



Washington County Parks and Recreation Master Plan Report

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WASHINGTON
County

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Acknowledgements

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Photo: Cross Creek Lake in Cross Creek Park



Photo: Mingo Creek in Mingo Creek Park

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CHAPTER ONE - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Named after the first President of the United States, George Washington, Washington County was the first county in the United States to be named in his honor. The County is home to a growing population of over 210,000 individuals and is included with the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

The Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for 5,500 acres of park land in Washington County, offering picnic shelters, nature trails, bicycle and bridle trails, hunting and fishing, as well as recreational programs, and special events. The department is in charge of Mingo Creek, Cross Creek, and Ten Mile Creek county parks that offer a variety of recreation and outdoor educational needs for the community within Washington County and beyond.

The Department desired to update its Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that was developed in 2000 and with an intent to plan the future of Washington County, hired PROS Consulting, MKSK, and GAI to develop the System-wide Master Plan and an update to the individual Park Master Plans for Mingo Creek and Cross Creek County Parks.

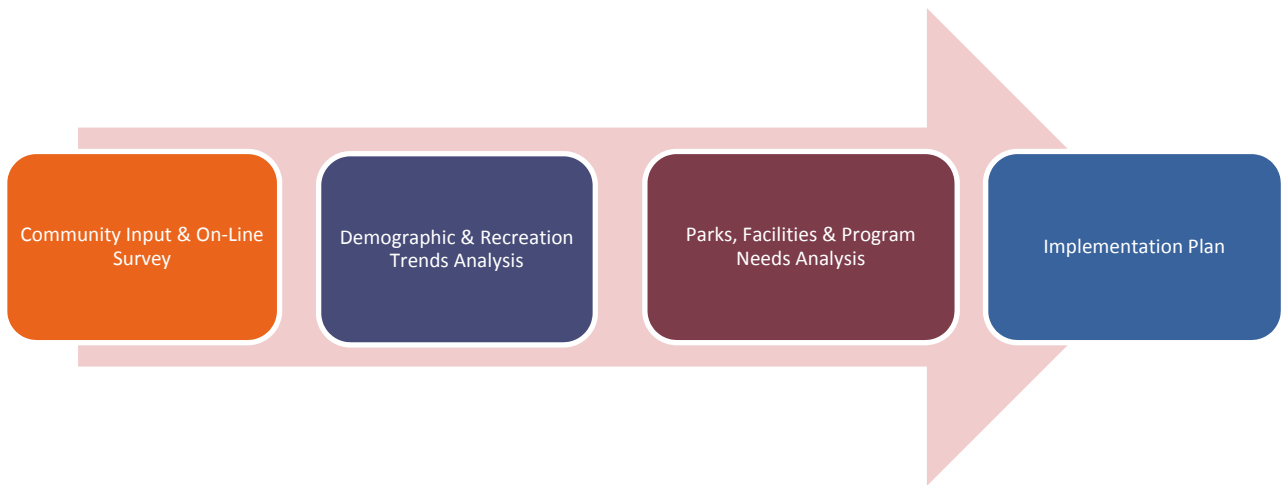
The two individual park master plan establish a comprehensive series of physical recommendations in support of ecology, history, programs/events, activities, and behaviors that echo the goals and objectives developed by the project team, stakeholders, and the community. The well-planned design and management of the park will further the goal of providing a community park with regional appeal, where spending an hour or a day at the park is a rewarding experience of opportunities for both individuals and groups engaging in expression, self-discovery, and recreation. It is also important to point out that all of the spaces within the park are intended to contribute to a sustainable environment honoring the legacy of the past while celebrating the future growth of the Washington County community. This renewed consciousness about rural park planning and design, and its impact on the health and wellness experience, will help create a dynamic and meaningful park signature for Washington County and the surrounding communities.

The overall plan is built as a realistic and implementable action plan that evaluates community needs, future demographics and trends along with the values of the community in recommending strategies for the future.

1.2 PROJECT PROCESS

The foundation of the Master Plan was to engage community members who enjoy participating in the planning process and encourage participation among those members that typically do not contribute. Public input engaged residents through a variety of community processes that included focus group meetings, public forums, and a county-wide citizen survey. The information received from these community processes was applied to overall planning and content of this Master Plan. This is critical when articulating accurately the true unmet needs, addressing key issues, providing recommendations for change, and strategizing to move the department forward for optimum results.

The process of developing the *Washington County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* followed a logical planning path as described below.



1.3 KEY FINDINGS

COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Effective communication between the project team, Washington County parks and recreation staff, and various stakeholder groups was essential for this master plan study to develop in an organized manner and meet a wide range of concerns represented by various interests. Working with the local community was deemed a critical and vital component to this study. A comprehensive community engagement approach was planned to gain feedback from the following stakeholders as design research and design alternatives were explored.

ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

An online survey powered by Survey Monkey was administered to the Washington County community from May 1st - June 30th, 2014. This survey focused on the unmet needs and concerns of the community. A total of 376 responses were received and the summary is provided below.

Initially, community members were asked from a provided list of amenities, would they or their families like these features. The results illustrate how survey takers felt about each given amenity. A vast majority of the responses demonstrated that features such as small picnic areas, trails, greenways, and a nature center are desired within the parks. About half of the responses felt that things such as an amphitheater, dog parks, and gardens would be positive uses of park space. Some of the least desired features from the list were items such as disc golf, tennis and basketball courts, and equestrian trails.

Community members were provided a list of potential, broad-based park activities or programs and asked whether or not they or their families would like to see the parks department offer them to the public. The vast majority of the responses demonstrated that programs such as outdoor skills and adventure, nature programs, environmental education, and adult wellness programs would be valuable to Washington County Parks. About half of the responses felt that activities such as workshops, family oriented programs, and youth summer camps were positive things to have as well. According to survey takers, the least desired programs from the list provided were offerings such as pre-school, home school outdoor classrooms, and after school programs. Overall, the survey results will help guide Washington County Parks in determining which programs would be beneficial to incorporate into their existing park programming.

SWOT ANALYSIS

This analysis evaluates the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved with the Department. This analysis conducted with the staff from the department identifies the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve the objective of the Department.

FACILITY AND AMENITY PRIORITY RANKINGS

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

This rankings model evaluated both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes the online Community Survey, which asked residents of Washington County to list unmet needs and rank their importance. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in community input and demographics and trends.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for parks and recreation facilities/amenities and recreation programs. As per the scoring system outlined below, Unmet Needs and Importance Ranking each make up 30% each of the total score, while Consultant Evaluation makes up the remaining 40% for a total of 100%.

Note: It is important to note that people while people may rank a Park / Facility or Program as very important to them, if their need is being fulfilled by Washington County or another service provider, then it may not rank as high on the Needs Category despite being high on the Importance Category.

This scoring system considers the following:

- Online Community Survey
 - Unmet needs for facilities and recreation programs - This is used as a factor from the total number of households mentioning whether they have a need for a facility/program and the extent to which their need for facilities and recreation programs has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify this for 19 different facilities/amenities and 20 recreation programs.
 - Importance ranking for facilities and recreation programs - This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility or program by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important facilities and recreation programs.
- Consultant Evaluation
 - Factor derived from the consultant's evaluation of program and facility priority based on survey results, demographics, trends and overall community input.

The weighted scores were as follows:

- 60% from the online community survey results.
- 40% from consultant evaluation using demographic and trends data, community focus groups and public meetings and levels of service.

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

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

The results of the amenity needs survey indicate that walking, biking trails and greenways, small family picnic areas and shelters (less than 50 people), playground equipment, environmental education areas, and camping sites are the top five highest facility / amenity priorities in Washington County.

As for the program needs survey, outdoor skills / adventure programs, nature programs, adult fitness and wellness programs, youth summer camp programs, and special events are the top five highest program priorities in Washington County.



Photo: Ebenezer Covered Bridge in Mingo Creek Park

CHAPTER TWO COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Washington County is found in the southwest corner of Pennsylvania, and is part of the Allegheny Plateau geographic region. Rolling hills delineated by creeks and springs are a defining feature of the landscape that was originally hardwood forest. The county rests in the portion of the state that drains into the Ohio River system. The eastern border of the county is defined by the Monongahela River, which is a main waterway as it flows northward to join the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh. The county has a total of 861 square miles, of which approximately 4 square miles is attributed to water area.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis provides an understanding of the population within Washington County, PA. This analysis is reflective of the total population, and its key characteristics such as age segments, income levels, race, and ethnicity. It is important to note that future projections are all based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the projections could have a significant bearing on the validity of the final projections.

2.2.1 METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in January 2014 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2010 Census, and estimates for 2013 and 2018 as obtained by ESRI. Straight line linear regression was utilized for projected 2023 and 2028 demographics. The geographic boundary of the County was utilized as the demographic analysis boundary shown in Figure 1.

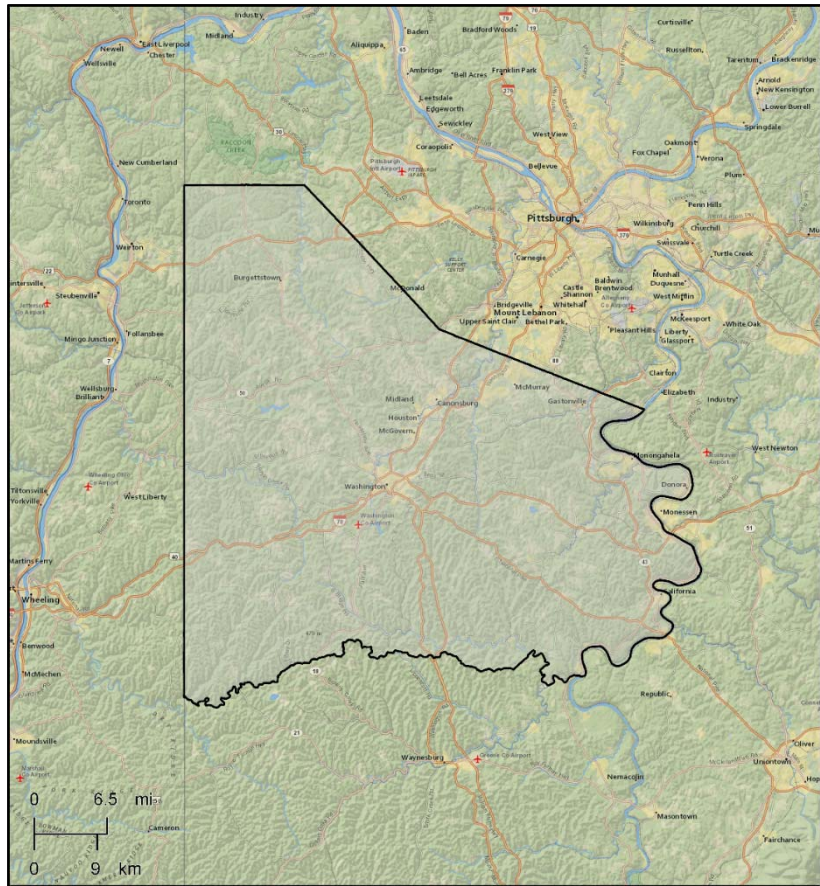


Figure 1-Washington County Boundaries

2.2.2 WASHINGTON COUNTY POPULACE

POPULATION

The County has witnessed a slight growth in recent years. From 2010 to 2013, the County’s total population experienced an increase of 1.5%, which is slightly above national growth averages which were just over 1% annually. Projecting ahead, the total population of the target area is expected to slowly grow over the next 15 years. Based on predictions through 2028, the local population is expected to have approximately 222,755 residents living within 92,684 households. See Figure 2.

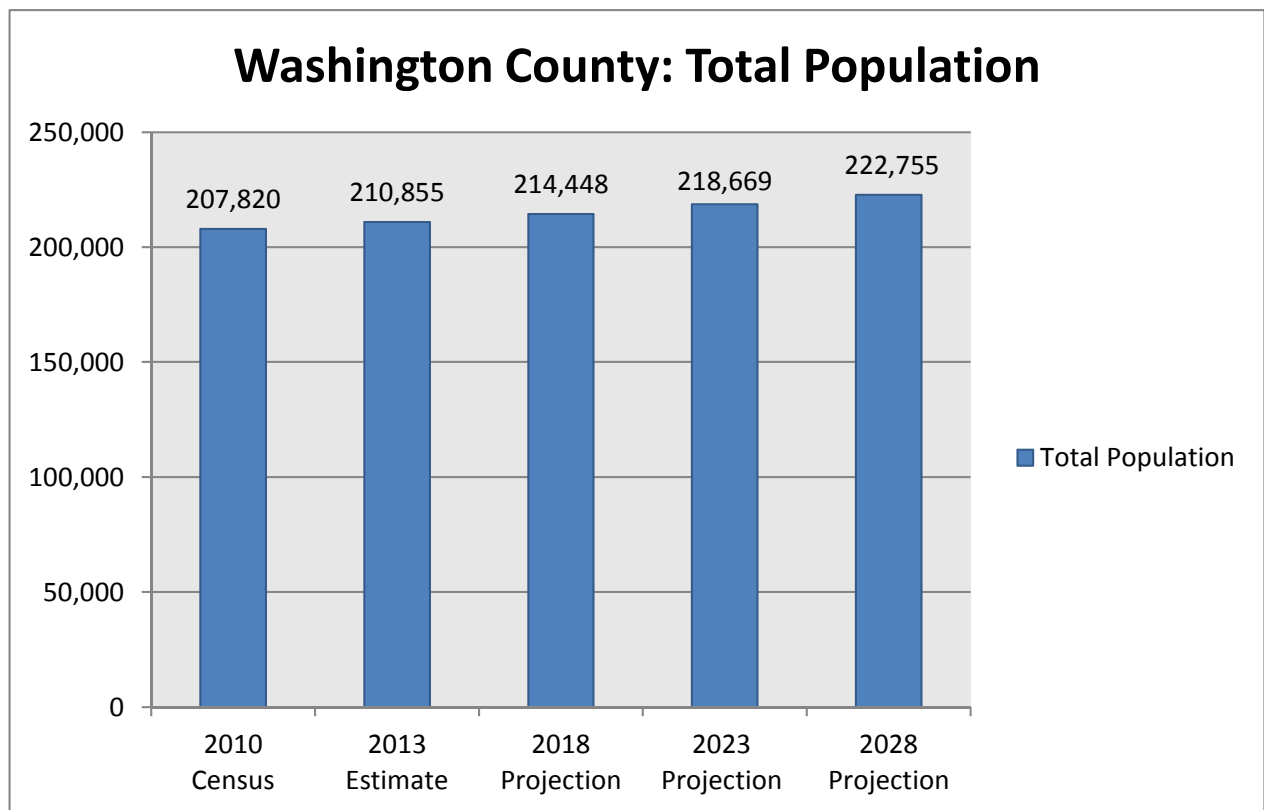


Figure 2-Total Population

AGE SEGMENT

Evaluating the distribution by age segments, the County has a skewed balance between middle-aged and older adults compared to youth and young families.

Over time, the population is projected to continue an aging trend. Based on the 2013 estimate, the 55+ segment will emerge as the largest age group, constituting 34.0% of the population. Future projections through 2028 show that each age segment, except the 55+ group, will undergo small, but steady, decreases in size as compared to the population as a whole. The 55+ group is expected to continue to gradually grow to represent approximately 43% of the population by 2028 which indicates that more than 2 out of every 5 individuals in Washington County will be over the age of 55. This is consistent with general national trends where the 55+ age group has been growing as a result of increased life expectancies and the baby boomer population entering that age group. See Figure 3.

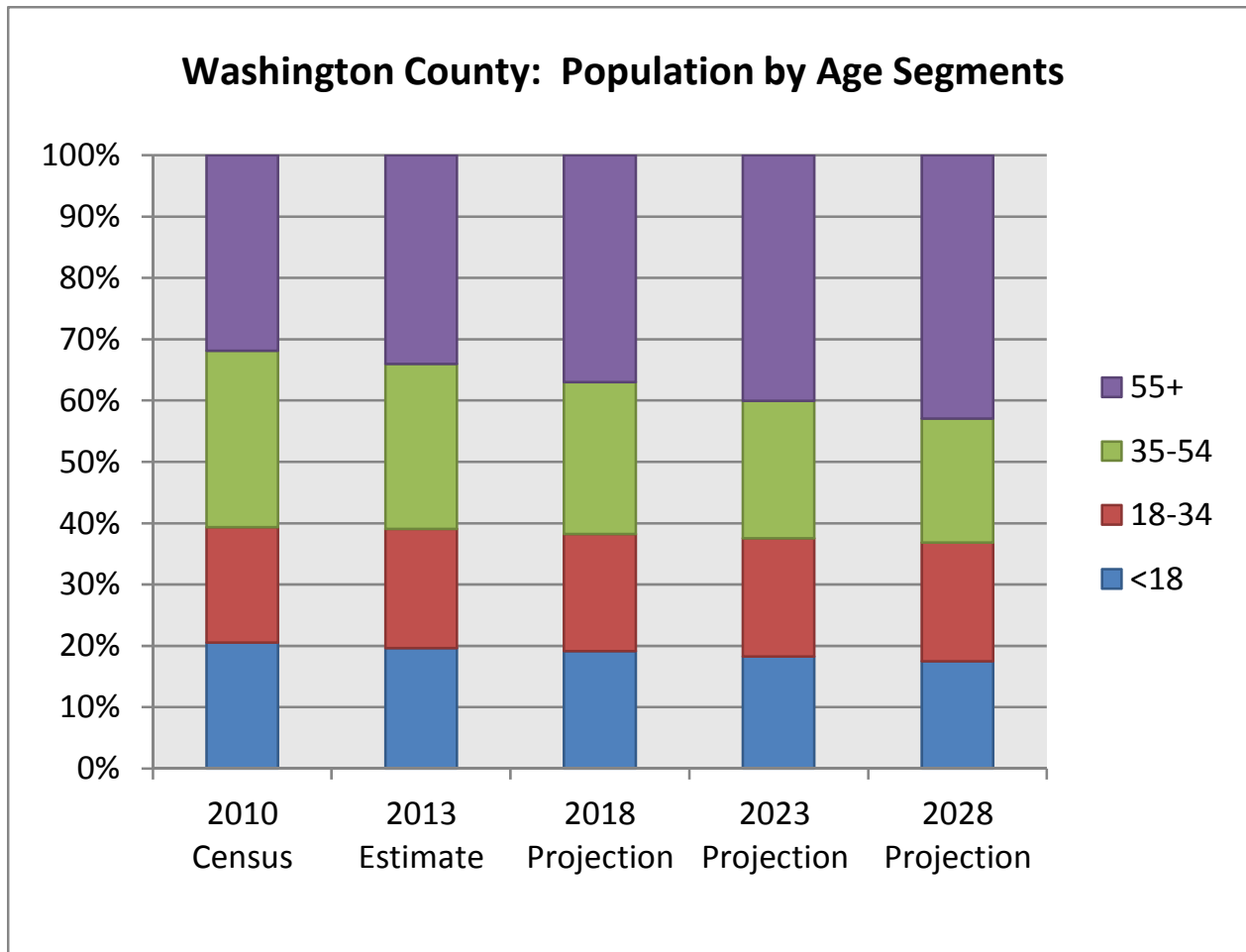


Figure 3-Population Age by Segments

2.2.3 LOCAL BUSINESS SUMMARY

As seen in the chart below, businesses in Washington County are heavily service oriented (42.3%), followed by unclassified establishments (18.4%), retail trade (10.7%), construction (8.4%), and finance, insurance, real estate (5.6%).

