Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update - Final Report

February 2015

CITY OF GAHANNA

City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation • www.gahanna.gov

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CHAPTER ONE - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation offers outstanding recreation, environmental and park assets to our community through a variety of programs and services that enhance Gahanna's quality of life, economic value and environmental protection.

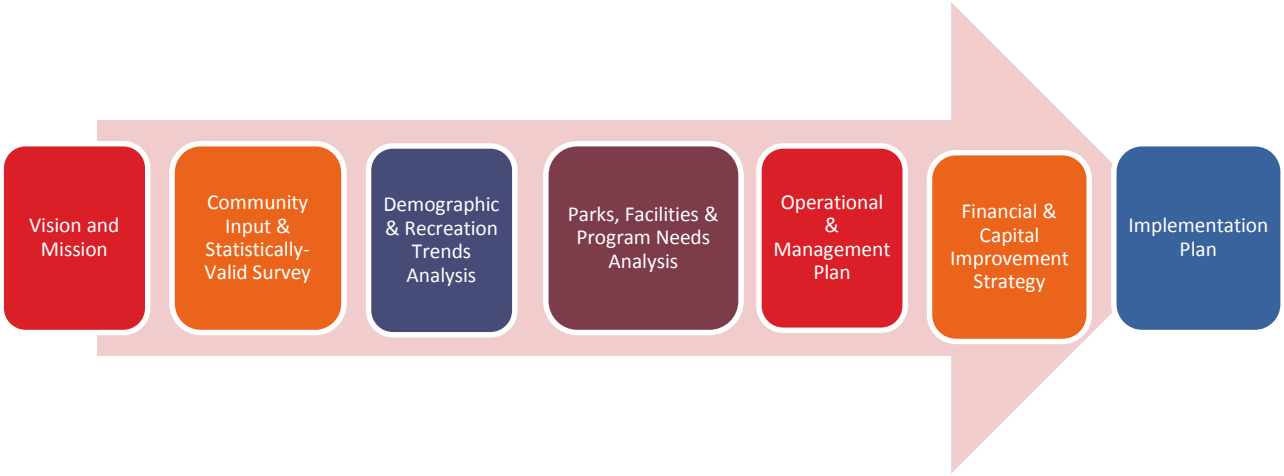
Gahanna owns and maintains 759 acres of parkland in the 52 parks. It includes a state nature preserve, over 200 acres of preservation and conservation property, the Ohio Herb Education Center, 2 aquatics facilities, a 9-hole USGA golf course with a pro shop and clubhouse, a senior center, a skate park, a dog park, 3 community parks with 30 athletic fields, 5 rentable shelters, basketball and tennis courts, 15 playgrounds, fishing ponds and the signature Creekside Park & Plaza.

The City offers exceptional recreation programming for all ages including aquatics programming, golf, youth camps, adult and youth classes and community events like Creepside & Herb Day.

The City of Gahanna desired a Parks & Recreation Master Plan and retained PROS Consulting to be a partner in the update to the *2006 Parks & Recreation Master Plan*. During the study period of 2013-2014, the master plan was built around a series of technical assessment processes to measure the parks & recreation system, as well as the operational management of policies, procedures, parks, facilities, programs and services against best-practices in the state and region.

1.2 PROJECT PROCESS

The foundation of the approach to the updated *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* was to incorporate an efficient and effective public participation process. It was very important to not only to engage those who are always participating in the planning process but also those who do not. The Consulting Team worked with the City of Gahanna to identify opportunities that engage people through a variety of community input process described below. The outcomes, as outlined in this Master Plan, provide guidance for both short-term and long-term goals in a financially sustainable and achievable manner. The process of developing the updated *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* followed a logical planning path, as described below:



As part of the master plan, an extensive public involvement process was conducted to vet or refine community values and issues leading the City of Gahanna's vision, as such the Community Values Model™ was utilized as the foundation of the study. The Community Values Model™ is an innovative process approach to gather comprehensive public input and insight from key community leaders, stakeholders, general public and users to define the overall guiding principles and values of the community related to the delivery of parks, recreation facilities and program services.

The Community Values Model™ was then used as the basis for developing or reaffirming the vision, mission and community values-strategic objectives. The strategic objectives address six unique areas of parks & recreation planning including:

Community / Mandates Priorities	Standards	Levels of Services	Financial / Revenue	Partnerships	Governance / Organization
• Safety & Health / Wellness • Principles of Community • Mandatory Elements for Facilities, Programs & Services	• Land and Open Space • Facilities • Programs • Maintenance	• Levels of Service Delivery • Core Services • Role in Delivery vs. Other Service Providers	• Funding Mechanisms to Support Operations & Capital	• Public / Public • Public / Not-for-Profit • Public / Private	• Design / Align Organization to Support Vision and Values to Community

1.3 VISION

The following vision presents how the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation desires to be viewed in the future:

> *"To enhance and preserve parks & recreation services, lands and facilities through high standards and innovation that positions Gahanna as a leading community and a great place to live, work and play."*

1.4 MISSION

The following is the mission for the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation regarding how they will implement the vision:

> *"To conserve the natural environment through parks and open space as well as provide balanced, sustainable and accessible recreation opportunities and facilities."*

1.5 KEY FINDINGS

The following outlines the key findings from focus group meetings, the citizen survey and on-site operations analysis:

1.5.1 STRENGTHS

- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the community have visited a Gahanna park over the last year which is 5% higher than the national average.
- Ninety-three percent (93%) of residents indicated that maintenance of parks was excellent or good.
- Seventy-one percent (71%) of residents have participated in a Gahanna program or special event activity which is more than double the national average of 35%.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of participants indicate that the programs provided are excellent or good quality which is 15% higher than the national average.
- The Department is appreciated by the community.
- The community loves the programs provided and would like additional opportunities.
- People love the trails that are developed and desire additional trail connections.
- Partnerships with the business community are excellent and the community would like to see even more developed.
- Distribution of parks is good throughout the City.
- The community appreciates the low cost youth and family programs.
- Safety in the parks is acceptable to the community.
- People feel the Department provides strong leadership beyond just parks & recreation services.
- The biggest unmet needs are picnic facilities, adults sports fields, more connected trails, updating of existing pools and indoor recreation program space for basketball, volleyball, fitness, walking and aquatic space.

1.5.2 OPPORTUNITIES

- Better communication is needed on how to reach the community as some residents are unfamiliar with the parks and services provided in the community.
- An updated website is needed.
- Improved signage in the parks is desired.
- Clarity of standards and goals for the Department needs to be stated.
- The community needs to be educated on how the Department is funded and the costs to maintain the parks system.
- The community desires a connected trail system to neighborhoods.
- The scheduling of sports fields needs an updated agreement between the Department and community sports organizations.

- The business community desires sports tourism to become a core service of the Department.
- A long term financial plan is desired by the community to make the Department financially sustainable.
- The community would like to see the Department have a stronger role in how youth sports are delivered.
- Residents desire additional afterschool and life skill programs for kids.
- The community recognizes that the pools are at the end of their lifecycle and need to be replaced.
- Additional park infrastructure improvements are needed as it applies to playgrounds and ball fields.
- Recycling in parks is desired by many residents.

1.6 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.6.1 RECREATION PROGRAMING

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Recreation programs and services in Gahanna will provide opportunities for our residents to participate in quality planned activities that create lifelong users and create a sense of place and livability in partnership with other service providers in the City.

OBJECTIVE

Provide a balance of core recreation programs activities for all age groups and types of families in the City.

STRATEGIES

Continue to keep core programs in the following areas:

- Adult programs
- Active Older Adult Programs
- Youth and Teen Programs
- Family Programs
- Special Events
- Cultural Art
- Environmental Education
- Wellness
- Aquatics
- Golf
- Teen and Preteens programs

Consider adding core programs for the following areas:

- Adult sports
- Sports Tourism
- Preschool children
- Fitness
- Health and Wellness

Establish cost recovery goals based on the cost of service study provided in the Master Plan update:

- Classify services as core essential, important and value added (see Section 5.3 for definitions).
- All value added programs will be self-supporting which includes covering their direct and indirect costs.
- Determine if the Department should be a direct provider of programs as well as a direct provider of space to eliminate any tax subsidy by contracting services to other providers due to lack of tax dollars available in the City.
- Create mini-business plans for core program services and facilities operated by the Department to maintain cost recovery goals desired.
- Demonstrate performance of financial outcomes based on established cost recovery goals to make the Department as financial sustainable as possible.

Program Portfolio Management:

- Continue to provide, or expand, programs considered important to older residents such as senior programs, water fitness programs and trips to special attractions and events. This is particularly important considering the projected increase of older adults in Gahanna.
- Programs considered popular across all age groups should also be maintained or expanded, including community special events, adult fitness/wellness programs and nature programs/exhibits.
- Designate core program areas, as specified in the program assessment.
- Identify ways to increase capacity for recreation programs through increased or more efficient facility use.

Program Lifecycle Management:

- Strive to keep about 40-50% of all recreation programs in the Introductory or Take-Off lifecycle stages and about 40-50% in the Mature stage.
- Programs falling into the Saturation or Decline stage should be reprogrammed or retired to create new programs for the Introductory stage.

Cost Recovery, Pricing and financial management:

- Cost recovery targets should be identified for each program area, at the least, and for specific programs or events at the most. The core programs identified in this recreation program assessment should serve as an effective breakdown, because they group programs with similar cost recovery goals.
- Consider differentiating full cost accounting practices for various program areas to more accurately reflect true costs.
- Consider implementing additional temporal pricing strategies (e.g., day of the week, prime/nonprime differences) to help manage demand and create incentives for participation during off-peak times at additional facilities or for more programs.
- Very brief business plans should be developed for each program area, particularly the core program areas. They will help monitor the success of achieving desired outcomes, help control cost recovery, guide operational adjustments and serve as budget development tools.

- Develop corporate sponsorship for all free special events and programs offered by the Department to help defer tax dollar support.

Performance Management:

- Implement consistent system-wide recreation program standards.
- Conduct an annual review process so that staff and leadership can review policies, operations, issues and plans for the future.
- Begin documenting the program development process to formalize and coordinate program lifecycles in a strategic way.
- Develop an instructor/contractor tool kit or resource package with critical information and information on strategic frameworks.
- Create on-going connections with part-time and seasonal staff to integrate them to the Department and to help manage satisfaction and performance.
- Identify customer requirements for core program areas (at least) and use them for performance management.
- Conduct an environmental scan of best practices every few years to inspire innovation and help make corrections to program operations.
- Implement a system-side and centralized approach for collecting customer feedback.
- Develop and implement quality control mechanisms for instructors, seasonal staff and contractors to ensure effectiveness and build credibility.

Volunteer Management:

- Foster a system-wide approach to volunteer recruitment and management, including coordinated and standardized position descriptions and application/acceptance requirements.
- Develop a tracking system to quantify the number of volunteer hours according to program area and specific function and document cost savings in more detailed ways.
- Develop documented volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition systems.
- Involve volunteers in cross-training to expose them to various departmental functions and increase their skill. This can also increase their utility, allowing for more flexibility in making work assignments and can increase their appreciation and understanding of the Department.

Partnership Management:

- Formalize and continually maintain an overall partnership philosophy supported by a policy framework.
- Consider additional partnerships with schools, libraries and nonprofits particularly to provide expanded educational programming.
- Require all partnerships to have a working agreement with measureable outcomes evaluated on a regular basis.
- Require all partnerships to track costs to demonstrate the shared level of equity and investment.

- Maintain a culture of collaborative planning for all partnerships, focusing on regular communications and annual reporting.
- Update the partnership agreement with Gahanna-Jefferson School District in order to continue to secure consistent availability of indoor space for programs and to coordinate the use of outdoor facilities for community use.

Marketing and Promotion:

- Develop a strategic marketing plan that focuses the brand and identity of the Department as well as increases communication about programs and services.
- Tie the marketing plan directly to the Department mission and vision.
- Provide specific guidance as to how the Department's identity and brand should be consistently portrayed across the multiple methods and deliverables used for communication.
- Use community input to inform marketing efforts.
- Build volunteerism in the marketing and communication efforts and recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows.
- Establish performance measures for marketing efforts and review them regularly.
- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion.

Lead as a Health and Wellness Partner:

- Develop health awareness through trail development by creating heart healthy trails.
- Develop a health and wellness matrix by age segment and service provider to establish what services are missing for which age segments in the City.
- Establish Get Healthy Gahanna as a major theme that includes fitness expos, community gardens, heart healthy trails, fitness walks, runs, hikes and challenges that will motivate residents to become healthier.
- Utilize recognized partners to establish programs such as Play 60 with the NFL for all summer camps and after school programs.
- Develop outdoor fitness facilities in at least one park over the next five years.
- Design parks & recreation facilities with health related features in the future.

1.6.2 PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Parks & Recreation facilities will be attractive, clean and safe and will provide opportunities for passive and active pursuits through a balance of park types offered in the City.

OBJECTIVES

Build connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, schools, downtown Gahanna, Metroparks and adjacent communities through the development of trails, greenways, facilities and programs.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to develop Big Walnut Creek Corridor as a primary greenway feature in the City with multi-purpose trail connections between existing parks, downtown and communities that connect with Gahanna.
- Develop a long term plan to ensure the continuation of one or two aquatic facilities in the City.
- Continue to consider the development of a multi-generational community center in the community for the future as the community begins to support parks & recreation needs in the City through the development of a feasibility study.
- Develop an asset management plan that evaluates the current assets in the City parks system and where they are in their lifecycle to plan on how to enhance them when they reach the 25% of production level.
- Increase maintenance standards for special use parks, community parks and sports complexes to keep them at all times at level 2 standards based on NRPA maintenance management modes.
- Coordinate with public works on asset management and data collection to be consistent how the City tracks costs and schedule repairs.
- Establish clean up and fix up days with neighborhoods in their neighborhood parks twice a year by improving tree care, mulching, painting, flowers, weed control and minor repairs.
- Remove amenities that are not used by the public to save operational costs.
- Improve signage to access the parks on the street through improved signage to get to the park, at the park and in the park on how to use the park in a positive manner.
- Work more closely with how sports fields are scheduled to maximize fairness and productivity of the fields in the City.
- Relocate the pro shop to allow greater accessibility to it and the golf course.
- Coordinate the development of non-traditional recreation facilities and programs that address regional trends such as a disc golf or an adventure park.
- Consider the development of a Nature Center in cooperation with Metroparks at Gahanna Woods to host educational and interpretive programs.
- Design and or redesign facilities to produce revenue to offset operational costs to the highest extent possible.

1.6.3 OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The Department of Parks & Recreation will be a best practice agency that is productive and outcome based, delivering quality parks, programs and facilities to the community in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

OBJECTIVE

Develop and adopt a set of core performance indicators to manage programs, facilities and parks.

STRATEGIES

- Determine a new organizational structure based on reduced services that create a sustainable system while focusing on core services, standards and cost recovery goals.
- Stay focused on cost of service work completed in the Master Plan and update yearly to support unit costs goals and cost recovery goals.
- Incorporate operational cost requirements in advance of any new park that is updated or any new facility created to inform City Council of what the operational costs will be before building it so operational dollars are available.
- Incorporate as many new funding sources as possible to increase the operational budget of the Department to meet the needs of citizens.
- Update pricing requirements on a yearly basis to support cost recovery goals desired.
- Consider allowing parks to be have its own standalone levy in the City to meet the needs of residents.
- Establish a long term capital improvements plan for the Department.
- Establish maintenance outcomes for efficiency, customer satisfaction and operational budget growth as well as for partnerships with other service providers.
- Establish different levels of maintenance standards for practice, recreational fields and game fields.
- Continue to contract out services where applicable.
- The Department should increase program fees based on the classification of services and cost recovery goal desired, reduce overhead and operating costs where they can, or a combination of both strategies to achieve an overall cost recovery of 75% of recreation programs only. This does not include capital costs. The net effect of achieving an overall cost recovery of 75% for recreation programs would reduce the general fund subsidy by nearly $200,000, through the generation of new revenue.
- The Department should implement individual program changes to increase revenues through fee increases or reduce operating costs and overhead to achieve the cost recovery targets for each individual program as outlined in the cost recovery tables. The increase to cost recovery levels may need to be achieved over 2-3 years, to allow for phased implementation of higher fees or cost reductions related to staffing and overhead.

- Revise the existing comprehensive fee and pricing policy to be approved by the Gahanna City Council that establishes cost recovery and general fund subsidy levels for Department programs, facilities and services based on service classification and public benefit.
- Establish market based non-resident fee rates which can vary from a 0% to 50% fee differential between residents and non-residents based on program demand versus capacity, general fund subsidy level of programs and ease of collection.
- Establish a "Program Passport" scholarship program for low income children and teens to allow for free participation in Core and Important programs and 50% fee reduction for Value Added programs.
- Aggressively market and promote financial opportunities to the private sector to offset costs associated with Special Events with the goal to recover 100% of costs, which would reduce the overall subsidy to the Department.
- Based on the community's desire for special events, the City should prioritize which events the community desires the most in order of magnitude, determine the cost to provide the event, share the results with the local business community on what level of support they are capable of providing, as well as what City Council will support and have a cut off of the remaining special event programs based on the resources available.
- Athletic field reservations should be categorized based on community value and based on classification of services as core essential, important or value added with the appropriate cost recovery goals for each.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation is a very well respected Department in the City by the residents they serve. The Department has undergone many changes due to budget changes. The updated Master Plan does not call for a massive level of capital improvements even though they are needed in the City due to a lack of tax dollars available.

As such, this Master Plan focuses on operational efficiency, cost recovery, productivity and customer service. Many of the recommendations are how to increase revenue to support operational costs and to meet standards for programs and park maintenance. The Department has done a good job implementing the recommendations from the 2006 Master Plan and can and will do the same in this 2014 update. The 2014 update introduces a cost of service study, a stronger program plan and an updated level of service plan.

This Master Plan is based on the Department's current operations, however, the community has indicated that additional programs and activities are desired for the system. The City needs to think broader than the current funding for the system to allow the Department to serve these additional needs and increase the City's image through well managed public space. Best practice agencies have some level of dedicated funding that includes a commitment in tax dollars to parks and recreation primarily for park maintenance and capital improvements supplemented with earned income dollars from user fees, sponsorships and a host of other funding options to increase operating revenue to meet unmet needs in the community.

The staff of the Department are very committed to the citizens' needs and this Master Plan study follows what residents have asked for through the focus groups meetings and citizen survey. The challenge will be to develop a Department that can recover 75% of its recreation programs provided through user fees while supporting the other elements of parks, recreation facilities and capital funding needs from dedicated tax dollars which will not be easy but is achievable. The Department is poised to build on its many achievements and this Master Plan outlines the strategy for success!

CHAPTER TWO - COMMUNITY INPUT

2.1 KEY LEADERSHIP AND FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

As part of the process for the updated Parks & Recreation Master Plan, six (6) focus groups along with four (4) stakeholder interviews were conducted. This process of community involvement helps establish priorities for the future improvement of and direction of management and planning for the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. The focus groups and stakeholder interviews enable the Department and Parks & Recreation Board to learn what users of the system value, are concerned with and feel are unmet needs are that the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation could be providing. **The comments below reflect a summary of the stakeholder, key leadership and focus groups.**

2.1.1 STRENGTHS OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Overall, the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation is well liked in the community and people are proud of their parks system. The most frequent responses in the interviews gave praise to the maintenance of the parks and facilities, the park amenities, the programs and events and the relationship between the agency and community. The focus groups agreed that the parks and facilities in Gahanna are clean and well-maintained. The nature trails and bike paths are well used, and people are happy with the size and layout of the trails. The parks and facilities are considered accessible and inexpensive to use. The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation has very strong programming. They offer a wide variety of programs for all ages, including sports and summer camps. The camps are top-notch, satisfy large numbers of kids and provide employment opportunities for older kids. The Department of Parks & Recreation is also revered for the events they host. Many people in the community attend events such as the Blues and Jazz Fest and Creekside events on Fridays. Events are constantly going on in the parks and considered to be very inviting and entertaining. Partnerships are very strong and help produce high quality events. The Department of Parks & Recreation's community outreach is excellent and they are very responsive to public concerns. The Staff are friendly, knowledgeable and have strong leadership. Communication within the parks is excellent and complaints are acted upon quickly and handled with care.

2.1.2 MOST VALUED ABOUT PARKS & RECREATION SERVICES

The people of the City of Gahanna value the parks system with high regard. The most common response among focus groups was the accessibility and convenience of the parks. There is something for people of all ages, fields and facilities are readily available and the parks system is spread out evenly across the City. The trail systems associated with the parks are very important to the public, and progress in completing and connecting existing trails has been noticed. The community enjoys the low cost programs offered by the parks department, and feel they get premium value for their money when participating in these programs. Residents of Gahanna take pride in youth programs and family activities in locations like Creekside, Hannah Park and Friendship Park. Gahanna's Department of Parks & Recreation is also renowned by the public for providing a safe experience and excellent service within well-maintained parks and facilities.

2.1.3 GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM

According to focus group responses, the largest perception that needs improvement is the information available on the parks and how that information reaches the public. Although Gahanna's parks and

facilities are considered plentiful and accessible throughout the City, many people are unfamiliar with the locations and offerings of the parks in the system. Those interviewed suggest that there is a need for better information on park locations, amenities, park and trail maps, programs/activities and events. Some interviewees complain that the signage marking parks is unnoticeable or nonexistent, and those unfamiliar to an area would have trouble locating the park. A program guide is needed as a resource for programs and activities which explains different types of offerings, pricing, ages and locations. A complete maps system is also a necessity for the parks department. This would include maps for each park and trail system, GEO Coded with directions and amenities. New avenues to relay these resources should be explored to create more publicity about the parks and their programs, activities and events. Responses suggest a need for more thorough information on the website, sending program guides via direct mail, more complete advertising of events and a parks application for smart phones.

There is a lack of clarity regarding the standards, needs and goals of the organization. Many interviewed would like to see more interaction and spending between the parks department and local businesses. This should create an opportunity to acquire more resources and generate more funds. Along with more partnerships with local businesses, the residents of Gahanna are also interested in developing relationships with other successful municipalities to share information and resources to improve on existing operations. The City of Gahanna and its residents would like the City to be a destination for visitors. The City hopes to accomplish this vision by bringing large soccer tournaments to the area as an economical tool. To ensure success and sustainability of such tournaments, Gahanna needs to research and implement strategies for hosting large sporting event groups.

2.1.4 KEY OUTCOMES FROM THE MASTER PLAN

Key outcomes desired are a prioritized plan to help determine what needs to be built, maintained, repaired and/or closed. The plan should cover cost associated with facilities and programs and have a clear path for what the community sees as the future of the Department of Parks & Recreation. Participants would also like a business plan implemented in creating partnerships with local business owners / organizations to help support the Department and cover costs. Participants want to see the Department have a long-term plan to sustainability and continue to meet the needs of the Community.

2.1.5 KEY PROGRAM SERVICES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

The City of Gahanna has never had the presence of a youth sports association, and many feel there could be more opportunities for kids in sports activities if they did develop one. Participants would also like to see after school and educational programming for children. The children of the community would also benefit from programming that can be provided from current educational partnerships. The public would like to continue to see more activities that are low in cost or free.

2.1.6 RECREATION FACILITIES AND / OR AMENITIES THAT ARE MOST NEEDED

Interviews with focus groups revealed concern to improve and expand on existing amenities in the parks. The most frequent response was a desire to complete and connect the bike trail system. The community would like to see the bike trail expanded to include more access to downtown areas, and possibly connect with trails in other areas of the region such as New Albany. The interview results also stress an immediate need to improve and/or replace the swimming pools owned by the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. The pools are outdated and most are in very poor condition. Due to the complexity and high cost associated with repairing and replacing the City's pool facilities, careful planning is needed to create an effective strategy and a coordinated approach. Other amenities perceived as opportunities to

improve the existing parks include updating equipment to create age appropriate playgrounds, improvements and expansion of ball fields and conduct research for an indoor facility/fieldhouse for City, township and school use. Results also reveal an interest in making recycling available in the parks to encourage a greener environment.

2.1.7 OPERATIONAL OR MAINTENANCE ISSUES

Focus group responses indicate a need to establish standards for routine maintenance of park grounds and lifecycle maintenance and usable lifecycle measures for amenities. It would also be beneficial to coordinate parks and services because they perform similar tasks, but do not share a database. A partnership with organizations such as girl scouts and boy scouts could be utilized to improve aesthetics of the parks. Implementation of a recycling program in the parks is imperative and will help to define core values of the organization. In addition to recycling bins in the parks, residents would like to improve safety by adding more lighting and security surveillance, as well as more water fountains to keep people hydrated.

2.1.8 AREAS OF THE SYSTEM THAT NEED MORE FOCUS

The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation has numerous opportunities that should be focused on. Improvements to swimming pools and camps, as well as continued expansion and completion of the pathway systems are also areas of opportunity for the parks. Some suggest revisions to the Department to remove unneeded amenities and right size its budget.

There needs to be a focus on Gahanna maintaining green spaces. Pools in the parks need to be replaced and updated. Also, there is a need for more maintenance staff, because there is a lot of work for only five employees. Politically, the government has been taking over elements that have been managed by the community previously. Future expansion of the parks is in jeopardy because tax rates have not increased in 35+ years, and the Department cannot operate at the current rate.

2.1.9 FUNDING OF THE DEPARTMENT AND FUNDING SOURCES

Focus group interview results express concern with the transparency of the parks department and where the department is headed in the future. The most troubling issue for the residents of Gahanna is the lack of information regarding spending within the Department of Parks & Recreation. The general public isn't in tune with how the department is spending its money, and residents would like to know how costs are determined and what value is realized by the tax payers. Most participants felt the Department was under funded or was not sure.

2.1.10 WITH THE RECENT FAILURE OF THE INCOME TAX LEVY WHAT PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES DO YOU FEEL THE CITY SHOULD REDUCE OR ELIMINATE?

Many respondents said to close the older pools, shorten hours opened to the community and/or cut programs that do not cover cost. Participants see the Department of Parks & Recreation as a value and do not want to cut programs or services.

2.1.11 OTHER COMMENTS

The following statements are from participants:

- We need to have more facts

- We should have had just the parks levy on versus the income tax on the on the ballot
- We need to make sure we have adequate open space
- A lifecycle of activities from preschool to when you are a senior on programs we offer. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate. We have a large amount of people who want to play but we do not have facilities to provide for them
- We need a field house in the City
- Rain water collection for irrigation for fields use
- Collaboration with Jefferson Township because they have the land. The City should create a joint partnership
- Comparison of the percentage of budget we have to a like City (ex. Westerville) for all of the services in the City
- Re-visit the Master Plan on what was completed and what is still relevant issues
- We need to do a benchmark comparisons of budget and staffing
- Find a way to connect neighborhoods, trails and schools
- The pools need to be addressed

2.2 STATISTICALLY VALID COMMUNITY SURVEY

Leisure Vision conducted a Community Attitude and Interest Survey during March and April of 2013 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the City of Gahanna. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City. The survey was administered by mail.

