



Indian River County Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2025 – 2035





Acknowledgements

Organizing and facilitating a robust process that results in a creative, forward-looking and inclusive parks master plan is a significant endeavor. The Consultant Team would like to thank the numerous members of the community, partner organizations, and county leadership and staff that generously contributed to the development of the *Indian River County Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2024*. This includes but is not limited to those listed below.

County Staff

John A. Titkanich, Jr. County Administrator

Michael Zito, Deputy County Administrator

Beth Powell, Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department Director

Gustavo Vergara, Assistant Director Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department

Wendy Swindell, Assistant Director Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department

Brad Dewson, Parks Superintendent

Joe Tilton, Recreation Manager

And Many Additional Staff Who Assisted Along The Way!

2025-2026 Indian River County Board of Commissioners

Susan Adams – District 1

Joseph E. Flescher, Chairman – District 2

Joe Earman – District 3

Deryl Loar, Vice Chair – District 4

Laura Moss – District 5

Key Partners / Stakeholders

We would like to thank all the key partners, stakeholders, and residents of Indian River County who participated in public forums, interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Numerous residents that participated in public forums, interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Thank You!



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Executive Summary

A Game Plan for the Future

A parks master plan is a guiding document for a community on how a parks system can meet the current and emerging needs of residents and create vibrancy in a community. The parks and recreation system of Indian River County is the canvas on which so much is made possible and provides the venues through which the county-wide community pursue healthy lifestyles, come together, grow their skills, and build connections. This *Park and Recreation Master Plan* is built on a vision of responsible public service, embraces the history of the County, is accountable to the present, and looks to the future.

This *Park and Recreation Master Plan* ("Master Plan") establishes a long-term plan focusing on sustainability and maximizing resources while providing an appropriate level/balance of facilities and amenities throughout the community. The Master Plan is the first of its kind for Indian River County and in many ways celebrates the current and recent successes of the County's Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department ("Department"). This Master Plan does not completely rethink what has transpired up to now but rather creates a new "game plan" for the County to follow for the next 10 years based on sound data, local values and traditions, and a rapidly evolving future.

Indian River County ("County") maintains a total of 3,113 acres of public lands that includes 662 acres of park and recreation lands within the County boundaries which includes athletic field complexes, developed/undeveloped parklands, open space, trails, beaches, boat ramps, and public facilities. This does not include public parks and recreation facilities that are located and managed within the boundaries of the local municipalities of Sebastian, Fellsmere, Vero Beach, Town of Indian River Shores, or Town of Orchid. Within the total land inventory there are 2,451 acres of conservation lands that the Department manages. The County also operates and maintains several unique facilities including the North County Aquatic Center, Gifford Aquatic Center, Indian River County Fairgrounds and Expo Center, the Intergenerational Recreation Center, the Indian River County Public Shooting Range, Donald MacDonald Campground, and Sandridge Golf Club/Course. Finally, the County also organizes a robust portfolio of recreation programs, services and community events to fully activate these public spaces bringing the community together.

The Master Plan sought community input to identify and confirm the County's vision and expectations for the future of the park, recreation and conservation system. Community input was received via in-person and virtual focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, public meetings, a statistically-valid needs analysis survey, and a community online open survey as well. The information gathered from the community engagement process was combined with technical research to produce the final Master Plan.



Master Plan Objectives

The Master Plan establishes a prioritized framework for future development or redevelopment of the County's parks and recreation system over the next 10 years using the County's current Capital Improvement Element of the Comprehensive Plan (CIE) as a starting point. The Master Plan is a resource to develop policies and guidelines related to location, use, resource allocation, and level of service that will provide direction to County Commissioners, County staff, and the community at large.

The goals of the Master Plan include:

- **To develop a plan that is grounded in accessible community engagement** to ensure the broad interests of the diverse community in Indian River County are heard and can help guide growth and development of parks and recreation sites, facilities, and programs.
- **To develop a future strategy for parks, recreation, and greenspaces** that ensures availability for the entire community, regardless of socioeconomic, cultural, racial, or geographic differences, while providing fair community benefits to all.
- **To utilize a wide variety of data sources and best analytical practices** to predict trends and patterns of use, community impact, and how to address unmet needs in Indian River County.
- **To strengthen the environmental resilience of Indian River County** by using parks and greenspaces as green infrastructure, with fair access for all areas of the community.
- **To shape the financial sustainability and organizational excellence** to achieve the strategic objectives, identify revenue opportunities, potential partnerships, and ensure future operational and maintenance needs are addressed.
- **To develop a dynamic and realistic action plan** that is based on unique levels of service, promotes health and safety, supports active lifestyles, builds community connectivity, and creates a road map to ensure long-term success and financial sustainability for the County's parks, recreation programs, and facilities.

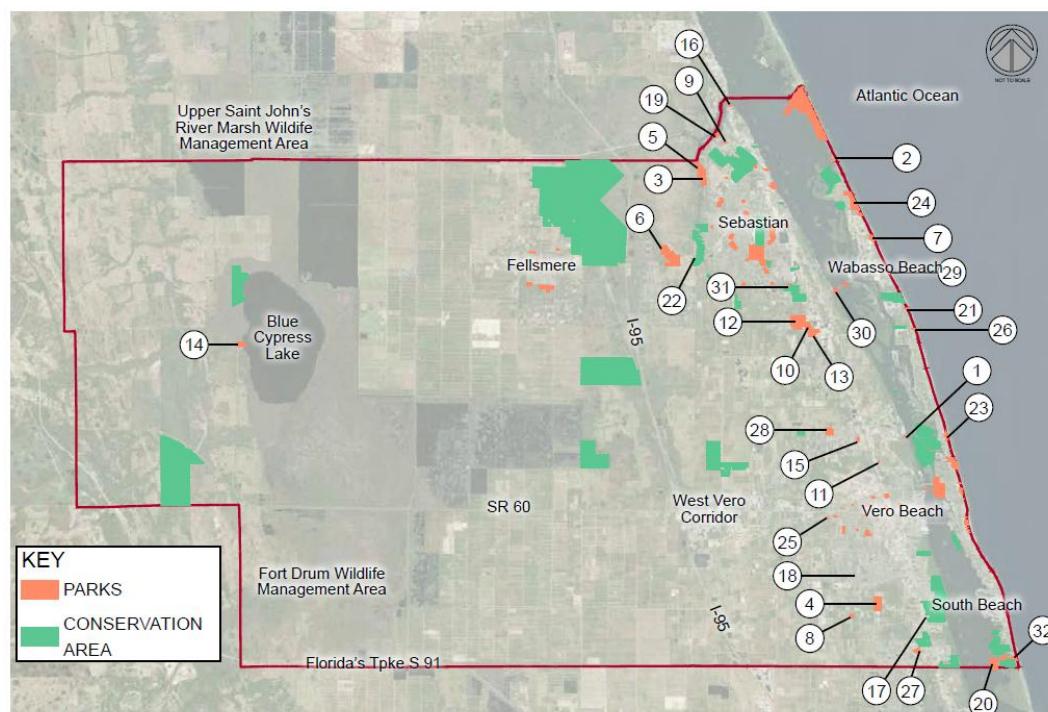
Project Process

The Master Plan followed a process of data collection, public input, on-the-ground study, assessment of existing conditions, market research, and open dialogue with local leadership and key stakeholders. The project process followed a planning path, as illustrated below:



Current Parks Map and Definition of Planning Area

The planning area for this Master Plan includes all areas within the boundaries of Indian River County including the current and potential urban services boundary. This plan recognizes the actual service areas of some County parks and facilities extend beyond the defined boundaries of the planning area as the County has parks that have regional draw. Similarly, there are other public parks and lands within Indian River County that also assist to meet the overall park and recreation needs of County residents that are owned and managed by other entities or jurisdictions. The primary purpose of this plan is to first and foremost identify and address the park and recreation needs of all County residents particularly in unincorporated areas and also in compliment with those facilities and services being provided by municipalities within the County. The map below depicts the planning area and location of County-owned and managed parks and facilities.



1. 45th Street Dock	17. Oslo Road Boat Ramp
2. Ambersands Beach Park	18. Pine Hill (Lone Pine) Park
3. Dale Winbrow Park	19. Roseland Community Park
4. Dick Bird Park / South County Park	20. Round Island Riverside Park
5. Donald MacDonald Campground	21. Seagrape Trail Beach Access
6. Fran Adams Park / North County Regional Park	22. Sebastian Canoe Launch park
7. Golden Sands Beach Park	23. Tracking Station Beach Park
8. Grovenor Estates Park	24. Treasure Shores Beach Park
9. Helen Hanson Park	25. Tropic Colony Park
10. Hobart Ballfields	26. Turtle Trail Beach Access
11. Hosie Shumann Park	27. Vero Highland Park
12. IRC Fairgrounds	28. Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex
13. Kiwanis Hobart Park	29. Wabasso Beach Park
14. Middleon's Fish Camp Park	30. Wabasso Causeqay Park
15. MLK Park	31. West Wabasso Park
16. Moore's Point	32. Round Island Oceanside Park

Indian River County Parks Inventory

Current developed park inventory by park name, address, park classification and size are detailed below:

Park	Address	Classification	Size (Acres)**
45th Street Dock	600 Gifford Dock Road	Water Access	.04 acres
Ambersands Beach Park	12566 Highway A1A	Beach Access	3.38 acres
Dale Wimbrow Park	11805 Roseland Road	Community Park	9.36 acres
Dick Bird Park / South County Park	800 20 th Avenue SW	Regional Park	75.11 acres
Donald MacDonald Campground	12315 Roseland Road	Community Park	65.02 acres
Fran Adams Park / North County Regional Park	9450 Sebastian Boulevard	Regional Park	125 acres
Golden Sands Beach Park	10350 North Highway A1A	Beach Park	13.84 acres
Grovenor Estates Park	3205 10 th Street SW	Neighborhood Park	4.65 acres
Helen Hanson Park	8020 129 th Court	Neighborhood Park	1.93 acres
Hobart Ballfields	5790 77 th Street	Community Park	15.5 acres
Hosie Shumann Park	1760 39 th Street	Neighborhood Park	2.0 acres
IRC Fairgrounds	7955 58 th Avenue	Regional Park	139 acres
Kiwanis Hobart Park	5555 77 th Street	Community Park	41.4 acres
Middleton's Fish Camp Park	7400 Blue Cypress Lake Road	Water Access / Special Use Park	23 acres
MLK Park	2880 45 th Street	Neighborhood Park	5.84 acres
Moore's Point	14510 US Highway 1	Neighborhood Park	0.55 acres
Oslo Road Boat Ramp	150 9 th Street SE/Oslo Road	Water Access	2.57 acres
Pine Hill (Lone Pine) Park	206 30 th Avenue	Neighborhood Park	0.12 acres
Roseland Community Park	12925 83 rd Avenue	Community Park	1.69 acres
Round Island Oceanside Park	2200 South Highway A1A	Beach Park	9.37
Round Island Riverside Park	2205 South Highway A1A	Water Access / Special Use Park	21.47 acres



Park	Address	Classification	Size (Acres)**
Seagrape Trail Beach Access	8462 North Highway A1A	Beach Access	0.76 acres
Sebastian Canoe Launch Park	9800 Canoe Launch Cove	Water Access	1.03 acres
Tracking Station Beach Park	800 46 th Place	Beach Park	5.53 acres
Treasure Shores Beach Park	11300 Highway A1A	Beach Park	20.8 acres
Tropic Colony Park	1825 46 th Avenue	Neighborhood Park	0.53 acres
Turtle Trail Beach Access	8102 North Highway A1A	Beach Access	1.16 acres
Vero Highland Park	330 21 st Road SW	Neighborhood Park	8.72 acres
Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex	4715 43 rd Avenue	Community Park	38.96 acres
Wabasso Beach Park	1820 Wabasso Beach Road	Beach Park	0.46 acres
Wabasso Causeway Park	3105 Wabasso Bridge Road	Water Access	13.40 acres
West Wabasso Park	8900 64 th Avenue	Community Park	10.0 acres
TOTAL			662.37 acres

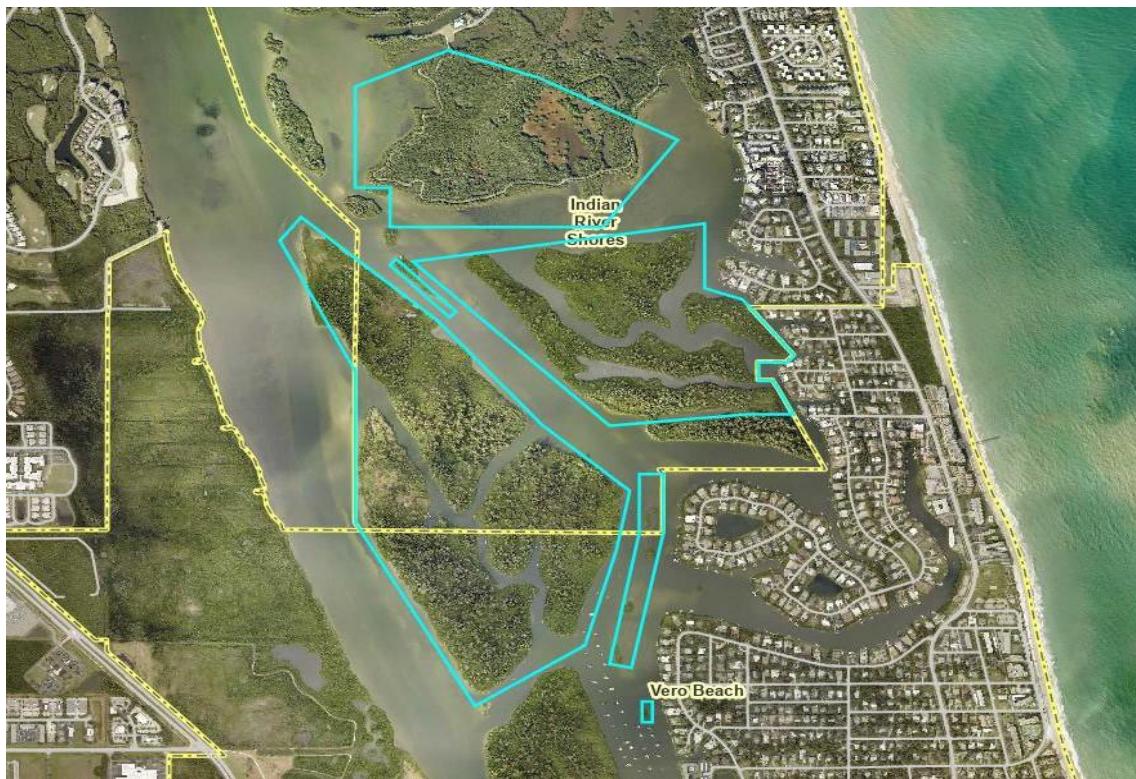
**Total park size includes water surface area in the cases where parks contain ponds or lakes.

Indian River County Conservation Lands Inventory

Current conservation lands by name, address, and size are detailed below:

Conservation Area	Address	Size (Acres)**
Indian River Lagoon Greenway	850 Indian River Boulevard	37.5 acres
Lost Tree Islands Conservation Area	505 Gifford Dock Road	508 acres
Oyster Bar Marsh Conservation Area	1955 South Highway A1A	132 acres
Prange Island Conservation Area	901 Castaway Boulevard	26.5 acres
Round Island South Conservation Area	2205 South Highway A1A	59.0 acres
58 th Avenue Conservation Area	4755 58 th Avenue	20.0 acres
Ansin Riverfront Conservation Area	9800 Canoe Launch Cove	28.0 acres
Archie Smith Fish House	1740 Indian River Drive	1.1 acres

Conservation Area	Address	Size (Acres)**
Captain Forster Hammock Preserve	8650 Jungle Trail	111 acres
Cypress Bend Community Preserve	800 Gardenia Street	47.3 acres
Hallstrom Farmstead Conservation Area	1701 Old Dixie Highway	93.0 acres
Harmony Oaks Conservation Area	2323 4 th Avenue SE	90.0 acres
Jane Schnee Conservation Area	2050 Barber Street	10.8 acres
Jones' Pier Conservation Area	7770 Jungle Trail	16.5 acres
Kroegel Homestead Conservation Area	11296 Indian River Drive	2.6 acres
North Sebastian Conservation Area	1295 Main Street	506 acres
Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area	150 9 th Street SE	298 acres
Sebastian Harbor Preserve	184 Englar Drive	163 acres
Sebastian Scrub Conservation Area	1258 Schumann Drive	10.0 acres
South Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area	175 9 th Street SE	143 acres
South Prong Preserve Conservation Area	7775 85 th Street	37.5 acres
Wabasso Scrub Conservation Area	8900 64 th Avenue	111 acres
TOTAL		2,451.8 acres



Lost Tree Islands Conservation Area



Vision, Mission and Core Values

The process to develop this plan was grounded in inclusive, accessible, and creative public input and engagement. This is a plan that reflects the community, its interests and needs, and its directional growth. In the course of the process, Indian River County has fine-tuned their mission statement as it pertains specifically to the provision of parks and recreation services, which clearly defines how the County intends to serve the community through this plan over the next 10 years.

Vision

"The Parks, Recreation & Conservation Department's vision is to cultivate unparalleled recreation opportunities, develop innovative facilities, and preserve vital conservation resources for present and future generations."

Mission

"The Parks, Recreation & Conservation Department's mission is to enrich lives by fostering the connection of people to community, nature, and play."

Core Values

**Communication
Ownership
Service
Innovation and Creativity
Resiliency
Teamwork
Growth and Education
Safety
Integrity
Respectfulness
Diversity and Inclusion**

Key Issues and Themes

Throughout the Master Plan process, several key themes and issues emerged as priorities to address over the next 10 years. These represent input and insights from a broad segment of County residents, leadership, partner organizations, and the assessments of the consultant team.

The County is a Broad Provider of Parks and Recreation Services

One of the distinguishing qualities of the Indian River County Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department, compared to many other county-level departments across the country, is its ability to provide a broad spectrum of parks and recreation services. In most cases, County parks and recreation departments tend to be predominantly land-based entities with large, undeveloped open spaces, greenways, and trails dominating their portfolio. Occasionally, county systems will have a regional sports complex included within their inventory. Indian River County's parks and recreation system stands out from many of its peers due to its robust offerings, which are typically found in larger municipal systems.

The County operates and manages over 54 sites including 662 acres of developed parklands, and 2,451 acres of undeveloped natural areas and open space almost all of which have developed trails to facility public access, as well as the County fairgrounds. Additionally, given its coastal orientation the County also operates nine (9) boat ramp, one (1) canoe launch, and seven (7) public beaches access areas. These are common County system functions. The Indian River County Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department exceeds expectations by operating and managing two outdoor aquatic centers, an extensive indoor intergenerational recreation center, a high-quality public shooting range, and several athletic complexes and sports fields. Furthermore, for many residents of the county living in unincorporated areas, the County is also the predominant provider of traditional neighborhood parks.

The scope and diversity of the Department's portfolio present both challenges and opportunities. Managing a wide range of facilities and services requires a variety of skills and adequate financial resources to maintain high standards. Additionally, ensuring these resources are properly allocated to maintain quality sites, facilities, and programs that meet public expectations is an ongoing challenge.

Geographic Preferences

There are unique geographic preferences by residents in Indian River County pertaining to both aquatic facilities and indoor recreation facilities. The County's largest aquatic facility is the North County Aquatic Center located in Sebastian. The second aquatic facility is Gifford Aquatic Center which is considerably smaller and located slightly south of the central sector of the County. There is a strong desire of residents in the southern region of the County to have more akin to the amenities of the North County Aquatic Center.

Relatedly, the Intergenerational Recreation Center ("IG Center") is located in the southern Indian River County providing unique indoor recreational opportunities for residents. Residents in the northern part of the county want more indoor recreational opportunities that are conveniently located within a short travel distance from their homes. Both aquatic and indoor recreation facilities can be expensive to design and construct, as well as to operate. Coming to an agreeable middle ground on these demands will be a priority for the County over the next 10 years.

Trails and Connectivity are a Priority

The residents of Indian River County are active and enjoy broad ranging recreational opportunities for personal enjoyment, health, and wellness. The highest rated priorities from community input, key local stakeholders, County leadership, and the consultant team are additional trail development and connectivity. Both multi-use paved trails and unpaved trails were identified as the highest rated priorities to add over the next 10 years. Regional “spine” trail development should be considered to improve overall connectivity within the County and between parks and other significant points of interest. Additionally, the development of multi-use unpaved trails should continue to be considered within existing or new park sites where appropriate to further enhance the recreational opportunities and enjoyment afforded to County residents. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is tasked with the oversight and development of a comprehensive trail and connectivity system in Indian River County. The PRC Department will continue to expand and develop trail systems within the geographical boundaries of park lands and conservation areas.

Integration of Other Providers

In addition to the services provided by the County, other organizations also support the recreational needs of Indian River County residents. These include popular parks and amenities in Sebastian and Vero Beach, multiple school properties, private homeowner association (HOA) parks, and numerous private golf courses and sports courts. High school and some middle school athletic facilities are not considered here due to their heavy use by the school system, which limits public access. Given the significant number of other service providers in the county, it's important to incorporate their facilities and offerings into the County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan as part of the broader network of resources that meet the recreational needs of residents. High school and some middle school athletic facilities are not in consideration because of their substantial use and programming by the school system and resulting lack of availability for public access and use. As a result of the substantial presence of other service providers within the County, it is critical to represent the facilities and offerings of these providers into the County's *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* as a component of the larger ecosystem of meeting the recreation and park needs of residents.

Parks for All

Park locations, design, and amenities should be reflective of and accessible by the *whole* community. A modern and forward-looking public park system should be designed to serve the entire community. Park locations, design, and amenities should be accessible to all residents. This core value was emphasized throughout the community process. Opportunities to enhance the Indian River County parks system include, but are not limited to, adding playgrounds and recreational amenities that cater to users with varying physical, cognitive, emotional, and mobility needs; providing amenities for senior adults and other specific age groups; and offering amenities that serve residents from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Key Recommendations

The following key recommendations have been developed through robust community and stakeholder engagement throughout the planning process, consultant analyses, and industry best practices.

Revitalization and Maintenance of Existing Parks

Over the past 20 years, Indian River County has made significant investments in developing large facilities, updating athletic amenities, and acquiring conservation lands that serve as both local treasures and regional destinations. However, similar investments were impacted or delayed by the economic recession from 2008 to 2012. In response, the County took a conservative approach to resuming operations and maintenance activities. In 2019, the County launched a deferred maintenance plan to begin revitalizing park infrastructure and address previous delays.

Enhancing and Upgrading Community and Regional Parks

Community and regional parks offer recreational opportunities for residents while also serving as regional attractions that contribute to economic development and tourism. There are three primary objectives for revitalizing the County's community and regional parks:

- to improve usability and overall versatility of the sites,
- to better meet current and emerging public needs, and
- to further enhance the local recreational value of these sites while also optimizing their ability to drive economic activity in the County.

Trails and Connectivity

There is a strong public demand for an expanded trail system to improve connectivity and recreational opportunities in Indian River County, which is great to see! Enhancing non-motorized access between parks and points of interest will not only improve the overall experience for residents and visitors but also offer health benefits and environmental sustainability.

Building on the existing network and introducing new types of trails will definitely make the County a more accessible and enjoyable place for outdoor activities. Since the development of trails outside the County parks is under the responsibility of the Indian River County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), collaboration between the County and the MPO will be key in achieving a seamless, connected trail system.

Growing the System to Meet Regional Needs

Based on our analysis of the system, it's clear that the County has several areas for improved park development, or areas currently outside the service area of public greenspaces. Indian River County is an active population with diverse recreational interests and needs. Needs were identified through a variety of methodologies including public forums, targeted public intercept interviews at community events, website/online public comments, social media, a statistically valid community survey, and assessments of existing parks and amenities. As the community grows, the parks and recreation system must adapt to meet both the current and future needs of residents. It's important that the system not only caters to the established interests but also anticipates emerging trends and shifts in how people use public spaces.

New Park Development

Future Park Development and Expansion

Building upon multiple layers of data analysis—from existing park location assessments to demographic and population growth projections—this plan pinpoints both immediate and long-term opportunities to enrich the County's recreational amenities. In reviewing current and anticipated levels of service, particularly over the next 10 to 15 years, it became clear that neighborhood park deficiencies must be a top priority.

Community feedback underscored this need through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and surveys (both online and statistically valid). Residents emphasized a desire for more local, conveniently located parks with features that appeal to all ages and abilities. Specific areas identified for new neighborhood parks include the 20th Street corridor, the vicinity of the I-95 and Highway 60 interchange, north and south of Vero Beach, and areas near Vero Lake Estates.

Large Regional Park/Sports Complex Feasibility

In addition to local park expansions, there is strong interest in exploring the feasibility of a major regional park or sports complex situated along the I-95 corridor in the County's western areas. A facility of this scale could serve as a bold “southern front door” to Indian River County—an iconic destination that leverages existing sports tourism on the Treasure Coast and encourages potential commercial or mixed-use development nearby.

By including multiple diamond and rectangular fields, this regional park could host large tournaments, attracting teams from across Florida and beyond. Beyond fields alone, thoughtful design would integrate a variety of recreational amenities: outdoor sport courts (for tennis, pickleball, and basketball), a signature playground, both small and large pavilions for group gatherings, walking trails, and more. Such features would ensure year-round utility for local residents while strengthening the County's reputation as a sports tourism hub.

I-95/Oslo Interchange and Corridor Study

Further bolstering Indian River County's long-term vision is the new I-95/Oslo interchange, slated for completion in 2027. This critical infrastructure improvement will significantly enhance regional connectivity, opening up new opportunities for both residential and commercial growth along the Oslo corridor. In anticipation of these changes, the County is actively conducting a corridor study to evaluate traffic impacts, land-use patterns, and the strategic placement of public facilities. By coordinating park planning with the results of this corridor study, the County can ensure that future recreational amenities—whether neighborhood parks or a large sports complex—are effectively integrated into evolving transportation networks.

Economic and Community Benefits

A regional park of this stature offers far-reaching benefits. Tournaments and special events would spur visitor spending on lodging, dining, and entertainment, amplifying local economic impacts. At the same time, new or enhanced parks in underserved neighborhoods would address critical gaps identified in the planning process, fostering healthier lifestyles and stronger community connections.

Looking Ahead

Implementing these recommendations requires close coordination among County agencies, stakeholders, and residents. Beyond bricks-and-mortar improvements, innovative partnerships—such as joint-use agreements with schools or collaborative ventures with local sports leagues—can maximize funding opportunities and reduce operational costs. By balancing the need for more neighborhood parks with the potential of a landmark regional sports destination—and by leveraging the possibilities arising from the new I-95/Oslo interchange and corridor study—Indian River County can strategically invest in public spaces that serve today's residents and tomorrow's generations.



Community Profile

Demographics and Trends Analysis

A key component of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a Demographics and Recreation Trends Analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to provide the Department with insight into the makeup of the population they serve and identify market trends in recreation. The report also helps to quantify the market in and around Indian River County, Florida and assists in providing a better understanding of the types of parks, facilities, and services used to satisfy the needs of residents.

This analysis is two-fold; it aims to identify the *who* and the *what*. First, it assesses the demographic characteristics and population projections of Indian River County residents to understand *who* is served recreationally. Second, recreational trends are examined on a national and local level to understand *what* the population may want to do. Findings from this analysis establish a fundamental understanding that provides a basis for prioritizing the community's need for parks, trails, facilities, and recreation programs.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis describes the population in Indian River County. This assessment is reflective of the County's total population and its key characteristics such as age, race, and income levels. It is important to note that future projections are based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the analysis. These patterns could have a significant bearing on the validity of projected figures. **Figure 1** provides an overview of Indian River County's populace based on current estimates of the 2023 population. A further analysis of each of these demographic characteristics can be found throughout the report.

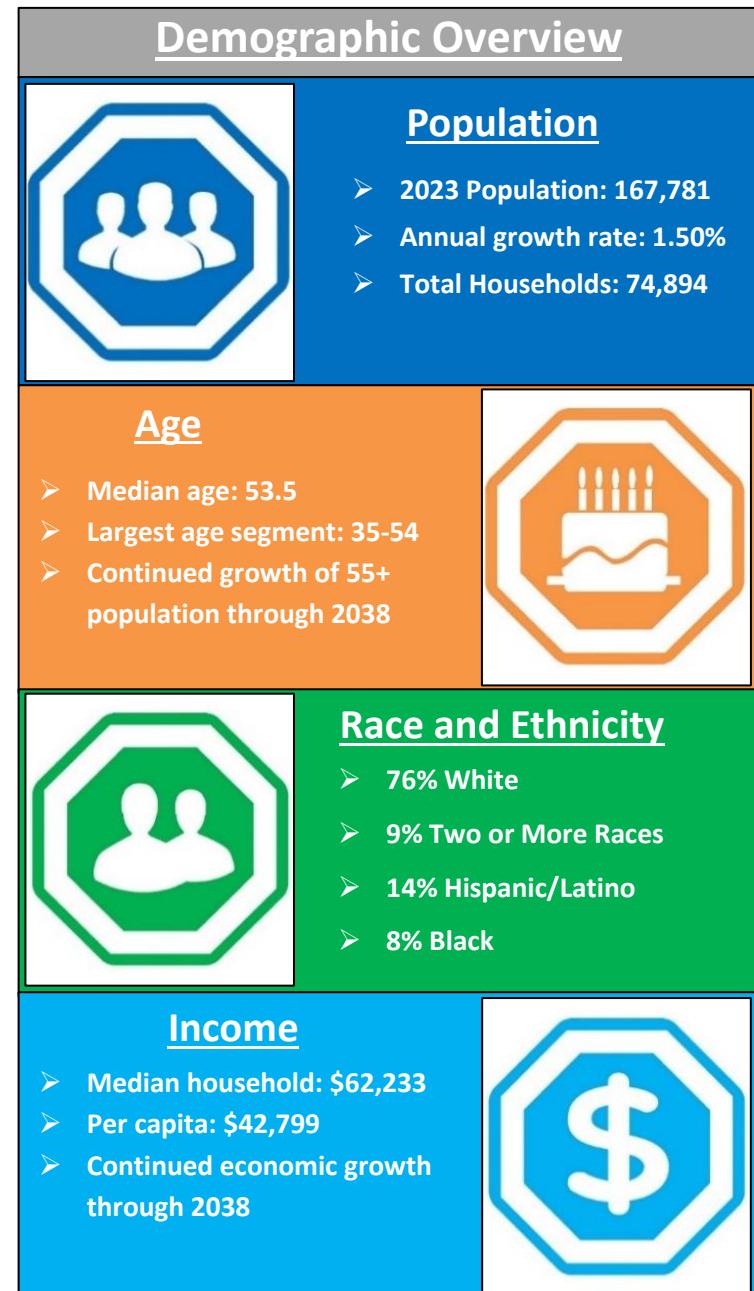


Figure 1: Demographic Overview of Indian River County, FL (ESRI, 2024)

Methodology

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from the 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 June 2023 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2020 Census. ESRI then estimates the current population (2023) as well as a 5-year projection (2028). PROS Consulting, Inc. then utilized straight line linear regression to forecast demographic characteristics for 10 and 15-year projections (2033 and 2038). ***Please note: Some data has yet to be released from the 2020 Census, resulting in certain analyses utilizing 2010 Census data instead (e.g., age segmentation).***

Race and Ethnicity Definitions

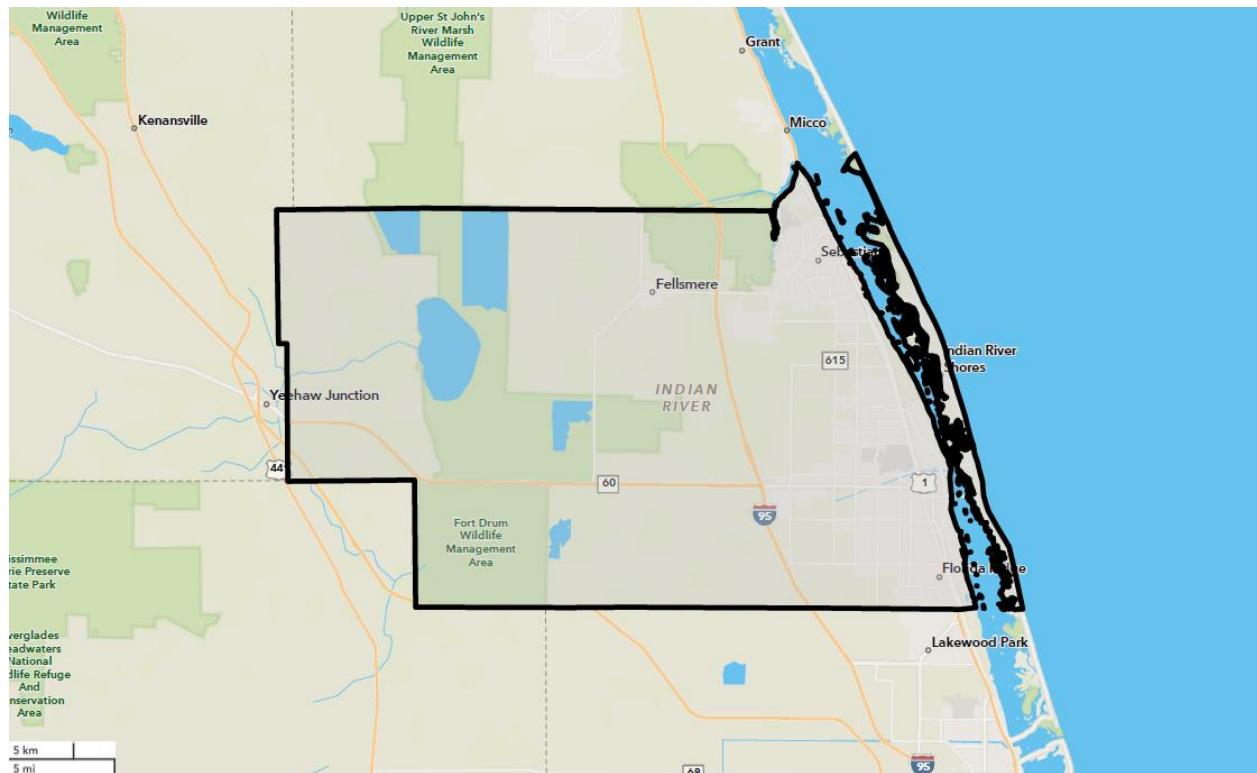
The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined below. The Census 2020 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 2010 Census and earlier censuses; therefore, caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2020) definitions and nomenclature are used within this analysis.

- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original people of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original people of East Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic or Latino:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White:** A person having origins in any of the original people of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Please note: The Census Bureau states that the race and ethnicity categories generally reflect social definitions in the U.S. and are not an attempt to define race and ethnicity biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. We recognize that the race and ethnicity categories include racial, ethnic, and national origins and sociocultural groups. They define Race as a person's self-identification with one or more of the following social groups: White, Black, or African American, Asian, American Indian, and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, or a combination of these. Ethnicity is defined as whether a person is of Hispanic / Latino origin or not. For this reason, the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity is viewed separate from race throughout this demographic analysis.

Demographic Analysis Boundary

The Indian River County boundaries shown below were utilized for the demographic analysis. (Figure 2)



County Populace

Population

Indian River County has a fast-growing population that ranges from moderate to heavy yearly increases. (Figure 3). The County's population has increased from 138,028 in 2010 to an estimated 167,781 in 2023. Indian River County's population is expected to continue to grow in the following 15 years, where it is projected to reach 194,819 residents by 2038. The total number of County households has grown at a rate that is mostly proportional to the population growth, increasing from 60,176 in 2010 to an estimated 74,894 in 2023, and is projected to continue growing to 89,490 total households by 2038 (Figure 4).

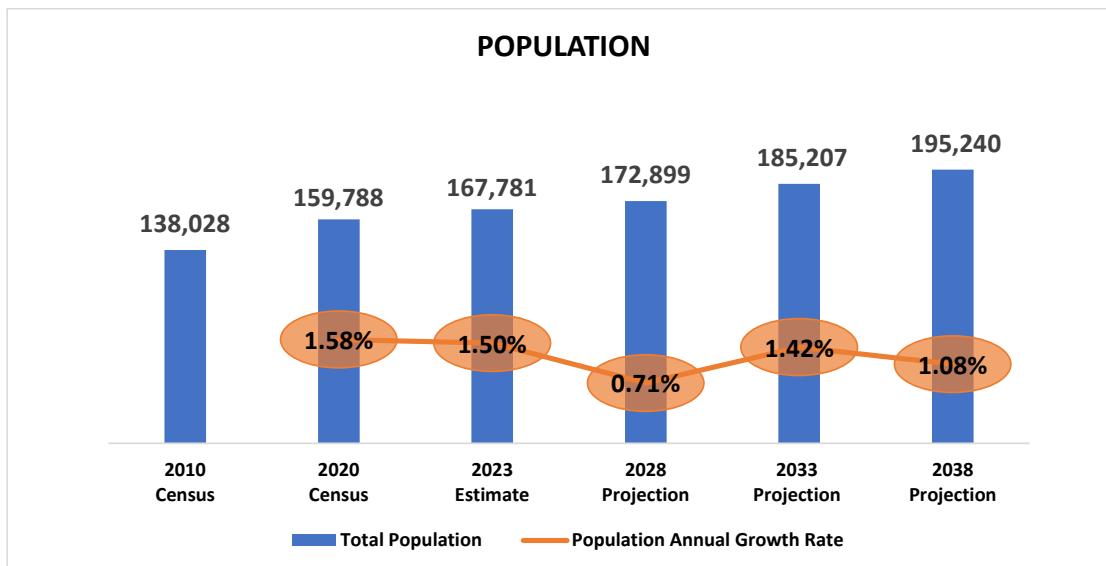


Figure 3: Indian River County's Total Population and Annual Growth Rate (ESRI, 2024)

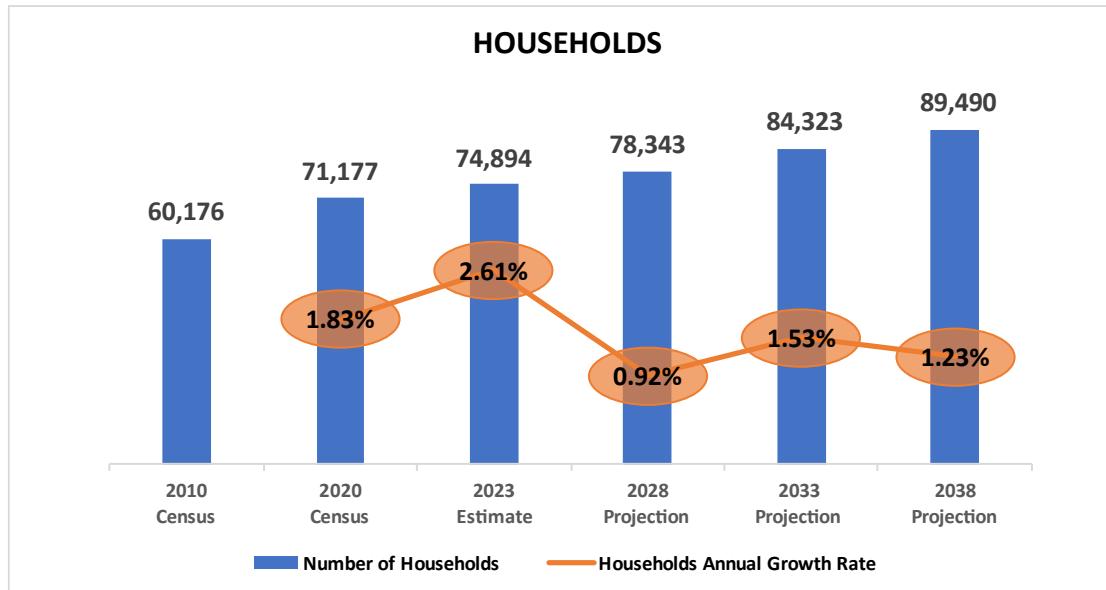


Figure 4: Indian River County's Total Households and Annual Growth Rate (ESRI, 2024)

Age Segmentation

The largest age segments found in Indian River County's population are **35–54** (20%), **65-74** (17%), and **75+** (17%), comprising a **largely elderly population** in comparison to the United States average. This elderly population also includes a **slight aging trend** with people over the age of 55 over the next 15 years, increasing from 41% of the population in 2010 to **54% of the population by 2038**. As the population projects to age over time, younger populations will decrease in exchange for those increases in middle age and elderly populations. Additionally, the **median age has risen** from 49.0 in 2010 to **53.5 in 2023**, where it projects to continue to increase slightly in the coming years. Therefore, the amenities updated and developed for Indian River County (including a potential multi-generational community center) should likely be designed to be feasible, accessible, and appealing for this steadily growing elderly population (Figure 5).