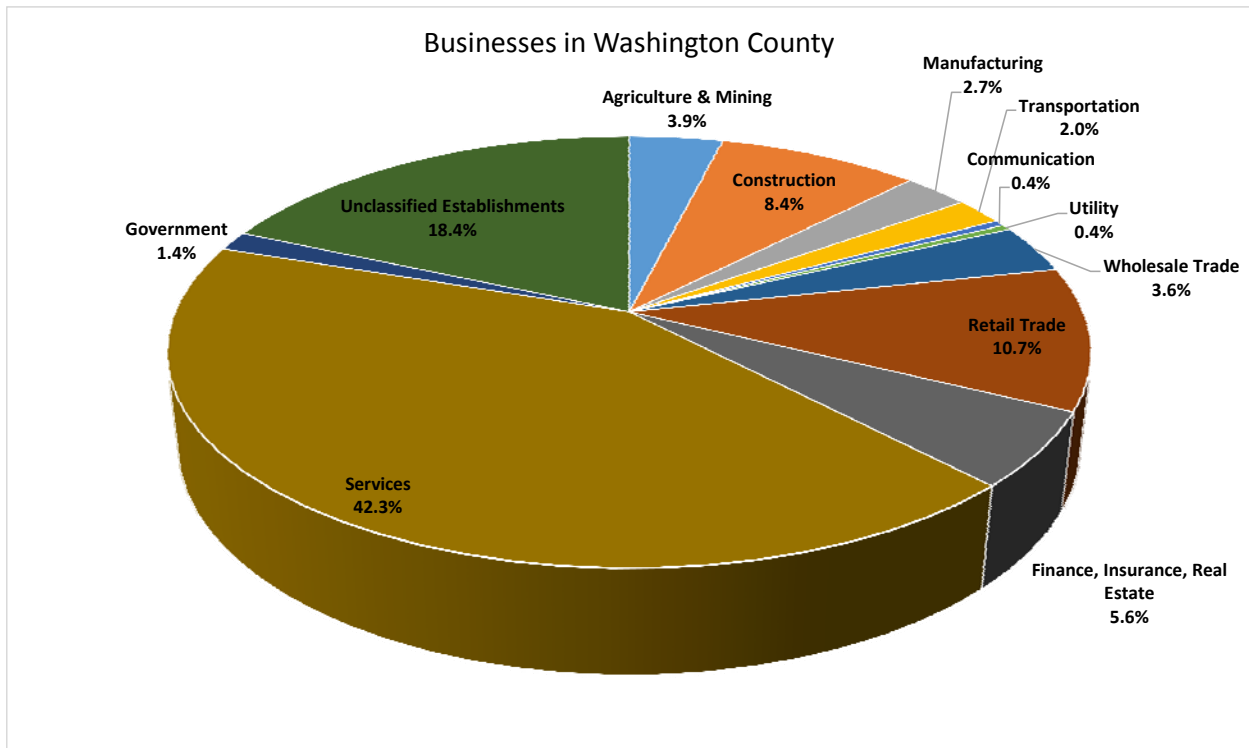


Figure 4 - Local Business Summary

2.3 RECREATION TRENDS

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.3.1 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL SPORTS

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

As seen in Figure 5, since 2008, squash and other niche sports like lacrosse and rugby have seen strong growth. Squash has emerged as the overall fastest growing sport, as it has seen participation levels rise by nearly 115% over the last five years. Based on survey findings from 2008-2013, rugby and lacrosse have also experienced significant growth, increasing by 80.9% and 66% respectively. Other sports with notable growth in participation over the last five years were field hockey (31.4%), ice hockey (27.9%), gymnastics (25.1%), and beach volleyball (18.5%). From 2012 to 2013, the fastest growing sports were rugby (33.4%), field hockey (19.2%), lacrosse (12.8%), and squash (9.6%). During the last five years, the sports that are most rapidly declining include wrestling (45.2% decrease), touch football (down 32%), and slow pitch softball (28.9% decrease).

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

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

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

Legend: Large Increase (greater than 25%) Moderate Increase (0% to 25%) Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%) Large Decrease (less than -25%)

Figure 5 - General Sports Participatory Trends

2.3.2 NATIONAL TRENDS IN AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Swimming is unquestionably a lifetime sport. Swimming activities have remained very popular among Americans, and both competition and fitness swimming have witnessed an increase in participation recently. Fitness swimming is the absolute leader in multigenerational appeal with over 26 million reported participants in 2013, a 13.5% increase from the previous year (Figure 6). NOTE: In 2011, recreational swimming was broken into competition and fitness categories in order to better identify key trends.

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

| National Participatory Trends - Aquatics | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Activity | Participation Levels | | | | | | % Change | | | | |
| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 12-13 | 11-13 | 10-13 | 09-13 | 08-13 |
| Aquatic Exercise | 9,512 | 8,965 | 8,947 | 9,042 | 9,177 | 8,483 | -7.6% | -6.2% | -5.2% | -5.4% | -10.8% |
| Swimming (Competition) | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2,363 | 2,502 | 2,638 | 5.4% | 11.6% | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Swimming (Fitness) | N/A | N/A | N/A | 21,517 | 23,216 | 26,354 | 13.5% | 22.5% | N/A | N/A | N/A |

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

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Legend: | Large Increase (greater than 25%) | Moderate Increase (0% to 25%) | Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%) | Large Decrease (less than -25%) |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Figure 6 - Aquatic Participatory Trends

2.3.3 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL FITNESS

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

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

Over the last five years, the activities that are growing most rapidly are high impact aerobics (up 47.1%), yoga (up 36.9%), running/jogging (up 31.9%), cardio kickboxing (28.7% increase), and group stationary cycling (up 27.8%). Most recently, from 2011-2012, the largest gains in participation were in boxing for fitness (8.7% increase), Tai Chi (up 8.3%), and high impact aerobics (up 7.1%). See Figure 7.

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

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

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Legend: | Large Increase (greater than 25%) | Moderate Increase (0% to 25%) | Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%) | Large Decrease (less than -25%) |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Figure 7 - General Fitness Participatory Trends

2.3.4 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL RECREATION

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

From 2008-2013, general recreation activities that have undergone very rapid growth are adventure racing (up 159%), non-traditional/off-road triathlons (up 156%), traditional/road triathlons (up 139.9%), and trail running (up 49.7%). In-line roller skating, horseback riding, and skateboarding have all seen a substantial drop in participation, decreasing by 40%, 29.4%, and 21.8% respectively over the last five years. See Figure 8.

| National Participatory Trends - General Recreation | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Activity | Participation Levels | | | | | | % Change | | | | |
| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 12-13 | 11-13 | 10-13 | 09-13 | 08-13 |
| Adventure Racing | 809 | 1,005 | 1,214 | 1,202 | 1,618 | 2,095 | 29.5% | 74.3% | 72.6% | 108.5% | 159.0% |
| Archery | 6,180 | 6,368 | 6,323 | 6,471 | 7,173 | 7,647 | 6.6% | 18.2% | 20.9% | 20.1% | 23.7% |
| Bicycling (Mountain) | 7,242 | 7,367 | 7,152 | 6,989 | 7,265 | 8,542 | 17.6% | 22.2% | 19.4% | 15.9% | 18.0% |
| Bicycling (Road) | 38,527 | 39,127 | 39,730 | 39,834 | 39,790 | 40,888 | 2.8% | 2.6% | 2.9% | 4.5% | 6.1% |
| Bicycling (BMX) | 1,896 | 1,858 | 2,090 | 1,958 | 1,861 | 2,168 | 16.5% | 10.7% | 3.7% | 16.7% | 14.3% |
| Climbing (Sport/Indoor/Boulder) | 4,642 | 4,541 | 4,542 | 4,445 | 4,355 | 4,745 | 9.0% | 6.7% | 4.5% | 4.5% | 2.2% |
| Climbing (Traditional/Ice/Mountaineering) | 2,175 | 2,062 | 2,017 | 1,904 | 2,189 | 2,319 | 5.9% | 21.8% | 15.0% | 12.5% | 6.6% |
| Fishing (Fly) | 5,849 | 5,755 | 5,523 | 5,581 | 5,848 | 5,878 | 0.5% | 5.3% | 6.4% | 2.1% | 0.5% |
| Fishing (Freshwater) | 42,095 | 40,646 | 39,911 | 38,864 | 39,002 | 37,796 | -3.1% | -2.7% | -5.3% | -7.0% | -10.2% |
| Fishing (Saltwater) | 14,121 | 13,054 | 12,056 | 11,896 | 12,000 | 11,790 | -1.8% | -0.9% | -2.2% | -9.7% | -16.5% |
| Golf | 28,571 | 27,103 | 26,122 | 25,682 | 25,280 | 24,720 | -2.2% | -3.7% | -5.4% | -8.8% | -13.5% |
| Hiking (Day) | 31,238 | 32,542 | 32,534 | 33,494 | 34,519 | 34,378 | -0.4% | 2.6% | 5.7% | 5.6% | 10.1% |
| Horseback Riding | 11,457 | 10,286 | 9,782 | 9,335 | 8,423 | 8,089 | -4.0% | -13.3% | -17.3% | -21.4% | -29.4% |
| Roller Skating, In-Line | 10,211 | 8,942 | 8,128 | 7,451 | 6,647 | 6,129 | -7.8% | -17.7% | -24.6% | -31.5% | -40.0% |
| Skateboarding | 8,118 | 7,580 | 7,080 | 6,318 | 6,227 | 6,350 | 2.0% | 0.5% | -10.3% | -16.2% | -21.8% |
| Trail Running | 4,537 | 4,845 | 4,985 | 5,373 | 5,806 | 6,792 | 17.0% | 26.4% | 36.2% | 40.2% | 49.7% |
| Triathlon (Non-Traditional/Off Road) | 543 | 634 | 798 | 819 | 1,075 | 1,390 | 29.3% | 69.7% | 74.2% | 119.2% | 156.0% |
| Triathlon (Traditional/Road) | 943 | 1,148 | 1,593 | 1,686 | 1,789 | 2,262 | 26.4% | 34.2% | 42.0% | 97.0% | 139.9% |

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

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Legend: | Large Increase (greater than 25%) | Moderate Increase (0% to 25%) | Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%) | Large Decrease (less than -25%) |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Figure 8 - General Recreation Participatory Trends

2.4 SWOT ANALYSIS

This analysis evaluates the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved with the Department. This analysis conducted with the staff from the department identifies the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve the objective of the Department. The following SWOT Matrix is the findings of the analysis.

| Strengths (Internal - You can control) | Weaknesses (Internal - You can control) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Adequate level of financial resources</p> <p>Political will and community desire to support parks & recreation</p> <p>Two signature parks that can be further developed</p> <p>Focus on planning initiatives</p> <p>Supporter for providing healthy lifestyles through parks and programs</p> <p>Wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities</p> | <p>County communication mechanisms and outreach (electronic media, maps etc.)</p> <p>Unclear on brand identity and perception in the community</p> <p>Limited number of amenities in existing parks</p> <p>Maintenance is reactive with limited ability for proactive maintenance</p> <p>Staffing levels at capacity with no room for expanded service offerings</p> <p>Security presence in County Parks is limited (e.g. park rangers / people living in the parks / cell phone reception in the park)</p> <p>Rental / Reservation process is inefficient and can be improved - Online Reservations</p> |
| Opportunity (External - You may not be able to control) | Threats (You may not be able to control) |
| <p>Health and wellness e.g. childhood obesity issues</p> <p>Increased population and workforce in Washington County</p> <p>Location and abundance of natural resources</p> <p>Growing participation in outdoor recreation programming and facility trends - (e.g. zip lines, glamping, BMX, skateparks, ropes courses, etc.)</p> <p>Technology - mobile apps / online registration could be improved</p> <p>Public / Private Partnerships in County Parks (bike rentals, concessionaire, canoe / kayak rentals)</p> | <p>External service providers</p> <p>Proliferation of gaming / in-house entertainment (Xbox, Playstation, Wii, etc.)</p> <p>Impact of negative perception of government</p> <p>Impact of resource extraction in / around County Parks</p> |

CHAPTER THREE COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

3.1 COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Effective communication between the project team, Washington County parks and recreation staff, and various stakeholder groups was essential for this master plan study to develop in an organized manner and meet a wide range of concerns represented by various interests. Working with the local community was deemed a critical and vital component to this study. A comprehensive community engagement approach was planned to gain feedback from the following stakeholders as design research and design alternatives were explored.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Two workshops were conducted that incorporated a visioning component including activities based on audience involvement to actively engage them in the process. Topics included opportunities and constraints as well as sustainable design strategies. Alternatives were presented at a public meeting with opportunity for feedback. Surveys were used to facilitate input.

ADVISORY / TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Combined meetings with stakeholders were held to help keep participants informed of progress and to obtain feedback. The lines of communication were kept open throughout the study duration. These meetings included Washington County Planning Staff, Parks and Recreation staff, and the Washington County Board of Commissioners.



Photo: Cross Creek Park Shelter

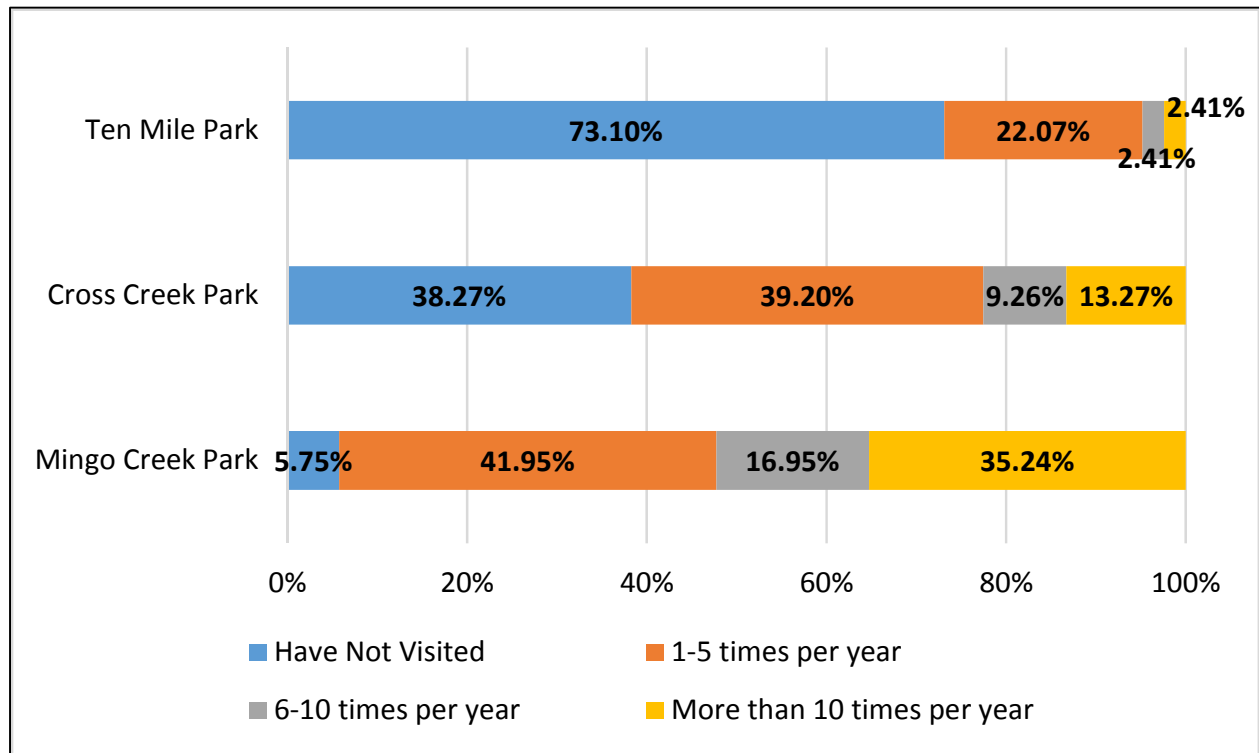
3.2 COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online survey powered by Survey Monkey was administered to the Washington County community from May 1st - June 30th, 2014. This survey focused on the unmet needs and concerns of the community. A total of 376 responses were received and the summary is provided below.

| Summary of Online Survey Responses | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. 376 Total Responses - | |
| a. This points to a high level of participation and engagement by residents | |
| 2. Over 95% of respondents rated the County’s programs as either Excellent or Good | |
| 3. Only 35% claimed to have participated in programming offered by Washington County Parks and Recreation, while 65% had not participated. | |
| 4. Top four amenities respondents would like to see added to the parks | |
| a. Equestrian Trails | |
| b. Walking, Biking Trails and Greenways | |
| c. Boating Docks | |
| d. Amphitheater | |
| 5. Top four programs respondents would like to participate in | |
| a. Youth summer camp programs | |
| b. Home school outdoor classroom | |
| c. Youth sports programs | |
| d. Outdoor skills / adventure programs | |
| 6. Top reasons for not using amenities or programs offered by Washington County Parks and Recreation | |
| a. Do not know what is being offered | |
| b. Class or program full | |
| 7. Top ways respondents learn about the County’s recreation programs and activities | |
| a. From Friends and Neighbors 47% | |
| b. Newspaper 47% | |
| c. Website 46% | |
| 8. 45% of respondents are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the overall value from activities and programs | |

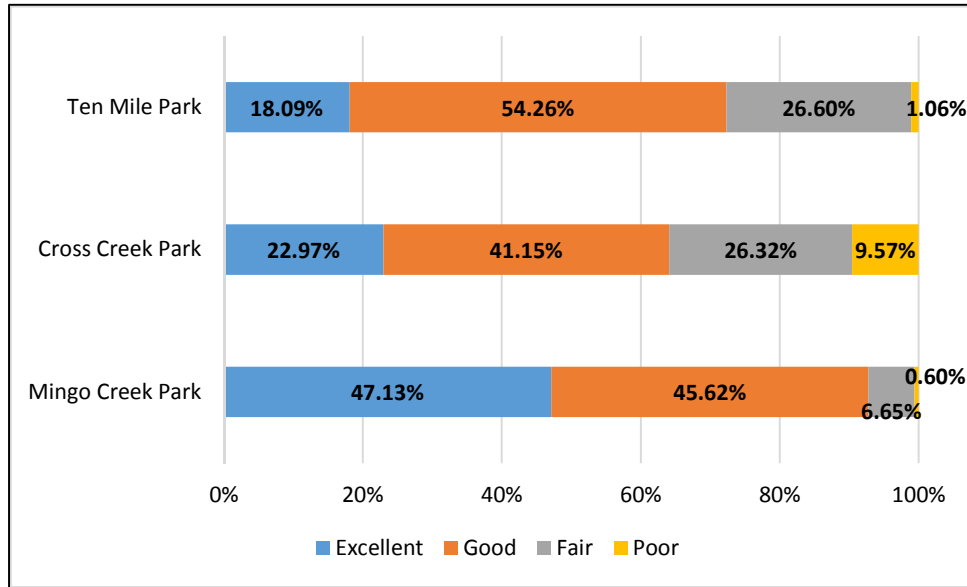
3.2.1 FROM THE LIST OF WASHINGTON COUNTY PARKS AND FACILITIES PLEASE CHECK ALL THE PARKS AND FACILITIES YOU AND MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE USED DURING THE PAST YEAR. PLEASE LIST THE NUMBER OF TIMES YOU HAVE VISITED THEM ANNUALLY.