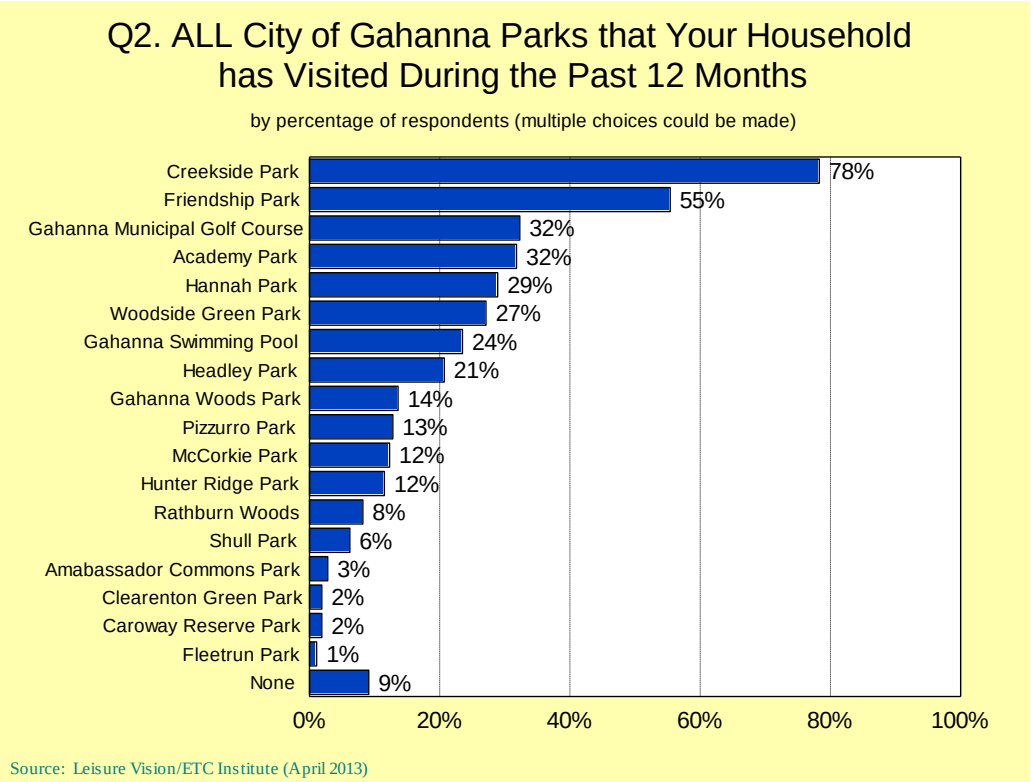
Leisure Vision worked extensively with City of Gahanna officials and PROS Consulting in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

On March 15, surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in the City of Gahanna. The same day the surveys were mailed, each household that was to receive a survey also received an electronic voice message encouraging them to complete the survey.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 300 completed surveys. The actual total surveys completed was 745 surveys. The results of the random sample of 745 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.6%. The following pages summarize major survey findings:

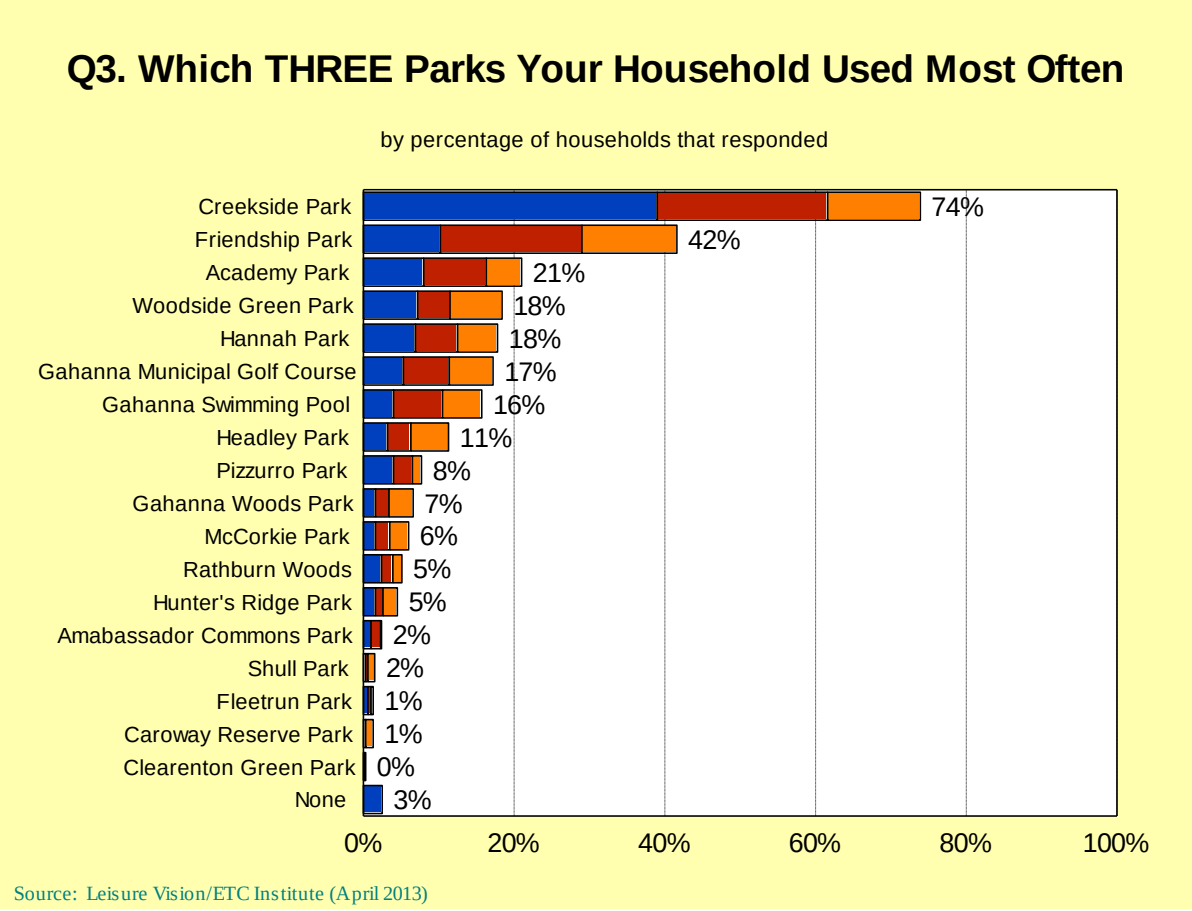
2.2.1 CITY OF GAHANNA PARKS VISITED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Respondent households were asked to indicate ALL the City of Gahanna Parks they had visited over the past 12 months. Ninety-one percent (91%) of households have visited at least of the (18) City parks over the past 12 months. Creekside Park was the most visited park with 78% of households visiting the park. Other heavily used parks included: Friendship Park (55%), Gahanna Municipal Golf Course (32%) and Hannah Park (29%).



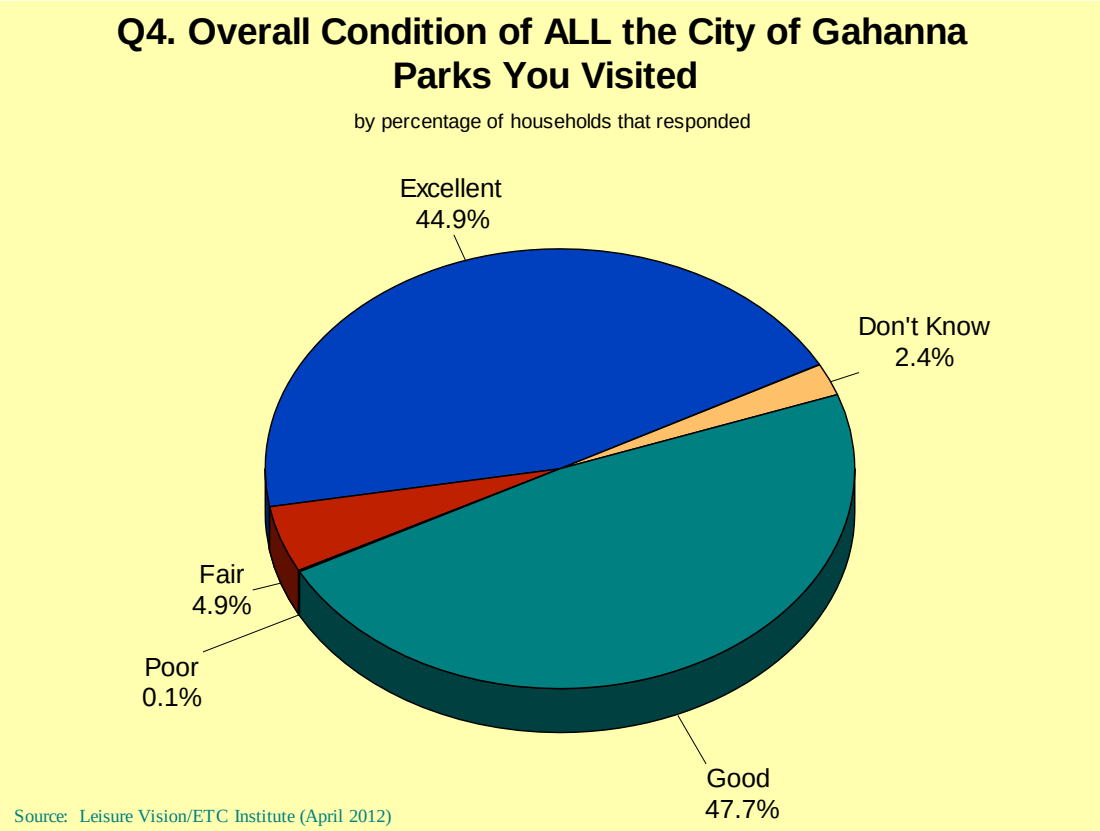
2.2.2 RESPONDENTS INDICATED THE THREE (3) PARKS THEY VISITED THE MOST OFTEN

Of respondents who indicated they had visited a park in question #2, respondents visited Creekside Park (74%) the most often. Other most visited parks include: Friendship Park (42%), Academy Park (21%), Woodside Green Park (18%) and Hannah Park 18%.



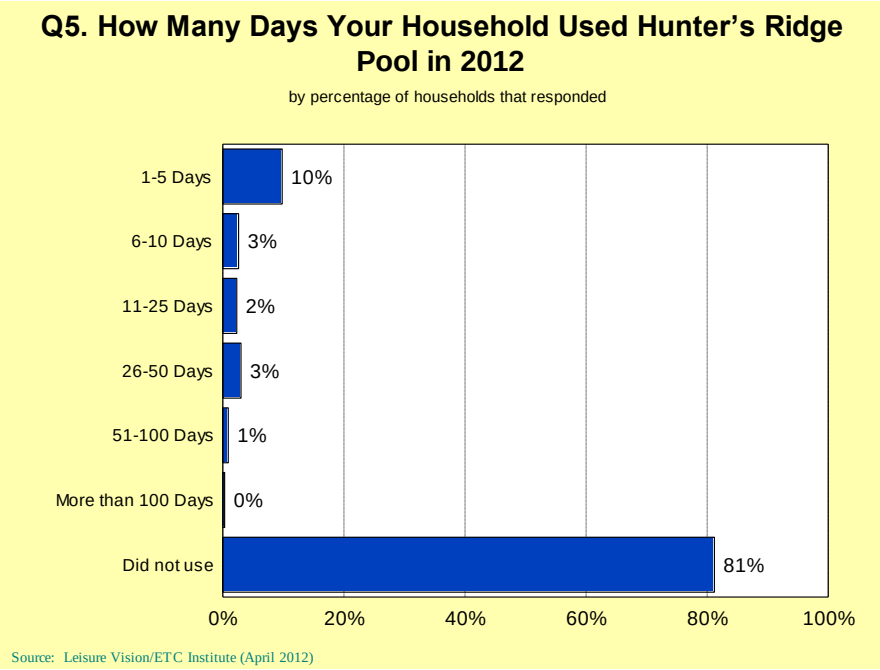
2.2.3 OVERALL CONDITION OF PARKS

Respondents who visited parks were asked to rate the conditions of the parks that they visited. Forty-five (45%) of respondents indicated the parks they visited were in excellent condition, with 48% indicating they were in good condition, 5% indicating in poor condition, 0.1% rating the parks in poor condition, with the remaining 2.4% indicating don't know.

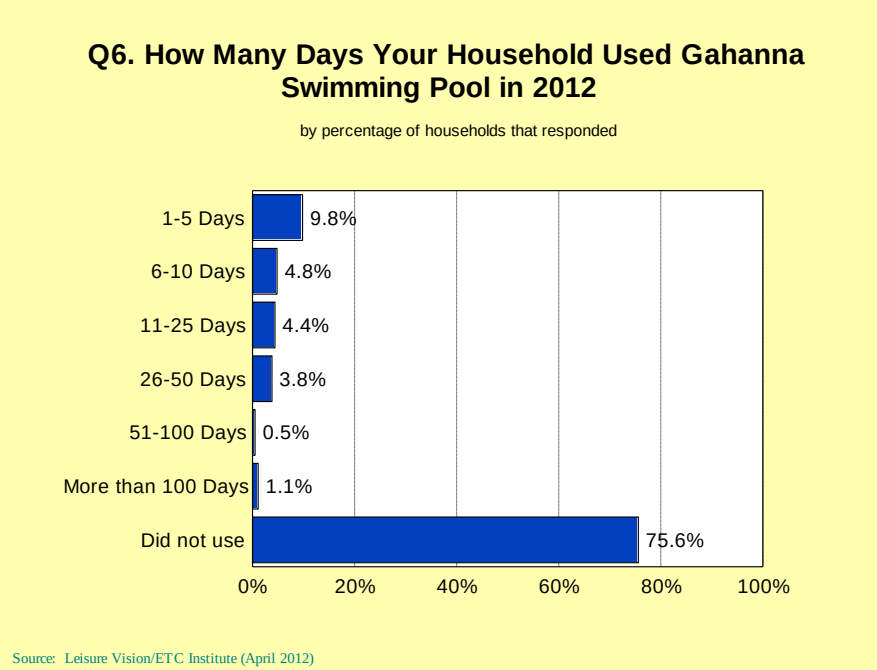


2.2.4 RESPONDENT USAGE OF CITY OF GAHANNA OUTDOOR POOLS

Nineteen percent (19%) of households had at least one household member use the Hunter's Ridge Pool in 2012, while 81% of households did not use the pool. Only 1% of households used the pool 51 days or more in 2012, 5% used the pool 11 to 50 days and 13% used the pool 1 to 10 days.

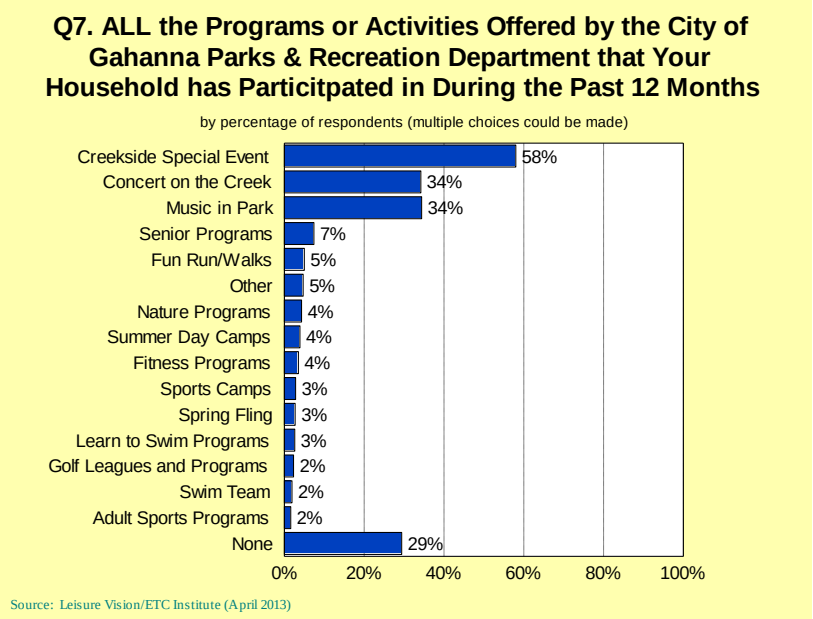


Twenty-five percent (25%) of households had at least one household member use the Gahanna Swimming Pool in 2012, while 75% of households did not use the pool. Only 2% of households used the pool 51 days or more in 2012, 8% used the pool 11 to 50 days and 15% used the pool 1 to 10 days.



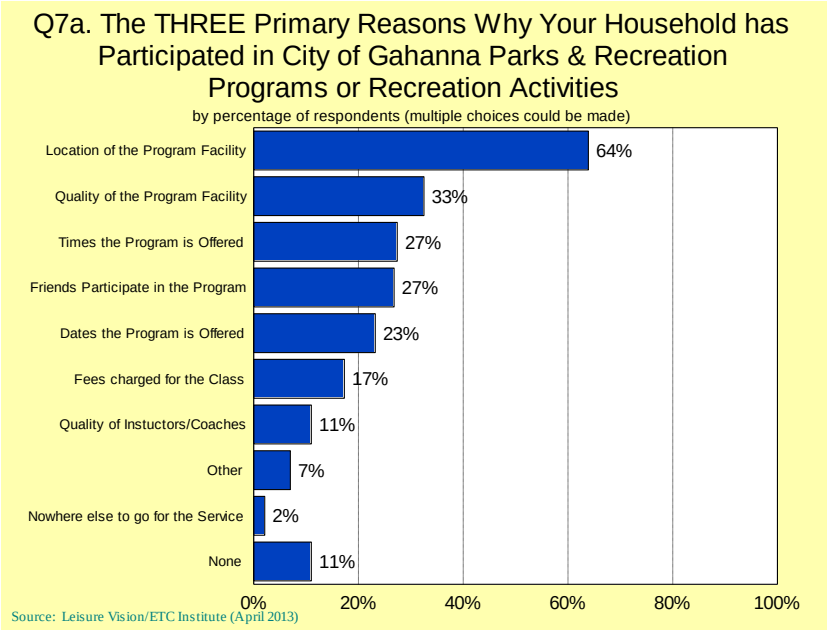
2.2.5 PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY THE CITY OF GAHANNA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Fourteen different programs or activities were listed in the survey and respondents were asked to indicate ALL the programs and activities they participated in over the past 12 months. Seventy-one percent (71%) of households participated in at least one program or activity offered by the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. Of the 71% who participated, the Creekside Special Event was the most participated program or activity with 58% of respondents participating in the event. Other programs and activities that had high participation included: Music in Park (34%) and Concert on the Creek (34%). No other recreation program or activity had 10% or more of respondents participate in the program or activity over the past 12 months.



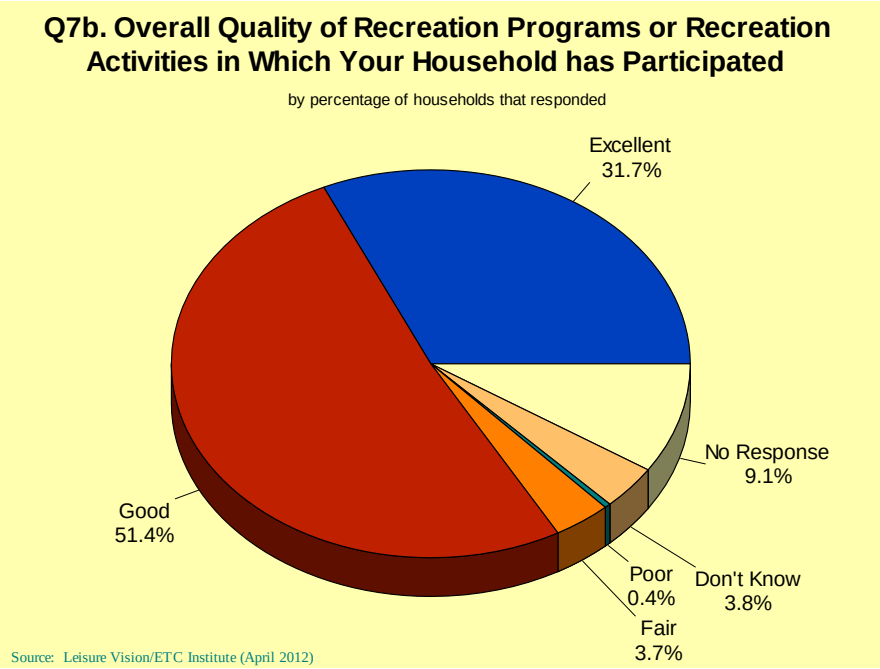
2.2.6 PRIMARY REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY THE CITY OF GAHANNA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

From a list of eight potential reasons, respondents were also asked to indicate the three primary reasons their household participated in City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation programs and activities. By a wide margin, location of the program facility was the most frequently mentioned reason with 64% of households indicating location of the program or facility being one of the three primary reasons they participated. In order other primary reasons for participation in programs and activities included: Quality of the program facility (33%), times the program is offered (27%), friends participate in the program (27%) and dates the program is offered (23%).



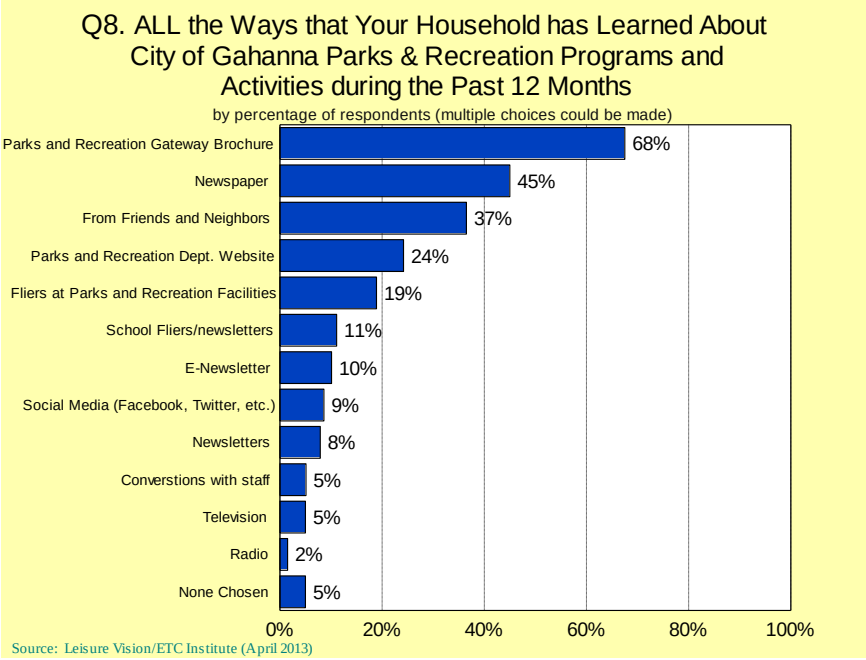
2.2.7 QUALITY OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY THE CITY OF GAHANNA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Finally, respondents were asked to rate the quality of the programs and activities they participated in. Thirty-two percent (32%) of households indicated the quality of the program or activity was "excellent", with an additional 52% indicating "good". Four percent (4%) of respondents indicated the quality of the programs and activities were "fair" with less than 1% indicating poor and 9% did not answer.



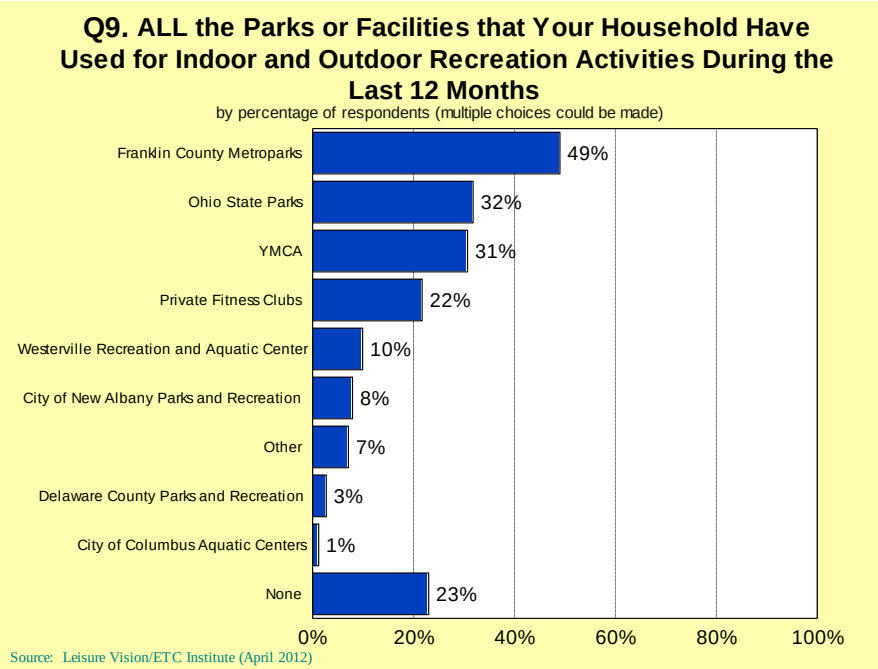
2.2.8 WAYS THAT HOUSEHOLDS LEARNED ABOUT CITY OF GAHANNA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

From a list of twelve different ways that households could learn about programs and activities, household respondents were asked to indicate ALL the ways they learned about programs and activities. The most frequently mentioned ways were Parks & Recreation Gateway Brochure (68%), newspaper (45%) and from friends and neighbors (37%).



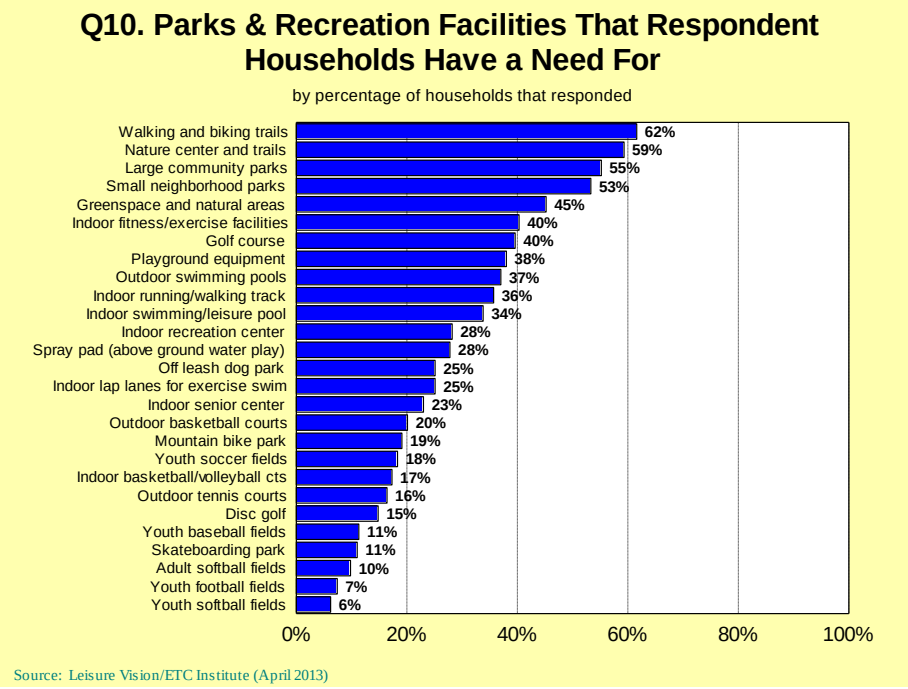
2.2.9 FACILITIES AND AGENCIES HOUSEHOLDS HAVE USED FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

From a list of eight different facilities and agencies, household respondents were asked to indicate ALL the facilities and agencies they had used over the past 12 months for indoor and outdoor recreation activities. Note: This list did not include indoor and outdoor activities offered by the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. The agencies and facilities that were used the most were: Franklin County Metroparks (49%), Ohio State Parks (32%) and YMCA (31%). Twenty-three percent (23%) of respondents did not use and of the agencies or facilities.



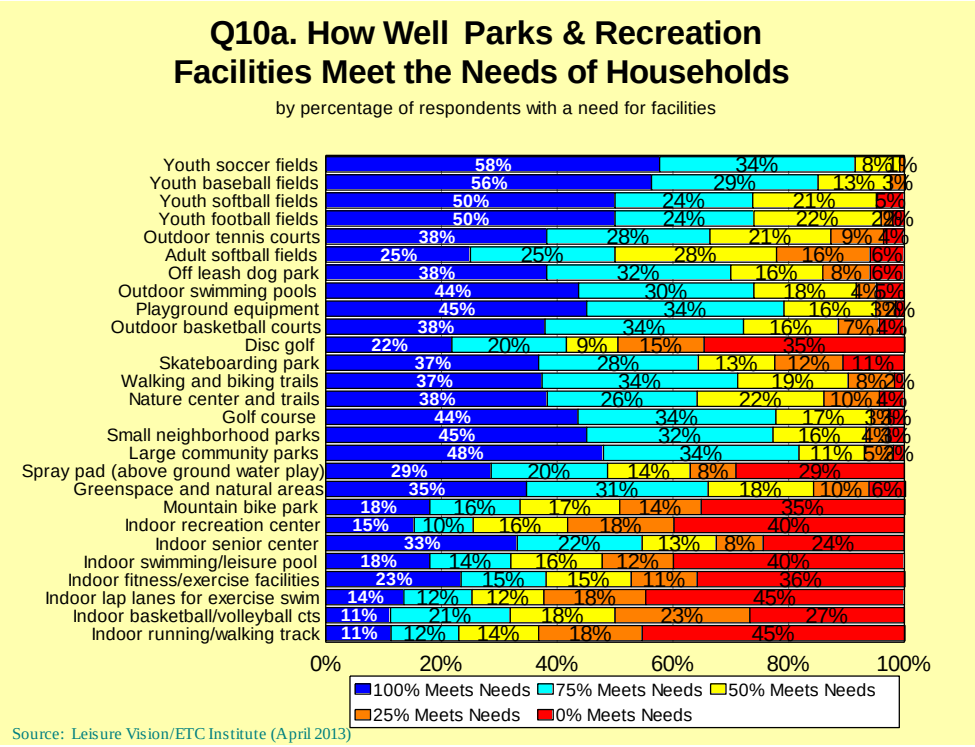
2.2.10 OUTDOOR AND INDOOR PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES HOUSEHOLDS HAVE A NEED FOR

From a list of twenty-seven different parks, outdoor and indoor recreation facilities, household respondents were asked to indicate ALL the parks, outdoor and indoor recreation facilities they have a need for. Walking and biking trails was the facility that the most households had a need for, with 62% of houses indicating they had a need for walking and biking trails. Other parks and recreation facilities that a high percentage of households indicated having a need for included: Nature center and trails (59%), large community parks (55%), small neighborhood parks (53%) and green space and natural areas (45%).



