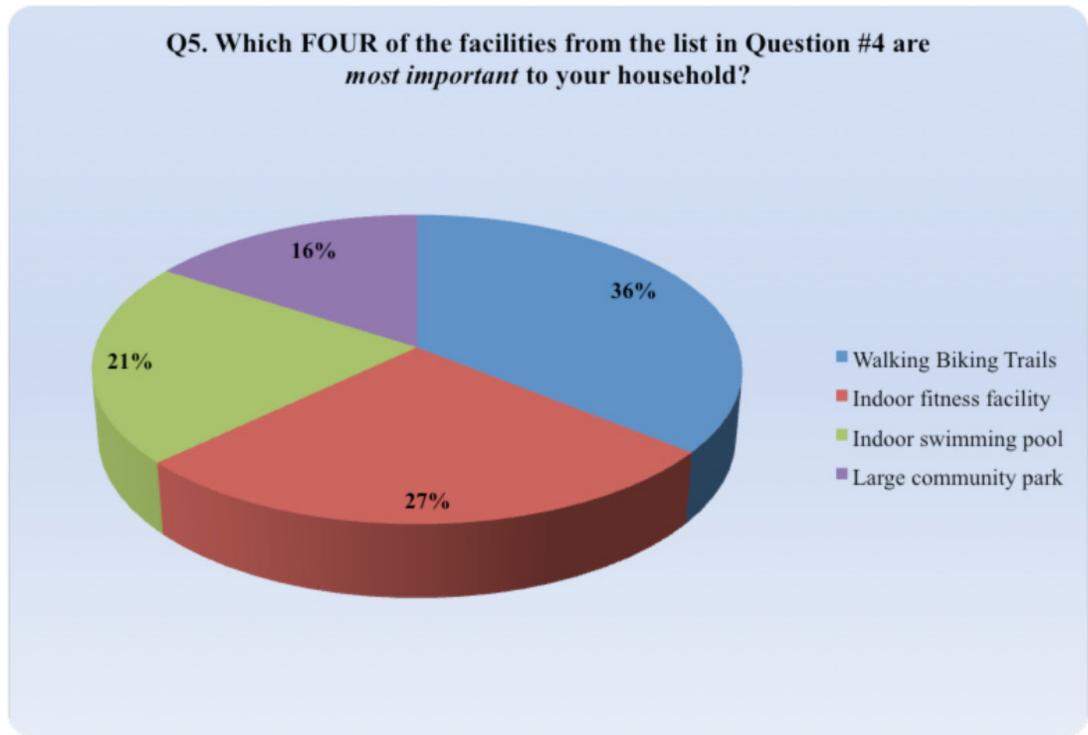
Q2. Which THREE of the FACILITIES from the list in Question #1 have you or members of your household used the most during the past year?