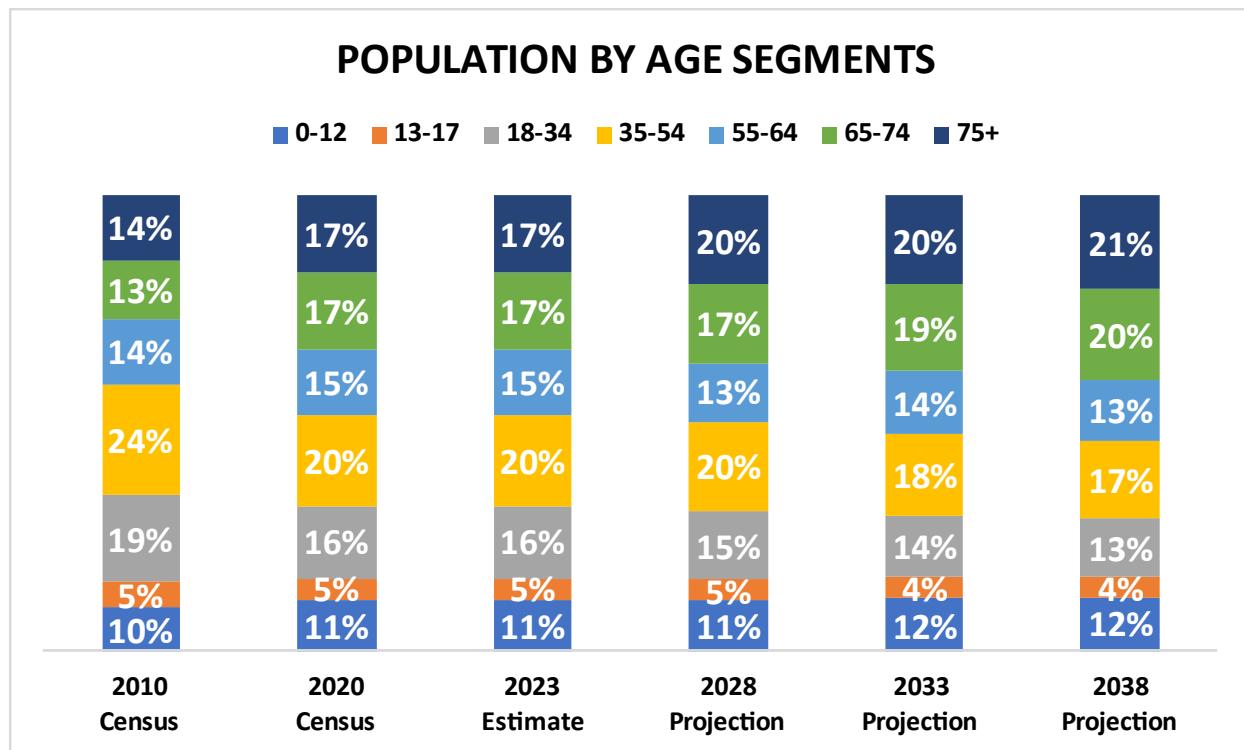


Figure 5: Indian River County's Population by Age Segments (ESRI, 2024)

Race

Analyzing race, Indian River County's current population makeup is **mostly White Alone**, with the 2023 estimate showing that 76% of the population falls into the White category, with **Two or More Races** (9% of the population) representing the second largest racial demographic. Predictions for 2028 and beyond expect the **population to slowly diversify**, with a **slight decrease in the White Alone population**, and **minor increases to all other race categories**. (Figure 6).

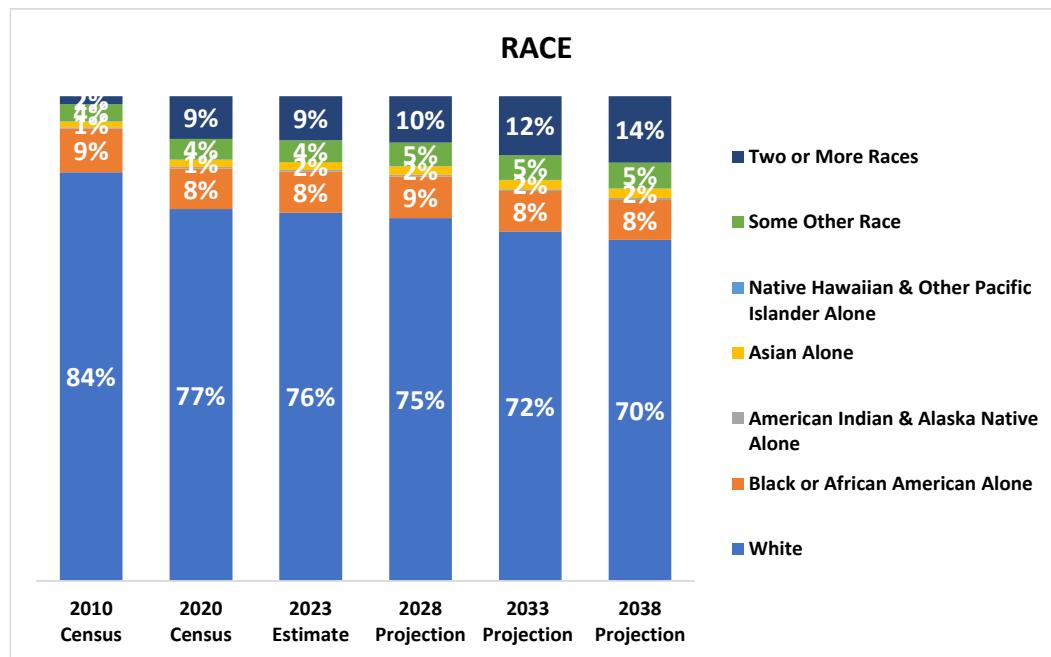


Figure 6: Indian River County's Population by Race (ESRI, 2024)

Ethnicity

Indian River County's population was also assessed based on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, which by the Census Bureau definition is viewed independently from race. **It is important to note that individuals who are Hispanic/Latino in ethnicity can also identify with any racial categories identified above.**

Based on the current 2023 estimate, people of Hispanic/Latino origin represent **14% of Indian River County's population**, which is slightly below the national average (19% Hispanic/Latino) and well below the Florida average (27% Hispanic/Latino). However, the Hispanic/Latino population has experienced a **minor increase over time** and is **expected to continue growing slightly to 15% of Indian River County's total population by 2038** (Figure 7).

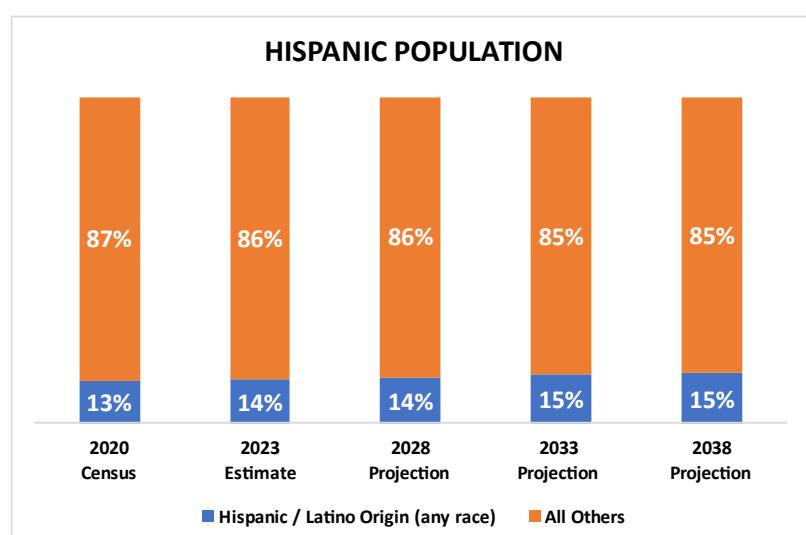


Figure 7: Indian River County's Hispanic Population (ESRI, 2024)

Income Characteristics

When analyzing income, the per capita income is that earned by an individual, while the median household income is based on the total income of everyone over the age of sixteen living within the same household. Indian River County's **per capita income** (\$42,799) is slightly above both the state of Florida average (\$38,850) and the national average (\$41,804), while its **median household income** (\$62,233) is slightly below the state of Florida average (\$67,917) and national average (\$74,755). However, Indian River County projects to increase in both median household and per capita income, where the **averages are expected to rise to \$65,038 and \$91,867** respectively by 2038. These income characteristics should be taken into consideration when pricing programs and calculating cost recovery goals. (Figures 8 and 9).

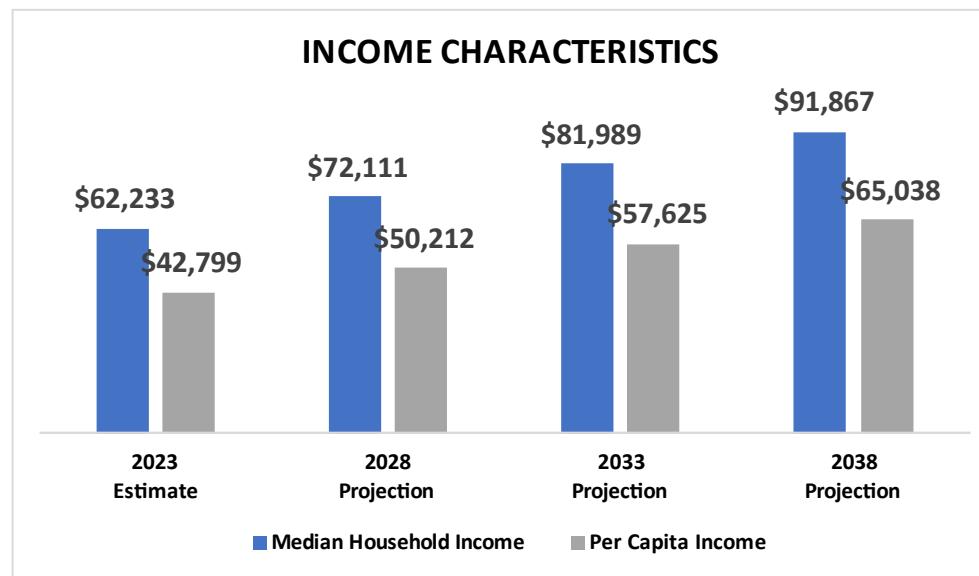


Figure 8: Income Characteristics of Indian River County (ESRI, 2024)

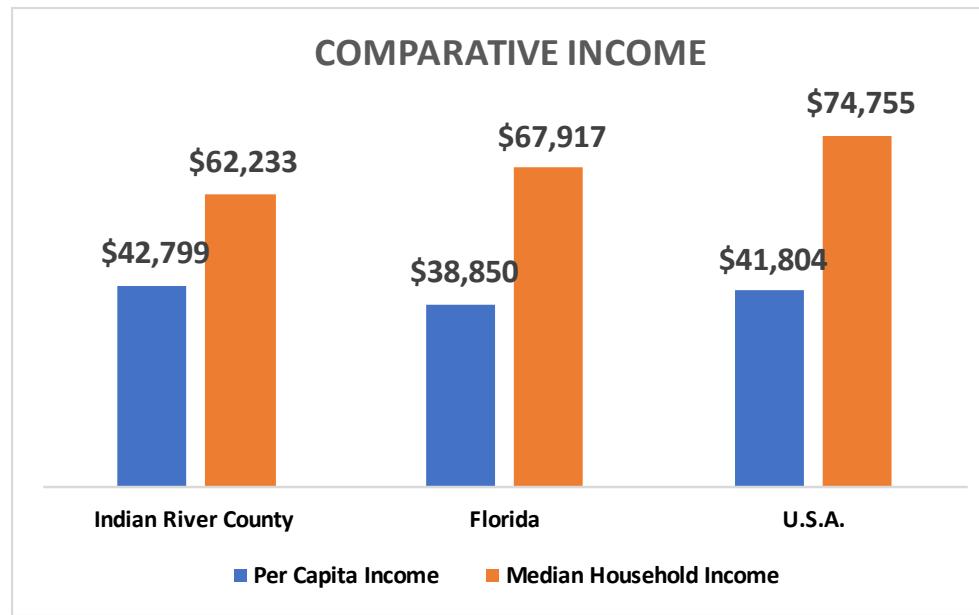


Figure 9: Comparative Income Characteristics of Indian River County (ESRI, 2024)

Demographic Implications

While it is important to avoid generalizing recreation needs and priorities based solely on demographics, the analysis suggests some potential implications for Indian River County, Florida:

- Indian River County's aging population indicates a need to continue to **identify and understand the interests of the elderly population**. Prioritizing recreational activities and programming for elderly populations, such as exercise classes or elderly recreational leagues, may prove to be beneficial in keeping that population active.
- Indian River County's relatively low to average income characteristics suggest **potential income barriers at the individual and family level**. The County should be mindful of this when pricing out programs and events and considering amenities, while staying aware of the potential interaction they can expect from a populace that has a slightly lower than average income level.
- In comparison to the United States average (0.74%), Indian River County had a **relatively high annual growth rate from 2020 to 2023** (1.50%). Although the annual growth rate is projected to drop to 1.11% from 2023 to 2038, this steady population growth should be considered when planning new amenities and offerings for the community, as well as the maintenance and upkeep of current offerings.
- Finally, Indian River County should ensure its **diversifying population is reflected in its offerings, marketing/communications, and public outreach**. With increasing diversity in both race and age, Indian River County should remain prepared to change its offerings over time.

Recreation Trends Analysis

The Trends Analysis provides an understanding of national, regional, and local recreational trends as well as recreational interest by age segments. Trends data used for this analysis was obtained from Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). All trend data is based on current and/or historical participation rates, statistically valid survey results, or NRPA Park Metrics.

National Trends in Recreation

Methodology

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) *Sports, Fitness & Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report 2023* was utilized in evaluating the following trends:

- National Recreation Participatory Trends
- Core vs. Casual Participation Trends



The study is based on findings from surveys conducted in 2022 by the Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS), resulting in a total of 18,000 online interviews. Surveys were administered to all genders, ages, income levels, regions, and ethnicities to allow for statistical accuracy of the national population. A sample size of 18,000 completed interviews is considered by SFIA to result in a high degree of statistical accuracy. A sport with a participation rate of five percent has a confidence interval of plus or minus 0.32 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. Using a weighting technique, survey results are applied to the total U.S. population figure of 305,439,858 people (ages six and older).

The purpose of the report is to establish levels of activity and identify key participatory trends in recreation across the U.S. This study looked at 120 different sports/activities and subdivided them into various categories including: sports, fitness, outdoor activities, aquatics, and others.

Overall Participation

Approximately 236.9 million people ages six and over reported being active in 2022, which is a 1.9% increase from 2021 and the greatest number of active Americans in the last 6 years. This is an indicator that Americans are continuing to make physical activity more of a priority in their lives. Outdoor activities continue to thrive, recreation facilities reopened. Fitness at home maintains popularity, and team sports are slowly reaching prepandemic participation levels. The chart below depicts participation levels for active and inactive (those who engage in no physical activity) Americans over the past 6 years.

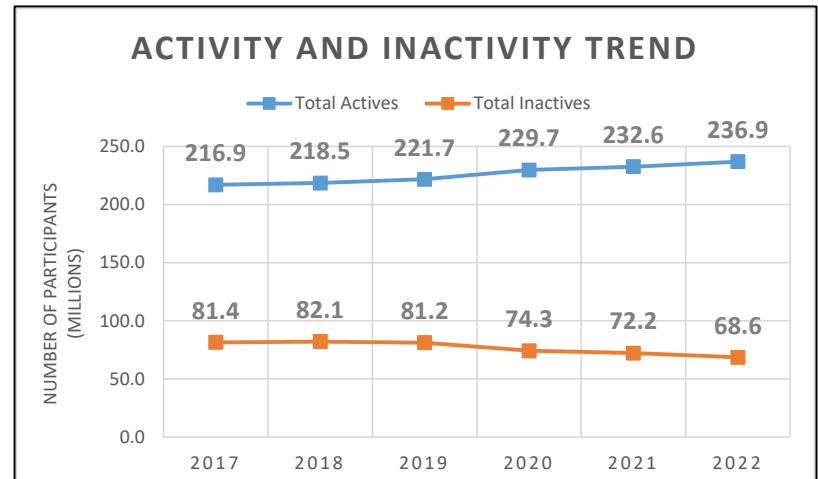


Figure 10: Active vs. Nonactive Trend

Core vs. Casual Participation

In addition to overall participation rates, SFIA further categorizes active participants as either core or casual participants based on frequency of participation. Core participants have higher participatory frequency than casual participants. The thresholds that define casual versus core participation may vary based on the nature of each individual activity. For instance, core participants engage in most fitness activities more than fifty times per year, while for sports, the threshold for core participation is typically 13 times per year.

In each activity, core participants are more committed and tend to be less likely to switch to other activities or become inactive (engage in no physical activity) than causal participants. This may also explain why activities with more core participants tend to experience less pattern shifts in participation rates than those with larger groups of casual participants. Increasing for the fifth straight year, 158.1 million people were considered CORE participants in 2022.

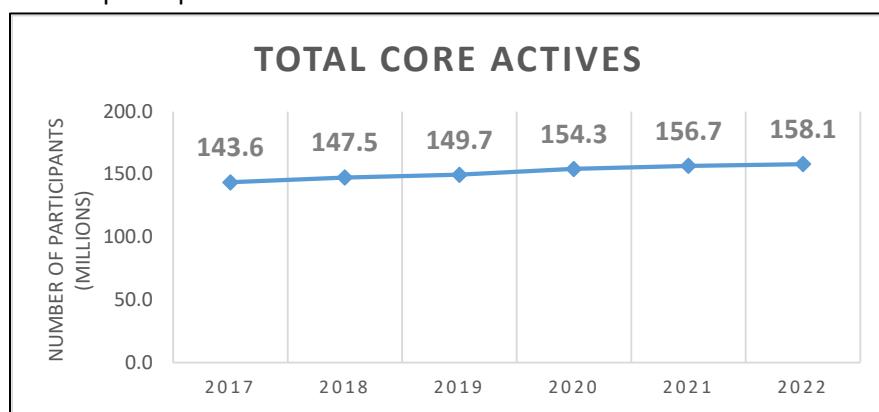


Figure 11: Total Core Actives

Participation By Generation

The following chart shows 2022 participation rates by generation. Fitness sports continue to be the go-to means of exercise for Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials. Over half of the Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z generation participated in one type of outdoor activity. Team sports were heavily dominated by generation Gen Z and nearly a third of Gen X also participated in individual sports such as golf, trail running, triathlons, and bowling.

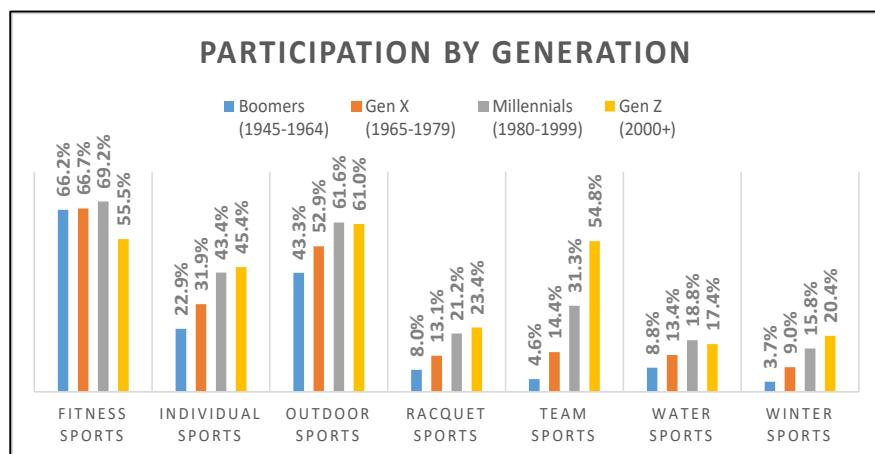


Figure 12: Participation by Generation

Highlights

Team sports are continuing to recover due to shutdowns during the pandemic. Team sports participation rate increased to 23.2% which is near 2019 participation levels. Pickleball continues to be the fastest growing sport in America by doubling its participation in 2022. Following the popularity of pickleball, every racquet sport also increased in total participation in 2022.

Americans continued to practice yoga, attend Pilates training, workout with kettlebells, started indoor climbing, while others took to the hiking trail. The waterways traffic had an increase of stand-up paddleboarders, kayakers, and jet skiers. Gymnastics, swimming on a team, court volleyball, and fast-pitch softball benefited from the participation boom created from the Olympics.

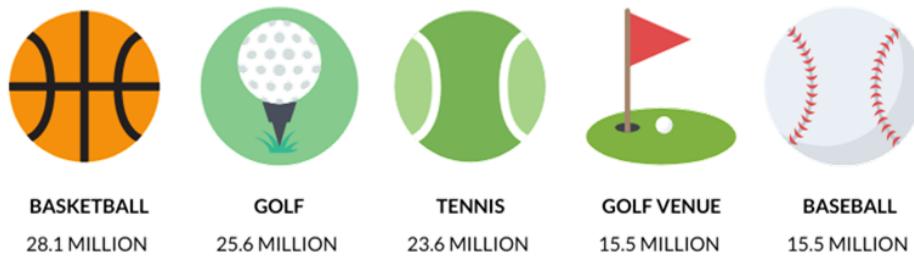
Water sports had the largest gain in participation rates. Activities such as jet skiing, scuba diving, and boardsailing/windsurfing all contributed to the 7% increase. Outdoor sports continued to grow with 55% of the U.S. population participating. This rate remains higher than pre-pandemic levels with a 51% participation rate in 2019. The largest contributor to this gain was trail running, having a 45% increase over the last five years.

National Trends in General Sports

Participation Levels

The top sports most heavily participated in the United States were basketball (28.1 million), golf (25.6 million), and tennis (23.6 million) which have participation figures well more than the other activities within the general sports category. Baseball (15.5 million) and outdoor soccer (13.0 million) round out the top five.

The popularity of basketball, golf, and tennis can be attributed to the ability to compete with small number of participants. This coupled with an ability to be played outdoors and/or properly distanced helps explain their popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Basketball's overall success can also be attributed to the limited amount of equipment needed to participate and the limited space requirements necessary, which make basketball the only traditional sport that can be played at most American dwellings as a drive-way pickup game. Golf continues to benefit from its wide age segment appeal and is considered a life-long sport. In addition, target type game venues or golf entertainment venues have increased drastically (86.2%) as a 5-year trend, using golf entertainment (e.g., Top Golf) as a new alternative to breathe life back into the game of golf.



Five-Year Trend

Since 2017, pickleball (185.7%), golf entertainment venues (86.2%), and tennis (33.4%) have shown the largest increase in participation. Similarly, basketball (20.3%) and outdoor soccer (9.2%) have also experienced significant growth. Based on the five-year trend from 2017-2022, the sports that are most rapidly declining in participation include ultimate frisbee (-31.5%), rugby (-28.1%), and roller hockey. (-25.4%).

One-Year Trend

The most recent year shares some similarities with the five-year trends; with pickleball (85.7%) and golf - entertainment venues (25.7%) experiencing some of the greatest increases in participation this past year. Other top one-year increases include racquetball (8.0%), badminton (7.1%), and gymnastics (7.1%).

Sports that have seen moderate 1-year increases, but 5-year decreases are racquetball (8.0%), gymnastics (7.1%), and court volleyball (4.2%). This could be a result of coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and team program participation on the rise. Similar to their 5-year trend, rugby (-5.8%), roller hockey (-4.0%), and ultimate frisbee (-2.2%) have seen decreases in participation over the last year.

Core vs. Casual Trends in General Sports

General sport activities, basketball, court volleyball, and slow pitch softball have a larger core participant base (participate 13+ times per year) than casual participant base (participate 1-12 times per year). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most activities showed a decrease in their percentage of core participants. However, there were significant increases in the percentage of casual participation for basketball, baseball, pickleball, outdoor soccer, flag football, badminton, and indoor soccer in the past year. *Please see Appendix B for the full Core vs. Casual Participation breakdown.*

Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2017	2021	2022	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Basketball	23,401	27,135	28,149	20.3%	3.7%
Golf (9 or 18-Hole Course)	23,829	25,111	25,566	7.3%	1.8%
Tennis	17,683	22,617	23,595	33.4%	4.3%
Golf (Entertainment Venue)	8,345	12,362	15,540	86.2%	25.7%
Baseball	15,642	15,587	15,478	-1.0%	-0.7%
Soccer (Outdoor)	11,924	12,556	13,018	9.2%	3.7%
Pickleball	3,132	4,819	8,949	185.7%	85.7%
Football (Flag)	6,551	6,889	7,104	8.4%	3.1%
Badminton	6,430	6,061	6,490	0.9%	7.1%
Volleyball (Court)	6,317	5,849	6,092	-3.6%	4.2%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	7,283	6,008	6,036	-17.1%	0.5%
Soccer (Indoor)	5,399	5,408	5,495	1.8%	1.6%
Football (Tackle)	5,224	5,228	5,436	4.1%	4.0%
Football (Touch)	5,629	4,884	4,843	-14.0%	-0.8%
Gymnastics	4,805	4,268	4,569	-4.9%	7.1%
Volleyball (Sand/Beach)	4,947	4,184	4,128	-16.6%	-1.3%
Track and Field	4,161	3,587	3,690	-11.3%	2.9%
Racquetball	3,526	3,260	3,521	-0.1%	8.0%
Cheerleading	3,816	3,465	3,507	-8.1%	1.2%
Ice Hockey	2,544	2,306	2,278	-10.5%	-1.2%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	2,309	2,088	2,146	-7.1%	2.8%
Ultimate Frisbee	3,126	2,190	2,142	-31.5%	-2.2%
Wrestling	1,896	1,937	2,036	7.4%	5.1%
Lacrosse	2,171	1,892	1,875	-13.6%	-0.9%
Roller Hockey	1,834	1,425	1,368	-25.4%	-4.0%
Squash	1,492	1,185	1,228	-17.7%	3.6%
Rugby	1,621	1,238	1,166	-28.1%	-5.8%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over

Participation Growth/Decline:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	
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Figure 13: General Sports National Participatory Trends

National Trends in General Fitness

Participation levels

Overall, national participatory trends in fitness have experienced growth in recent years. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest among Americans to improve their health and enhance their quality of life by engaging in an active lifestyle. The most popular general fitness activities in 2022 also were those that could be done at home or in a virtual class environment. The activities with the most participation are walking for fitness (114.8 million), treadmill (53.6 million), free weights (53.1 million), running/jogging (47.8 million), and yoga (33.6 million).



Five-Year Trend

Over the last five years (2017-2022), the activities growing at the highest rate were trail running (44.9%), yoga (23.0%), Pilates training (14.0%) and dance, step and choreographed exercise. Over the same period, the activities that have undergone the biggest decline in participation include group stationary cycling (-33.4%), cross-training style workout (-32.1%) and non-traditional/off road triathlons (-28.1%).

One-year Trend

In the last year, fitness activities with the largest gains in participation were group-related activities, cardio kickboxing (8.5%), Pilates training (5.8%), and group stationary cycling (5.5%). This 1-year trend is another indicator that participants feel safe returning to group-related activities. Trail running (5.9%) also saw a moderate increase indicating trail connectivity to continue to be important for communities to provide. In the same span, fitness activities that had the largest decline in participation were cross-training style workout (-5.3%), bodyweight exercise (-2.6%) and running/jogging (-2.4%).

Core vs. Casual Trends in General Fitness

Participants of walking for fitness are mostly core users (participating 50+ times) and have seen a 1.5% growth in the last five years. *Please see Appendix B for the full core vs. casual participation breakdown.*

National Participatory Trends - General Fitness					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2017	2021	2022	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Walking for Fitness	110,805	115,814	114,759	3.6%	-0.9%
Treadmill	52,966	53,627	53,589	1.2%	-0.1%
Free Weights (Dumbbells/Hand Weights)	52,217	52,636	53,140	1.8%	1.0%
Running/Jogging	50,770	48,977	47,816	-5.8%	-2.4%
Yoga	27,354	34,347	33,636	23.0%	-2.1%
Stationary Cycling (Recumbent/Upright)	36,035	32,453	32,102	-10.9%	-1.1%
Weight/Resistant Machines	36,291	30,577	30,010	-17.3%	-1.9%
Free Weights (Barbells)	27,444	28,243	28,678	4.5%	1.5%
Elliptical Motion/Cross-Trainer	32,283	27,618	27,051	-16.2%	-2.1%
Dance, Step, & Choreographed Exercise	22,616	24,752	25,163	11.3%	1.7%
Bodyweight Exercise	24,454	22,629	22,034	-9.9%	-2.6%
High Impact/Intensity Training	21,476	21,973	21,821	1.6%	-0.7%
Trail Running	9,149	12,520	13,253	44.9%	5.9%
Rowing Machine	11,707	11,586	11,893	1.6%	2.6%
Stair Climbing Machine	14,948	11,786	11,677	-21.9%	-0.9%
Pilates Training	9,047	9,745	10,311	14.0%	5.8%
Cross-Training Style Workout	13,622	9,764	9,248	-32.1%	-5.3%
Martial Arts	5,838	6,186	6,355	8.9%	2.7%
Stationary Cycling (Group)	9,409	5,939	6,268	-33.4%	5.5%
Cardio Kickboxing	6,693	5,099	5,531	-17.4%	8.5%
Boxing for Fitness	5,157	5,237	5,472	6.1%	4.5%
Boot Camp Style Cross-Training	6,651	5,169	5,192	-21.9%	0.4%
Barre	3,436	3,659	3,803	10.7%	3.9%
Tai Chi	3,787	3,393	3,394	-10.4%	0.0%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	2,162	1,748	1,780	-17.7%	1.8%
Triathlon (Non-Traditional/Off Road)	1,878	1,304	1,350	-28.1%	3.5%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over

Participation Growth/Decline:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	
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Figure 14: General Fitness National Participatory Trends

National Trends in Outdoor/Adventure Recreation

Participation Levels

Results from the SFIA report demonstrate rapid growth in participation regarding outdoor/adventure recreation activities. Much like general fitness activities, these activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually, and are not as limited by time constraints. In 2022, the most popular activities, in terms of total participants include day hiking (59.5 million), road bicycling (43.6 million), freshwater fishing (41.8 million), camping (37.4 million), and wildlife viewing (20.6 million).



Five-year Trend

From 2017-2022, sport/bouldering (174.8%), camping (42.5%), skateboarding (41.3%), day hiking (32.7%), birdwatching (28.6%) has undergone large increases in participation. The five-year trend also shows activities such as indoor climbing (-51.4%), adventure racing (-32.2%) to be the only activities with double-digit decreases in participation.

One-year Trend

The one-year trend shows most activities growing in participation from the previous year. The most rapid growth being in sport/boulder climbing (151.1%), BMX bicycling (8.3%), birdwatching (6.8%), and in-line roller skating (4.7%). Over the last year, the only activities that underwent decreases in participation were indoor climbing (-56.9%), adventure racing (-6.1%), and overnight backpacking (-0.9%).

Core vs. Casual Trends in Outdoor / Adventure Recreation

Most outdoor activities have experienced participation growth in the last five years. Although this is a positive trend, it should be noted that all outdoor activities participation, besides adventure racing, consist primarily of casual users. *Please see Appendix B for the full core vs. casual participation breakdown.*

National Participatory Trends - Outdoor / Adventure Recreation					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2017	2021	2022	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Hiking (Day)	44,900	58,697	59,578	32.7%	1.5%
Bicycling (Road)	38,866	42,775	43,554	12.1%	1.8%
Fishing (Freshwater)	38,346	40,853	41,821	9.1%	2.4%
Camping	26,262	35,985	37,431	42.5%	4.0%
Wildlife Viewing (>1/4 mile of Vehicle/Home)	20,351	20,452	20,615	1.3%	0.8%
Camping (Recreational Vehicle)	16,159	16,371	16,840	4.2%	2.9%
Birdwatching (>1/4 mile of Vehicle/Home)	12,296	14,815	15,818	28.6%	6.8%
Fishing (Saltwater)	13,062	13,790	14,344	9.8%	4.0%
Backpacking Overnight	10,975	10,306	10,217	-6.9%	-0.9%
Skateboarding	6,382	8,747	9,019	41.3%	3.1%
Bicycling (Mountain)	8,609	8,693	8,916	3.6%	2.6%
Fishing (Fly)	6,791	7,458	7,631	12.4%	2.3%
Archery	7,769	7,342	7,428	-4.4%	1.2%
Climbing (Sport/Boulder)	2,103	2,301	5,778	174.8%	151.1%
Roller Skating, In-Line	5,268	4,940	5,173	-1.8%	4.7%
Bicycling (BMX)	3,413	3,861	4,181	22.5%	8.3%
Climbing (Indoor)	5,045	5,684	2,452	-51.4%	-56.9%
Climbing (Traditional/Ice/Mountaineering)	2,527	2,374	2,452	-3.0%	3.3%
Adventure Racing	2,529	1,826	1,714	-32.2%	-6.1%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Participation Growth/Decline:		Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)

Figure 15: Outdoor/Adventure Participatory Trends

National Trends in Aquatics

Participation Levels

Swimming is deemed a lifetime activity, which is why it continues to have such strong participation. In 2022, fitness swimming remained the overall leader in participation (26.3 million) amongst aquatic activities.



FITNESS SWIMMING	AQUATIC EXERCISE	SWIMMING ON A TEAM
43.6 MILLION	41.8 MILLION	37.4 MILLION

Five-year Trend

Assessing the five-year trend, fitness swimming (-3.2%) and swimming on a team (-3.4%) experienced moderate decreases due to the accessibility of facilities during COVID-19. While aquatic exercise (2.1%) saw a slight increase in participation during this same time period.

One-year Trend

In 2022, all aquatic activities saw moderate increases in participation which can be asserted to facilities and programs returning to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. Swimming on a team (2.8%), aquatic exercise (2.7%) andn fitness swimming (2.5%) saw moderate increases in participation.

Core vs. Casual Trends in Aquatics

All activities in aquatic trends have undergone an increase in casual participation (1-49 times per year) over the last five years. *Please see Appendix B for full the core vs. casual participation breakdown.*

National Participatory Trends - Aquatics					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2017	2021	2022	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Swimming (Fitness)	27,135	25,620	26,272	-3.2%	2.5%
Aquatic Exercise	10,459	10,400	10,676	2.1%	2.7%
Swimming on a Team	3,007	2,824	2,904	-3.4%	2.8%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over

Participation Growth/Decline:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	
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Figure 16: Aquatics Participatory Trends

National Trends in Water Sports/Activities

Participation Level

The most popular water sports / activities based on total participants in 2022 were recreational kayaking (13.6 million), canoeing (9.5 million), and snorkeling (7.4 million). It should be noted that water activity participation tends to vary based on regional, seasonal, and environmental factors. A region with more water access and a warmer climate is more likely to have a higher participation rate in water activities than a region that has a long winter season or limited water access. Therefore, when assessing trends in water sports and activities, it is important to understand that fluctuations may be the result of environmental barriers which can influence water activity participation.



Five-year Trend

Over the last five years, surfing (37.8%), recreational kayaking (28.7%), stand-up paddling (13.6%) and white-water kayaking (9.0%) were the fastest growing water activities. From 2017-2022, activities declining in participation were water skiing (-14.9%), snorkeling (-12.0%), boardsailing/windsurfing (-11.6%), and sea/touring kayaking (10.6%).

One-year Trend

In 2022, water skiing (-0.6%) was the only water activity to see a decrease in participation. Activities which experienced the largest increases in participation in the most recent year include jet skiing (7.6%), scuba diving (7.4%), boardsailing/windsurfing (7.2%), and surfing (6.6%).

Core vs. Casual Trends in Water Sports / Activities

As mentioned previously, regional, seasonal, and environmental limiting factors may influence the participation rate of water sport and activities. These factors may also explain why all water-based activities have drastically more casual participants than core participants, since frequencies of activities may be constrained by uncontrollable factors. *Please see Appendix B for the full core vs. casual participation breakdown.*

National Participatory Trends - Water Sports / Activities					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2017	2021	2022	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Kayaking (Recreational)	10,533	13,351	13,561	28.7%	1.6%
Canoeing	9,220	9,199	9,521	3.3%	3.5%
Snorkeling	8,384	7,316	7,376	-12.0%	0.8%
Jet Skiing	5,418	5,062	5,445	0.5%	7.6%
Stand-Up Paddling	3,325	3,739	3,777	13.6%	1.0%
Surfing	2,680	3,463	3,692	37.8%	6.6%
Sailing	3,974	3,463	3,632	-8.6%	4.9%
Rafting	3,479	3,383	3,595	3.3%	6.3%
Water Skiing	3,572	3,058	3,040	-14.9%	-0.6%
Wakeboarding	3,005	2,674	2,754	-8.4%	3.0%
Kayaking (White Water)	2,500	2,587	2,726	9.0%	5.4%
Scuba Diving	2,874	2,476	2,658	-7.5%	7.4%
Kayaking (Sea/Touring)	2,955	2,587	2,642	-10.6%	2.1%
Boardsailing/Windsurfing	1,573	1,297	1,391	-11.6%	7.2%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over

Participation Growth/Decline:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	
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Figure 17: Water Sports/Activities National Participatory Trends

Local Sport and Leisure Market Potential

Local Sport and Leisure Market Potential

The following charts show sport and leisure market potential data for Indian River County residents, as provided by ESRI. Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the defined service areas. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident will participate in certain activities when compared to the U.S. national average. The national average is 100; therefore, numbers below 100 would represent lower than average participation rates, and numbers above 100 would represent higher than average participation rates. The service area is compared to the national average in four (4) categories: General Sports, Fitness, Outdoor Activity, and Commercial Recreation.

It should be noted that MPI metrics are only one data point used to help determine community trends; thus, program decisions should not be based solely on MPI metrics.

Overall, when analyzing Indian River County's MPIs, the data demonstrates some varied market potential index (MPI) numbers in all assessed areas, with some higher potential in several more specific activities. For example, Golf and Swimming both scored well above the national average, while also outperforming most of their other General Sports or Fitness counterparts according to the analysis. Something to note about Indian River County's MPI scores is the variety of MPI scores; in any given section, some scores may well above the national average, while other activities (such as Rock Climbing) score as low as 76. This becomes significant when the County considers starting up new programs or building new facilities, giving them a strong tool to estimate resident interest, facility attendance, and program participation in more specific offerings.

The following charts compare MPI scores for 46 sport and leisure activities that are prevalent for residents within Indian River County. The activities are categorized by activity type and listed in descending order, from highest to lowest MPI score. High index numbers (100+) are significant because they demonstrate that there is a greater likelihood that residents within the service area will actively participate in those offerings provided by the County.

General Sports Market Potential

The following chart shows that only one of Indian River County's recorded General Sports is above the national average regarding MPI, with the three highest scores belonging to Golf (115), Football (92), and Softball (89). Indian River County's General Sports scores are otherwise **below average**, with the lowest scoring activities (Tennis, Basketball, and Soccer scoring at 77, 74, and 71 respectively) all ranking well below the national average of 100 (**Figure 18**).

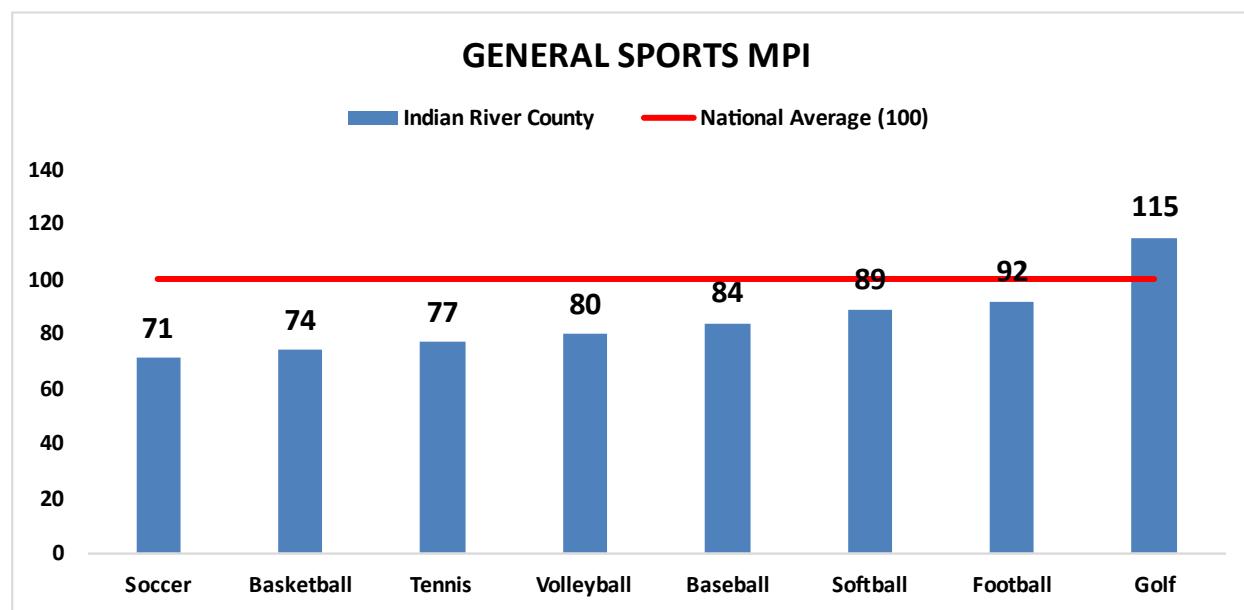


Figure 18: General Sports MPI for Indian River County

Fitness Market Potential

Assessing MPI scores for the Fitness Activity category reveals that Indian River County's fitness activities are also **nearly all below the national average**, with the exceptions of Walking for Exercise (105) and Swimming (105). The lowest scored activities were Pilates (83), Zumba (82), and Jogging/Running (74) (Figure 19).

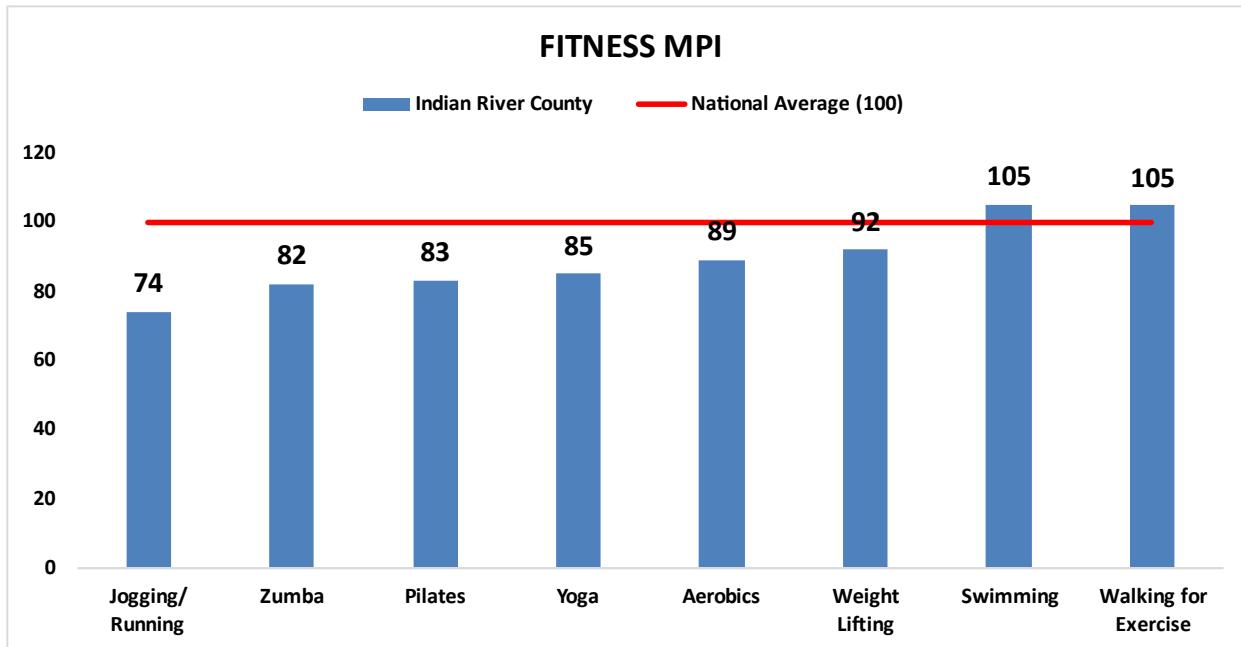


Figure 19: Fitness MPI for Indian River County

Outdoor Activity Market Potential

Indian River County's Outdoor Activity MPI chart reflected some relatively strong scores compared to that of its General Sports and Fitness MPI; the County has several activities **above the national average**, with the most popular activity being fishing, as Saltwater Fishing (116) and Freshwater Fishing (107) rounded out the top of the chart. Most other activities scored at least a 90, with the lone exception being Rock Climbing at 76 (**Figure 20**).