2.2.11 HOW WELL PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES MEET THE NEEDS OF HOUSEHOLDS

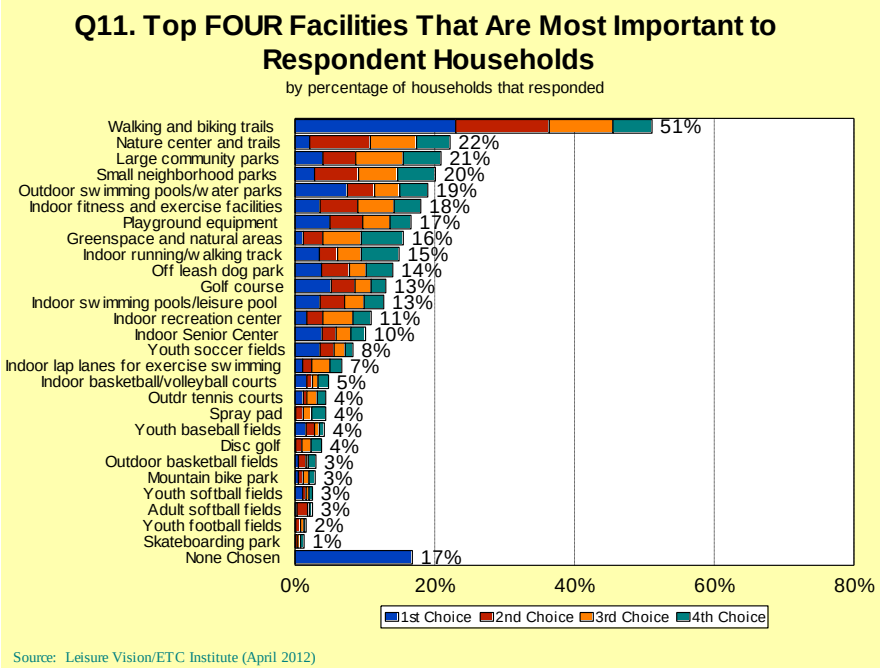
The below chart indicates how well respondents needs are being met of those respondents who indicated a need for a facilities. For examples, ninety-two percent (92%) of respondents who have a need for youth soccer fields need is being met 75% or more with only 8% of respondents who have a need for youth soccer fields being met 50% or less. The highest percentage of met needs for respondents who have a need for facilities whose needs are being met 75% or more include: Youth baseball fields (85%), large community parks (82%) and outdoor swimming pools (79%).



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2013)

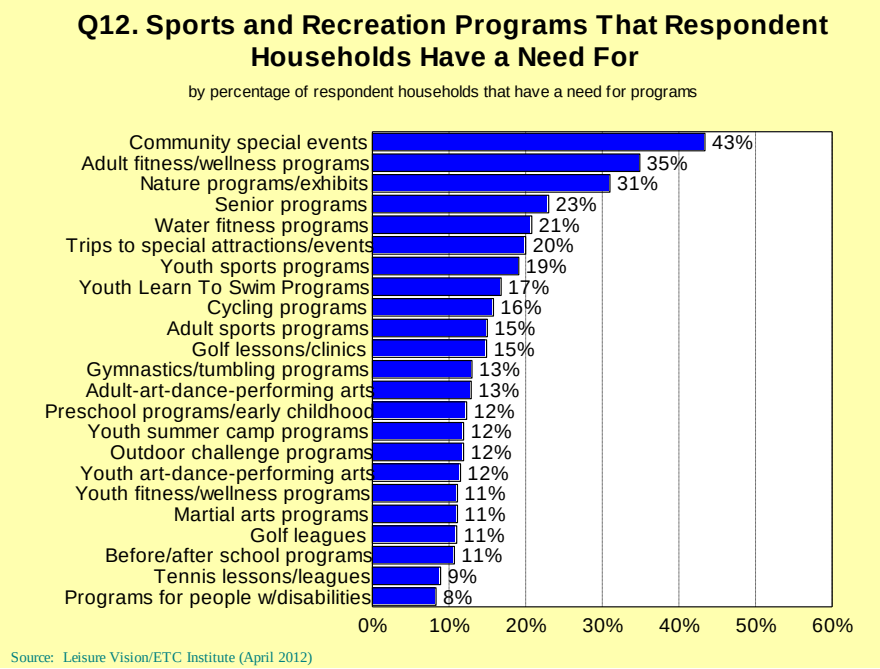
2.2.12 HIGHEST PRIORITY OUTDOOR AND INDOOR PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

Households were asked to indicate which FOUR of the twenty-seven different parks, outdoor and indoor recreation facilities were MOST IMPORTANT to their household. Based on a sum of their top 4 choices, 51% of households indicated that walking and biking trails were one the most important facilities to their household. Other parks and recreation facilities that household respondents indicated were one of the most important to their household (based on a sum of their top 4 choices) included: Nature center and trails (22%), large community parks (21%), small neighborhood parks (20%) and outdoor swimming pools and water parks (19%).



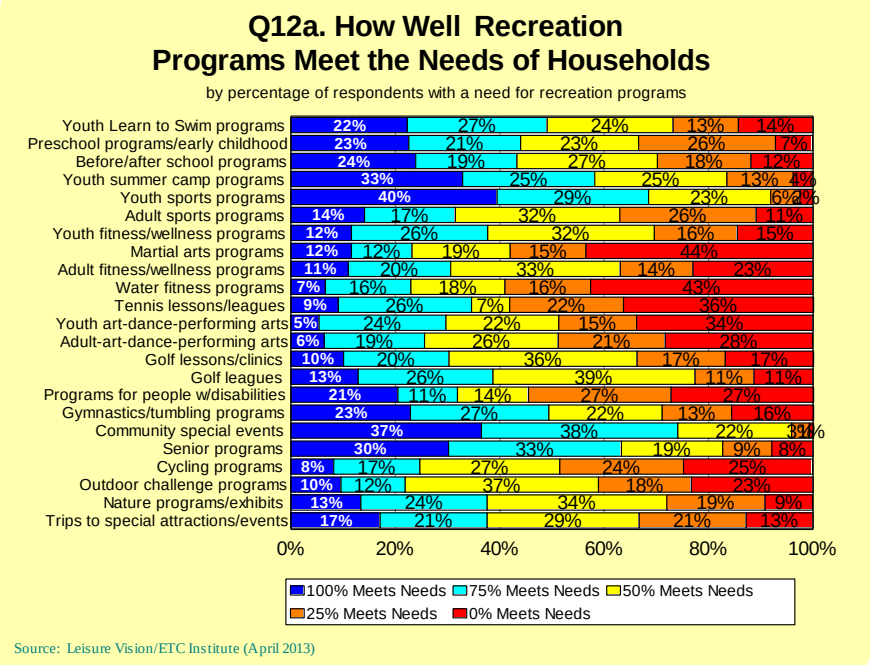
2.2.13 SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS HOUSEHOLDS HAVE A NEED FOR

From a list of twenty-three different sports and recreation programs, household respondents were asked to indicate ALL the sports and recreation programs they have a need for. Community special events were the program that the most households had a need for, with 43% of households indicating they had a need for community special events. Other recreation and sports programs that a high percentage of households indicated having a need for included: Adult fitness and wellness programs (35%), nature programs and exhibits (31%), senior programs (23%) and water fitness programs (21%).



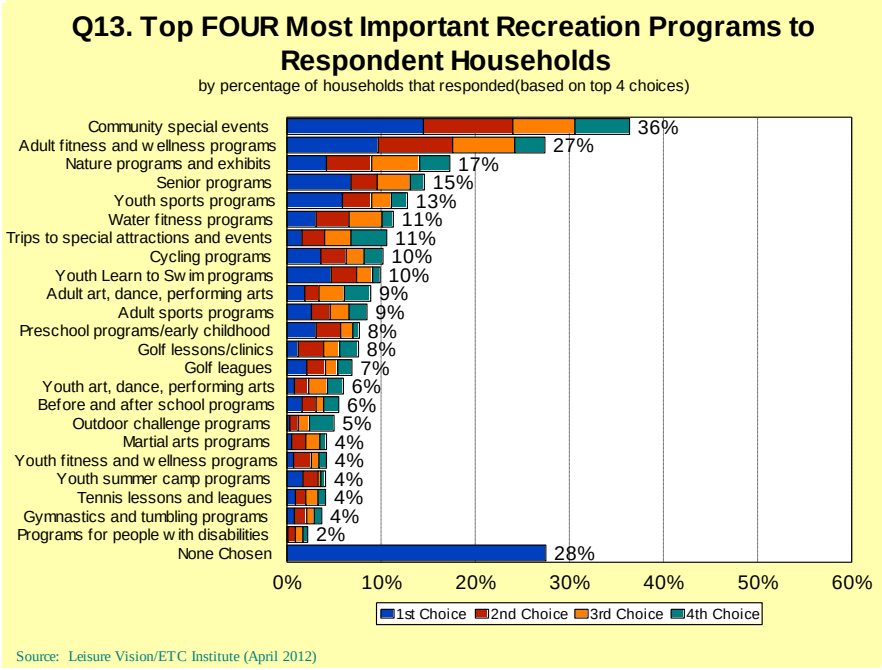
2.2.14 HOW WELL RECREATION PROGRAMS MEET THE NEEDS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Seventy-five percent (75%) household with a need for community special events need is being met 75% or more. Similar met needs include: Youth sports programs (69%), senior programs (63%) and youth summer camp programs (58%).



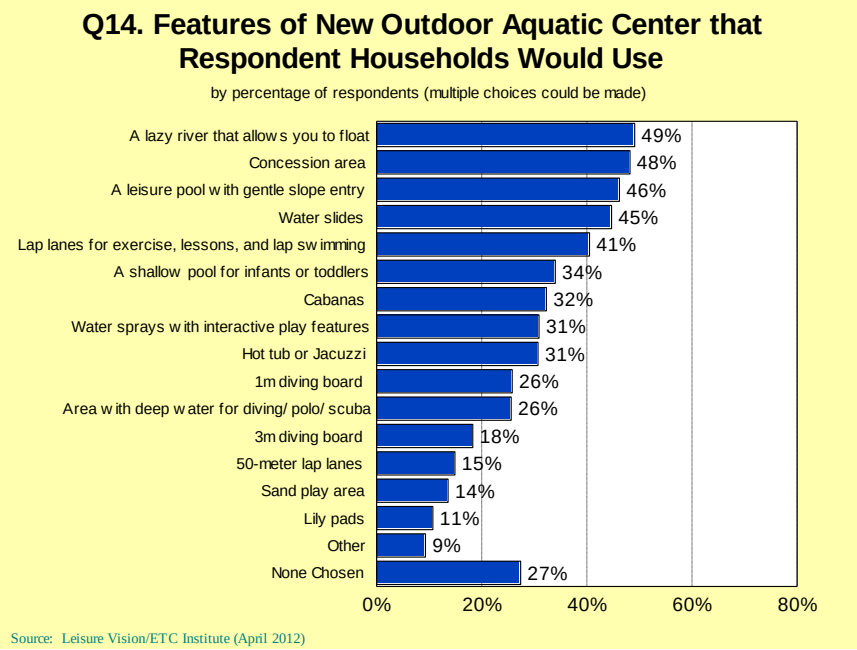
2.2.15 MOST IMPORTANT RECREATION PROGRAMS TO RESPONDENT HOUSEHOLDS

Based on the sum of respondent top four choices, the most important program to respondents is community special events (36%). Programs with similar importance to respondents include: Adult fitness and wellness programs (27%), nature programs and exhibits (17%) and senior programs (15%).



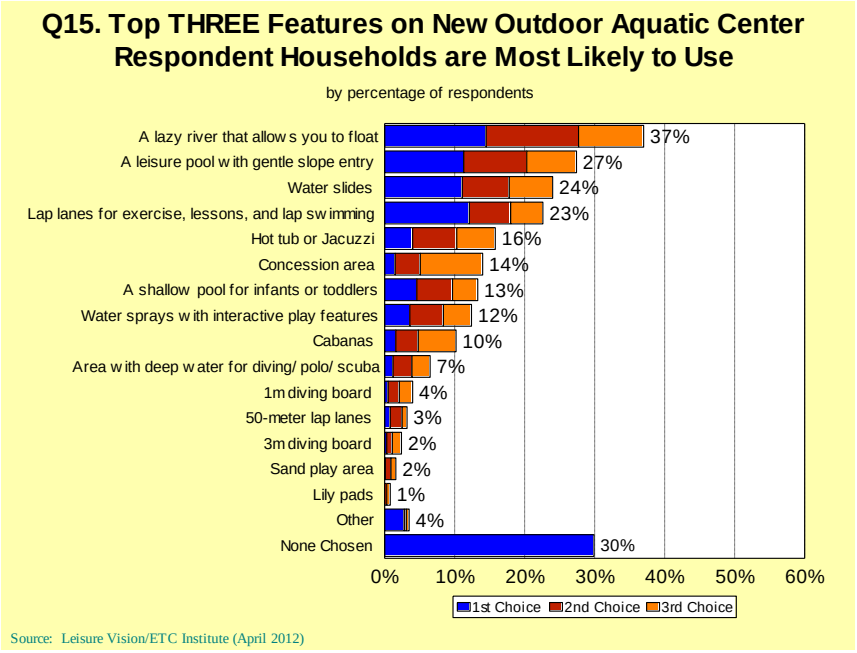
2.2.16 POTENTIAL WATER FEATURES THAT THE HOUSEHOLD RESPONDENTS WOULD USE IN A NEW OUTDOOR AQUATIC CENTER

Out of fifteen features that could be developed at a new outdoor aquatic center in the City of Gahanna, households were asked to indicate ALL the water features they would use. Over 40% of household respondents indicated they would use the following features: A lazy river that allows you to float on a raft/flotation device through slow moving water (49%), concession area (48%), water slides (45%), a leisure pool with gentle slope entry for walking into the water (46%) and lap lanes for exercise, lessons and lap swimming (41%). Seventy-three percent (73%) of households indicated they would use at least one (1) aquatic feature, with the average household indicating they would use approximately 5 of the features.



2.2.17 POTENTIAL WATER FEATURES THAT THE HOUSEHOLD RESPONDENTS WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO USE IN A NEW OUTDOOR AQUATIC CENTER

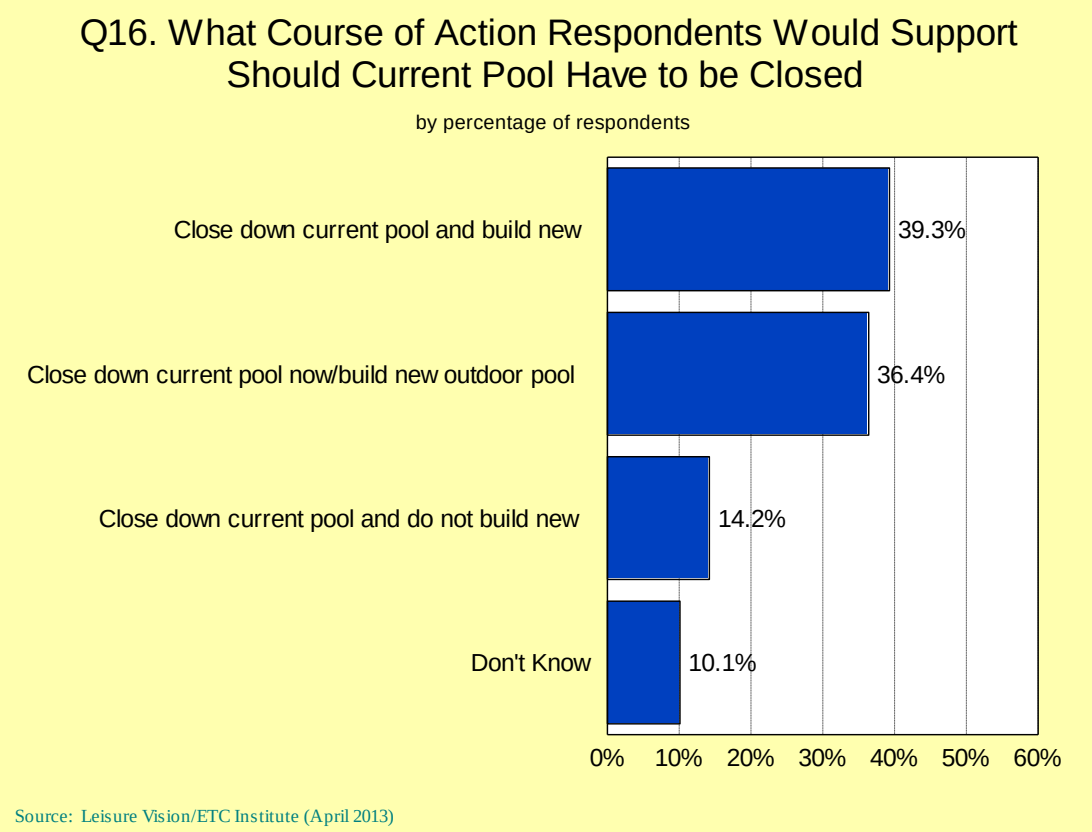
Out of fifteen features that could be developed at a new outdoor aquatic center in the City of Gahanna, households were asked to indicate the three water features they would be most likely to use. Based on a sum of their top 3 choices, 37% of respondents indicated a lazy river that allows you to float on a raft/flotation device through slow moving water. Other water features that respondents indicated they would most likely use included: a leisure pool with gentle slope entry for walking into the water (27%), water slides (24%) and lap lanes for exercise, lessons and lap swimming (23%).



2.2.18 PREFERRED DIRECTION SUPPORTED SHOULD THE CITY OF GAHANNA POOL NOT BE OPERATIONAL IN THE FUTURE

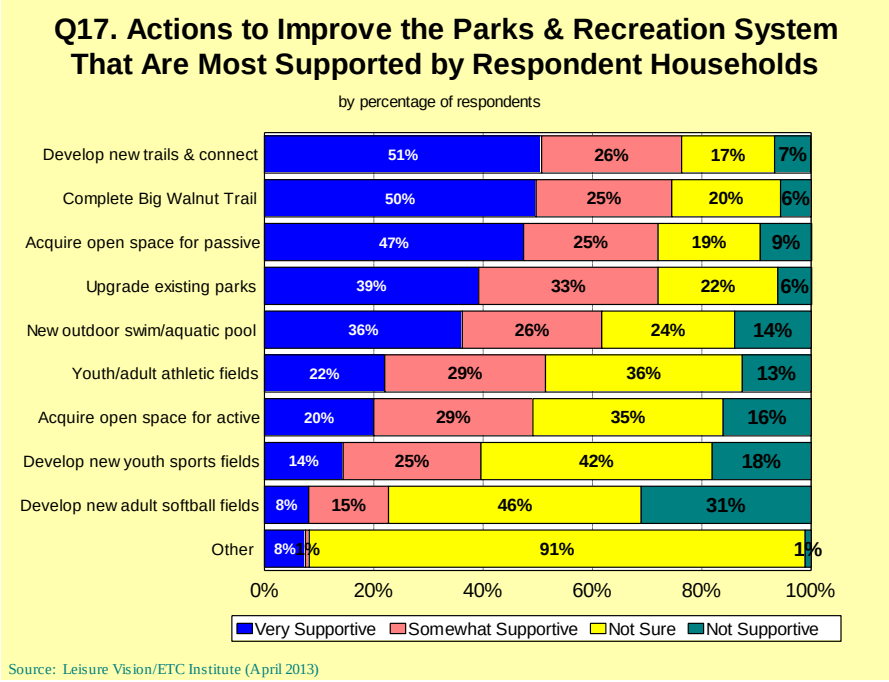
Households were asked which ONE of three potential directions they would support the city taking the Gahanna Pool should not be operational in the future. Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents indicated that the current pool should be closed down when it becomes non-functional and do not build a new pool to take its place. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents indicated that the City should close down the current pool when it becomes non-functional and build a new outdoor aquatic center at that time. Thirty-six percent (36%) indicated the City should close down the current pool now and build a new aquatic center. An additional 10% of respondents did not indicate any answer.

Therefore, 75% of household respondents feel that the City should build a new outdoor aquatic center; however, they are fairly evenly split on whether the new outdoor aquatic center should be developed now or when the current pool becomes non-functional.



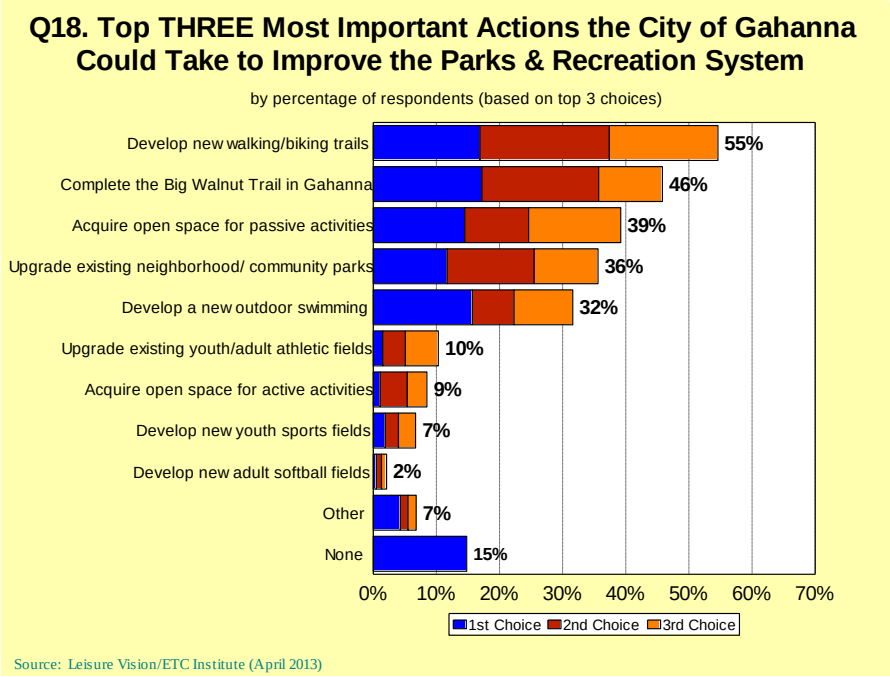
2.2.19 SUPPORT FOR VARIOUS ACTIONS THE CITY OF GAHANNA COULD TAKE REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM

Households were provided 9 potential actions for various improvements to parks and recreation services and asked how supportive they would be of each action. The three actions that received the most support based on those indicating very or somewhat supportive were: Develop new walking/biking trails and connecting existing trails (77% of households "very" or "somewhat supportive"), complete the Big Walnut Trail in Gahanna (75% of households "very" or "somewhat supportive") and acquire open space for passive activities, i.e. trails, picnicking, etc. (72% "very" or "somewhat supportive").



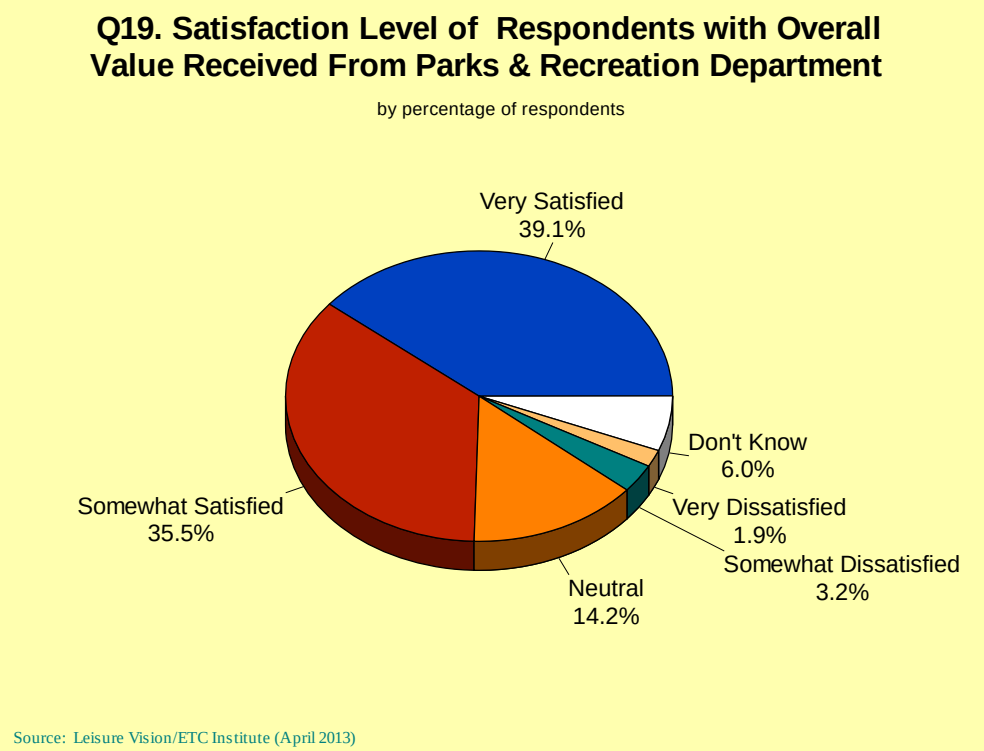
2.2.20 MOST IMPORTANT ACTIONS THE CITY OF GAHANNA COULD TAKE REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM

From the nine potential actions for various improvements to parks and recreation services, respondents were asked to select the three actions they felt were MOST Important. Based on a sum of their top three choices, the most important actions were: Develop new walking/biking trails and connecting existing trails (55%), complete the Big Walnut Trail in Gahanna (46%), acquire open space for passive activities, i.e. trails, picnicking, etc. (39%) and develop a new outdoor swimming pool (32%).



2.2.21 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE OVERALL VALUE YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES FROM THE CITY OF GAHANNA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents indicated they were either "very satisfied" (39%) or "somewhat satisfied" (36%) with the overall value their household receives from the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. Five percent (5%) of households were either "somewhat dissatisfied" (3%) or "very dissatisfied" (2%) with the overall value their household receives from the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. Fourteen percent (14%) of households were "neutral". Six percent (6%) of households indicated "don't know".



CHAPTER THREE - COMMUNITY PROFILE

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis provides an understanding of the population within the City of Gahanna, Ohio. This analysis is reflective of the total population, and its key characteristics such as age segments, income levels, race and ethnicity.

It is important to note that future projections are all based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the projections could have a significant bearing on the validity of the final projections.

3.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The total population of the City of Gahanna underwent minimal growth of approximately 1.1%, from 33,248 in 2010 to 33,617 in 2014. The current estimated population is projected to slowly increase to 34,951 in 2019 and reach 36,761 by 2029.

The current estimate for 2014 depicts the target area as a family-oriented area, where nearly 70% of total households are families.

The total number of households in the target area has grown by approximately 1.6%, from 13,037 in 2010 to 13,251 in 2014. The City of Gahanna is projected to have 13,800 households in 2019, and is expected to grow to 14,621 households by 2029.

The City's median household ($73,391) and per capita income ($39,089) are well above both state and national averages.

Based on the 2010 Census, the population of the target area is slightly older (39.4 years) than the median age of the U.S. (37.2 years). Projections show that by 2029 the City will endure an aging trend, with nearly 38% of the population belonging to the 55+ segment.

The estimated 2014 population of the target area is predominantly White Alone (80.63%), with Black Alone (11.81%) representing the largest minority. Future projections show that by 2029 the overall composition of the population will experience a gradual decrease in the White Alone category (75.34%), while Black Alone increases to just over 14% and all other minorities combine to represent about 10% of the population.