Mingo Creek Park was visited most frequently by survey respondents, with nearly 60% visiting the park 1-10 times per year and over 35% visiting more than 10 times per year, while less than 6% claim they hadn't visited the site in the past year. Cross Creek Park had attracted over 60% of survey respondents at least one time in the last year, with over 13% visiting more than 10 times. Ten Mile Park was by far the least visited park among survey respondents, as over 73% of those surveyed had not visited the park in the last year.



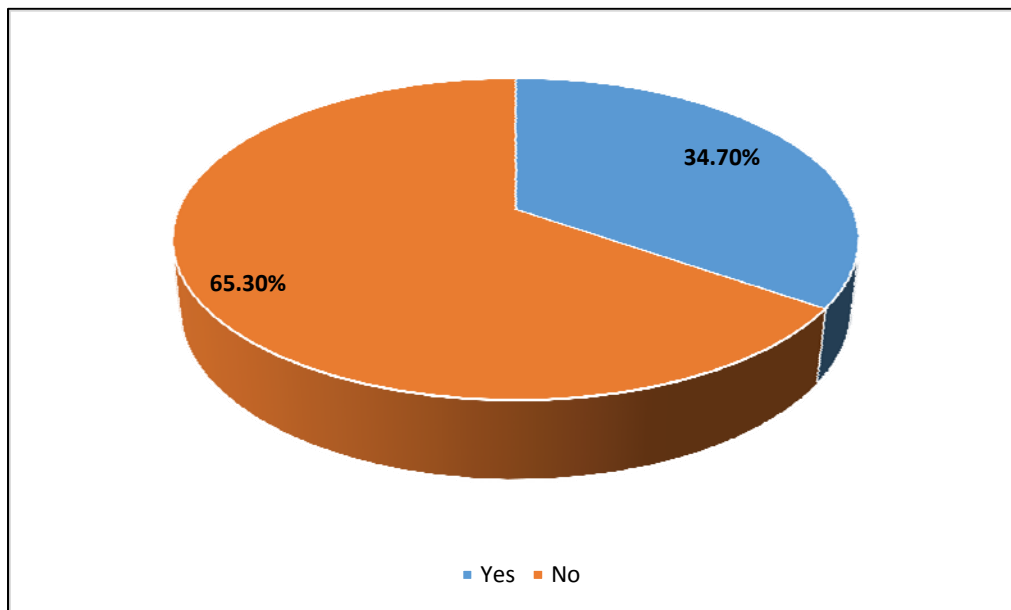
3.2.2 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE PARKS OR FACILITIES THAT YOU AND MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATED IN?

Among survey respondents, Mingo Creek Park was rated highest in overall quality, as nearly 93% considered the park to be in good or excellent condition. Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents rated Cross Creek Park as either excellent or good. Ten Mile Park was rated by over 70% of respondents to be in excellent or good condition.



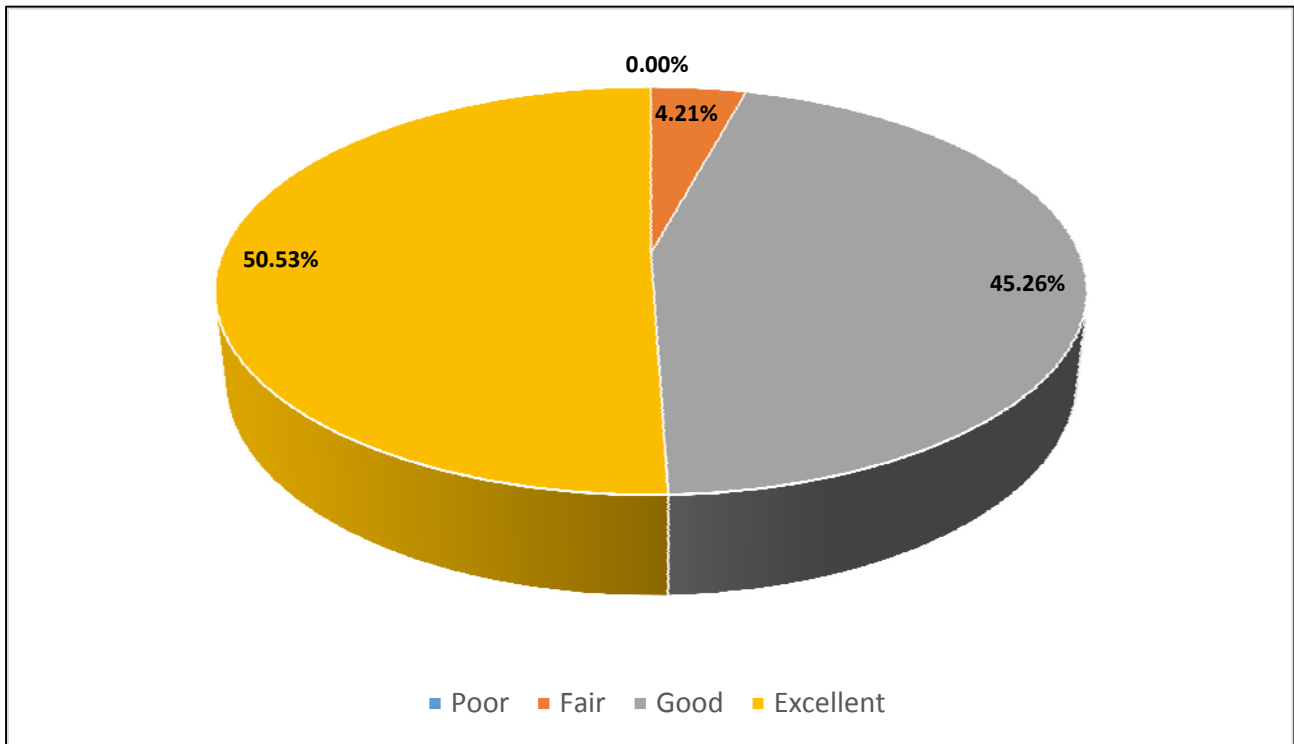
3.2.3 HAVE YOU OR OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATED IN ANY RECREATION PROGRAMS OR SPECIAL EVENTS OFFERED BY THE COUNTY DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

35% of those surveyed claimed to have participated in programming offered by Washington County Parks and Recreation, while 65% had not participated. This is comparable to national standards where program participation is typically between 30% - 40%



3.2.4 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RECREATION PROGRAMS OR SPECIAL EVENTS THAT YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE PARTICIPATED IN?

Over 95% of respondents rated the County's programs as either excellent or good, while only 4% considered them to be fair and no one surveyed rated programs as poor.



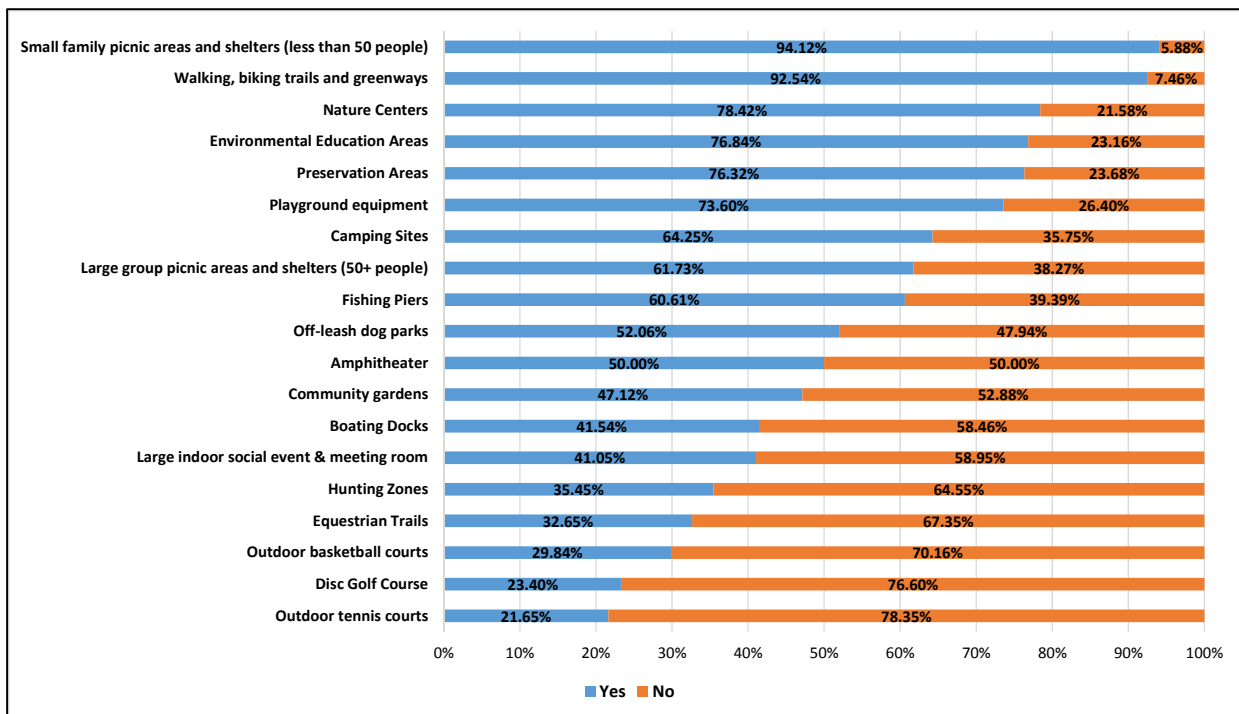
3.2.5 PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU OR ANY MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS A NEED FOR EACH OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LISTED BELOW BY CHOOSING YES OR NO TO THE PARK/FACILITY.

This specifically corresponds to whether people have a need for that particular park or facility. Based on survey responses, the top 5 most needed parks/facilities were: small family picnic areas and shelters (94.12%), walking, biking trails and greenways (92.54%), nature centers (78.42%), environmental education areas (76.84%), and playground equipment (73.60%). Respondents' least needed parks/facilities included outdoor tennis courts (21.65%), disc golf course (23.40%), outdoor basketball courts (29.84%), equestrian trails (32.65%), and hunting zones (35.45%).

Note: It is important to note that Section 3.2.5 and Section 3.2.7 ask two different types of questions for the same list of park / facility. Section 3.2.5 asks respondents to state whether they have a need for a specific park or facility. If they said Yes (they have a need), then Section 3.2.6 asks them to what extent is their need for that park / facility still met (Completely Met - 100% or Not At All Met - 0% and options in between).

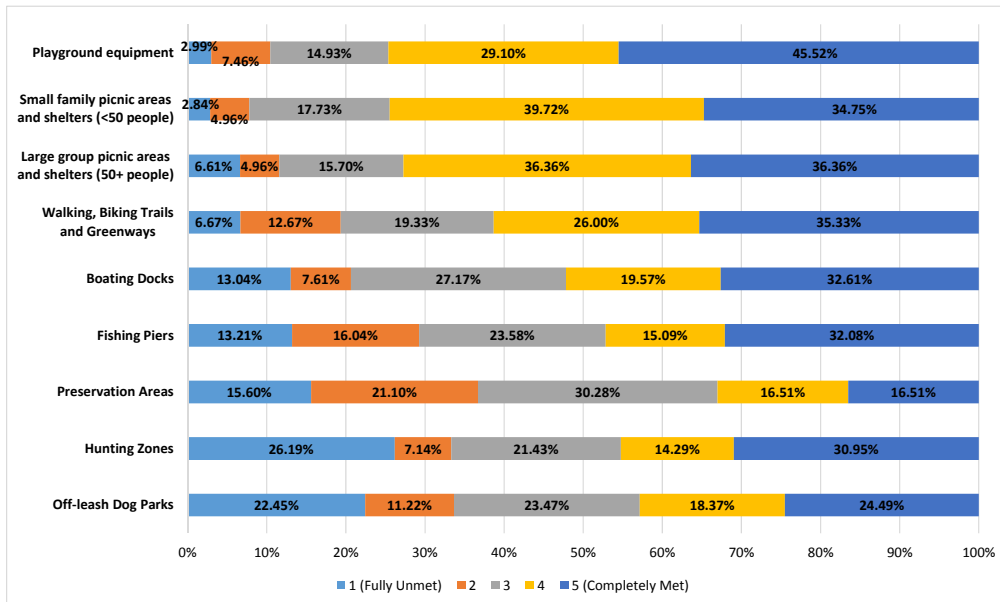
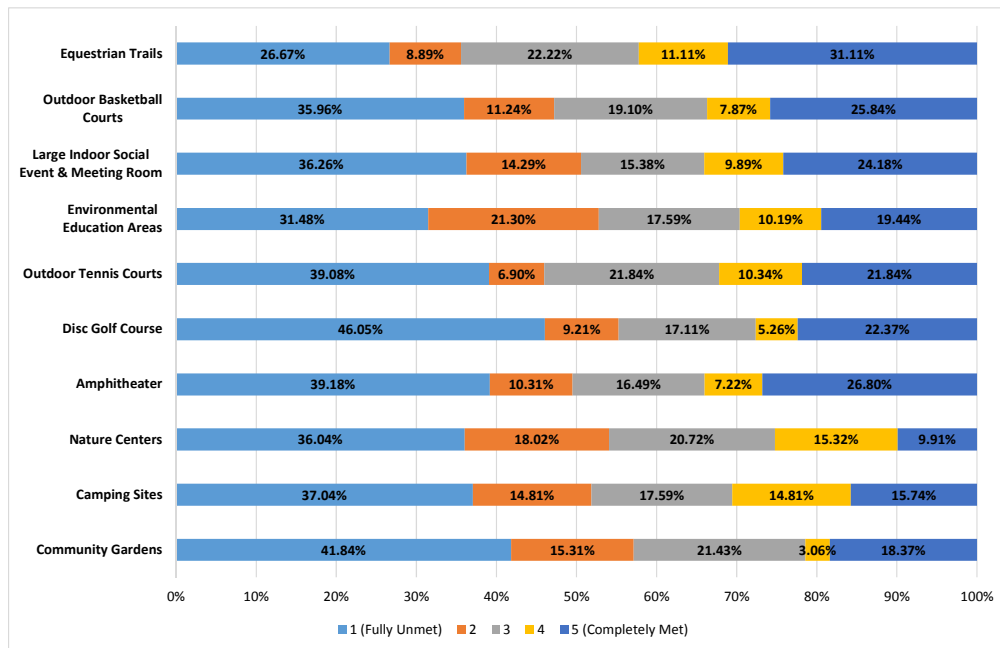
Section 3.2.7 asks respondents to list which of the same park / facilities are in the top 4 most important ones for them. Thus, respondents could state that certain facilities /amenities are really important to them (and thus rank it very high on Section 3.2.7) but if they don't have a need for it (per response to Section 3.2.5) or their need for that park or facility is already met (Section 3.2.7) by Washington County or any other agency, then their response may be expressed as lower.

Thus, a perfect example is Small Family Picnic Areas and Shelters that most respondents stated that the community needs it (Section 3.2.5) but their need is already met to some extent hence it is not the highest choice in Section 3.2.6. Also, while most people said it is a community need, it is not as important for as many people in the community (see responses in Section 3.2.7). Thus, the survey questions evaluate a combination of Community Need, Extent of Need being Met and Top Community Priority for each park / facility in the list.



3.2.6 IF YES TO QUESTION 4, PLEASE RATE ALL THE FOLLOWING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES OF THIS TYPE ON A SCALE OF 5 TO 1, WHERE 5 MEANS "100% MEETS NEEDS" AND 1 MEANS "DOES NOT MEET NEEDS" OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD. PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY 1 RESPONSE FOR EACH PARK/RECREATION FACILITY.

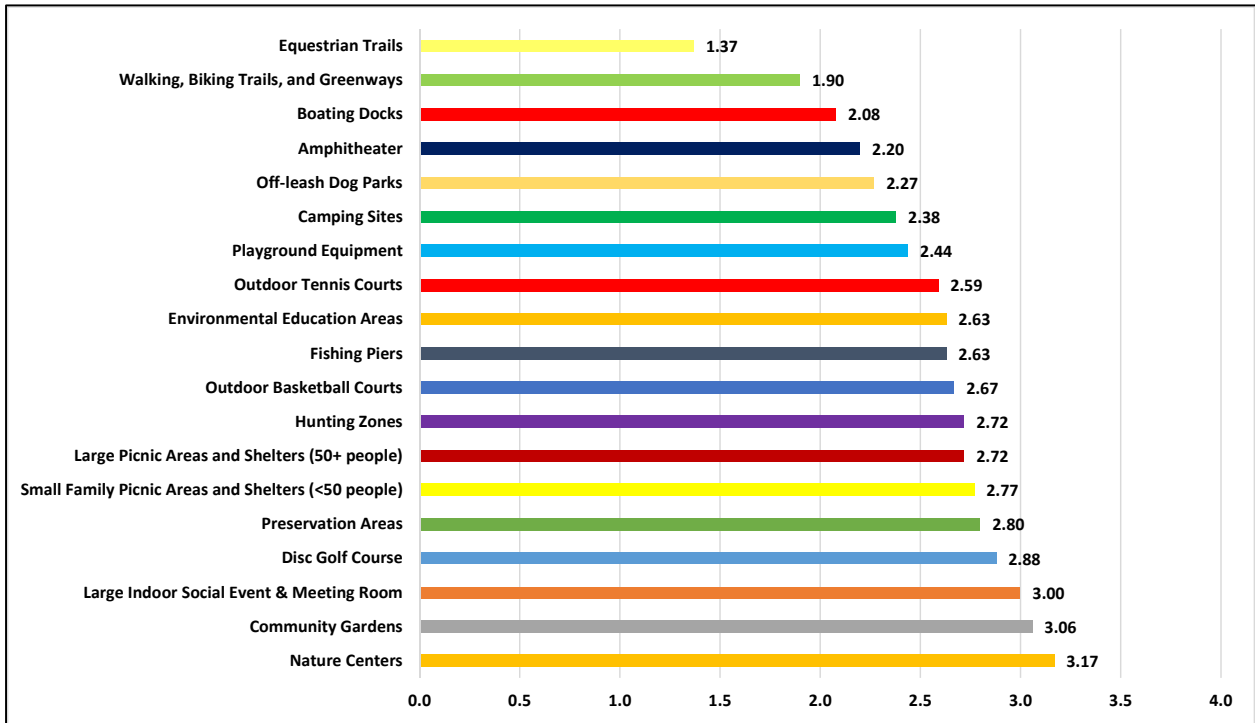
Based on the two charts below, respondents' needs are 75% met or better at the highest rate for playground equipment (74.62%), small family picnic areas and shelters (74.47%), large group picnic areas and shelters (72.72%), walking, biking trails and greenways (61.33%), and boating docks (52.18%). Respondent needs are fully unmet at the highest rate for the following amenities: disc golf course (46.05%), community gardens (41.84%), amphitheater (39.18%), outdoor tennis courts (39.08%), and camping sites (37.04%).