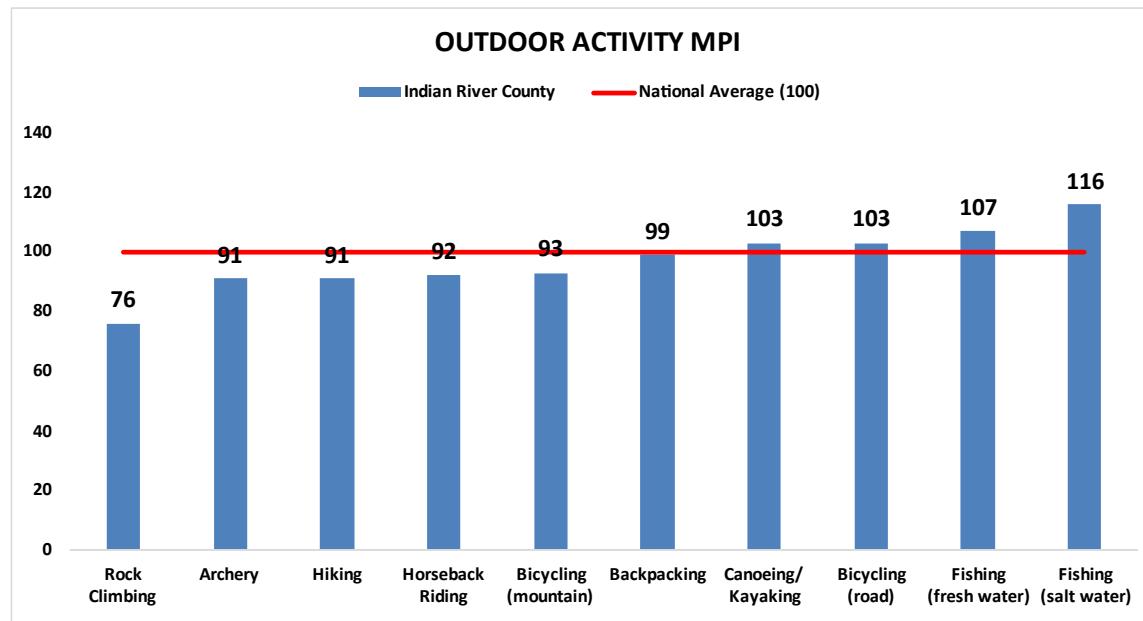


Figure 20: Outdoor Activity MPI for Indian River County

Commercial Recreation Market Potential

The Commercial Recreation category reveals that almost all the recorded Commercial Recreation activities are **below the national average**, with the sole exception of 'Dined Out' (102); however, there were several activities that just barely missed the mark. Alternatively, 'Visited a Zoo' and 'Played video electronic game' (both portable and console) gave Indian River County its lowest scores. The types of activities that are popular in Indian River County are diverse; artistic activities and sports activities alike have relatively **high ratings across the board**. One thing to note is the relatively high willingness to spend money on sports or recreational equipment, as the 'Spent \$1-\$99' and 'Spent \$100-\$249' categories both scored at 99 and the 'Spent \$250+' category scored at 91. Paired with the other MPI ratings (General Sports, Fitness, and Outdoor Activity), these activities could signal potential target areas for new facilities, (like a multi-generational community center) funding, or programs for the County (**Figure 21**).

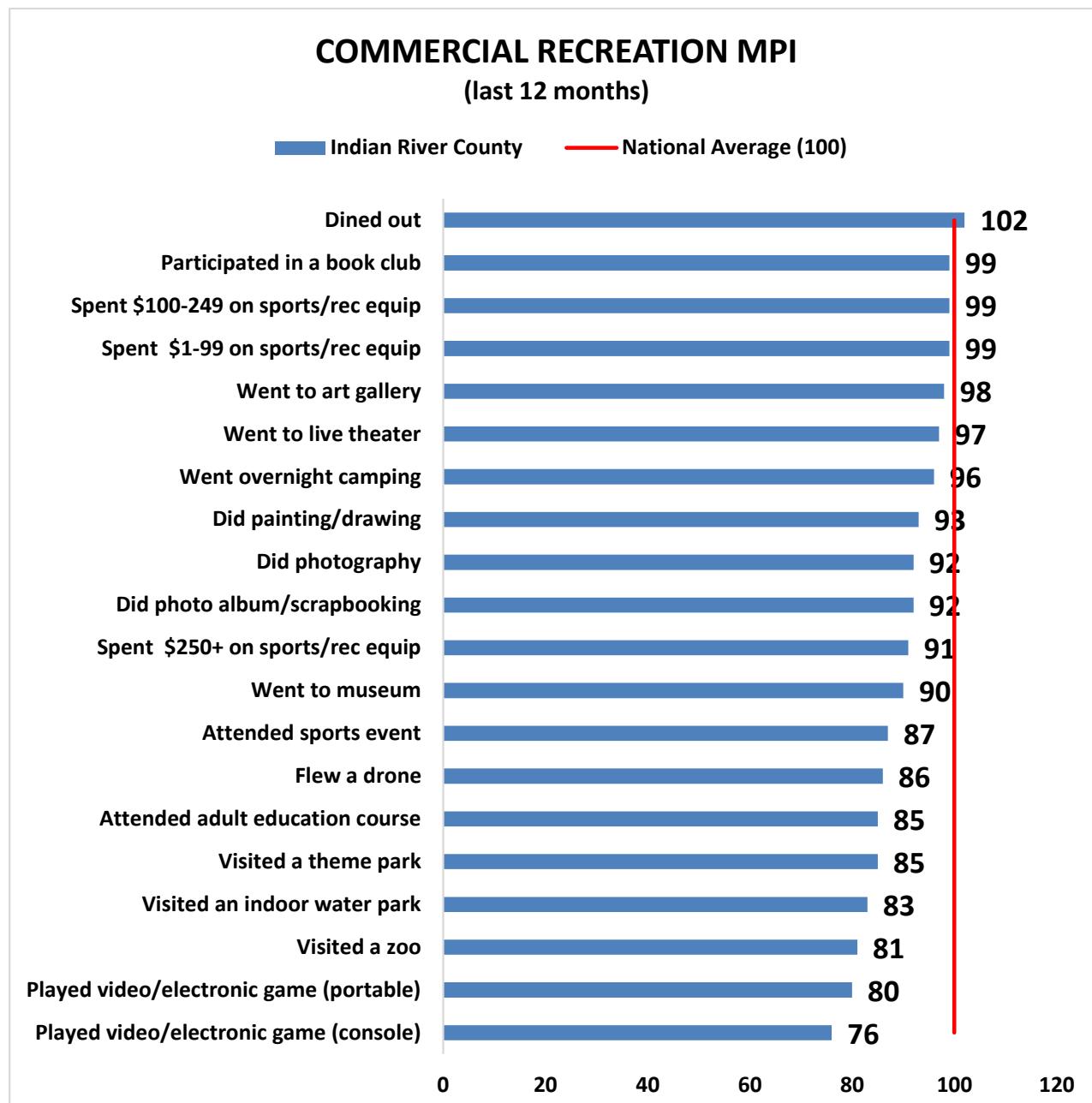


Figure 21: Commercial Recreation MPI for Indian River County

Summary of Community Engagement

The *Indian River County Parks and Recreation Master Plan* was launched in October 2023, which included a robust public engagement process to inventory the current conditions of the system and to help determine the needs and priorities for the future. The planning process incorporated a variety of input from the community, including a series of key stakeholder interviews, staff input, and a community-wide statistically valid survey. Details on specific strategies included the following outreach methods:

- Stakeholder interviews with the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator's Office, and leaders in the communities of Sebastian, Fellsmere, Vero Beach, Vero Lake Estates, Gifford, and Wabasso
- Stakeholder interviews and focus groups with multiple community groups, including regular users of parks and recreation amenities
- Four (4) public forums
- Staff SWOT Analysis
- Statistically Valid Survey
 - Goal was 400 responses, received 402
 - Precision of +/-4.9% at the 95% level of confidence
 - Residents were able to return the survey by mail, by phone or completing it online
- Online survey (411 responses)

The following sections in this chapter summarize and highlight the key findings from each stage of the community engagement process.

Key Stakeholder and Focus Group Summary Qualitative (Interviews)

As part of the Strategic Plan, key stakeholder interviews were conducted from January through May 2024 to provide a foundation for identifying community issues and key themes. The interviews provided valuable insight and assisted in the development of question topics that were beneficial for the statistically valid community survey. A series of questions that spurred conversation and follow up questions were asked when appropriate. Invited stakeholders were identified by the Department and included representatives from the following entities or interest groups:

- Play Treasure Coast
- City of Sebastian
- City of Vero Beach
- City of Fellsmere
- Community of Vero Lake Estates
- Youth Sports
- Adult Sports
- Seniors/Active Adults
- Families with Small Children
- Special Needs Populations

After speaking with several stakeholders and interest groups, it is clear that the community takes great pride in the County's park and recreation system and in the staff's ability to achieve meaningful community benefits through coordinated efforts and proper allocation of resources.

Vision for the Parks and Recreation System

Residents, Commission members, and community groups alike are appreciative of the current state of Indian River County Parks and Recreation, which is largely due to the staff on the front line as well as the back-end management staff. Several community members were pleased with the financial management of the Department, the programming, and the overall value received by households across the County from the parks and recreation offerings. Residents, Commissioners, and community groups are appreciative of the current state of Indian River County's Parks and Recreation system, which is largely attributed to the dedicated front-line staff and the County's executive leadership. Several community members praised the Department's use of allocated resources, programming, and the overall value provided to households across the County through Parks and Recreation.

For many community members, their vision for the Indian River County Parks and Recreation system aligns closely with both the County's current identity and its aspirations. There were calls for greater awareness and promotion of the Department's offerings, enhanced accessibility to parks and recreation amenities, and continued community engagement through partnerships with nonprofits, local businesses and organizations.

What Residents Value the Most

Residents recognize that the park system significantly contributes to the overall quality of life. They value the size and scope of the system, as well as the County's investment in parks and recreation sites and facilities. Additionally, residents highly appreciate the County's efforts in acquiring and protecting important conservation lands. Water access, including boat ramps and beach access, is also a top priority for residents across the County. One of the most frequently mentioned themes across nearly all forms of community input was the importance of trails and connectivity, as well as the need for high-quality neighborhood and community parks throughout the County, particularly near where residents live. Finally, stakeholders shared great support for many of the more unique features of the parks and recreation system such as the Indian River County Public Shooting Range, the Indian River County Fairgrounds, the North County Aquatic Center, and the facilities and adjacent amenities of the IG Recreation Center.

Challenges Facing the Department

Residents have expressed several challenges, including a lack of awareness about the Department's offerings, despite a comprehensive marketing and communication strategy that utilizes both print and digital media. Additionally, there are challenges related to physical infrastructure, such as the need for repairs and renovations of aging facilities and amenities at many older parks. Lastly, there is a growing interest in the development of new parks and recreational facilities that complement existing ones and help distribute amenities and recreational assets more evenly across the County.

Parks and Recreation Amenities / Programs Needed

Community members made specific requests for amenities they would like to see added to the parks system, including multi-use trails, additional neighborhood parks, shade structures, more conservation lands, and larger community or regional parks. For recreation programming, residents indicated a strong need for more diverse youth programming, adult fitness and wellness programs, additional County special events, and outdoor/environmental programming.

Statistically Valid Survey

ETC Institute administered a parks and recreation needs assessment survey for the Indian River County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department was completed during the winter and early spring months of 2024. This survey was used to gather input to help determine parks and recreation priorities for the community as part of the County's efforts in completing this *Master Plan*. In this process, it is important to identify future priorities of recreation and parks amenities, and facilities that also support programs and activities provided by the Department. Information gathered from the assessment provided data that will help determine priorities which the County can use to prioritize efforts and make decisions that meet community and resident needs.

Methodology

A survey packet was mailed to a random sample of households across the County. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it online at IndianRiverCountySurvey.org.

After the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute followed up with residents to encourage participation. To ensure that only Indian River County residents participated, individuals completing the survey online were required to provide their home address before submitting their responses. ETC Institute then cross-referenced the submitted addresses with those selected in the original random sample. If an online survey's address did not match one of the randomly selected addresses, that response was excluded from the final database used for this report.

The goal was to collect a minimum of 400 surveys from residents. The goal was met with 402 surveys collected. The overall results for the sample of 402 surveys has a precision of at least +/- 4.9 at the 95% level of confidence.

The full survey report is provided as a supplemental report to Master Plan, containing the following:

- Executive Summary (Section 1)
- Charts and graphs showing the overall results of the survey (Section 2)
- Priority Investment Ratings (PIR) Analysis that identifies priorities for facilities/ amenities and programs/ activities in the community (Section 3)
- Benchmarks comparing data from Indian River County to national averages (Section 4)
- Tabular Data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey (Section 5)
- Open-ended responses (Section 6)
- A copy of the survey instrument (Section 7)

The major findings of the survey are summarized on the following pages. The detailed findings report of the statistically valid survey can be found in **Appendix D** of this *Master Plan*.

Recreation Programs and Events

Communication Methods – Current

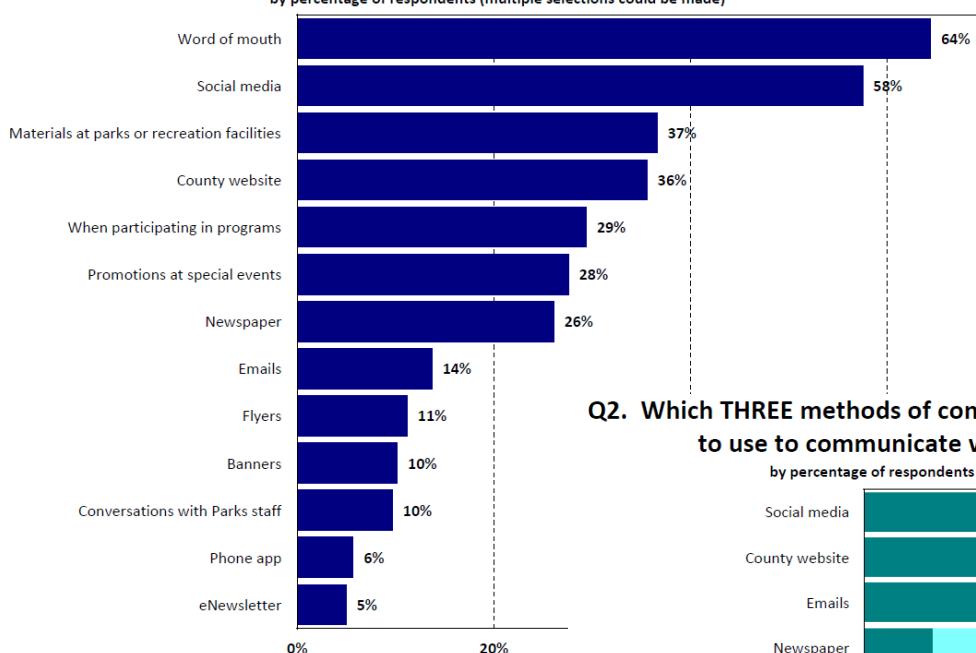
The most common way residents learn about the Department's amenities, events, and recreation programs is from word of mouth (64%), social media (58%), and materials at parks and recreation facilities (37%). This is followed closely by information available on the County's website (36%).

Preferred Methods of Communication

Alternatively, the preferred methods of communication and information sharing, as indicated by the percentage of respondents who selected each option among their top three choices, were social media (57%), the County website (38%), and informational emails from the County (35%).

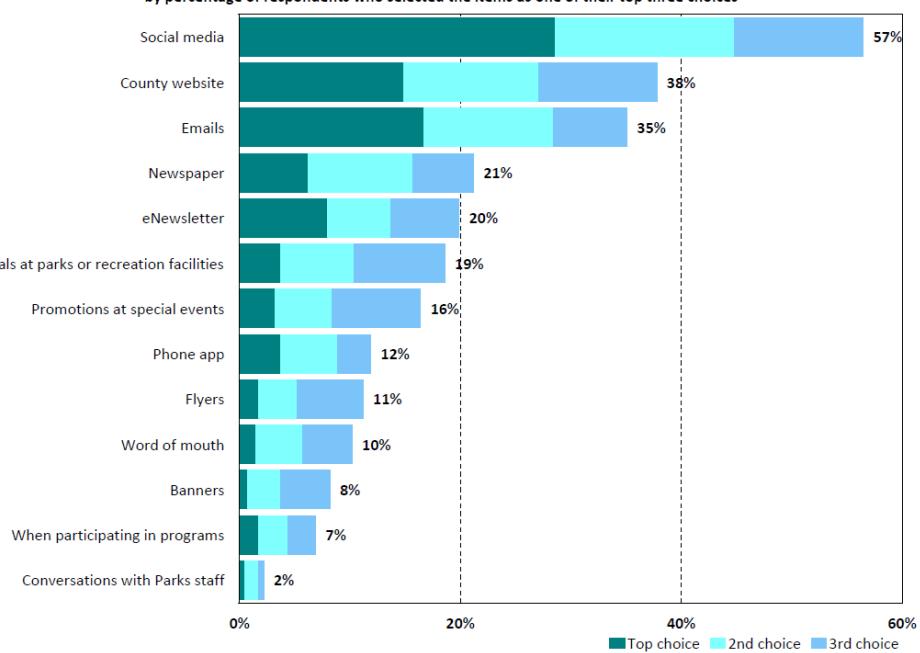
Q1. From the following list, please CHECK ALL the ways you learn about Indian River County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department programs/services.

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



Q2. Which THREE methods of communication would you MOST PREFER the county to use to communicate with you about P&R programs/services?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices

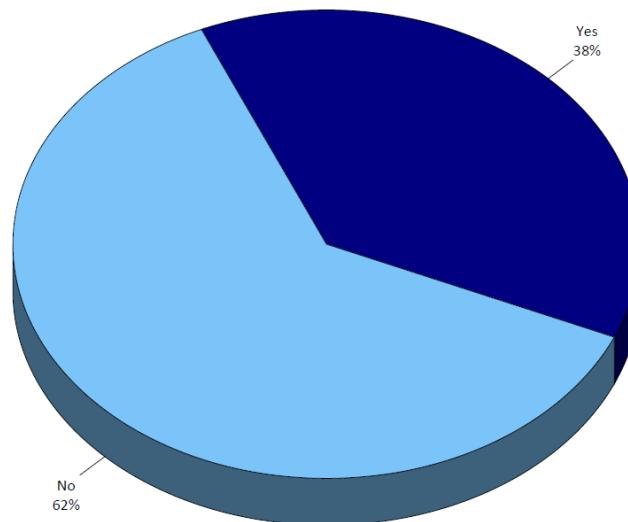


Program and Event Participation

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of respondents report participating in programs and events offered by the Department in the last year. Of those who participated, almost half (46%) report attending 2-3 programs followed by (25%) who participated in 1 program. Most participants (90%) rated the programs and events as either "good" (48%) or "excellent" (42%).

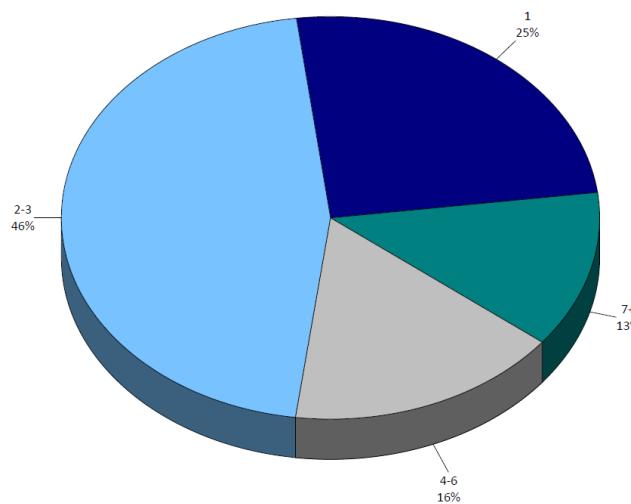
Q4. Has your household participated in any Programs/Events offered and/or hosted by IRC Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department during the past 12 months?

by percentage of respondents



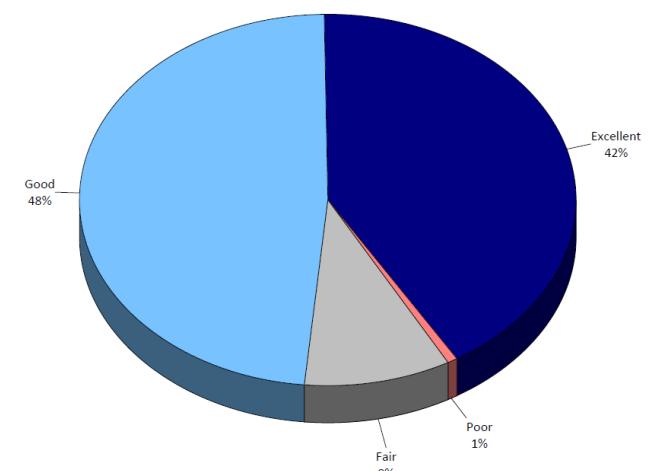
Q4a. How many Programs/Events offered and/or hosted by the IRC Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department have you/your household participated in?

by percentage of respondents



Q4b. How would you rate the overall quality of the IRC Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department Programs/Events in which your household has participated?

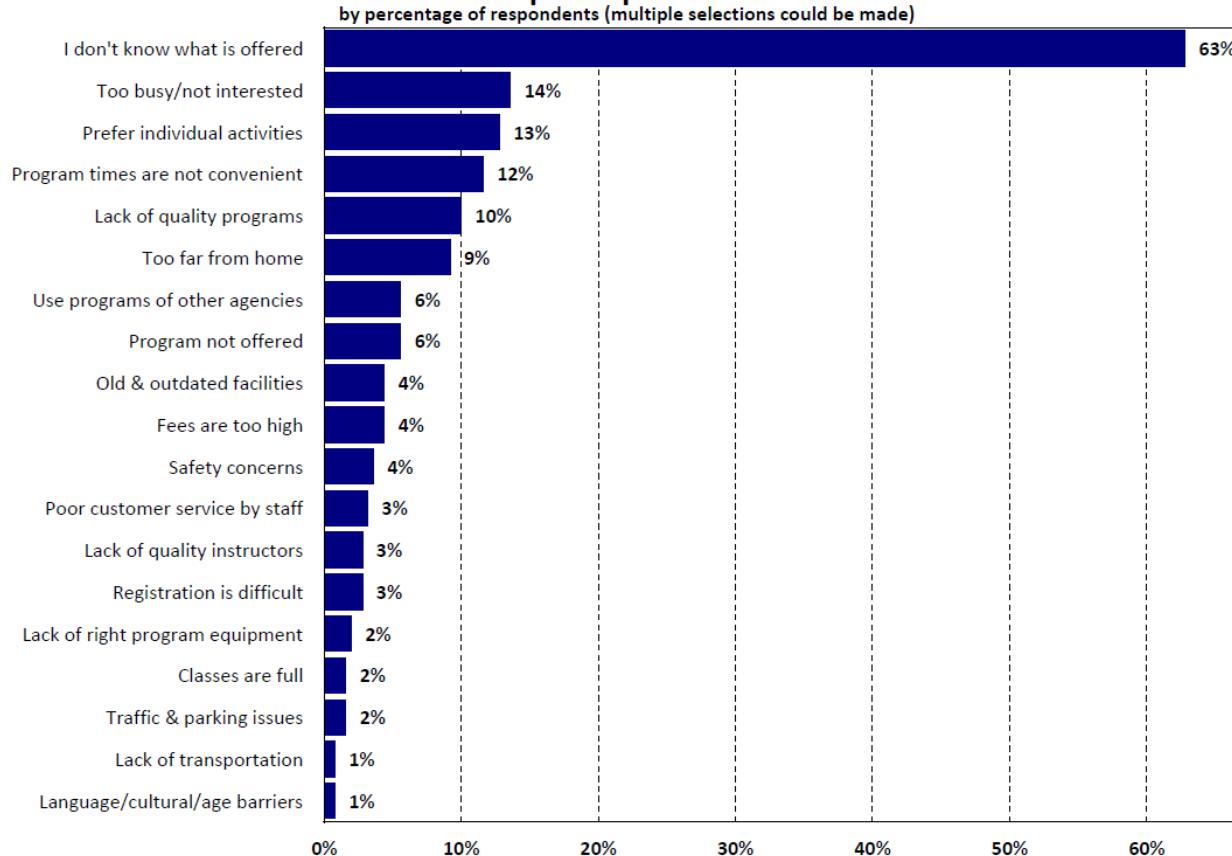
by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")



Barriers to Participation

63% of respondents most often selected not knowing what is offered, 14% of respondents selected busy schedule/lack of interest, and 13% responded that they prefer individual activities as their barriers to participation.

Q4c. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons why you may have NOT participated?



Indian River County Parks and Facilities

Event Type Interest

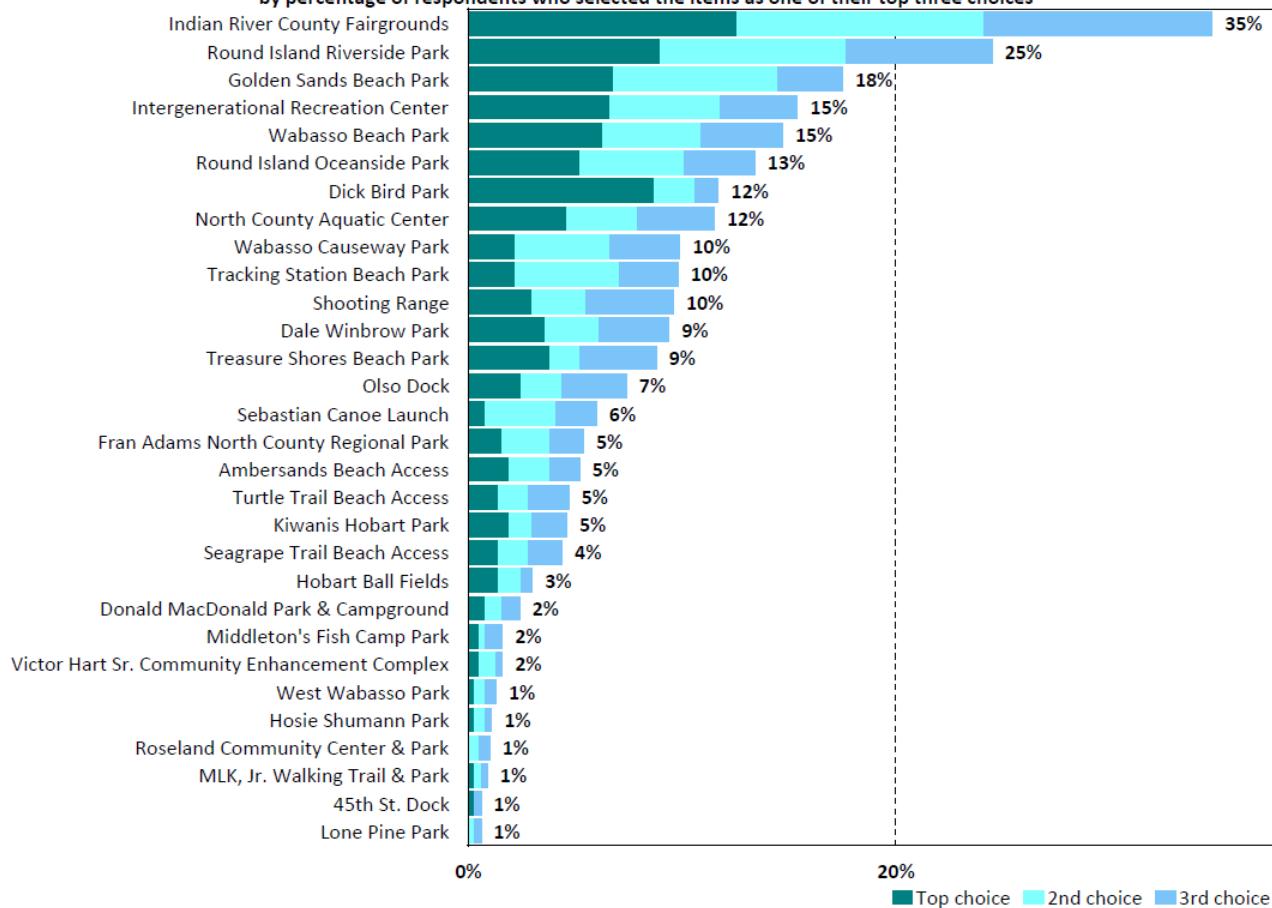
Respondents were asked to select the three single or multi-day event concepts their household would be most interested in. Food events (66%), entertainment (59%), and holiday celebrations (41%) were selected most often.

Most Used Parks / Facilities

Respondents were asked to select the three parks and facilities their household visits most often. Indian River County Fairgrounds (35%), Round Island Riverside Park (25%), and Golden Sands Beach Park (18%) were the parks or facilities selected most.

Q5a. Which THREE parks/facilities listed in Question 5 do you visit most often?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices

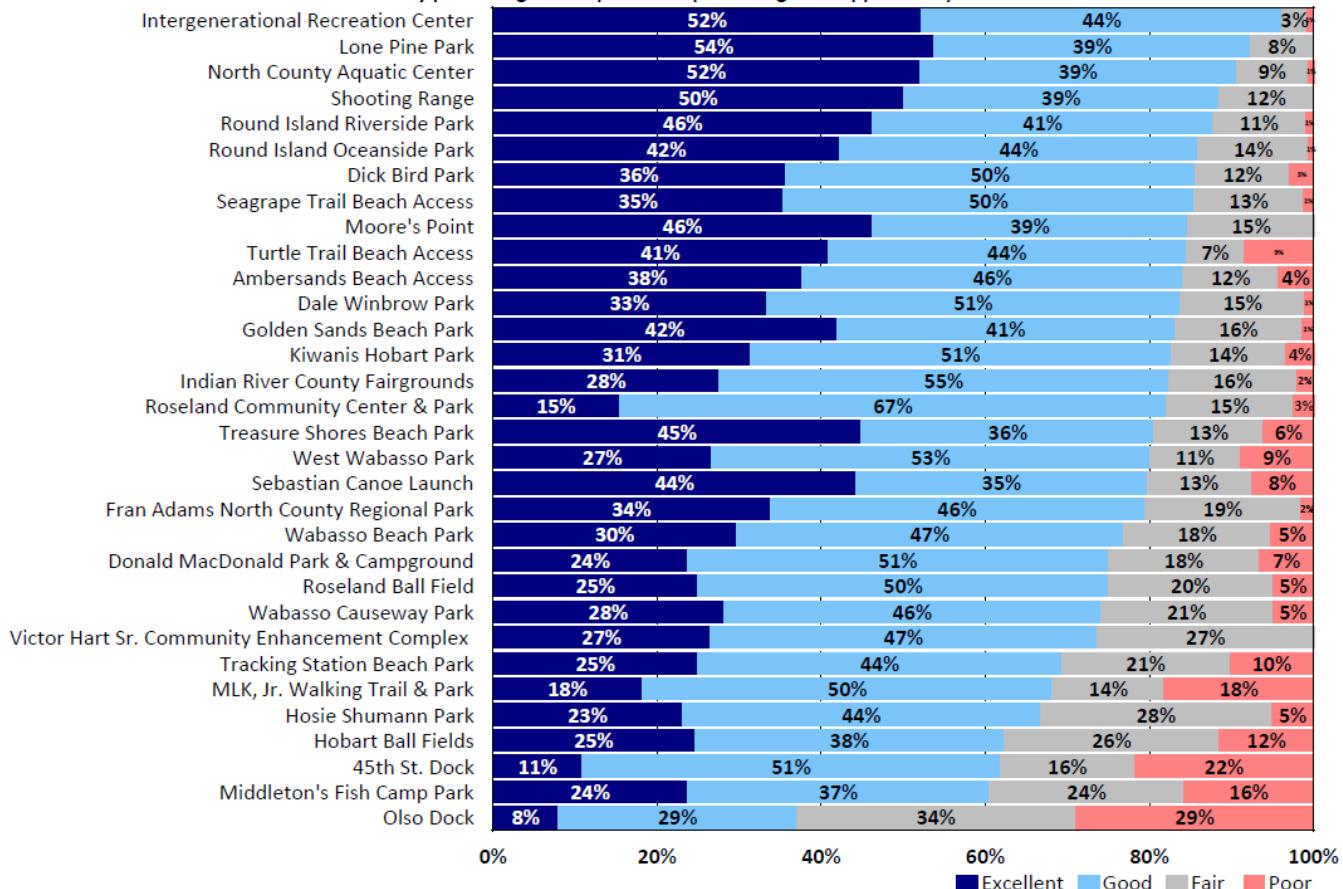


Condition of Parks / Facilities

Respondents were asked to rate the condition of each of the parks and facilities they visited in the last year. The parks and facilities rated highest (rated “excellent” or “good”) were Intergenerational Recreation Center (96%), Lone Pine Park (93%), and North County Aquatic Center (91%).

Q5. Please rate the condition of the parks and facilities you/your household have visited DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

by percentage of respondents (excluding "not applicable")

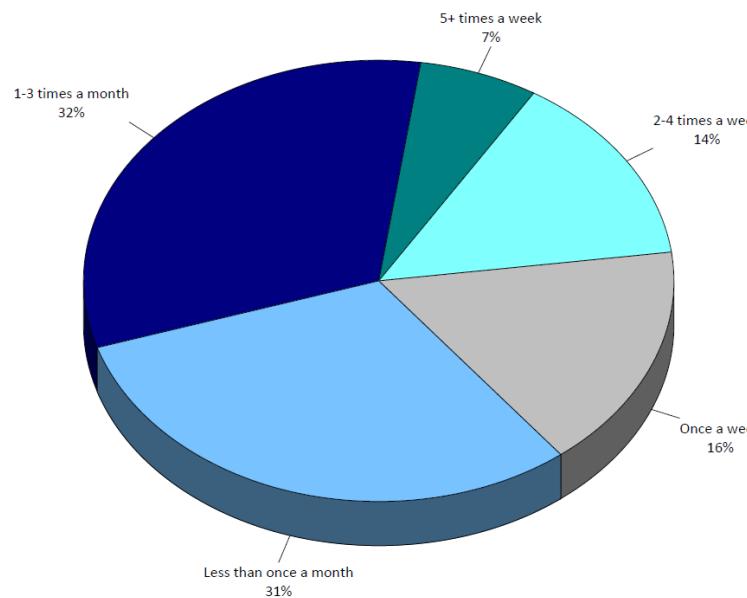


Frequency of Use

The highest percentage of respondents (32%) report visiting parks and facilities 1-3 times per month followed by 31% visiting less than once per month.

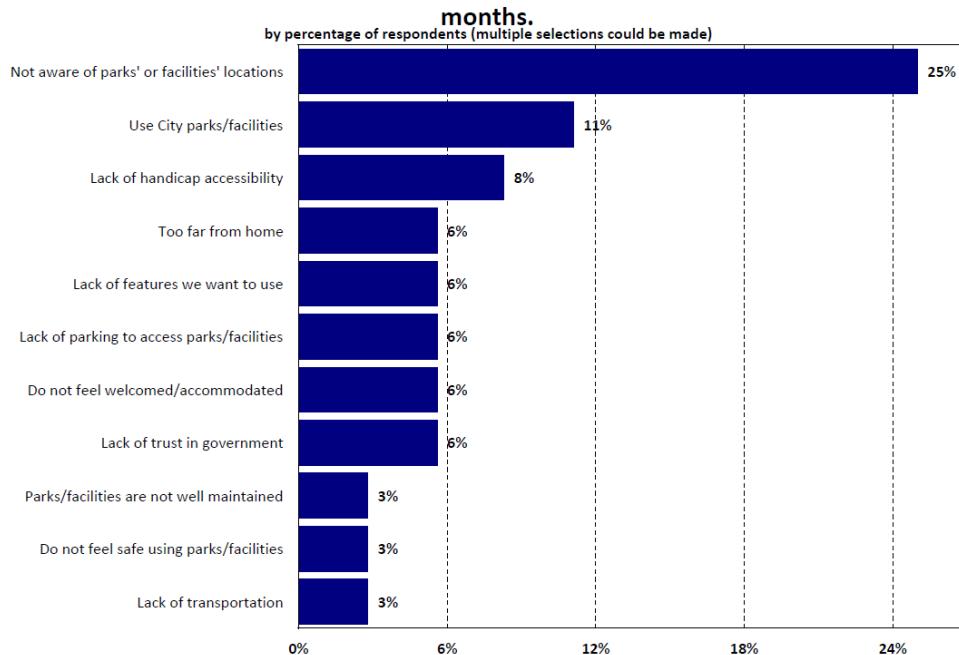
Q5b. How often have you visited Indian River County Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department parks/facilities during the last 12 months?

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know")



The highest percentage of respondents (25%) list not being aware of parks' or facilities' locations as their biggest barrier to use of parks and facilities in the last year followed by using County parks and facilities (11%) and lack of handicap accessibility (8%).

Q5c. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons you have NOT visited any IRC Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department parks/facilities during the past 12 months.



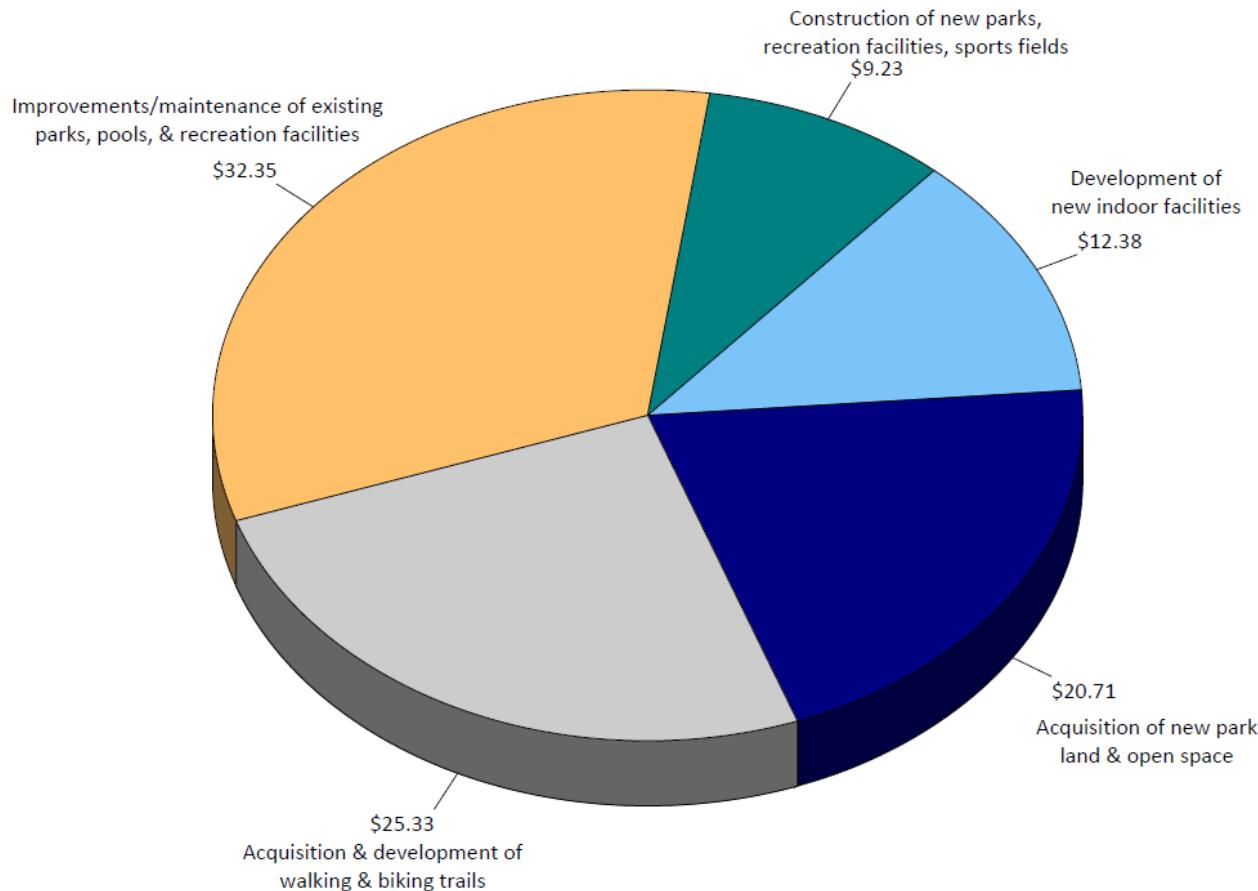
Benefits, Funding and Improvements

Capital Projects Funding

Respondents were asked to allocate funding for capital projects with a hypothetical \$100. The greatest amount of funding \$32.35 went toward improvements and maintenance of existing parks, pools, and recreation facilities, followed by \$25.33 toward acquisition and development of walking and biking trails, and \$20.71 for acquisition of new park lands and open space.