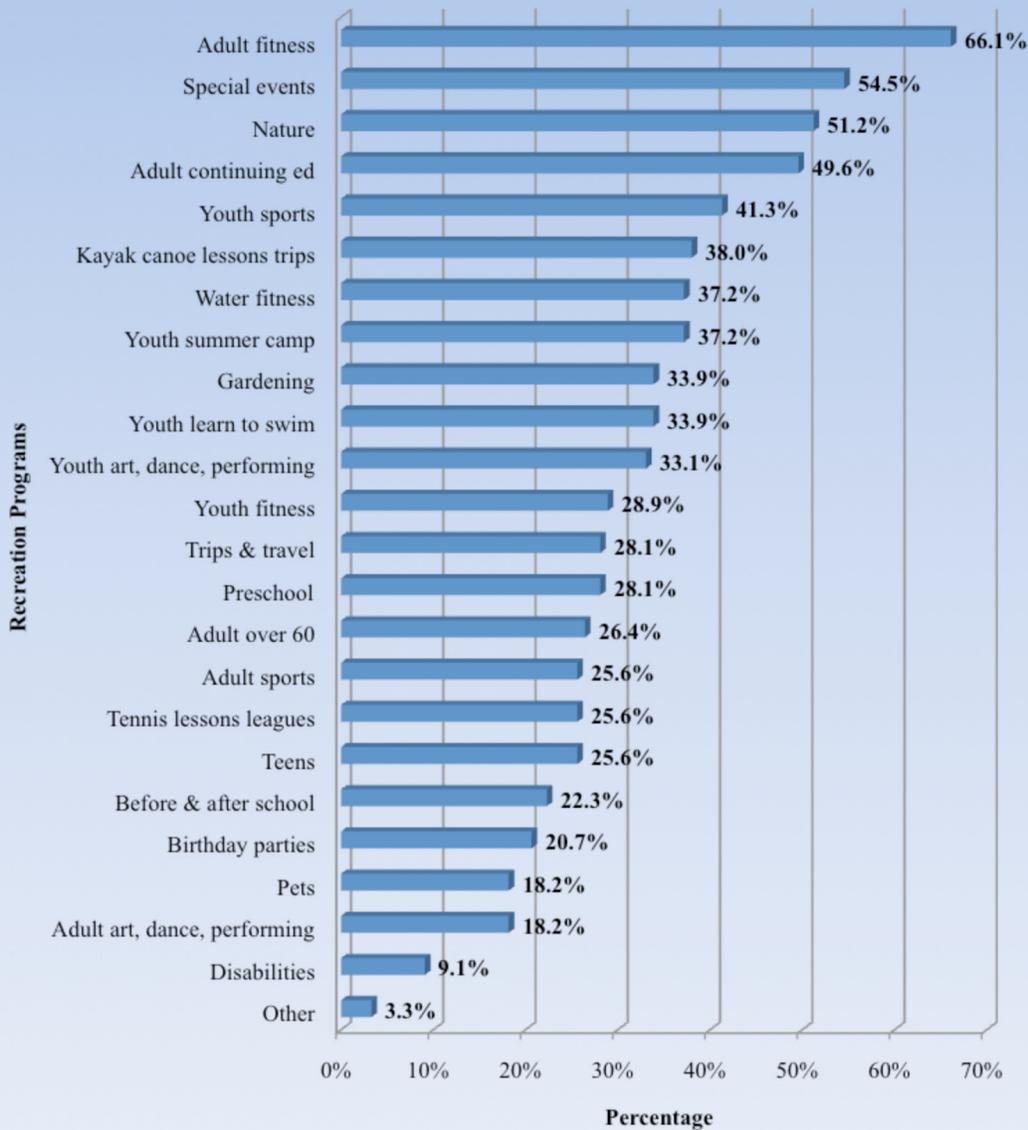


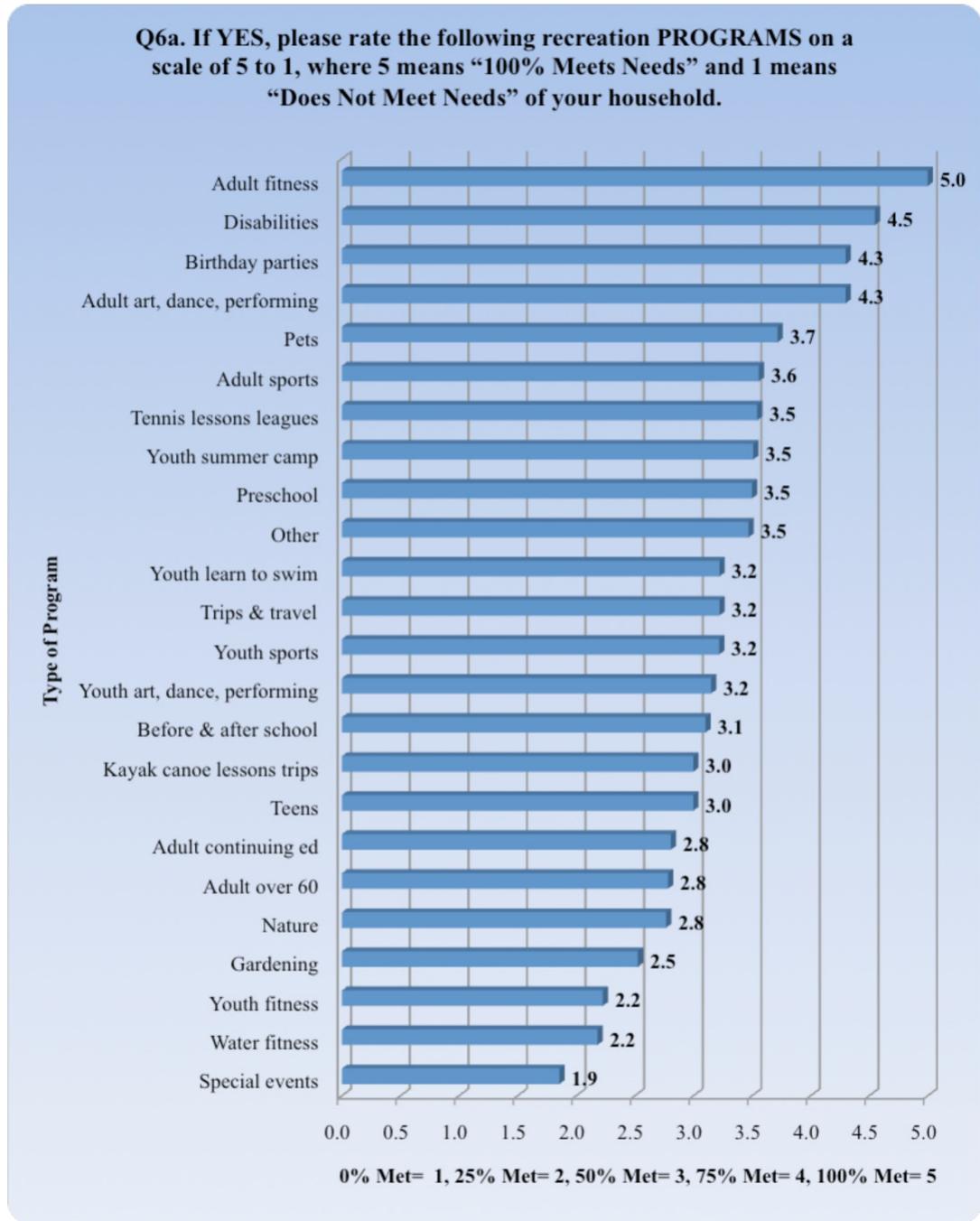
Q4. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has a need for each of the parks and recreation facilities listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the park/facility.