3.2.7 FROM THE LIST, PLEASE RANK YOUR TOP FOUR CHOICES

1 Indicates Top Choice and 4 Indicates Fourth Choice

Respondents ranked their top choice as 1 and their 4th choice as 4 thus the top choice for most respondents will correspond to the lowest actual value below. Thus, based on the average ratings seen below, respondents' top four choices are Equestrian Trails (1.37), Walking, Biking, and Greenways (1.90), Boating Docks (2.08), and Amphitheater (2.20). Programs that were rated the least important to the respondents were at the bottom of the chart: Nature Centers (3.17), Community Gardens (3.06), Large Indoor Social Event & Meeting Room (3.00), and Disc Golf Course (2.88).



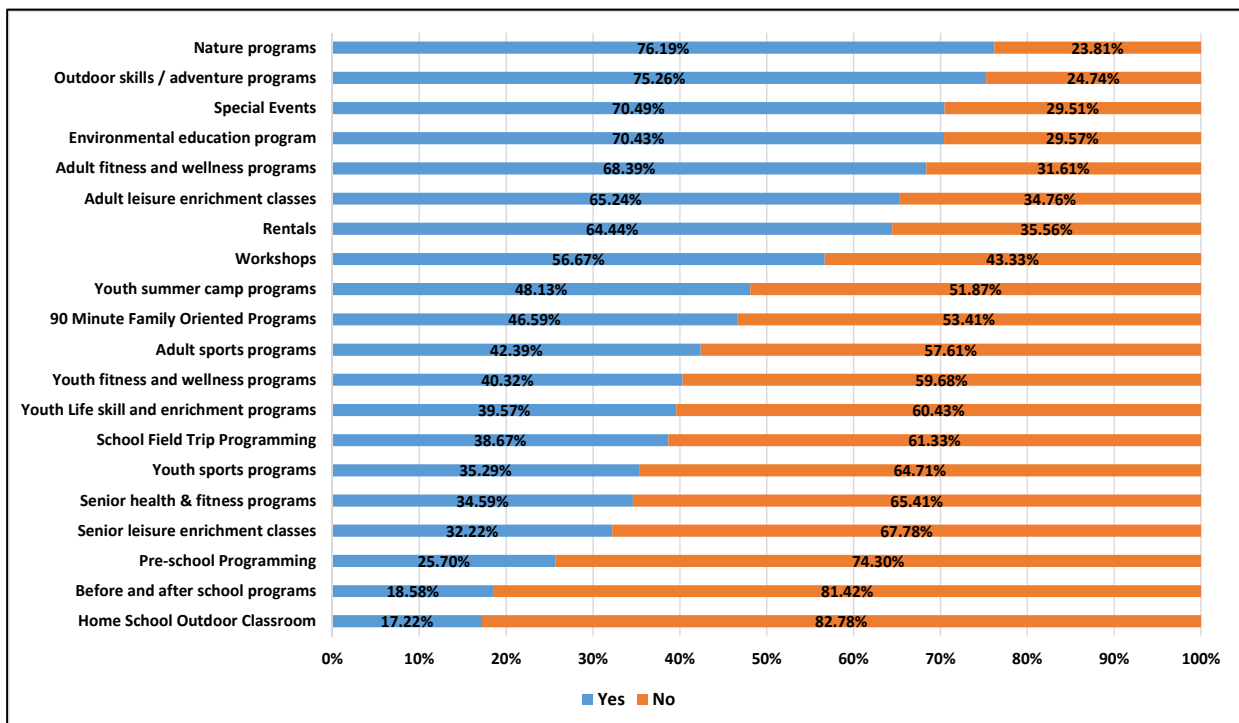
3.2.8 PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU OR ANY MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS A NEED FOR EACH OF THE RECREATION PROGRAMS LISTED BELOW BY CHOOSING YES OR NO NEXT TO THE PROGRAM.

Survey respondents identified the following programs and the most needed: nature programs (76.19%), outdoor skills/adventure programs (75.26%), adult fitness and wellness programs (68.39%), environmental education programs (70.43%), and special events (70.49%). Programs considered least important for households of those surveyed include: home school outdoor classroom (17.22%), before and after school programs (18.58%), pre-school programming (25.7%), senior leisure enrichment classes (32.22%), and senior health & fitness programs (34.59%).

Note: It is important to note that Section 3.2.8 and Section 3.2.10 ask two different types of questions for the same list of park / facility. Section 3.2.8 asks respondents to state whether they have a need for a specific program. If they said Yes (they have a need), then Section 3.2.9 asks them to what extent is their need for that program still met (Completely Met - 100% or Not At All Met - 0% and options in between).

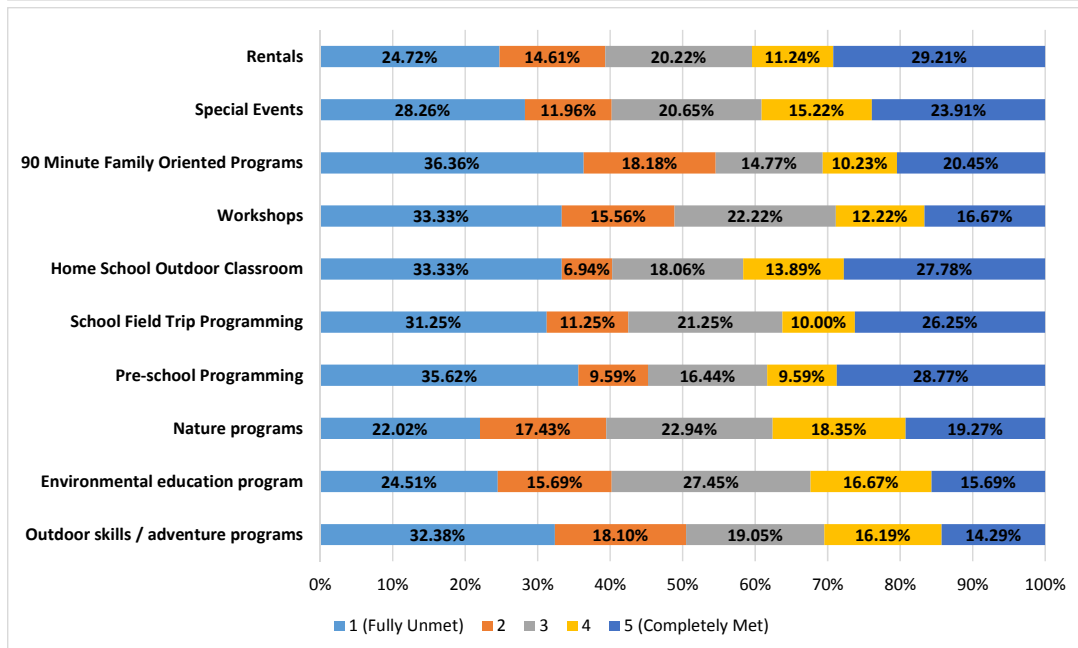
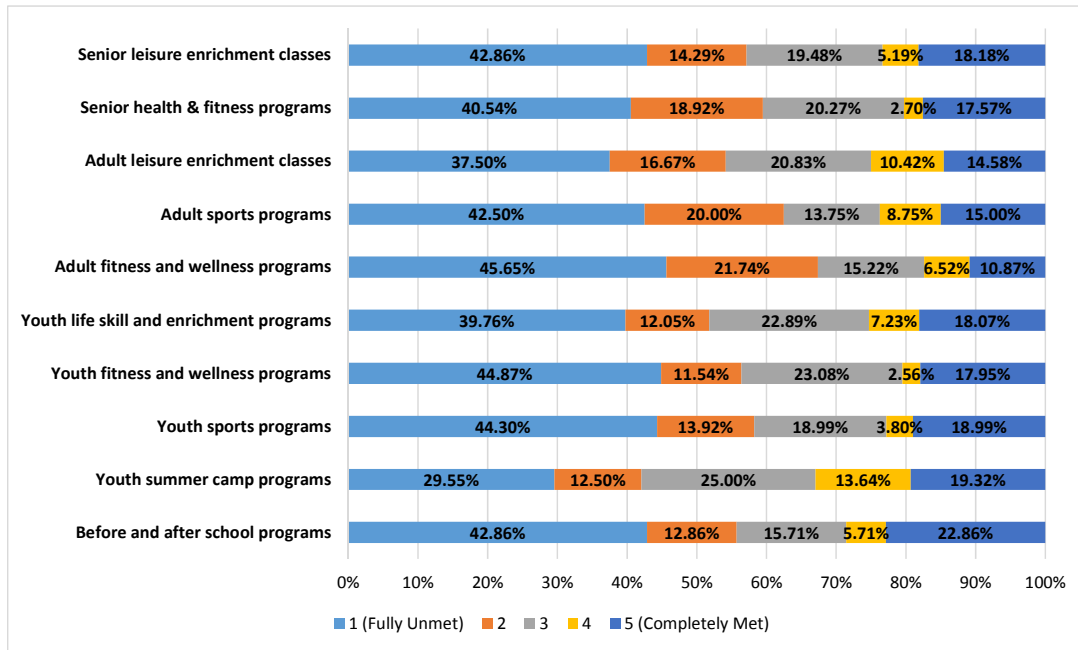
Section 3.2.10 asks respondents to list which of the same program are in the top 4 most important ones for them. Thus, respondents could state that certain program are really important to them (and thus rank it very high on Section 3.2.10) but if they don't have a need for it (per response to Section 3.2.8) or their need for that program is already met (Section 3.2.9) by Washington County or any other agency, then their response may be expressed as lower.

Thus, a perfect example is Nature Programs that most respondents stated that the community needs it (Section 3.2.8) but their need is already met to a large extent hence it is not a very high choice in Section 3.2.9. Also, while most people said it is a community need, it is not as important for as many people in the community (see responses in Section 3.2.10). Thus, the survey questions evaluate a combination of Community Need, Extent of Need being Met and Top Community Priority for each program in the list.



3.2.9 IF YES TO QUESTION 8, PLEASE RATE ALL THE FOLLOWING RECREATION PROGRAMS OF THIS TYPE ON A SCALE OF 5 TO 1, WHERE 5 MEANS "100% MEETS NEEDS" AND 1 MEANS "DOES NOT MEET NEEDS" OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

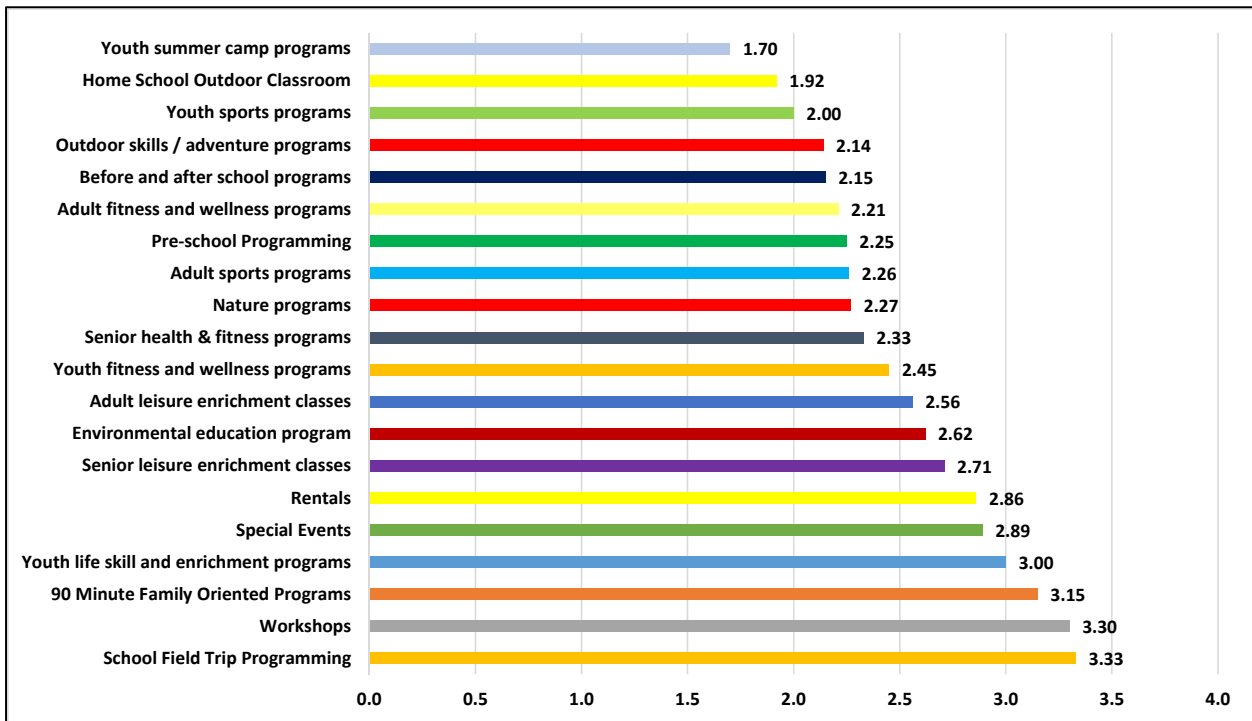
Overall, survey responses indicate that recreation programs are not meeting expectations, with no program fulfilling 75% or more of the need by more than half of survey respondents. Many programs reported needs to be fully unmet for over 40% of respondents. These include: adult fitness and wellness (45.65%), youth fitness and wellness (44.87%), and youth sports (44.3%).



3.2.10 FROM THE LIST, PLEASE RANK YOUR TOP FOUR CHOICES FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS THAT YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN OR WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN?

1 Indicates Top Choice and 4 Indicates Fourth Choice

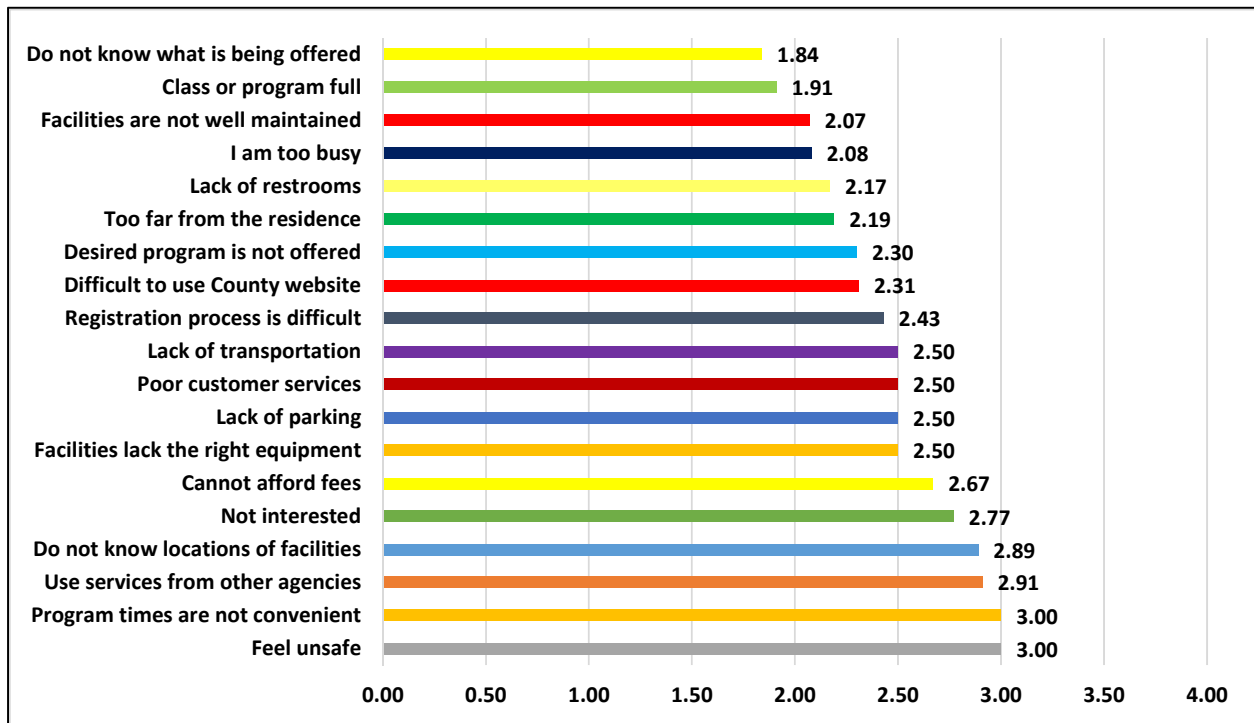
Respondents ranked their top choice as 1 and their 4th choice as 4 thus the top choice for most respondents will correspond to the lowest actual value below. Thus, based on the average ratings seen below, programs that ranked highest among survey respondents were Youth Summer Camp Programs (1.70), Home School Outdoor Classroom (1.92), Youth Sports Programs (2.00) and Outdoor Skills / Adventure Programs (2.14). Programs that were rated the least important to the respondents were at the bottom of the chart: School Field Trip Programming (3.33), Workshops (3.30), 90 Minute Family Oriented Programs (3.15) and Youth Life Skill and Enrichment Programs (3.00).



3.2.11 PLEASE RANK THE TOP FOUR REASONS THAT PREVENT YOU OR OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD FROM USING PARKS, RECREATION AND SPORTS FACILITIES OR PROGRAMS MORE OFTEN.

