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TOWN OF ELON

Recreation + Parks Comprehensive Master Plan
ADOPTED | June 11, 2019



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executive summary



CHAPTER 1 > EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Elon strives to serve residents' growing and changing recreational needs. This Comprehensive Plan will guide that growth during the next 10 years. The community's recreational needs drive this plan's recommendations while identifying the operationa and financial resources needed to implement that vision. The Plan's recommendations address parkland, operations and maintenance and finances.

This executive summary introduces the planning process and summarizes the results of the analysis and includes the plan's goals for the next 10 years.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive planning provides a structure for evaluating needs and setting priorities. The planning process captures the status of the Department at a moment in time, creates vision for the future, and identifies steps on the path to achieving that vision. The plan will guide the Department's decisions and priorities for the next 10 years.

The planning process includes four main steps:

1. Inventory and Analysis- The project team and Town staff inventory recreation and parks services. Information is analyzed and organized to identify recreation trends, gaps in what is provided, and unique characteristics.
2. Visioning - With a clear understanding of community needs, operations, and community context, Town staff creates a vision for the future and defines the mission to achieve it.
3. Recommendations - The Town and project team have determined a current status and defined a vision for the future. This step forges the path to achieving the vision for the next 10 years.
4. The project team creates a detailed to-do list for the next 10 years. Information from the Inventory and Analysis becomes performance measures that will guide the next planning process.

The planning process has the following benefits:

- > Provides data to inform and validate decisions
- > Framework for the Department's growth in the next 10 years
- > Identifies community needs and priorities
- > Engages community, staff, stakeholders and decision makers to create a shared vision
- > Identifies and resolves gaps and deficiencies in parks and recreation services
- > Identifies level of service goals and metrics
- > Prioritizes goals for next 10 years
- > Creates opportunities to qualify or be more competitive for certain State and Federal grant sources.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The plan sought community input throughout the planning process to identify goals and priorities. The community’s demographics for a

basis for characterizing the Town and its growth, benchmarking provides a context for how other Departments perform.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town’s population is growing at a rate slightly faster than North Carolina’s growth rate. The population is aging which indicates a need for expanding parks and recreation services for seniors. Additionally, the Town is interested

in attracting and retaining younger adults and families with young children, which has implications for the types of park programming and amenities to provide.

	2019 Population	2023 Population	2029 Population
Population	10,783	12,350	14,212
Households	2,997	3,084	3,196

Table 2 - Population and Household Estimates

LEVEL OF SERVICE

The level of service standard is a metric used to determine deficits or surpluses of parkland and trails in a park system based on the population of the jurisdiction. The level of service provides a standard of comparison to ensure that the Town continues providing parks and recreation services to residents at a certain standard as the population grows.

The level of service standard for parkland is below the national median. However, the parks the town does provide are high-quality and heavily programmed with many amenities and activities.

There is no national median for trail mileage, but a best practice standard is 1.5 miles per 1,000 residents. Most communities are below this standard.

MEASUREMENT	CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE	RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE
Parkland acres per 1,000 residents	2.27	8
Trail miles per 1,000 residents	0.7	1

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement included the elements listed to the right. A statistically valid survey identified community needs of a statistically representative sample of Elon Residents.

All sources of community input include:

- › Three open houses
- › Two staff meetings
- › Steering Committee meeting
- › Stakeholder interviews
- › Statistically valid survey

Priority Investment Rating

High priority facilities

- › Greenway trail system
- › Natural trails
- › Indoor fitness and exercise facilities
- › Senior Center
- › Community gardens

High priority youth programs

- › Youth and teen sports programs
- › Special events and family festivals
- › Outdoor music and concerts
- › Outdoor adventure programs
- › Art, dance and performing arts
- › Aquatic programs

High Priority adult programs

- › Adult fitness and wellness programs
- › Outdoor music and concerts
- › Special events and family festivals
- › Senior citizen programs



PARKLAND

Provide an inclusive and well-connected park system while ensuring a high level of customer service at each location.

The park system includes:

27.93 acres of
developed parkland

7 reservable spaces including
community room, shelters,
amphitheater and gardens.

0.7 miles of trails

The following are goals to achieve the Parkland vision:

- › Intentionally expand parkland acreage.
- › Build great parks for the Elon community.
- › Leverage parks and greenways as a platform to meet larger community goals.
- › Develop a connected network of greenways and trails.
- › Pursue healthy partnerships to provide indoor recreation and aquatic facilities and programming for town residents.
- › Incorporate recreation and parks opportunities into the evolving downtown streetscape.



OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

Develop a sustainable recreation and parks system with functions that meet the community's needs now and in the future.

Primary operations and maintenance themes include

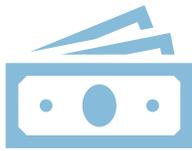
Management: Elon's continued investment in recreation and parks services have resulted in benefits the whole community enjoys. This investment has increased maintenance and management responsibilities for parks, programs, events, facilities and amenities.

Staffing: The positive response to the town's recreation and parks investments have stretched current staffing levels. The Town relies on the Public Works Department to maintain assets within the park system. Communication between Recreation and Parks and Public Works is strong and contributes to the successful delivery of services.

Procedures: Recreation and parks follow all applicable Town policies and standard operating procedures. Approved plans, policies and procedures are the foundational direction for staff in providing services. Staff have identified the need for recreation and parks specific policies to provide direction to new and increased requests from the public.

The following are goals to achieve the Operations and Maintenance vision

- › Create a formal recreation and parks department structure to meet existing and future demand.
- › Develop policies and operating procedures specific to recreation and parks services.
- › Continue to invest and enhance the technology and marketing of the Town's recreation and parks services



FINANCE

Enact financial best practices to ensure a sustainable recreation and parks system that thrives for current and future residents.

\$330,523 total
expenditures budgeted for FY 17-18

\$343,300 total
capital budget requests
from 2018 through 2022

The following are goals to achieve the Finance vision

- › Develop a consistent and diversified approach to financing the system.
- › Incorporate different funding strategies to finance the system.
- › Develop a consistent per-capita and per-acre funding strategy.

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2 introduction



CHAPTER 2 > INTRODUCTION

The Town of Elon began as a transportation hub and blossomed into a thriving community home to a premier university. At just under four square miles within the town limits, Elon boasts two well-developed parks – Beth Schmidt Parks and Lawrence Slade Park. With a vigorous, growing population exceeding 10,000 citizens, the Town is facing challenges familiar to many of North Carolina’s small but growing towns, such as transportation, connectivity challenges, and parkland inaccessible by transportation modes other than by vehicle. This plan will define the role that parkland, trails, open space and recreational programming have in the continued growth of this already flourishing town.

The Town’s planning and zoning authority extends across an 11.5 square mile jurisdiction, which includes the current town limits and the greater extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The Town’s recently completed comprehensive land use plan, Envision Elon 2040, will guide future development in accordance with anticipated population growth. As referenced in the comprehensive plan, the organization, improvement, and implementation of recreational recommendations are crucial.

The Town has made great progress with existing park offerings but has not yet established a formal parks and recreation department. As a small community with limited parkland, a department with dedicated parks and recreation staff has not been necessary to date and the Town has contributed resources to pursuing parks and recreation activities even without the existence of a formal department. However, if the Town intends to continue expanding parkland and recreation facilities, or offer recreation programming, the Town should consider developing a dedicated department. This plan intends to evaluate the potential need for a parks and recreation department with dedicated staff and resources. Informed by community engagement, inventory and assessment of existing parks, and consideration of national standards and best practices, this plan will make recommendations for town-wide recreation needs and determine what resources will be required to implement the recommendations of this plan.

This Comprehensive Plan will guide improvements to parkland, facilities, programming, and operations across a 10-year planning horizon. The plan acts as a resource for Town officials and the public alike to understand current park and facility offerings and to learn what improvements are planned. The Action and Implementation Plan are intended to provide decision-makers with a framework to guide, validate and prioritize project implementation.

The Branches of the Plan

The 2019 Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan will provide a framework to achieve the Department’s vision for a 10-year planning horizon. Key focus areas of the plan include:

Parkland
Operations + Maintenance
Finances

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The comprehensive planning process is one of transparency, community engagement, and data driven recommendations considered with an analytical and Level of Service (LOS) approach. From the initial inventory and analysis through to the implementation plan, the project team engaged the community, stakeholders and Town staff, while researching recreation trends and the Town's current and expected future demographics. The project team used

the existing conditions to evaluate the level of service and operational standards of the Town's parks and facilities. Finally, the project team, in conjunction with Town staff, developed and prioritized recommendations and an action plan to improve the recreational offerings provided for a 10-year planning horizon.

This 2019 Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan is comprised of several components:

DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

The project team completed a demographic and trends analysis using current ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.). National and local recreation trends were evaluated and cross-referenced with both the Town's demographics,

local Market Potential Index (MPI) data and national publications to draw conclusions about current and future recreation trends and participation levels. Such data serves as the basis for parkland and facility recommendations.



Image: Playground, Lawrence Slade Park

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

The project team reviewed the history of the Town's recreation and parks activities to understand past planning efforts and the program's evolution. Comprehensive plans and recent park renovations were reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the plans that guide the growth and development of the Town. To further understand the allocation and planning of existing and potential park space, the Land Development Ordinance was reviewed to understand the Town's policies regarding open space and how it reflects the growth of recreation and parks. It is the goal of this comprehensive plan that the recommendations presented herein will integrate seamlessly with all Town plans.

The project team conducted an inventory, evaluation and assessment of public parks, facilities, and operations. The location of each town-owned and operated park was mapped using GIS. The project team visited both parks to observe existing conditions as a basis for upgrades and improvements as well as to understand the

overall character and quality of the existing parks system.

The inventory of Town-owned and operated facilities was compared to the national standards provided by the National Parks and Recreation Association to establish a base-line assessment of the existing level of service the Town is providing.

The team also researched other recreational opportunities for Elon and Alamance County's residents. The inventory of parkland in Burlington and Gibsonville were compiled with Alamance County parks to understand amenity offerings. In addition, private facilities at Elon University and Twin Lakes were also considered. All analysis was followed by a visioning session where the team members met with Town staff and the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee to develop a future direction for recreation and parks. The visioning session resulted in goals and objectives for future parks, facilities, programs, and operations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The project team performed a robust public input process which gathered input from the Board of Aldermen and staff, members of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee, Elon University, and Elon residents. The process was designed to be transparent, equitable, and engage the widest range of residents as was possible. The engagement plan consisted of the following elements:

- › Two public open house events
- › One meeting at Elon University
- › One meeting at Twin Lakes Community
- › Two Town of Elon Staff Meetings
- › Two Coordination calls with the firm that created Envision Elon 2040
- › Leadership Interviews
- › One presentation to the Recreation and Parks Commission.
- › One presentation to the Board of Aldermen.
- › Monthly Town Manager Briefings.

BENCHMARKING + LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of Service (LOS) and Benchmarking are methods to evaluate current and future service levels compared to national standards and best practices as well as agencies with comparable characteristics. The level of service analysis uses matrix that includes the inventory for Elon's parkland, facilities and amenities. Inventories are referenced with the town's population to understand the current level of service the Town is providing per resident, and project future needs for a ten-year planning horizon based on population growth.

Benchmarking of comparable agencies provides a peer comparison for both the existing state of

the recreational offerings as well as informs level of service standards for the ten-year planning horizon. The project team gathered data from the National Parks and Recreation Association's Park Metrics and selected data for comparison based on jurisdictions with similar population, number of parks, and full-time equivalent staff. Metrics for parks, trails, acreage, staffing, and budget, are evaluated for each peer agency which informs the development of an appropriate level of service standard specific to Elon. Such standards are population-based so target metrics can evolve to meet demands of the population growth the Town is experiencing.

HEALTH + WELLNESS

The team has identified recommendations, based on the Impact Alamance County Community Assessment, that aim to strengthen the relationship between parks, the environment, and the multiple facets of health among the population. The health-based recommendations are used to improve the relationship between parks, the environment, and overall health.

Examples of recommendations include installation of exercise equipment and fitness opportunities in parks, and generally educating the public about health benefits of simply visiting parks. System-wide, the goal is to provide an equitable, healthy environment within reach of all residents through connectivity and geographic expansion.

OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

The team evaluated the governance of the Town's core functions and overall structure in how it relates to the staffing, policies, and procedures of recreation and parks. The team evaluated maintenance protocols for Elon's two existing parks based on efficiency and sustainability.