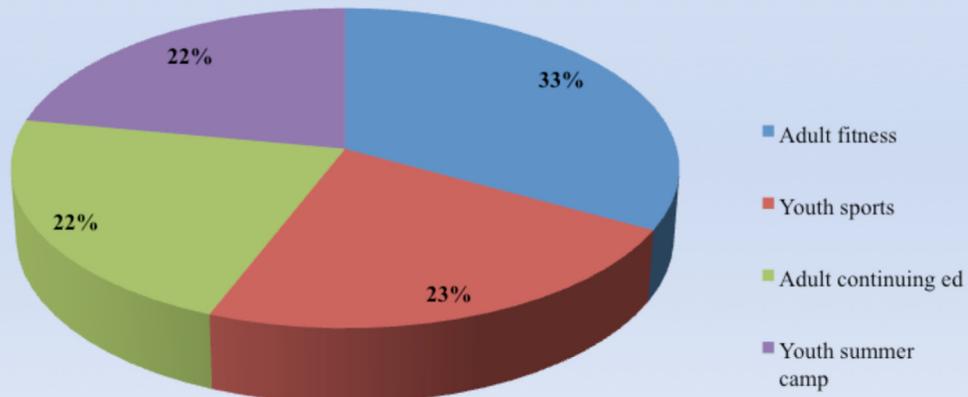


Q6. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has a need for each of the sports and recreation programs listed below by circling the YES or NO next to the recreation program.