Q7. If you had an additional \$100 for CAPITAL PROJECTS, how would you allocate the funds among the P&R categories listed below?

by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")

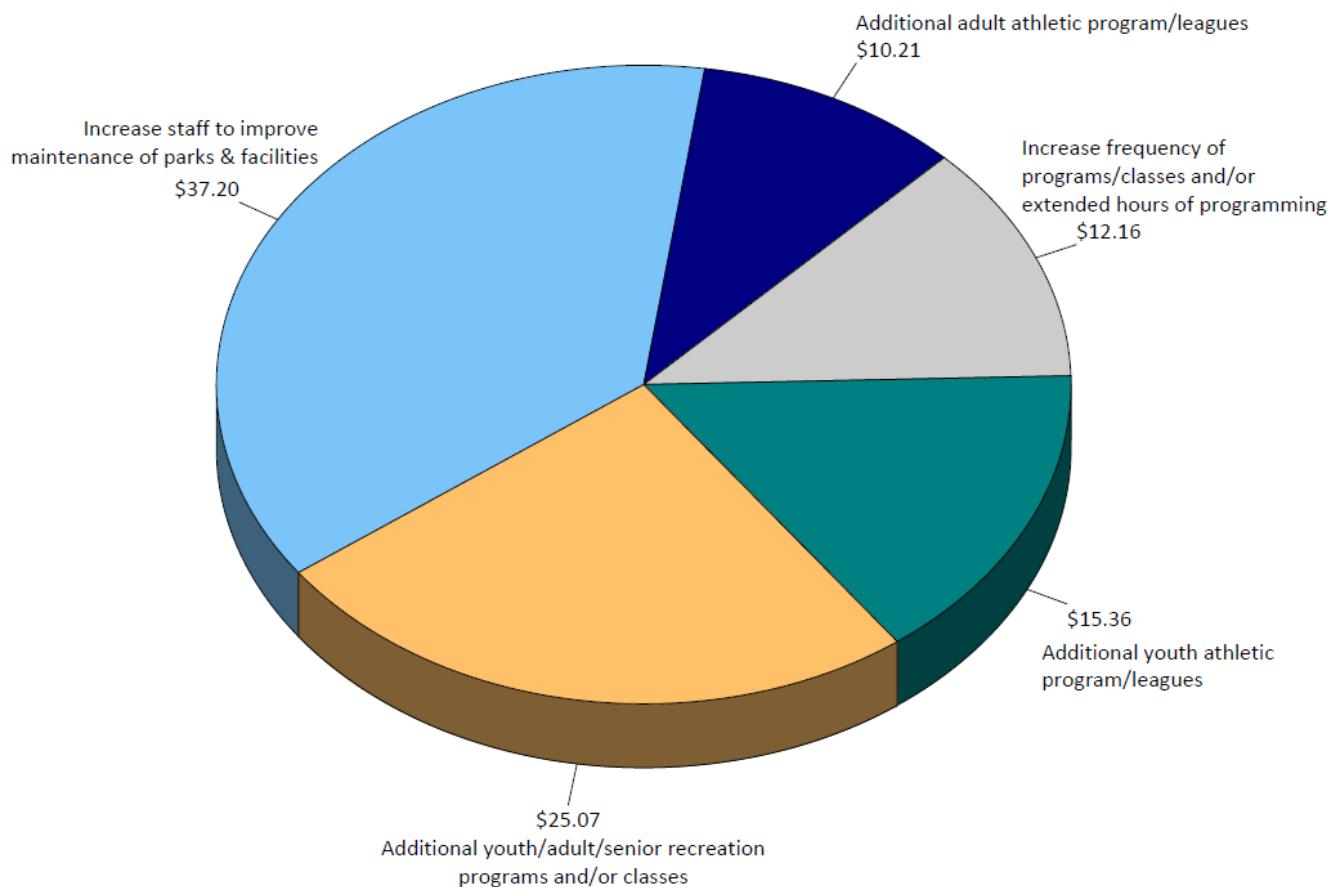


Programs and Operational Funding

Respondents were asked to allocate funding for programs and operations with a hypothetical \$100. The greatest amount of funding \$37.20 went toward increasing staff to improve maintenance of parks and facilities followed by \$25.07 for additional recreation programs and classes and \$15.36 for additional youth athletic programs/leagues.

Q8. If you had a budget of \$100 for PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS, how would you allocate the funds among the categories of funding listed below?

by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")

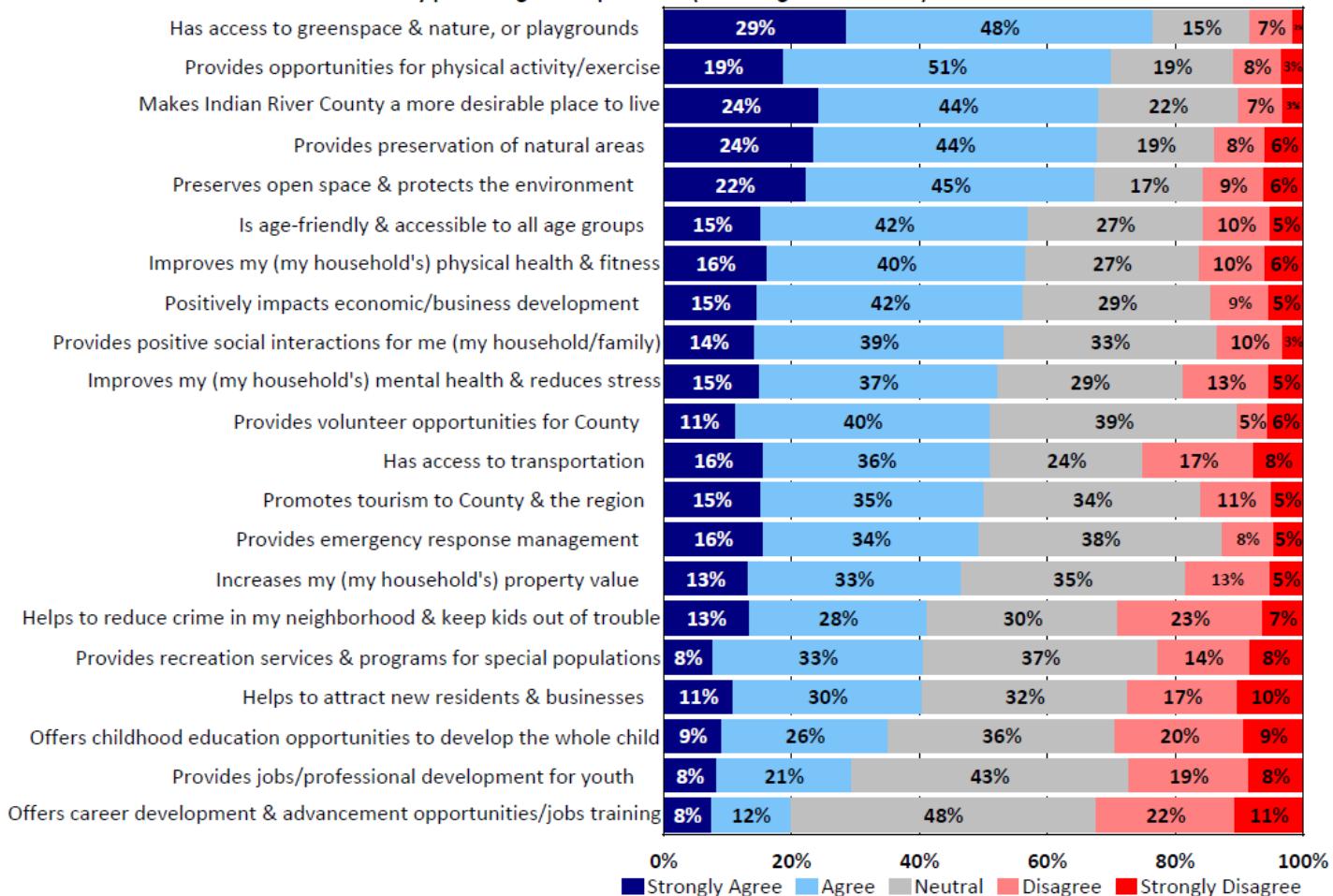


Benefits of Parks, Recreation and Conservation

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with 21 statements regarding potential benefits of parks and recreation. Respondents most often agreed (rating "agree" or "strongly agree") they have access to greenspace and nature or playgrounds (77%), parks and recreation provides opportunities for physical activity/exercise (70%), parks and recreation provides preservation of natural areas (68%) and parks and recreation makes Indian River County a more desirable place to live (68%). The four benefits most important to households are access to greenspace (46%), preservation of natural areas (28%), making Indian River County a more desirable place to live (26%), preserving open space and protecting the environment (23%), improving households' physical health and fitness (23%), and access to transportation (23%).

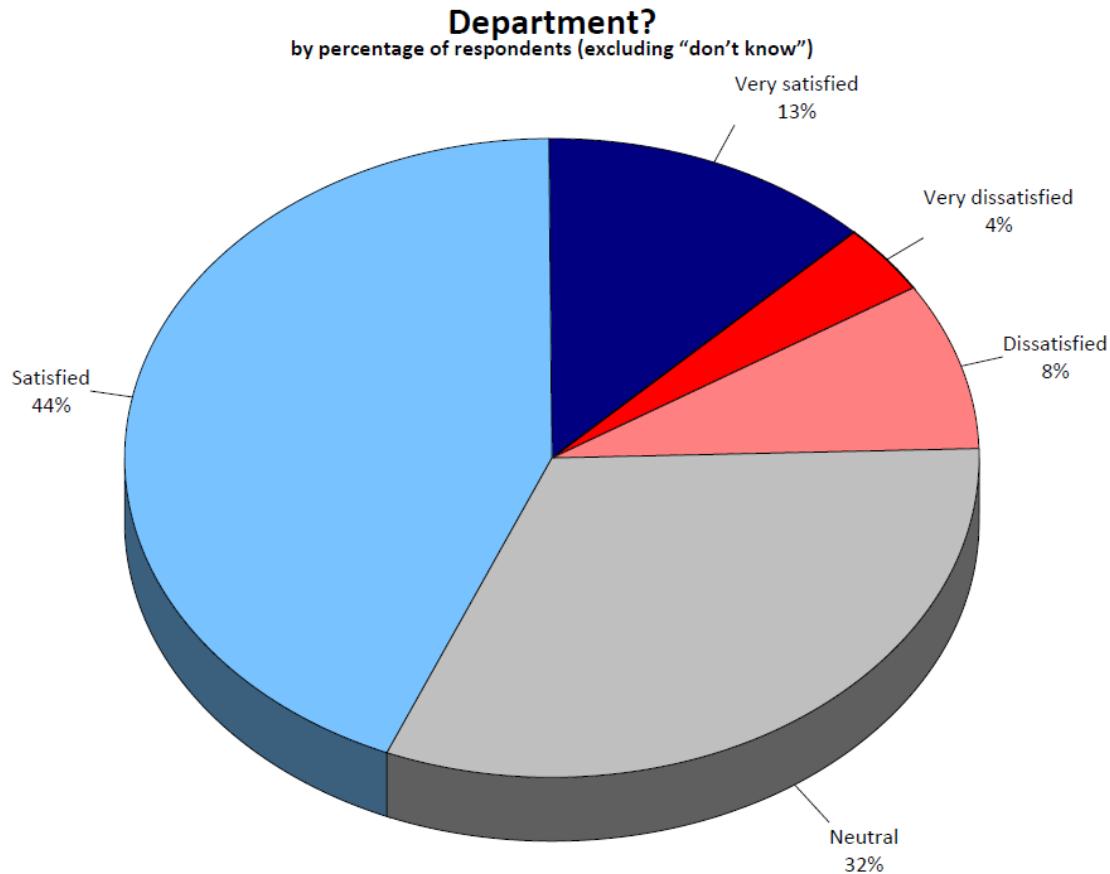
Q13. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements concerning some benefits of IRC Parks/Facilities/Recreation Programs/Services.

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know")



Rating Overall Satisfaction with Perceived Value

Respondents were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with the value their household receives from IRC Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department. Over half of respondents (57%) felt either "satisfied" (44%) or "very satisfied" (13%).

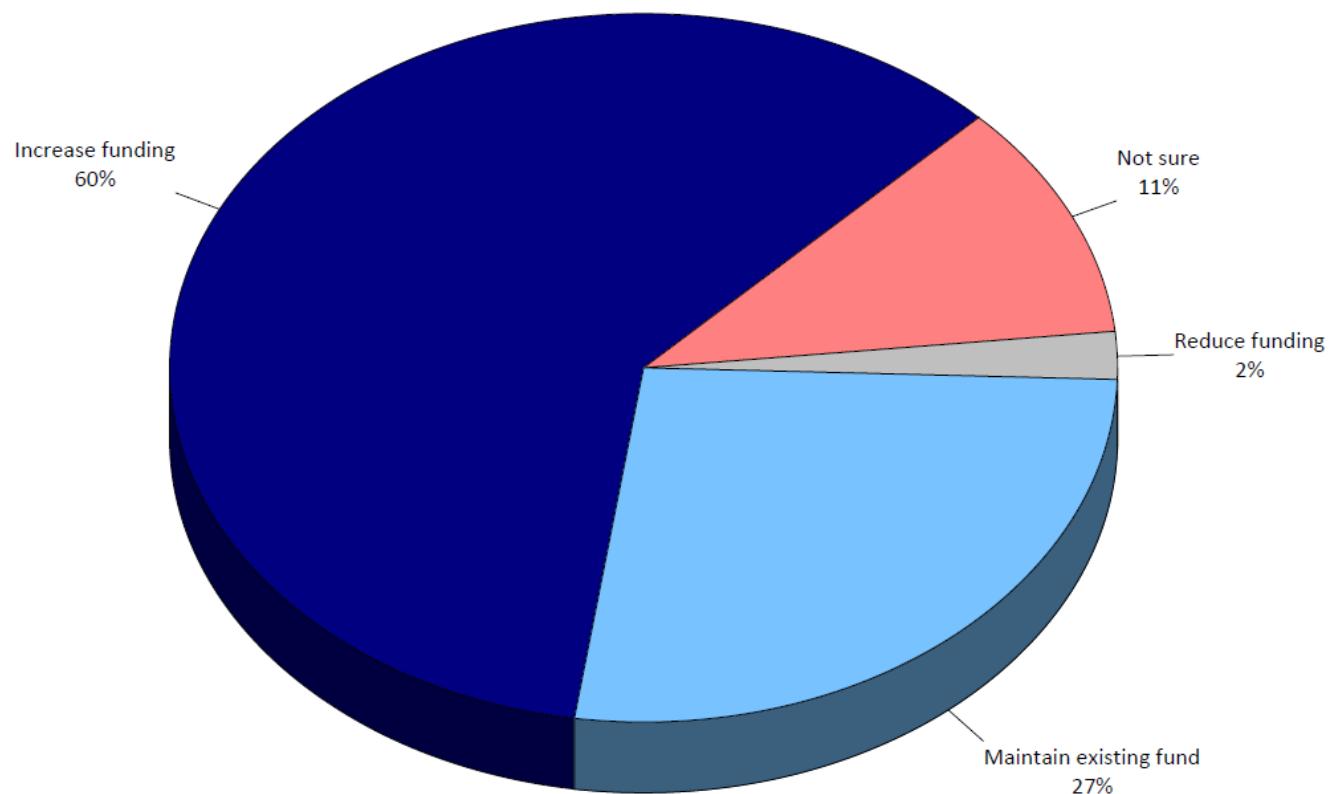
Q15. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the overall value that your household receives from the IRC Parks, and Recreation, and Conservation

Support for Funding Levels

Based on respondents' perception of value, the highest percentage of respondents (60%) would want the County to increase funding for future parks, recreation, trails, and open space needs.

Q16. Based on your perception of value, how would you want the County to fund future parks, recreation, trails and open space needs?

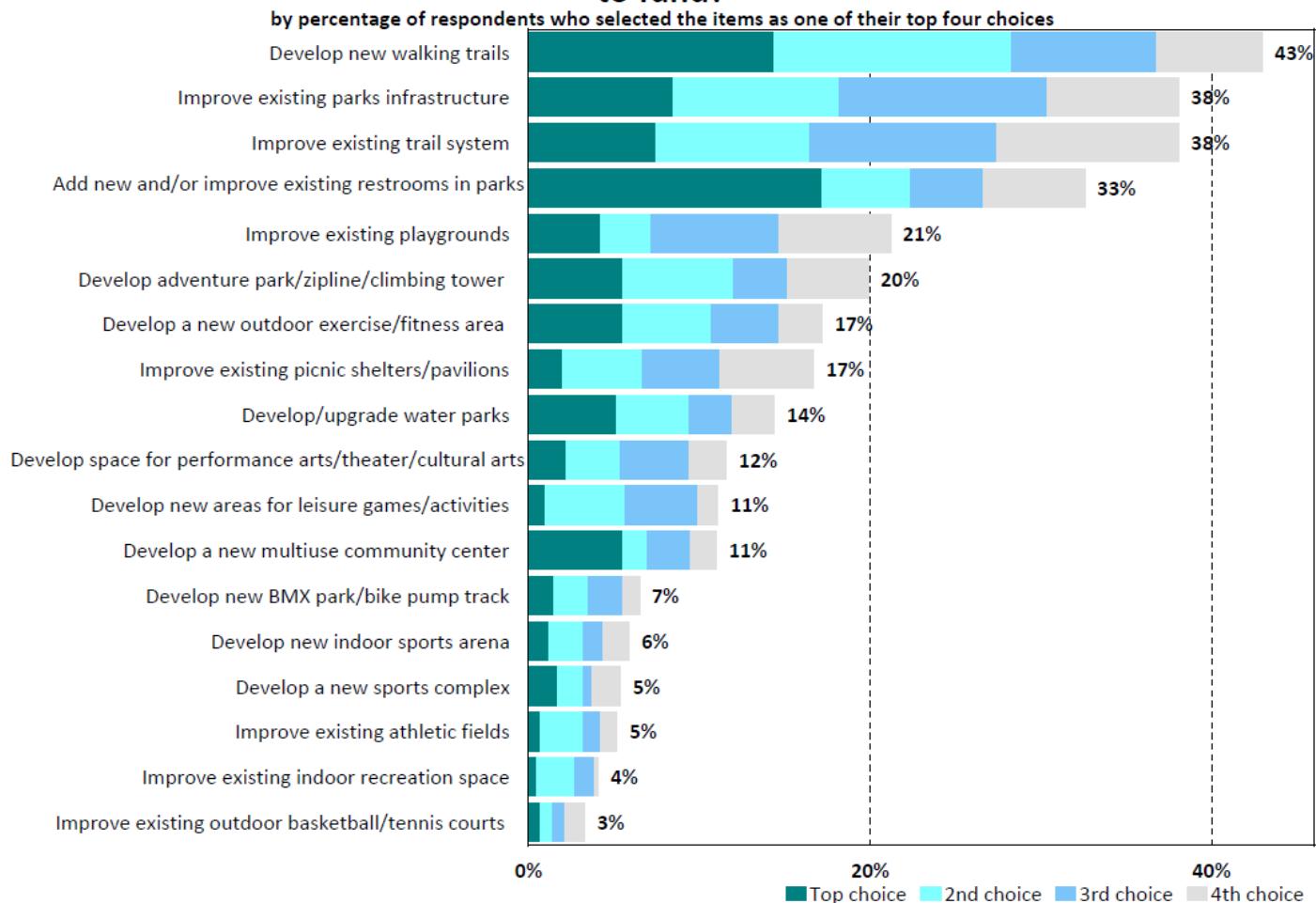
by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")



Support for Improvements

Respondents were asked to rate their level of support for 18 potential improvements to parks and recreation. Respondents most supported (rating “somewhat supportive” or “very supportive”) improving existing parks infrastructure (76%), developing new walking trails (75%), and adding/improving existing restrooms in parks (74%). The four actions respondents said they would be most willing to fund were developing new walking trails (43%), improving existing parks infrastructure (38%), improving exiting trail systems (38%), and adding and/or improving existing restrooms in parks (33%).

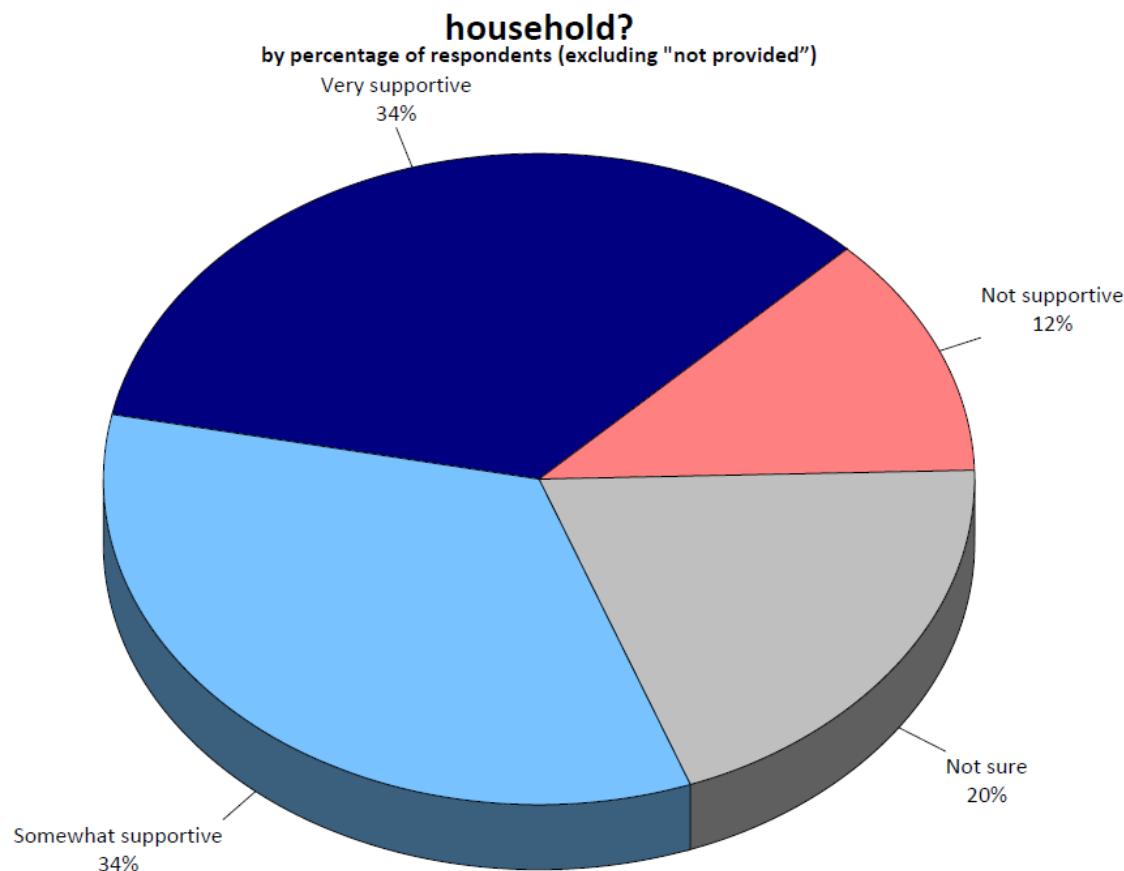
Q18. Which FOUR actions from the list in Question 17 would you be MOST WILLING to fund?



Support for Bond Referendum

Respondents were asked to rate their level of support for a bond referendum to fund the types of parks improvements most important to their household. Most respondents (68%) said they were either "somewhat supportive" (34%) or "very supportive" (34%).

Q19. How supportive are you of a bond referendum to fund the types of parks and improvements that you indicated in Question 17 are most important to you/your household?



Online Survey Report

Executive Summary

PROS Consulting conducted an online survey to gain a better understanding of the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of Indian River County Parks, Recreation, & Conservation Department ('Department') users. The survey responses were able to give insight into what respondents wanted to see prioritized and funded, as well as their satisfaction with the Department.

Demographically, the survey was answered by mostly female respondents; females made up 79% of respondents, while males only made up 21%. The respondents were also overwhelmingly white (89% to be precise), with only 12% of respondents indicating that they were Hispanic or Latino. **It is important to note the survey asked respondents to answer several questions for or in place of their family or household, both regarding demographics but also for facility and amenity usage.**

The Department had mostly positive reviews from respondents who participated in programs or visited the Department's facilities. There were varying reviews for facility and amenity conditions, however, the quality of programs and services was mostly said to be either excellent or good. Most respondents mentioned they would be either very supportive or somewhat supportive of a bond referendum that would increase the funding levels for the Department functions.

Regarding specific programs, broad offerings that served more groups of people fared well, while some more specific offerings were indicated as the least important to respondents and their households. Specifically, respondents indicated a higher need for adult fitness, wellness, and enrichment programs, as well as aquatic programming, while many niche services, sports, or hobbies had less support.

Methodology

This online survey was powered by SurveyMonkey. The survey was open for nearly five months, beginning January 16, 2024 through June 12, 2024, and received a total of 411 responses.



Survey respondents had the option to skip certain questions, which led to many questions having a high number of skipped responses. However, each question was analyzed individually, meaning that skipped responses were not considered.

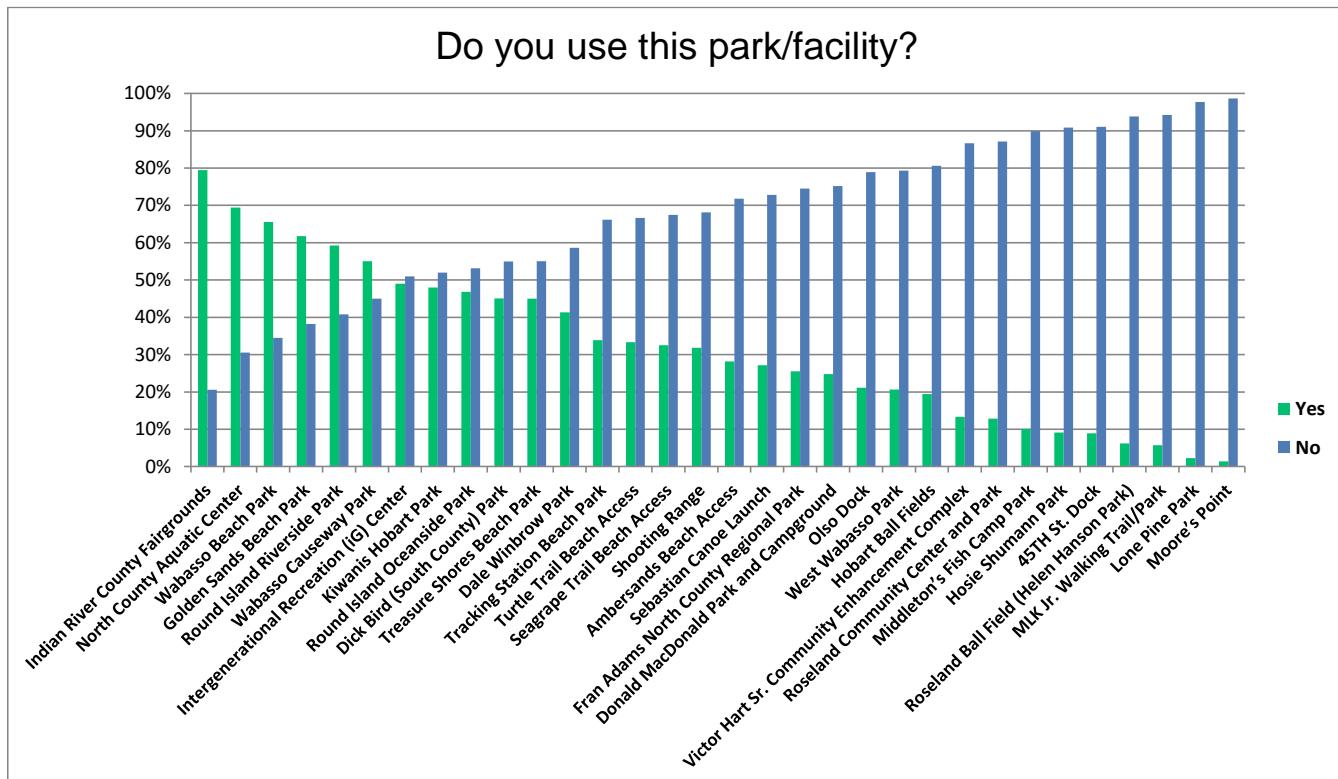
Note: The language in this document may not exactly match the survey. Some questions have been shortened for brevity.

Survey Findings

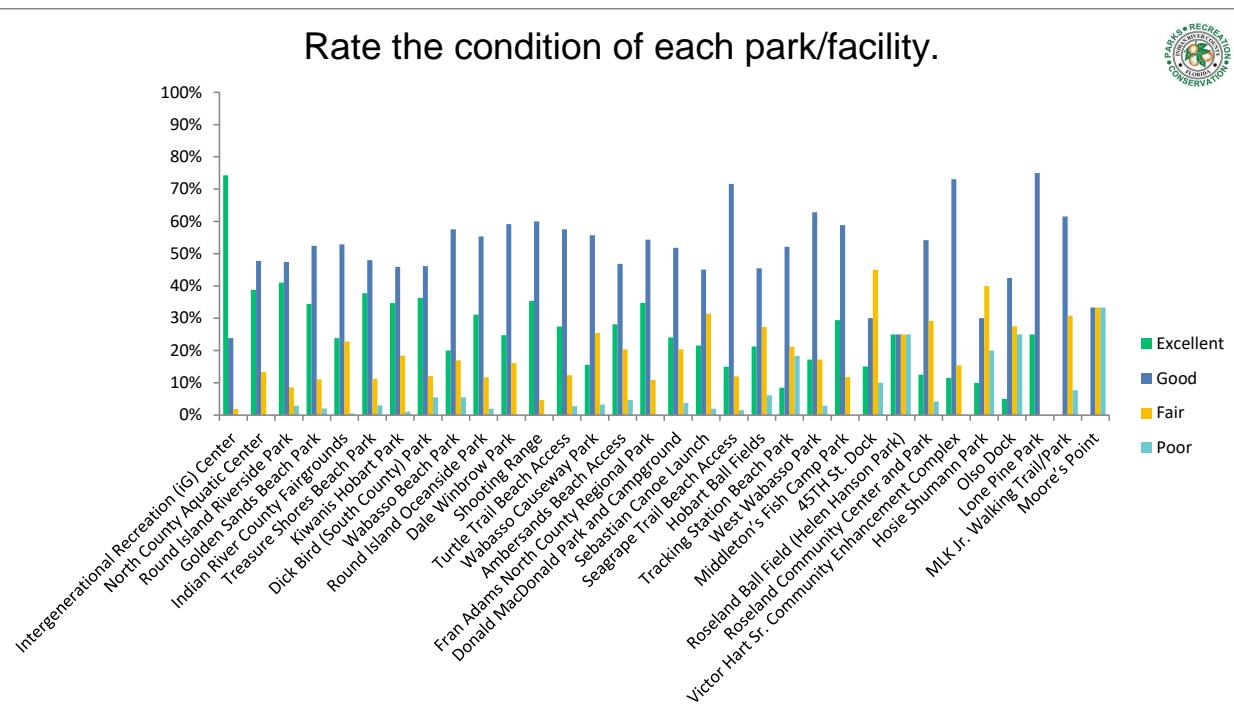
The following section includes the findings from the survey including responses from all 29 questions in the same order that the questions were asked.

Park and Facility Use

When asked whether the respondent or any members of their household used any of Department parks and/or facilities, **nearly 80% of respondents said 'yes' to the Indian River County Fairgrounds**, while the **North County Aquatic Center, Wabasso Beach Park, and Golden Sands Beach Park** received the next highest number of 'yes' responses.

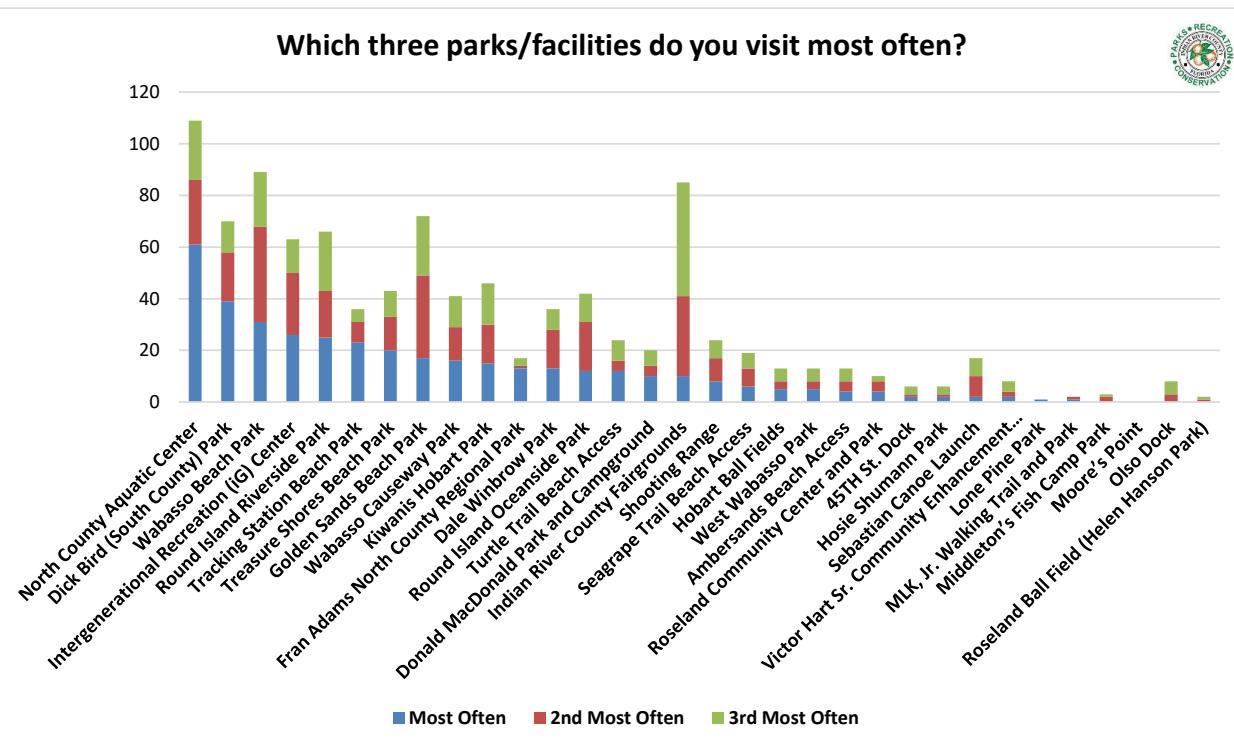


Respondents were then asked to rate the condition of each park or facility that they use. **The facilities with the highest number of 'Excellent' responses included the Intergenerational Recreation Center, the North County Aquatic Center, and the Round Island Riverside Park.**



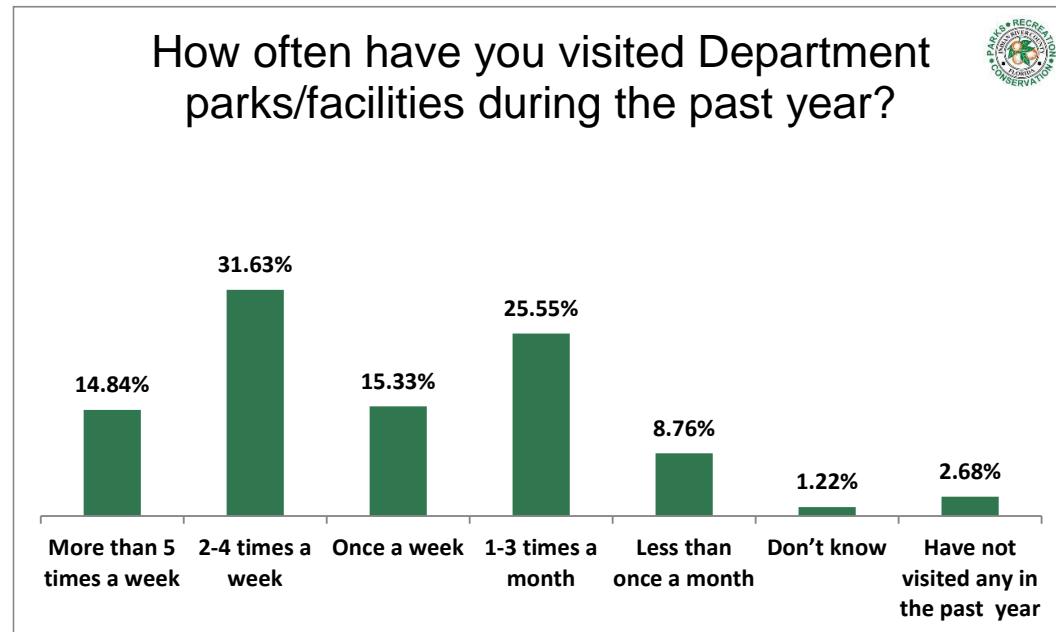
Most Visited Parks and Facilities

Respondents indicated, from a list, which three parks and/or facilities that they have visited most often over the past year. The highest number of 'Most Often' (and total responses) was the **North County Aquatic Center**, with **Richard N. "Dick" Bird Park** and **Wabasso Beach Park** having the second and third highest amounts of 'Most Often' responses.



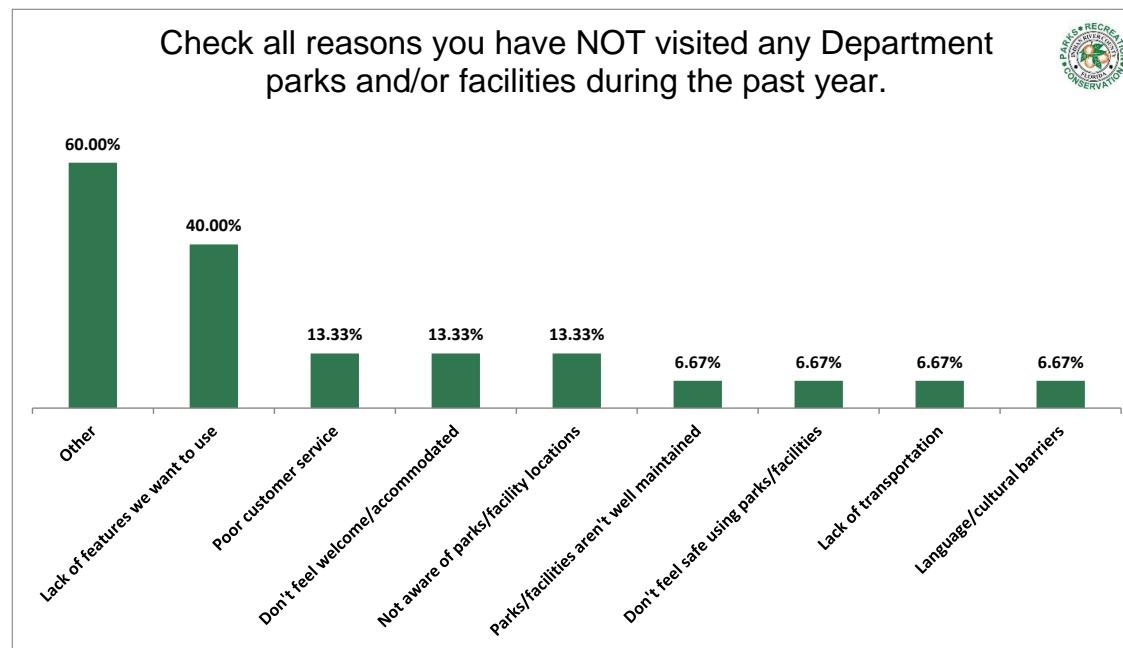
Park and Facility Visitation

When asked how often respondents visited parks and facilities over the past year, **15% said more than 5 times a week**, **32% said 2 to 4 times a week**, **15% said once a week**, and **26% said 1 to 3 times a month**.



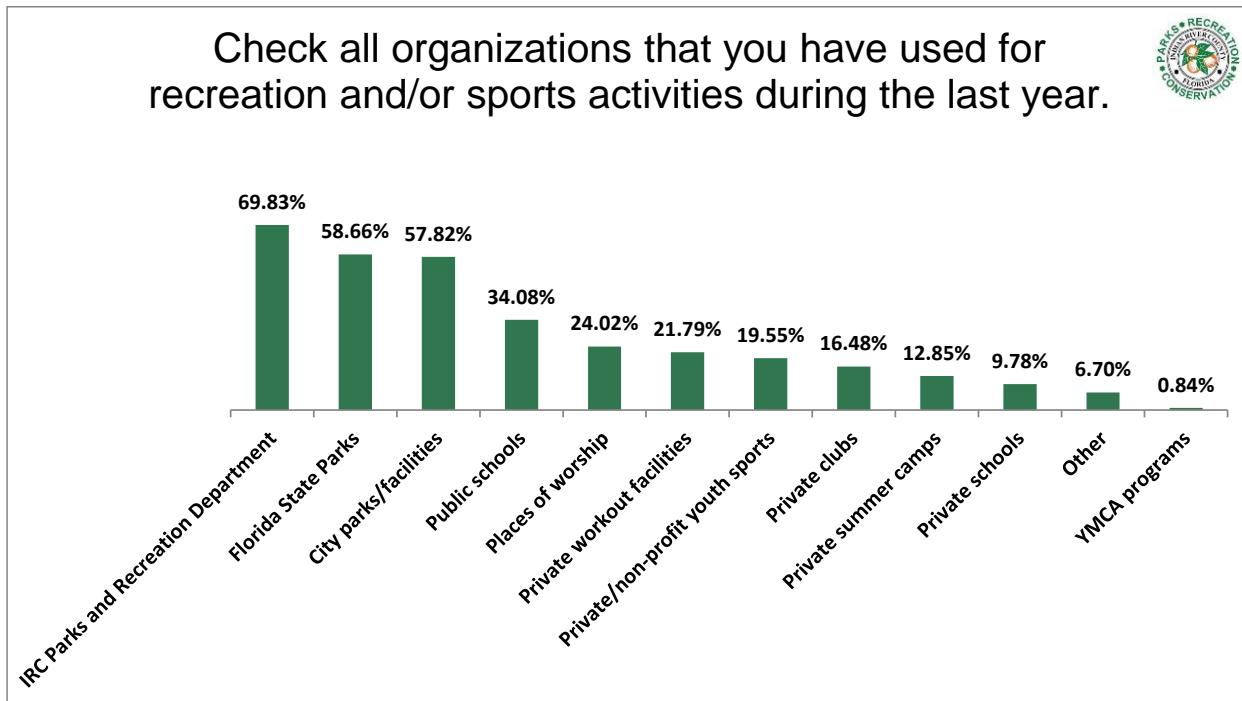
Reasons for Lack of Visitation

After being asked about how often respondents visited parks and facilities, the survey then prompted respondents to answer about reasons they do not visit those parks or facilities. While **60% said "Other"** (including reasons like being too busy or living too far away), **40% said it was due to a lack of features that they want**, while **13% said they were not visiting due to poor customer service and that they didn't feel welcomed or accommodated**.