Recommendations were created to inform preventative maintenance policies programs and therefore prolong the life of current and future park amenities through appropriate staffing and equipment management.

RECOMMENDATIONS + IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The recommendations and Action Plan provide a framework to guide park, facility, open space, programming and operational improvements through the next 10 years. It is structured to guide decision making for programs, facilities and Town policy. Criteria for recommendation prioritization varies based on the item's context and range from land availability to financial implications

but are firmly rooted in community preferences. This information can be found in Chapter 8. The implementation plan concludes with a list of outcome measures to ensure the Town staff and management are executing the action items, achieving the goals of this comprehensive plan, and sharing their successes.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The Town's current parks and recreation investments were analyzed to recommend financial goals. These recommendations were based on the budget, pricing policy, user fees, current and other revenue generating opportunities, grant opportunities and revenue forecast.

The gathered data is then compared with current policies of best practice agencies. Resulting recommendations effects policies and adjustments to current policies where enhancements may be needed, or new policies need to be enacted.

REGIONAL CONTEXT + RESOURCES

History

The Town of Elon began in 1881 with the construction of a train depot at the intersection of a Charlotte to Goldsboro railway and a country dirt road from Burlington. The depot was intended to aid in the transport of goods for local mills, thus giving the depot and surrounding community its original name – Mill Point. Locals referred to the intersection as Boon’s Crossing. Due to a growing population and the community’s importance as a transportation hub, a post office was established. The community was officially incorporated in 1893.

Elon University

Attracted by the Mill Point depot and ample amount of open space, the Southern Christian Conference opened a college nestled in a nearby wooded area dominated by oak trees. The college founders recognized this, therefore naming the college Elon, Hebrew for oak. Elon College opened in 1889, welcoming 76 students its’ first year.

Skirting the growing college, Mill Point grew into a community known as Elon College where incoming residents developed businesses and homes. By 2001, the student population and academics had grown significantly, resulting in the institution being renamed Elon University and the town name was officially shortened to Elon.

Today, Elon University is Alamance County’s 4th largest employer and a major influence on the population of Elon, with approximately 1,403 employees at the University.

ELON TODAY

Elon has grown into a community of more than 10,000 residents, with approximately half of those residents living in town year-round. Elon is nearly surrounded by the neighboring municipalities of Burlington to the east and Gibsonville to the west. Given the proximity of these communities, in addition to the influx of students attending Elon University, the Town receives an outstanding attendance to its two parks with some park patrons traveling from neighboring towns to enjoy the parks.

Town Growth

The Town is experiencing a rate of population growth that is expected to nearly double in the next 20 years. Ensuring smart growth into the future requires that all current and future residents have access to trails and open space for transportation and recreational use. Areas experiencing the most growth are in, but not limited to, the suburban and rural areas near the outer extents of the corporate limits and within the greater extraterritorial jurisdiction of Elon, particularly to the north. The growth of Elon University results in an increase of young adults, while current projections also forecast increases in retirement and post-retirement age residents. This affects the recommended programs and amenities for current and existing parks.

According to the projected growth, approximately 1,758 single-family houses, 652 townhouses, and 425 apartment units requiring 696 acres will be needed to house the growing population. With this, the demand for additional parkland and facilities will increase although the available land for park development will decrease. Referencing the Town comprehensive land use plan combined with the Land Development Ordinances, this Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan will aid in appropriate open space allocation for parks and recreational programs.

Environmental

Several streams and small lakes are located in the area immediately surrounding Elon. Due to the area's agricultural history, pockets of rural agrarian pastures and fields create bucolic environments creating scenic views of farmland and rural life.

Located within the Jordan Lake Watershed, the Town has set strict development guidelines along various streams, creeks, and wetlands to protect the functionality and aesthetic value of the hydrological features. All jurisdictional streams have a 50-foot buffer to filtrate and reduce the velocity of water entering streams. In turn, this also provides additional green space capable of containing trails, blueways, and recreational opportunities for the Town.¹

All extents of the 100-year floodplain within the corporate limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of Elon fall under the Stream Protection Overlay District, further limiting the types of development allowed in these areas to recreational and agricultural uses.²

¹ http://www.elonnc.com/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=att_download&link_id=14&cf_id=24

² http://www.elonnc.com/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=att_download&link_id=847&cf_id=24



3

demographics + trends



CHAPTER 3 > DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

An accurate understanding of the Town’s demographics is an essential foundation for creating an effective long-range plan. Population growth drives many of this plan’s goals and objectives to provide a road map to keep the Town’s parks and recreation offerings on pace with demand generated by increasing numbers of residents and changing demographics related to age, race, and other demographic descriptors.

Demographic analysis adds nuance to the variable of population growth, giving insight into changing proportional allocations of age, race, and income within a growing population. As these proportions shift, for example from younger to older, so do the types of recreational facilities and programs needed to meet demand.

National trends in recreational preferences change continually, influencing local demand for new activities and programs. Even when other demographic factors remain constant, changing preferences influence and alter a population’s demand for parks and recreation and facilities.

This chapter provides a summary of the Town’s demographic characteristics and summarizes the Town’s future population projections through 2028. This quantitative analysis illustrates the Town’s future needs for parks and recreation based on demographic and market research data.

Included here are the Town’s population growth projections, an overview of current demographics and projections for the 10-year planning horizon, and a summary of national and local trends in recreation. The combination of this data provides a foundation for recommendations targeting the end user for current and future improvements that align with recreation trends.

Demographic analysis uses a variety of data, methods, and assumptions to illustrate the current demographic composition of an area, and project potential changes into the future. This plan uses average annual growth rates, projections and estimates, and population proportions to describe the demographic composition of the Town’s population.

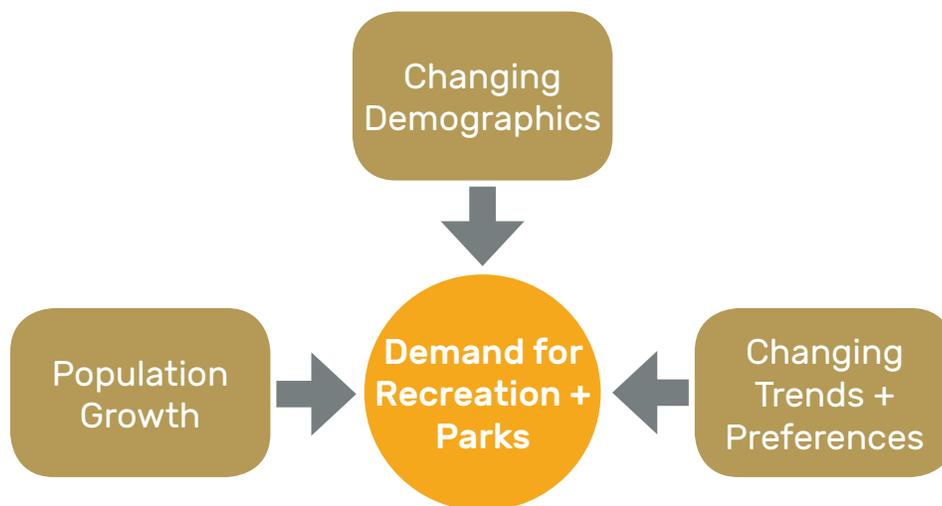


Figure 1 – Elements that influence demand for parks, facilities and programs

METHODOLOGY

Demographic analysis uses a variety of data, methods and assumptions to illustrate the current demographic composition of an area and project potential changes into the future. This plan uses average annual growth rates, projections and estimates and population proportions to describe the demographic composition of the Town’s population.

Decennial Census of Population and Housing – The U.S. census counts each resident of the country, where they live on April 1, every ten years ending in zero. The Constitution mandates the enumeration to determine how to apportion the House of Representatives among the states.

American Community Survey – The ACS helps local officials, community leaders and businesses understand changes taking place in communities. It is the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation.

Source - U.S. Census Bureau. www.census.gov/programs-surveys/

DATA SOURCES

This analysis draws on two sources of data for the demographic analysis. They are the U.S. Census Bureau which gathers demographic data on a

continual basis and Esri which uses Census Data to conduct proprietary demographic analyses.

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau creates the foundation of this demographic analysis. Census data is the most comprehensive and accurate data collected in the United States. Census data includes data gathered from the decennial census of population and housing, conducted every 10 years, and the American Community Survey,

conducted on an ongoing basis and reported every five years. In this chapter, the analysis for geographic mobility and special populations is summarized from Census Data. In all other cases, the data collected is synthesized using a variety of demographic analysis methods to inform the current and future demographic characteristics.

ESRI

Elements of this chapter including population proportions are sourced from Esri. Esri uses a proprietary methodology for creating a current population estimate and a five-year population projected estimate. Esri uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Internal Revenue Service, and high-quality local sources. Esri has developed methods specially tailored to estimating demographic characteristics of small areas such as Census Blocks.

Esri encourages use of their data in conjunction with other sources of data, saying “Esri revises its forecasts annually to draw on the latest data. However, this data can be enhanced with personal knowledge of an area to provide the qualitative, anecdotal detail that is not captured in a national database. It is incumbent on the data user and the producers to incorporate as much information as possible when assessing local trends.”

SOURCE	DATA	YEAR
Esri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Age segments › Race and ethnicity › Household income 	Uses 2010 census data projected to 2019
Project Calculations	› Projections of trends summarized in Esri data	Projects Esri data to 2019 and forward.

Table 1 – Data sources for demographic analysis

ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS

Estimates and projections are the core of demographic analysis.

Estimates provide a summary of an area's current population or demographic characteristics, while projections are a proposed scenario for a future population, based on certain assumptions such as a consistent growth rate, or expected increase in migration.

Projections are based on an estimate of the population at a given point in time, and project a potential future scenario based on certain assumptions. The population growth projections are based on information from Envision Elon

Population projections are calculations which show the future development of a population when certain assumptions are made about the future course of population change, usually with respect to fertility, mortality and migration.

Demographic estimates include estimates of the population and of such characteristics as fertility, mortality and migration... Estimates of the population by size and composition at various dates in the past and present may be made by various methods, including many of the methods used for population projection.

2040, the Town's comprehensive plan. All other projections are calculated using the average annual growth rate.

AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH

Average annual growth is a measure for determining the rate of growth per year over a given period. The average annual growth rate is useful for showing the rate at which population growth is occurring per year even when population estimate data available spans a multiple year period. An indication of past growth can be used

to form the basis for projecting population for a future year. Esri estimates that the Town's average annual growth rate between 2019 and 2024 will be 0.6 percent. This report uses that growth rate to project population estimates for the planning horizon.

The formula for calculating average annual growth rates is as follows:

$$\text{Average Annual Growth Rate} = \left[\left(\frac{\text{Growth in Ending period}}{\text{Growth in beginning period}} \right)^{\frac{1}{\text{Number of periods}}} \right] \times 100$$

POPULATION PROPORTIONS

This report uses 100 percent stacked bar charts to display changes in demographic characteristics over time. This analysis shows how the characteristics of the population will change over time. These charts use Esri's analysis of demographic characteristics in the Town of Elon, which nuances overall population growth into expected changes in the subsections of age, race, ethnicity and household income. Esri's analysis

estimates 2019 data and makes a projection for 2023. To create the population proportions of demographic trends for 2019, 2024 and 2029, this analysis calculates the average annual growth rate for each demographic segment between 2019 and 2024 and uses that to make projections for each population segment in the years 2019, 2024 and 2029.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The population projections outlined below will become the basis for many of this plan’s recommendations, most prominently the level of service analysis, which establishes standards for facility space, park acreage, sports fields, and amenities that will be needed within the next 10 years. Population estimates and projections used for this plan are listed below. These numbers

are based on population projections in Envision Elon 2040. The population projects have been adjusted for this comprehensive plan’s planning horizon using Envision Elon 2040’s average annual growth rate of 1.3 percent. This growth rate is greater than the United State’s growth rate of 0.7 percent and North Carolina’s 1.1 percent growth rate¹.

	2019 Population	2023 Population	2029 Population
Population	10,783	12,350	14,212
Households	2,997	3,084	3,196

Table 2 - Population and Household Estimates

The Town is experiencing low population growth, slightly slower than population growth rates of North Carolina and the United States. Population increase due to migration is anticipated to shift the overall demographic composition of the Town in the coming years. The bullets below are a summary of the anticipated changes:

- › Youth and young adults comprise the largest proportion of the age segment with

44 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 24

- › The population falls primarily into the “white alone” census category with 84 percent of the population in that category
- › A small proportion of the population is of Hispanic descent at 4.7 percent
- › 26 percent of households earn more than \$100,000 annually and 28 percent earn less than \$25,000 annually.