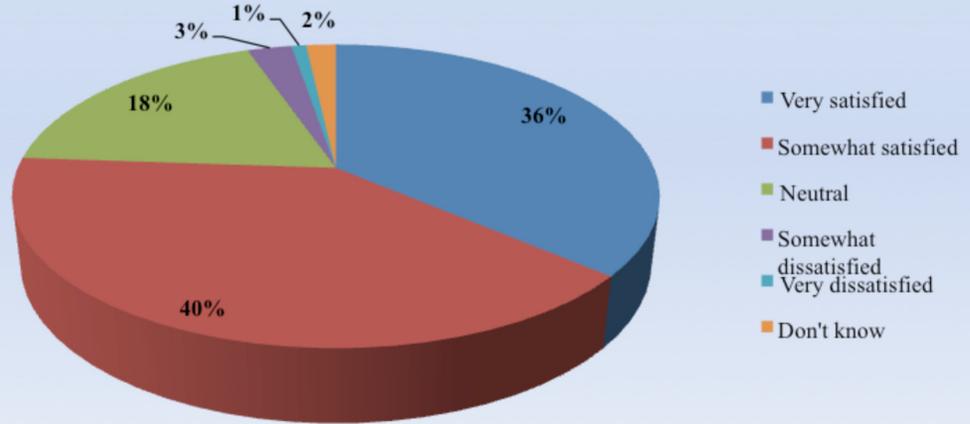




Q7. Which FOUR of the programs from the list in Question #6 are most important to your household?



Q10. Please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means “Very Satisfied” and 1 means “Very Dissatisfied”, with the overall value your household receives from the Town of Concord Recreation Department.



Appendix 3 : Community Input

DO YOU USE THE DEPARTMENT'S PROGRAMS OR SERVICES? IF SO, HOW?

A majority of the respondents referenced Emerson as the most utilized facility for programs and services. Programs that were most often mentioned were tennis, the use of the track, summer camps and youth programs.

Additional comments included:

- Summer camps when my kids were younger, swimming
- We use the Hunt Recreation Center for meetings and equipment hand out, coach classes
- Sports, tennis, camps, everyone in preschool, exercise, therapy pool and swim lessons, rock climbing in the diving well
- The synthetic fields are a good amenity because they are open year round
- Parks are in good condition, especially the turf
- The parks are easy to access, especially those in the center of Town
- Beede is in great condition. It is a good place to exercise
- Hunt Recreation Center is used by youth of all ages; some start as campers and eventually become counselors
- Rideout Playground is popular with middle school kids from West Concord, but hard to access from high school
- The parks have a good variety of activities. I can spend a whole day there
- The ice rink at Emerson is a good amenity, and should be more permanent
- The tennis courts at Emerson are usually available
- Walden Pond is good for trails and swimming. Fairyland is used for trails. People smoke pot there too
- Moms do yoga at 105 Everett

DO YOU HAVE ANY GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT RECREATION PROGRAMS? ANY COMMENTS RELATIVE TO YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF OFFERINGS? ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS NOT OFFERED THAT SHOULD BE OFFERED?

Comments ranged from the need to expand after school programming, more opportunities for toddler aged children, and needed facility improvements.

Other Comments included:

- Passive recreation needs are big; while I was on the Recreation Commission I always heard about this
- I just pulled my son from the afternoon ski program; I don't feel it is chaperoned enough for supervision
- We have heard about the supervision of the ski trip program is lacking; might be not age appropriate, maybe this would be OK for older
- There is not a lot to do for youth ages four to five during the school year; there doesn't seem to be enough offered

- There was a flyer for open play at Hunt...that is the first time I have seen this
- Concord family network is important to keep informed
- The preschool program is not offered on Tuesday. The school has a lot of half day and maybe that is why it isn't. There used to be Tuesday through Thursday for Carousel. It would be great to have more flexibility
- Summer camp programs are really well run
- There was a problem for me in that camps started at the same time in different locations; I have two kids that are in different locations
- I would love to see an option for three to five year olds for three days a week
- It would be good to have flexibility in the offerings
- After school program at Thoreau on Tuesdays should be offered as they are at capacity
- Why don't they do after school programs at the school; kids have much more access?
- When the weather is bad, there is no plan B, there is nowhere to put it inside. For example, my son's tennis classes has no place to go indoors
- Offer language classes
- Yoga classes for elementary school
- Look at the after school program at each school; do they operate the balance of programs
- Basketball program is great; John Smith is awesome
- Staff such as Danner and Laura are all great
- What is offered is well done
- I know a lot of families are wait-listed at the remaining private after-school programs. My own family's tenuous solution depends on a program at Emerson Umbrella which may not run every season. If Concord Recreation could expand their program on Tuesdays, it would provide many families with essential reliable childcare
- In the last twenty years Concord has enjoyed amazing improvements to recreational space for nearly all sports and/or interests
- The parks need more seating, especially for the elderly
- The parks need more drinking fountains
- White Pond should be accessible to the public and there should be parking
- The land behind the Alcott School would be an ideal dog park
- There are plans in the works for a new walking trail at the new high school. If not there, then there needs to be an accessible walking loop somewhere in the Town
- There should be a fishing dock at Warner's Pond
- The Town has great water resources, but there is limited access for small crafts, especially along Lowell Road
- Route 2 is a major barrier for pedestrians and cyclists
- There isn't enough parking at Walden Pond
- Junction Park in West Concord is a great precedent for a successful park
- The trails on Fairhaven Hill need ADA accessible parking at the top of the hill