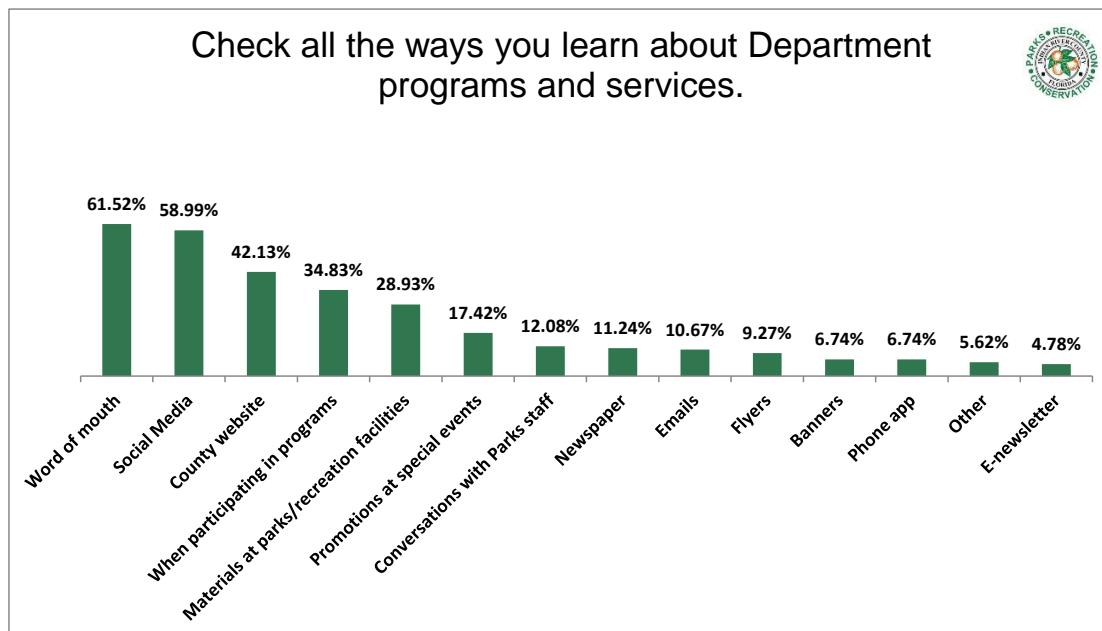
Recreation Organizations

Respondents were asked to list all of the organizations they use for recreation and sports activities. **70% said the Department**, while **59% said Florida State Parks** and **58% said parks/facilities from nearby cities**.



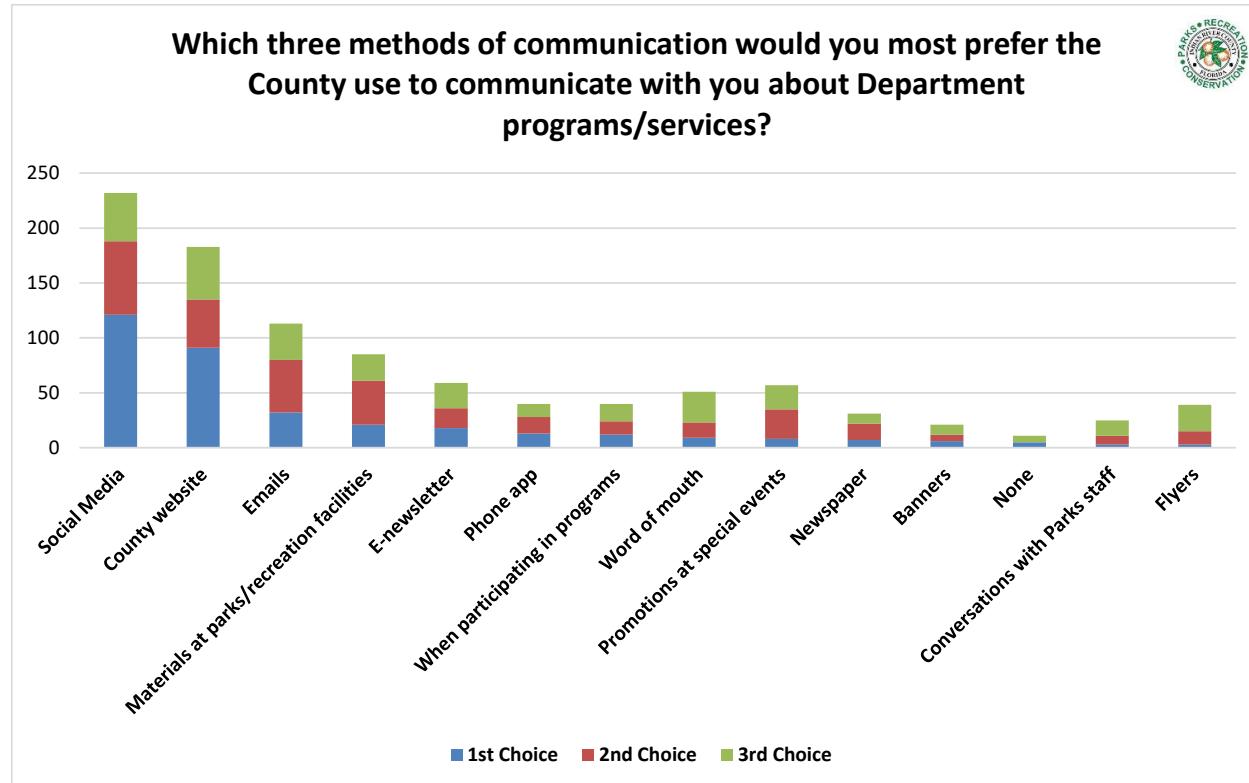
Respondents' Methods of Learning about Programs and Services

When asked about the methods that respondents learn about programs, **62% said word of mouth**, **59% said social media**, and **42% said the County website**.



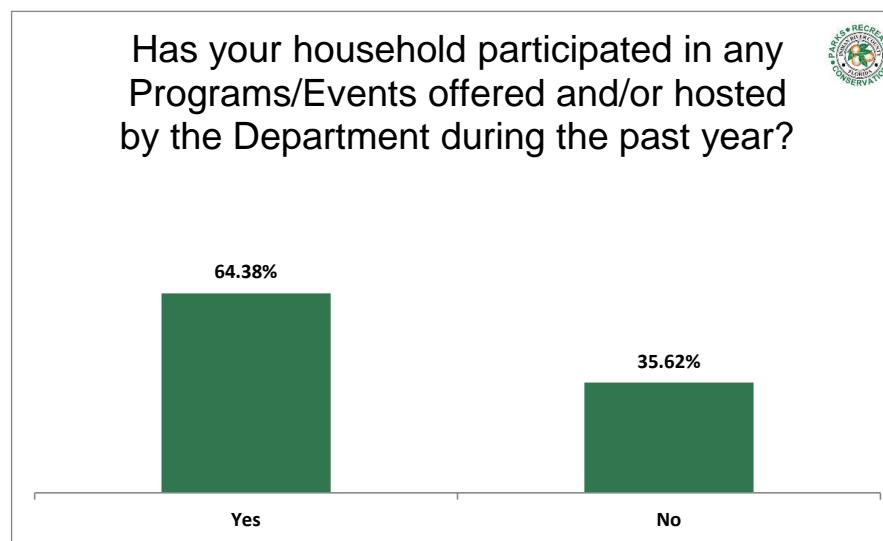
Preferred Methods of Learning about Programs and Services

Respondents were then asked about their **preferred** method of learning about programs and services in a ranked choice format. The choices with the highest number of 1st choice (and total responses) were **Social Media, County Website, and Emails**.



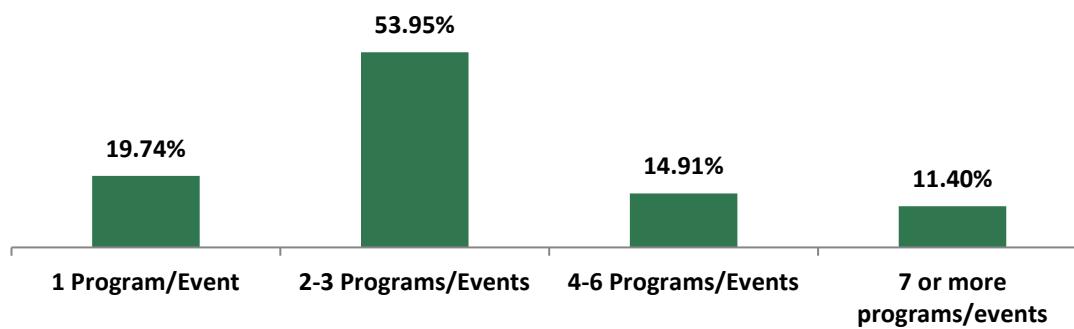
Program and Event Participation

When asked whether their household had participated in any Department programs or events this year, **64% of respondents said 'yes' while 36% said 'no'**.



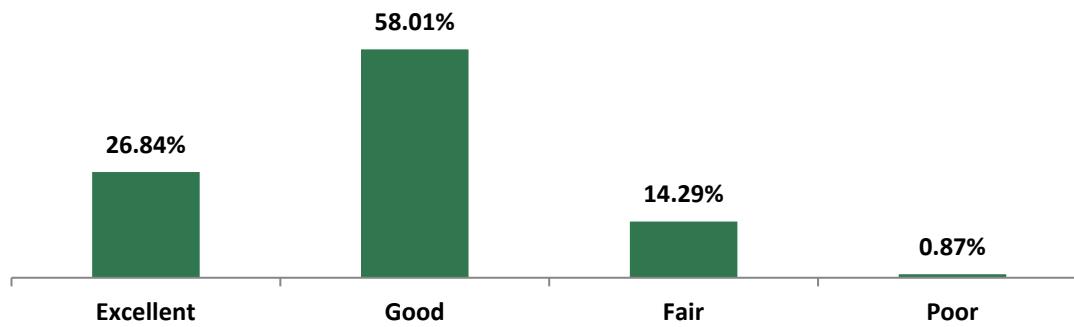
More specifically, respondents were asked about how many programs or events they attended in the last year. **20% said 1 program/event, 54% said 2 to 3, 15% said 4 to 6, and 11% said 7 or more.**

How many programs/events offered and/or hosted by the Department have you participated in during the past year?



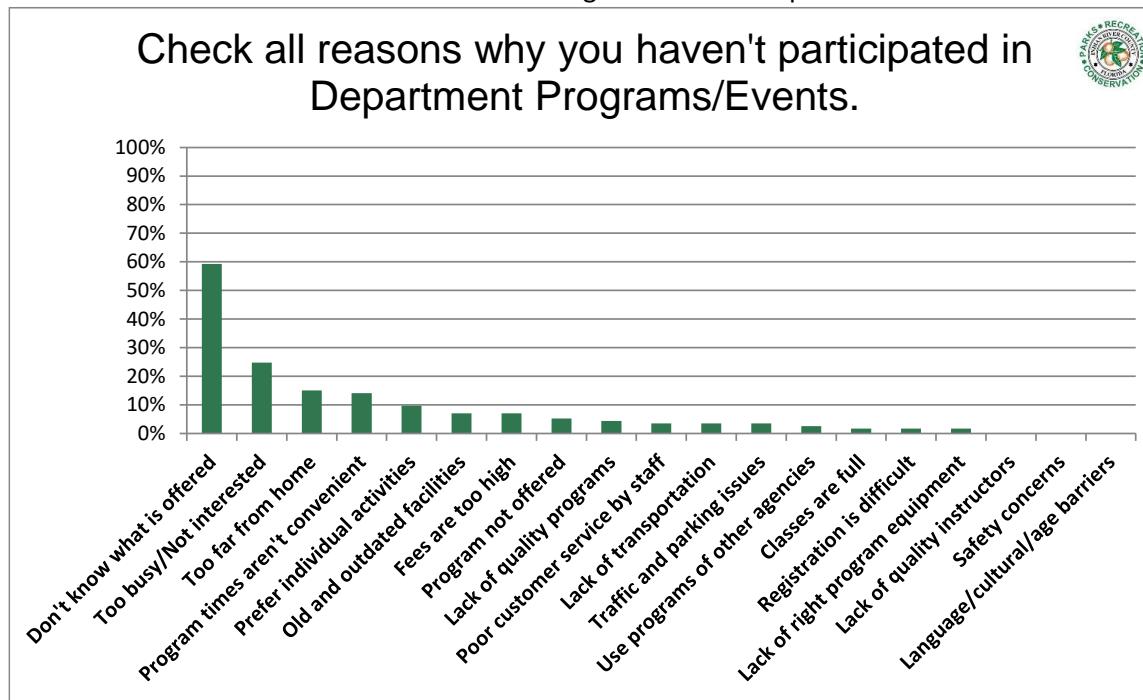
Respondents were then asked to rate the overall quality of the events they attended or participated in. **27% said excellent, 58% said good, 14% said fair, and only 2 total respondents out of 231 answers said poor.**

Rate the overall quality of the Department Programs/Events in which your household has participated.



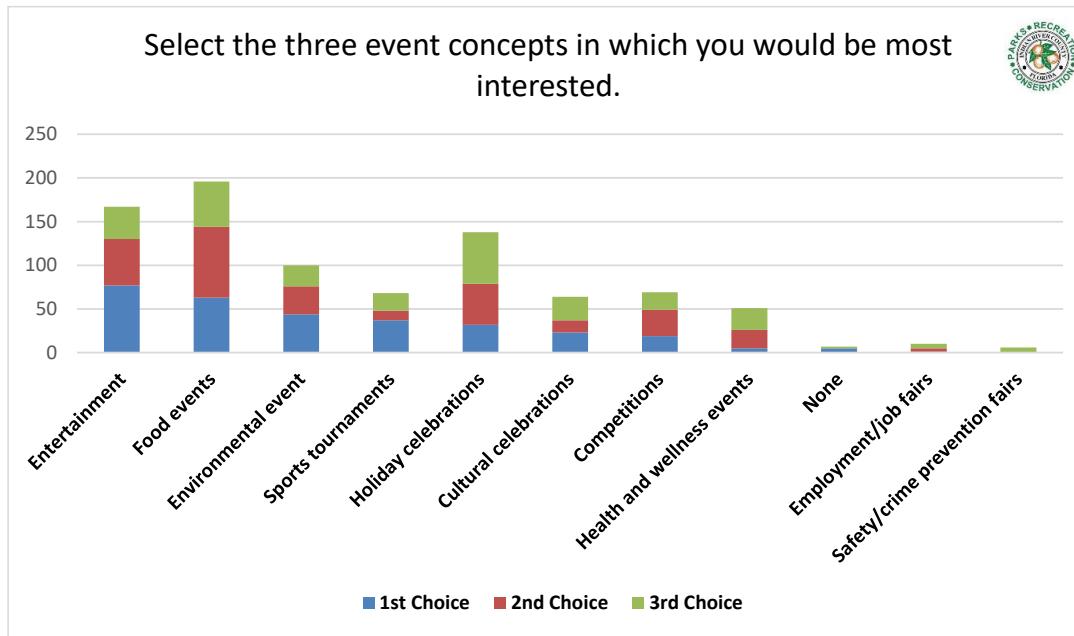
Reasons for Not Participating

The chart shows how respondents answered when asked why they haven't participated in programs or events. The most common answer by far was '**Don't know what is offered**', while '**Too busy/not interested**' and '**Too far from home**' had the next highest rates of responses.



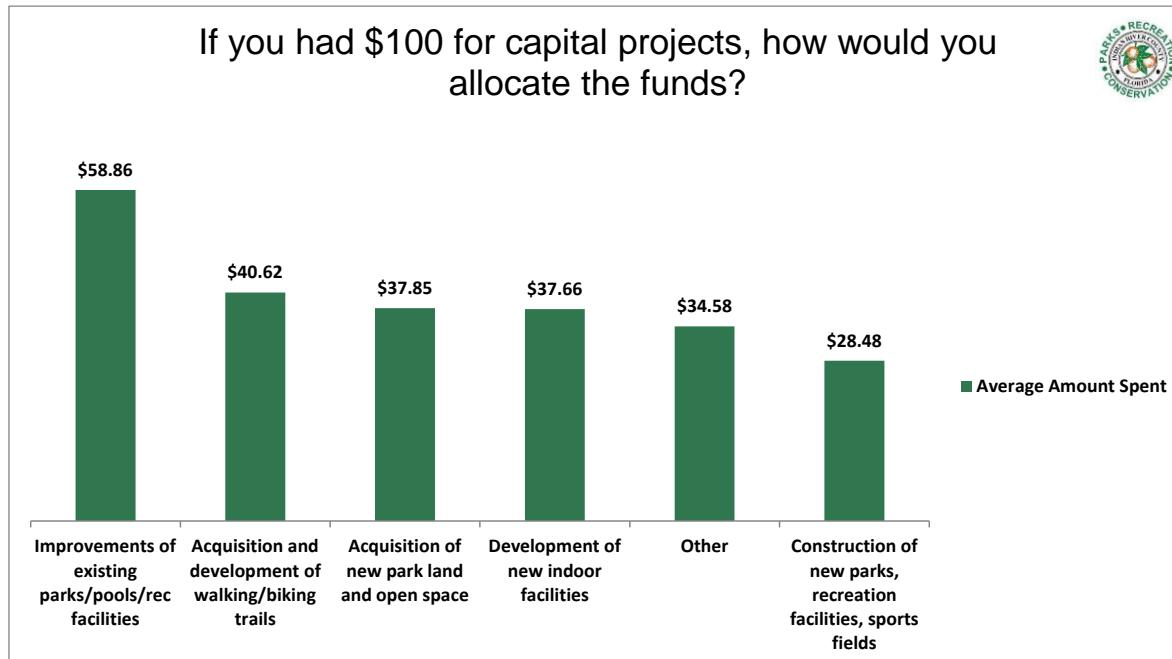
Favored Event Concepts

On the following question, respondents were given a pool of potential event and program concepts and were asked to choose three that they would be most interested in. '**Entertainment**', '**Food Events**', and '**Holiday celebrations**' were the choices with the highest number of total responses.

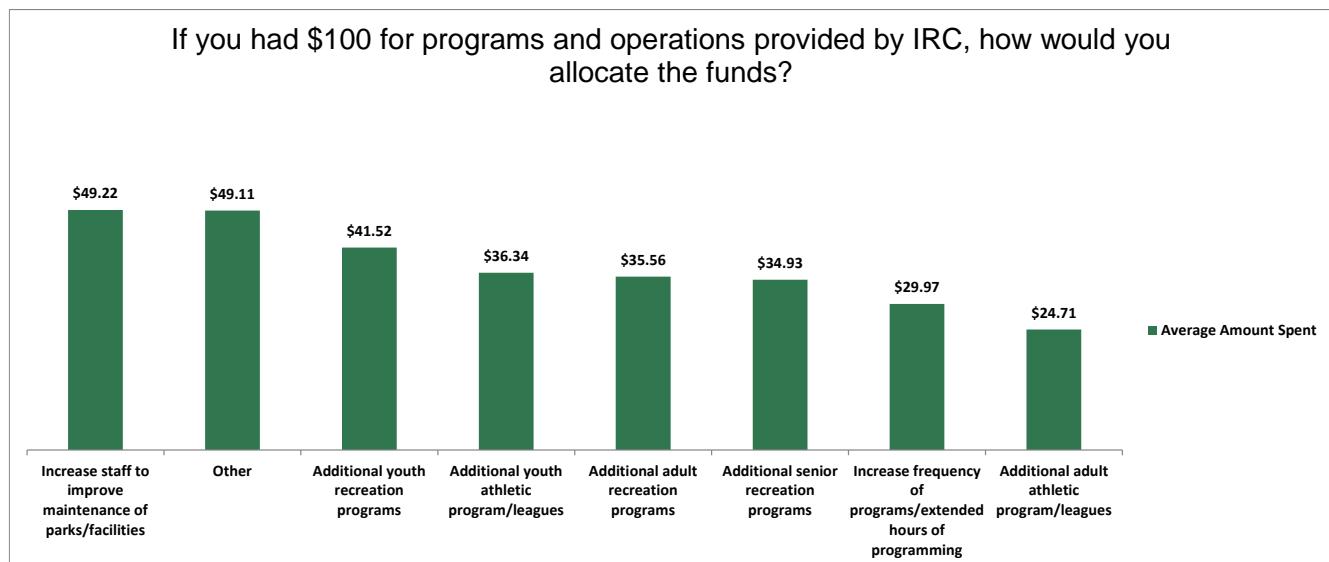


Potential Funding Exercise

Using a hypothetical situation where respondents were given an additional \$100 to spend on capital projects, the survey allowed respondents to indicate how they would fund certain categories. The categories with the highest average amount spent were '**Improvements of existing parks, pools, and/or rec facilities**', '**Acquisition and development of walking and biking trails**', and '**Acquisition of new park land and open space**'.



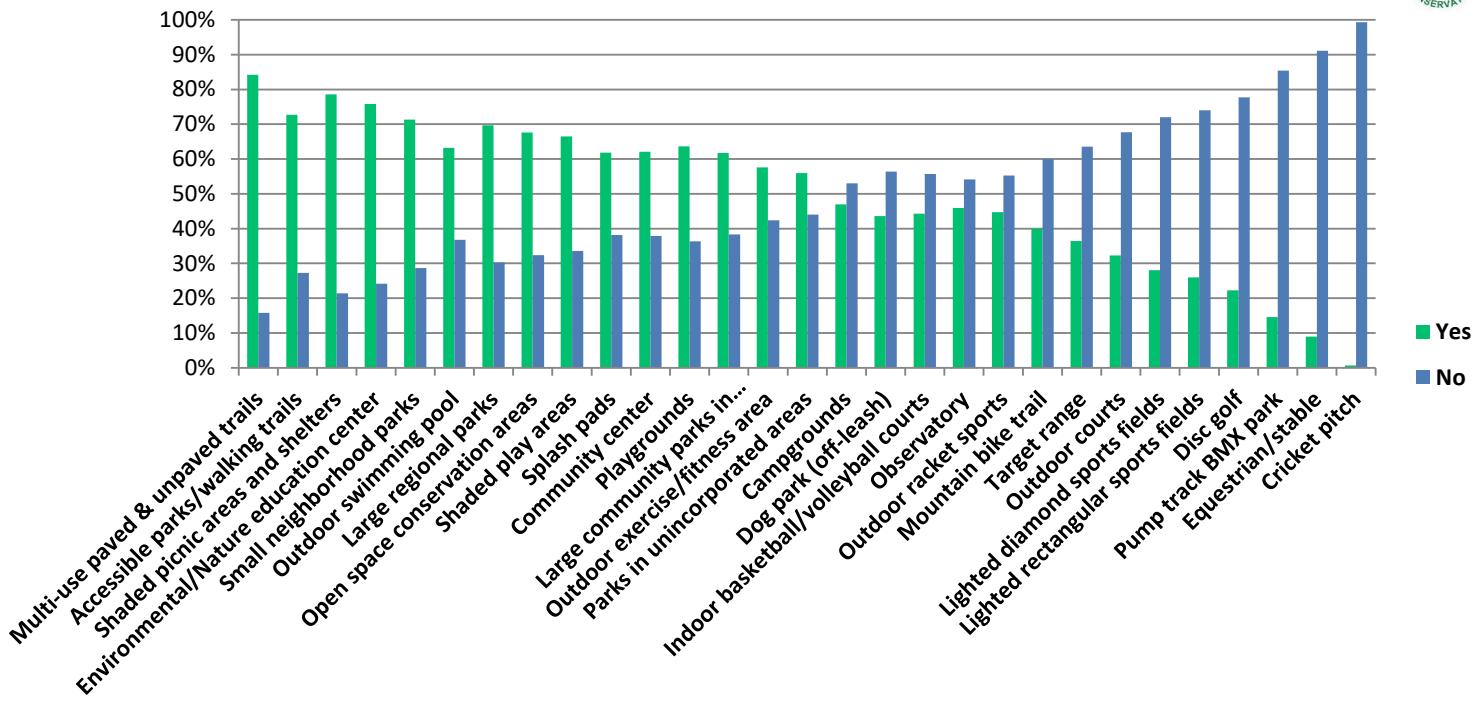
In a question format like the previous question, respondents were asked how they would spend \$100 for Department programs and operations. The highest average amount spent belonged to '**Increase staff to improve maintenance of parks/facilities**', '**Other**', and '**Additional youth recreation programs and classes**'.



Facility and Amenity Needs

Respondents were then asked about their needs for certain facilities and amenities in the County. The amenities with the highest percentage of 'yes' responses included '**Multi-use & unpaved trails**', '**Accessible parks and walking trails**', and '**Shaded picnic areas and shelters**'.

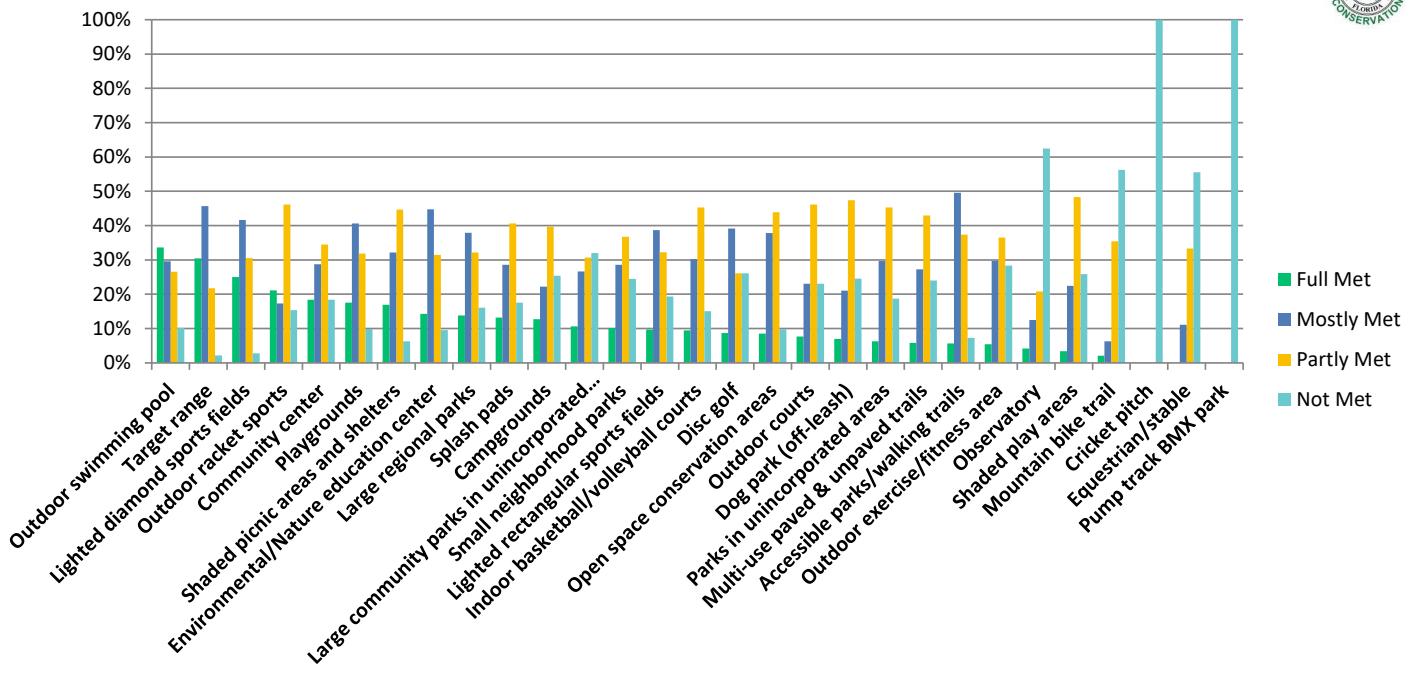
Do you have a need for this facility/amenity?



When asked how well their needs were met, the most common choices with the highest percentage of 'fully met' responses were '**Outdoor swimming pool**', '**Target range**', and '**Lighted diamond sports fields**'.



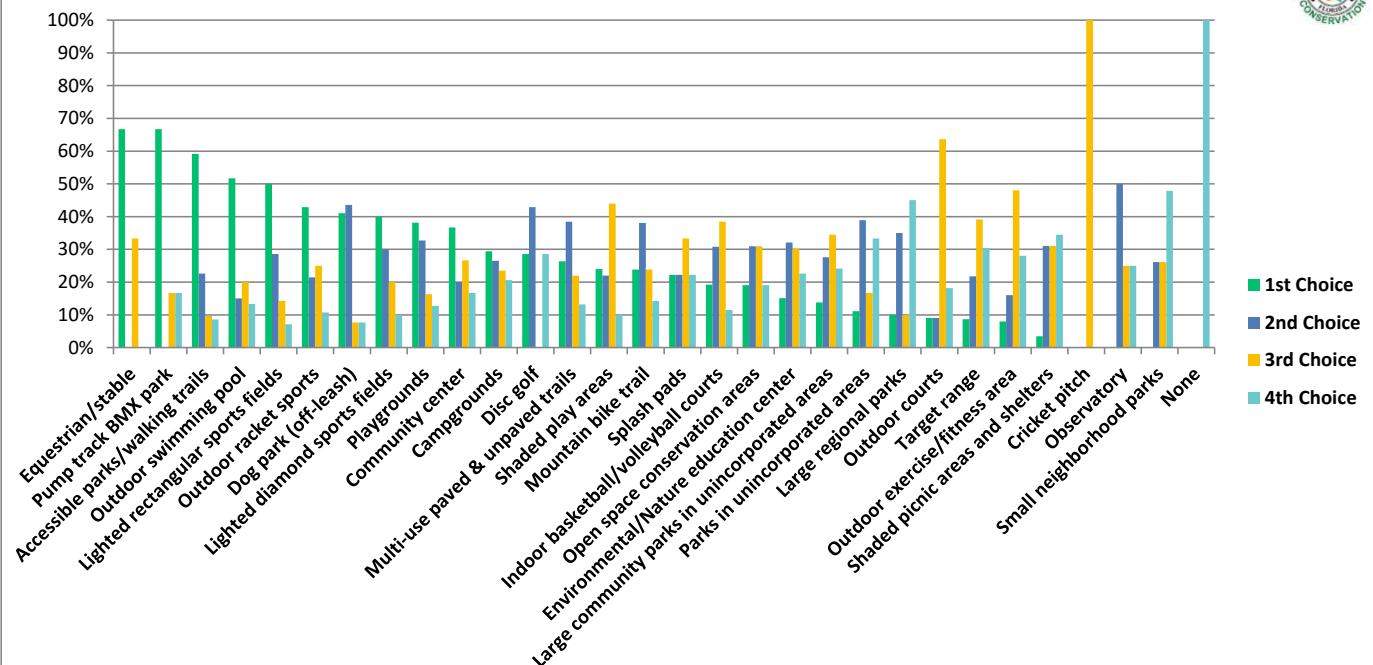
If yes, how well are your needs met?



Respondents were also asked to list the four facilities and amenities that are most important to them. The leading responses in terms of 1st choices included '**Equestrian/stable**', '**Pump track BMX park**', and '**Accessible parks and walking trails**'.

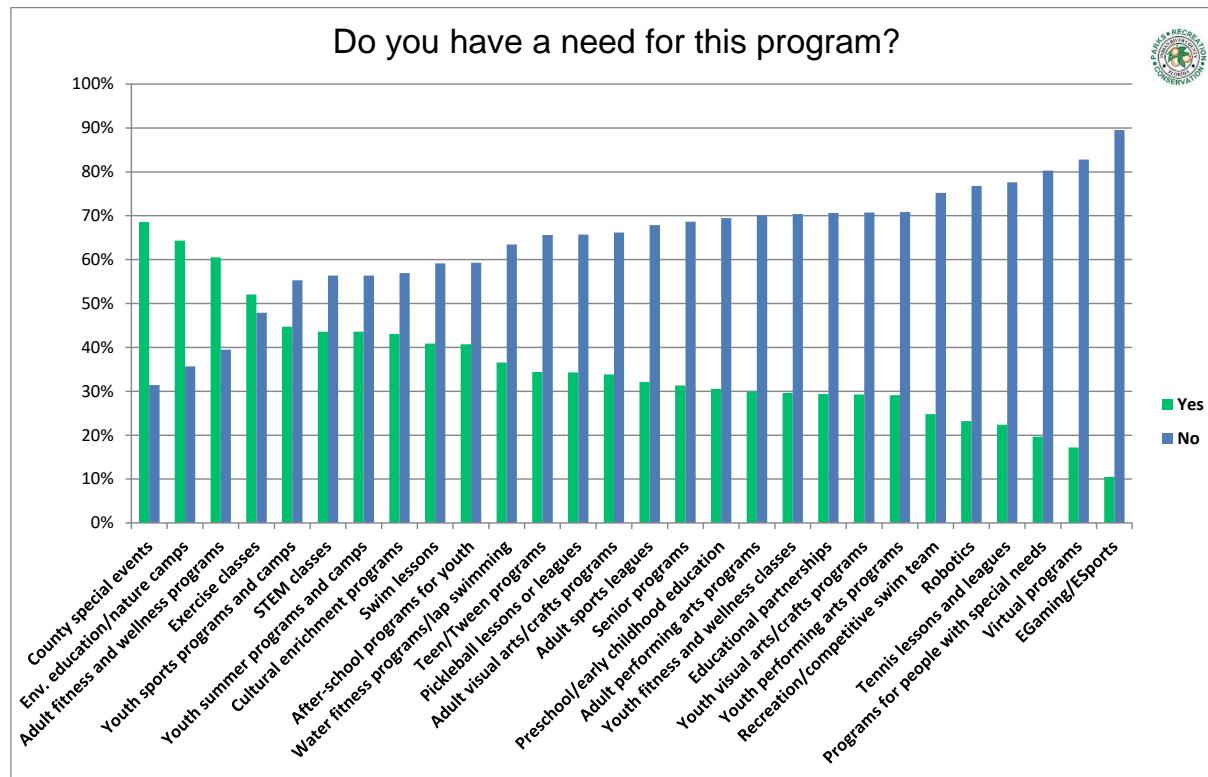


Which four facilities/amenities are most important to you?

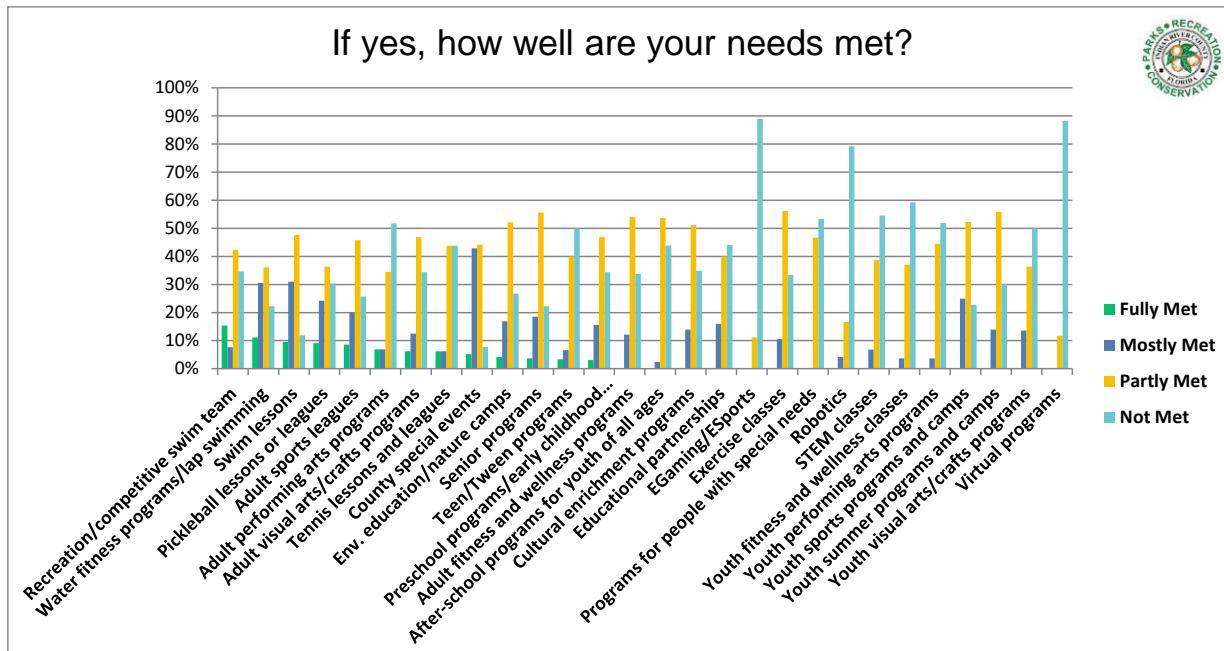


Program Needs

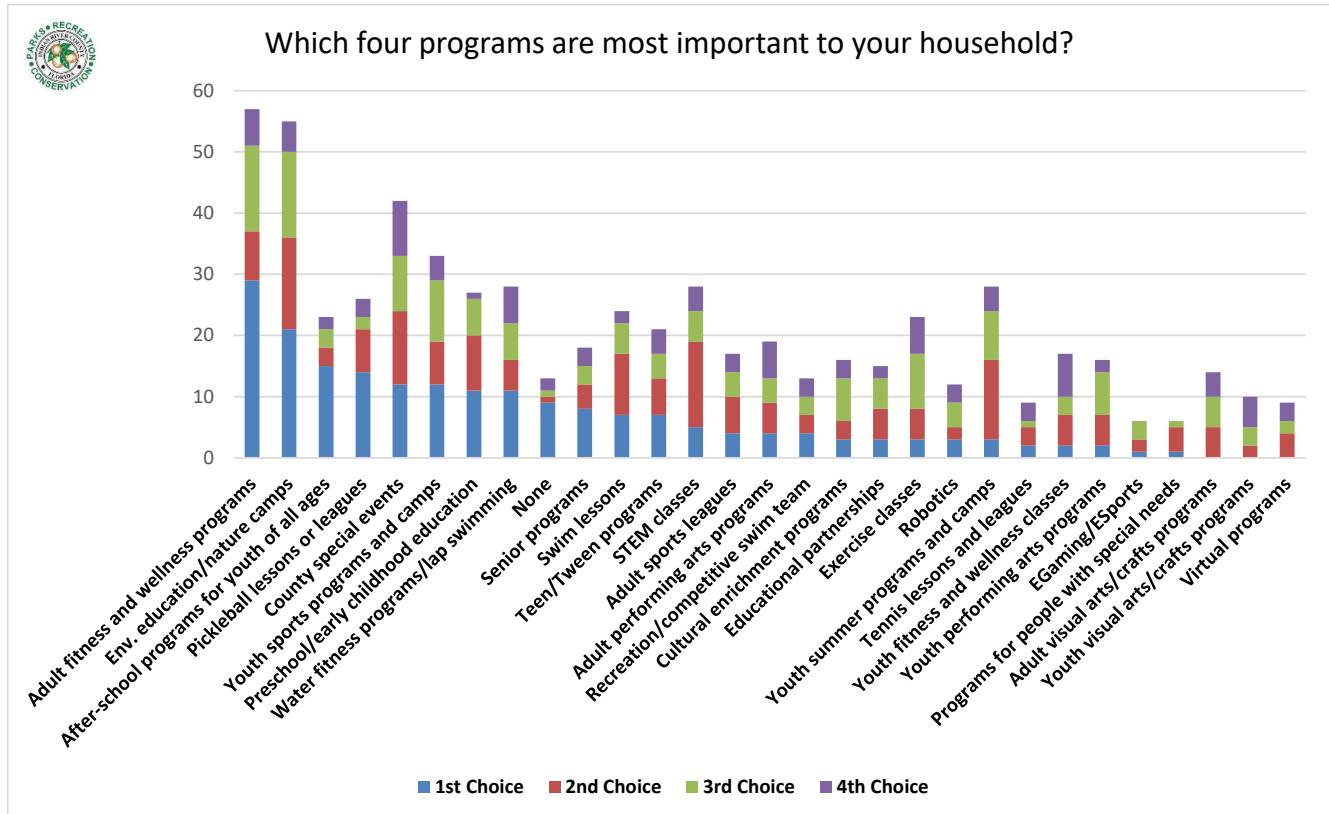
Alternatively, respondents were also asked about their needs for specific Department programs. When asked whether respondents had a need for a program, the choices with the highest percentage of 'yes' responses included **'County special events'**, **'Environmental Education and Nature Camps'**, and **'Adult fitness and wellness programs'**.



When asked if those needs are met, **'Recreation/competitive swim team'**, **'Water fitness programs and lap swimming'**, and **'Swim lessons'** were the choices with the highest percentage of 'fully met' responses.

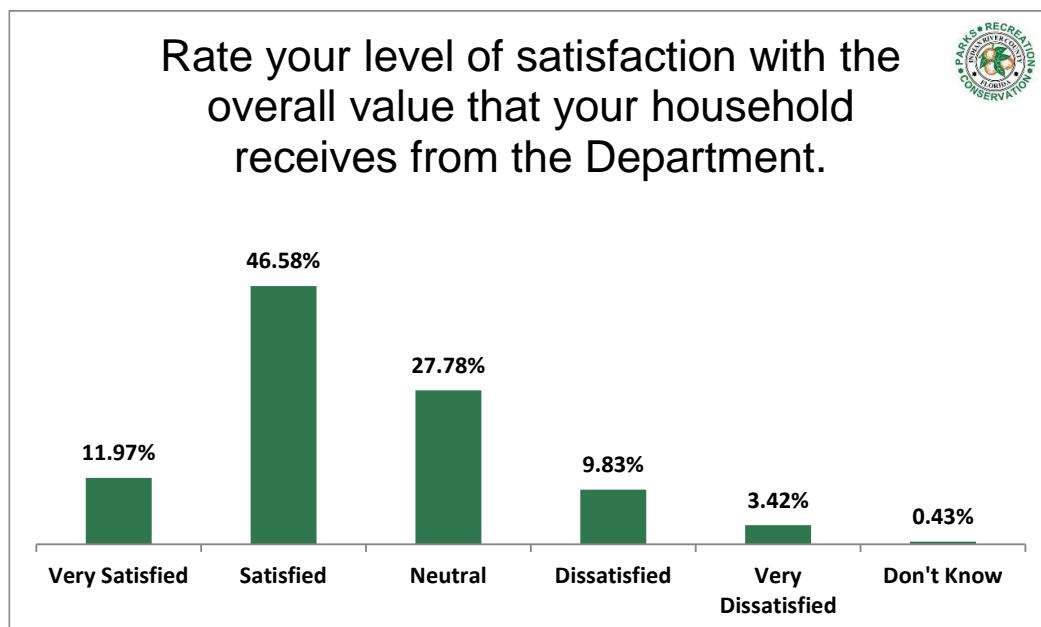


Respondents were then asked about the importance of specific programs to them and their households. **'Adult fitness and wellness programs', 'Environmental Education and nature camps', and 'After-school programs for youth of all ages'** garnered the highest amount of 1st choice responses.