¹ Tippett, R. (2017, February 10). North Carolina population growth at highest levels since 2010. Retrieved from <http://demography.cpc.unc.edu/2017/02/10/north-carolina-population-growth-at-highest-levels-since-2010/>

AGE SEGMENT

Figure 2 presents the changing proportions of the age cohorts based on population estimates and projections from 2019 through 2028. The proportional charts show little change over all in proportional spreads of age segments over the next 10 years.

The most notable characteristic of the Town’s age segments is that a significant proportion of the population is between the ages of 15 and 24. Many of these individuals are undoubtedly Elon University students approximately between the ages of 18 and 22. The University provides open space, recreation facilities, amenities and

programs for its students, the Town will want to have a clear idea of whether and how to provide this demographic with parks and recreation amenities, facilities and programs.

It is possible that this projection underestimates the future population proportions of Elon’s residents over the age of 55. The Town has multiple senior living communities that provide both active and assisted living. Given this context, there may be more migration of seniors to the Town of Elon, resulting in a larger proportion of the population than the 33 percent by 2028 indicated here.

DEMOGRAPHICS
+ TRENDS

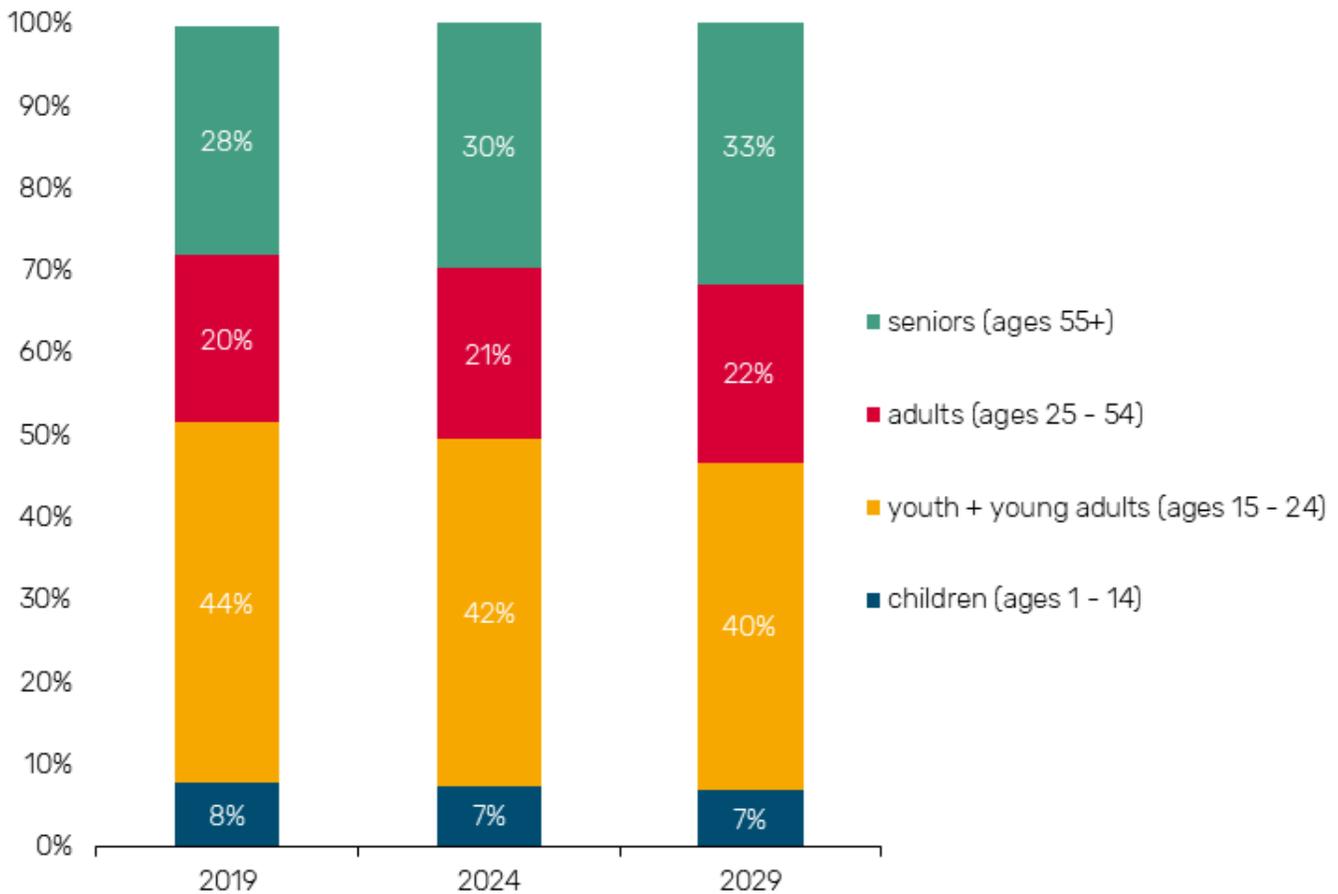


Figure 2 – Population proportion by age
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2017 and 2022 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography. Project team projected data for 2019, 2023 and 2028.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Estimates show that residents identify as “white alone” category are approximately 84 percent of the population. In the coming years, this proportion will decrease slightly as the populations of other categories grow at a rate slightly faster than that of the “white alone” category. The category that will have the largest increase in its proportion is “Asian alone”, which is growing at a rate of nearly 5 percent per year.

The category growing at the second fastest pace is “some other race alone”.

The proportion of residents of Hispanic origin will increase over the next 10 years, with an average annual growth rate of 3.6 percent. Even at 5 percent of the population, the proportion of the 2028 projected population of Hispanic origin in Elon is lower than North Carolina’s current population proportion of approximately 10 percent of the population of Hispanic origin.

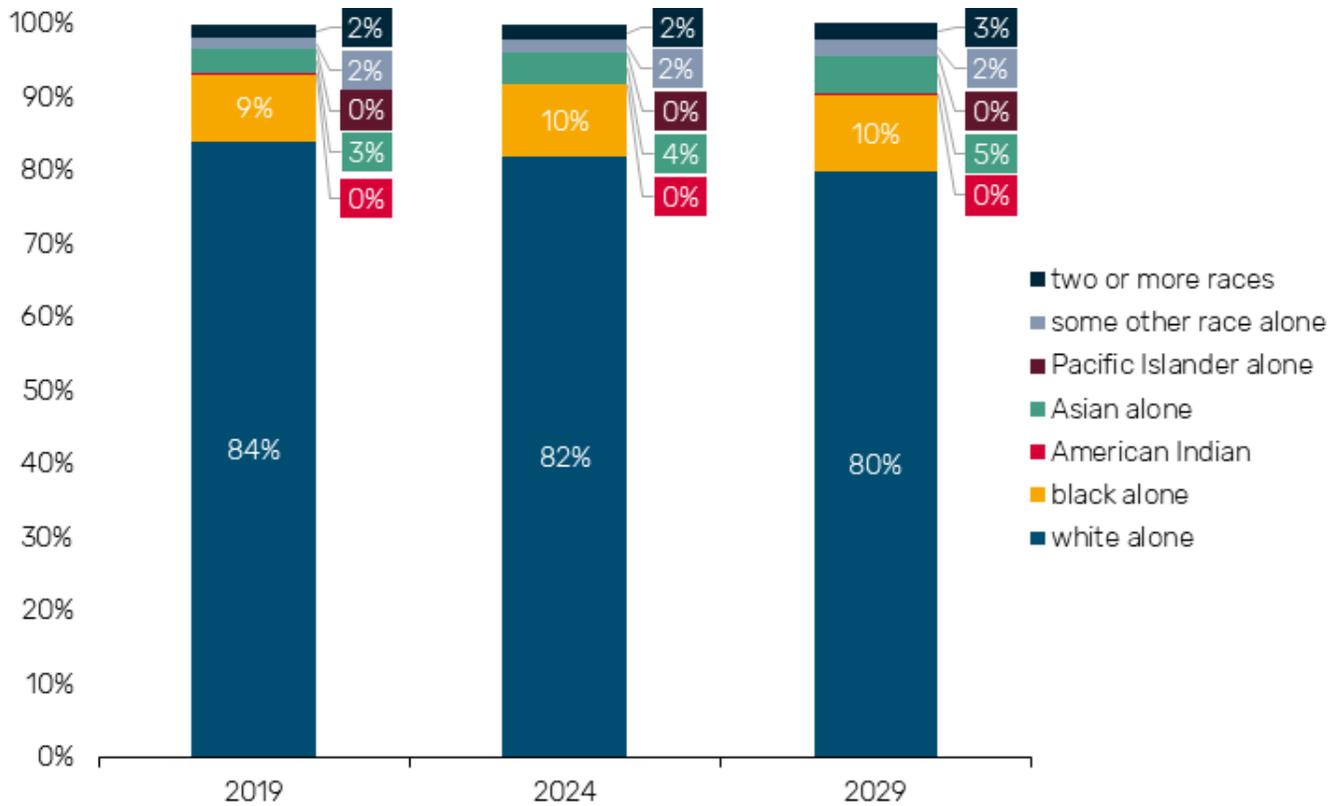


Figure 3 – Population proportions by race
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2017 and 2022 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography. Project team projected data for 2019, 2023 and 2028.

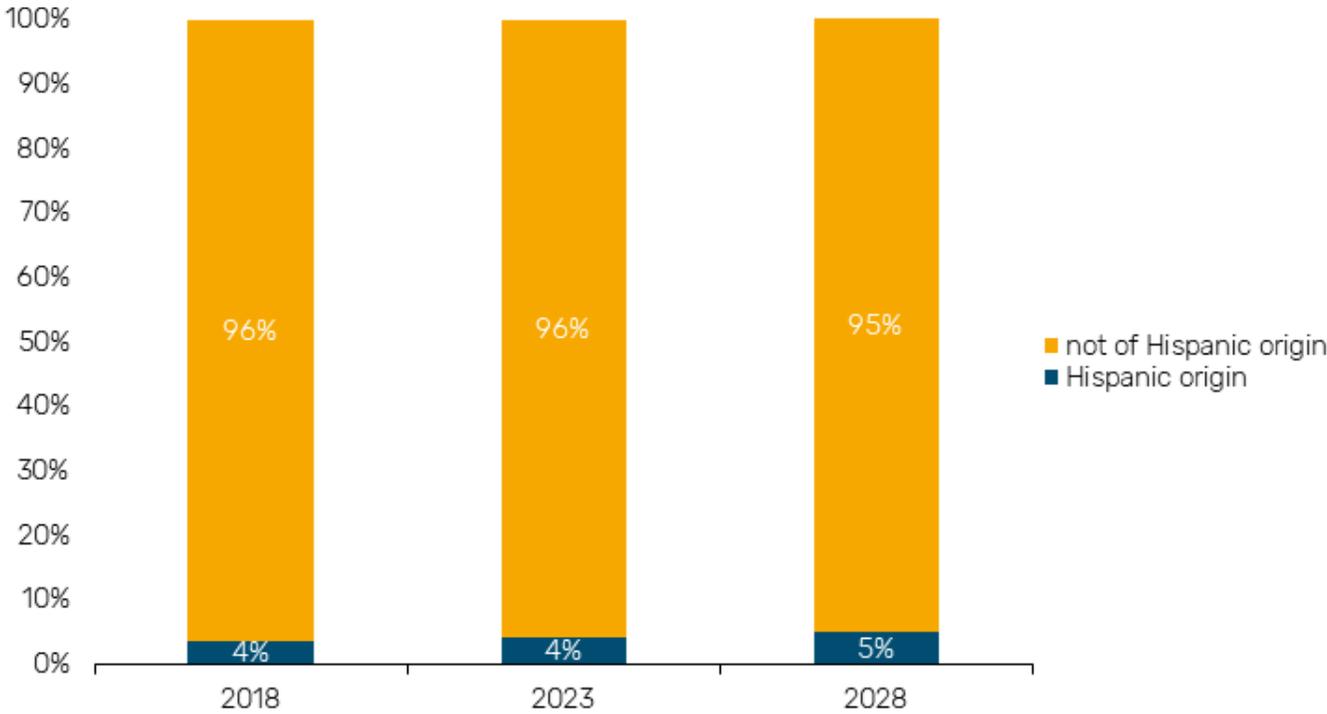


Figure 4 – Population proportions by Hispanic or Latino ethnicity
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2017 and 2022 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography. Project team projected data for 2019, 2023 and 2028.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Figure 5 shows the proportional spread of income for households in the Town of Elon. Nearly 50 percent of households have an income of \$49,999 while approximately 8 percent of households have an annual income of more than \$200,000.