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ABOUT EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES, BOTH INDOOR FACILITIES AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES SUCH AS TENNIS COURTS AND BALLFIELDS? ARE THERE ENOUGH OF THESE AMENITIES, TOO MUCH OR NOT ENOUGH? WHAT COMMENTS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE FACILITIES?

The general consensus among respondents was that there are not enough adequate facilities to service the need of the community. Some of the themes mentioned were the lack of athletic facilities such as tennis courts, basic facility amenities such as bathrooms, and underutilization of available space within the Town of Concord.

Additional comments included:

- The lockers at the pool are too small
- Maneuvering the locker and family rooms are hard to maneuver because of a lack of space
- Water fountains seem to be lacking at outdoor facilities
- Our fields are in good shape maintenance wise
- We seem to have a lot of baseball fields
- Quality of maintenance is very good throughout the system
- We love the Beede Center kids' pool
- I would like to see more ice skating
- The yoga studio is too small; could Hunt be used for yoga, which would include mirrors; if they are looking for more enrollment then they need more space
- We may need more space to be able to accommodate all the program needs
- Use Concord Academy for some space
- There is more space in the Town; are we using all of the space...all schools have gyms
- Thoreau does their own programs
- Paddle is also something to consider
- We lost fields as new schools were built. So we go to other places like Rideout. When Willard was re-built, the basketball and tennis courts were not re-built
- Alcott Elementary also seems to have some land to accommodate fields
- Ask Lacrosse if they need more fields
- For baseball and softball we are right on the verge of not having enough, but we are going to be OK. Overall we are OK. We have a spring, summer and fall program. We do not have an issue with not having lights. We do have a premier field at Ripley. There is a demand for tournament, but we don't have lights at Ripley
- Lacrosse wants to use the turf field on Saturday. We could use more fields at Emerson in the spring closer to the high school because of proximity
- Football is OK with facilities. We have no formal place to practice on Saturday
- Springtime thaw...we start before the turf is really ready
- At South Meadow there is no parking and is hard to get to. Lacrosse supposedly has this field. The field needs parking and could be used well

- Tennis courts became an issue for the Town; there are building new courts for the new high school
- Lighted basketball court is needed
- Maintenance quality: the turf fields are in great shape. I deal with Public Works. Fields at Emerson are in good shape aside from the middle one. Ripley field also maintained by DPW. There are some flooding issues here. If the field would be twice the size, it would really be popular
- Baseball uses Ripley, Emerson, High School, Rideout, and Carlisle. For the most part, the fields are in good shape. We contribute \$5,000 to \$7,000 to the Town for maintenance
- Soccer gave money for improvements for Cushing Field. We put in new nets
- Last year, one of the private after-school programs in Concord closed. This year, there was not enough space at Concord Recreation at the Hunt Building on Tuesdays to accommodate all the families who need after-school care for middle-schoolers
- Although the Beede Center is a beautiful facility, my family rarely has an opportunity to make use of it. Most programs are scheduled during mid-day hours of the work-week. Both my husband and I work in Cambridge. We don't arrive home until 6pm. We'd love to see evening programs that start after 6:30pm
- The tennis court needs and related tennis court deficit in this community has not been equitably addressed
- Until last year the high school tennis team had been playing on an inadequate number of cracked courts at the high school. These courts will now get replaced but they will not be substantively increased—continuing our community's long term deficit of tennis courts
- There have been extraordinary significant improvements to sports/recreation space and facilities in Concord in the last few decades which has been fantastic for the larger community. To name a few more improvements to recreational/sports facilities, childrens' playgrounds have had a series of overhauls which includes the Rideout and Emerson playground equipment and three completely renovated elementary school play grounds. Other facilities include a new pool and diving well, a multi-use turf field built at the high school just a few years ago, several extensive baseball field renovations and additions, other leveled grass fields and a skate board park
- Field scheduling among all the entities; it would be nice to be able to go to one site to schedule
- After 8th grade – either highly competitive or nothing more informal non-competitive venues
- More cultural diversity
- The synthetic fields are very busy on Saturdays
- Beede should have a discount for students
- Hunt gym needs A/C. It is very hot in the summer. Hunt gym isn't open enough. The hours and programming is unclear
- The pool at Emerson is rarely used. You need to be a member
- No bathroom in Emerson when Hunt is closed. Parks need bathrooms