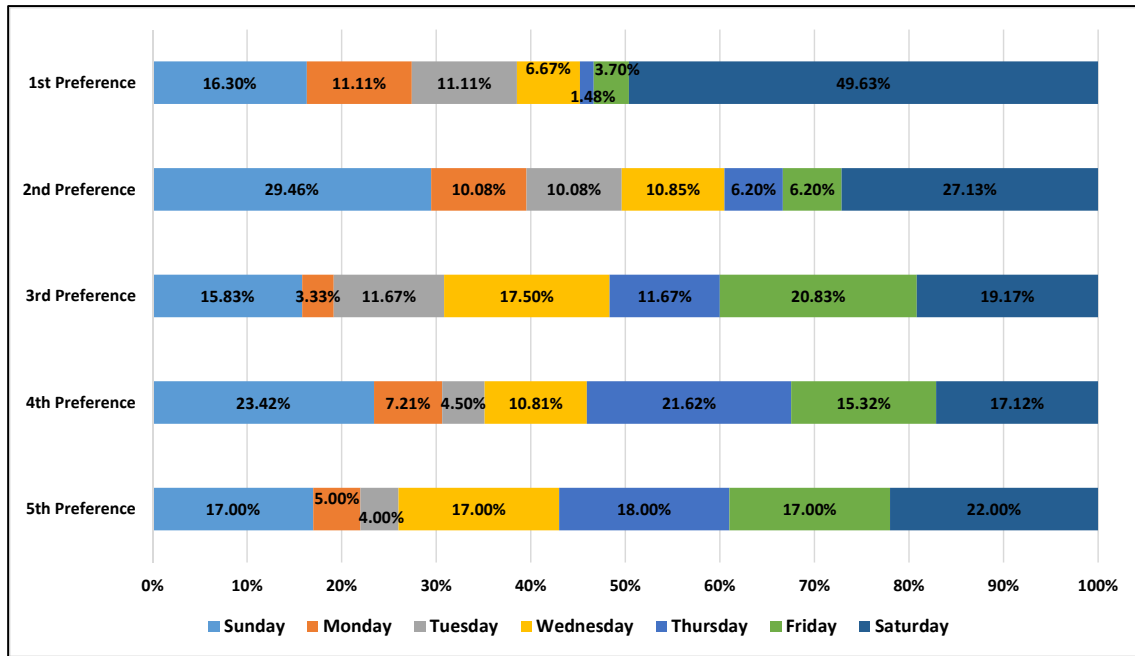
1 Indicates Top Choice and 4 Indicates Fourth Choice

Respondents ranked their top choice as 1 and their 4th choice as 4 thus the top choice for most respondents will correspond to the lowest value below. Thus, Based on the average ratings seen below, the most common deterrent for users surveyed was Do not know what is being offered (1.84), followed by class or program full (1.91), facilities are not well maintained (2.07), and I am too busy (2.08). This is an encouraging sign since it points to an issue (marketing and outreach) that can be addressed fairly easily in order to help maximize program participation.

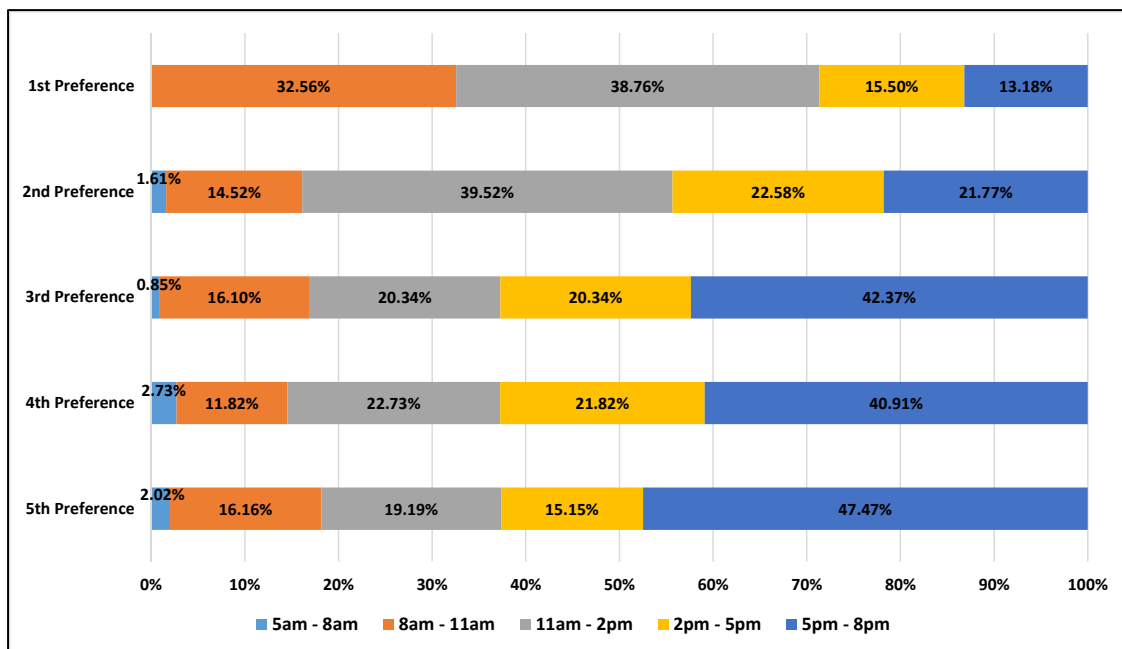


3.2.12 CHOOSE THE FIVE MOST PREFERRED TIME SLOTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES TO BE OFFERED.

Based on survey responses, the most desirable days for programming to occur are on Saturdays (49.63% first preference and 27.13% second preference) and Sundays (16.3% first preference and 29.46% second preference).

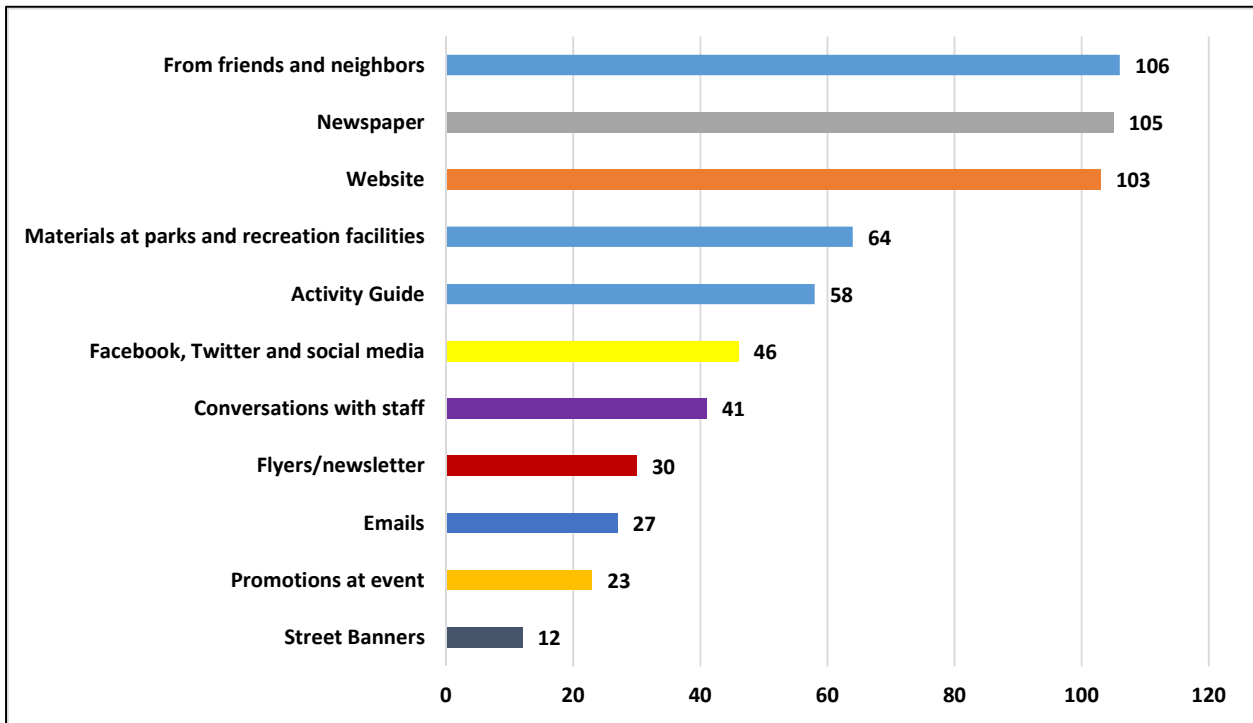


Respondents most often identified from 11am-2pm (38.76%) and from 8am-11am (32.56%) as the most preferential program times. Many respondents listed between 5pm-8pm as a preferred backup option. Very few individuals considered 5am-8am as a desirable time for programming.



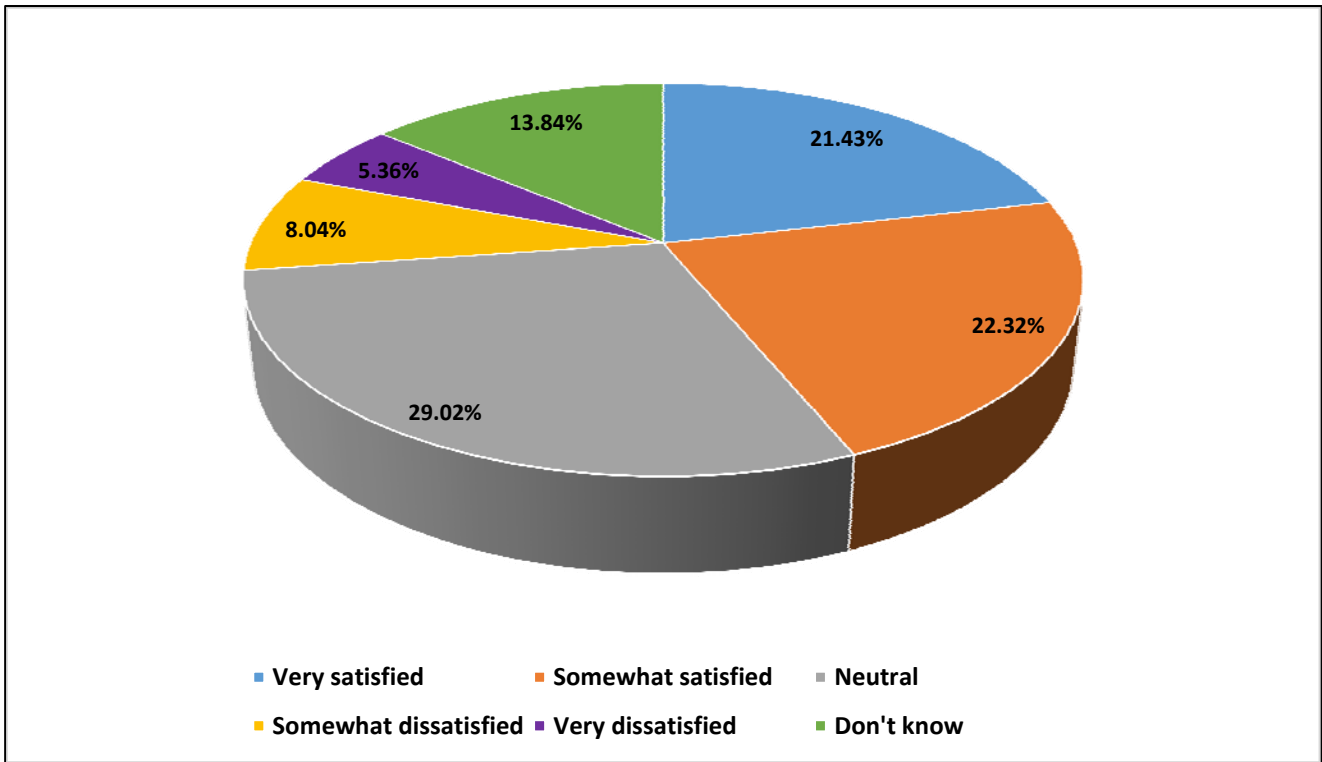
3.2.13 PLEASE CHECK ALL THE WAYS YOU LEARN ABOUT THE COUNTY'S RECREATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES?

Survey respondents were asked to check ALL ways they learn about programming and activities the County has to offer. One-hundred and six (106) respondents learn through friends and neighbors, followed closely by the newspaper (105 respondents), and the website (103 respondents). Street banners (12 respondents), promotions at events (23 respondents), and e-mails (27 respondents) are the least effective modes of promotion based on survey results. Less than 30% (168 respondents) of those surveyed identified materials at facilities, the activity guide, or social media as resources used to learn about programs and activities.



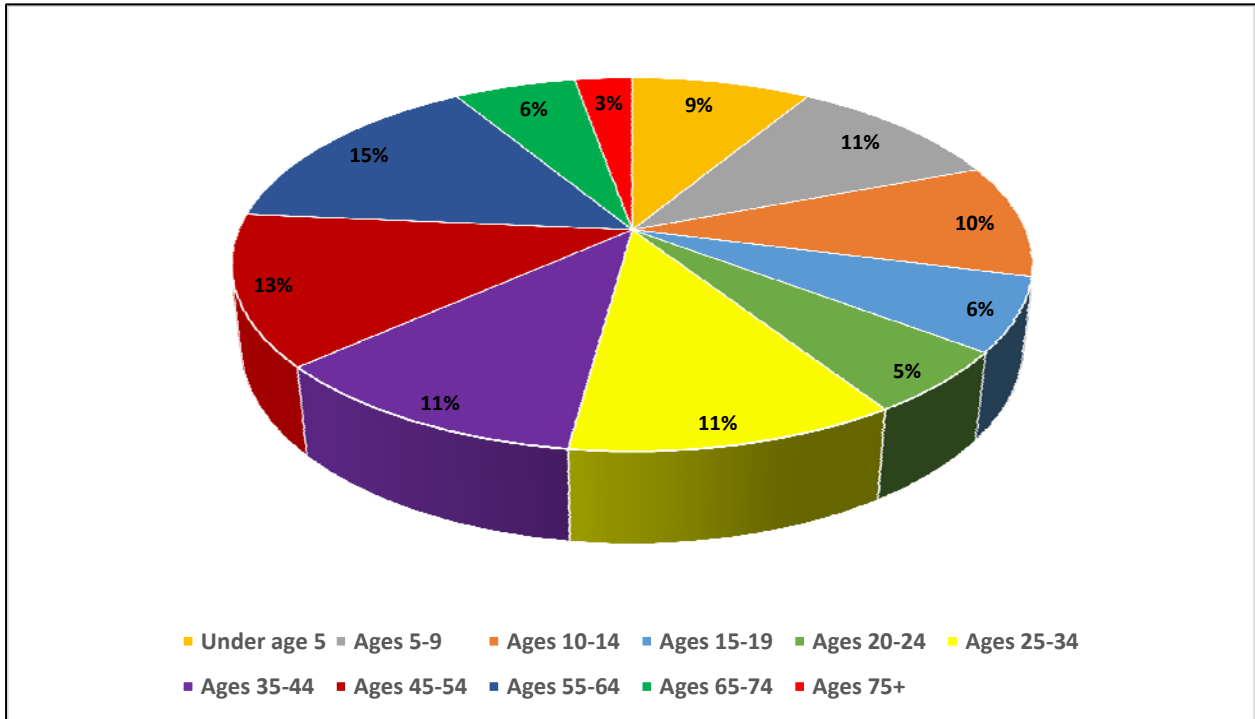
3.2.14 PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE OVERALL VALUE YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES FROM ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS.

Nearly 45% of those surveyed are either very satisfied (21.43%) or somewhat satisfied (22.32%), while less than 15% report some level of dissatisfaction. 30% of all respondents were neutral and that is certainly an area that the staff has an opportunity to improve upon.



3.2.15 COUNTING YOURSELF, HOW MANY PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD ARE:

The respondent households present a fairly balanced picture and indicate a broad representation of Washington County’s demographics. Among households surveyed, the largest age segment is the 55-64 group (15%), followed by 45-54 (13%), 5-9 (11%), 25-34 (11%), and 35-44 (11%). Approximately 30% of the polled population is under the age of 15, while less than 10% is 65 or older.