According to the American Community Survey, the estimated median household income in 2016 was \$43,322.

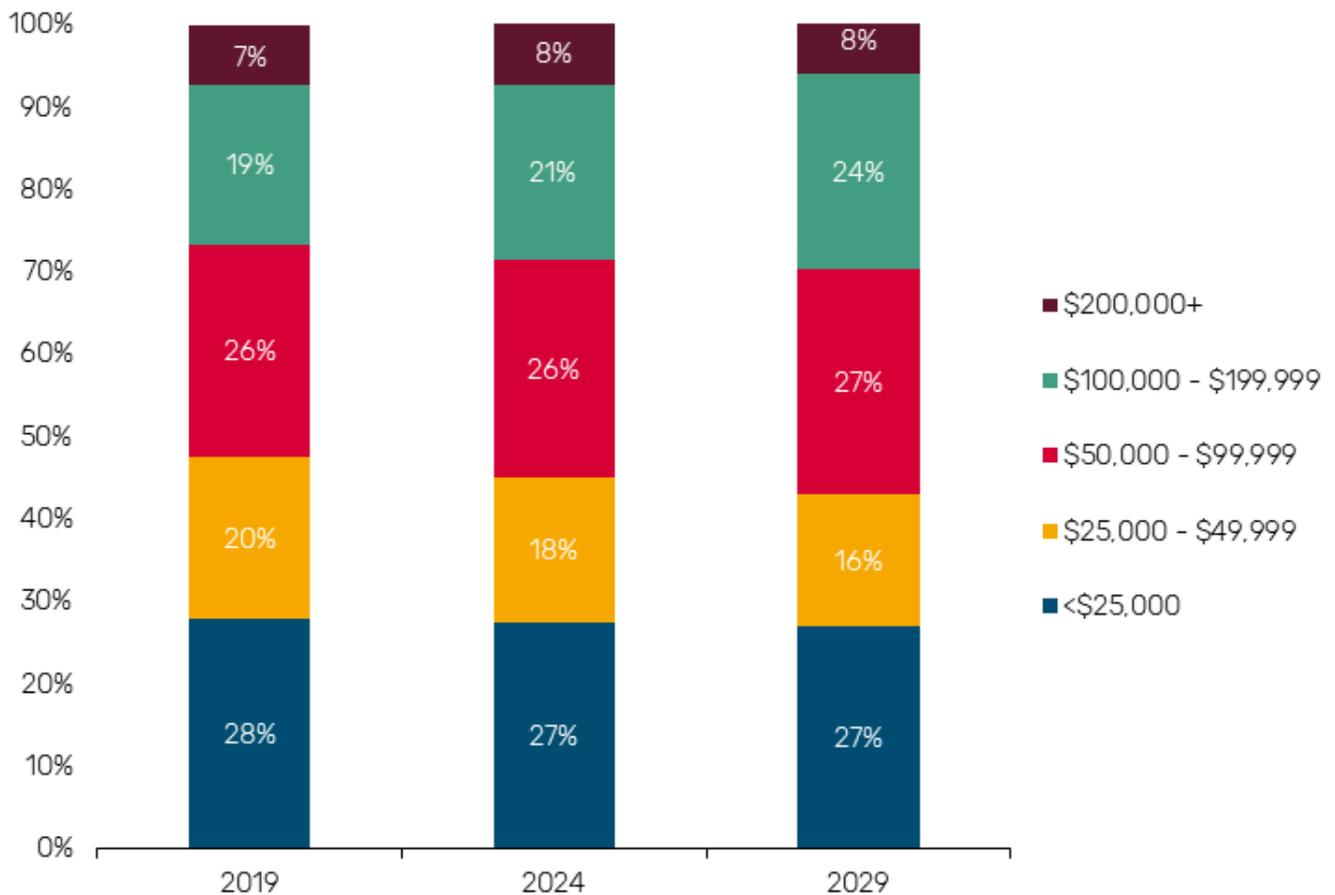


Figure 5 – Household proportions by household income
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2017 and 2022 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography. Project team projected data for 2019, 2023 and 2028.

TRENDS IN PARKS + RECREATION

The trends analysis provides a summary of local trends related to demand for parks and recreation activities, demographic trends, and emerging issues in parks and recreation.

RECREATION + ACTIVITY TRENDS

The Market Potential Index is a measure of an area's relative demand for a product or service. The MPI uses credit card spending data as a measurement of local demand for that recreation activity in relation to national demand. An activity receives an MPI of 100 if the local and national demand for that activity are the same. MPIs

greater than 100 indicate that local demand for that activity is greater than national demand.

Recreational activities in Elon had a very high relative demand with 29 activities having an MPI over 100. The table below summarizes these activities.

Activity	Estimated households participating	Percent of population	Market Potential Index
rock climbing	453	5.0%	255
Frisbee	833	9.2%	202
ping pong	764	8.4%	198
Pilates	467	5.1%	192
basketball	1,264	13.9%	165
jogging/running	1,974	21.7%	161
soccer	593	6.5%	151
football	691	7.6%	150
aerobics	1,061	11.7%	141
weight lifting	1,305	14.3%	141
baseball	555	6.1%	134
hiking	1,268	13.9%	134
yoga	923	10.1%	133
softball	376	4.1%	127
volleyball	381	4.2%	125
bicycling (road)	1,152	12.7%	123
walking for exercise	2,671	29.4%	109
tennis	374	4.1%	108

Table 3 – Parks and recreation activities with the highest relative demand in the Town of Elon compared to national demand

Source: Data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to local demographic composition. Usage data were collected by GfK MRI in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. Esri forecasts for 2017 and 2022.

The table below lists the 10 activities most popular with Elon residents as indicated by having the highest percentages of participation among the Elon population.

Activity	Estimated Household Participants	Percent of Population	MPI
walking for exercise	2,671	29.4	109
jogging/running	1,974	21.7	161
swimming	1,919	21.1	135
weight lifting	1,305	14.3	141
hiking	1,268	13.9	134
basketball	1,264	13.9	165
bicycling (road)	1,152	12.7	123
fishing (fresh water)	1,074	11.8	99
aerobics	1,061	11.7	141

Table 4 – Most popular parks and recreation activities among Town of Elon residents based on overall participation rates

Source: Data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to local demographic composition. Usage data were collected by GfK MRI in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. Esri forecasts for 2017 and 2022.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

RECREATION AND AGE SEGMENT

The Town of Elon's senior population will occupy an increasing proportion of the overall population in the coming years. National trends indicate that this aging population continues to remain active, though individuals' needs change as their mobility and health changes. A 2015 publication from the National Recreation and Parks Association indicates that the park needs for senior populations include flatter topography, shorter trails, frequent resting spots, improved wayfinding signage, and partnerships with senior communities or programs to increase awareness of park offerings tailored to seniors' needs.

Another important consideration for the town's age segment demographics is the predominance of young adults, most likely those aged 18 to 22 who

are associated with Elon University. The Market Potential Index indicates that the three activities with the greatest relative local demand are rock climbing, Frisbee, and ping pong, three activities associated with college campuses where rock walls are an amenity of growing popularity, and quadrangles that provide a picturesque location for tossing a Frisbee.

The MPI and age segment proportion add support for the Town's desire to partner with the University to provide recreational activities. The MPI should be compared to recreational opportunities the University currently offers to understand if the University is currently both generating and meeting the demand for these activities.

RECREATION AND PROGRAMMING

A key consideration for the Town's Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan will be whether the Town should consider offering recreational programming in addition to their current special event offerings. Programmatic offerings typical of parks and recreation departments are team sports leagues for youth and adults, fitness classes, and summer camps for youth. The Market Potential Index is a measure for indicating local spending and involvement in sports and leisure activities. The Market Potential Index analysis indicates which activities have the highest number of participants, and which activities have a local demand for an activity that is higher than the national demand for that activity. The first measure indicates overall popularity of an activity, while the second measure may indicate a local niche for that activity.

Somewhat unusually, two team sports, basketball and swimming, appear on the list of the top 10

sports and activities in which Town residents participated according to Esri's market potential index analysis. Similarly, soccer, basketball and football are the three team sports that appear on the list of sports and activities with the greatest MPIs, a measure of local demand relative to national demand. Even though the Town does not currently provide athletic programming, many of Elon's residents participate in sports leagues in nearby Gibsonville and Burlington and Elon University provides programming for students and others associated with the institution. The information suggesting low demand for team sports in the Town should be carefully considered in conjunction with other sources of data that will be compiled for this plan to inform recommendations regarding potential future provision of recreational programming. Team sports are also discussed in the operations chapter, recommendations chapter and Action and Implementation Plan.

EMERGING TRENDS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARKS

A well-documented economic impact of parks and recreation is the positive influence on surrounding property values. Though parks remove property from the total bank of land that could generate property taxes, they more than justify their existence by increasing the property values of the surrounding properties and therefore the amount of property tax owed. This concept is important to consider in terms of land acquisition in areas of new residential development. Parks and facilities should be well-maintained and properly programmed to ensure the desired effect. Improving and expanding parks should be considered an investment in protecting and expanding the Town's tax base.

In addition to increasing a community's existing wealth, parks and recreation can generate new income by generating tourism revenue. The playground at Beth Schmidt Park frequently attracts visitors from surrounding cities. Out-of-

town visitors to these parks may spend money at restaurants, gas stations, and other local businesses.

Finally, there are the economic impacts of the management and operation of the department itself. This results in the direct, indirect, and induced effects spurred by public investment in parks and recreation and the revenue the department generates. For example, a department has an economic impact on the people it directly employs and generates demand for certain equipment and contracted services. The department's demand for goods and services has an indirect ripple effect throughout the community as contractors conduct their own businesses. The department's induced effect on the local economy is generated by employees spending their wages within Elon on goods and services for themselves and their families.

BENEFITS OF PARKS

In addition to the impacts a department generates based on its role as an economic entity in the community, a parks and recreation system can generate positive outcomes that avoid costs for which the Town may otherwise be responsible. For example, parks promote physical and mental health through providing places where people can exercise, meditate, and socialize. By encouraging

activities that prevent long-term health issues such as obesity and heart disease, a parks and recreation department provides services that may reduce the burden for programs and services provided by another public entity and frees resources to continue to promote preventative actions.

Seven Benefits of Parks:

Adapted from Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System by the Trust for Public Land (2009)
<https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe-econvalueparks-rpt.pdf>

1 > Tourism

Though not always recognized, parks play a major role in a city's tourism economy. Some are tourist attractions by themselves. Others are simply great venues for festivals, sports events, even demonstrations. Read any newspaper's travel section and you'll usually see at least one park among the "to see" picks.

2 > Direct Use

While city parks provide much indirect benefit, they also provide huge tangible value through such activities as team sports, bicycling, skateboarding, walking, picnicking, benchsitting and visiting a flower garden. Economists call these activities "direct uses". Most direct uses in city parks are free of charge but economists can still calculate value by knowing the cost of a similar recreation experience in the private marketplace. This is known as "willingness-to-pay". In other words, if parks were not available in the city, how much would the resident pay in a commercial facility? (Thus, rather than income, this value represents savings by residents.

3 > Property value

Other things being equal, most people are willing to pay more for a home close to a nice park. Property value is affected primarily by two factors: distance from the park and the quality of the park itself. People's desire to live near a park depends on characteristics of the park. Beautiful natural resource parks with great trees, trails, meadows and gardens are markedly valuable. Other parks with excellent recreational facilities are also desirable (although sometimes the greatest property value is a block or two away if there are issues of noise, lights and parking). Less attractive or poorly maintained parks are only marginally valuable. And parks with frightening or dangerous aspects can reduce nearby property values.

4 > Community Cohesion

The more webs of human relationships a neighborhood has, the stronger, safer and more successful it is. Any institution that promotes this kind of community cohesion – whether a club, a school, a political campaign, a religious institution, a co-op – adds value to a neighborhood and by extension, to the whole city. This human web, which Jane Jacobs termed "social capital", is strengthened by parks. From playgrounds to sports fields to park benches to chessboards to

swimming pools to ice skating rinks to flower gardens, parks offer opportunities for people of all ages to interact, communicate, compete, learn and grow.