3.1.2 METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and 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 was acquired in September 2014 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2010 Census and estimates for 2014 and 2019 as obtained by ESRI. Straight line linear regression was utilized for projected 2024 and 2029 demographics. The City of Gahanna geographic boundary was utilized as the demographic analysis boundary shown in **Figure 1.**

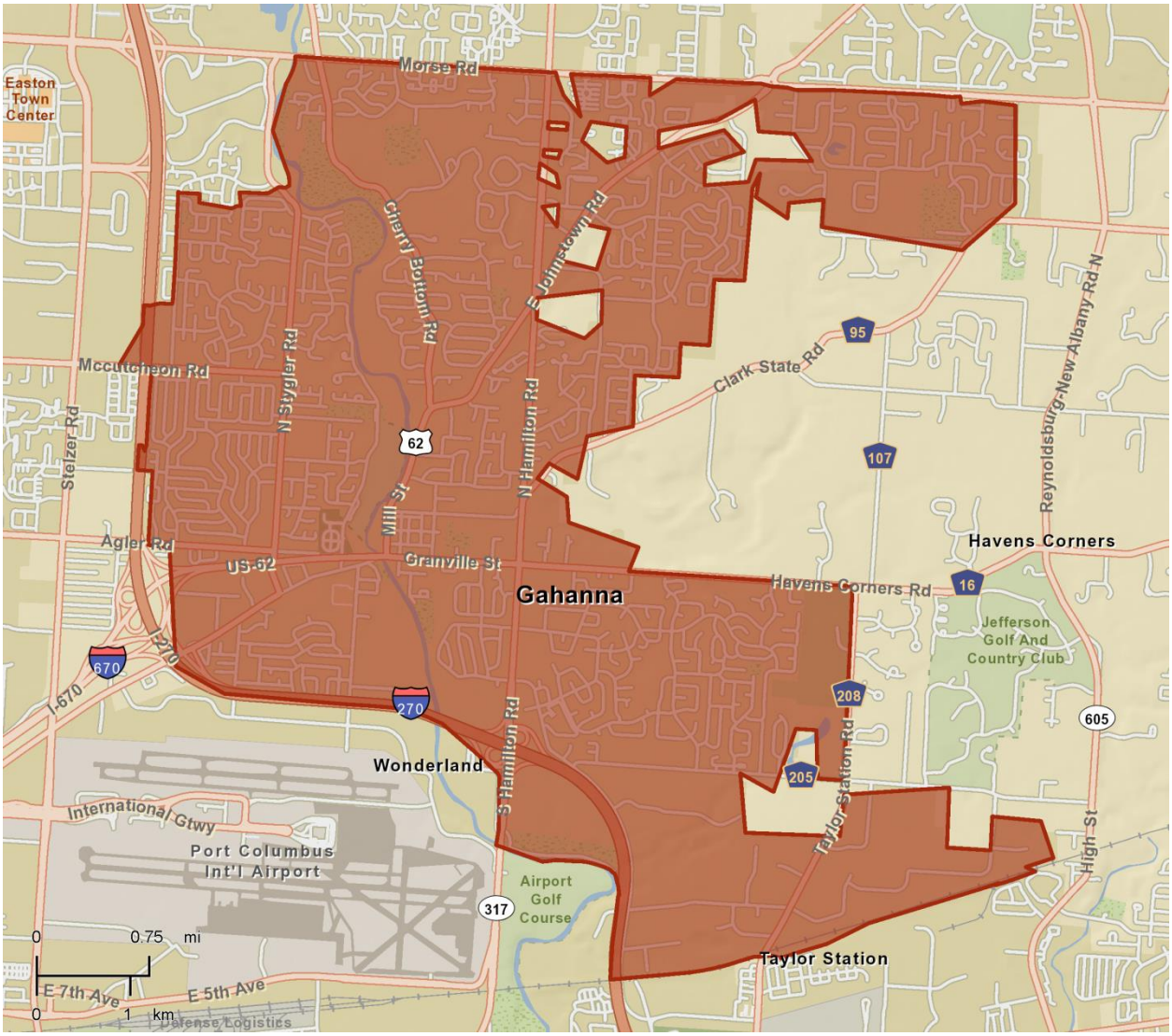


Figure 1 - City Limits of Gahanna

RACE AND ETHNICITY DEFINTIONS

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting and civil rights compliance reporting are defined as below. The Census 2010 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 2000 Census and earlier censuses; caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2010) definitions and nomenclature are used within this analysis.

- American Indian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment
- Asian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam
- Black – This includes a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands
- White – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa
- Hispanic or Latino – This is an ethnic distinction, a subset of a race as defined by the Federal Government; this includes a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race

3.1.3 CITY OF GAHANNA POPULACE

POPULATION

The City of Gahanna's growth has been somewhat stagnant in recent years. From 2010 to 2014, the City's total population experienced a minimal increase of 1.1%. Projecting ahead, the population of the target area will continue to slowly increase over the next 15 years. Based on the projections through 2029, the City is expected to have approximately 36,761 residents living within 14,621 households. **See Figure 2.**

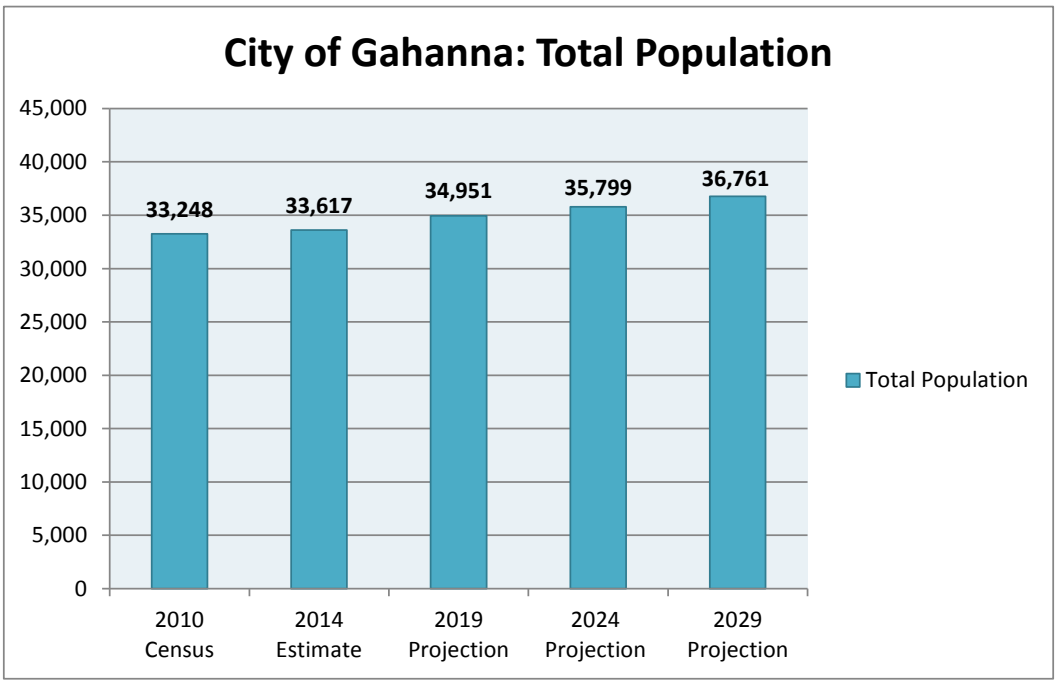


Figure 2 - Total Population

AGE SEGMENT

Evaluating the distribution by age segments, the City is currently balanced between youth, young adult, families and senior populations. Based on 2014 estimates, the highest segment by population is the 55+ group with 28.8%, and the lowest is the 18-34 population with 20.5%.

Over time, the City of Gahanna is expected to continue on an aging trend. Future projections through 2029 show that the 55+ segment is the only age group expected to undergo notable growth and is expected to represent nearly 38% of the total population. This will make the senior population the single largest age segment, while each of the other age segments will represent around 20% of the total. This is consistent with general national trends where the 55+ age group has been growing as a result of increased life expectancies and the baby boomer population entering that age group. **See Figure 3.**

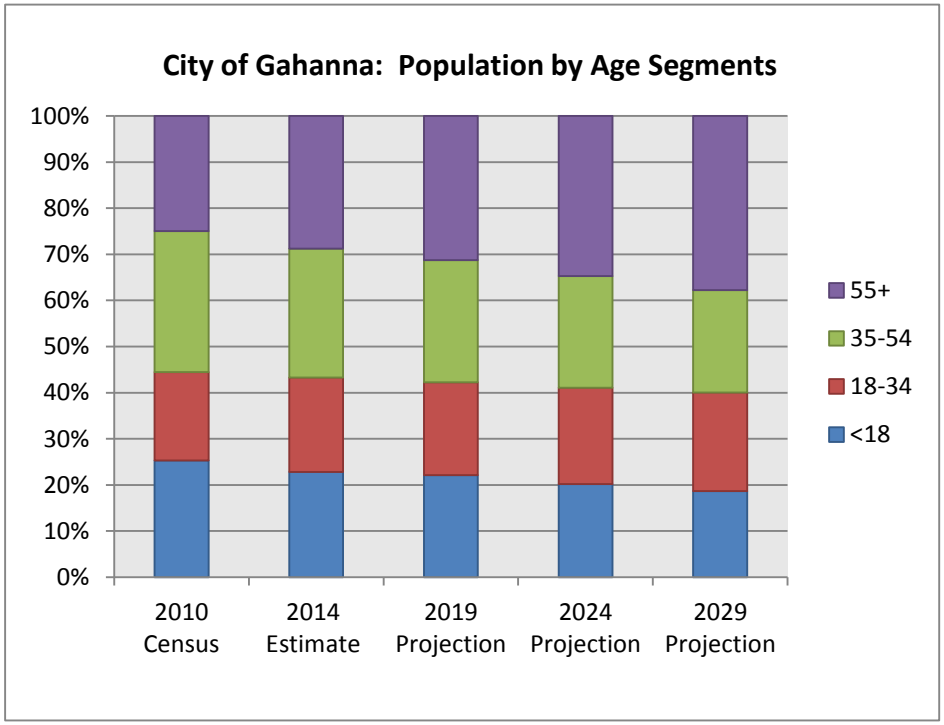


Figure 3 - Population by Age Segments

RACE AND ETHNICITY

From a race standpoint, the City is limited in its diversity. Based on the current 2014 estimate, White Alone (80.63%) is the overwhelming majority, with Black Alone (11.81%) representing the largest minority. Predictions through 2029 expect the population to undergo some minor diversification, with the White Alone decreasing to 75.34% and Black Alone growing to just over 14%, while all other minorities account for approximately 10% of the total population (**Figure 4**).

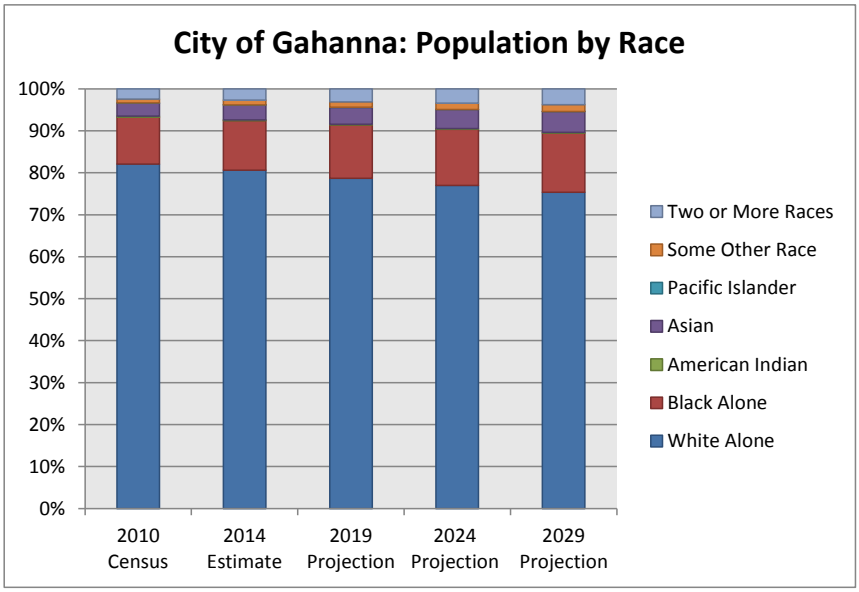


Figure 4 - Population by Race

HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOME

The City's income characteristics demonstrate a growing trend. The median household income is estimated to be $73,391 in 2014. It is projected to grow to $102,596 by 2029. The median household income represents the earnings of all persons age 16 years or older living together in a housing unit. The per capita income is also projected to increase from $39,089 in 2014 to $52,949 by 2029 (**Figure 5**).

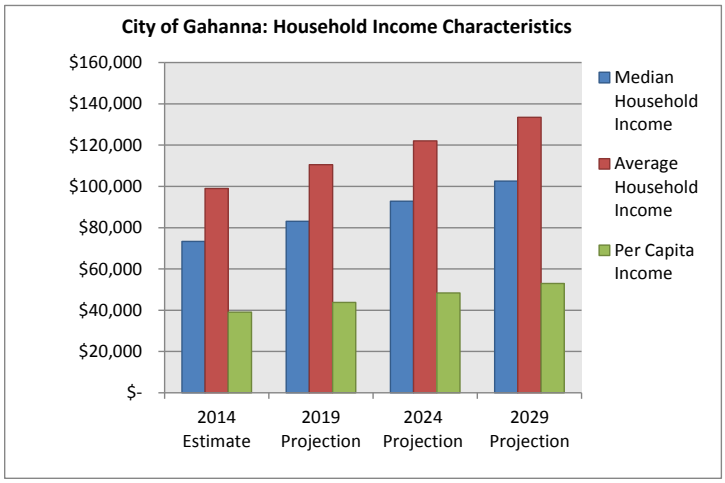


Figure 5 - Household Income Characteristics

As seen in **Figure 6**, the City of Gahanna's median household and per capita income is considerable higher than state and national averages. The fact that household income is over and above the state and national averages indicates the presence of disposable income and greater price elasticity.

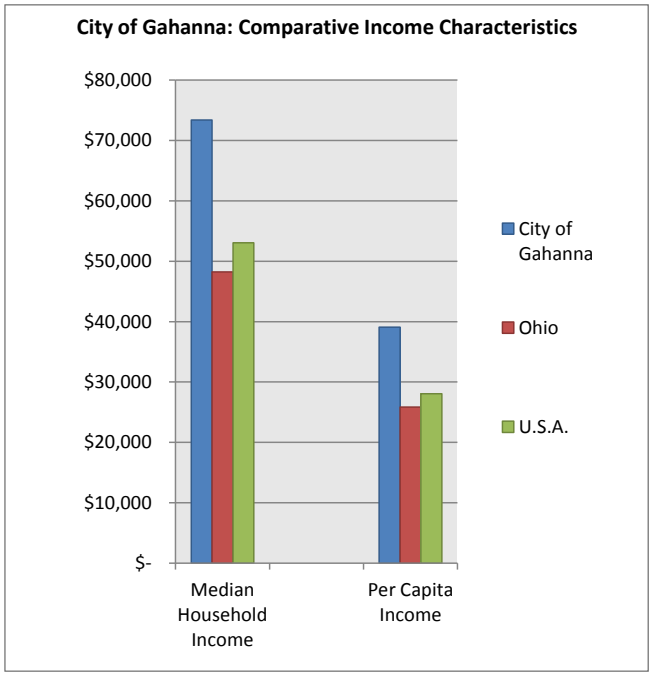


Figure 6 - Comparative Income Characteristics

3.2 TRENDS ANALYSIS

The following tables summarize the findings from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2014 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, as well as the local market potential index data, which compares the demand for recreational activities and spending of Gahanna residents to the national averages.

Summary of National Participatory Trends Analysis
1. Number of "inactives" decreased slightly, those active to a healthy level on the rise a. "Inactives" down 0.4% in 2013, from 80.4 million to 80.2 million b. Approximately one-third of Americans (ages 6+) are active to a healthy level
2. Most popular sport and recreational activities a. Fitness Walking (117 million) b. Running/Jogging (54 million) c. Treadmill (48 million)
3. Most participated in team sports a. Basketball (23.7 million) b. Tennis (17.7 million) c. Baseball (13.3 million)
4. Activities most rapidly growing over last five years a. Adventure Racing – up 159% b. Non-traditional/Off-road Triathlon – up 156% c. Traditional/Road Triathlon – up 140% d. Squash – up 115% e. Rugby – up 81%
5. Activities most rapidly declining over last five years a. Wrestling – down 45% b. In-line Roller Skating – down 40% c. Touch Football – down 32% d. Horseback Riding – down 29% e. Slow-pitch Softball – down 29%

Summary of Local Market Potential Index Analysis
1. Gahanna exhibits above average market potential for all sport and leisure activities
2. Top recreational activities in Gahanna compared to the national average a. Attended basketball game (college) b. Bicycling (mountain) c. Attended football game (NFL weekend) d. Attended football game (college) e. Attended ice hockey game (NHL reg seas)

Information released by Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2014 Study of Sports, Fitness and Leisure Participation reveals that the most popular sport and recreational activities include: fitness walking, treadmill, running/jogging, free weights and bicycling. Most of these activities appeal to both young and old alike, can be done in most environments, are enjoyed regardless of level of skill and have minimal economic barriers to entry. These popular activities also have appeal because of the social aspect. For example, although fitness activities are mainly self-directed, people enjoy walking and biking with other individuals because it can offer a degree of camaraderie.

Fitness walking has remained the most popular activity of the past decade by a large margin. Walking participation during the latest year data was available (2013), reported over 117 million Americans had walked for fitness at least once.

From a traditional team sport standpoint, basketball ranks highest among all sports, with nearly 24 million people reportedly participating in 2013. Team sports that have experienced significant growth in participation are rugby, lacrosse, field hockey, ice hockey, gymnastics, beach volleyball and ultimate Frisbee– all of which have experienced double digit growth over the last five years. Most recently, rugby, field hockey and lacrosse underwent the most rapid growth among team sports from 2012 to 2013.

In the past year, there has been a slight 0.4% decrease of "inactives" in America, from 80.4 million in 2012 to 80.2 million in 2013. According to the Physical Activity Council, an "inactive" is defined as an individual that doesn't take part in any "active" sport. Even more encouraging is that an estimated 33.9% of Americans above the age of 6 are active to a healthy level, taking part in a high calorie burning activity three or more times per week.

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) Sports, Fitness & Recreational Activities Topline Participation Report 2014 was utilized to evaluate national sport and fitness participatory trends. SFIA is the number one source for sport and fitness research. The study is based on online interviews carried out in January and February of 2014 from more than 19,000 individuals and households.

NOTE: In 2012, the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) came into existence after a two-year strategic review and planning process with a refined mission statement-- "To Promote Sports and Fitness Participation and Industry Vitality". The SFIA was formerly known as the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA).

3.2.1 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL SPORTS

Basketball, a game originating in the U.S., is actually the most participated in sport among the traditional "bat and ball" sports with almost 24 million estimated participants. This popularity can be attributed to the ability to compete with relatively small number of participants, the limited amount of equipment needed to participate and the limited space requirements necessary – the last of which make basketball the only traditional sport that can be played at the majority of American dwellings as a drive-way pickup game.

As seen in **Figure 7,** since 2008, squash and other niche sports like lacrosse and rugby have seen strong growth. Squash has emerged as the overall fastest growing sport, as it has seen participation levels rise by nearly 115% over the last five years. Based on survey findings from 2008-2013, rugby and lacrosse have also experienced significant growth, increasing by 80.9% and 66% respectively. Other sports with notable growth in participation over the last five years were field hockey (31.4%), ice hockey (27.9%), gymnastics (25.1%) and beach volleyball (18.5%). From 2012 to 2013, the fastest growing sports were rugby (33.4%), field hockey (19.2%), lacrosse (12.8%) and squash (9.6%). During the last five years, the sports that are most rapidly declining include wrestling (45.2% decrease), touch football (down 32%) and slow pitch softball (28.9% decrease).

In terms of total participants, the most popular activities in the general sports category in 2013 include basketball (23.7 million), tennis (17.7 million), baseball (13.3 million), outdoor soccer (12.7 million) and slow pitch softball (6.9 million). Although three out of five of these sports have been declining in recent years, the sheer number of participants demands the continued support of these activities.

National Participatory Trends - General Sports											
Activity	Participation Levels						% Change				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	12-13	11-13	10-13	09-13	08-13
Baseball	15,539	14,429	14,198	13,561	12,976	13,284	2.4%	-2.0%	-6.4%	-7.9%	-14.5%
Basketball	26,108	25,131	25,156	24,790	23,708	23,669	-0.2%	-4.5%	-5.9%	-5.8%	-9.3%
Cheerleading	3,192	3,070	3,134	3,049	3,244	3,235	-0.3%	6.1%	3.2%	5.4%	1.3%
Field Hockey	1,122	1,092	1,182	1,147	1,237	1,474	19.2%	28.5%	24.7%	35.0%	31.4%
Football, Flag	7,310	6,932	6,660	6,325	5,865	5,610	-4.3%	-11.3%	-15.8%	-19.1%	-23.3%
Football, Tackle	7,816	7,243	6,850	6,448	6,220	6,165	-0.9%	-4.4%	-10.0%	-14.9%	-21.1%
Football, Touch	10,493	9,726	8,663	7,684	7,295	7,140	-2.1%	-7.1%	-17.6%	-26.6%	-32.0%
Gymnastics	3,975	3,952	4,418	4,824	5,115	4,972	-2.8%	3.1%	12.5%	25.8%	25.1%
Ice Hockey	1,871	2,018	2,140	2,131	2,363	2,393	1.3%	12.3%	11.8%	18.6%	27.9%
Lacrosse	1,092	1,162	1,423	1,501	1,607	1,813	12.8%	20.8%	27.4%	56.0%	66.0%
Racquetball	4,611	4,784	4,603	4,357	4,070	3,824	-6.0%	-12.2%	-16.9%	-20.1%	-17.1%
Roller Hockey	1,569	1,427	1,374	1,237	1,367	1,298	-5.0%	4.9%	-5.5%	-9.0%	-17.3%
Rugby	654	720	940	850	887	1,183	33.4%	39.2%	25.9%	64.3%	80.9%
Soccer (Indoor)	4,487	4,825	4,920	4,631	4,617	4,803	4.0%	3.7%	-2.4%	-0.5%	7.0%
Soccer (Outdoor)	13,996	13,957	13,883	13,667	12,944	12,726	-1.7%	-6.9%	-8.3%	-8.8%	-9.1%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	2,331	2,476	2,513	2,400	2,624	2,498	-4.8%	4.1%	-0.6%	0.9%	7.2%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	9,660	9,180	8,477	7,809	7,411	6,868	-7.3%	-12.1%	-19.0%	-25.2%	-28.9%
Squash	659	796	1,031	1,112	1,290	1,414	9.6%	27.2%	37.1%	77.6%	114.6%
Tennis	17,749	18,546	18,719	17,772	17,020	17,678	3.9%	-0.5%	-5.6%	-4.7%	-0.4%
Track and Field	4,604	4,480	4,383	4,341	4,257	4,071	-4.4%	-6.2%	-7.1%	-9.1%	-11.6%
Ultimate Frisbee	4,459	4,636	4,571	4,868	5,131	5,077	-1.1%	4.3%	11.1%	9.5%	13.9%
Volleyball (Court)	7,588	7,737	7,315	6,662	6,384	6,433	0.8%	-3.4%	-12.1%	-16.9%	-15.2%
Volleyball (Sand/Beach)	4,025	4,324	4,752	4,451	4,505	4,769	5.9%	7.1%	0.4%	10.3%	18.5%
Wrestling	3,335	3,170	2,536	1,971	1,922	1,829	-4.8%	-7.2%	-27.9%	-42.3%	-45.2%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over											
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)		Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)		Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)		Large Decrease (less than -25%)				

Figure 7 – General Sports Participatory Trends

3.2.2 NATIONAL TRENDS IN AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Swimming is unquestionably a lifetime sport. Swimming activities have remained very popular among Americans, and both competition and fitness swimming have witnessed an increase in participation recently. Fitness swimming is the absolute leader in multigenerational appeal with over 26 million reported participants in 2013, a 13.5% increase from the previous year (**Figure 8**). NOTE: In 2011, recreational swimming was broken into competition and fitness categories in order to better identify key trends.

Aquatic Exercise has a strong participation base, but has recently experienced a downward trend. Aquatic exercise has paved the way for a less stressful form of physical activity, allowing similar gains and benefits to land based exercise, including aerobic fitness, resistance training, flexibility and better balance. Doctors have begun recommending aquatic exercise for injury rehabilitation, mature patients and patients with bone or joint problems due to the significant reduction of stress placed on weight-bearing joints, bones, muscles and also the affect that the pressure of the water assists in reducing swelling of injuries.

National Participatory Trends - Aquatics											
Activity	Participation Levels						% Change				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	12-13	11-13	10-13	09-13	08-13
Aquatic Exercise	9,512	8,965	8,947	9,042	9,177	8,483	-7.6%	-6.2%	-5.2%	-5.4%	-10.8%
Swimming (Competition)	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,363	2,502	2,638	5.4%	11.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Swimming (Fitness)	N/A	N/A	N/A	21,517	23,216	26,354	13.5%	22.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over											
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)		Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)		Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)		Large Decrease (less than -25%)				

Figure 8 - Aquatic Participatory Trends

3.2.3 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL FITNESS

National participatory trends in general fitness have experienced some strong growth in recent years. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest among people to improve their health by engaging in an active lifestyle. These activities also have very few barriers to entry, which provides a variety of activities that are relatively inexpensive to participate in and can be performed by nearly anyone with no time restrictions.

The most popular fitness activity by far is fitness walking, which had over 117 million participants in 2013, which was a 2.9% increase from the previous year. Other leading fitness activities based on number of participants include running/jogging (over 54 million), treadmill (48.1 million) and hand free weights (43.2 million) and weight/resistant machines (36.3 million).

Over the last five years, the activities that are growing most rapidly are high impact aerobics (up 47.1%), yoga (up 36.9%), running/jogging (up 31.9%), cardio kickboxing (28.7% increase) and group stationary cycling (up 27.8%). Most recently, from 2012-2013, the largest gains in participation were in boxing for fitness (8.7% increase), Tai Chi (up 8.3%) and high impact aerobics (up 7.1%). **See Figure 9.**

National Participatory Trends - General Fitness											
Activity	**Participation Levels**						**% Change**				
	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**12-13**	**11-13**	**10-13**	**09-13**	**08-13**
Aerobics (High Impact)	11,780	12,771	14,567	15,755	16,178	17,323	7.1%	10.0%	18.9%	35.6%	47.1%
Aerobics (Low Impact)	23,283	24,927	26,431	25,950	25,707	25,033	-2.6%	-3.5%	-5.3%	0.4%	7.5%
Aerobics (Step)	9,423	10,551	11,034	10,273	9,577	8,961	-6.4%	-12.8%	-18.8%	-15.1%	-4.9%
Boxing for Fitness	N/A	N/A	4,788	4,631	4,831	5,251	8.7%	13.4%	9.7%	N/A	N/A
Calisthenics	8,888	9,127	9,097	8,787	9,356	9,356	0.0%	6.5%	2.8%	2.5%	5.3%
Cross-Training	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,706	7,496	6,911	-7.8%	-10.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cardio Kickboxing	4,905	5,500	6,287	6,488	6,725	6,311	-6.2%	-2.7%	0.4%	14.7%	28.7%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	24,435	25,903	27,319	29,734	28,560	27,119	-5.0%	-8.8%	-0.7%	4.7%	11.0%
Fitness Walking	110,204	110,882	112,082	112,715	114,029	117,351	2.9%	4.1%	4.7%	5.8%	6.5%
Free Weights (Barbells)	25,821	26,595	27,194	27,056	26,688	25,641	-3.9%	-5.2%	-5.7%	-3.6%	-0.7%
Free Weights (Dumbells)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	32,309	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Free Weights (Hand Weights)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	43,164	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Martial Arts	6,818	6,643	6,002	5,037	5,075	5,314	4.7%	5.5%	-11.5%	-20.0%	-22.1%
Pilates Training	9,039	8,770	8,404	8,507	8,519	8,069	-5.3%	-5.1%	-4.0%	-8.0%	-10.7%
Running/Jogging	41,097	42,511	46,650	50,061	51,450	54,188	5.3%	8.2%	16.2%	27.5%	31.9%
Stair Climbing Machine	13,863	13,653	13,269	13,409	12,979	12,642	-2.6%	-5.7%	-4.7%	-7.4%	-8.8%
Stationary Cycling (Group)	6,504	6,762	7,854	8,738	8,477	8,309	-2.0%	-4.9%	5.8%	22.9%	27.8%
Stationary Cycling (Recumbent)	11,104	11,299	11,459	11,933	11,649	11,159	-4.2%	-6.5%	-2.6%	-1.2%	0.5%
Stationary Cycling (Upright)	24,918	24,916	24,578	24,409	24,338	24,088	-1.0%	-1.3%	-2.0%	-3.3%	-3.3%
Stretching	36,235	36,299	35,720	34,687	35,873	36,202	0.9%	4.4%	1.3%	-0.3%	-0.1%
Tai Chi	3,424	3,315	3,193	2,975	3,203	3,469	8.3%	16.6%	8.6%	4.6%	1.3%
Treadmill	49,722	50,395	52,275	53,260	50,839	48,166	-5.3%	-9.6%	-7.9%	-4.4%	-3.1%
Weight/Resistant Machines	38,844	39,075	39,185	39,548	38,999	36,267	-7.0%	-8.3%	-7.4%	-7.2%	-6.6%
Yoga	17,758	18,934	20,998	22,107	23,253	24,310	4.5%	10.0%	15.8%	28.4%	36.9%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over											
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)		Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)		Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)		Large Decrease (less than -25%)				

Figure 9 - General Fitness Participatory Trends

3.2.4 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL RECREATION

Results from the SFIA's *Topline Participation Report* demonstrate increased popularity among Americans in numerous general recreation activities. Much like the general fitness activities, these activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually or with a group and are not limited by time restraints. In 2013, the most popular activities in the general recreation category include road bicycling (over 40 million participants), freshwater fishing (nearly 38 million participants) and day hiking (over 34 million participants).