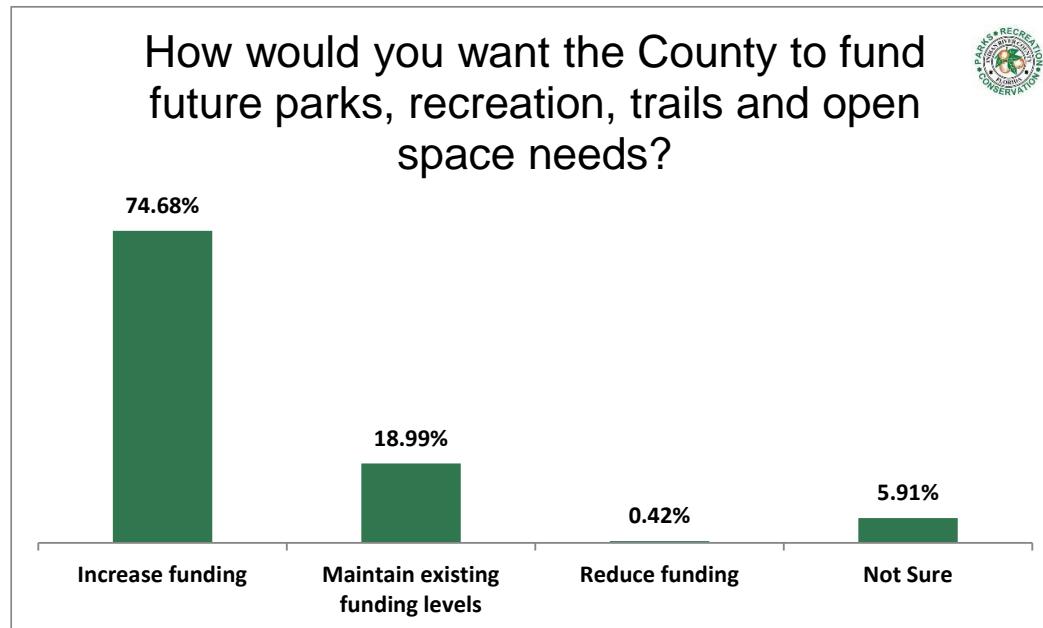
Overall Satisfaction

Nearing the end of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction level with the Department. **12% were 'Very Satisfied', 47% were 'Satisfied', while 28% were 'Neutral'**.

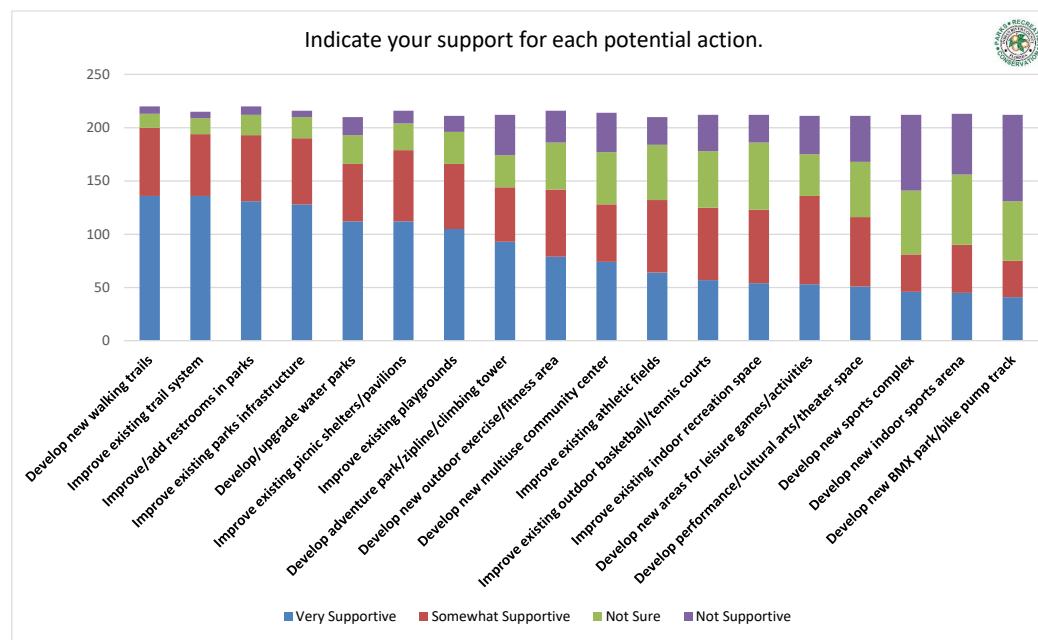


Funding Choices

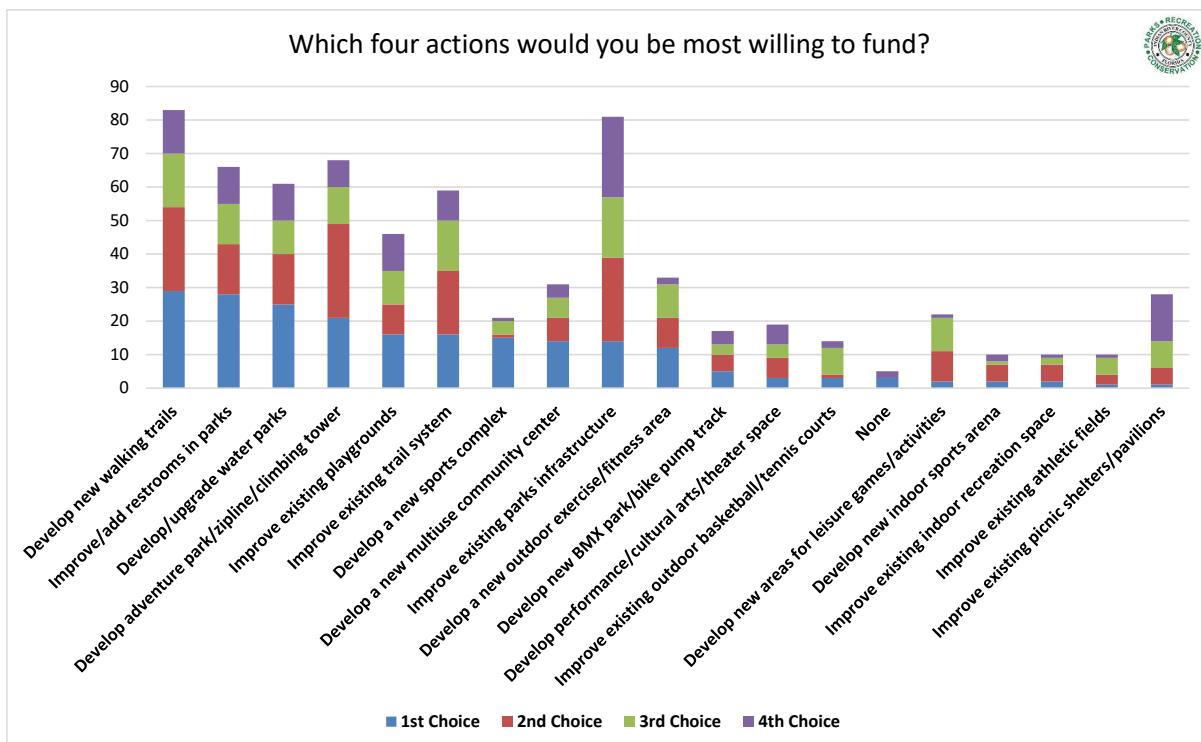
Respondents were asked to indicate how they would personally want the County to fund future parks and recreation endeavors. **75% wanted funding to be increased, 19% wanted funding to stay the same, and less than 1% wanted to reduce funding.**



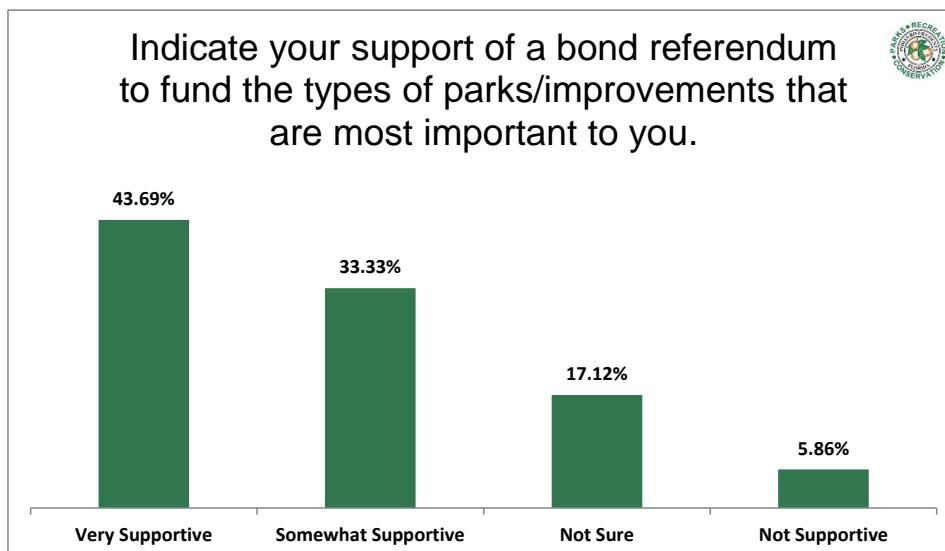
In tandem with asking respondents about how they would want to fund certain amenities, the survey asked respondents to also indicate their support for a series of potential actions. The actions with the highest amount of 'Very supportive' responses included **'Develop new walking trails', 'Improve existing trail system', and 'Improve and/or add restrooms in parks'**.



Respondents were also asked, from the same pool of potential actions as the previous question, which Department actions they would be most willing to fund. While ‘**Improve existing parks infrastructure**’ received the highest total number of responses, ‘**Develop new walking trails**’ and ‘**Improve and/or add restrooms in parks**’ received the highest number of 1st choice responses.



Finally, survey respondents were asked to indicate their support for a theoretical bond referendum that would fund the types of parks and improvements that were most important to them. **44% were ‘Very Supportive’, 33% were ‘Somewhat Supportive’, 17% were ‘Not Sure’, and 6% were ‘Not Supportive’.**



Summary of Site and Facility Assessments

In the fall of 2023, the Consultant Team conducted site and facility assessments of all 32 park sites, boat ramps, and beach access points. Additionally, the Consultant Team also performed assessments of all 22 parcels of conservation lands. The summary of these assessments is detailed on the following pages with the detailed assessment findings found in **Appendix C** of this *Master Plan*.

Park Site Findings

Research by park experts has shown that all successful parks and public spaces share common qualities:

- Easily accessible
- Comfortable and have an attractive image
- Allow users of all ages to engage in a variety of activities and allow people to gather and meet one another
- Sustainable – meaning that they help meet existing needs while not compromising the needs of future generations

Considering these qualities, Indian River County's parks were evaluated based on 6 categories and 35 sub-categories using one park from each site type as a measuring stick for the rest of the park system. The 4 site types and respective measuring stick parks are listed below.

1. Neighborhood – West Wabasso Park
2. Community – Richard N. "Dick" Bird Park/South County Park
3. Beach – Round Island Beach Park
4. Specialty – Round Island Riverside Park

Parks were evaluated collaboratively by County staff and the consultant using a three-point scale for the condition category and five-point scale for the other categories:



ACCESS

Proximity, Access, and Linkages

- **Visibility from a distance**
Can one easily see into the park?
- **Ease of walking to the park**
Can someone walk directly into the park safely and easily?
- **Clarity of information/signage**
Is there signage that identifies the park, and/or signage that provides additional information for users?
- **ADA Compliance**
Does the site generally appear to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws for accessibility?
- **Lighting**
Is the park lighted appropriately for use at night? (if applicable)



COMFORT

Comfort and Image

- **First impression/overall attractiveness**
Is the park attractive at first glance?
- **Feeling of safety**
Does the park feel safe at the time of the visit?
- **Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance (Exterior /Interior)**
Is the park clean and free of litter?
- **Comfort of places to sit**
Are there comfortable places to sit?
- **Protection from bad weather**
Is there shelter in case of bad weather?
- **Evidence of management/stewardship (Exterior/ Interior)**
Is there visual evidence of site management?
- **Ability to easily supervise and manage the park or facility (Interior)**
How difficult it is to supervise the park and its facilities?
- **Condition and effectiveness of any equipment or operation systems**
Is the equipment and/or operating system in good condition?
- **Branding**
Does the park exhibit appropriate branding?



USE

Uses, Activities, and Sociability

- **Mix of uses/things to do**
Is there a variety of things to do given the type of park?
- **Level of activity**
How active is the park with visitors?
- **Sense of pride/ownership**
Is there evidence of community pride in the park?
- **Programming flexibility**
How flexible is the park in accommodating multiple uses?
- **Ability of facility to effectively support current organized programming**
Is the site meeting the needs of organized programs?
- **Marketing or promotional efforts for the facility**
Is the site being marketed effectively?



BUILDINGS

Buildings and Architecture

- **Image and aesthetics**
Is the building attractive?
- **Clarity of entry and connection to the park**
Is the building integrated into its surroundings?
- **Interior layout**
Is the layout functional?
- **Interior finishes, furniture, and equipment**
Are the furnishings and equipment inside the building of good condition and quality?
- **Functioning dimensions of spaces**
Does the organization of space support the building's intended function?
- **Structural integrity**
Is there any obvious need for structural repairs?
- **Building enclosure**
Is there any obvious need for repairs to the building shell?
- **Building systems**
Are all the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in working order?
- **Energy and sustainability**
Is there evidence that the building is energy efficient?



NRPA PILLARS

Health and Wellness, Conservation, Social Equity

- **Health and Wellness**
Does the park promote a variety of health and wellness opportunities?
- **Conservation**
Does the park promote conservation practices?
- **Social Equity**
Does the park promote social equity?



CONDITION

Amenities, Furnishings, Landscape, and Hardscape

- **Site Structures / Amenities**
What are the conditions of the park's amenities?
- **Site Furnishings**
What are the conditions of the park's furnishings?
- **General Landscape / Hardscape**
What are the conditions of the park's landscape and hardscapes?



Park Site Evaluations Result

CHART LEGEND:		PARK NAME: [REDACTED]																			
		TOTAL AVERAGES			TOTAL PARKS			TOTAL AMENITIES			TOTAL FURNISHINGS			TOTAL LANDSCAPE			TOTAL CONSTRUCTION			TOTAL PROGRAMMING	
1.0	Needs Improvements	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.5	10.0	10.5	11.0	11.5	12.0
TOTAL AVERAGE SCORE:	2.3	1.5	1.7	2.7	3.2	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.0	1.6	1.9	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	
TOTAL CONDITION SCORE:	2.0	1.4	1.2	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.7	1.8	1.5	1.5	2.6	2.2	2.5	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	
SITE AMENITIES	2.5			3.5	2.9	3.0	2.3	2.8		1.8	1.5	3.6	2.9	2.8	1.7	2.0					
Baseball/Softball Field	2.3				3.0		3.0			1.0	2.0										
Basketball Court	2.4					3.0				1.0										2.0	
Boat Ramp	3.0			5.0		5.0														2.0	
Campground	2.0					3.0												2.0		1.0	
Canoe/Kayak Launch	2.4																				
Community Recreation Center																					
Fishing Dock/Perch	2.8					1.5															
Golf/Frisbee Golf	4.0																			4.0	
Outdoor Gym Equipment	3.0																				
Pavilion	2.7				3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0				4.0	3.5	2.0							
Pickleball Court	4.0					4.0															
Playground	3.3			3.5	3.0		2.0	4.5		4.0		3.5		2.0							
Pool/Aquatic Center	2.5						3.0														
Racket Ball																					
Restroom	2.5			2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.0		1.0	1.0	4.0	3.0	4.5	2.0						
Soccer/Rugby/ Football/Lacrosse Field	2.3					3.0		1.0												3.0	
Splash Pad / Spray Park	2.0																				
Tennis Court	3.5			4.0																	
Volleyball Court	1.0					1.0														1.0	
GENERAL LANDSCAPE + HARDCAPE	2.1	1.8	1.3	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.7	3.4	2.5	1.2	1.4	2.0	1.4	2.3	1.8	2.0					
Landscape	2.1	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0					
Hardscape/Walkways	1.7	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0		1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0					
Trees	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	3.0				
Parking	1.8	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	4.5		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0		
Turf/Fields	2.4					3.0		3.0		1.0	2.0						3.0				
Trails	3.2				3.0	2.0	4.0	4.0													
Garden	3.0																				
SITE FURNISHINGS	1.6	1.0	1.0	1.6	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.7	2.2	2.3	2.6	1.3	1.3				
Bench	1.8			2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0		1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	3.0						
Bike Rack	2.3				2.0	1.0	3.0	2.0											4.0		
Dog Waste Station	2.0						2.0														
Drinking Fountain	2.2			1.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	2.0			1.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.0						
Picnic Table	2.1			2.5	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0			1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0						
Trash/Recycling	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0		2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0		
Signage	1.1	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0		
Sail Shade Structure	2.0																				
Lighting	2.0	1.0		3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0			2.0	2.0		3.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0		
SYSTEM AVERAGES	2.5	1.6	2.3	2.9	4.1	2.3	3.5	2.7	2.2	1.8	2.2	2.5	3.0	3.1	2.4	2.8					
1: PROXIMITY, ACCESS, + LINKAGES	2.1	1.2	1.8	1.9	3.0	1.4	2.8	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.2	1.8	2.4	1.6	1.4	2.0					
Visibility from distance	2.7	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	2.0					
Ease in walking to the park	2.4	1.0	1.0	4.0	4.0	1.0	4.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0					
Clarity of Information/signage	1.6	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0					
ADA Compliance	1.9	1.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	3.0		1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0					
Lighting	1.8	1.0		1.0	2.0	1.0	3.0				2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0					
2: COMFORT + IMAGE	3.0	2.1	2.8	3.6	4.0	3.1	3.5	3.5	2.8	1.9	2.9	3.1	3.6	3.6	3.0	2.0					
First Impression/overall attractiveness	2.9	2.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0					
Feeling of safety	3.8	1.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0					
Maintenance (Exterior Site)	3.9	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0					
Maintenance (Facilities Interior)	3.9	1.5					4.0	4.0													
Comfort of places to sit	2.6	1.0		3.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.0		1.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0					
Protection from bad weather	2.6	1.0		4.0	5.0	2.0	4.0	4.0		1.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0					
Stewardship (Exterior Site)	3.5	3.0	2.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	3.0	4.5	2.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0					
Stewardship (Facility Interior)	3.6	3.5				3.0	4.0														
Supervision ability (Interior)	3.8					2.0	4.0														
Condition of operating systems	2.9					4.0	3.0	3.0													
Branding	1.5	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0		
3: USES, ACTIVITY, + SOCIALIBILITY	2.6	1.2	2.4	3.0	4.7	2.5	4.2	2.8	1.5	1.8	2.5	4.0	2.0	4.0	3.8	2.3					
Mix of uses/things to do	2.1	1.0	2.5	3.0	5.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	1.0					
Level of activity	3.2	2.0	2.5	4.0	5.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0					
Sense of pride/ownership	3.6	1.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	2.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.0					
Programming flexibility	2.8	1.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	5.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	5.0	3.0	5.0	2.0					
Current organized programming	2.4	1.0		3.0	3.0	5.0	3.0									2.0					
Marketing efforts	1.5	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0					
4: BUILDINGS + ARCHITECTURE	2.7					1.3	3.2									3.2					
Image and aesthetics	2.6					2.0	2.0									3.0					
Clarity of entry and connections	3.5					2.0	4.0									3.0					
Interior layout	2.8					1.0	3.0									4.0					
Interior finishes, furniture and equipment	2.0					1.0	2.0									3.0					
Functioning dimensions of spaces	2.6					1.0	2.5									4.0					
Structural integrity	2.5					1.0	4.0									3.0					
Building enclosure	2.8					1.0	4.0									3.0					
Building systems	3.3					2.0	4.0									4.0					
Energy and sustainability	2.0					1.0	3.0									2.0					
5: NRPA 3 PILLARS	2.5	2.0	2.3	3.0	4.7	3.0	4.0	2.7	2.0	1.7	1.3	2.3	1.7	3.3	2.7	2.0					
Health/Wellness	2.3	2.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.0					
Conservation	2.9	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0					
Social Equity	2.3	2.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0					

Park Site Evaluations Results (Continued)

PARK NAME:	CHART LEGEND:									
	1.0	Needs Improvements	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	Exceeding Expectations	6.0	7.0	8.0
Mobile Point	Ohio Road/Box Ramp	Fire Hill (Line Pipe)	Roseland Community Park	Roseland Beach Park	Roseland Island Riverside	Seagrove Beach Access	Scholar in Canoe Beach Park	Tracking Station South	Tunxis Shores Park	Tropic Colony
TOTAL AVERAGE SCORE:	1.5	1.6	1.5	2.5	2.9	2.6	2.3	2.3	1.8	2.1
TOTAL CONDITION SCORE:	1.1	1.3	1.3	2.6	2.8	2.2	1.8	2.2	1.7	2.4
SITE AMENITIES	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.5	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	4.0	1.8
Baseball/Softball Field										2.5
Basketball Court			1.0							3.0
Boat Ramp		1.0				3.0				2.0
Campground										
Canoe/Kayak Launch		1.0				3.0		2.5		3.0
Community Recreation Center										
Fishing Dock/Pier				3.0		4.0				
Golf/Frisbee Golf										
Outdoor Gym Equipment										2.0
Pavilion	1.0			4.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.0		3.0
Pickleball Court										4.0
Playground				5.0	3.0			5.0		2.0
Pool/Aquatic Center										2.0
Racket Ball										
Restroom					2.0		2.0	3.0		2.0
Soccer/Rugby/Football/Lacrosse Field										2.0
Splash Pad / Spray Park										2.0
Tennis Court										3.0
Volleyball Court									1.0	1.0
GENERAL LANDSCAPE + HARDCAPE	1.0	1.5	1.3	2.8	3.0	2.0	2.5	2.8	1.5	1.8
Landscape	1.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	1.0	2.0
Harbcape/Walkways	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
Trees	1.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	3.0
Parking	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
Turf/Fields										2.5
Trails					2.0					3.0
Garden										3.0
SITE FURNISHINGS	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.5
Bench					2.0	2.0		1.0	1.0	2.0
Bike Rack					2.0	2.0		3.0	3.0	2.0
Dog Waste Station										
Drinking Fountain					2.0	2.0		1.0	1.0	1.0
Picnic Table	1.0		2.0	2.5	2.0	2.0		2.0	2.0	2.0
Trash/Recycling	2.0	2.0		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Signage	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Sail Shade Structure						2.0				
Lighting									3.0	4.0
SYSTEM AVERAGES	1.9	1.9	1.7	2.4	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.4	1.9	1.8
1: PROXIMITY, ACCESS, + LINKAGES	2.2	1.4	2.0	1.5	2.5	2.3	2.3	1.8	1.3	2.3
Visibility from a distance	4.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
Ease in walking to the park	4.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	1.0	3.0
Clarity of information/signage	1.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
ADA Compliance	1.0	1.0		1.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	2.0
Lighting	1.0	1.0							1.0	3.0
2: COMFORT + IMAGE	2.3	2.2	1.9	3.2	3.9	2.9	2.9	3.6	2.6	2.1
First Impression/overall attractiveness	2.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	2.0
Feeling of safety	3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	5.0
Maintenance (Exterior Site)	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	5.0
Maintenance (Facilities Interior)										5.0
Comfort of places to sit	3.0		1.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.0
Protection from bad weather	3.0		1.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	1.0
Stewardship (Exterior Site)	2.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
Stewardship (Facility Interior)										4.0
Supervision ability (Interior)			5.0							
Condition of operating systems										
Branding	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
3: USES, ACTIVITY, + SOCIOABILITY	2.0	1.5	1.5	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.0	2.0
Mix of uses/things to do	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
Level of activity	3.0	3.0	1.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	1.0
Sense of pride/ownership	3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	5.0
Programming flexibility	1.0									4.0
Current organized programming	1.0				1.0	1.0		1.0	1.0	4.0
Marketing efforts	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
4: BUILDINGS + ARCHITECTURE										
Image and aesthetics										
Clarity of entry and connections										
Interior layout										
Interior finishes, furniture and equipment										
Functioning dimensions of spaces										
Structural integrity										
Building enclosure										
Building systems										
Energy and sustainability										
5: NPPA 3 PILLARS	1.0	2.3	1.3	2.0	2.7	3.7	4.0	2.3	1.3	1.7
Health/Wellness	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	5.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Conservation	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	1.0	2.0	3.0
Social Equity	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0

Park and Facility Evaluation Summary Findings

Based on the evaluation of Indian River County's parks and recreation system that use the criteria previously described, it appears that the County's parks and recreation system scored just below fair condition, with an overall condition score of 1.7 out of 3. For the other categories, the County scored just above fair with an overall score of 2.8 out of 5. These findings are discussed in more detail below. The park system displayed a variety of strengths and opportunities that the County should build on and improve wherever possible.

General Comments for Park System

General Comments for Park System

- In some cases, a detailed Master Plan for the entire site is necessary to meet the County's needs.
- Most site furnishings and equipment require cleaning, upgrading, or servicing. Update existing interpretive signage, benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles. Convert drinking fountains to bottle-fill stations and add bike fix-it stations to support cycling.
- Assess parks for American's with Disabilities Act Compliance and address deficiencies.
- More in-depth analysis of existing parks for compliance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Standards (CPTED).
- Increase tree canopy for shade and aesthetics; increase wildflower and native plantings for conservation efforts.
- Coordinate with Engineering and Transportation Departments for shared project opportunities involving stormwater planning and sidewalk connectivity throughout the system.
- Establish digital transformation strategy throughout system to incorporate Wi-Fi access, solar power charging stations, educational opportunities, asset management, gaming integration, and trail tracking. Technology improvements should include security monitoring, lighting, and energy efficiency.

Lessons from the 2020 Pandemic

Data has shown that communities turned to parks and recreation areas for healthy outdoor physical activity and relief from the worries and pressures of the pandemic on them and their families.

- National surveys have shown an increase in visitation, trail usage, and value of local park systems.
- Replace outdated drinking fountains with hands-free bottle-fill stations.
- Consider adding hand washing stations to spaces outside of restrooms, perhaps connected to the water bottle-refill stations.
- Include more natural play areas and be mindful of "small footprint, high occupancy" play equipment.
- Develop a regular cleaning schedule for park equipment, site furnishings, and play areas.
- Transition to self-cleaning restrooms.
- Add sanitizing stations to outdoor exercise areas.

General Condition of Amenities, Furnishings, Landscape, and Hardscape

(+) STRENGTHS

Many of the parks contain facilities and amenities such as sports courts, fields, pavilions, playgrounds, etc. that appear to be in fair condition and may not need improvements in the next 5 to 7 years. Notable examples include Dick Bird, Fran B. Adams, Round Island Riverside, and West Wabasso.



(-) OPPORTUNITIES

- Most of the parks' landscape and hardscape elements will need improvements in the next 1-5 years. Parks with the greatest need include Ambersands Beach Access, Treasure Shores Beach Park, Wabasso Causeway, Fran Adams (North County) Regional Park, Helen Hanson Park, and MLK Park.



- Though many of the County parks contain facilities and amenities such as sports courts, fields, pavilions, playgrounds, etc. that may not need improvements in the next 5 to 7 years, some will need improvements in the next 1 to 5 years. Parks with the greatest need are Kiwanis-Hobart Park, MLK Park, Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex, Lone Pine, and Oslo Boat Ramp. The County should develop an Asset Management/Repair and Replacement Schedule to proactively plan for these Capital Improvements.



- Most of the parks' site furnishings such as drinking fountains, picnic tables, trash receptacles, signage, etc. will need replacement in the next 1 to 5 years. All Neighborhood Parks scored poor or below fair in this category. The County should develop an Asset Management/ Repair and Replacement Schedule to proactively plan for these updates.

Proximity, Access, and Linkages

(+) STRENGTHS



- Most of the parks provide adequate visibility or clear site lines into the park. MLK Park, Vero Highlands Park, Helen Hanson, Dale Wimbrow, and Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex are examples of parks that provide clear visibility into the park from at least two sides of the park.
- Most County parks and recreation facilities show evidence of intention to be accessible and allow equitable use for people with all needs/abilities.

(-) OPPORTUNITIES



- While some of the parks allow for people to enter via adjacent neighborhoods safely and comfortably, there is a notable opportunity to improve the walking or biking experience to all County parks. The objective should be to create an interconnected park sidewalk network. This network should be on narrow streets and include ADA accessibility, pedestrian-timed street crossings, and wide shaded sidewalks that lead to pedestrian entrances. Notable examples include Dick Bird (South County) Regional Park, MLK Park, and Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex.



- In the 10-year plan, all park lights need to be upgraded to be LED. The objective is to allow users opportunities to enjoy park amenities after dusk, where appropriate, and provide safety lights in parks where after dusk activities are not appropriate. Parks serving as good examples of upgraded lighting include West Wabasso Park and Fran Adams (North County) Regional Park.



- Most of the parks contain gateway and regulatory signage, however, there is an opportunity to enhance signage in all of the County's parks. Additional signage opportunities that the County should consider include park system location maps, park amenity location maps and amenity directional signage (depending on the size and complexity of the park), amenity signs, and educational interpretive signs. Signage enhancements should include branding consistency.



- Although many of the parks are accessible, the County should continue to improve ADA accessibility to more park amenities to ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access to a variety of activities. Beach accessibility is important to the community of Indian River County and more efforts should be made to improve access to the ocean where possible.

Comfort and Image

(+) STRENGTHS



- The first impression and overall attractiveness of most of the County's parks is "fair" with a few being "great". Dick Bird (South County) Regional Park, Round Island Beach Park, and West Wabasso Park are parks that provide a great first impression and show a high degree of overall attractiveness. The positive first impression and overall attractiveness of these parks also translates into a feeling of safety and stewardship from park users.
- Many of the County's parks exhibit good signs of overall cleanliness, quality of exterior maintenance, management, and stewardship with some parks exhibiting a higher degree than others. Notable examples include Richard N. "Dick" Bird (South County) Regional Park, Golden Sands Beach Park, Round Island Beach Park, Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex, and Hobart Ballfields and Park.
- The interior spaces of many county park buildings can be easily supervised and managed due to an interior design that is configured to allow clear site lines to major amenities, entrances, and exists from a central location. Buildings in Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex, the IRC Fairgrounds, North County Aquatic Center, and Gifford Aquatic Center are good examples. This translates into strong interior cleanliness and management/stewardship, which the above parks exhibit.



(-) OPPORTUNITIES

- While some of the County's parks have a "fair" to "great" first impression, overall attractiveness, cleanliness, quality of maintenance, management, and stewardship, there is opportunity to improve the quality of parks, so that there is consistency across the entire parks system. This includes addressing deferred maintenance, upgrading the public restrooms and site furnishings, completing capital improvements, and re-master planning some of these parks. Parks that require priority attention are MLK Park, Wabasso Causeway Park, Helen Hanson, Lone Pine, Fran Adams (North County) Regional Park, Treasure Shores Beach Park, Ambersands Beach Access, and Turtle Trail Beach Access.



- There is an opportunity to improve the appearance, comfort, and experience of all park sitting areas. The County should strive to incorporate a consistent variety of seating options in parks including movable tables and chairs, which allow users to customize their sitting experience.



- Some of the parks do not contain shelters where park users can go to find refuge from Florida's inclement, and at times, unpredictable weather. The County should strive to incorporate more shelters and shade in parks including pavilions, shade structures for playgrounds, exercise stations, and seating areas, and shade trees to enhance park user's experience and comfort. Dick Bird (South County) Regional Park, Fran Adams (North County) Regional Park, Victor Hart Sr. Community Enhancement Complex, Golden Sands Beach Park, and Kiwanis

Hobart Park provide good examples of how to incorporate effective types of shelters and shade.



- Some of the parks contain equipment and operating systems that are in good condition, however, others do not require replacement or upgrade. The County should ensure that the equipment and operating systems in all the County parks are in good working condition. Good examples include West Wabasso Park and Dick Bird (South County) Regional Park.



- All County parks have the potential to enhance their branding through the consistent use of high-quality materials, colors, textures, furnishings, signage, details, upkeep, and overall aesthetics. The County should develop park standards that define the County's brand and implement the branding throughout the parks and recreation system.

Uses, Activities, and Sociability

(+) STRENGTHS



- Most of the County parks exhibit a high degree of pride and ownership with few signs of litter, vandalism, or misuse. Many parks appear to be actively used and show signs of care and upkeep from the community as well as the County staff. Notable examples include Dick Bird/South County Park, Kiwanis-Hobart Park, and Roseland Community Park.

(-) OPPORTUNITIES



- While some of the County parks provide a range of facilities, amenities, and activities for users of all ages that lead to a high level of activity, many do not. This limited range of facilities, amenities, and activities in parks also limits the level of activity that occurs in these parks. Even parks that are well used in the evenings or weekends may remain underused at other times of the day. The County should strive to have a mix of uses at each park. This can be achieved by increasing or changing the amenities and programs in the parks based on the community's needs and priorities. Specific parks that could use additional amenities include Helen Hanson Park, Lone Pine, MLK Park, and the beach parks.



- While some of the County's parks are adequately planned and spatially organized to facilitate organized programming, many are not. Space for multi-purpose, multi-generational experiences, and parking appears to be a factor. Parks where the ability to support current organized programming is challenged include Fran Adams (North County) Regional Park, Hobart Ballfields, Helen Hanson Park, Roseland Community Park, and beach parks.



- While some of the parks use a variety of marketing and promotional tools to make residents aware of the park, its recreation facilities and activities, program marketing is poor overall. To the extent possible, the County should look to enhance marketing efforts through as many avenues as possible including traditional and digital means.

Buildings and Architecture

(+) STRENGTHS



- Some of the County's park buildings have an adequate image and aesthetic through the use of appropriate proportions and materials, and contribute to the context of the park and surrounding neighborhood. The most notable examples are the buildings at Victor Hart Park, Roseland Community Park, and Fran Adams (North County) Regional Park.
- Most of the park buildings have adequate entry points and connections to surrounding outdoor spaces.
- Most of the park buildings showed no visible evidence of loss of integrity of any structural components or building enclosures. Most of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are observed to be in operating order.

(-) OPPORTUNITIES



- Most of the restrooms and park facilities have finishes, furniture, and equipment (FF&E) that are either damaged, outdated, or not aesthetically pleasing.
- Many of the park maintenance, storage, or multipurpose spaces are incorrectly sized or otherwise ill-fitted for their current function. The following types of buildings should be redesigned to allow for better use of the facilities: baseball concession/press boxes, aquatic center multipurpose rooms and lifeguard/admin. offices, maintenance/equipment storage spaces.
- Most of the buildings' systems are not energy efficient. Over time, the County should look to replace these systems to have energy efficient elements and use sustainable materials.

NRPA Pillars - Health and Wellness, Conservation, Social Equity**(-) OPPORTUNITIES**

- Most County parks scored poorly in the evaluation of the '3 NRPA Pillars'. Many of the larger community parks are good examples of promoting health and wellness but there is an opportunity in the neighborhood and beach parks to add fitness equipment and increase the variety of activities available.
- There is an opportunity to enhance conservation strategies in all of the County's parks. These opportunities include additional tree canopy, the use of additional sustainable materials, erosion control, stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), use of native landscaping, and other environmental best practices.
- While some of the County's parks exhibit good social equity strategies such as availability and ease of access, ADA compliance, recreation opportunities for many different ages/abilities located in a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse area, others do not. Specifically, the beach parks' social equity strategies could be improved.

Recreation Program Assessment

Overview

As part of the Indian River County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the consulting team conducted a Recreation Program Analysis of the services offered by the Indian River County Parks, Recreation, & Conservation Department ("Department"). The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of the Department's programming and service offerings and helps identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities regarding community programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core program areas, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues, areas of improvement, and future programs and services for Indian River County's residents and visitors.

The program findings and recommendations are based on two (2) key sets of data:

- Indian River County program offerings information provided by Department staff including program descriptions and details, financial data, website content, and discussions with staff, and;
- Indian River County and surrounding region demographics and recreation and leisure trends information. Following the review and amalgamation of all this data, this report is compiled and addresses the program offerings from a systems perspective for the entire portfolio of Department programs.



Framework

The Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department provides a broad range of recreational activities and programming, supported with dedicated spaces which include parks, trails, an intergenerational community center, pools, and a public shooting range.

Program Assessment Overview

While more detailed analysis is provided in the report, below are some overall notable observations when analyzing the program assessment data:

- Overall, the **program descriptions** do a good job of briefly communicating the overall idea of each Core Program Area. However, this could be improved by adding brief Core Program Area goals and to ensure that each Core Program Area has developed qualitative goals moving forward. Additionally, it would be beneficial to Department staff, and particularly programming staff, to know and understand the Core Program Areas, their definitions, and the goals of each to ensure consistency in offerings, how programs are structured, and development of tools for review, evaluation, and updating of Department programs. Finally, the Core Program Areas and definitions should be shared with the public for their understanding of the framework of Department programs.
- **Age segment distribution** is aligned with the community's current population and needs to be monitored annually to ensure program distribution continues to match evolving Indian River County age demographics.
- **Program lifecycles:** Approximately 48% of the system's current programs are categorized in the first three stages, while 18% of the Department's programs fall into the final two stages. 35% of programs were deemed as 'Mature', which may indicate a need to intentionally continue introducing new programming for the Department in the coming years. A more complete description of Lifecycle Stages can be found later in this report.
- **Pricing strategies** are somewhat diverse with all Core Program Areas utilizing some type of specific strategies. While ensuring access to all Indian River County residents is essential, the addition of some new and additional pricing strategies would be optimal to recognizing the various classification of program offerings as well as assisting with the Department's financial sustainability. Furthermore, it is essential to understand the Department's current cost of service to determine potential cost recovery goals.
- **Financial performance measures** such as cost recovery goals are minimally utilized across Core Program Areas based on different program types. Moving forward, it is recommended that the Department consistently track cost recovery for all Core Program Areas, and when doing so, factor in all direct and indirect costs pertaining to programming. A focus on developing a department revenue policy and establishing consistent earned income opportunities would be beneficial to the Department's overall quest for greater fiscal accountability and sustainability.



Core Program Areas

To support the Department's mission, it's essential to identify key program areas that address current and future needs, focusing on the most important areas for the community. This section of analysis covers core programs that work with or serve all ages of the community. Program Areas are considered as "Core" if they meet a majority of the following criteria:

- The program area has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years) and/or is expected by the community.
- The program area consumes a relatively large portion (5% or more) of the agency's overall budget.
- The program area is offered 3-4 seasons per year.
- There is a tiered level of skill development available within the program area's offerings.
- There is full-time staff responsible for the program area.
- There are facilities designed specifically to support the program area.
- The agency controls a significant percentage (20% or more) of the local market.

Existing Core Program Areas

Eight (8) Core Program Areas are currently offered by the Department. Included within each of the Core Program Areas are individual programs that are designed to meet current and emerging needs of the Indian River County community.

Adult Activities / Enrichment	<p>Description: Adult activities designed to keep them healthy, engaged, and in shape.</p> <p>Includes: Open gym activities, coloring and coffee, board games</p>
Adult Sports	<p>Description: Sports leagues designed for adults (18+).</p> <p>Includes: Basketball leagues, Pickleball leagues, Softball leagues, Kickball leagues</p>
Education / Safety	<p>Description: Includes Water Safety School, Baby and Me Swim Classes, Lifeguarding, Babysitting classes, and swim lessons for all ages.</p> <p>Includes: Preschool Learn to Swim, Learn to Swim, Babysitting classes, Junior Lifeguarding, Water Safety School</p>
Fitness and Wellness	<p>Description: Fitness and wellness classes designed to keep seniors (55+) active and healthy, including senior wellness, water fitness, and cardio.</p> <p>Includes: Aerobics, Weights, Rock & Roll Cardio, Up Beat Boxing, Senior Wellness, Walking Club, Water Fitness</p>

Professional Development	<p>Description: Includes CPR, First Aid, Lifeguarding, Water Safety Instruction, and Emergency Medical Responder classes.</p> <p>Includes: CPR/First Aid classes, Lifeguarding classes, Water Safety Instructor classes, Emergency Medical Responder classes</p>
Special Events	<p>Description: Special experiences designed for children ages 3-12, featuring festive gatherings, spooky celebrations, and heartwarming dances, creating unforgettable memories for families.</p> <p>Includes: Daddy Daughter Dance, Mother Son Dance, Flash Light Egg Hunt, Pickleball Tournament, Trunk or Treat, Halloween Dance, Breakfast with Santa</p>
Youth Activities / Enrichment	<p>Description: Youth activities designed to keep kids active outside of the normal school parameters and promote a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>Includes: Youth Pickleball Camp, Youth Open Gym Basketball/Volleyball, Summer Sports Camp, Tales with Tails, Homeschool PE</p>
Youth Sports	<p>Description: Youth sports leagues designed for kids aged (4-16).</p> <p>Includes: Youth Baseball, Youth Basketball, Youth Flag Football</p>

Core Program Area Recommendations

Existing Core Program Areas and Program Types provide a generally well-rounded and diverse array of programs for the Indian River County community. Based on the observations of the consulting team, it is recommended that Department staff evaluate the Core Program Areas to ensure they meet the Indian River County demographics and recreation trends, as well as the majority of Core Program Area criteria as described in this report. The evaluation of the Core Program Areas should include a review of the Core Program Area definitions to ensure a consistency of descriptions and definitions while also ensuring the definitions are in alignment with the public survey results and the demographic and recreation trends of Indian River County. Additionally, Department staff should evaluate the alignment of the individual programs within the Core Program Areas.