5 > Health

Lack of exercise is shown to contribute to obesity and its many effects and experts call for a more active lifestyle. Research suggests that access to parks can help people increase their level of physical activity. Park users who undertake at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity at least three days per week cut their annual medical costs by an average of \$250 per year. This is an avoided cost.

6 > Clean water

Stormwater runoff is a significant problem in urban areas. When rainwater flows off roads, sidewalks and other impervious surfaces, it picks up pollutants. Parkland reduces stormwater management costs by capturing precipitation and/or slowing its runoff. Large pervious (absorbent) surface areas in parks allow precipitation to infiltrate and recharge the groundwater. Also, vegetation in parks provides considerable surface area that intercepts and stores rainwater, allowing some to evaporate before it ever reaches the ground. Thus, urban green spaces function like mini-storage reservoirs.

7 > Clean air

Air pollution is a significant and expensive urban problem, injuring health and damaging structures. The human cardiovascular and respiratory systems are affected and there are broad consequences for healthcare costs and productivity. In addition, acid deposition, smog and ozone increase the need to clean and repair buildings and other costly infrastructure. Trees and shrubs remove air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone and some particulates. Leaves absorb gases and particulates adhere to the plant surface, at least temporarily. Thus, vegetation in city parks plays a role in improving air quality and reducing pollution costs.

CONNECTIVITY

A report from Healthy Spaces & Places a project aimed at creating places that promote wellness. They define connectivity as “the directness of links and the density of connections in a transport network... Good connectivity provides easy access to key destinations for pedestrians. Excellent connectivity actively seeks to discourage car use by making local trips easier and more pleasant by foot than by car.” Connectivity is often addressed through design approaches that impact all areas of urban development such as transportation, parks, economic development, and public health.

Parks and greenways promote connectivity by serving as both routes and destinations. Greenways create transportation routes

protected from automobile traffic and parks create attractive destinations for socializing, exercising and playing.

The Town of Elon’s emphasis on connectivity through the provision of greenways and trails is reinforced by the data of this demographic analysis. Greenway trails have low barriers to entry that make appealing recreational destinations for seniors and others with limited or declining mobility. Additionally, walking for exercise and jogging/running were the two most participated in activities, with road biking also making the list at number eight. Greenways and trails systems support all these activities.



Figure 6 – Relationship between connectivity and health
Source: Healthy Spaces & Places. Design Principle - Connectivity and Permeability

Characteristics of parks that promote connectivity –

Adapted from the National Parks and Recreation Association. "Designing Parks for Health." October 1, 2016. Joanna Lombard, AIA, LEED, AP

1. **Mixed-use** – Access to mixed use destinations provides multiple reasons for more people to walk. Neighborhoods with mixed use destinations show higher levels of social interaction and physical activity, essential elements of a healthy lifestyle. Mixed-use in a park context can mean that the park is part of a mixed-use district with shops, residences and other kinds of activities nearby, or the park itself can serve as a mixed-use destination in the neighborhood.
2. **Connectivity** – Mixed-use depends on connectivity. Multiple destinations are only beneficial when they are accessible. Studies show that people walk more in areas with connected sidewalks and having many route choices is associated with high connectivity. Parks and open space are opportunities to build connectedness throughout otherwise sprawling areas.
3. **Greenness** – Shade trees, green spaces and opportunities for community gardens provide significant health benefits. Streetscape and a sidewalk system that connects a park to its neighborhood can help to contribute to greenness. Research shows that neighborhood greenness enhances community identity and encourages physical activity.
4. **Eyes on the park** – Neighborhood safety and vitality depend on a maximum number of people watching over a streetscape. Parks are especially sensitive to supervision and the proximity of residents, the presence of mixed-use, easy access through a well-connected network, and the presence of trees are all linked to higher levels of activity and social support. Providing proximity of active uses and easy visual and physical access can ensure sufficient numbers of Eyes on the Park, as well as enhancing both physical activity and social interaction.
5. **Mobility** – Mobility enables people to reach places through multiple modes of travel – walking, biking, and various forms of private and public transit. Parks that can be reached on foot by the closest residents provide important neighborhood destinations and a park infrastructure that connects parks and greenways across a region through trails, sidewalks, streets and rails.



4 inventory + analysis



CHAPTER 4 > INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

The Town has two well-developed parks that provide a variety of amenities and opportunities for socializing, exercising, and playing. The Town does not have a formal recreation and parks department but does have a two staff members, one Public Works employee and two part-time staff members. All staff are dedicated to overseeing parks, operations, maintenance, and system development.

The Town has successfully leveraged grant funding to build a new park and do a complete renovation of another. The Town is looking to grow and replicate that success and leadership to continue providing high quality parks and events as the Town continues to grow.

Parks

- > Beth Schmidt Park
- > Lawrence Slade Park

Events

- > Art in the Park
- > Christmas in the Park
- > Halloween Happenings
- > Bunny Hop
- > Movies in the Park

PARKLAND

The Town owns and maintains approximately 24.53 acres of parkland at two parks: Beth Schmidt Park and Lawrence Slade Park. These two developed parks are well-maintained and attract a variety of users from Elon and the surrounding jurisdictions.

TOWN OF ELON PARKLAND RESOURCES

Opened in 2005, Beth Schmidt Park is the town’s first and largest park, located on the grounds of a former homestead on the edge of Elon’s town limits. The park maintains the open space and character of years prior while providing a playful, active atmosphere for all members of the family to enjoy. Beth Schmidt Park contains the area’s largest playground, multiple reservable areas for events, walking trails, the Heritage Place Community Center, a gazebo and other structures with local cultural significance. The park is comprised of multiple parcels. Most of the area is developed as a park, but the Town recently acquired some smaller parcels to the north of the existing park that will be developed as part of Beth Schmidt Park as resources allow. Those parcels have been included as existing parkland at Beth Schmidt Park in the table below.

The Town purchased Lawrence Slade Park, formerly known as Morgan Place Park, from Alamance County in 2008. The park, located a few blocks from downtown, received a major overhaul in 2014 that improved access to and amenities within the park. Included in the renovations are a regulation-sized basketball court, picnic pavilion, and a bandshell for hosting community events.

The Town currently plans to pursue a highest and best use study for a 72 acre parcel between Elon Ossipee Road and NC HWY 87 to determine its future development. This property, Parcel PIN 118227, is a mostly wooded tract located near Western Alamance High School. The undeveloped acreage has the potential to meet many identified needs and the Town will take a deliberate approach to determining the parcels future.

ACREAGE	PARK NAME	PARCEL PIN	PARK CLASSIFICATION
26.43	Beth Schmidt Park	108630	Neighborhood Park
		108651	
		108890	
		108907	
		108921	
		108908	
		108911	
		108944	
3.4	Lawrence Slade Park	109434	Community Park
29.83	TOTAL ACREAGE		

Table 1 – Town of Elon developed parkland

ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The project team collected an inventory of private and non-town owned facilities to further evaluate the recreational opportunities available to Elon residents and the surrounding area.

Elon University and the Twin Lakes Community are the primary providers of other recreational opportunities aside from the town's offerings.

ELON UNIVERSITY

Elon University offers a variety of programs and facilities for sports and recreational use. The University's Campus Recreation and Wellness program is dedicated to promoting wellness, in all forms, for all university staff and students through programs and facilities. The program provides outdoor ball courts for basketball and tennis. The Koury Center houses the university's

gyms, fitness centers, indoor ball courts and pools. A recent addition to campus is the driving range, located on south campus near the soccer and multi-use sports fields and a new recreation center on the southern part of campus. Recreational equipment, including bicycles and kayaks, is available for rental to Elon University staff and students.¹

TWIN LAKES

Twin Lakes is a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) less than a half-mile south from Beth Schmidt Park. The community's residents have opportunities to create or enhance an active lifestyle through communal

programs and amenities such as arts and crafts, fitness classes, and engaging programs aimed at creating a holistic wellness experience for residents. The community helps host Elon's senior games annually.²

THE OLDE FOREST RACQUET CLUB

Easily accessible from Beth Schmidt Park, The Olde Forest Racquet Club is a 15-acre private recreational facility. The Club offers its members

14 outdoor and four indoor tennis courts year-round, as well as a seasonal swimming pool with associated features.³

NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS

The City of Burlington borders Elon to the east. Burlington manages 22 parks and indoor recreation facilities. Amenities and programs include a marina, nature park, and an amusement park. Burlington City Park, located near downtown Burlington, serves as the City's premier entertainment park with amusement rides, ballfields, shaded walking path, and a dog park. Willowbrook Park is in progress and will feature an arboretum and botanical garden, serving the community with a generous variety of plantings, exploratory paths for users of all ability levels, and a community center.⁴

The Town of Gibsonville which is roughly split between Alamance County and Guilford County borders Elon to the west on the Alamance County side. The Town of Gibsonville owns two parks and two facilities with locations within a half-mile from downtown. Serving as the town's largest park, William F. Moricle Recreational Complex offers ballfields, ball courts, picnic shelters, a playground, and walking paths across 29 partially wooded acres.⁵ Edward G. Murrell Park is Gibsonville's smaller park, at just over six acres. The acreages of Gibsonville's collective parkland are comparable to that of Elon's. In addition to the two parks, the Town of Gibsonville also provides a community center and senior center for its residents to utilize for community events.

1 <https://www.elon.edu/u/campus-recreation-wellness/facilities/>

2 https://twinlakescomm.org/TLCBrochures/tlc-pamph-thrive_web.pdf

3 <https://www.oldeforest.com/index.html>

4 <http://www.ci.burlington.nc.us/willowbrook>

5 https://www.gibsonville.net/index.asp?SEC=60D2684B-D6F9-4A61-A41B-5A66ABE080E7&Type=B_BASIC

ALAMANCE COUNTY PARKS

The Alamance County Parks Department manages 1,200 acres of parkland distributed across four parks and the Haw River Trail. The Shallowford Natural Area is the park closest to Elon and is located on the Haw River near Western Alamance High School. The park is a popular destination for local hikers, campers, and canoe/kayak users. Programming at County parks vary: hiking and equestrian trails, disc golf courses,

historic and cultural resources, and camping and other outdoor activities are available for users of a wide range of interest and skill levels.

In 2015, Alamance County adopted the Alamance County Trails Plan to improve and add to the existing trail networks along the Haw River and within existing parks, as well as provide equestrian and community centers.⁶

⁶ <https://www.alamance-nc.com/recreation/outdoors/>



PARK + FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

The project team conducted an assessment and inventory of the town’s existing parks and facilities to serve as a basis for this plan’s recommendations. The assessment focused on each park’s accessibility, connectivity, safety, aesthetics, and sense of place.

METHODOLOGY

The project team visited the two town-owned parks to document existing conditions. The evaluation criteria are depicted in the table below. Each evaluation criteria represents an important element of park design. The criteria informed how the project team observed the parks and influenced which aspects of the built environment are important to achieving high functioning public spaces. The full park assessment is included in the appendix.

This chapter includes a summary of those results. The following sections provide a brief description

and rating of each park and facility. Observation of parks using these evaluation criteria informed the project team’s creation of the current conditions and themes characterizing the existing park system.

The conditions and themes include:

- › a strong sense of place
- › varying levels of connectivity, circulation, and distribution
- › excellent customer service and high community expectations

 ACCESSIBILITY	 SENSE OF PLACE	 ACCESS, LINKAGE + SAFETY	 SIGNAGE	 SUSTAINABILITY
<p>Is the park designed so people of all abilities can access the park and all its amenities? Does the park meet most or all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?</p>	<p>Does the park design support the intended use of the park and create an enjoyable place to pursue those activities? Does the park appear to reflect the history or identity of the Town?</p>	<p>Does the park connect to its surroundings through sidewalks, greenways, and trails while still allowing safe passage?</p>	<p>Are people able to identify this park as a Town of Elon park and easily navigate both to and within the park?</p>	<p>Does this park promote green building practices and promote environmental sustainability?</p>

CURRENT CONDITIONS + THEMES

The themes included in this section reflect observations made during the project team's site visits to the town's park facilities. The themes are intended to be a summary of the realities, opportunities, and challenges observed

throughout the park system. The discussion is a synthesis of observations of parks across the Town and are not intended to be discrete categories or a comprehensive list of considerations.

SENSE OF PLACE

Both parks offer a natural setting with a sense of community. These areas also both provide high-quality recreational amenities that contribute to the park's sense of place.