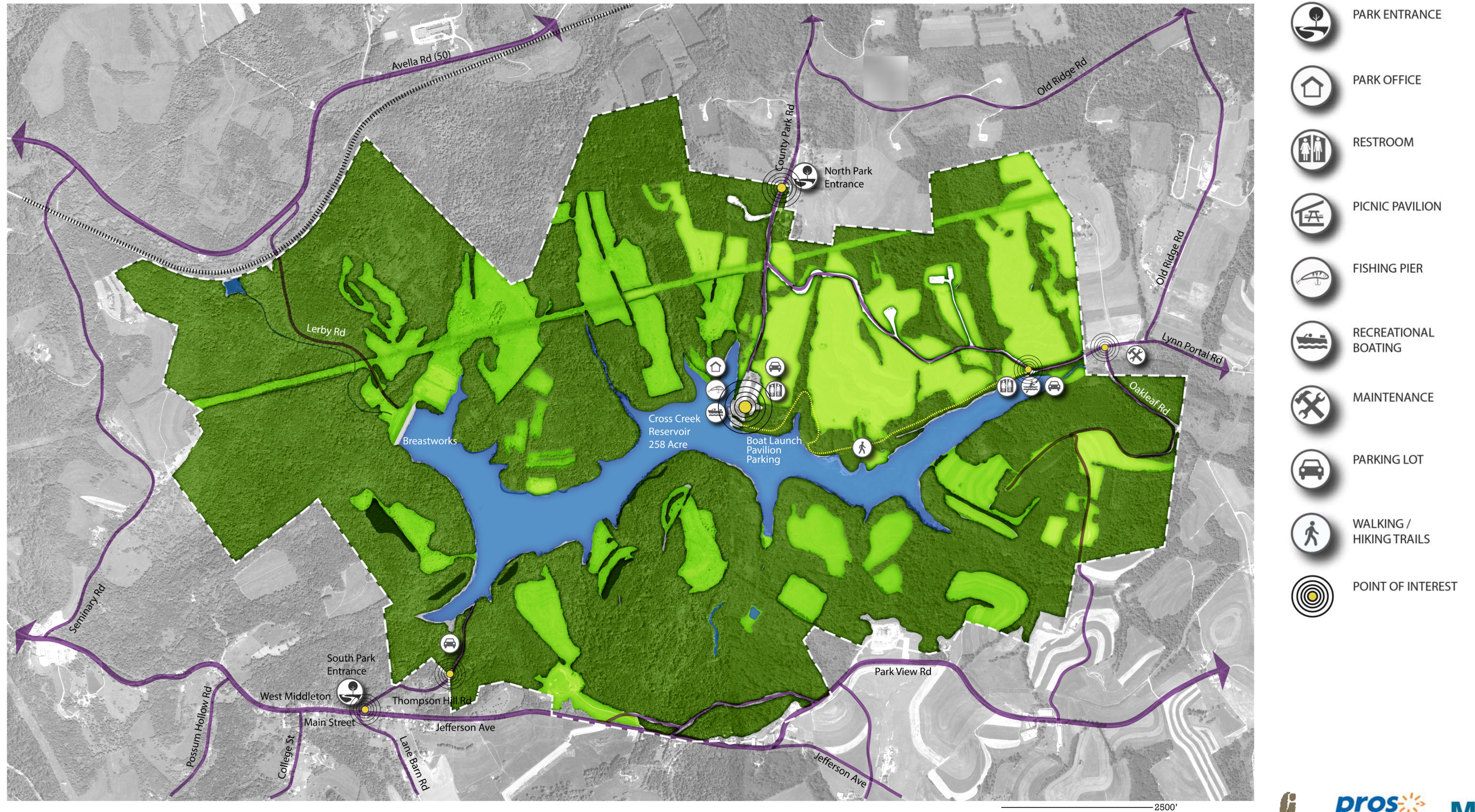


CHAPTER FOUR FACILITY AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

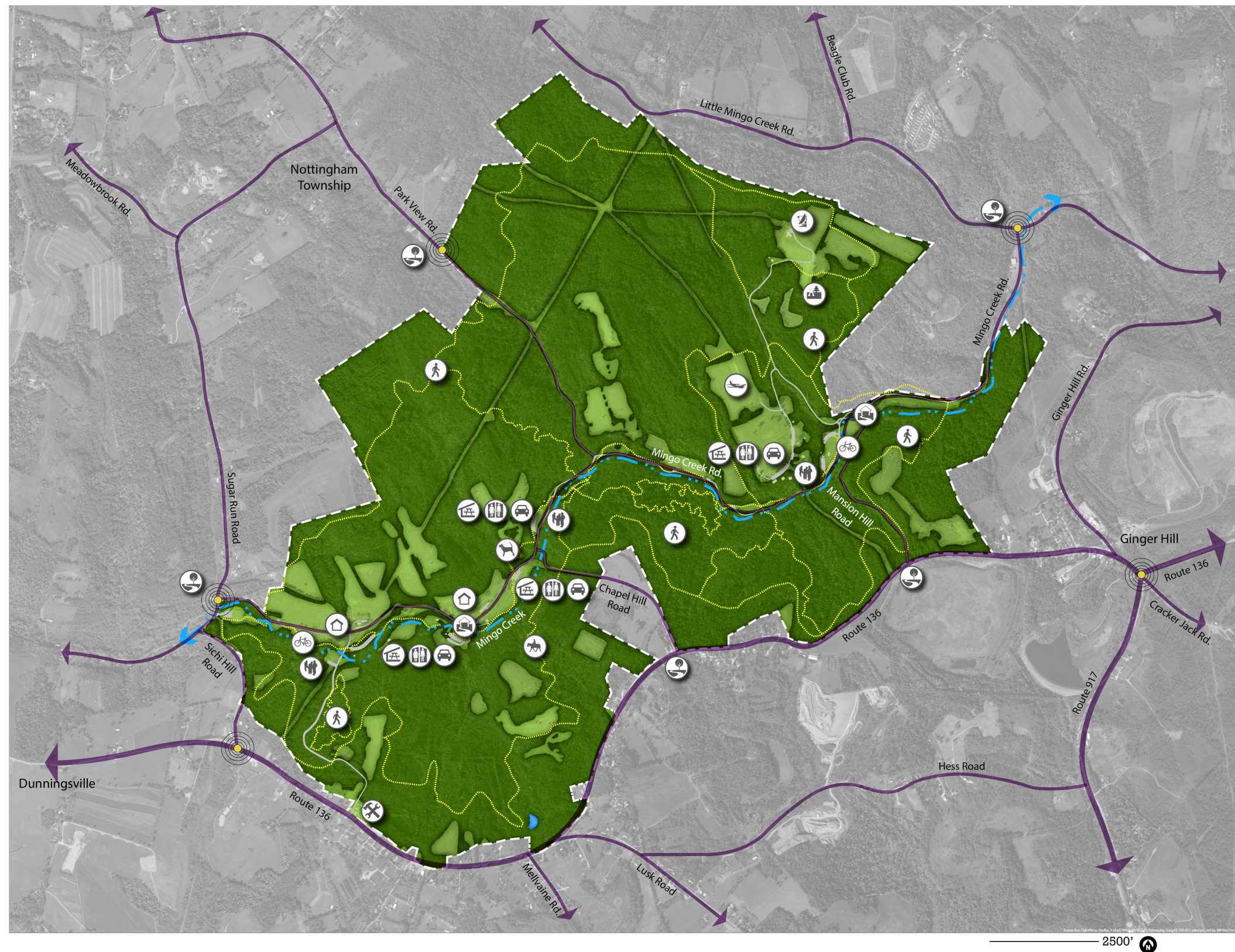
4.1 PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES INVENTORY

Prior to beginning the design and recommendation of any type of development for Mingo Creek Park and Cross Creek Park, it was essential that the design team understood the existing conditions and function on both parks on a micro and macro scale. During this process, the design team conducted facility tours of each park that were guided by parks and recreation staff, collected GIS data and mapping through the Washington County Planning Commission and various other sources, and interviewed key parks and recreation staff members in regard to the current state of each park. After a complete inventory of the parks was completed, the necessary information to begin analysis and providing recommendations was in place.

4.1.1 CROSS CREEK PARK



4.1.2 MINGO CREEK PARK



- PARK ENTRANCE
- PARK OFFICE
- RESTROOM
- PICNIC PAVILION
- PLAYGROUND
- MAINTENANCE
- PARKING LOT
- WALKING / HIKING TRAILS
- HORSEBACK TRAIL
- BIKE TRAIL
- AIRPLANE FIELD
- LEASH FREE AREA
- SCOUT CAMPING AREA
- OBSERVATORY
- COVERED BRIDGE
- POINT OF INTEREST

4.2 LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

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

PROS evaluated park facility levels of service using a combination of resources. These resources included: recreation activity participation rates reported by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association as it applies to activities that occur in the United States and the Washington County area, community and stakeholder input, findings from the online survey and general observations. This information allowed standards to be customized to Washington County.

These standards should be viewed as a guide to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the particular situation and needs of the community. By applying these facility standards to the Washington County residents, gaps and surpluses in park and facility/amenity types are revealed.

Overall, it reveals that the Department does have some areas of deficit in levels of service as compared with recommended standards and the growing population.



Photo: Mingo Creek Park Play Area



Photo: Scenery in Mingo Creek Park



Photo: Scenery in Cross Creek Park

Washington County Park Facility Standards

| PARKS: | | | | | | | | | | | 2014 Inventory - Developed Facilities | | | 2014 Facility Standards | | | 2018 Facility Standards | | |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|----|----------|
| | Cross Creek Lake County Park | Mingo Creek County Park | Ten Mile Creek County Park | Panhandle Trail | Municipal Recreation Facilities | Other Providers | Total Inventory | Current Service Level based upon population | | Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area | | Meet Standard/ Need Exists | Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed | | Meet Standard/ Need Exists | Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed | | | |
| OUTDOOR AMENITIES: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Picnic Pavilions (Small, Medium & Large) | 3.00 | 10.00 | 3.00 | | 55.00 | | 71.00 | 1.00 | site per | 2,970 | 1.00 | site per | 2,800 | Need Exists | 4 | Sites(s) | Need Exists | 6 | Sites(s) |
| Baseball Fields | | | | | 81.00 | | 81.00 | 1.00 | field per | 2,603 | 1.00 | field per | 10,000 | Meets Standard | - | Field(s) | Meets Standard | - | Field(s) |
| Outdoor Basketball Courts | | | | | 54.00 | | 54.00 | 1.00 | court per | 3,905 | 1.00 | court per | 5,000 | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) |
| Tennis Courts | | | | | 36.00 | | 36.00 | 1.00 | court per | 5,857 | 1.00 | court per | 6,000 | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) |
| Playgrounds (Youth & Tot) | 1.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 | | 92.00 | | 98.00 | 1.00 | site per | 2,152 | 1.00 | site per | 2,500 | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Dog Parks | | 1.00 | | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | site per | 210,855 | 1.00 | site per | 50,000 | Need Exists | 3 | Site(s) | Need Exists | 3 | Site(s) |
| Multi-Use Trails (Miles) | 5.50 | 3.45 | 0.80 | 17.30 | | 21.00 | 48.05 | 0.22 | miles per | 19,947 | 0.40 | miles per | 1,000 | Need Exists | 36 | Mile(s) | Need Exists | 38 | Mile(s) |
| Outdoor Pools | | | | | 2.00 | | 2.00 | 1.00 | site per | 105,428 | 1.00 | site per | 50,000 | Need Exists | 2 | Sites(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Sites(s) |
| Nature Centers | | | | | | | - | 1.00 | site per | - | 1.00 | site per | 150,000 | Need Exists | 1 | Sites(s) | Need Exists | 1 | Sites(s) |
| Campgrounds | | 1.00 | | | | 3.00 | 4.00 | 1.00 | site per | 52,714 | 1.00 | site per | 50,000 | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) |

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| 2013 Estimated Population | 210,855 |
| 2018 Estimated Population | 214,448 |

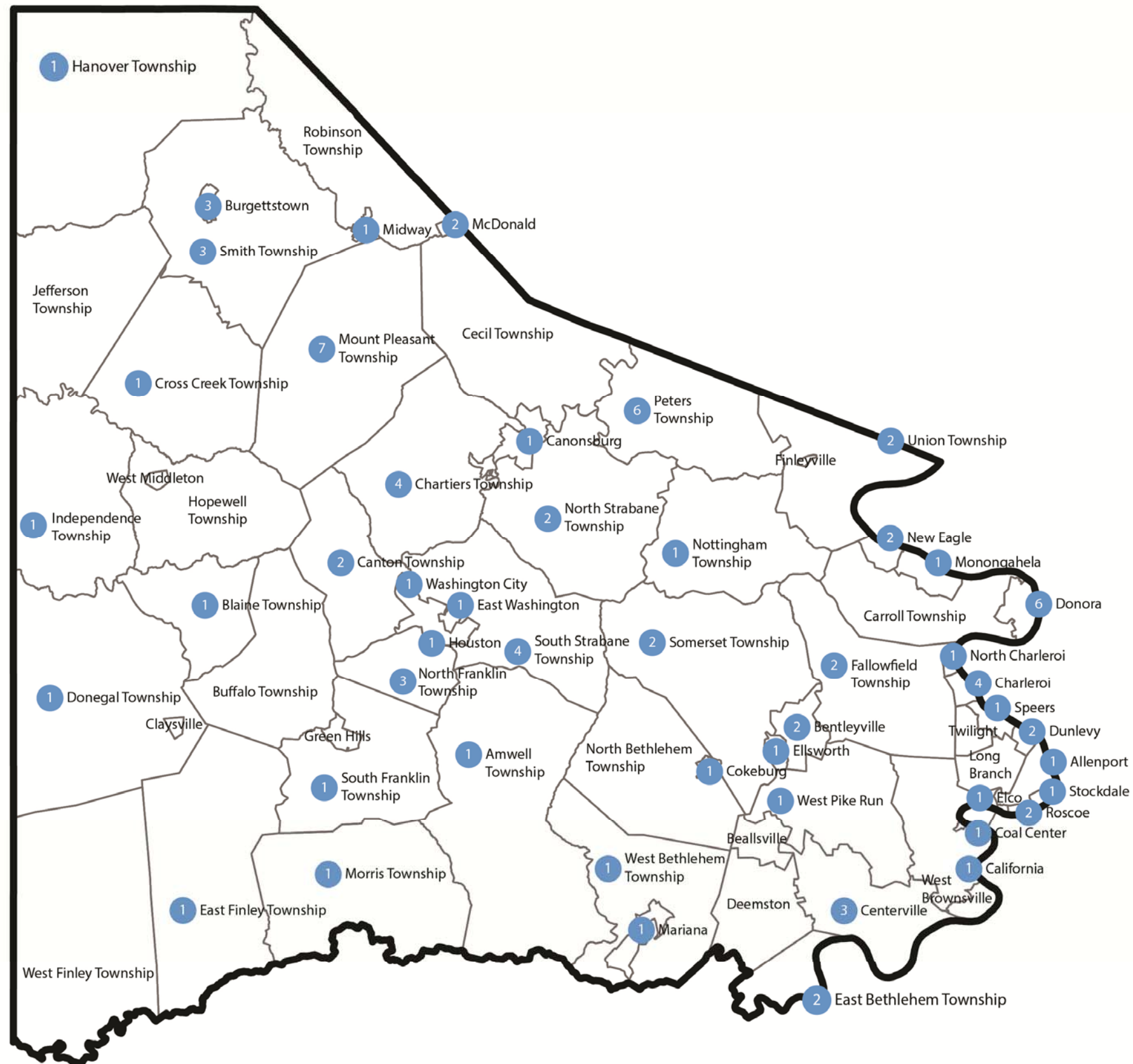
Notes:
Municipal Recreation Facilities and Other Providers inventory numbers came from the Washington County Comprehensive Plan which was updated in July 2014

4.3 MUNICIPAL INVENTORY

The following tables list the individual inventories for municipalities found within Washington County. This information was expanded upon from the previous Washington County Comprehensive Plan and was provided to Washington County Parks and Recreation staff on a voluntary basis by each municipality. The Washington County Parks and Recreation staff and the consulting team worked extensively on compiling all municipality inventory accurately for the Washington County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This table provides a detailed list of the number of parks, acres, trails, and amenities found within each municipality. This information can be used for identifying gaps and surpluses in providing outdoor recreation amenities to residents and visitors of Washington County.

| Municipality (* indicates Borough) | Parks | Acreage | Picnic Areas | Shelters/ Pavilions | Playgrounds | Basketball | Baseball | Soccer | Football | Walking Tracks | Tennis | Special Event Areas | Pools | Hiking Trails | Horse Trails |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|------------|----------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------|---------------------------|-------|------------------|-----------------|
| Allenport* | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Amwell Twp | 1 | 52.5 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Beallsville* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bentleyville* | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Blaine Twp | 1 | 47 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Buffalo Twp | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Burgettstown* | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| California* | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Canonsburg* | 1 | 50 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Canton Twp | 2 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Carroll Twp | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cecil Twp | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Centerville* | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Charleroi* | 4 | 2.2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chartiers Twp | 4 | 123 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Claysville* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Coal Center* | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cokeburg* | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cross Creek Twp | 1 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Deemston | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Donegal Twp | 1 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Donora* | 6 | 124 | 4 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dunlevy* | 2 | 8.5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| East Beth Twp | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| East Finley Twp | 1 | 36 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| East Washington* | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Elco* | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ellsworth* | 1 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fallowfield Twp | 2 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finleyville* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Green Hills* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hanover Twp | 1 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hopewell Twp | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Houston* | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

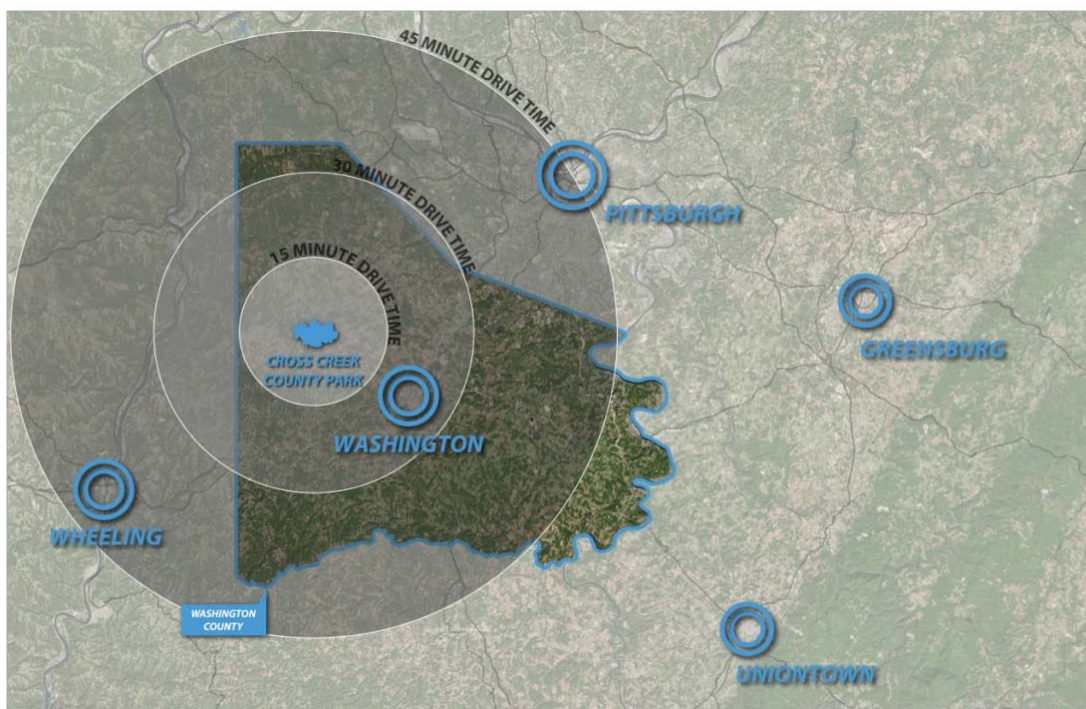
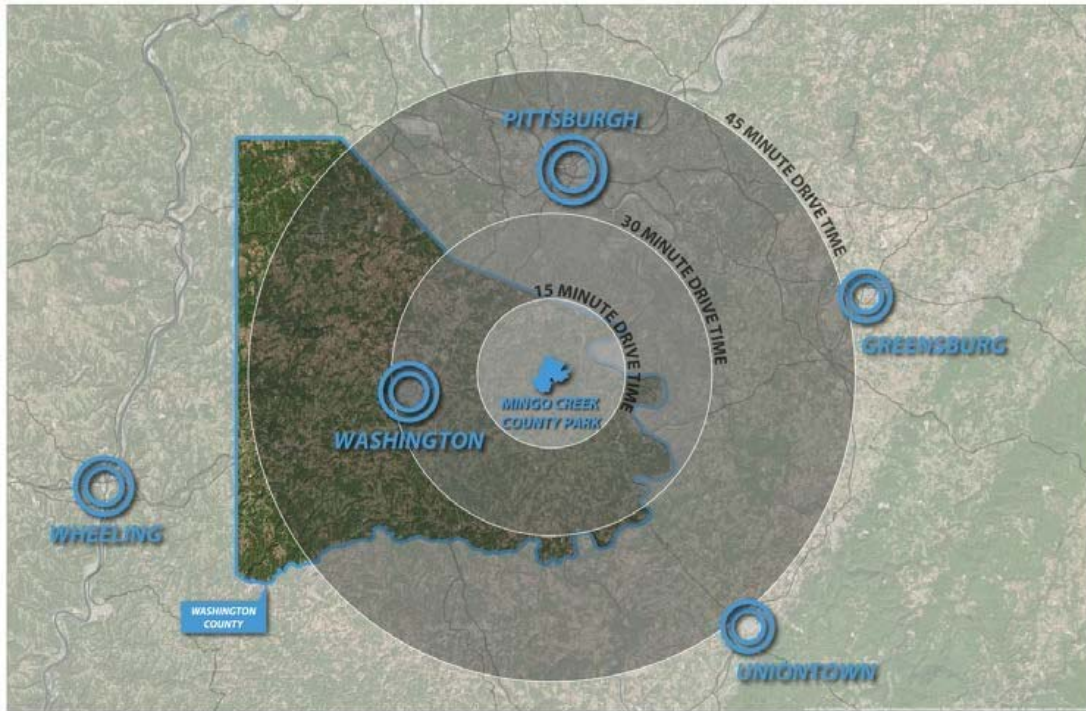
| Municipality (* indicates Borough) | Parks | Acreage | Picnic Areas | Shelters/ Pavilions | Playgrounds | Basketball | Baseball | Soccer | Football | Walking Tracks | Tennis | Special Event Areas | Pools | Hiking Trails | Horse Trails |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------------|----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Independence Twp | 1 | 36.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jefferson Twp | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Long Branch* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mcdonald* | 2 | | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mariana* | 1 | 3.3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Midway* | 1 | 4.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Monongahela | 1 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Morris Twp | 1 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mount Pleasant Twp | 7 | 13.8 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| New Eagle* | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Beth Twp | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Charleroi* | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Franklin Twp | 3 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Strabane Twp | 2 | 81.8 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Nottingham Twp. | 1 | 40 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Peters Twp | 6 | 81.7 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Robinson Twp | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Roscoe* | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Smith Twp | 3 | 1.5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Somerset Twp | 2 | 13.1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Franklin Twp | 1 | 25 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Strabane Twp | 4 | 16 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Speers* | 1 | 32 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Stockdale* | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Twilight* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Union Twp | 2 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Washington City | 1 | 253 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| West Beth Twp | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Brownsville* | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Finley Twp | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Middleton* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| West Pike Run | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Charleroi Trustee Park | 1 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 96 | 1217.3 | 55 | 96 | 92 | 54 | 81 | 17 | 4 | 21 | 36 | 20 | 2 | 10 | 1 |