Defining of Core Program Areas and Alignment of Individual Programs

One of the major internal changes that the consulting team identified is a need to redefine and streamline Core Program Areas and align Individual Programs within the Core Program Areas. Currently, with 8 total Core Program Areas, the Department's individual programming is concentrated well, however, it seems that programs are divided because they are similar to each other, rather than by cost recovery goals, program location and facility usage, or overall core program area goals. The idea of Core Program Areas should allow the Department to consolidate programming from across locations and facilities into one Core Program Area, so that staffing and planning can be streamlined and monitored more effectively. Therefore, the consultant team recommends that the Department conduct an evaluation of its Core Program Areas to promote efficiency and consistency across its programming portfolio.

Once this evaluation of the current Core Program Areas, Core Program Area definitions, and the individual programs is completed, it is important to provide training for all Department staff who are involved with programming to ensure a full understanding of the Department's Core Program Areas and how they will be used for developing programming and program requirements. Following this initial evaluation process, Department staff should annually evaluate the Core Program Areas, Core Program Area definitions, and individual programs to ensure the Core Program Areas meet the community's demographics and trends at that time and meet the majority of Core Program Area criteria.

Program Strategy Analysis

Age Segment Analysis

For this report, an Age Segment Analysis was completed by Core Program Area, exhibiting an over-arching view of the age segments served by different Core Program Areas, and displaying any gaps in segments served.

The chart below depicts each Core Program Area and the age segments they serve. Within each Core Program Area, a 'P' or 'S' is indicated to show two different age segment alignments: 'Primary' or 'Secondary'. Each core program area will serve at least one age segment in either a primary or secondary capacity, while some programs serve multiple Primary and Secondary Markets. For example, the 'Adult Sports' Core Program Area primarily serves Adult aged participants but also serves Seniors as a secondary demographic.

Age Segment Analysis						
Core Program Area	Preschool (5 and Under)	Elementary (6-12)	Teens (13-17)	Adult (18+)	Senior (55+)	All Ages Programs
Adult Activities / Enrichment				P	P	
Adult Sports				P	S	
Education / Safety	P	P	P	P	S	P
Fitness and Wellness				P	P	
Professional Development			P	P	P	
Special Events	P	P	S			
Youth Activities / Enrichment	P	P	P			
Youth Sports	S	P	P			

Based on the age demographics of Indian River County, current program offerings are generally well-aligned with the community's age profile. Each age group is well accounted for with all the various age segments served by each Core Program Area. The Department does a great job providing offerings for elementary and teenaged participants and there are a good number of program offerings for adults and seniors. All core program areas serve at least two age segments as a primary market, with some (like Education / Safety) providing offerings for large sections of the community.

Moving forward, it would be useful for the Department to maintain an annual Age Segment Analysis by individual programs to continue to monitor how all age segments are being served. Starting this practice at the inception of programs or in annual reviews of the programming portfolio would allow for a long-term planning process that fosters a programming portfolio that serves each age demographic sufficiently.

Program Lifecycle Analysis

A Program Lifecycle Analysis involves reviewing each program offered by the department to determine the stage of growth or decline for each. This analysis helps to inform strategic decisions about the overall mix of programs managed by the Department to ensure that an appropriate number of programs are “fresh” and that relatively few programs, if any, need to be discontinued. **This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data but instead is based on staff members’ knowledge of their programs.** The following table shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the Department’s programs, obtained by dividing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs.

Lifecycle Analysis				
Stages	Description	Actual Programs Distribution		Recommended Distribution
Introduction	New programs; modest participation	4%	48%	50%-60% Total
Take-Off	Rapid participation growth	24%		
Growth	Moderate, but consistent participation growth	20%		
Mature	Slow participation growth	35%		40%
Saturated	Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition	9%		0%-10% Total
Decline	Declining participation	9%		

Overall, the Lifecycle Analysis depicts a well-balanced portfolio of programs. Approximately 48% of all programs fall within the beginning stages (Introduction, Take-Off, & Growth), with 44% of those programs within the Take-off and Growth stages. It is generally recommended that agencies should have 50%-60% of all programs within these beginning stages as they provide departments with an avenue to energize their programmatic offerings. At present, the Department is nearly reaching that threshold, however, there could be more new program development as only 4% of all offerings are considered in the Introduction stage. To ensure that programs remain at a healthy balance in terms of lifecycle, it is recommended that more programs are introduced in the coming years to maintain a strong flow of new offerings that meet residents’ current and future needs. Adding staff will be essential to manage the increased workload, ensuring the successful development and delivery of these new programs.

Alternatively, 35% of programs are in the “Mature” stage (which is recommended to be around 40% of an agency’s portfolio). Mature programs are the Department’s well-established programming that the community has experience with and is expected to attend as a stable offering. With time, it is expected for the Department’s early-stage programming to continue to fill out this section of the portfolio, especially with a high percentage of current program offerings in the “Growth” and ‘Take-Off Stages’. To promote this growth, Department staff will need to conduct regular, on-going reviews and evaluations of program offerings and be able to respond to program demands in a timely manner, as new and maturing programs alike can be volatile and change rapidly in terms of attendance and how well they are serving residents’ needs.

18% of programs are either in the “saturated” or “decline stage”, which typically should not be more than 10% of an entire Department’s programming portfolio. Programs at or nearing these stages should be monitored, as it is a natural progression for programs to eventually transition into Saturation and Decline stages from the Mature stage. However, if programs reach these stages rapidly, it could be an indication that the quality of the programs does not meet expectations, or that there is not much of a demand for

those programs. As programs enter the “Decline Stage”, they must be closely reviewed and evaluated for repositioning or elimination. When this occurs, staff should modify these programs to begin a new lifecycle within the “Introductory Stage” or replace the existing programs with new programs based upon community needs and trends.

Staff should complete a Program Lifecycle Analysis on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distributions closely align with desired performance. Furthermore, staff needs to implement performance measures as recommended in this report and monitor them annually to track total participation numbers, participant to staff ratios, program cancellation rates, participation growth, customer retention, and percentage of new programs as an incentive for innovation and alignment with community trends.

Program Classification

Conducting a classification of services analysis informs how each program serves the overall organization mission, aligns with the goals and objectives of each Core Program Area, and how the program should be funded regarding tax dollars and/or user fees and charges. How a program is classified can help determine the most appropriate management, funding, and marketing strategies.

Program classifications are based on the degree to which the program provides a public benefit versus a private benefit. Public benefit can be described as everyone receiving the same level of benefit with equal access, whereas private benefit can be described as the user receiving exclusive benefit above what a general taxpayer receives for their personal benefit.

For this exercise, staff placed programs in the classification model based on three categories: Essential Services, Important Services, and Value-Added Services. Where a program or service is classified depends upon alignment with the organizational mission, how the staff and public perceive a program, legal mandates, financial sustainability, personal benefit, competition in the marketplace, and access by participants. The following graphic describes each of the three program classifications.

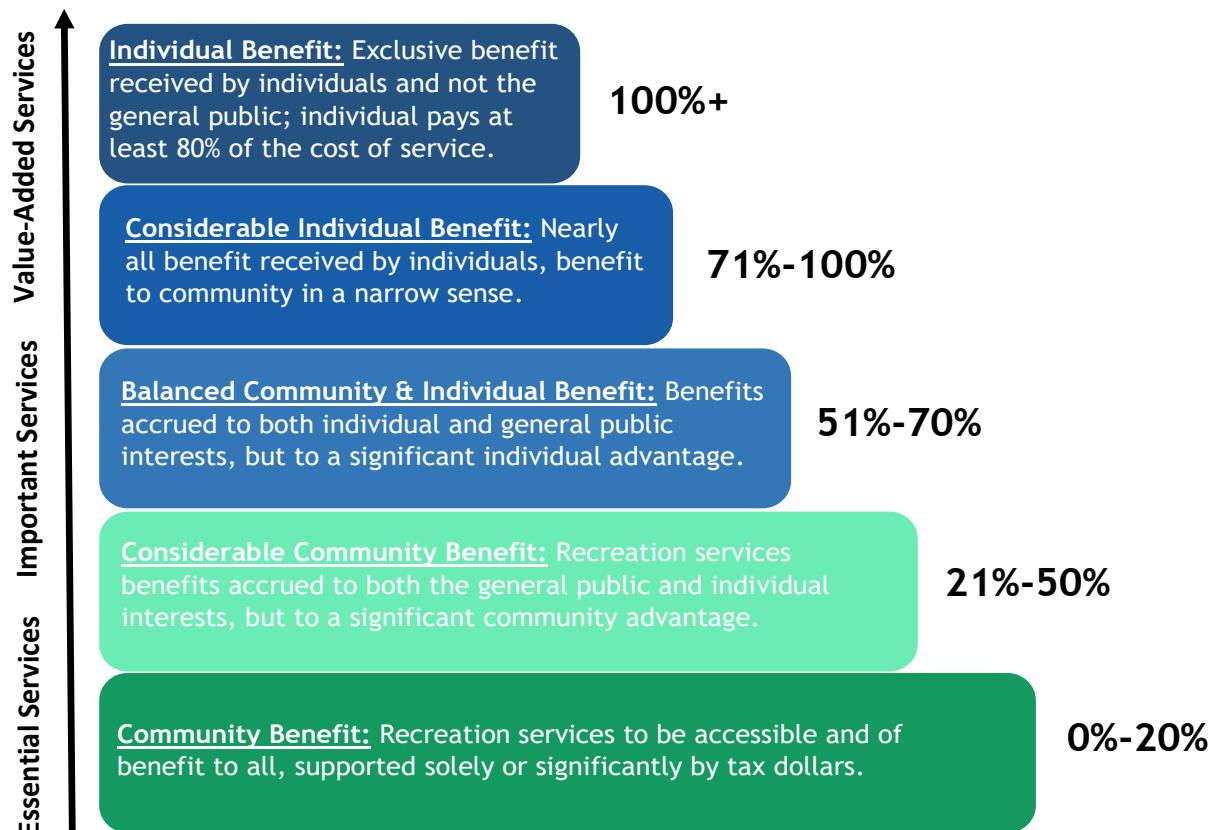


The classification of all recreation programs offered by the Department is presented in the following table. These results represent staff's perspective of the current classification distribution of recreation program services within each Core Program Area.

Program Classification Distribution		
Essential	Important	Value-Added
26%	43%	32%

With the information provided by staff and represented in the chart above, it appears that the Department has a healthy balance of program classification; 26% are deemed Essential, with 43% of the total individual programs identified as Important and 32% of programs being deemed Value-Added.

Program Classification Cost Recovery



With the establishment of a broad range of cost recovery goals (i.e., 0-40% for Essential Services, 40-80% for Important Services, 80-100%+ for Value Added Services), the Department should distribute programs internally within sub-ranges of cost recovery as depicted above. This will allow programs to fall within an overall service classification tier while still demonstrating a difference in expected/desired cost recovery goals based on a greater understanding of the program's goals (e.g., Pure Public Benefit versus Mostly Public Benefit or Mostly Public Benefit versus Individual Benefit).

Cost of Service and Cost Recovery Recommendations

At a minimum, cost recovery targets should be identified for each Core Program Area, and for specific programs or events, when realistic. The identified Core Program Areas would serve as an effective breakdown for tracking cost recovery metrics including administrative costs. Once the new classification system is established, the Department should review how the programs are grouped for similar cost recovery and subsidy goals to determine if current practices still meet management outcomes.

Determining cost recovery performance and using it to make informed pricing decisions involves a three-step process:

1. Classify all programs and services based on the public or private benefit they provide (as completed in the previous section).
2. Conduct a Cost-of-Service Analysis to calculate the full cost of each program which includes direct and indirect program costs.
3. Establish a cost recovery percentage, through Department policy, for each program or program type based on the outcomes of the previous two steps and adjust program prices accordingly.

The following section provides more detail on steps 2 & 3.

Understanding the Full Cost of Service

To develop specific cost recovery targets, full cost of accounting should be created for each class or program that accurately calculates direct and indirect costs. Cost recovery goals are established once these numbers are in place. Once again, it is critical the Department's program staff be trained on this process.

A Cost-of-Service Analysis should be conducted on each program, or program type, that accurately calculates direct (i.e., program-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs. Completing a Cost-of-Service Analysis not only helps determine the true and full cost of offering a program, it also provides information that can be used to price programs based upon accurate delivery costs. The illustration below depicts the common types of costs that must be accounted for in a Cost-of-Service Analysis.



The methodology for determining the total Cost-of-Service involves calculating the total cost for the activity, program, or service, then calculating the total revenue earned for that activity. Costs (and revenue) can also be derived on a per unit basis. Program or activity units may include:

- Number of participants
- Number of tasks performed
- Number of consumable units
- Number of service calls
- Number of events
- Required time for offering program/service

Agencies use Cost-of-Service Analyses to determine what financial resources are required to provide specific programs at specific levels of service. Results are used to determine and track cost recovery as well as to benchmark different programs provided by the Department between one another. Cost recovery goals are established once Cost-of-Service totals have been calculated. Program and other associated staff should be trained on the process of conducting the Cost-of-Service Analysis and the analysis should be undertaken on a regularly scheduled basis.

Actual cost recovery can vary based on the Core Program type, and even at the individual program level within a Core Program Area. Several variables can influence the cost recovery target, including lifecycle stage, demographic served, location where program is delivered, and perhaps most important, program classification. It is normal for programs within each Core Program Area to vary in price and subsidy level. The program mix within each Core Program Area will determine the cost recovery capabilities.

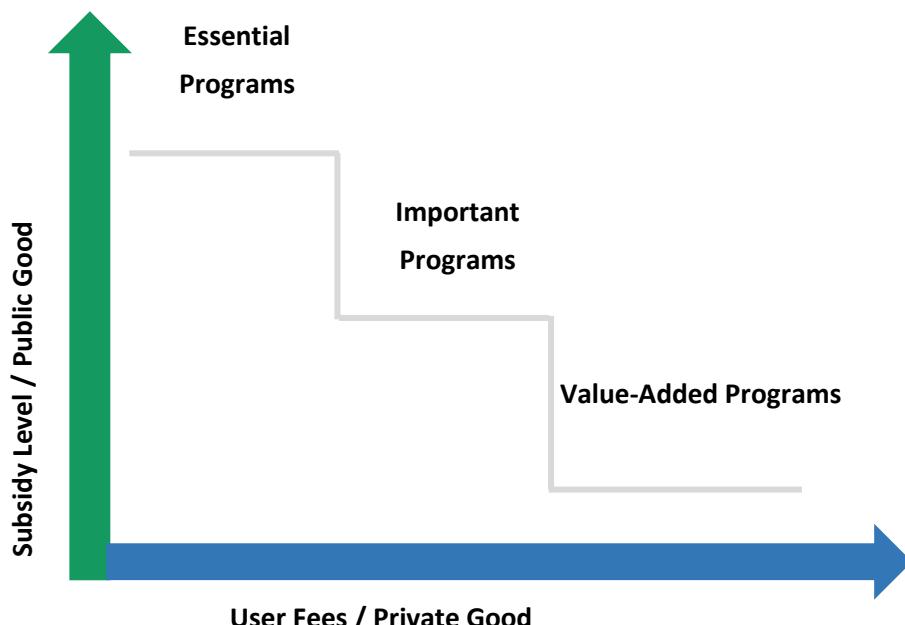
With approved cost recovery goals, annual tracking, and quality assurance, actual cost recovery will improve. Use the key performance indicator on the previous page and update it annually to include the cost recovery goal and the actual cost recovery achieved. Each Core Program type can be benchmarked against itself on an annual basis.

Cost Recovery Best Practices

Cost recovery targets should reflect the degree to which a program provides a public versus individual good. Programs providing public benefits (i.e., Essential programs) should be subsidized more by the Department; programs providing individual benefits (i.e., Value-Added programs) should seek to recover costs and/or generate revenue for other services. To help plan and implement cost recovery policies, the consultant team has developed the following definitions to help classify specific programs within program areas.

- **Essential** program category is critical to achieving the organizational mission and providing community-wide benefits and therefore, generally receive priority for tax-dollar subsidization.
- **Important or Value-Added** program classifications generally represent programs that receive lower priority for subsidization.
 - **Important** programs contribute to the organizational mission but are not essential to it; therefore, cost recovery for these programs should be high (i.e., at least 80% overall).
 - **Value-Added** programs are not critical to the mission and should be prevented from drawing upon limited public funding, so overall cost recovery for these programs should be near or in excess of 100%.

Classification of Programs and Cost Recovery Expectations



Pricing

Pricing strategies are one mechanism agencies can use to influence and foster cost recovery. Currently, the degree to which the Department uses various pricing strategies is limited to four main strategies, with each core program area having at least one of the listed pricing tactics in use. These results can be found in the table below. It should be noted that these are not all of the pricing strategies used within the Department, as some programs are free, have varied cost recovery goals, are on set fee schedules, or have built-in costs that help offset the cost of equipment or participation for users.

Pricing Strategies										
Core Program Area	Age Segment	Family/ Household Status	Residency	Weekday/ Weekend	Prime / Non- Prime Time	Group Discounts	By Location	By Competition (Market Rate)	By Cost Recovery Goals	By Customer's Ability to Pay
Adult Activities / Enrichment							X			
Adult Sports								X		
Education / Safety							X		X	
Fitness and Wellness									X	
Professional Development									X	
Special Events							X			
Youth Activities / Enrichment						X				
Youth Sports								X		

Overall, Indian River County has a relatively diverse use of pricing strategies across the board, with By Location, By Competition, By Cost Recovery Goals, and By Customer's Ability to Pay being the four listed strategies currently in use. However, this does not tell the entire story of the Department's program pricing strategies. While some Core Program Areas do not utilize the above pricing strategies very often, it should be noted that some programs are free by design (to allow for more participation from residents with lower income levels within Indian River County) or have very limited cost recovery that only supplements the Department rather than making a meaningful amount of revenue.

The Department should consider implementing additional pricing strategies where appropriate, such as Weekday/Weekend, Age Segment, and Prime / Non-Prime Time, as these are all valuable strategies when working to create financial resiliency as a department. The Department should work to identify and collect data around their programming that could identify areas that a slightly higher cost of entry or participation would not result in losing attendance or keeping residents from accessing programs. For example, if a program is being held in a more affluent area of the County, those attendees are more likely to be able to pay to access the program.

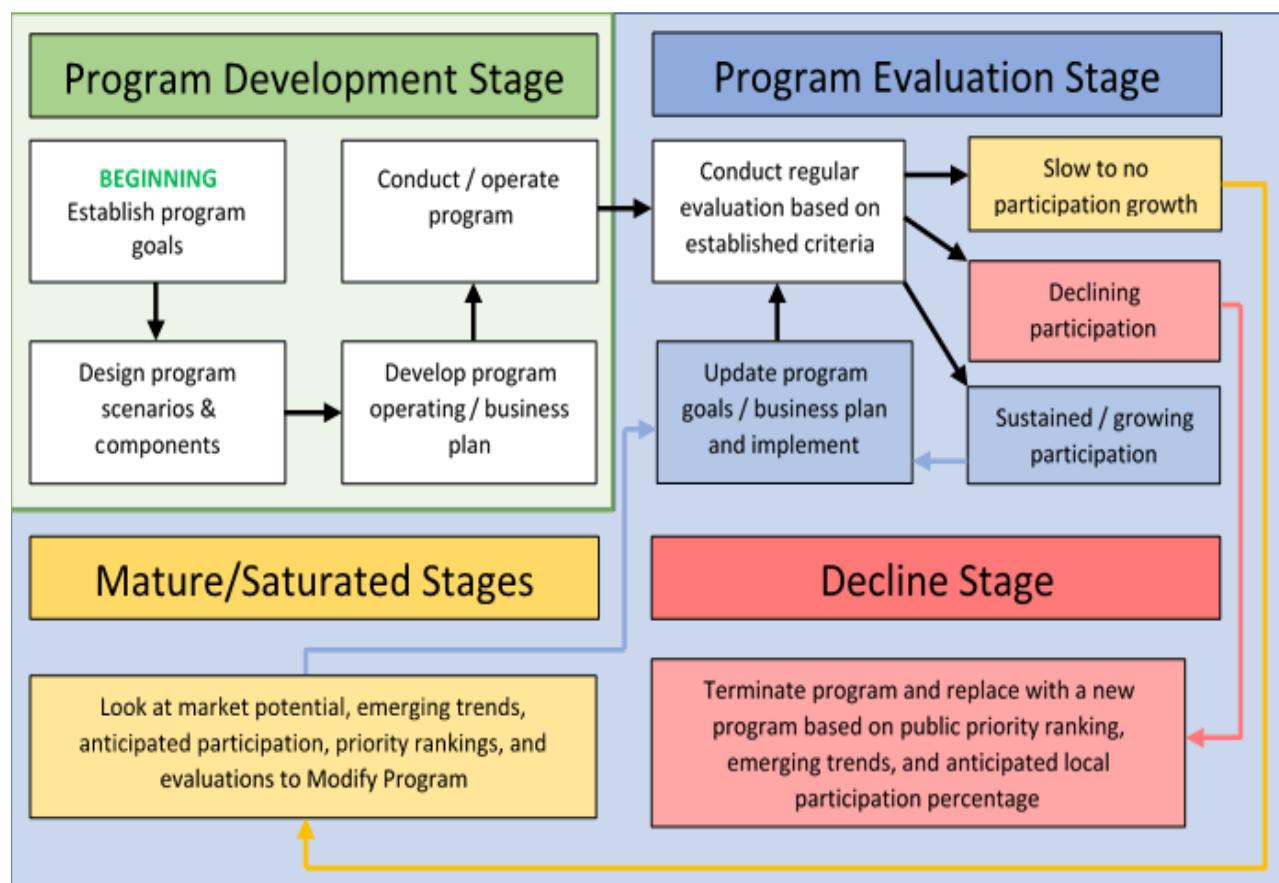
Staff should monitor the effectiveness of the various pricing strategies they decide to employ and adjust, as necessary. It is also important to regularly monitor local competitors and other similar service providers as an increase in competition may alter program pricing.

Program Strategy Recommendations

Program Evaluation Cycle (with Lifecycle Stages)

Using the Age Segment and Lifecycle analysis, and other established criteria, program staff should evaluate programs on an annual basis to determine program mix. This can be incorporated into the Program Operating/Business Plan process. A diagram of the program evaluation cycle and program lifecycle is found in the figure below. During the Introductory Stages, program staff should establish program goals, design program scenarios and components, and develop the program operating/business plan. Regular program evaluations should be completed to help determine the future of each program.

If participation levels are still growing, continue to provide the program. When participation growth is slowing (or non-existent) or competition increases, staff should look at modifying the program to re-energize the customers to participate. When program participation is consistently declining, staff should terminate the program and replace it with a new program based on the public's priority ranking and/or program areas that are trending nationally/regionally/locally, while taking into consideration the anticipated local participation percentage.



Prioritization Analyses

The purpose of the Facility/Amenity and Program Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity needs, as well as program/service needs for the community(s) served by Indian River County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department. Quantitative data was used from the statistically-valid community survey across several questions that have been cross-tabulated to identify level of total need, degree to which needs are being met or unmet, and how they can be prioritized overall. This culminates data analysis into a weighted scoring system is used to determine the priorities for Indian River County's facilities/amenities and programs/services.

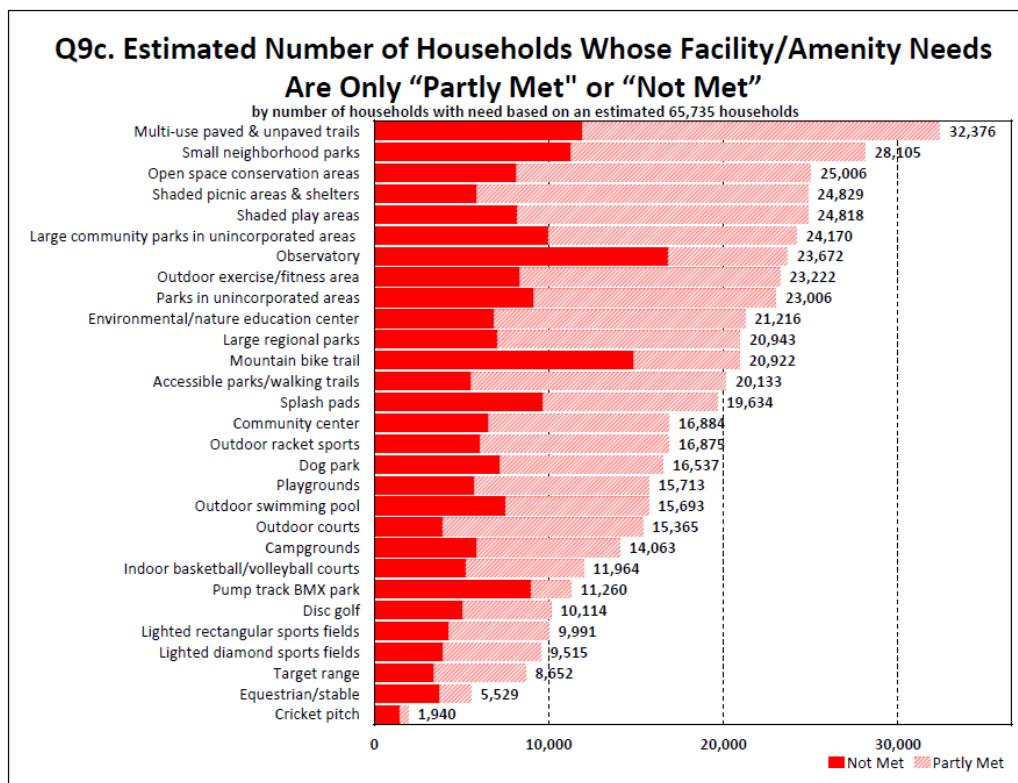
Facility / Amenity Priorities

Facility / Amenity Needs

Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 29 parks and recreation amenities/facilities and to rate how well their needs were met for each type of facility/amenity. Based on this analysis, an estimate of the number of households in the community that had the greatest "unmet" need for various facilities was generated. The three parks and recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need:

1. Multi-use paved and unpaved trails – 32,376 households
2. Small neighborhood parks – 28,105 households
3. Open space conservation areas – 25,006 households

The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 26 amenities/facilities assessed is shown in the chart below.

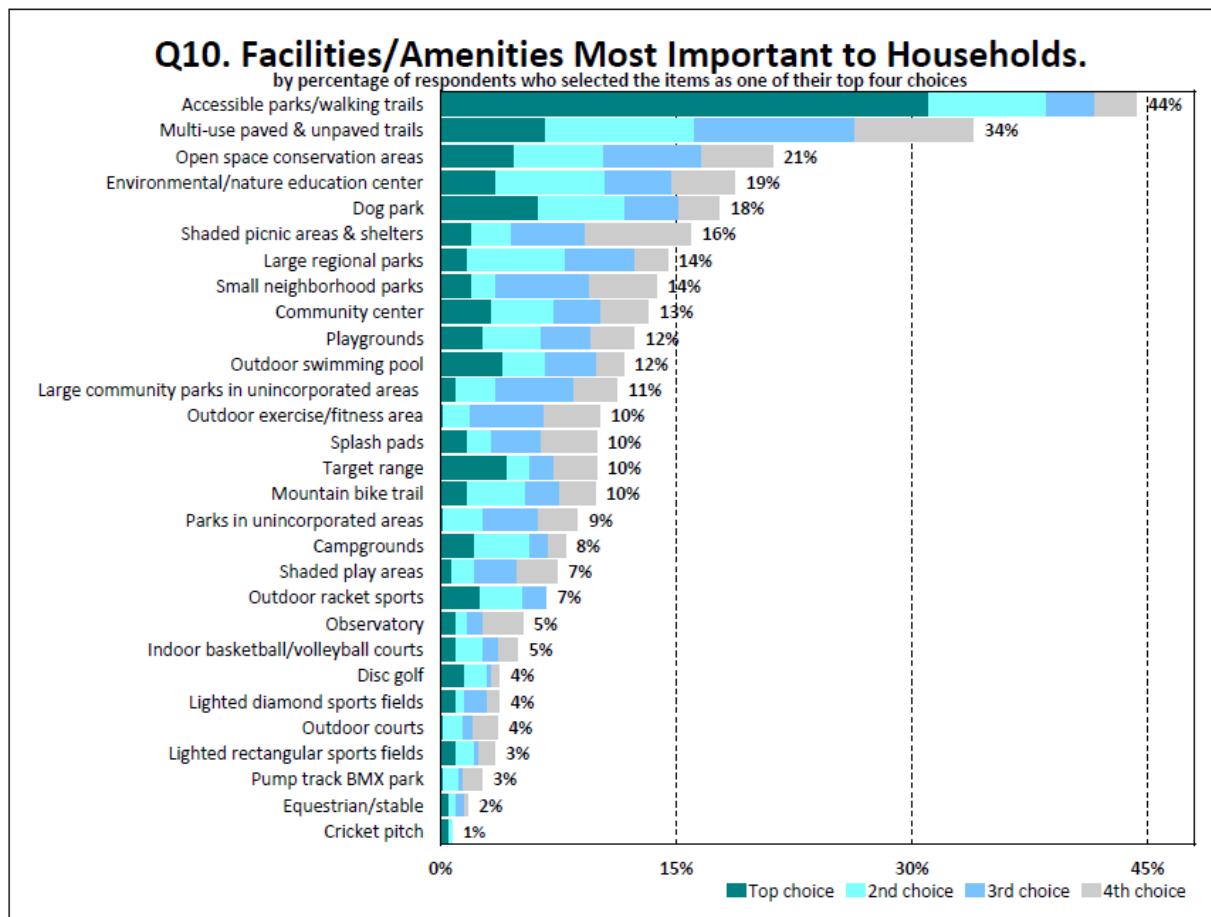


Amenity / Facility Importance to Households

In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, the importance that residents placed on each item was assessed. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, these were the four amenities/facilities ranked most important to residents:

1. Accessible parks/walking trails (44%)
2. Multi-use paved and unpaved trails (34%)
3. Open space conservation areas (21%)
4. Environmental/nature education center (19%)

The percentage of residents who selected each amenity/facility as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below.



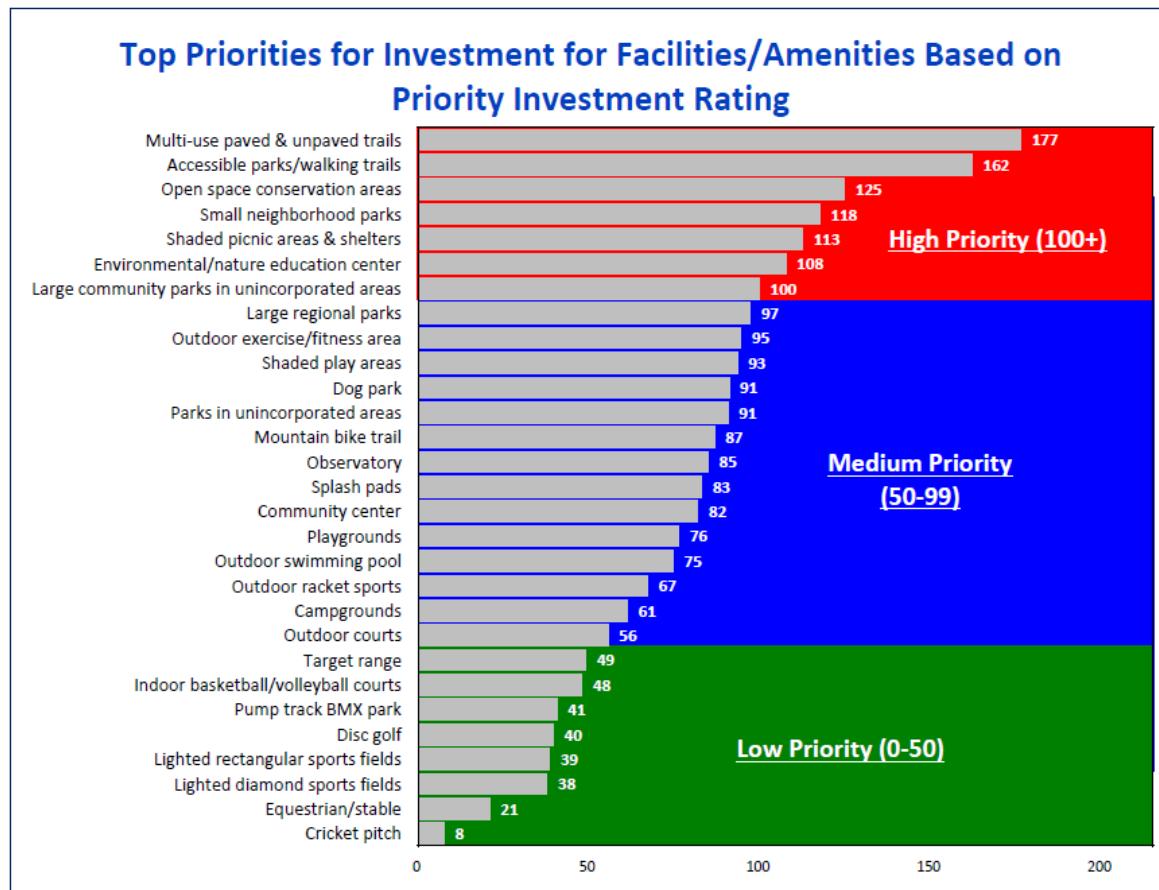
Priorities for Facility / Amenity Investment

The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on amenities/facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the amenity/facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 3 of the detailed survey findings report.]

Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following amenities/facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Multi-use paved and unpaved trails (PIR=177)
- Accessible parks/walking trails (PIR=162)
- Open space conservation areas (PIR=125)
- Small neighborhood parks (PIR=118)
- Shaded picnic areas and shelters (PIR=113)
- Environmental/nature education center (PIR=108)
- Large community parks in unincorporated areas (PIR=100)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 29 amenities/facilities assessed on the survey.



Program / Service Priorities

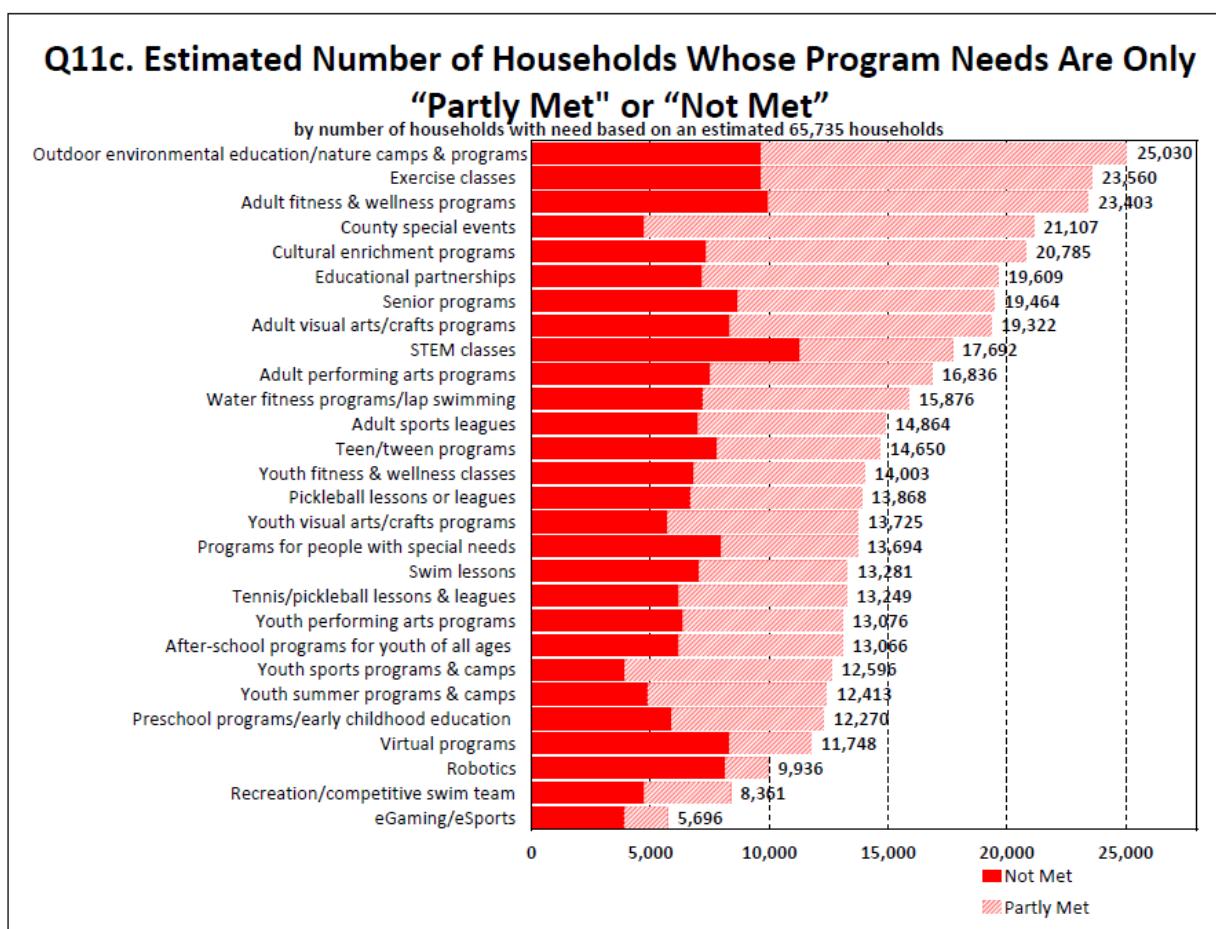
Program / Service Needs

Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 28 recreation programs and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various programs was estimated.

The three programs with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need:

1. Outdoor environmental education – 25,030 households
2. Exercise classes – 23,560 households
3. Adult fitness and wellness classes – 23,403 households

The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 28 programs assessed is shown in the chart below.

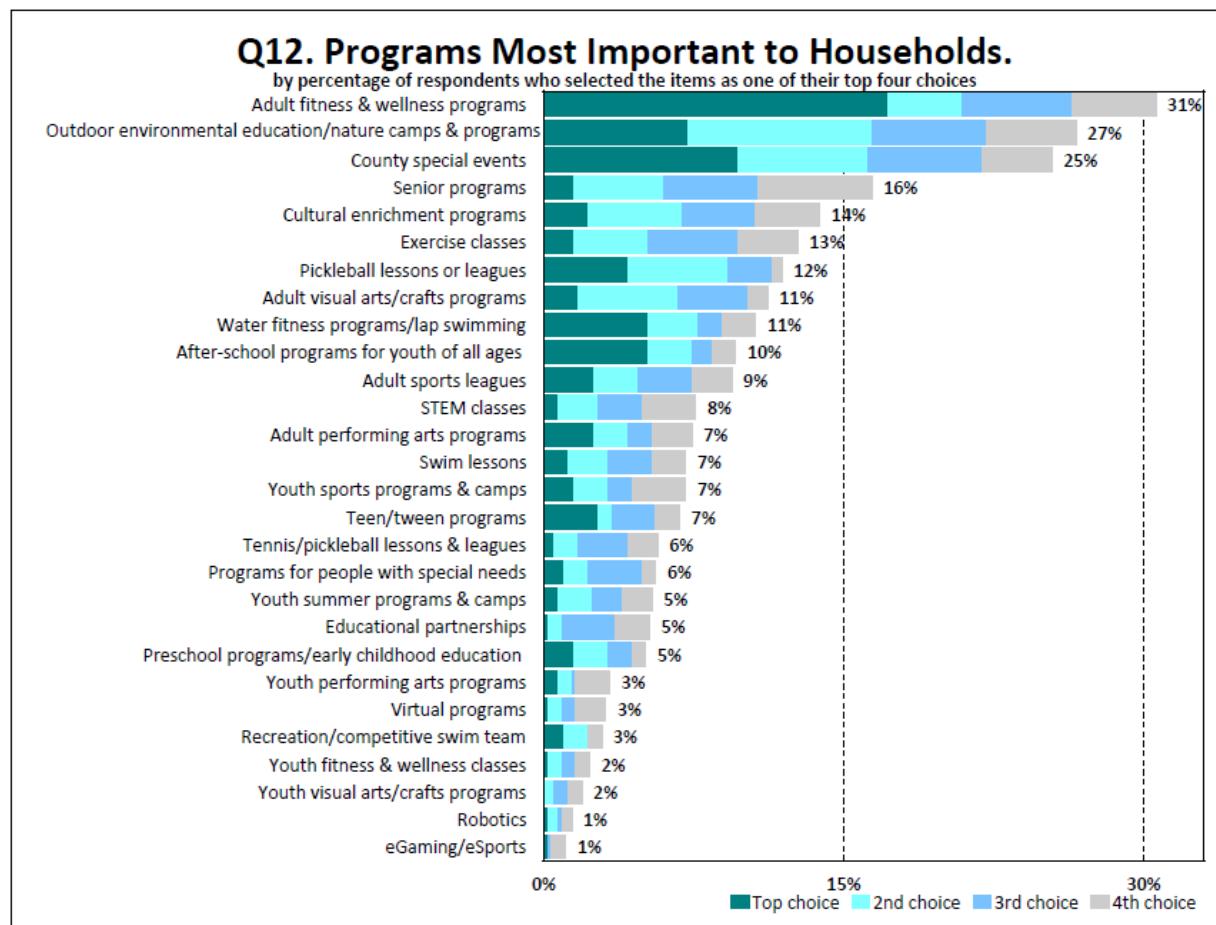


Program / Service Importance to Households

In addition to assessing the needs for each program, the importance that residents placed on each item was assessed. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, these were the four programs ranked most important to residents:

1. Adult fitness and wellness programs (31%)
2. Outdoor environmental education (27%)
3. County special events (25%)
4. Senior programs (16%)

The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below.