The natural and locally historic setting is most prevalent in Beth Schmidt Park where a natural surface trail meanders through a forested area and draws visitors toward a collection of relocated structures related to the town's past. Both parks provide residents access to green spaces and natural settings where they can pursue activities that promote spiritual, psychological, and physical wellness. Lawrence Slade Park is located in an established neighborhood and has a mature canopy trees on site. The physical setting contributes to the park's sense of place and so

does the history of the park itself. A community effort led the clean-up of this once under-maintained park. This community leadership set the stage for the Town's and State's investment in this park to make it the community asset it is today.

Beth Schmidt Park offers one of the area's largest playgrounds - capable of entertaining children of many ages and abilities. This amenity attracts users from neighboring jurisdictions, creating an active community environment throughout the day. Heavy use of the playground equipment over time has yielded advanced wear, resulting in playground elements requiring replacement before their expected lifetime.

CONNECTIVITY, CIRCULATION + DISTRIBUTION

Connectivity and circulation within Elon's parks appears to be inconsistent. The two parks are only located a quarter-mile away, but they lack connectivity to one another. As a result, the parks are used independently rather than as a connected, cohesive unit. Recent renovations in Slade Park have increased the accessibility with sidewalks and a walking path within the park, but the park remains disconnected from bike or pedestrian access to downtown Elon and Elon University, just a few blocks away.

Beth Schmidt Park is easily accessible from the surrounding area, but a lack of paths within the park creates stand-alone nodes of activity. The community center and playground are disconnected from the gazebo and structures, and dog park. To walk among these amenities, a pedestrian must walk on a sidewalk outside of the park or along a park driveway, although these

amenities are within the same park.

The lack of connectivity between the two parks is indicative of an apparent lack of pedestrian circulation via trails and sidewalks throughout the Town. A growing population creates congestion on roadways, but the creation of sidewalks, trails and greenways will provide citizens with an additional mode of transportation throughout Elon.

The Town's parks appear to be concentrated in the central eastern portion of the town close to one another. This suggests that the eastern and northern portions of the town may be underserved by the Town's parks and recreation offerings. Most of Elon's projected growth is expected to occur mostly to the north in the suburban and rural areas. It is crucial for these areas to have geographically equitable access to parks and recreational opportunities.

CUSTOMER SERVICE + COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

The Town of Elon is currently providing park users with an exceptionally high-quality park experience. Both parks have been carefully and lovingly improved and expanded, with the Town adding popular amenities as needed, such as a dog park and an outdoor amphitheater.

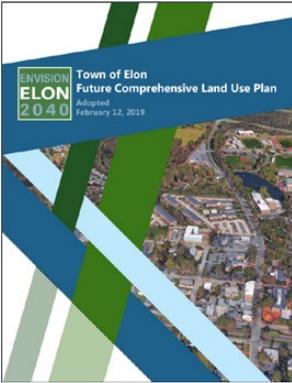
The Town's recreation specialist has an office at Beth Schmidt Park, and is on site during business hours. Lawrence Slade Park is programmed with

community events that draw many visitors. The town's ability to provide a high level of customer service at their parks is one of the defining features that sets the Town of Elon's park system apart from others. Moving forward, the Town has the opportunity to intensively develop parks and provide a high level of staff involvement and programming at each park, or to provide residents with alternatives such as well-maintained but less developed nature parks.

RELEVANT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

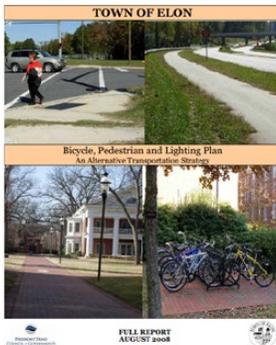
Over the past decade, several local agencies and organizations have undertaken planning studies in Elon to consider the expansion of parks and trails. Integral to this comprehensive plan is the coordination and integration of all planning efforts

and goals related to recreation. The following sections summarize overarching goals and objectives of these plans and recognize common planning themes while minimizing redundancies in recommendations.



Envision Elon 2040

Recently completed, Envision Elon 2040 is the Town’s comprehensive land use comprehensive plan aimed at providing smart growth strategies for an expanding Elon. The Town’s current land use, infrastructure, housing and commercial market, and assets are evaluated and translated into recommendations. Proceeding the assessments, the recommendations aim at improving and updating the previously composed Downtown Master Plan and Land Development Ordinance, implementing appropriate Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan recommendations, and conducting studies for the infrastructure and Town-owned properties.



Bicycle, Pedestrian and Lighting Plan, 2017 Update

The Bicycle, Pedestrian and Lighting Plan is intended to “identify and prioritize key opportunities for improving Elon’s bicycle, pedestrian, and lighting systems over the next 20 years.” The Plan identifies an organization framework and stakeholder roles to assist with plan implementation. Recreation and Park’s role is identified as “Education and enforcement programs”. The plan includes a prioritized list of sidewalk projects gives preference to projects that are near or within parks. This plan prioritizes the connection between Lawrence Slade Park and Beth Schmidt Park.



Elon Downtown Master Vision Plan

The historic center of Elon is located immediately adjacent to Elon University. In 2014, the Downtown Elon Master Vision Plan was composed to identify and place-make a commonly-known downtown district for Elon where residents could dine, shop, manage civic functions, and live within an easily maneuverable area. A primary goal of the plan was to create an identity for downtown Elon that is independent from, but complementary to the University. The plan recommends that a town commons area be located central to downtown for community gatherings and events.

RELEVANT POLICY REVIEW

The following policies include Town and County policies that inform land use and land development, including parkland, within the Town.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

According to the Town of Elon's Land Development Ordinance, adopted in 2004 and amended in 2018, open spaces and alternative forms of transportation are important concepts to consider when developing new areas or enhancing existing areas. Ordinances address these goals by ensuring that every neighborhood has access to a park, square, or other open space while creating paths and trails that connect neighborhoods internally and to a greater trail and greenway system.

Open space within the Town of Elon and the extraterritorial jurisdiction is considered as either urban open space or rural open space. Each designation describes the character and programming specific to the location. Depending on the character and usage of a proposed development, 15 to 30 percent of all land within a development must be dedicated to open space.

The Town of Elon's Board of Aldermen may either accept or reject Town ownership of any proposed open space. If the Town rejects ownership, the open space ownership falls onto the homeowners' association of the development.

Urban open spaces are those in developed areas with public access easily available. Examples of these spaces are community playgrounds, squares and plazas. As defined in the Land Development Ordinance, urban open spaces are to be no more than one-quarter mile from a residential building.

Rural open spaces are to serve as conservation or access to natural elements via trails or nature parks. These open spaces are exemplified by stream buffers, historical rural heritage features (mature trees, hedgerows, pastures, rock outcrops, etc.), and nature parks.



OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

The operations and maintenance analysis identifies opportunities for improvement and key performance indicators for the agency. The intent of the review is to determine how the agency operates, how it functions as an organization, how organizational design affects operations to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness for the future.

Parks and recreation agencies continue to face a multitude of growing market demands including providing a superior customer experience, addressing the needs of neighborhoods, capital development project management, keeping up with changing industry regulatory requirements, and attracting and retaining the best possible employees. Challenges such as cost recovery, customer retention, expenditure reduction, brand awareness and consistency, and technology applications are opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of service.

The Town currently offers parks and recreation services, but these services are not part of a formal town department. The Town has expressed interest in establishing a fully functional recreation and parks department to manage services and help the system evolve with public input. This process included a review of policies, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, interviews with key staff and site visits.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Town of Elon provides services at two parks. Named after two distinguished Elon residents, Beth Schmidt and Lawrence Slade. Beth Schmidt served the Town of Elon for over thirty-years in various capacities including Town Manager and Mayor. Lawrence Slade is one of the longest serving Aldermen in Elon history, serving 20 years before his retirement in 2011.

The well-visited Beth Schmidt Park (Schmidt Park) opened in 2005 and was the town's first recreational facility. It boasts the largest playground in the area with over 60 accessible components. Other amenities include a walking trail, disc golf, and indoor and outdoor rental facilities with restrooms. In 2006, the Town opened Alamance County's first dog park which is located at the park.

Morgan Place Park was purchased from Alamance County in 2008 and renamed Lawrence Slade Park at Morgan Place (Slade Park) in 2012. Slade Park received a complete renovation in 2014 and offers a collegiate size Frank Haith, Jr. signature outdoor basketball court, amphitheater, picnic shelters with nearby restrooms, bocce ball courts, corn hole courts, walking track and a playground.

TOWN OF ELON FACILITIES + AMENITIES

- › Heritage place community center
- › 1-mile walking and jogging trail
- › 2 playgrounds
- › Amphitheater
- › K-9 Corner Dog Park
- › Loy Garden
- › Basketball court with 6 hoops
- › 2 picnic shelters
- › 2 picnic pavilions
- › 2 bocce ball courts
- › Restrooms
- › Gazebo
- › Disc golf course
- › Cornhole courts

RECREATION + PARKS OPERATIONS

This Operational Analysis seeks to identify opportunities for town leaders and staff to improve the experience of residents and visitors alike. This includes looking for best practices that lead to efficiency, cost containment, and increased capacity for the Town to meet increasing demands. In addition, recommendations will

focus on optimizing operational performance, which is particularly important when budget constraints limit resources. Properly aligning people, processes, resources, and technology with the right strategy will help staff meet and exceed expectations.

GOVERNANCE

The Town of Elon operates as a Council-Manager form of government. The Board of Alderman includes an elected mayor and five elected board members. The Board appoints the Town Manager who supervises town staff and oversees the day-

to-day functions of the Town. The Recreation and Parks Commission functions as a citizen advisory board. It was formed via ordinance which can be found in Section 2.45 of the Elon Town Code of Ordinances.

MANAGEMENT

Parks and recreation services are important to the vitality of a community. These spaces, programs, and events bring the community together to share experiences. How the Town plans, prepares, implements, and develops parks and recreation services should positively impact residents and businesses.

Elon's continued investments in recreation and parks services have resulted in benefits the whole community enjoys. This investment has increased maintenance and management responsibilities for parks, programs, events, facilities and amenities. Departmental growth requires additional internal capacity for stakeholder and customer service, finances, equipment maintenance and

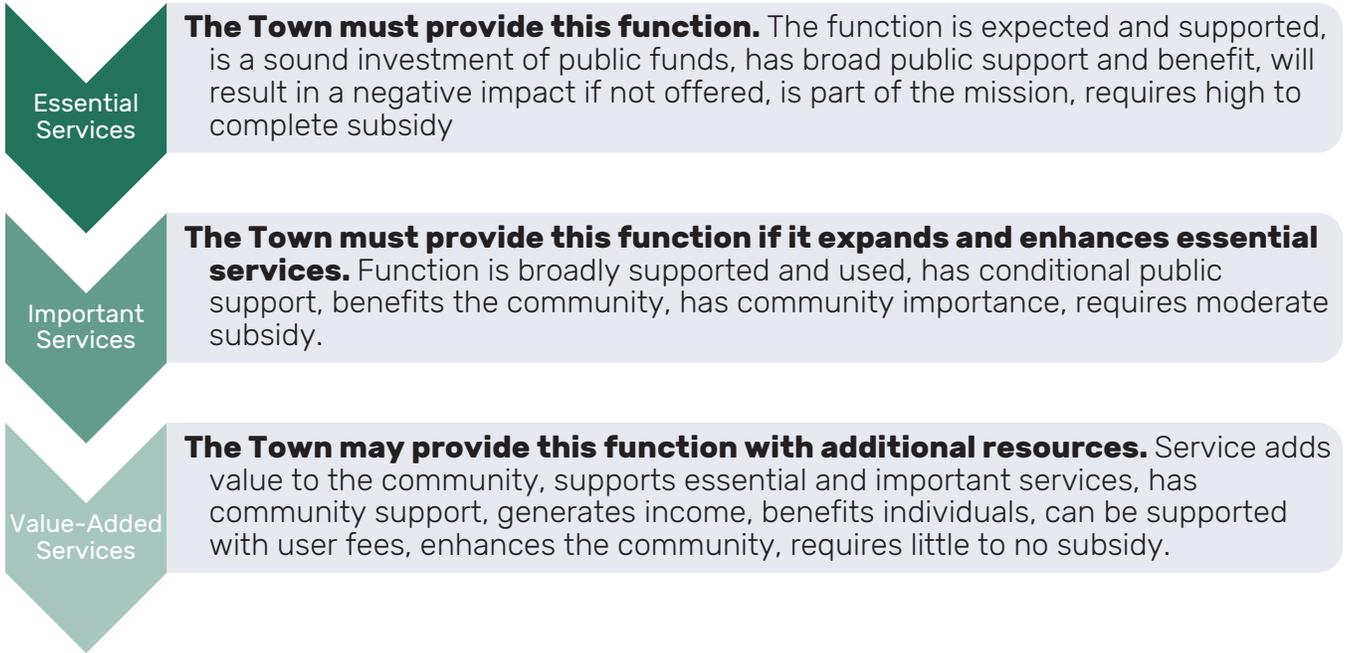
acquisition, and human resources.