From 2008-2013, general recreation activities that have undergone very rapid growth are adventure racing (up 159%), non-traditional/off-road triathlons (up 156%), traditional/road triathlons (up 139.9%) and trail running (up 49.7%). In-line roller skating, horseback riding and skateboarding have all seen a substantial drop in participation, decreasing by 40%, 29.4% and 21.8% respectively over the last five years. **See Figure 10.**

National Participatory Trends - General Recreation											
Activity	Participation Levels						% Change				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	12-13	11-13	10-13	09-13	08-13
Adventure Racing	809	1,005	1,214	1,202	1,618	2,095	29.5%	74.3%	72.6%	108.5%	159.0%
Archery	6,180	6,368	6,323	6,471	7,173	7,647	6.6%	18.2%	20.9%	20.1%	23.7%
Bicycling (Mountain)	7,242	7,367	7,152	6,989	7,265	8,542	17.6%	22.2%	19.4%	15.9%	18.0%
Bicycling (Road)	38,527	39,127	39,730	39,834	39,790	40,888	2.8%	2.6%	2.9%	4.5%	6.1%
Bicycling (BMX)	1,896	1,858	2,090	1,958	1,861	2,168	16.5%	10.7%	3.7%	16.7%	14.3%
Camping (Recreational Vehicle)	16,343	16,977	16,651	16,282	15,903	14,556	-8.5%	-10.6%	-12.6%	-14.3%	-10.9%
Camping (Within 1/4 Mile of Vehicle/Home)	32,531	34,012	32,667	31,961	31,454	29,269	-6.9%	-8.4%	-10.4%	-13.9%	-10.0%
Climbing (Sport/Indoor/Boulder)	4,642	4,541	4,542	4,445	4,355	4,745	9.0%	6.7%	4.5%	4.5%	2.2%
Climbing (Traditional/Ice/Mountaineering)	2,175	2,062	2,017	1,904	2,189	2,319	5.9%	21.8%	15.0%	12.5%	6.6%
Fishing (Fly)	5,849	5,755	5,523	5,581	5,848	5,878	0.5%	5.3%	6.4%	2.1%	0.5%
Fishing (Freshwater)	42,095	40,646	39,911	38,864	39,002	37,796	-3.1%	-2.7%	-5.3%	-7.0%	-10.2%
Fishing (Saltwater)	14,121	13,054	12,056	11,896	12,000	11,790	-1.8%	-0.9%	-2.2%	-9.7%	-16.5%
Golf	28,571	27,103	26,122	25,682	25,280	24,720	-2.2%	-3.7%	-5.4%	-8.8%	-13.5%
Hiking (Day)	31,238	32,542	32,534	33,494	34,519	34,378	-0.4%	2.6%	5.7%	5.6%	10.1%
Horseback Riding	11,457	10,286	9,782	9,335	8,423	8,089	-4.0%	-13.3%	-17.3%	-21.4%	-29.4%
Hunting (Bow)	3,770	3,974	4,067	4,271	4,354	4,079	-6.3%	-4.5%	0.3%	2.6%	8.2%
Hunting (Handgun)	2,734	2,575	2,493	2,690	3,112	3,198	2.8%	18.9%	28.3%	24.2%	17.0%
Hunting (Rifle)	10,490	10,729	10,632	10,479	10,485	9,792	-6.6%	-6.6%	-7.9%	-8.7%	-6.7%
Hunting (Shotgun)	8,638	8,611	8,276	8,370	8,426	7,894	-6.3%	-5.7%	-4.6%	-8.3%	-8.6%
Roller Skating, In-Line	10,211	8,942	8,128	7,451	6,647	6,129	-7.8%	-17.7%	-24.6%	-31.5%	-40.0%
Shooting (Sport Clays)	4,199	4,232	4,291	4,296	4,544	4,479	-1.4%	4.3%	4.4%	5.8%	6.7%
Shooting (Trap/Skeet)	3,523	3,519	3,489	3,453	3,591	3,784	5.4%	9.6%	8.5%	7.5%	7.4%
Skateboarding	8,118	7,580	7,080	6,318	6,227	6,350	2.0%	0.5%	-10.3%	-16.2%	-21.8%
Target Shooting (Handgun)	12,551	12,919	12,485	13,638	15,418	14,370	-6.8%	5.4%	15.1%	11.2%	14.5%
Target Shooting (Rifle)	12,769	12,916	12,637	13,032	13,853	13,023	-6.0%	-0.1%	3.1%	0.8%	2.0%
Trail Running	4,537	4,845	4,985	5,373	5,806	6,792	17.0%	26.4%	36.2%	40.2%	49.7%
Triathlon (Non-Traditional/Off Road)	543	634	798	819	1,075	1,390	29.3%	69.7%	74.2%	119.2%	156.0%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	943	1,148	1,593	1,686	1,789	2,262	26.4%	34.2%	42.0%	97.0%	139.9%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over											
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)		Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)		Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)		Large Decrease (less than -25%)				

Figure 10 - General Recreation Participatory Trends

3.2.5 LOCAL SPORT AND MARKET POTENTIAL

The following charts show sport and leisure market potential data from ESRI. A Market Potential Data (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service in the target area. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident of the City of Gahanna will participate in certain activities when compared to the US National average. **The National average is 100 therefore numbers below 100 would represent a lower than average participation rate and numbers above 100 would represent higher than average participation rate.** The City is compared to the national average in four (4) categories – general sports, fitness, outdoor activity and money spent on miscellaneous recreation.

The City of Gahanna shows high market potential index numbers for all categories. These high index numbers paired with the elevated income characteristics of residents is very promising from a programming standpoint. The City of Gahanna has strong potential to generate revenues from programs by capitalizing on the economic conditions of the service area and the residents' willingness to spend money on recreational activities.

As seen in the tables below, the following sport and leisure trends are most prevalent for residents within the City of Gahanna. Cells highlighted in yellow indicate the top three (four in case of a tie) scoring activities based on the purchasing preferences of residents.

GENERAL SPORTS MARKET POTENTIAL

City of Gahanna Participatory Trends - General Sports	
Activity	**MPI**
Participated in Baseball	**104**
Participated in Basketball	**104**
Participated in Football	**100**
Participated in Golf	**126**
Participated in Soccer	**103**
Participated in Softball	**109**
Participated in Tennis	**119**
Participated in Volleyball	**101**

FITNESS MARKET POTENTIAL

City of Gahanna Participatory Trends - Fitness	
Activity	**MPI**
Participated in Aerobics	**121**
Participated in Jogging/ Running	**128**
Participated in Pilates	**122**
Participated in Swimming	**121**
Participated in Walking for Exercise	**114**
Participated in Weight Lifting	**131**
Participated in Yoga	**117**

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY MARKET POTENTIAL

City of Gahanna Participatory Trends - Outdoor Activity	
Activity	**MPI**
Participated in Backpacking	**107**
Participated in Hiking	**128**
Participated in Bicycling (mountain)	**133**
Participated in Bicycling (road)	**125**
Participated in Boating (Power)	**119**
Participated in Canoeing/Kayaking	**105**
Participated in Fishing (fresh water)	**108**
Participated in Fishing (salt water)	**102**
Participated in Horseback Riding	**102**

MONEY SPENT ON MISCELLANEOUS RECREATION

City of Gahanna Participatory Trends - Money Spent on Recreation	
Activity	**MPI**
Spent on sports/rec equipment in last 12 mo: $1-99	**116**
Spent on sports/rec equipment in last 12 mo: $100-249	**119**
Spent on sports/rec equipment in last 12 mo: $250+	**120**
Attend sports event	**126**
Attend sports event: baseball game - MLB reg seas	**130**
Attend sports event: basketball game (college)	**133**
Attend sports event: basketball game - NBA reg seas	**119**
Attend sports event: football game (college)	**132**
Attend sports event: football game - NFL Mon/Thurs	**122**
Attend sports event: football game - NFL weekend	**132**
Attend sports event: high school sports	**119**
Attend sports event: ice hockey - NHL reg seas	**132**
Went on overnight camping trip in last 12 months	**112**
Visited a theme park in last 12 months	**114**
Went to zoo in last 12 months	**131**

CHAPTER FOUR - PARKS, FACILITIES & PROGRAM NEEDS ANALYSIS

4.1 PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

4.1.1 SUMMARY OF SYSTEM

STRENGTHS

- Parks are well maintained at a typical level two mode based on national park maintenance standards and the majority of the parks and facilities are maintained and kept in excellent condition.
- Landscape beds throughout the system are in need of some improvement, especially at the neighborhood park level.
- Parks were free of trash and offered plenty of receptacles for trash, but did not have recyclable containers and animal waste containers throughout the system.
- Turf maintenance was good for competition sports parks based on their maintenance program.
- The park system offers a wide variety of park experiences varying from passive program areas to active areas. This includes parks that offer both opportunities at the same site
- There was no evidence of vandalism or graffiti at any of the park sites visited.
- The trails throughout the system are very well-maintained and in excellent condition.
- Park benches and picnic tables are in good condition throughout the system.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Street sign communication was lacking to direct access to parks and inform residents where parks are located. Also, there is inconsistency in park signage within parks.
- Ensure that parks, specifically at the neighborhood/community park level, target different age segments to create at least 4-5 program experiences per age segment (age segments include: 2-5, 6-8, 9-12, 13-15, 16-20, 21-30, 30-45, 46-60, 60-70, 70+).
- Restrooms, while clean, need to be updated and flush toilets added when available.
- Use consistent branding on signs throughout the system. There is inconsistency with the brand at different parks and include a department logo. Establish a replacement schedule for outdated signs that do not conform to the current brand.
- Within the neighborhood and community parks, the Department should utilize signage on the trails to give users an accurate count on the distance, as well as consider branding some trails as Heart Healthy Trails.
- Institute the restriping of parking lots to a long term maintenance schedule throughout the system as some of the parks areas were in need of fresh stripe paint.
- Infrastructure improvements are needed at several parks to keep them in good condition.
- Some parking areas need to have paved parking especially where children are present in large quanities.
- Some parks are in need of an updated master plan.

4.2 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

4.2.1 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

MINI PARK

Mini parks are smaller parks that provide green space in the community. Depending on their size, these sites may also provide basic recreation amenities for nearby residents, such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, open lawn areas, sport courts, gazebos, benches and pathways. Mini parks are designed primarily for passive, non-supervised, informal recreation activities. Their size generally ranges from 1-5 acres, with larger parks supporting more green space and small group or family gatherings. Mini parks typically serve nearby residents, but may or may or may not serve a specific neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

A neighborhood park should be three to 10 acres; however, some Neighborhood Parks are determined by use and facilities offered and not by size alone. The service radius for a neighborhood park is one half mile or six blocks. Neighborhood Parks should have safe pedestrian access for surrounding residents; parking may or may not be included but if included accounts for less than ten cars and provides for ADA access. Neighborhood Parks serve the recreational and social focus of the adjoining neighborhoods and contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity.

- Size of park: Three to 10 acres (usable area measured). Preferred size is eight acres
- Service radius: 0.5 mile radius
- Site Selection: On a local or collector street. If near an arterial street, provide natural or artificial barrier. Where possible, next to a school. Encourage location to link subdivisions and linked by trails to other parks
- Length of stay: One hour experience or less
- Amenities: One signature amenity (e.g. major playground, spray ground park, sport court, gazebo); no restrooms unless necessary for signature amenity; may include one non-programmed sports field; playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some shaded elements; no reservable shelters; loop trails; one type of sport court; no non- activity producing/unused amenities; benches, small picnic shelters next to play areas. Amenities are ADA compliant
- Landscape Design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience
- Revenue facilities: none
- Land usage: 85 percent active/15 percent passive for developed areas
- Programming: Typically none, but a signature amenity may be included which is programmed
- Maintenance Standards: Provide the highest level maintenance with available funding. Seek a goal of Level 2 maintenance standards. Some amenities may require Level 1 maintenance
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience
- Parking: Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park. Goal is to maximize usable park space. As necessary, provide 5-10 spaces within park including handicap spaces. Traffic calming devices encouraged next to park

- Lighting: Security or amenity only. Lighting on dual system with 50 percent of lights off at a set time and 50 percent on all night for security
- Naming: Consistent with the City's ordinances for naming of parks, or may be named after a prominent or historic person, event or natural landmark
- Other: Customized to demographics of neighborhood; safety design meets established CPTED standards; integrated color scheme throughout

COMMUNITY PARK

Community Parks are intended to be accessible to multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Community Parks are generally larger in scale than neighborhood parks, but smaller than regional parks and are designed typically for residents who live within a three mile radius. When possible, the park may be developed adjacent to a school. Community Parks provide recreational opportunities for the entire family and often contain facilities for specific recreational purposes: athletic fields, swimming pool, tennis courts, extreme sports amenity, recreation center, loop trails, picnic areas, reservable picnic shelters, sports courts, permanent restrooms, large turfed and landscaped areas and a playground or spray ground. Passive outdoor recreation activities such as meditation, quiet reflection and wildlife watching also take place at Community Parks.

Community Parks generally range from 20 to 100 acres depending on the community. Community Parks serve a larger area – radius of one to three miles and contain more recreation amenities than a Neighborhood Park.

- Size of park: 20 to 60 acres normally. Can be up to 100 acres (usable area measured).
- Service radius: One to three mile radius
- Site Selection: On two collector streets minimum and preferably one arterial street. If near arterial street, provide natural or artificial barrier. Minimal number of residences abutting site. Preference is streets on four sides, or three sides with school or municipal use on fourth side. Encourage trail linkage to other parks
- Length of stay: Two to three hours experience
- Amenities: Four signature amenities at a minimum: (e.g., trails, sports fields, large shelters/ pavilions, community playground for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some shaded elements, recreation center, pool or family aquatic center, sports courts, water feature); public restrooms, ample parking and security lighting. Amenities are ADA compliant. Sport Fields and Sport Complexes are typical at this park.
- Revenue facilities: One or more (e.g. pool, sports complex, pavilion)
- Land usage: 65 percent active and 35 percent passive for developed areas
- Programming: Minimum of four essential program services (e.g. sports, day camps, aquatics)
- Maintenance Standards: Provide the highest level maintenance with available funding. Seek a goal of Level 2 maintenance standards. Some amenities may require Level 1 maintenance
- Parking: Sufficient to support the amenities; occupies no more than 10 percent of the park. Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park. Goal is to maximize usable park space. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to the park

- Lighting: Amenity lighting includes sport field light standards. Security lighting on dual system with 50 percent of lights off at a set time and 50 percent on all night for security
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility
- Landscape Design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Enhanced landscaping at park entrances and throughout park
- Naming: Consistent with the City's naming right ordinance, may be named after a prominent or historic person, event or natural landmark
- Other: Strong appeal to surrounding neighborhoods; integrated color scheme throughout the park; partnerships developed with support groups, schools and other organizations; loop trail connectivity; linked to Regional Park, trail or recreation facility; safety design meets established CPTED standards. Telephone/Cable TV conduit

ATHLETIC AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Athletic and recreation facilities can be located at Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks and stand-alone Sports Complexes. These can be developed to provide up to 16 fields or courts in one setting. Athletic and recreation facilities can be single focused or multi-focused and can include indoor or outdoor facilities to serve the needs of both youth and adults. Outdoor fields should be lighted to maximize value and productivity of the complex. Agencies developing athletic and recreation facilities focus on meeting the needs of residents while also attracting sport tournaments for economic purposes to the community.

Sport field design includes appropriate field distances for each sport's governing body and support amenities designed to produce revenue to offset operational costs.

Athletic and recreation facilities include enhanced amenities such as artificial turf, multipurpose field benches and bleachers, scoreboards, amplified sound, scorer's booths, etc. Enhanced amenities would be identified through discussion between the City and sports associations and are dependent upon adequate funding.

- Size of park: Preferably 40 or more acres for stand-alone complexes
- Service radius: Determined by community demand
- Site Selection: Stand-alone sports complexes are strategically located on or near arterial streets. Refer to community or neighborhood park sections if sport complex located within a park. Preference is streets on four sides, or three sides with school or municipal use on fourth side.
- Length of stay: Two to three hours experience for single activities. Can be all day for tournaments or special events
- Amenities: Up to sixteen fields or sports courts in one setting; public restrooms, ample parking, turf types appropriate for the facility and anticipated usage and field lighting. Amenities are ADA compliant.
- Revenue facilities: Four or more (e.g. fields, concession stand, picnic pavilion)
- Land usage: 95 percent active and 5 percent passive
- Programming: Focus on active programming of all amenities

- Maintenance Standards: Provide the highest level maintenance with available funding. Plan for Level 1 and sometimes 2 level of maintenance standards at signature facility
- Parking: Sufficient to support the amenities. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to park
- Lighting: Amenity lighting includes sport field light standards. Security lighting on dual system with 50 percent of lights off at a set time and 50 percent on all night for security
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility
- Landscape Design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Enhanced landscaping at entrances and throughout complex
- Naming: Consistent with the City's naming ordinance, may be named after a prominent or historic person, event or natural landmark
- Other: Integrated color scheme throughout the park; safety design meets established CPTED standards. Telephone/Cable TV conduit

OPEN SPACE/NATURAL AREA

Open Space/Natural Areas are undeveloped but may include natural or paved trails. Grasslands under power line corridors are one example; creek areas are another. Open Space contain natural resources that can be managed for recreation and natural resource conservation values such as a desire to protect wildlife habitat, water quality and endangered species. Open Space also can provide opportunities for nature based, unstructured, low-impact recreational opportunities such as walking and nature viewing.

- Amenities: May include paved or natural trails, wildlife viewing areas, mountain biking, disc golf, interpretation and education facilities
- Maintenance standards: Demand-based maintenance with available funding. Biological management practices observed.
- Parking: Sufficient to support the amenities. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to park
- Lighting: None
- Signage: Interpretive kiosks as deemed appropriate
- Landscape Design: Generally none. Some areas may include landscaping, such as entryways or around buildings. In these situations, sustainable design is appropriate.

4.2.2 LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Level of Service Standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities and amenities. Level of Service Standards can and will change over time as the program lifecycles change and demographics of a community change.

Park facility standards were analyzed using a combination of resources. These resources included: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, recreation activity participation rates reported by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2013 Study of Sports, Fitness and Leisure Participation as it applies to activities that occur in the United States and the Gahanna area, community and stakeholder input, findings from the prioritized needs assessment report and general observations. This information allowed standards to be customized to City of Gahanna (**Figure 11**).

These standards should be viewed as a guide. The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the particular situation and needs of the community. By applying these facility standards to the population of Gahanna, gaps and surpluses in park and facility/amenity types are revealed. Currently, there are needs to be met in Gahanna to meet the needs of the community now and in the future. The standards outlined are not aggressive, but are conservative.

The Level of Service Standard helps to determine community unmet needs based on the Community Survey, NRPA National Standards, best practices in Midwest area communities of similar size and nature.

PARKS:	2014 Inventory - Developed Facilities							2014 Facility Standards			2019 Facility Standards		
Park Type	City of Gahanna Park Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	
Mini Parks	22.99	0.68	acres per	1,000	0.50	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Neighborhood Park	166.01	4.94	acres per	1,000	5.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	2	Acre(s)	Need Exists	9	Acre(s)
Community Parks	128.71	3.83	acres per	1,000	4.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	6	Acre(s)	Need Exists	11	Acre(s)
Open Space	236.24	7.03	acres per	1,000	7.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	8	Acre(s)
Athletic/Recreational Facility	205.25	6.11	acres per	1,000	6.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	4	Acre(s)
Total Park Acres	**759.20**	**22.58**	**acres per**	**1,000**	**22.50**	**acres per**	**1,000**	**Meets Standard**	**-**	**Acre(s)**	**Need Exists**	**27**	**Acre(s)**
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:													
Picnic Areas & Tables	39.00	1.00	site per	862	1.00	site per	2,500	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)
Gazebo	2.00	1.00	site per	16,809	1.00	site per	10,000	Need Exists	1	Sites(s)	Need Exists	1	Sites(s)
Open Shelter	9.00	1.00	site per	3,735	1.00	site per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)
Shelter Rentals	6.00	1.00	site per	5,603	1.00	site per	5,000	Need Exists	1	Sites(s)	Need Exists	1	Sites(s)
Playgrounds	16.00	1.00	site per	2,101	1.00	site per	2,500	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)
Dog Parks	1.00	1.00	site per	33,617	1.00	site per	35,000	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)
Softball Fields	2.00	1.00	field per	16,809	1.00	field per	5,000	Need Exists	5	Field(s)	Need Exists	5	Field(s)
Baseball Fields	10.00	1.00	field per	3,362	1.00	field per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)
Soccer Fields	26.00	1.00	field per	1,293	1.00	field per	4,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)
Basketball Courts	8.00	1.00	court per	4,202	1.00	court per	4,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Need Exists	1	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	4.00	1.00	court per	8,404	1.00	court per	4,000	Need Exists	4	Court(s)	Need Exists	5	Court(s)
Skate Park	1.00	1.00	site per	33,617	1.00	site per	50,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Multi-Use Trails (Miles)	14.00	0.42	miles per	1,000	0.50	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	3	Mile(s)	Need Exists	3	Mile(s)
Pools (Square Feet)	28,800.00	0.86	SF per	person	0.50	SF per	person	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet
Recreation Centers (Square Feet)	13,100.00	0.39	SF per	person	1.50	SF per	person	Need Exists	37,326	Square Feet	Need Exists	39,327	Square Feet

2014 Estimated Population	33,617
2019 Estimated Population	34,951

Notes:

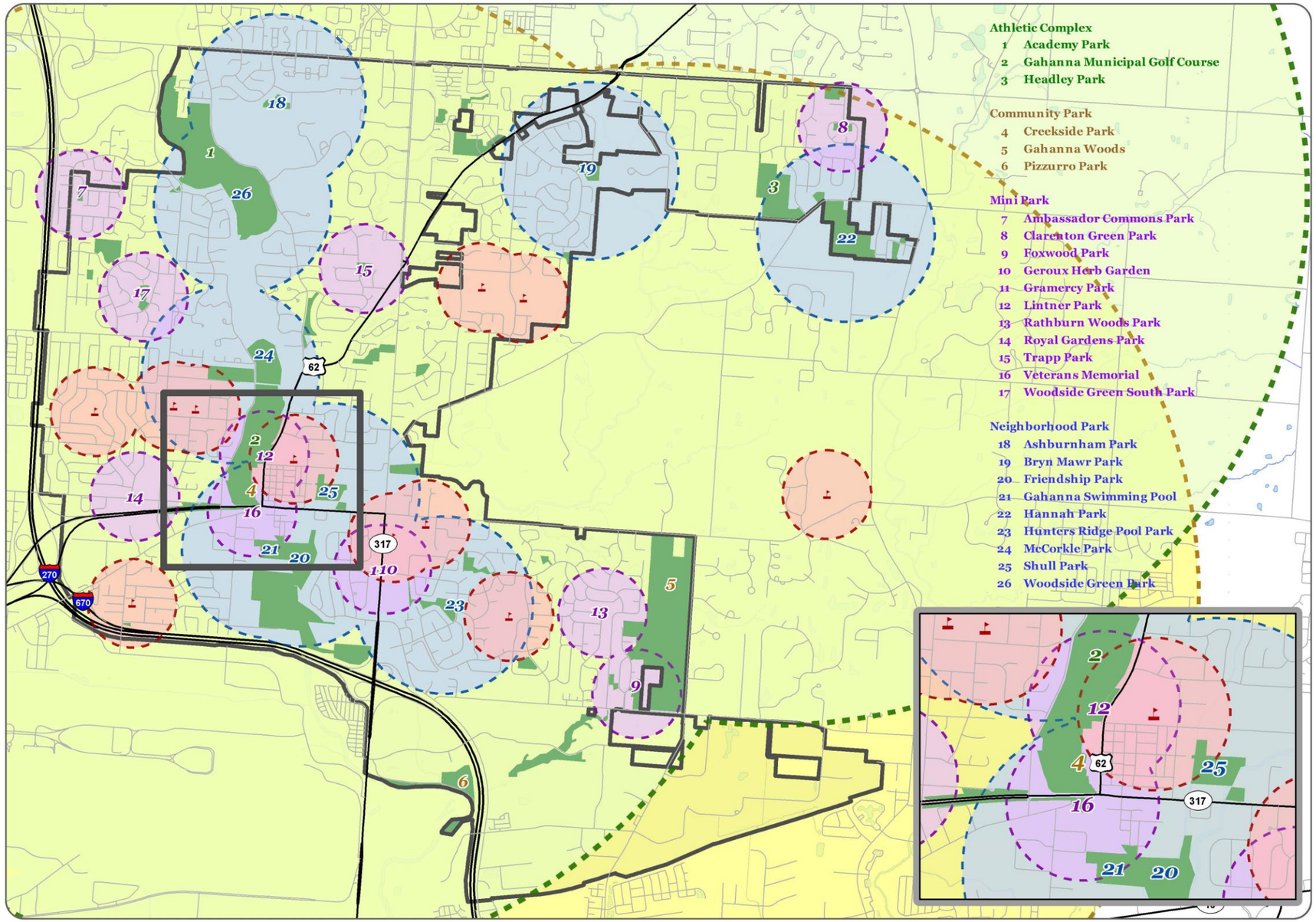
Recreation Centers include Senior Center, Ohio Herb Education Centers, and Rental Hall in Golf Course Club House

Pools include Hunter's Ridge Pool and Gahanna Swimming Pool

4.3 PARK INVENTORY

Map Number	Name	Type	Address	GIS Acres	Parking Lot	Baseball	Basketball	Canoeing	Dog Park	Drinking Water	Fishing	Gazebo	Golf	Grills	Historical Interest	Improved Trails	Nature Trails	Open Meadows	Open Shelter	Paddleboats	Performance Areas	Picnic Areas	Picnic Tables	Play Structure	Restrooms (Permanent)	Restrooms (Portable)	Shelter Rentals	Shuffleboard	Sledding	Skateboarding	Soccer	Softball	Street Hockey	Swimming	Tennis	Wading Beach
1	Academy Park	Athletic/Recreational Facility	1201 Cherry Bottom Rd	107.13	X	7	2			X	X					X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X											
2	Gahanna Municipal Golf Course	Athletic/Recreational Facility	220 Ridenour Rd	64.73	X					X			X			X	X	X				X	X		X	X		P	X							
3	Headley Park	Athletic/Recreational Facility	1031 Challis Springs Dr	33.39	X					X						X		X	X			X	X	X	X				X		22					
4	Creekside Park	Community Park	123 Mill St	5.84	X			X		X	X				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X											X
5	Gahanna Woods	Community Park	1501 Taylor Station Rd	99.37	X													X				X	X													
6	Pizzurro Park	Community Park	940 S Hamilton Rd	23.50	X			X	X		X			X		P	P	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X									
7	Ambassador Commons Park	Mini Park	639 Gahanna Highlands Dr	1.32														X				X	X	X												
8	Clarenton Green Park	Mini Park	1294 Fareharm Dr	2.82														X				X														
9	Foxwood Park	Mini Park	6000 Taylor Rd	5.52												P		X																		
10	Geroux Herb Garden	Mini Park	206 S Hamilton Rd	0.81	X										X			X																		
11	Gramercy Park	Mini Park	209 S Hamilton Rd	0.27												X																				
12	Lintner Park	Mini Park	Mill St	1.91							X				X																					X
13	Rathburn Woods Park	Mini Park	316 Howland Dr	1.48										X			X	X				X	X	X												
14	Royal Gardens Park	Mini Park	446 Agler Rd	0.26								X			X	X																				
15	Trapp Park	Mini Park	756 Trapp Dr	2.93										X		X	X	X				X	X	X												
16	Veterans Memorial	Mini Park	73 W Johnstown Rd	1.74	X						X				X	X																				
17	Woodside Green South Park	Mini Park	645 Waybaugh Dr	3.93				X		X	X							X				X	X													
18	Ashburnham Park	Neighborhood Park	1245 Ashburnham Dr	5.20			1										X					X		X												
19	Bryn Mawr Park	Neighborhood Park	1082 Riva Ridge Blvd	6.48												X		X	X			X	X	X												
20	Friendship Park	Neighborhood Park	150 Oklahoma Ave	22.67	X		1	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X								1	
21	Gahanna Swimming Pool	Neighborhood Park	148 Parkland Dr	9.55	X		1			X									X			X	X	X	X		X							X		
22	Hannah Park	Neighborhood Park	6547 Clark State Rd	35.46	X	X	1			X	X			X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X		2				2	
23	Hunters Ridge Pool Park	Neighborhood Park	341 Harrow Blvd	8.77	X		1			X								X	X				X	X	X		X							X	1	
24	McCorkle Park	Neighborhood Park	200 McCutcheon Rd	34.57	X					X						X	X	X				X	X	X	X						1					
25	Shull Park	Neighborhood Park	236 Granville St	10.49	X					P						P	X	X				X				X				X	1		X			
26	Woodside Green Park	Neighborhood Park	213 Camrose Ct	32.82	X	2	1	X		X	X			X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X			2				
27	Agler Road Parkway	Open Space	273 Agler Rd	6.95												X																				
28	Bryn Mawr Woods Reserve	Open Space	800 Line Way	1.39														X																		
29	Caroway Reserve	Open Space	934 Caroway Blvd	1.19														X				X														
30	Central Park Reserve	Open Space	Tech Center Dr	22.39																																
31	Clarenton Green Reserve	Open Space	Havant Dr	4.32														X				X		P												
32	Clark State Basin	Open Space	Clark State Rd	1.89																																
33	Fleetrun Reserve	Open Space	754 Fleetrun Ave	5.02														X																		
34	Foxboro Basin	Open Space	478 Peale Ct	2.54							X							X						X												
35	Gahanna Grove Reserve	Open Space	4501 Johnstown Rd	2.62														X																		
36	Galloway Reserve	Open Space	289 Rocky Fork Dr S	23.96														X																		
37	Goshen Reserve	Open Space	Denison Ave	0.38														X																		
38	Helmbright Woods Reserve	Open Space	445 Helmbright Dr	3.63													P	X																		
39	McKenna Creek Parkway	Open Space	486 Cherry Bottom Rd	5.91												X		X																		
40	Pipers Glen Basin	Open Space	633 Spirea Ave	1.20																																
41	Price Road Reserve*	Open Space	110 Price Rd	52.00							X					X	X	X																		
42	Rice Avenue Basin	Open Space	1180 Rice Ave	1.66							X					P		X																		
43	Rocky Fork Reserve	Open Space	N Hamilton Rd	6.67														X																		
44	Shagbark Reserve	Open Space	5079 Shagbark Rd	2.45														X																		
45	Shull Reserve	Open Space	Granville St	1.51														X																		
46	Sycamore Run Reserve*	Open Space	N Hamilton Rd	7.42																																
47	Taylor Road Reserve	Open Space	1249 Taylor Station Rd	51.44													P	X																		
48	Three Corners Reserve	Open Space	Stygler Rd N	1.09														X																		
49	Underwood Reserve	Open Space	Underwood Farms Blvd	2.85														X																		
50	Village at Hannah Farms Reserve	Open Space	Hannah Farms Ct	3.46																																
51	Woodmark Woods Reserve	Open Space	534 Woodmark Run	10.05													X	X				P														
52	Y Park Reserve	Open Space	555 YMCA Pl	12.24														X																		
	*Future Park Development		TOTALS =	759.20																																

4.4 EXISTING PARK SYSTEM AND SERVICE AREAS



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4.5 RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The PROS team performed a Recreation Program Assessment of the programs and services offered by the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of the recreation program offerings and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in programming. The Assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues and areas of improvement in determining future recreation programs and services for residents.