The illustration above corresponds with the municipal inventory on pages 36 and 37. Each circle contains the number of parks located within the municipalities.

4.4 SERVICE AREA MAPPING ANALYSIS

The following map depicts a 15, 30, and 45 minute drive time from Cross Creek and Mingo Creek Park. This analysis shows how long Washington County residents would have to travel to get to either Cross Creek or Mingo Creek Park.



4.5 RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the planning process, PROS performed an assessment of the programs and services offered by Washington County. The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of program and service offerings and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities regarding programming for residents in parks and recreation facilities. The program assessment also assists in identifying what are considered core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide program issues, and areas for improvement and in determining future programs and services for residents.

PROS based these program findings and comments from a review of information provided by the County including program descriptions, participation statistics, financial data, website content, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and discussions with staff. It identifies key issues and presents recommendations for these issues, summarized at the end of this section.

EXISTING CORE PROGRAM AREAS

The core program areas for the County are listed below. It is important to recognize that limits on the County’s staffing, resources, and availability of space may hinder some of the staff efforts to maintain or expand core programs; therefore, it is essential that staff commit to a concerted effort towards managing and prioritizing core program areas throughout fluctuations in resources availability.

SHELTER RENTALS

There are sixteen (16) shelter rentals available at Mingo Creek, Cross Creek, and Ten Mile Park.

Goal and desired outcome: Encourage park visitation and use. Provide reasonably priced rental of shelters in an outdoor park setting for picnicking, summer day camps, group outings and hosting programs in the shelters. Most of the reservable shelters are 50-75 people in size which limits their capability to draw larger groups and thus limits their ability to generate additional revenue.

CAMPFIRE JAM NIGHTS

Campfire Jam Nights are free family oriented acoustic open mic night at parks. The program had 102 participants with a 95% customer satisfaction rating and 75% customer retention rate.

Goal and desired outcome: Attract new user groups to the parks and encourages evening park use for people of all ages via music and entertainment type events.

CANOEING AND KAYAKING

The Canoeing and Kayaking program helps introduce to the public to flat water canoeing and kayaking. The program promotes family activity through recreation, experiencing the outdoors and engagement physical activity. The program had 73 participants with a 95% customer satisfaction and 50% customer retention rate.

Goals and desired outcome: Promote the Washington County Park System through adventure related outdoor activities via canoeing and kayaking activities and programs. Encourage more park usage and return visitation through directed and self-directed programs. Develop an appreciation of the resources found within the Washington County park system through adventure related programs.

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

The program encourages Pre-schoolers to participate in outdoor nature activities at the County's parks. In 2013, the program had 228 public and 46 private Pre-schoolers participants. The program had a 95% customer satisfaction rating and a 33% retention rate.

Goal and desired outcome: Increase park visitation with families and pre-schoolers during the week. Attract more users in this program group area and encourage return visitation while developing an appreciation of the park system through Pre-school related nature education programs.

SCHOOL FIELD TRIP PROGRAMMING

The program offers outdoor education school field trip opportunities for elementary aged children. The program had 1,003 participants with an 85% customer satisfaction and 100% customer retention rate.

Goal and desired outcome: Continue to develop an appreciation and awareness of Washington County's Natural Resources through School Field Trips.

SPRING INTO THE OUTDOORS

Spring into the Outdoor's is a variety of spring-themed outdoor activities in county parks beginning Saturday afternoon through Sunday at noon in the spring of each year. These family oriented activities include flint knapping, geo-caching, orienteering, small stream exploration, morel mushroom hunting, bird watching, wild edibles, wild flowers, natural bird houses, and star gazing. The program had 150 participants with a 95% satisfaction rate.

Goal and desired outcome: Encourage park visitation and participation in outdoor recreational activities, attract new visitors, provide a group camping opportunity in Mingo Creek Park that supports these programs as well.

NEEDLE AND YARN WORKSHOPS

The program is a 30+ year program that encourages park visitation and social time in parks while enjoying completing a needle work craft. In 2013, the program had 193 seniors participate in the program with a 95% satisfaction rate and 95% customer retention rate.

Goal and desired outcome: Encourage seniors to visit the park while completing a needle work craft.

SUMMER DAY CAMPS

Summer Day Camps are provided four weeks and each week is themed for children ages 6 - 12. The program had 94 participants with a satisfaction rate of 95%

Goal and desired outcome: Provide recreational and educational activities for children ages 6 - 12 during the summer via summer day camps where appropriate in County Parks and broaden to include more parks.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL CORE PROGRAM AREAS

In addition to the core program areas listed above, the County should consider designating the following program areas as core. They reflect services currently provided and/or areas that have been

identified for future growth in strategic alignment with the County mission and anticipated demographic trends:

- Health and wellness (emphasis on outdoor fitness and wellness recreation)
- Outdoor Adventure activities
- Suburban youth outdoor enrichment programs

4.5.2 LIFECYCLE ANALYSIS

A lifecycle analysis involves reviewing every core program identified by County staff to determine the stage of growth or decline for each as a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall program portfolio managed by the County. This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data, but rather is based on staff members' knowledge of their program areas. Figure 1 shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the County's programs.

| Lifecycle Stage | Description | Actual Program Distribution | | Recommended Distribution |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Introduction | New program; modest participation | 13% | 88% total | 60% or higher total |
| Take-Off | Rapid participation growth | 0% | | |
| Growth | Moderate, but consistent population growth | 75% | | |
| Mature | Slow participation growth | 13% | 13% | 30% or lower |
| Saturation | Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition | 0% | 0% total | 0-10% total |
| Decline | Declining participation | 0% | | |

Figure 9 - Program Lifecycle Analysis

Overall, the lifecycle analysis results indicate an encouraging trend for programs across various lifecycles. A combined total of 88% of programs fall into the Introduction, Take-Off, and Growth stages. This is a very encouraging sign and indicates that the County appears to be providing ample new programs to align with trends and help meet the evolving needs of the community.

There should be an on-going process to evaluate program participation and trends to ensure that program offerings continue to meet the community's needs.

There are zero programs that are saturated or declining. Programs in the Decline stage must be closely reviewed to evaluate repositioning them or eliminating them. Staff should complete a lifecycle review on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance.

4.5.3 PROGRAM FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Finding ways to enhance revenue year-on-year and improve service pricing strategies would be ways for Washington County to continue sustaining or even growing the existing levels of service for its expanding population. To support that, the consulting team conducted a review of program cost recovery and pricing strategies based upon information provided by County staff.

COST RECOVERY STRATEGIES

Currently, cost recovery performance is not tracked at a program level. PROS recommends using core programs areas as a basis for categorization. Cost recovery targets should be identified for each program area, at least, and for specific programs or events if necessary. The previously identified core programs would serve as an effective breakdown for tracking cost recovery metrics.

Targets should reflect the degree to which the program area provides a public versus private good. Programs providing public benefits should be subsidized more by the County; programs providing private benefits should seek to recover costs and/or generate revenue for other services. Generally, non-core programs, which are less critical to the organizational mission, should aim to yield a higher cost recovery rate to sustain them, leaving the limited tax-based appropriations to fund core programs.

To assist plan and implement cost recovery policies, PROS has developed the following definitions presented in Figure 2 to help classify specific programs within program areas.

| Category | Description | Cost Recovery | Subsidy |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the organizational mission Serves a majority of the community "We <i>must</i> offer this program." | None to moderate | High to complete |
| Merit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to the community Serves large portions of the community "We <i>should</i> offer this program." | Moderate | Moderate |
| Private | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced community offerings Serves niche groups "It would be <i>nice</i> to offer this program." | High to complete | Little to none |

Figure 10 - Cost Recovery and Subsidy Program Categories

Programs falling into the Important or Value-Added classifications generally represent programs that receive lower priority for tax 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 to or in excess of 100%.

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

The following table represents where Washington County's staffs portray their program.

| <i>Essential</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Value-Added</i> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Reptile & Amphibians Day Cam | Needle & Yarn Workshops | Reptiles & Amphibians Day Camp |
| Wilderness Survival Camp | Spring into the Outdoors Weekend | Wilderness Survival Camp |
| Eco-Explorers Camp | Campfire Jam Nights | Eco Explorers Camp |
| Pioneer Living Camp | Canoeing & Kayaking | Pioneer Living Camp |
| Shelter Rentals | | School Trip Field Programming |
| Canoeing & Kayaking | | Canoeing & Kayaking |
| | | Pre-School Programming |

Figure 11 - Washington County Program Classification

PRICING STRATEGIES

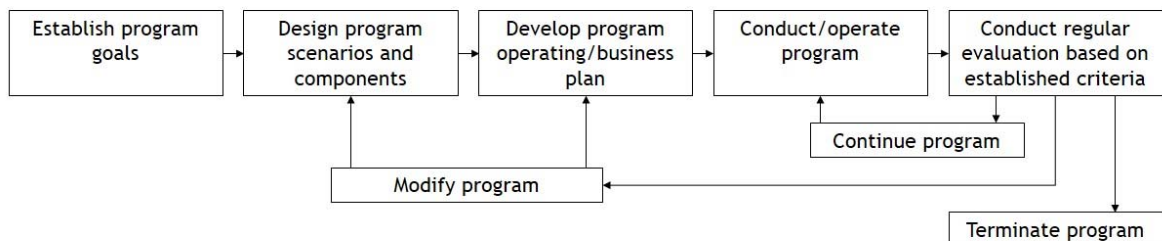
The pricing of programs and services should be established based on the cost of services, overlaid onto programs areas or specific events, and strategically adjusted according to market factors and/or policy goals. Currently, Washington County uses very few pricing strategies, outside of a general user fee to cover materials, for each core program area.

Rentals are the only program offering pricing strategies based on residency and weekday/weekend rates. The County offers two free programs (Campfire Jam Nights and Canoeing & Kayaking) and the rest of the programs charge a small fee to cover material cost.

FOUNDATIONAL APPROACHES FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

PROS recommends the following six methods to maintain a culture of quality management in program delivery for Washington County. These overall approaches reflect some of the observations presented previously and also include additional considerations based upon best practices and the organizational goals of the County.

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



- **Instructor/Contractor Tool Kit:** Tool Kits need to be created by the staff that outline information about the County, including mission, vision, values, goals, organizational structure, roster of users, program guides, program standards, evaluation forms, registration forms, important phone numbers, name tags, thank you cards, and program learning objectives.
- **On-going Connections with Part-time and Seasonal Staff:** There should be on-going processes and events to connect part-time and seasonal programming staff, as well as some contractors, with full-time Washington County personnel through meetings, email, newsletters, staff recognition, and random visits by management. This also assists with determining and managing job satisfaction of these employees.
- **Identification of Customer Requirements:** Staff identify customer requirements for core program areas. This is important to emphasize with staff that directly interface with customers. Requirements relate to those service attributes that are most important to a customer, and requirements should be developed with customer input. Each core program area should include a listing of approximately five key customer requirements. For example, in canoeing and kayaking program, key requirements could include: overall safety of the program, instructional quality, convenience and ease of registration, cost of the program, and skill development.
- **Scan of Best Practices:** Staff identify key competitors or similar providers, both locally and regionally, of core program areas. Every one or two years, staff should develop a matrix of information to compare services in areas that have the greatest importance to customers. Benchmarking other nationally renowned agencies also can provide a process to continuously improve programming.

4.5.4 VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Today's economic climate and political realities require most public park and recreation departments to seek productive and meaningful partnerships with both community organizations and individuals to deliver quality and seamless services to their residents. These relationships should be mutually beneficial to each party to better meet overall community needs and expand the positive impact of the agency's mission.

PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Washington County currently has a limited amount of volunteers to help with their core programs. PROS encourages the County to foster a system-wide approach to volunteer recruitment and management. Ensuring streamlined procedures and standardized guidelines for volunteer management are critical to making volunteers an effective complement to paid personnel and a valuable asset in reducing operational costs. When managed with respect and used strategically, volunteers can also serve as the primary advocates for the Department and its offerings.

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

Other best practices that the Department should be aware of in managing volunteers includes:

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

PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Washington County's current partner is the Fish and Boat Commission that work with the Canoeing and Kayaking program. Partnerships serve as a valuable mechanism for developing and facilitating other partnerships in the area with an overarching goal of supporting the construction, reconstruction, and improvement of public parks.

Washington County should pursue new partnerships that could include public entities such as cities within the County, schools, colleges, state or federal agencies; nonprofit organizations; as well as with private, for-profit organizations. There are recommended standard policies and practices that will apply to any partnership, and those that are unique to relationships with private, for-profit entities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL PARTNERSHIPS

All partnerships developed and maintained by Washington County should adhere to common policy requirements. These include:

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

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The recommended policies and practices for public/private partnerships that may include businesses, private groups, private associations, or individuals who desire to make a profit from use of Washington County facilities or programs are detailed below. These can also apply to partnerships where a private party wishes to develop a facility on park property, to provide a service on publically-owned property, or who has a contract with the agency to provide a task or service on the County's behalf at public facilities. These unique partnership principles are as follows:

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

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

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

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

2. **Vendor Partners:** Service providers and/or contractors that can gain brand association and notoriety as a preferred vendor or supporter of Washington County in exchange for reduced rates, services, or some other agreed upon benefit.
3. **Service Partners:** Nonprofit organizations and/or friends groups that support the efforts of the County to provide programs and events, and/or serve specific constituents in the community collaboratively.
4. **Co-branding Partners:** Private, for-profit organizations that can gain brand association and notoriety as a supporter of Washington County in exchange for sponsorship or co-branded programs, events, marketing and promotional campaigns, and/or advertising opportunities.
5. **Resource Development Partner:** A private, nonprofit organization with the primary purpose to leverage private sector resources, grants, other public funding opportunities, and resources from individuals and groups within the community to support the goals and objectives of the County on mutually agreed strategic initiatives.

4.5.5 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Washington County's staff is engaged in marketing and promotion to varying degrees, including facilitating the production of a Program Guide (print and online), newsletters, website, flyers and brochures, and public service announcements. Since most of the marketing is through printed material, it would be beneficial to Washington County Parks and Recreation to promote program information through its own (separate from the overall County-wide) Web 2.0 channels such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Smart Phone Apps etc.

To further enhance these efforts, it should be a priority for the County to enhance communication and marketing activities to increase public awareness of County's programs and services among all residents of the County, particularly non-users.

Effective communication strategies require striking an appropriate balance between the content of messaging with the volume of the messaging while utilizing the "right" methods of delivery. The County has multiple subjects and areas of focus that should be addressed in communications and will need to rely upon multiple types of media to deliver those messages.

Other recommendations for marketing and promotion include:

- Use community input from survey results, focus group meetings, program assessments, on-site surveys, etc. to inform marketing efforts
- Continually enhance highly visible communication outlets, such as the website and registration system
- Continue to leverage the project website www.wacountyparksplan.com as a resource to garner community input as well as to share implementation updates and progress with the users
- Build volunteerism in the marketing and communication efforts, and recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows
- Establish performance measures for marketing efforts and review them regularly
- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion



Photo: Picnic area in Mingo Creek Park



Photo: Recently constructed playground in Cross Creek Park

4.5.6 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAM PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

- Consider expanding program offerings to align with emerging demographic and recreational trends while strengthening the organizational mission. This includes providing programs that engage minorities and seniors, and programs that address health and wellness.
- Continue to provide a strong portfolio of programs that cater to fostering an appreciation of nature, history, and culture. While there are comparable providers for some programs, the holistic, mission-driven, quality programs provided by the County stands out as an asset to the community.
- Regularly re-evaluate core program areas, and consider adding the following as core program areas:
 - Health and wellness (emphasis on outdoor fitness recreation)
 - Senior recreation, wellness, and enrichment
 - Volunteerism
 - Adventure activities
 - Youth enrichment

PROGRAM LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

- Strive to keep at least 60% of all programs in the Introductory, Take-Off, or Growth lifecycle stages in order to align with trends and help meet the evolving needs of the community.
- Strive to keep less than 30% of programs in the Mature to Saturated stage to provide stability to the overall program portfolio.
- Programs falling into the Decline stage should be reprogrammed or retired to create new programs for the Introductory stage.