Elon has a reputation of safety and cleanliness in recreation and parks management. Recreation programs are provided on a limited basis and staff assist with special events. The Town makes intentional improvements and growth to be responsible with its resources. This includes recent efforts to improve accessibility within the parks. This responsible growth has kept operations manageable and services are delivered with high quality. This approach to quality has increased use and demand for services. Leaders and staff see the need to explore opportunities for Town operations to evolve.

CLASSIFYING FUNCTIONS

This analysis uses a functional classification analysis to analyze the roles of recreation and parks. The following criteria are used to determine

what are the essential, important, and value-added functions the town provides.



INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

CORE FUNCTIONS

Core functions are those programs, functions and facilities the town must provide or are essential to capably govern recreation and parks. Failure to provide a core function at an adequate level would

result in a significant negative consequence relative to the Town’s health and safety or economic and community vitality.

CRITERIA	TOWN OF ELON CORE FUNCTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The function is mandated by law, by Charter or is contractually obligated by agreement › The function is essential to protecting and supporting the public’s health and safety › The function protects and maintains valuable Town assets and Infrastructure › The town’s residents, businesses customers and partners would generally and reasonably expect and support the Town in providing the function, and that function is one that cannot or should not be provided by the private sector, and provides a sound investment of public funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Park maintenance: mowing, trimming, trash removal, repairs and asset maintenance › Facility maintenance: cleaning, repairs and asset preservation › Trail maintenance: cleaning, repairs, tree removal and trimming › Horticulture maintenance: planting, watering, mulching, edging and pruning › Snow Removal: plowing, shoveling and salting walkways › Community Center Operations: reservations, staffing, inspection and schedule management › Volunteer management › Customer service › Accounts receivable and payable › Policy and procedure management › Budget development

IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS

Important functions are those programs, functions, and facilities the Town should provide, and are important to effectively serving residents, businesses, customers and partners. Providing

important functions expands or enhances the ability to provide and sustain the Town’s core functions, health and safety, and economic and community vitality

CRITERIA	TOWN OF ELON IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The function provides, expands, enhances or supports identified core essential functions › The function is broadly supported and used by the community › The function is considered an appropriate, important, and valuable public good. Public support may be conditional upon how the function is paid for or funded › The function generates income or revenue that offsets some or all of its operating cost or is deemed to provide an economic, social or environmental outcome or result within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Recreation programs › Special event management › User registration › Facility rentals › Print and digital marketing › Social network management › Sponsorship and partnership management

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

VALUE-ADDED FUNCTIONS

Value-Added functions are discretionary programs, functions and facilities that the Town may provide when additional funding or revenue exists to offset the cost of providing those

functions. Value-Added functions provide added value to our residents, businesses, customers and partners above and beyond what is required or expected of a municipal agency .

CRITERIA	TOWN OF ELON VALUE- ADDED FUNCTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The function expands, enhances or supports Core Essential Functions and Important Functions, and the quality of life of the community › The function is supported and well-used and provides an appropriate and valuable public benefit › The function generates income or funding from sponsorships, grants, user fees or other sources that offsets some or all of its cost or provides a meaningful economic, social or environmental benefit to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Currently no value-added functions.

STAFFING

The positive response to the town’s recreation and parks investments have stretched current staffing levels. To fill operational gaps, other Town Departments have been supportive with events, public safety, and projects. Current Recreation and Parks services staff have been a stronghold to make sure all essential functions are happening through communication and follow up. This communication is intentional and includes staff in conversations regarding operational improvements and capital projects. Staff conduct weekly team meetings to ensure the most complete coordination. Recreation and

parks operates with two full-time positions, a full-time public works department position, part-time staff, and volunteers. In the summer of 2018 the Town added the second full-time position who leads programming. Staff have requested funding for a second part-time staff member in the next fiscal year.

The Town relies on the Public Works Department for maintaining assets within the park system. Communication between the Public Works Department and Recreation and Parks is strong and contributes to the successful delivery of services.

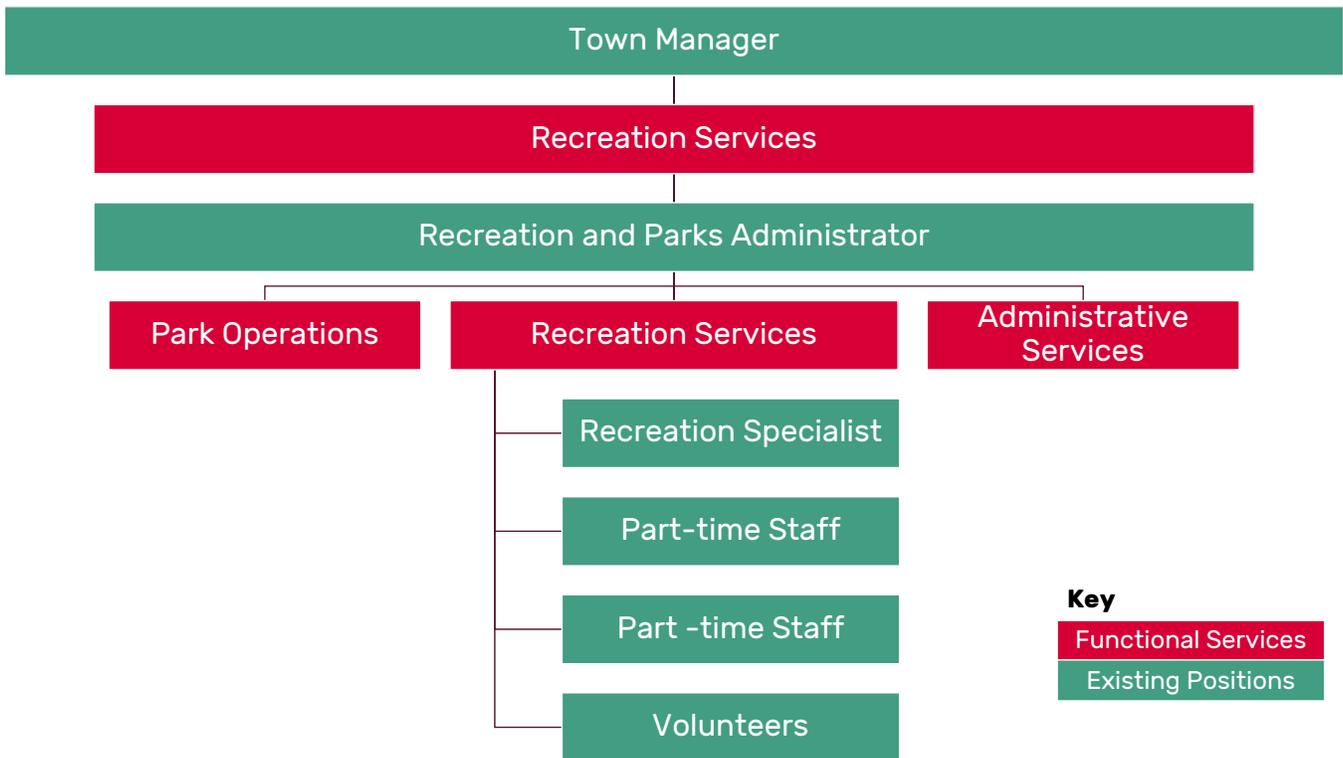


Figure 1 – Current organizational chart for Town of Elon recreation and parks operations

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Town's recreation and parks services follows all applicable Town policies and standard operating procedures. Approved plans, policies and procedures are the foundational direction for staff in providing services. Staff have identified the need for recreation and parks specific policies to

provide direction on new and increased requests from the public. The Town has already developed a special event policy to help manage the requests and meet requirements of the Town and public safety to minimize logistical challenges impacting the general public during the festivities.

TECHNOLOGY

The Town currently uses common software and technology in today's industry for inspections, operations, and reporting. Recreation and Parks has social media platforms established with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The use of these social media platforms to share information with the community is adequate and the Town is also developing proficiency in the 311 service for resident communication. 311 is a non-emergency

phone number that people can call in many cities to find information about services, make complaints, or report problems like graffiti or road damage. It is also available as a mobile application. The Town is looking at 311 to assist with internal operations. These 311 internal operations include data collection similar to a work order system, that could help improve how the Town manages services.



FINANCES

This financial analysis reviews the revenues, expenditures, and capital improvement budgets for the Town of Elon’s parks and recreation budgets and spending. This analysis identifies trends over time and informs decision-making in two ways:

- › Historical data informs projections of future performance.
- › Spending and budget information informs parks and recreation roles and responsibilities that will be in the Town’s best interest moving forward.

METHODOLOGY

The planning team reviewed the following information for the financial analysis:

- › Expense Budget Spreadsheet with actuals (FY2015 through FY2019)
- › Capital Improvement Plan (FY2018 through FY2022)

The financial analysis includes data from the past 5 fiscal years and projects future expectations from these historical trends. This report includes actuals for FY2015 through FY 2018, and includes budgeted numbers for FY2019.

REVENUES

The Town of Elon generates revenue from recreation and parks activities through reservations and those funds are deposited into the Town’s General Fund. The facilities

fee structure is below. Revenues are small by comparison to the budget and were not part of this review.

FACILITY	RESERVATION FEE	DEPOSIT	RENTAL DURATION	DAILY RENTAL PERIODS
Beth Schmidt Park Picnic Pavilion	\$50	\$50 cleaning	4 hours	2
Beth Schmidt Park Picnic Shelter #1	\$25	\$50 cleaning	4 hours	2
Loy Homestead Garden	\$50	\$50 cleaning	9 hours	1
Beth Schmidt Park Gazebo	\$50	\$50 cleaning	9 hours	1
Heritage Place Community Center	\$150	\$75 cleaning	6 hours	2
Lawrence Slade Park Restoration Shelter	\$25	\$50 cleaning	4 hours	2
Lawrence Slade Park Red Hill Hut Shelter	Free	N/A	4 hours	2

Table 3 – Reservation fee structure

EXPENDITURES

There is an allocation for expenditures that is set each year for recreation and parks services within the town's General Fund. Expenditures have been captured in the table below. Expenditures for supplies and materials, equipment, maintenance and repair, events, and capital outlay have

decreased over the analysis period. However, the overall expenditures have increased 117 percent. Recent investments to the recreation and parks system have contributed to the increase in expenses.

CATEGORY	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (BUDGETED)	% CHANGE
PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES						
Park Salary	\$65,595.28	\$72,662.51	\$61,381.95	\$74,533.44	\$123,000	88%
FICA Tax Expense	\$4,572.11	\$5,426.39	\$4,638.59	\$5,655.29	\$9,500	108%
401 K Supplemental Insurance	\$2,633.73	\$2,871.31	\$2,817.11	\$3,490.40	\$5,900	124%
NC Local Govt Retirement	\$3,748.81	\$3,929.88	\$4,129.81	\$5,263.59	\$9,200	145%
Medical/Dental Insurance	\$8,901.56	\$8,492.13	\$6,396.27	\$8,448.03	\$20,300	128%
Workers Compensation	\$380.50	\$598.00	\$595.00	\$1,324.00	\$2,500	557%
OPERATING EXPENDITURES						
Parks						
Janitorial Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,528.47	\$2,667.98	\$2,700	7%
Maintenance + Repair Buildings	\$4,288.38	\$1,774.72	\$15,247.41	\$2,162.54	\$6,500	52%
Maintenance + Repair Equipment	\$1,624.10	\$287.91	\$182.83	\$307.30	\$1,000	-38%
Maintenance + Repair Vehicles	\$688.77	\$0.00	\$29.98	\$316.93	\$1,000	45%
Maintenance + Repair Grounds	\$15,615.30	\$28,813.36	\$33,760.92	\$19,327.29	\$39,048	150%
Janitorial Service	\$3,402.81	\$5,328.95	\$7,245.00	\$7,119.90	\$7,500	120%
Contracted Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,515.00	\$25,924.40	\$49,075	1296%
Recreation						
Supplies + Materials	\$4,237.94	\$2,465.87	\$2,851.04	\$2,613.39	\$4,000	-6%
Equipment	\$0.00	\$5,846.09	\$14,062.51	\$2,383.22	\$2,000	-66%
Travel + Training	\$816.32	\$570.00	\$170.00	\$1,105.09	\$1,500	84%
Telephone Expense	\$3,373.25	\$3,012.39	\$3,049.98	\$3,060.41	\$4,600	36%
Advertising	\$2,337.40	\$5,334.42	\$8,497.29	\$7,508.71	\$10,200	336%
Electricity	\$11,496.53	\$10,697.70	\$10,483.07	\$9,978.20	\$15,000	30%
Utilities (Gas and Water)	\$2,948.32	\$3,029.36	\$2,221.24	\$2,513.15	\$4,000	36%
Events	\$15,607.13	\$16,129.95	\$11,440.12	\$11,561.95	\$12,000	-23%
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
Capital Outlay	\$0.00	\$19,160.21	\$12,688.85	\$9,057.47	\$0	-53%
TOTAL BUDGET	\$152,268.24	\$196,431.15	\$207,932.44	\$206,322.68	\$330,523	117%

Table 4 – Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Expenditures

PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES

Personnel expenditures have increased almost \$13,000 from FY2015 to FY2018. The trend indicates that personnel expenditures will continue to increase in the future. This will be especially accurate if the Town continues with recommend staff expansion and brings park maintenance under the formalized Recreation and Parks Department. This increase is significant but indicates an investment in parks and recreation and the excellent customer service residents expect.