The consulting team based these program findings and comments from a review of department literature (e.g., program guides), website, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and discussions with the park and recreation director and staff. This report addresses the program offerings from a systems perspective for the entire portfolio of programs, as well as individual program information. It identifies key issues and presents recommendations for these issues, summarized at the end of this chapter.

4.5.1 RECREATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Department offers a wide array of programs including adult, youth and senior programs, ACA-accredited summer camps, outdoor education, golf programs, aquatic programs and a variety of community special events. Programs take place throughout the system in parks, shelters, athletic fields, aquatic centers, the Gahanna Senior Center, the Ohio Herb Education Center (OHEC) and the nine-hole Gahanna Municipal Golf Course.

Overall, the mix of recreation programs offered by the Department is generally balanced across age groups and interests. The number of Gahanna residents that participate in the City's recreation programs is nearly double the national average, indicating they are popular and valued by the community. In 2012, the department had over 117,300 interactions with residents and visitors through uses of the golf course, aquatic centers, senior center, OHEC, programs, equipment rentals and special events.

Other recreation providers in Gahanna include organizations and businesses such as the YMCA, independent sports associations and commercial fitness centers. Some entities, such as sports associations, work in partnership with the Department to provide programming not offered by the City. Others, such as yoga/Pilates studios, private gyms, dance centers and commercial recreation attractions, operate in competition with the Department in the provision of certain recreation programs and facilities.

4.5.2 SURVEY AND PUBLIC INPUT FINDINGS

PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS

Public input meetings were held as part of the planning process, and out of the 120 invitations sent by the Department of Parks & Recreation Director, over 70 individuals attended a meeting. Participants included representatives of community organizations, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, civic associations and the general public.

According to the participants, strengths and advantages of the Department in terms of recreation services include the following:

- Accessibility and convenience
- Something for all ages to enjoy
- Strong programs and events

- Friendly and knowledgeable staff with strong leadership skills
- Partnerships and public outreach efforts
- Low cost programs
- Youth and family programs/activities
- Safe experiences

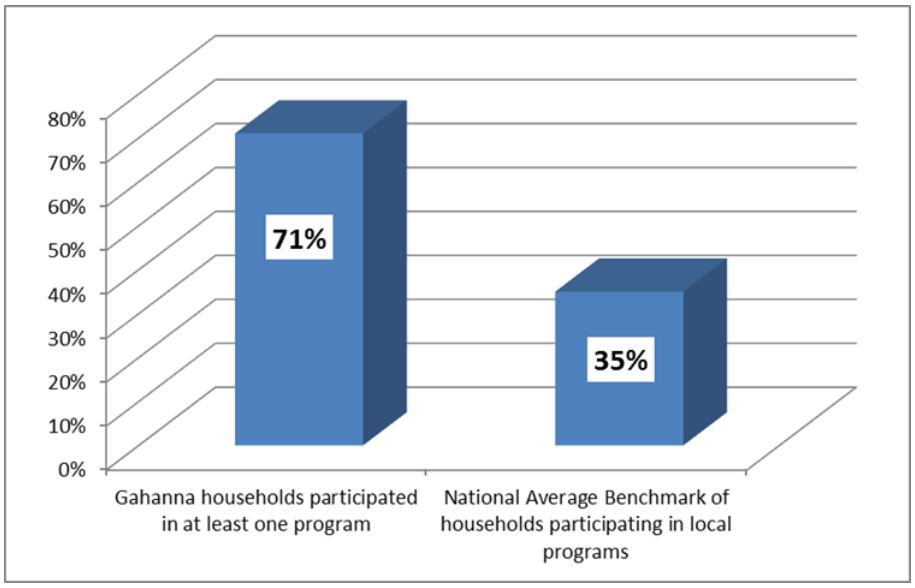
Areas for improvement and desired outcomes include:

- Better information on programs and events
- More information on the website
- More youth programs, particularly sports
- More after school and educational programs for youth
- More low- or no-cost programs
- More partnerships with local businesses
- More control over scheduling of sports fields
- More involvement/leadership regarding bringing sports tourism to the City
- Establishment of a youth sports association partnership

PUBLIC SURVEY

In addition to the public meetings, a statistically valid community survey was administered to Gahanna residents in April 2013. Complete findings of the survey are presented elsewhere in this plan, but findings relevant to recreation programs are discussed in this Assessment.

A total of 71% of respondents indicated participating in at least one program or event activity offered by the Department. This far exceeds the national average of 35%. A total of 84% of respondents indicated the quality of programs and activities offered by the Department are excellent or good; less than 1% indicated they are poor.



Overall, the recreation programs considered the most important to residents include community special events, adult fitness/wellness programs, nature programs/exhibits and senior programs. When broken down by age group, many of these remained top-ranking programs, especially community special events and adult fitness/wellness programs. Youth art, dance and performing arts programs are particularly important to residents age 30-39, the segment most likely to have small children. Cycling programs are important to individuals age 40-59. Older citizens, age 60 and above find water fitness programs and trips to special attractions/events to be important. Given the projected increase in population of older individuals in Gahanna, it is important for the Department to continue to provide these valued programs and make necessary adjustments to the overall program mix to meet increasing demand.

Which FOUR programs from the list are most important to your household?							
Programs	**Total**	**18-29 years**	**30-39 years**	**40-49 years**	**50-59 years**	**60-69 years**	**Over 70 years**
Community special events	**36.4%**	**28.4%**	**37.9%**	**46.4%**	**44.0%**	**34.5%**	**17.3%**
Adult fitness and wellness programs	**27.4%**	**17.9%**	**16.6%**	**29.1%**	**36.6%**	**37.8%**	**15.3%**
Nature programs and exhibits	**17.3%**	**14.9%**	**15.9%**	**13.6%**	**22.9%**	**19.6%**	11.2%
Senior programs	**14.6%**	0.0%	1.4%	1.8%	10.9%	**33.1%**	**37.8%**
Water fitness program	11.3%	3.0%	6.9%	12.7%	**13.7%**	**19.6%**	5.1%
Trips to special attractions and events	10.6%	7.5%	4.8%	5.5%	13.1%	14.9%	**16.3%**
Cycling programs	10.2%	7.5%	6.2%	**13.6%**	**13.7%**	12.2%	5.1%
Adult art, dance, performing arts	8.9%	7.5%	5.5%	8.2%	10.9%	13.5%	4.1%
Golf lessons/ clinics	7.7%	4.5%	6.2%	**15.5%**	9.7%	4.1%	5.1%
Golf leagues	7.0%	**10.4%**	9.0%	5.5%	8.6%	4.1%	5.1%
Youth art, dance, performing arts	6.0%	7.5%	**15.9%**	5.5%	2.3%	2.7%	3.1%
Outdoor challenge programs	5.0%	6.0%	4.1%	10.9%	6.9%	2.0%	0.0%
Tennis lessons and leagues	4.2%	9.0%	5.5%	9.1%	3.4%	0.7%	0.0%
Gymnastics and tumbling programs	3.8%	6.0%	8.3%	7.3%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%
Programs for people with disabilities	2.3%	3.0%	1.4%	1.8%	2.3%	2.0%	4.1%

4.5.3 RECREATION TRENDS

The consulting team conducted research regarding demographic, industry and consumer trends that may affect the outlook of the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. A full report on the team's findings is provided earlier in this master plan, but in this chapter it is important to summarize critical points from those findings that have an impact on recreation programming.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- The total population of the City of Gahanna is projected to increase gradually over the next 15 years, from an estimated 33,363 in 2012 to approximately 35,000 in 2027.
- Current demographic estimates indicate Gahanna is a family-oriented area, where approximately 70% of total households are families.
- The City's median household ($75,347) and per capita income ($36,506) is well above both state and national averages.
- The population of Gahanna is slightly older (39.4 years) than the median age of the U.S. (37.2 years). Projections show that by 2027 the City will have a strong presence of older segments, with the 35-54 age group estimated to be 24.9% and the 55+ group projected to reach 32.8%.
- The estimated 2012 population of the City is predominantly White Alone (81.79%). Future projections show that by 2027 the population will experience a gradual decrease in the White Alone category (77.47%), with those belonging to Black Alone increasing the most.

RECREATION PARTICIPATION

- According to recreation industry trends, the top recreational activities for females are currently walking, aerobics, general exercising, biking, jogging, basketball, weight lifting, golf, swimming and tennis.
- The top recreational activities for males are golf, basketball, walking, jogging, biking, weight lifting, football, hiking, fishing and hunting.
- Team sports have slowly declined over the past decade throughout the U.S., but several have seen a positive growth since 2010. In particular, lacrosse and tennis have seen significant growth over the past decade.
- Basketball ranks as the most popular team sport.
- The growth in youth team sports is now being driven by 13 and 14 year olds; these are the peak ages of sports participation for children. Nearly 70% of children (age 6-17) in the U.S. are playing team sports.
- The greatest growth of participation in recreational activities has occurred in activities that have low barriers to entry, can be undertaken within close proximity to home and can be completed in a limited amount of time.
- Swimming has proven multigenerational appeal is one of the few recreational activities pursued across the lifespan. Participation rates have remained relatively steady in recent years.

LOCAL MARKET POTENTIAL

- Sports with the most market potential in the City of Gahanna as measured by the Market Potential Index (MPI) are golf, basketball and tennis.
- Fitness activities with the most market potential in Gahanna include swimming, jogging/running and weight lifting.
- Outdoor recreation activities with the most market potential in Gahanna are mountain biking, road bicycling and backpacking/hiking.
- Activities or pursuits in Gahanna with the most potential for spending money are purchasing high-end sports/recreation equipment valued over $250, attending ice hockey games and going to the zoo.

4.5.4 CORE PROGRAMS

It is important to identify core programs based on both current and future needs. This assists in creating a sense of focus around specific program areas of greatest importance to the community. Public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people, especially in a community such as Gahanna. The core program philosophy assists staff in being able to focus on what is most important. This approach is not meant to suggest that non-core programs are not important to the community. It should also be noted that the process of determining core programs is an inherently subjective exercise. The process is conducted, however, to ensure the services provided by the Department are in line with the wants, needs and expectations of the City.

Programs are categorized as core programs if they meet a majority of the following categories:

- Program has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years).
- Offered 3-4 sessions per year.
- Enjoys wide demographic appeal.
- Includes 5% or more of recreation budget.
- Includes a tiered level of skill development.
- Requires full-time staff to manage the program area.
- Has strong social value.
- Exhibits high level of customer interface.
- Has high partnering capability or potential.
- Has facilities designed to support the program.

To further assist with the implementation of the core program philosophy, PROS has developed the following definitions to help classify specific programs within program areas (see Section 5.3 for detailed definitions):

- Core Essential – part of the organizational mission; serves a majority of the community; receives the highest level of subsidy offered. ("We *must* offer this program.")
- Important – important to the community; serves the broad community; receives some level of subsidy. ("We *should* offer this program.")

- Value-Added – enhanced community offerings; serves niche groups; receives limited to no subsidy. ("It would be *nice* to offer this program.")

Based upon meetings with and input from staff, and assessment by PROS, the following core program areas are recommended:

- Youth camp programs
- Senior center programs
- Aquatics programs
- Golf programs
- Community special events
- Provision of sports/athletic fields
- Volunteer programs

These align with the desires of the community expressed in public meetings and the survey, as well as national trends in recreation programming. It is important to recognize that limits on the department's staffing, resources and availability of space may hinder some of the efforts to maintain or expand core programs; therefore, it is essential that staff commit to a concerted effort towards managing and prioritizing these core program areas in the coming years when new facilities come on line.

4.5.5 FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

PRICING STRATEGIES

The Department employs several sound practices for pricing programs and services. A formal fee policy, developed by staff, recommended by the Parks & Recreation Board and submitted to City Council, stipulates the process for determining fees and accounting for both direct and indirect costs of each activity. Currently, policies and processes for setting fees and accounting for full costs apply "across the board" for all recreation programs. When appropriate, given the continued growth in recreation program offerings and potential for program portfolio changes, the Department may want to consider differentiating full cost accounting practices for various program areas to more accurately reflect true costs.

The Department uses pricing strategies based on age segment, family/household status, residency, prime/nonprime time, weekday/weekend, group discounts and comparability to competition. However, the use of some pricing strategies could be used more. Temporal pricing strategies are used, but generally only for shelter facility rentals. Additional strategies could be employed to help smooth demand over time at other facilities and for other programs, such as in the areas of aquatics, fitness and golf. Furthermore, as special event programming grows, department staff should consider using additional strategies to promote and control participation.

The consulting team recommends that mini-business plans (2-3 pages) be updated for each core program service area on a yearly basis. They will evaluate the program area based on meeting the outcomes desired for participants, cost recovery, percentage of the market and business controls, cost of service, pricing strategy for the next year and marketing strategies that are to be implemented. If developed regularly and consistently, they can be effective tools for budget construction and justification processes. Furthermore, these plans can address other financial and operational needs such as cash collection standards and refund process standards that need to be incorporated.

4.5.6 PROGRAM STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The relationship between meeting the needs of the community, achieving the agency mission and executing quality service delivery is of critical importance. With an understanding of this important dynamic, the following section provides an analysis of the service system and includes building on the service foundation that already exists in the Department. As observed from the discussions with and data from the staff, the community does seem to exhibit a relatively high level of satisfaction with the offerings provided by the Department.

Based on the consulting team's observations, the Department's operations and program offerings are above average based on nationwide trends, but more is needed, particularly in terms of management standards, to service the community better. This section is intended to move the Department to a higher level of sophistication in quality management and move it into the realm of state- and national-level best practices.

RECREATION PROGRAM STANDARDS

The practice of using recreation program standards is essential for agencies desiring to perform at high levels and that aspire to be community and industry leaders. One of the most significant issues in managing a recreation program system includes the challenges faced with the complexity associated with thousands of service transactions, in-person and online, from multiple staff members dealing with a diverse audience at a variety of facilities within the system. Furthermore, the heavy reliance on part-time and seasonal staff in the service delivery process creates even greater challenges. These dynamics result in significant program and service quality variation.

In reviewing the program assessment information, performance measures and management standards are used to some extent in the Department, but in many cases they have not been formalized. Participation counts and participant-to-staff ratios are monitored, but goals across program areas have not yet been developed. Customer retention is also reviewed periodically, but appear to be limited to golf and pool memberships. Customer satisfaction is measured through program surveys, and issues needing attention are responded to, but a strategic and comprehensive program to track retention and satisfaction across program areas has not been fully implemented.

Park and recreation departments should have standard measures in place to help manage the entire portfolio of programs in a data-driven and strategic way. Implementation of such standards not only informs decision making, but provides critical justification for programmatic changes when management actions must be articulated and explained to management, governing bodies and the general public. Measures that the Department should institutionalize for each program type include:

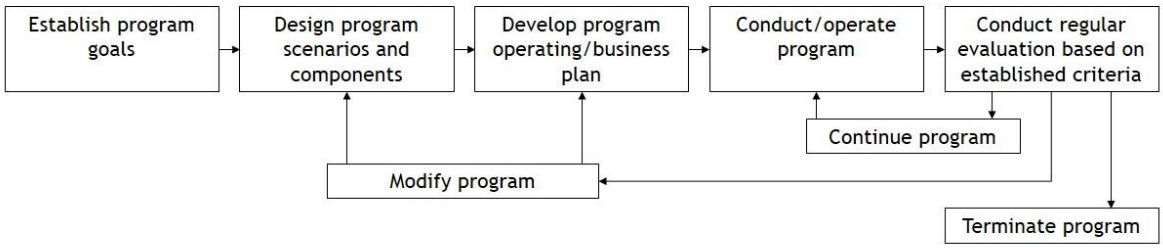
- Minimum and maximum number of participants
- Allowable participant-to-staff ratios
- Participant satisfaction rates (toward program quality)
- Participant satisfaction rates (toward registration/administration)
- Customer retention rates
- Program participation by age group
- Percentage of households (or members) participating
- Specific cleanliness / facility hygiene ratings

- Instructor performance ratings
- Cost recovery rates
- Percent of programs in each lifecycle stage (Introduction, Take-Off, Mature, Saturation, Declining)
- Market penetration rates

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Recommended ways to build a culture of quality management in recreation program delivery for the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation include the following:

- **Annual Review Process:** Staff present their yearly goals for program areas to senior leadership and/or an advisory board. This would include policy reviews, financial and registration performance, customer issues and plans for the future. This process helps to ensure good communication and cooperation for supporting divisions, such as parks, administration and technology as well.
- **Documented Program Development Process:** This is required in order to reduce service variation and assist in training new staff. A common approach is to use a process map that provides guidance to staff for consistently developing new programs. It can help to diminish the learning curve for new staff and reinforce program development as a core competency. This is created in a flow chart format showing the steps in the process for program development including writing class descriptions, process steps, hiring staff, using contractual employees and the list of standards.



- **Instructor/Contractor Tool Kit:** Kits need to be created by the staff that outline information about the department, including mission, vision, values, goals, organizational structure, roster of users, program guides, program standards, evaluation forms, registration forms, important phone numbers, name tags, thank you cards and program learning objectives.
- **On-going Connections with Part-time and Seasonal Staff:** There should be on-going processes and events to connect part-time and seasonal programming staff, as well as some contractors, with full-time Department personnel through meetings, email, newsletters, staff recognition and random visits by management. This also assists with determining and managing job satisfaction of these employees.
- **Identification of Customer Requirements:** Staff identify customer requirements for core program areas. This is important to emphasize with staff that directly interface with customers. Requirements relate to those service attributes that are most important to a customer, and requirements should be developed with customer input. Each core program area should include a listing of approximately five key customer requirements. For example, in a youth gymnastics

program, key requirements could include: overall safety of the program, instructional quality, convenience and ease of registration, cost of the program and skill development.

- **Environmental Scan of Best Practices:** Staff identify key competitors or similar providers, both locally and nationally, of core program areas. Every one or two years, staff should develop a matrix of information to compare services in areas that have the greatest importance to customers. Benchmarking other nationally renowned agencies also can provide a process to continuously improve programming.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Customer service is at the root of the success of any organization. A true community-service organization prides itself on identifying its customers' preferences and acting in accordance to help fulfill their needs. In order to do this, an ongoing and system-wide feedback mechanism is of vital importance.

Currently, the Department does not have a system-wide approach for gathering customer feedback. Feedback is collected, but it is inconsistent from program-to-program. Maximizing the use of the Department's website, utilizing online survey tools and incorporating both pre-and post-program feedback systems across the agency are recommended tactics for the Department to implement. Surveys to lost customers or non-users would also be a useful addition to identify causes of attrition, dwindling popularity or barriers to participation.

At the beginning of each year or season, the Department should also conduct targeted 'Open Houses' to provide potential users an opportunity to preview the full spectrum of upcoming program offerings. This forum can also be used to gather feedback on the types of programs and services the public would be most interested in. This concept provides a constant input mechanism for programming ideas and ensures that offerings are based on observed need, rather than staff opinion or assumption. Additionally, users are more likely to participate in programs that they have had a chance to provide input on.

It is important that the Department continue to capture the customer feedback data and develop a database that can be used over the years to track trends and changes. The feedback obtained must be communicated with senior leadership, advisory boards and future staff so as to ensure an open and transparent process and one that looks at improving as a team without focusing on individual blame.

Also, it is imperative to continue implementing quality control mechanisms for instructors, seasonals and contractors to ensure effectiveness and build credibility. Except for some programs that conduct post-program customer feedback, the Department does not appear to undertake any mechanism of evaluating overall customer feedback pertaining to seasonal staff/instructor quality. Having an on-going instructor quality check certainly helps elevate the quality level and accountability of program offerings which in turn enable the Department to provide and price programs according to their true value.

4.5.7 VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Today's economic climate and political realities require most public park and recreation departments to seek productive and meaningful partnerships with both community organizations and individuals to deliver quality and seamless services to their residents. These relationships should be mutually beneficial to each party to better meet overall community needs and expand the positive impact of the Department's mission. Because of the constraints facing the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation, effective partnerships and meaningful volunteerism are a key strategy areas for the Department to meet the needs of the community in the years to come.

RECREATION PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation boasts a strong and growing volunteer program. Staff estimate that their volunteers total approximately 400 individuals in the areas of high school community service, community clean-up projects, the senior center and departmental internships.

The consulting team encourages the Department to continue to foster a system-wide approach to volunteer recruitment and management. It can be difficult to guard against the significant variation in the ways that volunteers are managed. Ensuring streamlined procedures and standardized guidelines for volunteer management are critical to making volunteers an effective complement to paid personnel and a valuable asset in reducing operational costs. When managed with respect and used strategically, volunteers can also serve as the primary advocates for the Department and its offerings.

A key part of maintaining the desirability of volunteerism with the Department is developing a good reward and recognition system. The consultant team recommends using tactics similar to those found in frequent flier programs, wherein volunteers can use their volunteer hours to obtain early registration at programs, or discounted pricing at certain programs, rentals or events, or any other Department function.

Other best practices that the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation should be aware of in managing volunteers includes:

- Allocating a portion of an employee's time in order to continually manage a system-wide volunteer program, beyond the Recreation Division, as well as to oversee it or have a committee of employees involved in oversight.
- Identify volunteer opportunities system-wide, develop job descriptions and acceptance conditions for volunteers (such as background checks).
- Develop a tracking system to quantify the number of volunteer hours according to program area and specific function and document cost savings in more detailed ways.
- Develop documented volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition systems.
- Involve volunteers in cross-training to expose them to various departmental functions and increase their skill. This can also increase their utility, allowing for more flexibility in making work assignments, and can increase their appreciation and understanding of the Department.

PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation has a burgeoning partnership network that shows strong signs of further growth. Focus groups and public input touted the strength of existing partnerships, but also expressed desires to see partnerships grow. Current partners include Gahanna Jefferson Schools, youth sports leagues, the Gahanna Historical Society, the Gahanna Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Gahanna Public Library and numerous small businesses and area families that help host and facilitate events. The Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation, besides serving as a partner itself, serves as a valuable mechanism for developing and facilitating other partnerships in the area with an overarching goal of supporting the long-term preservation of park and recreational facilities for the Department.

An organizational goal for the Department is to further expand partnerships for the Department. The initial step in developing multiple partnerships in the community that expand upon existing relationships is to have an overall partnership philosophy that is supported by a policy framework for managing these relationships. Many times partnerships are inequitable to the public agency and do not produce reasonable shared benefits between parties. The recommended policies will promote fairness and equity within the existing and future partnerships while helping staff to manage against potential internal and

external conflicts. Certain partnership principles must be adopted by the Department for existing and future partnerships to work effectively. These partnership principles are as follows:

- All partnerships require a working agreement with measurable outcomes and will be evaluated on a regular basis. This should include reports to the Department on the performance and outcomes of the partnership.
- All partnerships should track costs associated with the partnership investment to demonstrate the shared level of equity.
- All partnerships should maintain a culture that focuses on collaborative planning on a regular basis, regular communications and annual reporting on performance and outcomes.

Partnerships can be pursued and developed with other **public** entities such as neighboring cities, schools, colleges, state or federal agencies; **nonprofit** organizations; as well as with **private**, for-profit organizations. There are recommended standard policies and practices that will apply to any partnership, and those that are unique to relationships with private, for-profit entities.

Policy Recommendations for All Partnerships

All partnerships developed and maintained by the Department of Parks & Recreation should adhere to common policy requirements. These include:

- Each partner will meet with or report to Department of Parks & Recreation staff on a regular basis to plan and share activity-based costs and equity invested.
- Partners will establish measurable outcomes and work through key issues to focus on for the coming year to meet the desired outcomes.
- Each partner will focus on meeting a balance of equity agreed to and track investment costs accordingly.
- Measurable outcomes will be reviewed quarterly and shared with each partner, with adjustments made as needed.
- A working partnership agreement will be developed and monitored together on a quarterly or as-needed basis.
- Each partner will assign a liaison to serve each partnership agency for communication and planning purposes.
- If conflicts arise between partners, the Director of the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation, along with the other partner's highest ranking officer assigned to the agreement, will meet to resolve the issue(s) in a timely manner. Any exchange of money or traded resources will be made based on the terms of the partnership agreement.
- Each partner will meet with the other partner's respective board or managing representatives annually, to share updates and outcomes of the partnership agreement.