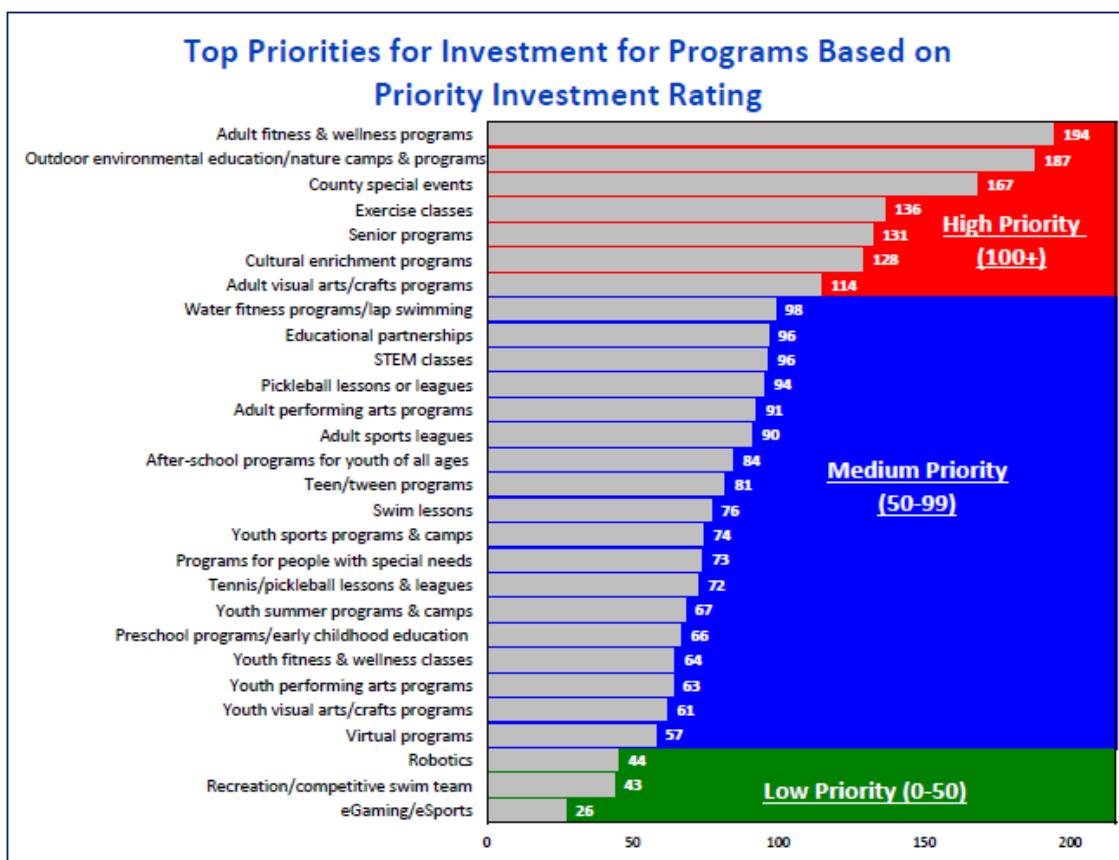
Priorities for Program / Service Investment

The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on programs and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the program. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 3 of the detailed survey findings report.]

Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following programs were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=194)
- Outdoor environmental education/nature camps and programs (PIR=187)
- County special events (PIR=167)
- Exercise classes (PIR=136)
- Senior programs (PIR=131)
- Cultural enrichment programs (PIR=128)
- Adult visual arts/crafts programs (PIR=114)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 28 programs assessed on the survey.



The Vision of Indian River County Parks and Recreation

The Vision establishes an aspirational framework for Indian River County's parks system over the next 10 years. The following Parks and Recreation Visions include a variety of components, all of which build on the earlier phases of the plan as their foundation. These recommendations reflect an effort to improve equitable access to parks and recreation facilities. However, given the constraints of funding and other resources, these visions will require further analysis and prioritization to determine an implementation strategy that best serves residents.

Parkland Vision

Goal: Increase the amount of park land equitably throughout the County, with a focus in areas that are currently underserved by public park and recreation assets.

The public input process identified increased access to park land as a need. Data supports this, as currently only 44% of residents have access to a park within 1 mile. In particular, resident responses in the Statistically Valid Survey (SVS) identified the following high priorities:

- Small Neighborhood Parks (118)
- Large Community Parks in unincorporated areas (100)

Additionally, "Large Regional Parks" (97) and "Parks in unincorporated areas" (91) were medium priorities.

The County's current acreage Level of Service (LOS) standard is 6.61 acres per 1,000 population however this is expected to improve with some of the projects in the existing approved 5-year CIE of the Department. Considering the County's existing parkland acreage of 728.72 acres and the 2023 unincorporated population, the County currently has an Acreage LOS of 7.3 acres per 1,000 population. Considering the County's projected 2033 population of approximately 125,902, if the County does not acquire any more parkland, the Acreage LOS would drop to 6.7 acres per 1,000 population. While this is still above the County's Acreage LOS Standard, there is an opportunity to increase the standard to acknowledge the geographical need of parkland throughout the County. Based on the parkland vision discussed in the following pages which illustrates the areas in the County where residents do not have access to Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Parks, the Consultant Team **recommends that the County increase the Acreage LOS Standard from 6.61 acres per 1,000 population to 10.8 acres per 1,000 population.**¹ This would reflect the need of an additional 510 acres of park land, consistent with the proposed vision discussed in the following pages.

¹ According to the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, the typical park and recreation agency has 10.8 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction.

A Strategy based on Population Density

Due to the distinct differences in population density in various parts of the County, a differential level-of-service strategy was developed to accommodate the different needs of communities depending on their density.

Using the County's Future Land Use categories as a guide, four density zones were developed based on industry best practices and County context:

Density Zone	Criteria	Future Land Use Categories						
Non-Residential	0 units / acre	C-1	RC	PUB	REC			
Rural	Up to 1 unit/acre	R	C-2	C-3	AG-1	AG-2	AG-3	
Low Density	Up to 3 units /acre	L-1	T					
Medium Density	Up to 10 units/acre	L-2	M-1	M-2	MHRP	BCID	C/I	

Based on these density zones, two park access standards are proposed, providing the recommended minimum park access distances:

- Half-mile Park Access in Medium Density
- 1-mile Park Access in Low Density
- Rural Areas – depending on the design and density of approved developments, park need will be established through ongoing discussion and analysis

Park Development Opportunities

Based on the density strategy, 36 areas are in need of a park (27 half-mile areas in Medium Density zones and 9 one-mile areas in Low Density zones). This equates to approximately 360 acres of park land (10 acres per Neighborhood Park). Initially developing new neighborhood parks is a significant task and will require pursuing a broad variety of opportunities. The County should collaboratively, creatively, and aggressively pursue opportunities to expand park land through fee-simple acquisition, securing of easements, partnerships, and redevelopment of County-owned land on a strategic parcel-by-parcel basis, and as opportunities become available.

The following conceptual park types provide context on the general layout and amenities that new parks can provide, with Neighborhood parks typically the minimum size to fulfill the need for new park spaces.

School Partnership Parks (6 potential areas identified) represent a powerful opportunity to increase parkland through partnership with the local school district. This strategy of school-County partnership is increasingly being implemented by departments across the country as a cost-saving method to improve under-activated public land. Having two public entities share the development costs and sometimes also maintenance costs allows each agency to get more for their investment.

The County-wide vision for **Parklands** can be found in **Appendix A** of this *Master Plan*.

Neighborhood Park



Size:

Generally 2 to 10 acres

Location and Context:

Residential and Mixed-Use Areas

Access Level of Service:

Walking distance, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to 1 mile

Function:

Neighborhood Parks are the primary green spaces of the parks system and serve the basic needs of nearby, neighborhood residents for passive and active, at-will and programmed social, cultural, and recreational uses. Programmed events should be limited to neighborhood serving events focused on the surrounding neighborhood.

Neighborhood Parks can also provide opportunities to address environmental challenges such as local stormwater management issues, urban heat island effect, biological diversity, and ecological habitat restoration. Ideally, half of the park space should be used for passive park uses with at least 50% of the passive space having canopy cover.

Illustrated Amenities/Elements

1. Basketball court
2. Covered multi-generational/ universally accessible playground
3. Exercise equipment
4. Multi-purpose open space
5. Multi-purpose trail
6. On-street parking
7. Outdoor table games (e.g. ping pong, foosball, etc.)
8. Park Zone traffic markings to calm traffic around the park (e.g., raised/marked/controlled pedestrian crossings were appropriate)
9. Picnic area
10. Restroom/ shelter

Other Typical Amenities/Elements

- Water fountains/ features, ponds
- Bicycle racks
- Dockless micro-mobility stations
- Sustainability strategies (e.g., renewable energy, water storage/ reuse, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Electrical outlets
- Green/ Low-Impact Development Infrastructure
- Lights on timers
- Litter/ recycling receptacles
- Movable tables and chairs
- Multi-purpose court with basketball court,

School Partnership Park



Size:

Dependent on the intended use as Mini, Neighborhood, or Community Park - 1 acre to 40+

Location and Context:

On school properties within Residential and Mixed-Use Areas

Access Level of Service:

Dependent on the intended use as Mini, Neighborhood, or Community Park - 1/2 to 1.2 or 3-miles

Function:

School Parks combine the resources of multiple agencies and allow for expanded parks, recreation, cultural, and educational opportunities for the community in an efficient and effective manner. Ensuring close coordination between the School Principal and School District will maximize the benefits of the joint-use space.

Programmed events should coincide with the type of park facility that the School Park is intended to serve.

School Parks can also provide opportunities to address environmental challenges such as local stormwater management issues, urban heat island effect, biological diversity, ecological and habitat restoration, and the incorporation of bird-friendly design standards.

Typical Amenities/Elements

- Baseball/ Tee ball field
- Basketball court
- Bike playground
- Bicycle racks
- Community garden
- Covered multi-generational/ universally accessible playground
- Dockless micro-mobility stations
- Sustainability strategies (e.g., renewable energy, water storage/ reuse, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Electrical outlets
- Green/ Low-Impact Development Infrastructure
- Exercise equipment
- Lights on timers
- Litter/ recycling receptacles
- Football field
- Movable tables and chairs
- Multi-purpose open space
- Multi-purpose trail
- On-leash dog area
- On-street parking
- Outdoor table games (e.g. ping pong, foosball, etc.)
- Park Zone traffic markings to calm traffic around the park (e.g., raised/marked/ controlled pedestrian crossings were appropriate)
- Pickleball court
- Picnic area
- Police Pads
- Public art
- Playground
- Restroom
- Running track
- Sand volleyball court
- Secure park/ school fencing
- Skate park
- Soccer field
- Softball field
- Splash pad
- Swimming pool
- Tennis court
- Water fountain, features, ponds
- Wi-fi
- Shade trees and native landscaping

Regional/ Community Park Vision

Goal: Provide equitable access to regional and community parks, with a wide range of amenities and a balance of passive and active uses that serves the broader community.

Community Parks are typically larger than neighborhood parks (generally 20-100 acres) and have more amenities, and subsequently serve a larger area. There are currently 19 parks classified as Community Parks in the County (seven County parks, four Sebastian Parks, and eight Vero Beach parks). For Indian River County, a standard access of 3 miles was established based on industry best practices and local context. Because of their larger service area, density is often less of a factor as the service area frequently extends across multiple density zones. Based on the County's coverage, one community park need area exists in the vicinity of I-95 and State Road 60 (20th Street) or alternatively near the Oslo Road interchange. This would equate to a need of an additional 150 acres of parkland and is already featured as a project in the Departments approved 5-year CIE.

Additionally, there are three parks in the County which could be considered Regional Parks – Richard N. “Dick” Bird Park, Fran B Adams Park, and the IRC Fairgrounds. These parks are even larger than Community Parks (typically 100+ acres) and often include athletic complexes. The park need area identified for a Community Park could also be a candidate for a Regional Park. The County currently owns land in the area, which may be a candidate for the Regional Park.

The County-wide vision for **Community and Regional Parks** can be found in **Appendix A** of this *Master Plan*.



Community Park



Size:

Generally 20 to 100 acres

Location and Context:

Residential and Mixed-Use Areas

Access Level of Service:

3 miles

Function:

Community Parks are where residents go to socialize and recreate with the larger community, whether it's to play ball, have a picnic, take a class, swim in the pool or enjoy a concert or art show.

Ideally, they should be located on a major street and on neighborhood boundaries to maximize access and to minimize disruption from lights, noise and traffic.

Community Parks should also play a larger role in addressing environmental challenges such as local stormwater management issues, urban heat island effect, biological diversity, and ecological and habitat restoration. Ideally, half of the park space should be used for passive park uses.

Illustrated Amenities/Elements

1. Basketball court(s)
2. Community garden
3. Covered multi-generational playground
4. Dog park
5. Exercise equipment
6. Multi-purpose open space
7. Multi-purpose trail
8. On-street parking
9. Outdoor table games (e.g. ping pong, foosball, etc.)
10. Park Zone traffic markings
11. Picnic area
12. Restroom/ shelter
13. Splash pad
14. Tennis court

Other Typical Amenities/Elements

- Baseball field
- Bike playground
- Bicycle racks
- Dockless micro-mobility stations
- Electrical outlets
- Green Infrastructure
- Litter/ recycling receptacles
- Football field
- Movable tables and chairs
- Mountain bike trail
- On-leash dog area
- Pickleball court
- Public art
- Running track
- Sand volleyball court
- Skate park
- Soccer field
- Softball field
- Swimming pool
- Tee ball field
- Water fountains/ features, ponds
- Wi-fi

Regional Park



Size:

Generally, 100 – 200+ acres

Location and Context:

Residential and Mixed-Use Areas

Access Level of Service:

6 miles

Function:

Regional Parks are large scale parks that draw users from the broader County area and beyond. Depending on the site and needs of the community, Regional Parks may provide a diversity of active and resource-based passive recreation opportunities in both natural settings and intensely developed indoor or outdoor facilities that can accommodate large numbers of people without significant deterioration of the recreation experience. Regional Parks are also used to protect unique and significant natural resources.

Ideally, they should be located on major streets and on community boundaries to maximize access and to minimize disruption from lights, noise, and traffic.

Regional Parks should also play a larger role in addressing environmental challenges such as regional stormwater management issues, urban heat island effect, biological diversity, ecological and habitat restoration, and the incorporation of bird-friendly design standards. Ideally, half of the park space should be used for passive park uses.

Illustrated Amenities/Elements

1. Rectangle fields
2. Diamond fields
3. Restroom and concession building
4. Pavilion
5. Playground and shade structure
6. Amphitheater
7. Overflow parking area
8. Basketball courts
9. Track and field
10. Tennis courts
11. Pickleball courts
12. Tennis and pickleball pro shop
13. Dog park
14. Multi-purpose trail
15. Fishing and paddling lake
16. Dock
17. Aquatic center
18. Recreation center
19. Multi-purpose open space

Other Typical Amenities/Elements

- Bike playground
- Bicycle racks
- Dockless micro-mobility stations
- Electrical outlets
- Green Infrastructure
- Litter/ recycling receptacles
- Movable tables and chairs
- Mountain bike trail
- On-leash dog area
- Public art
- Sand volleyball court
- Skate park
- Water fountains/ features, ponds
- Wi-fi

Facilities Visions

Goal: Provide equitable access to parks and recreation facilities.

Based on the needs identified through the needs assessment and informed by the County's demographics, local and national benchmarks, and outdoor recreation trends, the Vision recommends establishing Facilities and Access Level of Service (LOS) Guidelines that will guide the number and general future location of the following parks and recreation facilities:

DPR Category	2023 IRC Inventory	2023 City Inventory ²	Facilities Level of Service (LOS) (1 facility per X residents)		2033 Need/ Surplus	Access LOS Distance
			2023 County + City Facilities LOS	Proposed Facilities LOS		
Recreation Center	1	0	169,750	92,425	1	6 Miles
Playgrounds	13	21	5,100	3,500	19	1 Mile
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	2	2	42,400	15,400	8	2 Miles – Medium Density 3 Miles – Low Density
Tennis Courts	4	21	6,500	6,100	4	2 Miles – Medium Density 3 Miles – Low Density
Pickleball Courts	13	22	4,900	4,000	12	2 Miles – Medium Density 3 Miles – Low Density
Baseball Fields	3	6	18,800	16,800	2	3 Miles
Multipurpose Diamond Fields	12	3	13,060	12,300	2	3 Miles
Basketball Courts	9	14	7,300	5,100	11	1 Mile – Low Density 2 Miles – Medium Density
Outdoor Pools	2	1	56,500	36,900	2	3 Miles
Splash Pads	1	0	-	23,100	3	3 Miles
Rectangle Fields	19	5	5,600	5,100	6	2 Miles

There are new recreational facilities that are currently featured in the Department's approved 5-year CIE budget, as well as new parks being planned and developed (Liberty Park and Jackie Robinson Park).

The County-wide vision for **Facilities** can be found in **Appendix A** of this *Master Plan*. Additional facilities and amenities would be explored for inclusion into future parks during the design process and with input from the surrounding community.

² City inventory includes the parks and recreation assets of the cities of Sebastian and Vero Beach.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Vision

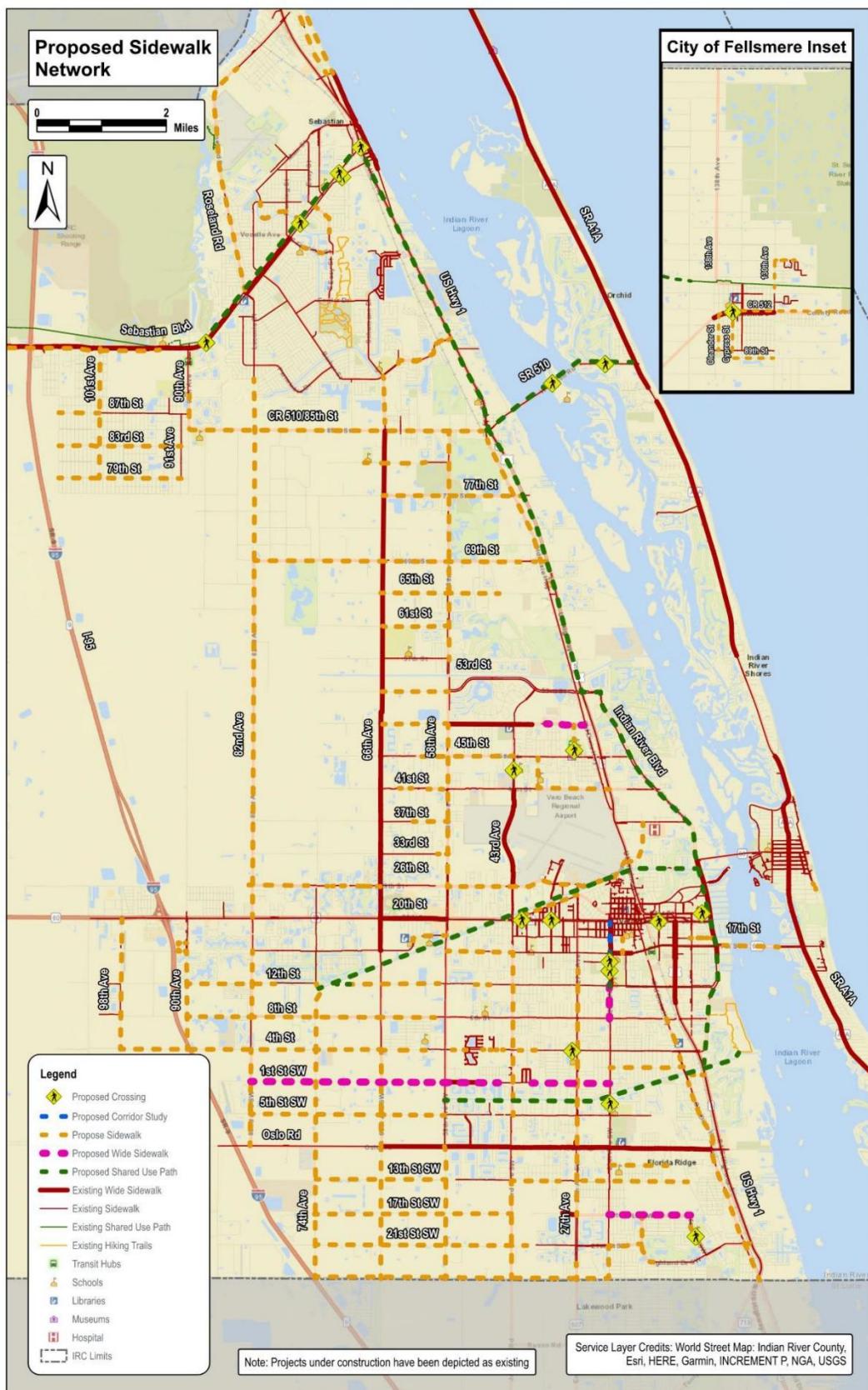
Goal: Connect parks and recreation facilities through an interconnected system of bikeways and trails.

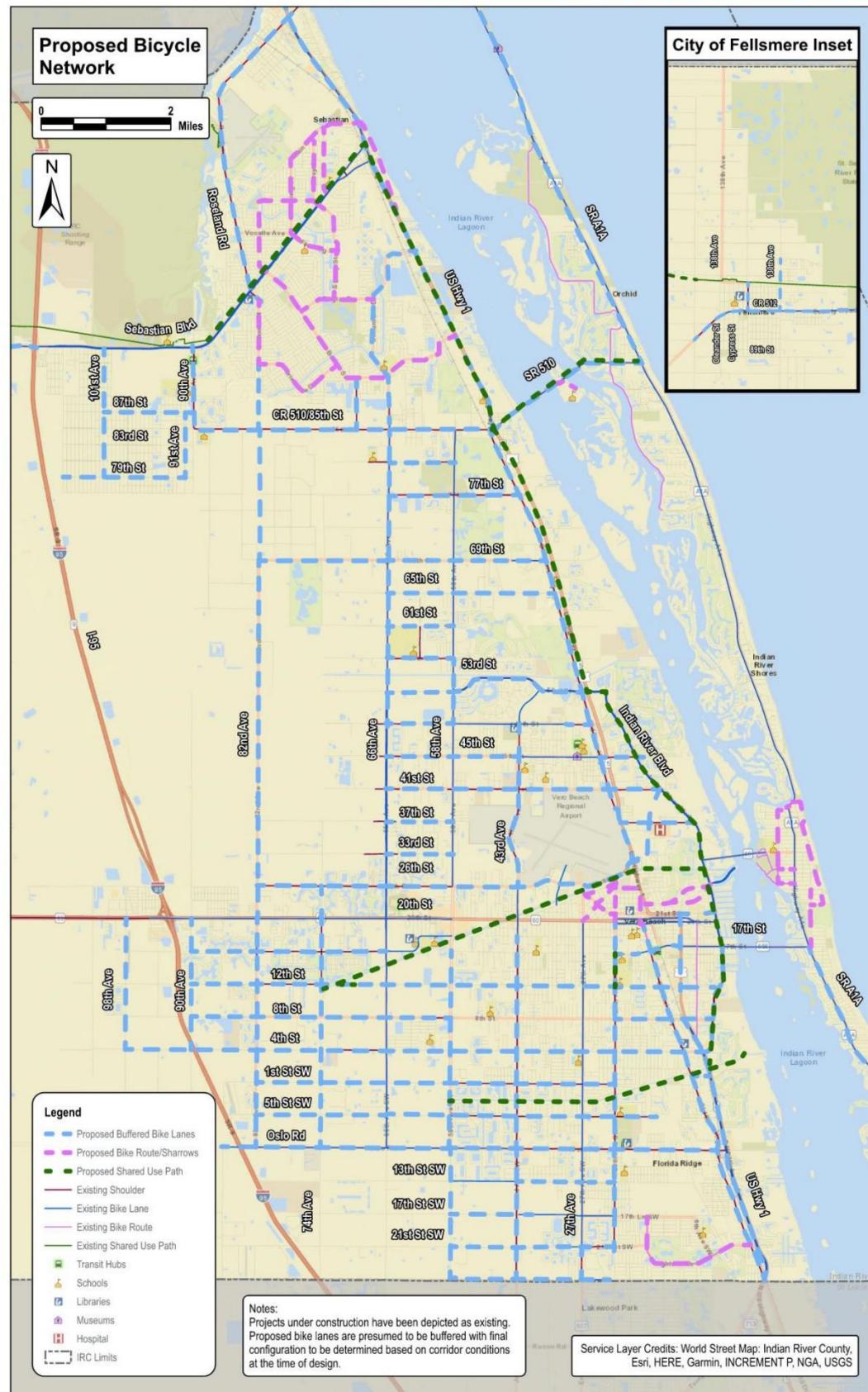
The public input process identified walking, biking, and hiking trails as the top priority needs. In particular, resident responses in the Statistically Valid Survey (SVS) identified the following top two priorities:

- Multi-use paved and unpaved trails (177)
- Accessible parks/ walking trails (162)

To address these needs, the County should explore adding paved multi-use trails and unpaved walking and hiking trails where possible in the County's parks. For example, in Neighborhood Parks, the County could add loop trails along the perimeter of the park with shade trees and sitting areas. In Community and Regional Parks, the County could add a more extensive network of walking, biking, mountain bike, and hiking trails. It would be important to also include a variety of support facilities including bicycle racks, fix-it stations, comfort stations, and parking.

Additionally, the County should look to implement the recently completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to ensure connectivity from resident's homes to parks and recreation facilities. This plan is a strategic approach to investing in a robust bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to serve residents and visitors. The plan is intended to guide community decisions in a balanced approach that considers the needs of different users as they relate to safety, accessibility, and equity. The following pages contain the sidewalk and bicycle network proposed in this plan. The Department should support the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) continued efforts to expand the bicycle and pedestrians facilities that connect communities to parks and recreation facilities including those already identified in the County's Pedestrian Plans.







Capital Improvement Plan

This Capital Improvement Plan was developed from the findings from multiple analyses conducted as a part of the master plan process. Potential capital projects were identified and recommended based on the following data collected:

1. Current site and facility conditions based on the site and facility assessments
2. Community priorities and needs based on leadership / stakeholder interviews and focus groups
3. Community priorities and needs based on the statistically valid survey and online survey
4. Feedback received during public forums
5. Industry best practices derived from the level of service analyses
6. Findings from the demographics and trends analysis on projected growth and evolution of the county population and local popular and emerging trends

Based on the findings from these various analyses, specific projects were identified, and estimated costs for improvements and developments were determined for inclusion in the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Department's 10-year Capital Improvement Plan. These cost estimates were derived from local and regional historical data. In addition to general recommendations, the proposed improvements were organized into a three-tier plan, with examples of projects in the categories outlined below.

General Recommendations

General recommendations apply to the whole system of Indian River County parks. These should be prioritized as individual site plans are developed and implemented. The general recommendations include:

- Establish updated and consistent signage guidelines for all parks
- Establish consistent design guidelines for all parks including, but not limited to furnishings, pavilions, restrooms, lighting, etc.
- Incorporate drinking fountains where possible
- Incorporate shade where possible
- Improve accessibility features overall throughout the system



Improving Existing Parks

These are capital improvements that strategically enhance and renovate existing parks and facilities:

- Updating / upgrading existing amenities such as pavilions, playgrounds and restroom facilities
- Updating / upgrading existing infrastructure such as parking, lighting and signage
- Adding new amenities to improve visitor experiences
- Improving connectivity, accessibility and usability of the parks

While specific projects were identified in this process of this master plan, the cost projection summary of those projects by park are detailed below. Cost estimates provided in the categories described above for projects in a “Low Estimate” and “High Estimate” format are based in 2024 construction estimates for the region. The table below detail these projects by park/site.

- 150+ individual potential projects
- 28 parks/sites
- Hobart Ballfields projects already included in current 5-year CIE
- IRC Fairgrounds projects are enhancing existing amenities only, not expansion of the park

Improving Existing Parks Capital Improvement Plan		
Park	Low Estimate	High Estimate
45th Street Dock	\$ 200,000	\$ 500,000
Ambersands Beach Park	\$ 200,000	\$ 600,000
Dale Wimbrow Park	\$ 200,000	\$ 750,000
Dick Bird Park/South Country Park	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 4,000,000
Donald MacDonald Campground	\$ 750,000	\$ 1,750,000
Fran B. Adams Park/ North County Regional Park	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
Grovenor Estates Park	\$ 100,000	\$ 300,000
Helen Hanson Park	\$ 900,000	\$ 2,500,000
Hobart Ballfields	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 8,000,000
Hosie Shuman Park	\$ 200,000	\$ 500,000
IRC Fairgrounds	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
Kiwanis-Hobart Park	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,500,000
Middleton's Fish Camp Park	\$ 500,000	\$ 900,000
MLK Park	\$ 300,000	\$ 750,000
Oslo Road Boat Ramp	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,000,000
Pine Hill (Lone Pine)	\$ 75,000	\$ 150,000
Roseland Community Park	\$ 500,000	\$ 800,000
Round Island Beach Park	\$ 300,000	\$ 950,000
Round Island Riverside	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,500,000
Sebastian Canoe Launch Park	\$ 500,000	\$ 900,000
Tracking Station Beach	\$ 300,000	\$ 1,500,000
Treasure Shores Park	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,500,000
Tropic Colony	\$ 75,000	\$ 150,000
Turtle Trail Beach Access	\$ 50,000	\$ 200,000
Vero Highland Park	\$ 100,000	\$ 500,000
Victor Hart Park	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,500,000
Wabasso Causeway Park	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 3,000,000
West Wabasso Park	\$ 250,000	\$ 750,000
Public Shooting Range	\$ 750,000	\$ 1,000,000
TOTAL	\$ 21,100,000	\$ 49,450,000

Expanding the System

These are capital improvements that expand on the existing parks and recreation system by either significant improvements to current parks or development of new parks and facilities. These projects tend to have larger costs associated with them, would be potentially timed as mid or long term projects, and include:

- Build-out of Indian River County Fairgrounds as a more robust regional park
- Developing an aquatic facility in the southern region of the county
- Developing new neighborhood parks to better serve growing residential areas and underserved areas of the county

Visionary Projects

Visionary projects were those identified in the planning process that meet current and emerging needs of county residents, potentially provide significant improvements in quality of life and economic development opportunities and help to distinguish Indian River County as a destination of high-quality parks and recreation facilities. These projects are typically associated with the highest potential costs for development, would require much longer time frames to make a reality, and often may require strategic partnerships in both capital development and future operations. These projects included:

1. Development of indoor recreation/multi-purpose space in the northern region of the county
2. Development of a West Regional Park
3. Development of a north-south spine trail that better connects parks and significant points of interest in the county. **This is identified as an area of community need that was noted in the process of this master plan. It is also acknowledged that such a project would not be under the authority of the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department. Rather, this would be a project to be undertaken by the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). No costs for this project are provided in this master plan.*



Summary

Expanding the System Projects

- **Build-out of IRC Fairgrounds**
 - Parking expansion
 - Pump track
 - Rectangular athletic field (1)
 - Amphitheater
 - Hard surface sport courts
- **Aquatic facility in south county**
 - Pool complex
 - In partnership with school district
- **New neighborhood parks**
 - Locations determined by County districts
 - In partnership with private development community when possible

Visionary Projects

- **Indoor recreation facility in north county**
 - At existing county park location
- **Indian River County Sports Complex (western corridor)**
 - Preferably at an existing County-owned site
 - Recommended to complete a feasibility study
 - Will require private and public sector partnerships
 - Requires advancement of zoning and tourism infrastructure

Expanding the System / Visionary Projects	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Expanding the System		
Build-out IRC Fairgrounds	\$ 3,950,000	\$ 7,250,000
Aquatic facility in south County	\$ 7,500,000	\$ 15,000,000
New Neighborhood Parks (3-5)*	\$ 15,000,000	\$ 30,000,000
TOTAL EXPANSION PROJECTS	\$ 26,450,000	\$ 52,250,000
Visionary Projects		
Indoor Recreation Facility in North County	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 6,000,000
Indian River County Sports Complex (western corridor)	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 50,000,000
TOTAL VISIONARY PROJECTS	\$ 29,000,000	\$ 56,000,000
GRAND TOTAL EXPANSION / VISIONARY PROJECTS	\$ 55,450,000	\$ 108,250,000

*includes potential land acquisition

Funding and Revenue Strategies

Park systems often rely on the same funding sources for their projects, programs, and capital improvements, as well as the ongoing financial support their agency requires. Funding sources change regarding how they provide funding and what organizations they will support.

Understanding the type of sources and opportunities available can be valuable to the sustainability of a park and recreation system. It is important to expand the range of sources where funding is obtained and develop a strategy to locate new sources. Developing new funding strategies, understanding new potential funding sources, and successfully obtaining new funding can be lengthy and time consuming, yet it can provide capital and operational dollars when normal funding channels change.

Successful Parks and Recreation Funding Options

The following three categories are examples of sources considered to be viable methods used in the parks and recreation industry:

- **Dedicated Funding:** These funds (often in the form of various tax options) are appropriated or set aside for a limited purpose.
- **Earned Income:** Revenue generated by membership fees, facility rentals, program fees and other sources where the agency is paid for services or what they provide.
- **Financial Support:** These monies are acquired by applying for grants, through foundation fundraising, corporations, organizations, as well as state and federal sources.

Dedicated Funding Sources

- **Taxable Bonds** through Voter Approved Referenda are used primarily to support the development of large community-based projects like a community center, field house, signature park, or trails system.
- **Transient Occupancy Tax from Hotels** are used to help pay for recreation facilities that have a high level of tourism involved such as sport tournaments for youth and adults held in the county by the Department and are used to help build and pay for the development and management of those facilities.
- **Land Value Captive Taxes** such as a Tax Increment Finance Funds are used to help support community centers and field houses whereby businesses benefit from higher property values based on their location to these amenities and the difference between the existing property values and the new property value is used to fund the development until the development is paid off.
- **Local Improvement Districts or Business Improvement Districts** are typically established in communities that are in a downtown business district. The BID district requires 60% of the owners to support the BID before it can be put into place and the money is used for improving the aesthetics such as streetscapes, flowers, sidewalk cleaning, signage, sidewalk furniture, hosting concerts and special events that attract people to spend time and money in the downtown area.
- **Developer Impact Fees** are used to support neighborhood park development in the property near or in their development as a way of enticing new homeowners to move into the development. The developer pays the impact fee at the time of the permit like impact fees for roads, sewers, and general utilities based on the value of the homes that are being built.

- **Real-Estate Transfer Fees** are established at usually 1% of the sale price of a home and is paid by the buyer to support ongoing park infrastructure in the area where the house is located.

Earned Income

- **Land Leases** allow park systems to lease prime property to developers for restaurants along trails or in parks, and/or retail operations that benefit users in the park to support the ongoing operation of the park over a period of time.
- **Health Care/Hospital Partnerships** are becoming a major partner for park and recreation agencies to help support the development of community centers that have health related amenities in them like fitness centers, therapy pools and walking tracks. Some health care providers put rehab centers inside of the community center and pay the development cost associated with the ongoing building costs.
- **Fees for Services** are typically used to support the operational cost and capital cost for parks and recreation programs and amenities which is occurring in Indian River County now.
- **Room Override Rates** from hotels used for major tournaments. These revenues go back to the county to help pay for the management and cost of hosting the tournament.
- **Establishment/Growth of a Park Foundation** is an appropriate revenue source for a Department to consider. The Park Foundation typically raises money for park related improvements, programs for disadvantaged users and support the development of new facilities that are needed in the county.
- **Local Not-for-Profit Foundation Gifts** usually help pay for specific music at special events or for helping to provide a running event in the county or a sports tournament.
- **Capital Fee on top of an Access Fee** to pay for a revenue producing facility need. This type of fee is usually associated with an amenity like a golf course where the users help to improve an irrigation system or improve cart paths because they benefit most from the capital fee. The fee is removed once the improvement is paid off.
- **Corporate Sponsorships** help to pay for the operations of signature facilities like sports complexes, indoor community centers, ice rinks and they pay for an impression point usually in the \$0.35 to \$0.50 per impression point on an annual basis.
- **Naming Rights** are used to help to capitalize a community center or special use facility and typically are good for 10 to 20 years before it is removed.
- **Public/ Not-for-Profit/ Private Partnerships** are used to help offset operational costs or capital costs for community-based facilities like trails, nature centers, sport complexes, community centers, ice rinks, signature parks, and special event sites that bring in and support a high level of users.
- **Licensing Fees** for a signature park or event that others want to use to make money from can be applied to elements of a park from a user or business as it applies to products sold on site, music, advertising, and ongoing events to be held on site.
- **Outsource Operations** to the private sector to save money where the cost is less costly to provide the same level of service. This can be in any form of service the system provides now from contracting with instructors, managing forestry operations, managing landscapes in the county, care of park related equipment are a few examples.

- **Volunteerism** is an indirect funding source used by many departments to support the operations of parks and recreation services. The time the volunteer gives can be used for in-kind support matches on state and federal grants in lieu of money. Best practice agencies try to get 15% of the work force hours from volunteers.
- **Maintenance Endowments** are established as new facilities are developed like all-weather turf to support replacement costs when the asset life is used up and need to be replaced.
- **User Fees** are currently used by the Department to offset their operational cost based on the private good that the service is providing to the user.
- **Entrance Fees** (pools, community centers, parks)
 - Daily Fees
 - Non-Resident Fees
 - Group Fees
 - Prime Time and Non-Prime Time fees
 - Group and Volume Fees
 - Permit Fees
 - Reservation Fees
 - Catering Fees
 - Food Truck Fees
 - Ticket Sales
 - Photography Fees
 - Price by loyalty, length of stay and level of exclusivity.

Financial Support

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund** is the primary funding source for federal grants and requires a match from the local jurisdiction of 50%.
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** provides greenways and trails grants for park systems across the system.
- **Recreation Trails Funding Program** for development of urban linkages, trail head and trailside facilities.
- **Private Donations** can be sought to help develop community-based facilities like community centers, sports complexes, outdoor theaters, and nature education facilities.

Recommended Funding Options

Based on an understanding of the County's capabilities and operating circumstances, there are specific alternative funding recommendations that are more preferred for consideration over the next 10 years. These include, but are not limited to:

- The expanded use of **Corporate Sponsorships** to support more facilities and programs beyond just special and community events as it is utilized currently. The value of these sponsorships can be developed based on annual "impressions" that are rooted in overall visitation and participation levels. That recommended value should be calculated on \$0.35 to \$0.50 per impression point on an annual basis. This could also be considered a form of **Advertising Sales** as well.

- **Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)** can be used with an established “TIF District” in which incremental increases in property taxes over a 20-25 year period is utilized to pay or reimburse initial development costs. Establishing a TIF district in areas that are anticipated to experience significant economic development and growth over the next 20 years can fund initial park/trail/greenway development that initially serves as a catalyst for that development.
- **Developer Impact Fees** are used to support neighborhood park development in the property near or in their development as a way of enticing new homeowners to move into the development. The developer pays the impact fee at the time of the permit like impact fees for roads, sewers, and general utilities based on the value of the homes that are being built.
- **Developer Land Dedication Ordinances** can be a productive manner in which to acquire new land for park, trail and greenspace development. As new development is planned and occurs, private developers are required to dedicate a certain amount of land for these purposes to be managed by the county. This methodology requires specific criteria to ensure the quality of land dedication.
- The current **Transient Tax** collected in Indian River County to support tourism and economic development should have a portion dedicated to parks and recreation needs. Some Indian River County Parks and Recreation facilities are major drivers of regional, statewide and national tourism in the area through events, tournaments, and special programs. Dedicated hotel/motel tax funds could strongly support the needs of the system in continuing to do this well.
- The utilization of a **Sales Tax** that is dedicated to funding parks and trails in Indian River County is highly recommended and preferred as this funding can be a significant contributor for most of the major park developments over the next 10 years.
- **Growth of Private Sector Fundraising with a Foundation** is an appropriate revenue source for the Department to consider in partnership with the local Parks or Community Foundation. The park-focused foundation and designated fund can raise money for park related improvements, programs for disadvantaged users and support the development of new facilities that are needed in the county.
- **Greenway Utilities** allow options to develop the infrastructure within the trail easement. Terms for notification, minimal impact to users and replacing/repairing damage caused by utility company is important. Greenway utilities are used to finance acquisition of greenways and development of the greenways by selling the development rights underground for the fiber optic types of businesses.
- **Naming Rights** can be a very successful strategy Indian River County can use to help support capital and/or operational costs of major facilities in the community. Many cities and counties have been successful selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovation of existing buildings and parks for the development cost associated with the improvement.

- **Lease of Development Rights** below ground specifically along trails have been very successful in many communities to assist with the development costs associated with trail system expansion. This involves leasing the land under or along trails for fiber optics or utilities to support capital and maintenance costs.
- **Partnership with a Non-profit Conservancy or Friends Group** for assistance in the management of land, amenities and programming are commonly a strong methodology for a park agency to significantly leverage its annual operations and maintenance responsibilities. These are organized fund raising and operational groups who raise money for individual signature parks and or attractions such as zoo's and regional parks. There are over two thousand conservancies in the United States now. This could be a helpful strategy for many of the conservation lands.
- **Capital Fees** are added to the cost of revenue producing facilities such as golf courses, pools, recreation centers, hospitality centers and sports complexes and are lifted off after the improvement is paid off. Currently this is done in a limited fashion solely with the golf course (carts only), but could be considered for most or all facilities that have rental, admission or membership fees associated with them.
- **Catering Permits and Fees** are licenses to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or a percentage of food sales returning to the County. Many agencies have their own catering service and receive a percentage of dollars off the sale of their food. This could be something considered in the future with food trucks servicing special and community events. This includes the use of **Private Concessionaires** for operating select facilities/amenities within certain parks or facilities.
- **BUILD Grants** (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) of the U.S. Department of Transportation, formerly known as TIGER grants, can be sizeable federal funds that can be utilized for large development projects that involve transportation infrastructure. This intersects well with Parks and Recreation on the potential development of trails/greenways and blueways, or water trails.
- **Revenue Bonds** are a category of municipal bond supported by the revenue from a specific project, such as a toll bridge, highway, or local stadium. Revenue bonds that finance income-producing projects are thus secured by a specified revenue source. Typically, revenue bonds can be issued by any government agency or fund that is managed in the manner of a business, such as entities having both operating revenues and expenses.
- **Interlocal Agreements** with the local school districts or other municipalities in the county in particular can dramatically improve both the public accessibility to specific school sites and assets for public recreation, but also improve inequity in a community through increased facility access. These are typically contractual relationships between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage/development of sports fields, regional parks, or other facilities.