COST RECOVERY, PRICING, AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Cost recovery targets should be identified for each program area, at the least, and for specific programs or events at the most. Currently, individual programs have no clear target.
- Classify programs as core essential, important, and value-added and apply true cost of service pricing to each program area before applying additional cost recovery goals.
- Use the spectrum of public-to-private benefit to inform cost recovery targets and pricing strategies.
- Full cost of accounting that accurately calculates direct and indirect costs should be used to develop prices and cost recovery goals. Washington County staff should be trained on this process.
- Programs, and their associated prices, provided by competitors and other providers should be benchmarked annually to monitor changes they are making and how they compare with the County's programs.
- Very brief business plans should be developed for each program area, particularly the core program areas. They will help monitor the success of achieving outcomes, help control cost recovery, guide operational adjustments, and serve as budget development tools.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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

- Begin documenting the program development process to formalize and coordinate program lifecycles in a strategic way.
- Develop an instructor/contractor tool kit or resource package with critical information and information on strategic frameworks.
- Create on-going connections with part-time and seasonal staff to integrate them and to help manage satisfaction and performance.
- Conduct an environmental scan of best practices every few years to inspire innovation and help make corrections to program operations.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

- Develop a Department specific volunteer management program that can help supplement staff efforts and allow for operational cost savings as well as greater advocacy
- Add steps to formally document resignation or termination of volunteers. Also, include ways to monitor and track reasons for resignation/termination.

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Formalize partnership philosophy supported by a policy framework.
- Require all partnerships to have a working agreement with measureable outcomes evaluated on a regular basis.
- Require all partnerships to track costs to demonstrate the shared level of equity and investment.
- Maintain a culture of collaborative planning for all partnerships, focusing on regular communications and annual reporting.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

- Provide specific guidance as to how the County's identity and brand should be consistently portrayed across the multiple methods and to diverse audiences.
- Use community input to inform marketing efforts.
- Build volunteerism in the marketing and communication efforts, and recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows.
- Establish performance measures for marketing efforts (such as customer retention rates and marketing return on investment) and review them regularly.
- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion.

4.6 PRIORITY RANKINGS

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

This rankings model evaluated both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes the online Community Survey, which asked residents of Washington County to list unmet needs and rank their importance. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in community input and demographics and trends.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for parks and recreation facilities/amenities and recreation programs. For instance, a weighted value of 3 for the Unmet Desires means that out of a total of 100%, unmet needs make up 30% of the total score. Similarly, importance-ranking also makes up 30%, while Consultant Evaluation makes up 40% of the total score, thus totaling 100%.

This scoring system considers the following:

- Online Community Survey
 - Unmet needs for facilities and recreation programs - This is used as a factor from the total number of households mentioning whether they have a need for a facility/program and the extent to which their need for facilities and recreation programs has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify this for 19 different facilities/amenities and 20 recreation programs.
 - Importance ranking for facilities and recreation programs - This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility or program by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important facilities and recreation programs.
- Consultant Evaluation
 - Factor derived from the consultant’s evaluation of program and facility priority based on survey results, demographics, trends and overall community input.

Note: It is important to note that people while people may rank a Park / Facility or Program as very important to them, if their need is being fulfilled by Washington County or another service provider, then it may not rank as high on the Needs Category despite being high on the Importance Category.

The weighted scores were as follows:

- 60% from the online community survey results.
- 40% from consultant evaluation using demographic and trends data, community focus groups and public meetings and levels of service.

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

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

As seen below, walking, biking trails and greenways, small family picnic areas and shelters (less than 50 people), playground equipment, environmental education areas, and camping sites are the top five highest facility / amenity priorities in Washington County.

| Facility/Amenity Needs Assessment | Overall Ranking |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Walking, biking trails and greenways | 1 |
| Small family picnic areas and shelters (less than 50 ppl) | 2 |
| Playground equipment | 3 |
| Environmental education areas | 4 |
| Camping sites | 5 |
| Equestrian trails | 6 |
| Preservation areas | 7 |
| Nature Center | 8 |
| Off-leash dog parks | 9 |
| Amphitheater | 10 |
| Fishing piers | 11 |
| Boating docks | 12 |
| Large group picnic areas and shelters (50+ ppl) | 13 |
| Community Gardens | 14 |
| Hunting zones | 15 |
| Large indoor social event & meeting room | 16 |
| Outdoor basketball courts | 17 |
| Outdoor tennis courts | 18 |
| Disc golf course | 19 |

As seen below, outdoor skills / adventure programs, nature programs, adult fitness and wellness programs, youth summer camp programs, and special events are the top five highest program priorities in Washington County.

| Program Needs Assessment | Overall Ranking |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Outdoor skills / adventure programs | 1 |
| Nature programs | 2 |
| Adult fitness and wellness programs | 3 |
| Youth summer camp programs | 4 |
| Special Events | 5 |
| Environmental education program | 6 |
| Adult leisure enrichment classes | 7 |
| Rentals | 8 |
| Adult sports programs | 9 |
| Youth sports programs | 10 |
| Youth fitness and wellness programs | 11 |
| Workshops | 12 |
| Senior health & fitness programs | 13 |
| 90 Minute Family Oriented Programs | 14 |
| Pre-school Programming | 15 |
| Youth Life skill and enrichment programs | 16 |
| Home School Outdoor Classroom | 17 |
| Senior leisure enrichment classes | 18 |
| Before and after school programs | 19 |
| School Field Trip Programming | 20 |

CHAPTER FIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

5.1 ACTION ITEMS

The following section outlines short term (0-3 years), midterm (4-5 years), and ongoing action items for four key areas of Washington County Parks and Recreation. The recommendations are meant to serve as a guide and should be flexible to adapt to changing trends and needs over time. This will ensure that the master plan truly serves as a living document, which is dynamic and proactively meeting community needs and vision over time.

The key areas for recommendations include:

- Parkland
- Programming
- Operations and marketing
- Financing

5.2 ONGOING ACTION ITEMS

5.2.1 PARKLAND – MINGO CREEK PARK AND CROSS CREEK PARK

- Trail maintenance is an ongoing chore that is required in order to provide a safe experience for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders. Also, special care should be taken to ensure trails do not become erosive and cause environmental issues such as slips and landslides.
- As new amenities are added, park signage should be kept up to date. To ensure continuity and a sense of place, a catalog or family of signage should be developed and carried uniformly throughout the park.
- Although park shelters and structures should be designed to be as low maintenance and durable as possible, regular maintenance and upgrades should be observed to insure the longevity of the facilities.

5.2.2 PROGRAMMING

- Provide comprehensive, quality recreation and educational programming aimed at satisfying the needs of varying age levels, physical abilities, and special interests in Washington County's core services
- Promote public involvement and actively seek input in the planning, operation, and participation of the programs provided by the Department.
- Promote community health and wellness through programming that addresses physical, mental, environmental, economical, and social wellbeing.
- Regularly re-evaluate core program areas, and consider adding the following as core program areas:
 - Health and wellness (emphasis on outdoor fitness recreation)
 - Senior recreation, wellness, and enrichment
 - Volunteerism
 - Adventure activities
 - Youth enrichment

5.2.3 OPERATIONS AND MARKETING

- Conduct an annual review process so that staff and leadership can review policies, operations, issues, and plans for the future.
- Ensure the volunteers stay fully informed about the strategic direction of the County’s parks overall.
- Invest in adequate training for staff at all levels: areas include customer service training, marketing and communications, innovative programming etc.

5.2.4 FINANCING

- Continue to benchmark fees and charges against other providers
- Develop differential pricing strategies for programs and rentals that allow staff to charge based on levels of benefit and exclusivity that a user receives
- Seek ways to communicate to users the true cost of offering program and services to ensure greater buy-in for pricing decisions
- Develop policies and practices to track and measure return on investment for spending on various parks, programs and events

5.3 SHORT TERM ACTION ITEMS

5.3.1 PARKLAND – MINGO CREEK PARK

- Because it requires minimal changes to the site and ease of construction, disc golf is a feature that can be developed quickly. Additionally, the disc golf course will attract new users to the park.
- The majority of the leash-free dog park is already in existence. Completing the dog park will help draw in more visitors to Mingo Creek Park.
- Because the development of the event lawn is flexible and primarily based on event programming, the space can begin being utilized in its current state. While more permanent facilities, such as restrooms, concessions, and shelters, can be added in time, temporary structures and outside vendors could be utilized during events in the short term.
- Many of the current shelters and restroom facilities throughout Mingo Creek Park are dated or in need of upgrades. To see an immediate park-wide rejuvenation, it should be a short term goal to begin replacing these structures.

5.3.2 PARKLAND – CROSS CREEK PARK

- Currently, formal access to most of Cross Creek Park is limited due to the lack of trails and access points. With the implementation of a lakeside trail that circumnavigates Cross Creek Lake, park visitors will gain access to more regions within the park. This project should be completed in the short term to allow access for future development throughout the park.
- Implementation of the boardwalk structure will increase accessibility to the lake for park visitors of varying ages and mobility. As accessibility is an important factor in any public space, the boardwalk should be completed as a short term project and tied into the proposed lakeside trail.

- Implementation of the lawn terrace will add a passive attraction for park visitors. Development of the lawn terrace will not be a major undertaking and it will be highly visible along the main entrance drive to the park. For this reason, it should be a short term, catalytic project.

5.3.3 PROGRAMMING

- Strive to keep at least 60% of all recreation programs in the Introductory, Takeoff, or Growth lifecycle stages in order to align with trends and help meet the evolving needs of the community.
- Limit programs in the Decline Stage to less than 10% of all programs
- Look for additional partners to help with cost and manage programs to meet the growing needs of the County
- Create more special events and educational programs leveraging the outdoor assets and natural resources that exist in Washington County

5.3.4 OPERATIONS AND MARKETING

- Evaluate staffing levels to ensure they are adequate to meet the growing program and facility offerings
- Create additional marketing efforts to build awareness of the services and facilities provided across Washington County
- Maximize use of Web 2.0 technologies including YouTube, Vimeo, Crowdsourcing, current and emerging social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest etc.) to maximize outreach to the users
- Continue to leverage the project website www.wacountyparksplan.com as a resource to garner community input as well as to share implementation updates and progress with the users
- Create a social media policy that dictates what can and cannot be considered appropriate for use by the Department and its staff on all social media networks

5.3.5 FINANCING

- Develop a pricing plan to ensure fees and charges are at a fair market value without pricing any users out
- Establish a goal to identify at least one new partner or sponsor annually to help with aspects of parks operations or programs and events
- Evaluate additional revenue opportunities through partnerships, sponsorships and value in kind support as well as crowd-funding through tools like www.kickstarter.org or www.citizninvestor.com

5.4 MIDTERM ACTION ITEMS

5.4.1 PARKLAND – MINGO CREEK PARK

- The nature adventure playground will be a popular item that will attract park visitors with children. This, coupled with the relative low cost of development, prioritizes it.
- To provide streamside access to users of all ages and levels of mobility, streamside boardwalks should be considered a midterm goal. Due to permitting and development costs, planning for this amenity should begin in the short term.
- In an effort to provide park amenities (shelters, restrooms, etc.) that are accessible to horseback riders without having to encroach on trails and areas of the park not designated for horseback riding, the development of equestrian trailheads should be a priority. Establishment of the trailheads could be broken down into smaller phases to spread out development costs.

5.4.2 PARKLAND – CROSS CREEK PARK

- After implementation of the lakeside trail and the Thompson Hill access road, the ridges on the south side of Cross Creek Park will become more accessible. Many of the upland areas on the south side of the park offer flat open land that is ideal for picnic areas and shelters along with an outstanding view of the lake below.
- In order to provide opportunity for park and community events, one of the vast, open meadows within Cross Creek Park should be leveraged and transformed into a revenue generating event lawn.
- As the trail network in Cross Creek Park expands over time and equestrian trails become a feature within the park, establishment of equestrian trailheads will be necessary. This will encourage horseback riders to stay within areas that are permitted for equestrian use by providing necessary park amenities.

5.4.3 PROGRAMMING

- Continue to find new earned income opportunities to support programs
- Develop a trends report using information from outdoor recreation trends, camping studies and Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association
- Modify core program areas to align with future park and facility offerings as well as based on trend data obtained from the above mentioned sources

5.4.4 OPERATIONS AND MARKETING

- Gradually align the Department's operations with the National Recreation and Park Association's 3 Pillars: Conservation, Health and Wellness and Social Equity
- Develop a maintenance management plan for the park system to help meet visitor and elected officials expectations for quality parks, trails and facilities
- Update the Master Plan after five years to ensure relevance and alignment with existing conditions and population in Washington County

5.4.5 FINANCING

- Evaluate creating a Foundation that can help raise money to preserve and protect the parks and natural resources in Washington County
- Identify an appropriate level of cost recovery that the Department can work towards through a combination of grants, earned income, advertising, sponsorships and donations.

5.5 LONG TERM ACTION ITEMS

5.5.1 PARKLAND – MINGO CREEK PARK

- The multi-use facility is meant to provide a flexible indoor space for visitor information, park sponsored programs and events, and an office for park staff. As a component of the larger “Park Core” recommendation in the master plan, the multi-use facility should be considered a long term goal that will require community and stakeholder buy in over time.
- In parallel to the multi-use facility, the amphitheater is an essential component in developing the “Park Core” within Mingo Creek Park. Once completed, the amphitheater will be capable of hosting large groups during outdoor park programs and events. The amphitheater should be a long term goal with planning that begins in the short term.
- Though already partially existing, the organized group camping area will need further development in order to serve moderate to large sized groups. Due to the nature of this amenity, expansion is capable of occurring over time as demand increases.

5.5.2 PARKLAND – CROSS CREEK PARK

- Implementation of the Outdoor Learning Center will provide a base for park sponsored educational programs. A long term goal is suggested for this facility with the reasoning that as park sponsored educational programs grow within Cross Creek Park, the apparent needs and requirements for the facility will be revealed over time.
- An additional fishing pier will increase accessibility to the lake. However, due to the fact that Cross Creek Park currently offers a fishing pier in the location of the proposed lakeside boardwalk, the proposed fishing pier can be considered a long term goal.
- Unlike Mingo Creek Park, Cross Creek does not currently provide opportunity for organized groups, such as scout troops, to utilize the park for overnight camping events. As the need grows over time and interest from local groups increase, implementing an organized group campground should be considered.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

The Parks and Recreation Department has demonstrated its commitment to the community and the future of Washington County by investing in the Master Plan process. The community is changing and it will require the Department and staff to ensure they continue to be responsive to their users' needs. Along with that, as the population grows, the need to balance active levels of service offerings along with preserving open space is going to be crucial.

Overall, the Department would do well to continue aligning itself with the National Recreation and Park Association's Three Pillars - Health and Wellness, Conservation and Social Equity. These would be the building blocks for future park and program improvements at Mingo Park or Cross Creek Park as well as additions to other parts of the system.

The staff is committed to serving the community and the County leadership's willingness to invest in the quality of life and recreation offerings of their citizens is a great indicator for a bright and prosperous future for Washington County and its residents.

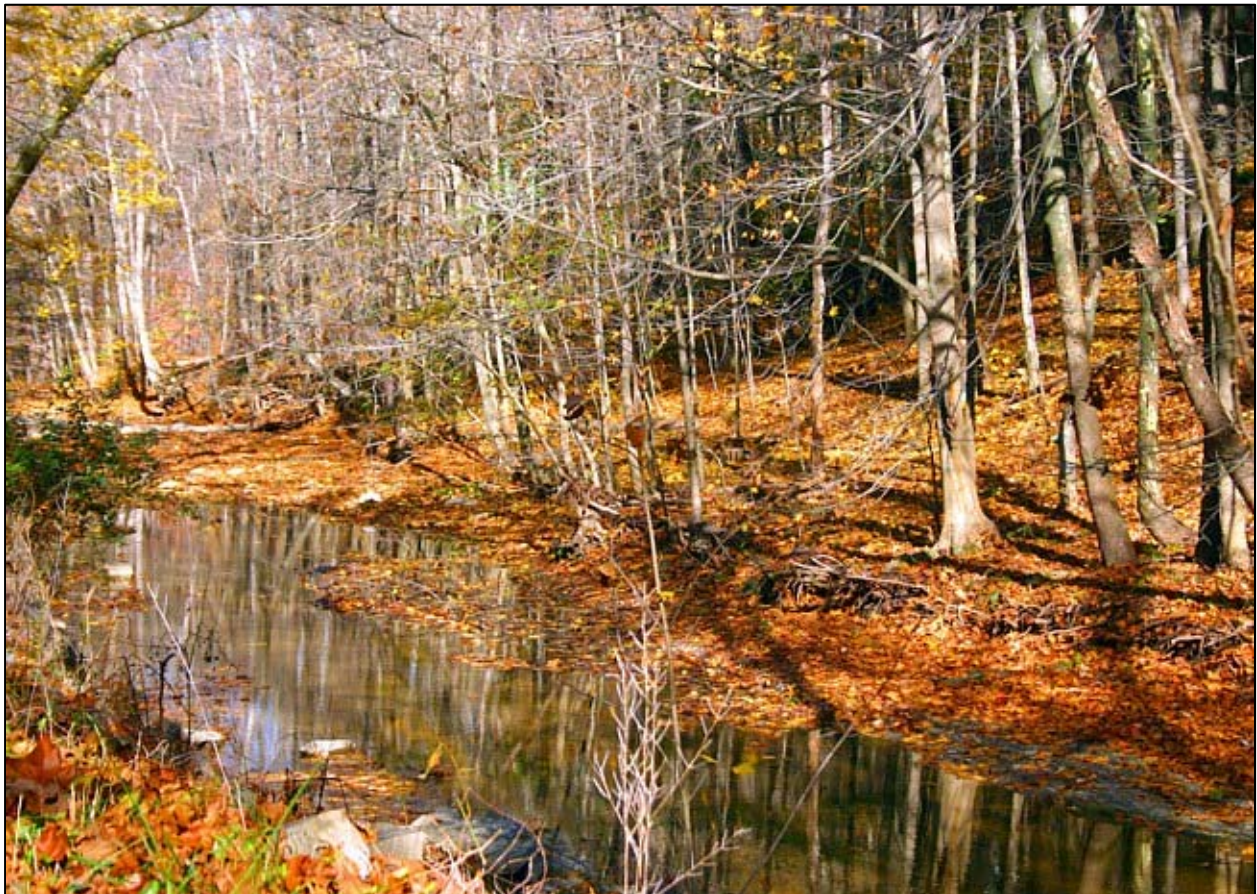


Photo: Mingo Creek