Policy Recommendations for Public/Private Partnerships

The recommended policies and practices for public/private partnerships that may include businesses, private groups, private associations or individuals who desire to make a profit from use of Department of Parks & Recreation facilities or programs are detailed below. These can also apply to partnerships where a private party wishes to develop a facility on park property, to provide a service on publically-

owned property or who has a contract with the agency to provide a task or service on the City's behalf at public facilities. These unique partnership principles are as follows:

- Upon entering into an agreement with a private business, group, association or individual, Department staff and political leadership must recognize that they must allow the private entity to meet their financial objectives within reasonable parameters that protect the mission, goals and integrity of the City.
- As an outcome of the partnership, the Department of Parks & Recreation must receive a designated fee that may include a percentage of gross revenue dollars less sales tax on a regular basis, as outlined in the contract agreement.
- The working agreement of the partnership must establish a set of measurable outcomes to be achieved, as well as the tracking method of how those outcomes will be monitored by the Department. The outcomes will include standards of quality, financial reports, customer satisfaction, payments to the Department and overall coordination with the Department for the services rendered.
- Depending on the level of investment made by the private contractor, the partnership agreement can be limited to months, a year or multiple years.
- If applicable, the private contractor will provide a working management plan annually they will follow to ensure the outcomes desired by the Department of Parks & Recreation. The management plan can and will be negotiated, if necessary. Monitoring of the management plan will be the responsibility of both partners. The Department must allow the contractor to operate freely in their best interest, as long as the outcomes are achieved and the terms of the partnership agreement are adhered to.
- The private contractor cannot lobby City advisory or governing boards for renewal of a contract. Any such action will be cause for termination. All negotiations must be with the Department of Parks & Recreation Director or their designee.
- The agency has the right to advertise for private contracted partnership services, or negotiate on an individual basis with a bid process based on the professional level of the service to be provided.
- If conflicts arise between both partners, the highest-ranking officers from both sides will try to resolve the issue before going to each partner's legal counsels. If none can be achieved, the partnership shall be dissolved.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

These recommendations are an overview of existing partnership opportunities available to the Department of Parks & Recreation, as well as a suggested approach to organizing partnership pursuits. This is not an exhaustive list of all potential partnerships that can be developed, but can be used as a tool of reference for the agency to develop its own priorities in partnership development. The following five areas of focus are recommended:

1. Operational Partners: Other entities and organizations that can support the efforts of the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation to maintain facilities and assets, promote amenities and park usage, support site needs, provide programs and events and/or maintain the integrity of natural/cultural resources through in-kind labor, equipment or materials.

2. Vendor Partners: Service providers and/or contractors that can gain brand association and notoriety as a preferred vendor or supporter of the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation in exchange for reduced rates, services or some other agreed upon benefit.

3. Service Partners: Nonprofit organizations and/or friends groups that support the efforts of the Department to provide programs and events and/or serve specific constituents in the community collaboratively.

4. Co-branding Partners: Private, for-profit organizations that can gain brand association and notoriety as a supporter of the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation in exchange for sponsorship or co-branded programs, events, marketing and promotional campaigns and/or advertising opportunities.

5. Resource Development Partner: A private, nonprofit organization with the primary purpose to leverage private sector resources, grants, other public funding opportunities and resources from individuals and groups within the community to support the goals and objectives of the Department on mutually agreed strategic initiatives.

4.5.8 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Recreation Division staff are engaged in marketing and promotion to varying degrees. Outside of the Recreation Division, the Department has a part-time Public Information and Marketing Coordinator that facilitates the production of publications, news releases, media requests and other communication and promotion tasks. It is a stated priority of the Department to enhance communication and establish a strategic marketing approach to increase public awareness of department programs and services. These goals were also articulated by focus groups, and are prevalent throughout the organization.

Effective communication strategies require striking an appropriate balance between the content of messaging with the volume of the messaging while utilizing the "right" methods of delivery. The Department has multiple subjects and areas of focus that should be addressed in communications and will need to rely upon multiple types of media to deliver those messages. Similarly, the community must perceive the interconnectedness of this whole messaging process so that it is not received as fragmented and overwhelming.

A strategic marketing plan is recommended that addresses the following:

- Target audiences/markets identification
- Key messages for each target market
- Communication channels/media for each target market
- Graphic identity and use protocols
- Style handbook for all marketing material
- Social media strategies and tactics
- Communication schedule
- Marketing roles and responsibilities

The marketing plan should build upon and integrate with supporting plans, such as this master plan, and directly coordinate with organizational priorities. The plan should also provide specific guidance as to how the Department's identity and brand should be consistently portrayed across the multiple methods and deliverables used for communication.

Other recommendations for marketing and promotion include:

- Update and clearly articulate the vision and mission for the Department in all publications and media information.
- Use community input from survey results, focus group meetings, program assessments, on-site surveys, etc. to inform marketing efforts.
- Build volunteerism within the marketing and communication efforts, and recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows.
- Establish performance measures for marketing efforts and review them regularly.
- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion.

4.5.9 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAM PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

- Continue to provide, or expand, programs considered important to older residents such as senior programs, water fitness programs and trips to special attractions and events. This is particularly important considering the projected increase of older populations in Gahanna.
- Programs considered popular across all age groups should also be maintained or expanded, including community special events, adult fitness/wellness programs and nature programs/exhibits.
- Designate core program areas, as specified in earlier in this assessment.
- Identify ways to increase capacity for recreation programs through increased or more efficient facility use.

PROGRAM LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

- Strive to keep about 40-50% of all recreation programs in the Introductory or Take-Off lifecycle stages, and about 40-50% in the Mature stage.
- Programs falling into the Saturation or Decline stage should be reprogrammed or retired to create new programs for the Introductory stage.

COST RECOVERY, PRICING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Cost recovery targets should be identified for each program area, at the least, and for specific programs or events at the most. The core programs identified in this recreation program assessment should serve as an effective breakdown, because they group programs with similar cost recovery goals.
- Consider differentiating full cost accounting practices for various program areas to more accurately reflect true costs.
- Consider implementing additional temporal pricing strategies (e.g., day of the week, prime/nonprime differences) to help manage demand and create incentives for participation during off-peak times at additional facilities or for more programs.

- Very brief business plans should be developed for each program area, particularly the core program areas. They will help monitor the success of achieving outcomes, help control cost recovery, guide operational adjustments and serve as budget development tools.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Implement consistent system-wide recreation program standards.
- Begin documenting the program development process to formalize and coordinate program lifecycles in a strategic way.
- Develop an instructor/contractor tool kit or resource package with critical information and information on strategic frameworks.
- Create on-going connections with part-time and seasonal staff to integrate them to the Department and to help manage satisfaction and performance.
- Identify customer requirements for core program areas (at least) and use them for performance management.
- Conduct an environmental scan of best practices every few years to inspire innovation and help make corrections to program operations.
- Implement a system-side and centralized approach for collecting customer feedback.
- Develop and implement quality control mechanisms for instructors, seasonals and contractors to ensure effectiveness and build credibility.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

- Foster a system-wide approach to volunteer recruitment and management, including coordinated and standardized position descriptions and application/acceptance requirements.
- Develop a tracking system to quantify the number of volunteer hours according to program area and specific function and document cost savings in more detailed ways.
- Develop documented volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition systems.
- Involve volunteers in cross-training to expose them to various departmental functions and increase their skill. This can also increase their utility, allowing for more flexibility in making work assignments and can increase their appreciation and understanding of the Department.

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Formalize and continually maintain an overall partnership philosophy supported by a policy framework.
- Consider additional partnerships with schools, libraries and nonprofits, particularly to provide expanded educational programming.
- Require all partnerships to have a working agreement with measureable outcomes evaluated on a regular basis.
- Require all partnerships to track costs to demonstrate the shared level of equity and investment.
- Maintain a culture of collaborative planning for all partnerships, focusing on regular communications and annual reporting.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

- Develop a strategic marketing plan that focuses the brand and identity of the department as well as increases communication about programs and services.
- Tie the marketing plan directly to the Department mission and vision.
- Provide specific guidance as to how the Department's identity and brand should be consistently portrayed across the multiple methods and deliverables used for communication.
- Use community input to inform marketing efforts.
- Build volunteerism in the marketing and communication efforts, and recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows.
- Establish performance measures for marketing efforts and review them regularly.
- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion.

4.6 PRIORITIZED FACILITY AND PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

The purpose of the Facility and Program Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility / amenity needs and recreation program needs for the community served by the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation.

This rankings model is based on quantitative data which includes the statistically valid Community Survey, which asked residents of Gahanna to list unmet needs and rank their importance.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for parks & recreation facilities / amenities and recreation programs. For instance as noted below, a weighted value of 5 for the Unmet Desires means that out of a total of 100%, unmet needs make up 50% of the total score. Similarly, importance ranking makes up 50%.

This scoring system considers the following:

- Community Survey
    - Unmet needs for facilities and recreation programs – This is used as a factor from the total number of households mentioning whether they have a need for a facility / program and the extent to which their need for facilities and recreation programs has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify this for 29 different facilities / amenities and 27 recreation programs. Weighted value of 5.
    - Importance ranking for facilities and recreation programs – This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility or program by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important facilities and recreation programs. Weighted value of 5.

These weighted scores were then summed to provide an overall score and priority ranking for the system as a whole. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority (top third), Medium Priority (middle third) and Low Priority (bottom third).

The combined total of the weighted scores for Community Unmet Needs and Community Importance and Consultant Evaluation is the total score based on which the Facility / Amenity and Program Priority is determined.

4.6.1 FACILITY/AMENITY PRIORITY RANKINGS

As seen in **Figure 10**, Walking and Biking trails, Nature center and trails, spray pad (above-ground water play), multigenerational recreation center and indoor basketball / volleyball courts were the top five priorities for the community based on the survey results.

Gahanna Facility/Amenity Needs Assessment	
	Overall Ranking
Walking and biking trails	1
Nature center and trails	2
Spray pad (above-ground water play)	3
Multigenerational recreation center	4
Indoor basketball / volleyball courts	5
Outdoor swimming pools / water parks	6
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	7
Playground equipment	8
Indoor swimming pools / leisure pool	9
Large community parks	10
Off-leash dog parks	11
Golf course	12
Small neighborhood parks	13
Greenspace and natural areas	14
Indoor lap lanes for exercise swimming	15
Youth soccer fields	16
Mountain bike park	17
Outdoor basketball courts	18
Outdoor tennis courts	19
Indoor running / walking track	20
Disc Golf	21
Youth baseball fields	22
Adult softball fields	23
Skateboarding parks	24
Youth softball fields	25
Youth football fields	26

Figure 11 - Facility / Amenity Priority Rankings

4.6.2 PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

As seen in **Figure 11**, Adult fitness and wellness programs, Water fitness programs, Community Special Events, Youth Learn to Swim Programs and Youth Sports Programs were the top five priorities for the community based on the survey results.

Gahanna Program Needs Assessment	
	Overall Ranking
Adult fitness and wellness programs	1
Water fitness programs	2
Community special events	3
Youth Learn to Swim programs	4
Youth sports programs	5
Adult sports programs	6
Cycling programs	7
Pre-School programs / Early Childhood	8
Senior programs	9
Youth summer camp programs	10
Youth art, dance, performing arts	11
Golf leagues	12
Tennis lessons and leagues	13
Golf lessons / clinics	14
Gymnastics and tumbling programs	15
Martial arts programs	16
Youth fitness and wellness programs	17
Adult art, dance, performing arts	18
Before and after school programs	19
Programs for people with disabilities	20

Figure 12 - Program Priority Rankings

CHAPTER FIVE - COST OF SERVICE STUDY

As part of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, a cost of service study was completed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Department in relation to the level of City-subsidy from the general fun versus revenue generation from user fees.

5.1 PURPOSE AND GOAL

The overall goal of the organizational assessment process and recommendations contained in this report are intended to optimize return on investment from the City's general fund tax support provided by the City of Gahanna for the operation of the Department of Parks & Recreation. The recommended changes specifically should improve operational efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Department, increase program and facilities revenue, provide cost savings and provide a sound public policy rationale for which programs and services should be subsidized at a higher level from tax support and those program that should be partially or fully self-supporting through user fees.

5.2 PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

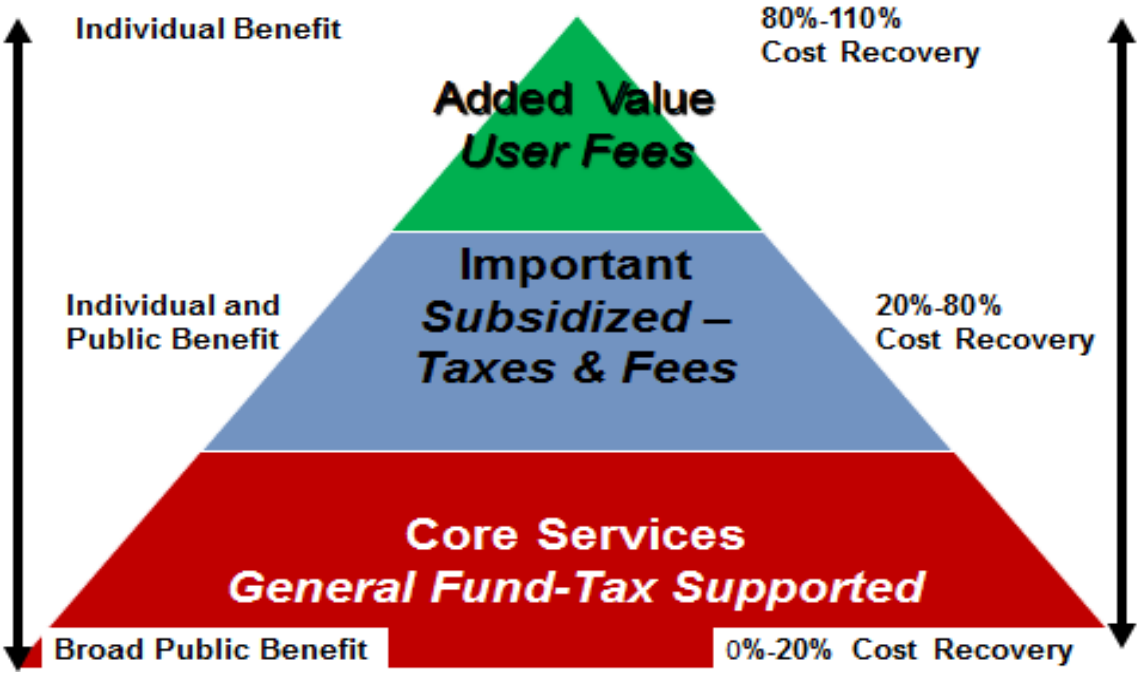
An organizational assessment of the City's Department of Parks & Recreation was completed through a combination of staff interviews, review of budget information and an analysis of current staffing structure. A staff workshop was facilitated to identify and classify Department services and functions into Core, Important and Value Added in order to establish appropriate level of general fund subsidy and corresponding cost recovery goals for Department operations. Additionally, a comprehensive cost of service analysis was completed to determine budget expenditures, revenues, program & facility cost recovery and general fund subsidy of programs, facilities and services provided by the Department.

This cost of service analysis is intended to provide findings and recommendations that should inform decision making relative to Department budget, operational priorities, staffing and potential reorganization. Additionally, the organizational analysis provides recommendations on changes to existing programs, services and delivery models. New and potential growth areas are identified that will expand or enhance services in ways that either increase revenue or produce operational savings. Finally, the findings and recommendations from this study should help the Department in aligning its organizational structure with community priorities, needs and future financial conditions.

5.3 CATEGORIZED PROGRAMS, FUNCTIONS & SERVICES

A work session with staff participation was conducted to categorize Department programs into three broad categories – Core, Important and Value Added. The determination of which programs or services were classified into each of these categories was based on the level of public vs. individual benefit and the established criteria outlined below. These categories of Department programs outline which programs should receive the highest level of public funding and general fund subsidy versus those programs that should be partially or fully self-supporting.

5.3.1 PUBLIC VS. INDIVIDUAL BENEFIT LEVEL



5.3.2 DEFINITION & CRITERIA FOR CORE/ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Core Essential Services are those programs, services and facilities the City must provide and/or are essential in order to capably govern the municipality. The failure to provide a core service at an adequate level would result in a significant negative consequence relative to the City's health & safety and economic and community vitality. The criteria for a core-essential service are:

- The agency is mandated by law, or is contractually obligated by agreement to provide the service.
- The service is essential to protecting and supporting the public's health and safety.
- The service protects and maintains valuable City assets and infrastructure.
- The City's residents, businesses customers and partners would generally and reasonably expect and support the City in providing the service, and that service is one that cannot or should not be provided by the private sector, and provides a sound investment of public funds.

Core Essential Services are those services that recreation offers that provide all users the same level of opportunity to access the service. The level of benefit is the same to all users. Examples of Core Essential Services are providing accommodations and support to persons with disabilities in order to participate in mainstream recreational activities and providing opportunities for the public to participate in low cost recreational swimming. Core Essential Services normally have low level or no user fees associated with their consumption. The cost for providing these services is borne by the general tax base.

5.3.3 DEFINITION & CRITERIA FOR IMPORTANT SERVICES

Important services are those programs, services and facilities the City should provide, and are important to governing the municipality and effectively serving its residents, businesses, customers and partners. Providing Important services expands or enhances our ability to provide and sustain our City's core services, health and safety and economic and community vitality. The criteria for important services are:

- Service provides, expands, enhances or supports identified core services.
- Services are broadly supported and utilized by the community, and are considered an appropriate, important and valuable public good. Public support may be conditional upon the manner by which the service is paid for or funded.
- Service generates income or revenue that offsets some or all of its operating cost and/or is deemed to provide an economic, social or environmental outcome or result within the community.

Important Services are services whereby the user receives a higher level of benefit than the general taxpayer. The taxpayer benefits as a whole because the service provides a more livable community and the service has a good public benefit as well. Examples of Important Services are youth sports, summer camp programs for youth, life skill programs and special events that promote healthy active lifestyles.

5.3.4 DEFINITION & CRITERIA FOR VALUE ADDED SERVICES

Value Added Services are discretionary programs, services and facilities that the City may provide when additional funding or revenue exists to offset the cost of providing those services. These programs and services provide added value to the City's residents, businesses, customers and partners above and beyond what is required or expected of the City of Gahanna. The criteria for value added services are:

- Service expands, enhances or supports Core or Important services, and the quality of life of the community.
- Services are supported and well utilized by the community, and provide an appropriate and valuable public benefit.

Service generates income or funding from sponsorships, grants, user fees or other sources that offsets some or all of its cost and/or provides a meaningful economic, social or environmental benefit to the community.

Value Added Services can be priced using either a partial overhead pricing strategy or a variable cost pricing strategy. Partial overhead pricing strategies recover all direct operating costs and some determined portion of fixed indirect costs. The portion of fixed indirect costs not recovered by the price established represents the tax subsidy. Whatever the level of tax subsidy, Gahanna Parks & Recreation staff needs to inform the users that the City of Gahanna is investing a certain dollar amount and/or what percentage level of investment they are making in their experience.

5.4 CATEGORIZED COST RECOVERY TARGETS FOR PROGRAMS & FACILITY OPERATIONS

As part of the analysis, cost recovery targets for recreation programs and services offered by the Department were established. These targets were based on best practice benchmarks established by high performing Department of Parks & Recreations in Central Ohio that are similar in size and demographics to the City of Gahanna as well as current cost recovery achieved by the Department. Total expenditures include direct, indirect and a corresponding percentage of administrative and overhead costs for each program category based on Fiscal Year 2012 data, including expenditures for two full-time employees that are no longer on staff with the Department. Outlined below is a list of programs and services that indicate the service category, benefit level, budget, cost recovery and funding strategy.

Program Areas	Visitation	Service Category	Benefit Level	Revenues	Total Expenditures	Revenues Over/(Under) Total Expenditures	Current Cost Recovery	Target Cost Recovery	Funding Strategy
Senior Services									
All services	15000	Important	Public & Individual	$10,500	$114,081	($103,581)	9%	33%	General Fund & User Fees
Aquatics Programs									
Open Swim	25000	Important	Public & Individual	$343,348	$521,467	($178,119)	66%	67%	General Fund & User Fees
Learn to Swim	300	Important	Public & Individual	$17,561	$15,914	$1,647	110%	100%	General Fund & User Fees
Lifeguard/WSI	18	Important	Public & Individual	$682	$1,789	($1,107)	38%	75%	General Fund & User Fees
Rentals	800	Value Added	Individual	$17,509	$9,246	$8,263	189%	100%	User Fees
Swim Team	100	Value Added	Individual	$7,085	$7,110	($25)	100%	100%	User Fees
Program Subtotal:	**26218**	**Varies**	**Varies**	**$386,185**	**$555,527**	**($169,342)**	**70%**	**Varies**	**Varies**
Youth Sports									
All Programs	660	Value Added	Individual	$47,649	$49,517	($1,868)	96%	100%	User Fees
Wellness									
All programs and services	514	Core	Public	$0	$1,032	($1,032)	0%	0%	General Fund
Partnerships									
All programs and services	NA	Core	Public	$4,833	$71,294	($66,462)	7%	20%	General Fund & User Fees
HERB Center									
All programs and services	3467	Core	Public	$73,145	$112,019	($38,874)	65%	65%	General Fund & User Fees
Outdoor/Environmental Education									
All Programs	560	Core	Public	$852	$17,444	($16,592)	5%	10%	General Fund
Summer Camps									
All programs (camper weeks)	1306	Important	Public & Individual	$202,280	$233,625	($31,345)	87%	90%	General Fund & User Fees
Destination Location Services									
All Services	6417	Core	Public	$8,715	$8,808	($93)	99%	100%	User Fees
Facility Rentals/Reservations									
All Services	NA	Value Added	Individual	$22,860	$24,821	($1,961)	92%	100%	User Fees
Athletic Field Reservations									
All Services	NA	Value Added	Individual	$9,740	$19,525	($9,785)	50%	100%	User Fees
Shelter Rental/Reservations									
All Services	NA	Value Added	Individual	$45,000	$13,756	$31,244	327%	100%	User Fees
Adult Programs									
All Programs	1162	Value Added	Individual	$19,592	$27,543	($7,951)	71%	100%	User Fees
Special Events									
All events	21700	Core	Public	$11,391	$110,008	($98,617)	10%	20%	General Fund, Sponsorships

5.4.1 COST OF SERVICE FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES)

5.5 KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES

- The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation has very good to excellent programs, services and facilities that they operate for the Gahanna community. These facilities are well maintained and located strategically throughout the community.
- The residents of Gahanna have a positive opinion of the programs, services and facilities operated by the City, as evidenced by the comprehensive surveys that were done during the Department of Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- The Department has a good cost recovery and corresponding lower general fund subsidy of most City programs and facilities. The overall cost recovery of the Department for recreation programs and services is 62%. Typical cost recovery rate for programs and services provided by City's similar to Gahanna are 50%.
- The highest general fund subsidy for the Department is to maintain and operate the City's swimming pools and aquatics program. Despite having the largest subsidy, the aquatic program has the highest level of participation among all program offerings by the Department and a cost recovery rate (70%) cost recovery that is above the overall Department average.
- The second highest general fund subsidy of Department programs is for the programs and services related to seniors and the operation of the Senior Center only recover "on average" 9% of their operating costs. Senior services only recover 9% of their operating cost, which is somewhat lower than most Central Ohio cities, and lower than the 33% cost recovery achieved by cities with a similar demographic to Gahanna.
- The City provides use of its athletic facilities by community and youth sports organizations at fees that recover 50% of its costs. These minimal rental fees creates additional City subsidy associated with maintenance, utilities, clean up, set up and take down.
- Special events are heavily subsidized and opportunities exist to off-set costs through sponsorships, donations and in-kind services.

5.6 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This report outlines a number of recommendations that should improve the operational effectiveness and cost efficiency of the Department.

- The Department should increase program fees, reduce overhead and operating costs or a combination of both strategies to achieve an overall cost recovery of 75% for recreation services. The net effect of achieving an overall cost recovery of 75% for recreation services would reduce the general fund subsidy of recreation programs and facility use by nearly $200,000, through the generation of new revenue.
- The Department should implement individual program changes to increase revenues through fee increases or reduce operating costs and overhead to achieve the cost recovery targets for each individual program as outlined in the previous tables. The increase to cost recovery levels may need to be achieved over 2-3 years, to allow for phased implementation of higher fees or cost reductions related to staffing and overhead.

- Revise the existing comprehensive fee and pricing policy to be approved by the Gahanna City Council that establishes cost recovery and general fund subsidy levels for Department programs, facilities and services based on service classification and public benefit.
- Establish market based non-resident fee rates which can vary from a 0% to 50% fee differential between residents and non-residents based on program demand versus capacity, general fund subsidy level of programs and ease of collection.
- Establish a "Program Passport" scholarship program for low income children and teens to allow for free participation in Core and Important" programs and 50% fee reduction for Value Added programs.
- Aggressively market and promote financial opportunities to the private sector to offset costs associated with Special Events with the goal to recover 100% of costs, which would reduce the overall subsidy to the department.
- Increase athletic field rental rates to offset the full cost of operation and maintenance.

5.7 PRICING POLICY

To gain and provide consistency among the Gahanna City Council, user groups, staff and the community, a philosophical revenue and pricing foundation must be implemented. It is recommended that Parks & Recreation state its philosophy in all publications, on its website and in its reservation processes to describe how they establish a price for a service or use of a facility. Example:

> *"Department of Parks & Recreation funding that is derived from taxpayers is focused on mission-based facilities and services. The programs and facilities that are furthest from our mission, that provide an individual benefit, or that provide exclusive use will require higher fees from users or other sources to help offset operating costs."*

5.8 PRICE SERVICES TO THE BENEFITS RECEIVED

The City Council should adopt a policy of pricing services for the benefits received to help offset operating costs – core, important and value-added programs as defined in Chapter One. This approach will provide a fair method to distribute Parks & Recreation resources across the system. Public sector administrators and managers must be prepared to respond to the fiscal realities that have resulted from these economic shifts and changes in government funding.

5.9 PRICE SERVICES BASED ON COST RECOVERY WITH PRICING FLEXIBILITY

Pricing based on established operating budget recovery goals will provide flexibility to maximize all pricing strategies to the fullest. Allowing the staff to work within a pricing range will permit them to set prices based on market factors and differential pricing (prime-time/non-primetime; season/off-season rates) to maximize user participation and also encourage additional group rate pricing where applicable.

5.10 CITIZEN OPTIONS

Citizen options into pricing of services allow users to pick and choose what components of the service they want to buy. This approach is helpful in the establishment of multi-tiered pricing and includes allowing users to pick and choose what level of quality or quantity they want and will pay for accordingly. One price fits all does not work effectively in maximizing pricing alternatives and in gaining revenue production. Parks & Recreation should allow the pricing of services to be options. Pricing options encourage users to move to a classification that best fits their schedule and price point. These pricing

options provide opportunities for staff to maximize facilities and services. An example of pricing options is to establish prime time and non-prime time rates for rental facilities. This helps people to move to a non-prime time rate for a facility rental to keep within their price point, but fills the less productive time for that facility.

5.10.1 PRICING OPTIONS

Pricing options could include the following:

• Primetime	• Incentive Pricing
• Non-primetime	• Length of Stay Pricing
• Season and Off-season Rates	• Cost Recovery Goal Pricing
• Multi-tiered Program Pricing	• Level of Exclusivity Pricing
• Group Discounting and Packaging	• Age Segment Pricing
• Volume Pricing	• Level of Private Gain Pricing

5.10.2 CLASSIFICATIONS

These classifications will apply to the following:

• Admissions	• Permits
• Reservations	• Rentals
• Programs	• Facility Use

CHAPTER SIX - FUNDING AND REVENUE STRATEGIES

This section identifies funding options to help support operational and capital cost. This is provided from PROS Consulting based on national work with other park systems.

6.1.1 REVENUE AND FUNDING OPTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

The greenway funding opportunities cited below are applicable to organizations and agencies throughout the U.S. that are seeking funding that include City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. The most common method for funding greenways is to combine local, public sector and private sector funds with funds from state, federal and additional private-sector sources. Many communities involved with greenway implementation are choosing to leverage local money as a match for outside funding sources, in essence multiplying their resources.

Local advocates and Department staff should pursue a variety of funding sources for land acquisition and greenway construction as well as funding opportunities for operations and maintenance costs. A greenway program that relies on limited funding sources may one day come to a grinding halt should these sources dry up. The following list of sources is divided into:

LOCAL AND STATE FUNDING SOURCES

Land Leases: Many communities across the United States have allowed land leases for commercial retail operations along trails as a source of funding. The communities that have used land lease look for retail operations that support the needs of recreation users of the trails. This includes coffee shops, grill and food concessions and small restaurants, ice cream shops, bicycle shops, farmers markets and small local business. The land leases provide revenue to maintain the trails and/or to be used for in-kind matching.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF Funds): The concept behind the tax increment financing is that taxes in a designated area are frozen and the redevelopment that occurs in the blighted, conservation or economic development area will increase the assessed valuation of the property and generate new property tax revenues. The increase can be used on an annual basis to retire revenue bonds issued to finance redevelopment costs. A great deal of development is required to generate sufficient revenues to make it work.

Sale of Development Rights below the Ground: Some public agencies have sold their development rights next to greenways below ground for fiber optic lines and utility lines for gas and electric on a lineal foot basis. This has occurred in King County, Washington.

Special Recognition License Tag: In Indianapolis, IN, the Greenways Foundation has a special Greenways designation car tag that provides income to the Greenways Foundation to provide matching grant monies for the City of Indianapolis greenways program. The tag provides $45 per tag sold back to the foundation.