- The city needs more bike opportunities, especially dedicated bike lanes. There could be a connection to the Bedford bike trail and other regional trails
- A fire pit somewhere, perhaps Emerson
- The benches at Emerson are in poor condition
- The basketball court at Ripley is in poor condition
- There should be a public performance space, perhaps an amphitheater
- There should be more public events like farmers markets and crafts fairs
- Soccer nets at Emerson are falling apart
- Bees are in the turf at Emerson and in the play equipment. It is a problem for day camp participants

ANY COMMENTS ABOUT PARKS/OPEN SPACE/TRAILS? IS THERE SUFFICIENT OPEN SPACE? ACTIVE AND PASSIVE PARKLAND?

The respondents did not comment on any general concerns regarding the sufficiency of open space. However, the major theme that came across was the lack of signage including maps, parking, online mapping and the clarity of marked trails.

Other general comments included:

- I would love to know more about them
- The trails should be online; I have to go to public works to get a map
- As a newer resident, we do not know where things are or what there is to do
- Rideout Playground is very open and needs more shade, especially in the future, needs more parking along the north edge of the park and needs more drinking fountains
- The new parcel at Rideout would be a good location for a dog park, exercise equipment and seating
- There should be a skating rink at Rideout and/or Emerson
- Veterans Park has great seating
- There should be bathrooms in Emerson Playground, not just inside Hunt

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT CONNECTIVITY AMONG PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PARKS? ARE THERE SUFFICIENT TRAILS FOR YOUR USE?

General comments included:

- This is a problem... it's not very walkable or bikeable, so parents are driving. Each neighborhood has something so this shouldn't be a big problem, which requires parking. That is an advantage for schools as they have a lot of parking. South meadows also has a parking issue
- I live on Main Street, and it's really dangerous
- There is a lack of sidewalks

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, SERVICES THAT CURRENTLY DO NOT EXIST? ANY FACILITIES OR PARKS THAT NEED RENOVATION OR REPURPOSING?

There were a variety of comments from the respondents. The majority of these referred to outdoor recreational opportunities including athletic and passive programming.

Additional comments included:

- Flag Football – we see this as a growing area
- Active adults would like some activities for sports such as indoor basketball as well as walking, biking, etc.
- Hockey would be nice. We do an OK job at Emerson and Rideout, but it could be expanded
- Parking at trails
- Platform tennis
- Bike lanes/trails
- Lighted basketball courts
- More tennis courts
- Outdoor ice rinks (more permanent)
- Outdoor street hockey
- Activity center
- Chess Club
- We are in need of indoor space – gym space
- It's good that we use other facilities – the Town doesn't need to own everything
- Bathroom access at all times Emerson is open
- Meeting facilities with kitchen
- Beede should have a second floor for cross fit
- Accessibility to water
- Movie night at playgrounds
- Amphitheater for anything
- Picnic facilities
- Town pool
- Sprinklers at Rideout
- Paved loop trail circling playground (for young cyclists)
- Speed bumps on roads adjacent to playgrounds
- Close off roads four pedestrian traffic from time to time
- Emerson: Fantastic except for bathrooms
- Dog park
- Grass on fields get beat-up; Some remediation desirable
- Elder opportunities (safe walkways etc.)
- Outdoor fitness stations