Greenway Foundations: Greenway Foundations have been developing across the United States over the last 15 years to support greenway matching monies for cities and counties. Greenway Foundations raise money for capital monies and operational money.

Floodway Funding Sources: Many cities and counties have used floodway funding sources to support development and operations of greenways. This funding source is used extensively in Houston, TX and in Cleveland, OH.

Greenway Trust Fund: Another strategy used by several communities is the creation of a trust fund for land acquisition and facility development that is administered by a private greenway advocacy group, or by a local greenway commission. A trust fund can aid in the acquisition of large parcels of high-priority

properties that may be lost if not acquired by private sector initiative. Money may be contributed to the trust fund from a variety of sources, including the municipal and county general funds, private grants and gifts.

Greenway Fundraising Programs: Agencies across the United States have used greenways for not-for-profit fundraisers in the form of walks, runs, bicycle races and special events. The local managing agency usually gets $2-$5 per participant who participates in the events to go back to support the operations and maintenance costs.

Greenways Conservation Groups: Conservation groups adopt green corridors to support the operations and capital costs for specific greenways corridors. These groups raise needed money for designated greenways for capital and operations costs.

Local Private-Sector Funding: Local industries and private businesses may agree to provide support for greenway development through one or more of the following methods:

- Donations of cash to a specific greenway segment
- Donations of services by large corporations to reduce the cost of greenway implementation, including equipment and labor to construct and install elements of a specific greenway
- Reductions in the cost of materials purchased from local businesses that support greenway implementation and can supply essential products for facility development

Adopt-A-Foot Program: These are typically small grant programs that fund new construction, repair/renovation, maps, trail brochures, facilities (bike racks, picnic areas, birding equipment) as well as provide maintenance support. The Adopt-A-Foot program is similar to adopt a mile of highway program. Citizens are encouraged to purchase an engraved foot plaque that is displayed along the trail system. The Adopt-A-Foot program is in the form of cash contributions that range from $2,640 to $26,400 over a five year period.

State Departments of Transportation: Many states are the local administrators of federal funding from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) – see more info below, under Federal Funding Sources.

Community Development Block Grants: Through its State CDBG Program, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides States with annual direct grants, which they in turn award to smaller communities and rural areas for use in revitalizing neighborhoods, expanding affordable housing and economic opportunities and/or improving community facilities and services.

Safe-Routes to Schools Program: The federal government provides safe-routes to school funding for greenways to promote youth walking to school. Grants are 100% federally funded.

State Water Management Funds: Funds established to protect or improve water quality could apply to a greenways/trails project if a strong link exists between the development of a greenway and the adjacent/nearby water quality. Possible uses of these funds include: purchase critical strips of land along rivers and streams for protection which could then also be used for greenways; develop educational materials, displays; or for storm water management.

VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE AND SMALL-SCALE DONATION PROGRAMS

Greenway Sponsors: A sponsorship program for greenway amenities allows for smaller donations to be received both from individuals and businesses. The program must be well planned and organized, with design standards and associated costs established for each amenity. Project elements that may be

funded can include mile markers, call boxes, benches, trash receptacles, entry signage and bollards and picnic areas.

Volunteer Work: Community volunteers may help with greenway construction, as well as conduct fundraisers. Organizations which might be mobilized for volunteer work include the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Estate Donations: Wills, estates and trusts may be also dedicated to the appropriate agency for use in developing and/or operating the greenway system.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

Some Federal programs offer financial aid for projects that aim to improve community infrastructure, transportation and housing and recreation programs. Some of the Federal programs that can be used to support the development of greenway systems include:

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21): The primary source of federal funding for greenways is through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). There are many sections of the Act that support the development of bicycle and pedestrian transportation corridors.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG): The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers financial grants to communities for neighborhood revitalization, economic development and improvements to community facilities and services, especially in low and moderate-income areas. Several communities have used HUD funds to develop greenways, including the Boscobel Heights' "Safe Walk" Greenway in Nashville, TN.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants: This Federal funding source was established in 1965 to provide "close-to-home" park and recreation opportunities to residents throughout the United States. Money for the fund comes from the sale or lease of nonrenewable resources, primarily federal offshore oil and gas leases and surplus federal land sales. LWCF grants can be used by communities to build a variety of parks & recreation facilities, including trails and greenways.

LWCF funds are distributed by the National Park Service to the states annually. Communities must match LWCF grants with 50-percent of the local project costs through in-kind services or cash. All projects funded by LWCF grants must be used exclusively for recreation purposes, in perpetuity.

Conservation Reserve Program: The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through its Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, provides payments to farm owners and operators to place highly erodible or environmentally sensitive landscapes into a 10-15 year conservation contract. The participant, in return for annual payments during this period, agrees to implement a conservation plan approved by the local conservation district for converting sensitive lands to less intensive uses. Individuals, associations, corporations, estates, trusts, cities, counties and other entities are eligible for this program. Funds from this program can be used to fund the maintenance of open space and non-public-use greenways, along bodies of water and ridgelines.

Wetlands Reserve Program: The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides direct payments to private landowners who agree to place sensitive wetlands under permanent easements. This program can be used to fund the protection of open space and greenways within riparian corridors.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention (Small Watersheds) Grants: The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding to state and local agencies or nonprofit organizations authorized to carry out, maintain and operate watershed improvements involving less than 250,000 acres. The NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible projects to improve watershed

protection, flood prevention, sedimentation control, public water-based fish and wildlife enhancements and recreation planning. The NRCS requires a 50-percent local match for public recreation, and fish and wildlife projects.

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program: The USDA provides small grants of up to $10,000 to communities for the purchase of trees to plant along City streets and for greenways and parks. To qualify for this program, a community must pledge to develop a street-tree inventory, a municipal tree ordinance, a tree commission, committee or department and an urban forestry-management plan.

Small Business Tree-Planting Program: The Small Business Administration provides small grants of up to $10,000 to purchase trees for planting along streets and within parks or greenways. Grants are used to develop contracts with local businesses for the plantings.

Economic Development Grants for Public Works and Development of Facilities: The U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), provides grants to states, counties and cities designated as redevelopment areas by EDA for public works projects that can include developing trails and greenway facilities. There is a 30-percent local match required, except in severely distressed areas where federal contribution can reach 80 percent.

National Recreational Trails Program: These grants are available to government and non-profit agencies, for amounts ranging from $5,000 to $50,000, for the building of a trail or piece of a trail. It is a reimbursement grant program (sponsor must fund 100% of the project up front) and requires a 20% local match. This is an annual program, with an application deadline at the end of January. The available funds are split such that 30% goes towards motorized trails, 30% to non-motorized trails and 40% is discretionary for trail construction.

Design Arts Program: The National Endowment for the Arts provides grants to states and local agencies, individuals and nonprofit organizations for projects that incorporate urban design, historic preservation, planning, architecture, landscape architecture and other community improvement activities, including greenway development. Grants to organizations and agencies must be matched by a 50-percent local contribution. Agencies can receive up to $50,000.

GRANTS THROUGH PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS

Many communities have solicited greenway funding from a variety of private foundations and other conservation-minded benefactors. Some of these grants include:

American Greenways Eastman Kodak Awards: The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program has teamed with the Eastman Kodak Corporation and the National Geographic Society to award small grants ($250 to $2000) to stimulate the planning, design and development of greenways.

REI Environmental Grants: Recreational Equipment Incorporated awards grants to nonprofit organizations interested in protecting and enhancing natural resources for outdoor recreation. The company calls on its employees to nominate organizations for these grants, ranging from $500 to $8,000, which can be used for the following:

- Protect lands and waterways and make these resources accessible to more people
- Better utilize or preserve natural resources for recreation
- Increase access to outdoor activities
- Encourage involvement in muscle-powered recreation

- Promote safe participation in outdoor muscle-powered recreation, and proper care for outdoor resources

Coors Pure Water 2000 Grants: Coors Brewing Company and its affiliated distributors provide funding and in-kind services to grassroots organizations that are working to solve local, regional and national water-related problems. Coors provides grants, ranging from a few hundred dollars to $50,000, for projects such as river cleanups, aquatic habitat improvements, water quality monitoring, wetlands protection, pollution prevention, water education efforts, groundwater protection, water conservation and fisheries.

World Wildlife Fund Innovative Grants Program: This organization awards small grants to local, regional and statewide nonprofit organizations to help implement innovative strategies for the conservation of natural resources. Grants are offered to support projects that accomplish one or more of the following: (1) conserve wetlands; (2) protect endangered species; (3) preserve migratory birds; (4) conserve coastal resources; and (5) establish and sustain protected natural areas, such as greenways.

Innovative grants can help pay for the administrative costs for projects including planning, technical assistance, legal and other costs to facilitate the acquisition of critical lands; retaining consultants and other experts; and preparing visual presentations and brochures or other conservation activities. The maximum award for a single grant is $10,000.

Bikes Belong: Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. The grant program is a national discretionary program with a small budget, to help communities build TEA-21-funded projects. They like to fund high-profile projects and like regional coalitions. An application must be supported by the local bicycle dealers (letters of support should be attached). Bikes Belong also offers advice and information on how to get more people on bikes. Government and non-profit agencies are eligible and no match is required. The maximum amount for a grant proposal is $10,000. Applications may be submitted at any time and are reviewed as they are received.

Steelcase Foundation: Steelcase Foundation grants are restricted to locally sponsored projects in areas where there are Steelcase Inc. manufacturing plants. In general, Steelcase does not wish to be the sole funder supporting a program. Grants are also only made to non-profit organizations. It does support educational and environmental projects, and is particularly interested in helping the disadvantaged; disabled, young and elderly improve the quality of their lives. Applications may be submitted anytime and are considered by the Trustees four times a year.

Wal-Mart Foundation: This foundation supports local community and environmental activities and educational programs for children (among other things). An organization needs to work with the local store manager to discuss application. Wal-Mart Foundation only funds 501(c)3 organizations.

6.1.2 PARKS & RECREATION FUNDING SOURCES THAT FUND OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL COSTS

The following funding sources can provide revenue opportunities for the Department, but it will take a dedicated staff person to investigate and pursue the source and manage for the future. The following are funding sources that can be developed for the City.

Redevelopment Money: Redevelopment money from the County or the State to promote economic development in the area. Redevelopment agencies are typically located as part of cities and counties in most states.

Bed Tax (transient occupancy tax): A Bed Tax (transient occupancy tax) money from hotels and motels in the City who would directly benefit from the attractions or special events held at the City park sites. Counties usually manage this funding source, which would require the County to support the funding source. This could be one or two percent added to the existing bed tax to support the development of a specific facility or park.

CDBG Money: This source can be used for a park site. The City does qualify for this funding source.

Local, Regional or National Foundations: Many communities have turned to their local, regional and national foundations in their area to support the development of an element of the park system.

Park Income Tax Issue: This would require local residents to vote on an income tax issue to develop or enhance existing and new parks from income taxes of residents and people who work in the City.

Lease Back Option: The agency would enter into a lease back option with a private finance company to provide the financing for the project. The agency, along with their partners, would agree to pay the development costs back over a 30-year period from the revenues earned from the site or from general fund dollars dedicated to the project.

Partnership Development Agreement: Each partner would develop their respective facilities based on set design guidelines with the City managing all the site elements. Partners would work collectively to promote the site as a whole versus individual amenities. This process was successful for Papago Park, located in the City of Phoenix, AZ. The site included a Major League Spring Training facility and Minor League Baseball Complex, Zoo, Botanical Gardens, History Museum and other attractions on site.

Naming Rights: Private fundraising could be developed to fund a portion or all of it through naming rights for a park site and through individual amenity naming rights. Naming rights are calculated by the number of impression points by visitors to the site. A park could raise 20%-30% of the development costs from naming rights. Individual naming rights could support the development of sports fields, a dog park, skate park, ice rink, BMX track, winter sports area, children's play area, hockey rink and golf course.

Grants: Grants have always been a good source for funding of parks throughout the United States. Grants can be provided by the Federal Government such as the land and conservation fund, transportation enhancement funds for trails and greenways, state grant funds from gambling taxes or alcohol funds and local grants from community foundations. Research for funding included, but is not limited to: Federal / State Grants, Foundation Source and Corporate Grants for areas of support and fields of interest.

Community Forest and Open Space Program: Federal Grant with Estimated Total Program Funding of $3,150,000. Individual grant applications may not exceed $400,000. The program pays up to 50% of the project costs and requires a 50% non-federal match. Eligible lands for grants funded under this program are private forests that are at least five acres in size, suitable to sustain natural vegetation and at least 75% forested.

Land and Water Conservation Fund: Preserve, develop and renovate outdoor recreation facilities. Focus is on America's Great Outdoors Initiative. New or renovation of pavilions, playgrounds or play areas, ball fields, bleachers, golf course meeting rooms, multi-purpose courts, parking facilities, pathways and trails, roads, signs, ski areas, snowmobile facilities and tennis courts. Federal Funds-Average Award is $70,000.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program-fund: This source is for transportation projects that improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion. Projects can include bicycle and pedestrian projects, trails, links to communities, bike rack facilities. Average grant size $50-$100,000.

Ohio Community Foundations: In the area are some very large community foundations that the City should pursue for elements of the park systems needs to support economic development for the area.

Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program-Grant Program: This source is established to assist communities with grant and loan funding for the expansion, renovation and or remodeling of former school facilities and or existing surplus government facilities that have an existing or future community use. Facilities may be space for community gatherings and functions, recreational athletic facilities for community members, particularly youth. These include space for non-for-profit offices, child care, community education, theater, senior centers, youth centers and after school programs. CFP match requirements for requests up to $250,000 are 10-% eligible project costs. For requests over $250,000 to $1 million, the match is 15%.

American Hiking Society: Fund on a national basis for promoting and protecting foot trails and the hiking experience.

The Helen R. Buck Foundation: This foundation provides funding for playground equipment and recreational activities.

Deupree Family Foundation: The Deupree Family Foundation provides grants for Recreation, parks/playgrounds and children/youth, on a national basis. This foundation supports: building/renovation, equipment, general/operating support, program development and seed money.

The John P. Ellbogen Foundation: Children/youth, services grants as well as support for capital campaigns, general/operating support and program development.

Economic Development Grants for Public Works and Development of Facilities: The U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), provides grants to states, counties and cities designated as redevelopment areas by EDA for public works projects that can include developing trails and greenway facilities. There is a 30% local match required, except in severely distressed areas where the federal contribution can reach 80%.

6.1.3 OPERATIONAL FUNDING COSTS OPPORTUNITIES

The Department has numerous revenue sources to draw from to support operational and management costs that include long term capital replacement costs. The following are funding options to consider in operations of the system:

User fees: User fees to access or use elements of parks exist currently but could be expanded to include fees to access recreation and education programs, a dog park, a BMX track, skate park, nature center, sport leagues, winter sports area, ice skating, spray ground and golf for green fees, carts, leagues and lessons. The City does a good job in accessing user fees now.

Concessions: Concessions can be leased out to a private operator for a percentage of gross profits. Typically, 15%-18% of gross profits for concessions of a profit operator, or a managing agency over a park site could manage concessions.

Parking Fees: During major special tournaments, the City could charge a $5 parking fee for special events in the parks.

Field Permits: The Department can issue field permits for practice or games. Permits should cover the operational cost of each field and management costs. If a private operator desires to rent the site for a

sporting tournament for private gain, the Department should provide a permit fee plus a percentage of gross from the event for the exclusive use of the fields.

Admission Fee: An admission fee to an event in the park can be utilized.

Walking and Running Event Fees: Event fees for walking and running events in the park can be assessed for to cover safety staff managing the event in the park.

Food and Equipment Sponsors: Official drink and food sponsors can be utilized for the Department. Each official drink and food sponsor pays back to the Department a set percentage of gross. Typically, this is 15%-20% of costs for being the official product and receiving exclusive pouring and food rights to the complex. Likewise official equipment sponsors work well for trucks, mowers and tractors.

Advertising Revenue: Advertising revenue can come from the sale of ads on banners in the parks. The advertising could include trash cans, trail markers, visitor pull trailers, tee boxes, scorecards and in restrooms.

Wi-Fi Revenue: The Department can set up a Wi-Fi area whereby a Wi-Fi vendor is able to sell the advertising on the Wi-Fi access banner to local businesses targeting the users of the site. This revenue has amounted to $20,000-$50,000 in revenue for similar systems.

Cell Tower: Cell tower leases can be used. This revenue source would support $35,000-$50,000 annually for the site if cell towers in areas needing cell towers.

Program Fees: Program Fees to support existing programs can be employed in the form of lessons, clinics, camps, life skill programs and wellness and fitness. These types program help support the operations of the park and recreation system as a whole. Gahanna has done a good job in establishing program fees.

Special Event Sponsors: Special Events provides a great venue for special events sponsors as it applies to a concert, stage, entertainment and safety.

Capital Improvement Fee: A Capital Improvement Fee on all programs and events can be added. A capital asset fee of $2-$3 on each person who participates in a class, event or program can be incorporated into the cost of the program or event.

Room Reservations: Rental of rooms in the park system can gain operational revenues from these amenities with a typical range of $200-$500 a day for exclusive rental reservations.

Volunteerism: The revenue source is an indirect revenue source in that persons donate time to the Department to assist in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces the Department's cost in providing the service plus it builds advocacy for the Department.

Special Fundraiser: Many agencies hold special fundraisers on an annual basis to help cover specific programs and capital projects to be dedicated to a facility or Department as a whole.

Catering: The Department has many sites that set up well to have high, medium and low level caterers on contract that groups can use. Caterers usually provide the parks with a fixed gross rate on food and beverage at 12%-15% of the cost of food and 18% of drink back to the Department.

CHAPTER SEVEN - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

7.1.1 RECREATION PROGRAMING

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Recreation programs and services in Gahanna will provide opportunities for our residents to participate in quality planned activities that create lifelong users and create a sense of place and livability in partnership with other service providers in the City.

OBJECTIVE

Provide a balance of core recreation programs activities for all age groups and types of families in the City.

STRATEGIES

Continue to keep core programs in the following areas:

- Adult programs
- Active Older Adult Programs
- Youth and Teen Programs
- Family Programs
- Special Events
- Cultural Art
- Environmental Education
- Wellness
- Aquatics
- Golf
- Teen and Preteens

Consider adding core programs for the following areas:

- Adult sports
- Sports Tourism
- Preschool children
- Fitness
- Health and Wellness

Establish cost recovery goals based on the cost of service study provided in the Master Plan update:

- Classify services as core essential, important and value added.
- All value added programs will be self-supporting including cover direct and indirect costs.
- Determine if the Department should be a direct provider of programs as well as a direct provider of space to eliminate any tax subsidy by contracting services to other providers due to lack of tax dollars available in the City.

- Update mini-business plans for core program services and facilities operated by the Department to maintain cost recovery goals desired.
- Demonstrate performance of financial outcomes based on established cost recovery goals to make the Department as financial sustainable as possible.

Program Portfolio Management:

- Continue to provide, or expand, programs considered important to older residents such as senior programs, water fitness programs and trips to special attractions and events. This is particularly important considering the projected increase of older populations in Gahanna.
- Programs considered popular across all age groups should also be maintained or expanded, including community special events, adult fitness/wellness programs and nature programs/exhibits.
- Designate core program areas, as specified in the program assessment.
- Identify ways to increase capacity for recreation programs through increased or more efficient facility use.

Program Lifecycle Management:

- Strive to keep about 40-50% of all recreation programs in the Introductory or Take-Off lifecycle stages, and about 40-50% in the Mature stage.
- Programs falling into the Saturation or Decline stage should be reprogrammed or retired to create new programs for the Introductory stage.

Cost Recovery, Pricing and Financial Management:

- Cost recovery targets should be identified for each program area, at the least, and for specific programs or events at the most. The core programs identified in this recreation program assessment should serve as an effective breakdown, because they group programs with similar cost recovery goals.
- Consider differentiating full cost accounting practices for various program areas to more accurately reflect true costs.
- Consider implementing additional temporal pricing strategies (e.g., day of the week, prime/nonprime differences) to help manage demand and create incentives for participation during off-peak times at additional facilities or for more programs.
- Very brief business plans should be developed for each program area, particularly the core program areas. They will help monitor the success of achieving outcomes, help control cost recovery, guide operational adjustments and serve as budget development tools.
- Develop corporate sponsorship for all free special events and programs offered by the Department to help defer tax dollar support.

Performance Management:

- Implement consistent system-wide recreation program standards.
- Conduct an annual review process so that staff and leadership can review policies, operations, issues and plans for the future.

- Begin documenting the program development process to formalize and coordinate program lifecycles in a strategic way.
- Develop an instructor/contractor tool kit or resource package with critical information and information on strategic frameworks.
- Create on-going connections with part-time and seasonal staff to integrate them to the Department and to help manage satisfaction and performance.
- Identify customer requirements for core program areas (at least) and use them for performance management.
- Conduct an environmental scan of best practices every few years to inspire innovation and help make corrections to program operations.
- Implement a system-side and centralized approach for collecting customer feedback.
- Develop and implement quality control mechanisms for instructors, seasonal staff and contractors to ensure effectiveness and build credibility.

Volunteer Management:

- Foster a system-wide approach to volunteer recruitment and management, including coordinated and standardized position descriptions and application/acceptance requirements.
- Develop a tracking system to quantify the number of volunteer hours according to program area and specific function and document cost savings in more detailed ways.
- Develop documented volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition systems.
- Involve volunteers in cross-training to expose them to various departmental functions and increase their skill. This can also increase their utility, allowing for more flexibility in making work assignments, and can increase their appreciation and understanding of the Department.

Partnership Management:

- Formalize and continually maintain an overall partnership philosophy supported by a policy framework.
- Consider additional partnerships with schools, libraries and nonprofits, particularly to provide expanded educational programming.
- Require all partnerships to have a working agreement with measureable outcomes evaluated on a regular basis.
- Require all partnerships to track costs to demonstrate the shared level of equity and investment.
- Maintain a culture of collaborative planning for all partnerships, focusing on regular communications and annual reporting.
- Update the partnership agreement with Gahanna-Jefferson School District in order to continue to secure consistent availability of indoor space for programs and to coordinate the use of outdoor facilities for community use.

Marketing and Promotion:

- Develop a strategic marketing plan that focuses the brand and identity of the Department as well as increases communication about programs and services.
- Tie the marketing plan directly to the Department mission and vision.
- Provide specific guidance as to how the Department's identity and brand should be consistently portrayed across the multiple methods and deliverables used for communication.
- Use community input to inform marketing efforts.
- Build volunteerism in the marketing and communication efforts, and recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows.
- Establish performance measures for marketing efforts and review them regularly.
- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion.

Lead as a Health and Wellness Partner:

- Develop health awareness through trail development by creating heart healthy trails.
- Develop a health and wellness matrix by age segment and service provider to establish what services are missing for which age segments in the City.
- Establish Get Healthy Gahanna as a major theme that includes fitness expos, community gardens, heart healthy trails, fitness walks, runs, hikes and challenges that will motivate residents to become healthier.
- Develop outdoor fitness facilities in at least one park over the next five years.
- Design parks & recreation facilities with health related features in the future.

7.1.2 PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Parks & Recreation facilities will be attractive, clean and safe and will provide opportunities for passive and active pursuits through a balance of park types offered in the City.

OBJECTIVES

Build connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, schools, downtown Gahanna, Metroparks and adjacent communities through the development of trails, greenways, facilities and programs.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to develop Big Walnut Creek Corridor as a primary greenway feature in the City with multi-purpose trail connections between existing parks, downtown and communities that connect with Gahanna.
- Develop a long term plan to ensure the continuation of one or two aquatic facilities in the City.
- Continue to consider the development of a multi-generational community center in the community for the future as the community begins to support parks & recreation needs in the City through the development of a feasibility study.

- Develop an asset management plan that evaluates the current assets in the City parks system and where they are in their lifecycle to plan on how to enhance them when they reach the 25% of production level.
- Increase maintenance standards for special use parks, community parks and sports complexes to keep them at all times at level 2 standards based on NRPA maintenance management modes.
- Coordinate with public works on asset management and data collection to be consistent how the City tracks costs and schedule repairs.
- Establish clean up and fix up days with neighborhoods on their parks twice a year for improving tree care, mulching, painting, flowers, weed control and minor repairs.
- Remove amenities that are not used by the public to save operational costs.
- Improve signage to access the parks on the street through improved signage at the park and in the park on how to use the park positively.
- Work more closely with how fields are scheduled to maximize fairness and productivity of the fields.
- Relocate the pro shop to allow greater accessibility to it and the golf course.
- Coordinate the development of non-traditional recreation facilities and programs that address regional trends such as a disc golf or an adventure park.
- Consider the development of a Nature Center in cooperation with Metroparks at Gahanna Woods to host educational and interpretive programs.
- Design and redesign facilities to produce revenue to offset operational costs to the highest extent possible.

7.1.3 OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The Department of Parks & Recreation will be a best practice agency that is productive and outcome based, delivering quality parks, programs and facilities to the community in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

OBJECTIVE

Develop and adopt a set of core performance indicators to manage programs, facilities and parks.

STRATEGIES

- Determine a new organizational structure based on reduced services that create a sustainable system while focusing on core services, standards and cost recovery goals.
- Stay focused on cost of service work completed in the Master Plan and update yearly to support unit costs goals and cost recovery goals.
- Incorporate operational cost requirement in advance of any new park that is updated or any new facility created to inform City Council of what the operational costs will be before building it so operational dollars are available.
- Incorporate as many new funding sources as possible to increase the operation budget of the Department to meet the needs of citizens.

- Update pricing requirements on a yearly basis to support cost recovery goals desired.
- Consider allowing parks to be have its own standalone levy in the City to meet the needs of residents.
- Establish a long term capital improvements plan for the Department.
- Establish maintenance outcomes for efficiency, customer satisfaction and operational budget growth as well as for partnerships with other service providers.
- Establish different levels of maintenance levels for practice, recreational fields and game fields.
- Continue to contract out services where applicable. The Department should increase program fees based on the classification of services and cost recovery goal desired, reduce overhead and operating costs where they can or a combination of both strategies to achieve an overall cost recovery of 75% from recreation programs only. This does not include capital costs. The net effect of achieving an overall cost recovery of 75% for recreation programs would reduce the general fund subsidy by nearly $200,000, through the generation of new revenue.
- The Department should implement individual program changes to increase revenues through fee increases or reduce operating costs and overhead to achieve the cost recovery targets for each individual program as outlined in the previous tables. The increase to cost recovery levels may need to be achieved over 2-3 years, to allow for phased implementation of higher fees or cost reductions related to staffing and overhead.
- Revise the existing comprehensive fee and pricing policy to be approved by the Gahanna City Council that establishes cost recovery and general fund subsidy levels for Department programs, facilities and services based on service classification and public benefit.
- Establish market based non-resident fee rates which can vary from a 0% to 50% fee differential between residents and non-residents based on program demand versus capacity, general fund subsidy level of programs and ease of collection.
- Establish a “Program Passport” scholarship program for low income children and teens to allow for free participation in Core and Important programs and 50% fee reduction for Value Added programs.
- Aggressively market and promote financial opportunities to the private sector to offset costs associated with Special Events with the goal to recover 100% of costs, which would reduce the overall subsidy to the department.
- Increase athletic field rental rates to offset the full cost of operation and maintenance including junior league sports.

CHAPTER EIGHT - CONCLUSION

The City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation is a very well respected Department in the City by the residents they serve. The Department has undergone many changes due to budget changes. The updated Master Plan does not call for a massive level of capital improvements even though they are needed in the City due to a lack of tax dollars available.

As such, this Master Plan focuses on operational efficiency, cost recovery, productivity and customer service. Many of the recommendations are how to increase revenue to support operational costs and to meet standards for programs and park maintenance. The Department has done a good job implementing the recommendations from the 2006 Master Plan and can and will do the same in this 2014 update. The 2014 update introduces a cost of service study, a stronger program plan and an updated level of service plan.

This Master Plan is based on the Department's current operations, however, the community has indicated that additional programs and activities are desired for the system. The City needs to think broader than the current funding for the system to allow the Department to serve these additional needs and increase the City's image through well managed public space. Best practice agencies have some level of dedicated funding that includes a commitment in tax dollars to parks and recreation primarily for park maintenance and capital improvements supplemented with earned income dollars from user fees, sponsorships and a host of other funding options to increase operating revenue to meet unmet needs in the community.

The staff of the Department are very committed to the citizens' needs and this Master Plan study follows what residents have asked for through the focus groups meetings and citizen survey. The challenge will be to develop a Department that can recovery 75% of its recreation programs provided through user fees while supporting the other elements of parks, recreation facilities and capital funding needs from dedicated tax dollars which will not be easy but is achievable. The Department is poised to build on its many achievements and this Master Plan outlines the strategy for success!