- Young kids’ yoga class- There was one offered at Thoreau, as an afternoon program. The enrollment was overwhelming. We had to have a waiting list. Thoreau will try to offer two classes in the spring. It makes me wonder how many more kids are out there in the community who are interested
- There are no cooking classes offered in the Concord area. You either enroll at Verrill during vacation weeks and it’s only one day for two age group or you do private classes. CMS offers it too, but on a lottery basis. This cooking class can be part of the healthy living classes for kids, offering yoga, meditation, sports conditioning. Again, Thoreau did a cooking class last year, but that parent can’t do it anymore
- A program offering high school student’s credit for their community service requirements. For example, a program, where the elderly and special needs have extra assistance in doing a project, art work, exercise, etc.
- Self-defense for girls. Martial arts
- Coordinate with student clubs at the high school, private school programs, and the Emerson Umbrella organization
- Indoor tennis
- A place to hang out after school
- More art classes
- Dances for high school students modelled on the SNL dances for middle school
- Nutrition class
- Badminton league
- Paddle boarding on the Concord River
- Boot camp
- The Town would love indoor paddle tennis
- There should be alternative sports like climbing walls offered by the Town
- High school students need transportation to the parks

ANY IDEAS HOW THE DEPARTMENT CAN STRENGTHEN OR BUILD NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE TOWN OR REGIONALLY?

General Comments included:

- I came here the first year that the Beede Center was opened. We work collaboratively with the Recreation Department and this year was the smoothest year and the relationship has been the best
- All the staff we work with are great. I have trouble communicating with the schools
- Danner and all the staff do really well
- They do above and beyond
- Scheduling: permits are distributed for Emerson, Rideout, etc. We schedule and it is awkward because fields overlap. We have first priority in the spring (baseball and softball). All of our stuff is at the new turf (football). There is a maintenance fee for soccer and lacrosse and football, adult soccer \$35/participant per season. This hasn’t been around that long. In baseball we only charge in the spring for a maintenance fee. On top of that is a lighting fee

HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS IN COMMUNICATING WITH ITS RESIDENTS? ANY IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT? HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE DEPARTMENT'S BRAND AND IMAGE?

A common response from respondents regarding the Department's communication was the lack of utilization of online communication, social media outlets and ease of use of the Website.

Other additional comments included:

- Recreation does a great job. John Smith is great
- The high school utilizes the turf field morning to 6:00 pm and youth groups have it from 6-9:30 pm and Saturdays. We do a good job with communication
- There was an issue about where to place the premier field. When this happened, we were accused of not informing them
- It's hard to do a great job with communication
- Maps at trails
- It's hard to navigate the Town Website; it is cumbersome to use
- They are working on getting their program registration online
- Programs are not online
- There should be email blasts
- Each school has a daily or weekly notice; the Recreation Department should utilize it
- The Recreation Department cannot be nimble with the catalog
- The Department needs to make sure of reaching a younger audience
- If you do not have kids in school, you miss out on flyers
- Concord Carousel has such a static website; other preschools website's are better
- High school students have to do community service, so utilize this resource; have Concord Recreation run a program matching high school students with service
- Better parking and clarity where you can park
- Communication: online and paper (maps include directions/address)
- The Lexington website has a good forum for job listings and babysitters
- Apps and events on Facebook would reach high school students
- There should be signs/posters in the parks advertising upcoming events
- Students are drawn to parks that have crowds, food and/or posters
- Successful events include club fairs, bake sales, raffles, the cake walk, the Thoreau walk
- The Town should advertise when the ponds freeze and are safe for skating
- There are currently trail maps available online, but nobody knows about them. They are created by the trails committee. The land trust also has good information

ONE OF THE HALLMARKS OF A GREAT PARKS AND RECREATION AGENCY IS ITS ABILITY TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO ALL. ARE THERE UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS WE NEED TO MAKE SURE WE ADDRESS?

There was a consensus among respondents regarding the lack of programming for adults, seniors, and teens.

Other comments included:

- Special needs children are not accommodated as well as they should. Other towns do special needs basketball and baseball
- Older adults and seniors. Seniors over 80 can join Beede for free. Maybe the Council of Aging and assisted living would be important to talk to
- Sledding hill would be nice
- It would be nice for kids to go to a place, like a recreation center
- The Hunt gym is across Town; West Concord needs something
- Every so often, we consider joining the Beede Center just to use the gym and the pool, but the cost is very high for a middle-class family. If the Beede Center offered memberships that were valid on limited days of the week for a reduced cost, we would love to join
- There are no free pools in Concord
- Beede is prohibitively expensive
- You need to be a member/property owner to access White Pond
- Pedestrian access across Route 2 is impossible