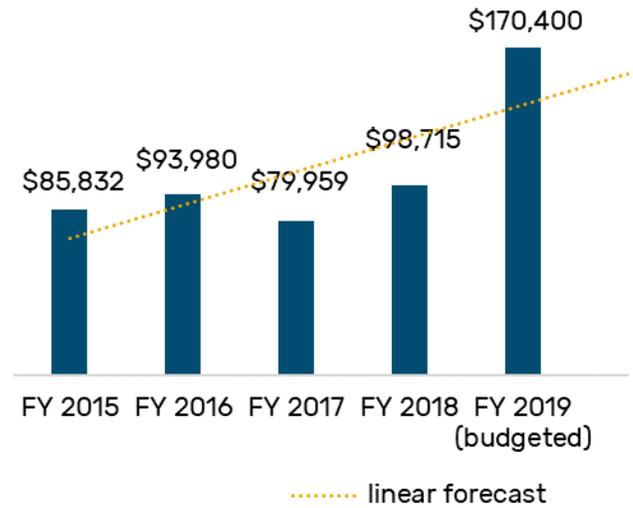


Figure 2 – Personnel expenditures

PERSONNEL EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES

Personnel expenditures are commonly known in the service industry as a key operational performance measure. Staffing expenditures

have been between 38 percent and 52 percent during the analysis period.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (BUDGETED)
Personnel Costs	\$85,832	\$93,980	\$79,959	\$98,715	\$170,400
Percent of Total Expenditures	56%	48%	38%	48%	52%

Table 5 – Personnel expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures

UTILITIES EXPENDITURES

Utilities expenditures show a decrease of more than \$2,000 from FY2015 to FY2018. It is not unusual for this to fluctuate from year to year as utility increases are not uncommon. In some instances, the utilities can be decreased with the transition from older infrastructure to newer technology for more efficient operations, such as transitioning florescent lighting to LED lighting.

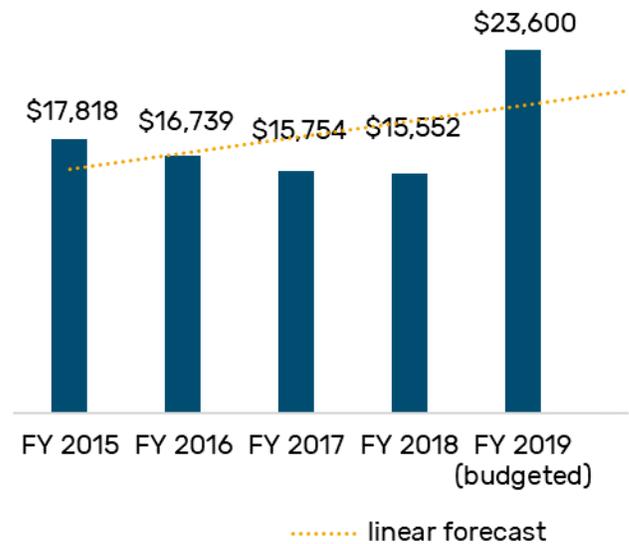


Figure 3 - Utilities expenditures

TRAVEL AND TRAINING EXPENDITURES

Travel and training refer to professional development and associated expenditures. These are typically between one and two percent of the total expenditures. Currently, the Town is at 0.54 percent the total for professional development and associated expenses. Expenditures are trending upward.

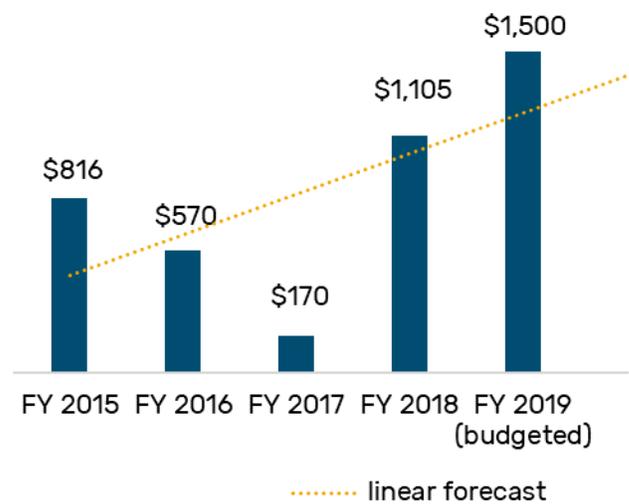


Figure 4 - Travel and training expenditures

ADVERTISING EXPENDITURES

Advertising expenditures have increased 221 percent from FY2015 to FY2018. This is an increase of \$5,171. This expenditure represents 3.64 percent of overall expenses.

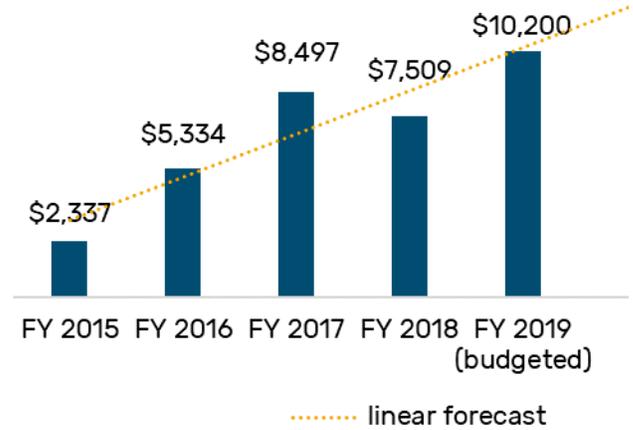


Figure 5 – Advertising expenditures

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR EXPENDITURES

Maintenance and repair expenditures have fluctuated from FY2015 to FY2018. This is not uncommon as maintenance is reactive to observations of wear and tear on facilities, amenities and parks. Overall the maintenance and repair expenditures are trending up.

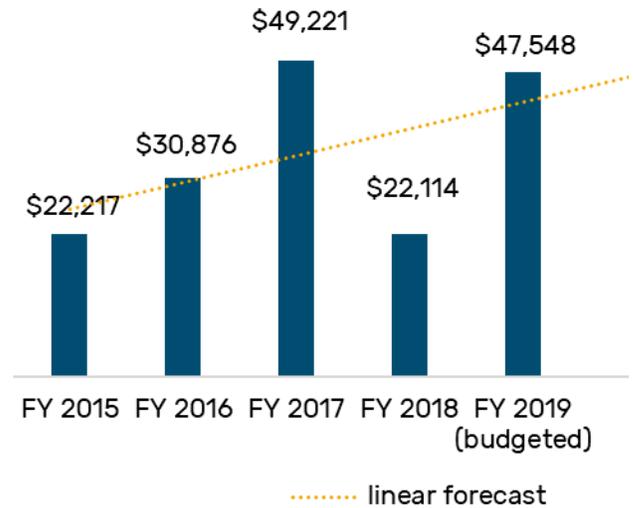


Figure 6 – Maintenance and repair expenditures

CONTRACTED SERVICES EXPENDITURES

Contracted services expenditures include janitorial services and other contracted services. These expenditures have increased from FY2015 to FY2018. The upward trend is likely due to recent improvements to recreation and park system.

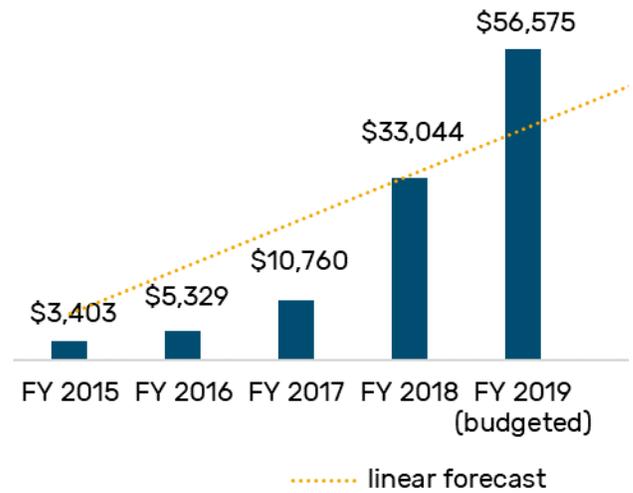


Figure 7 - Contracted services expenditures

SUPPLIES EXPENDITURES

Supplies and equipment expenditures have fluctuated from FY2015 to FY2018. It is not uncommon as some of these are consumable supplies and there are instances where additional one-time purchases of equipment is necessary. Currently, this expenditure is trending upward slightly.

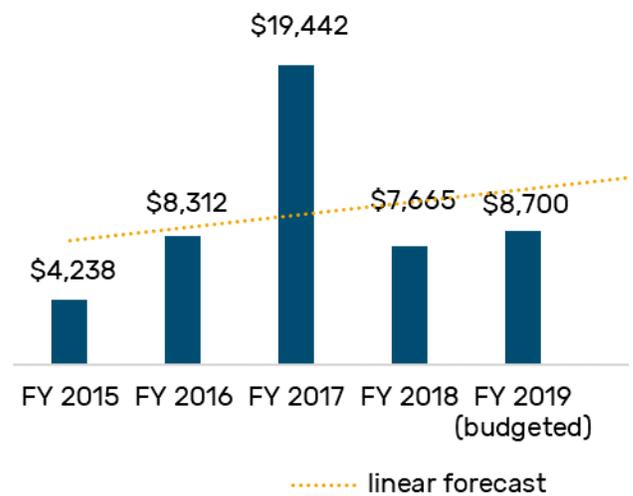


Figure 8 - Supplies expenditures

EVENTS EXPENDITURES

Events expenditures are trending downward. From FY2015 to FY2018, the events expenditure has decreased over \$4,000. Expenses can be expected to increase when implementing new programs and events.

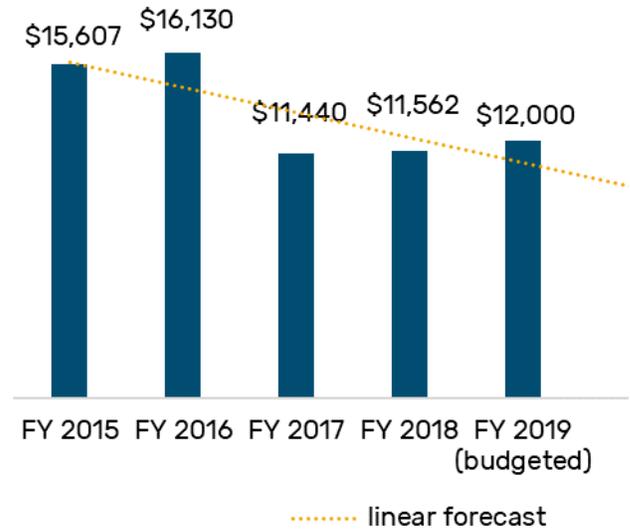


Figure 9 - Events expenditures

CAPITAL OUTLAY EXPENDITURES

Capital outlay expenditures may fluctuate based on annual planned capital improvements. Capital improvements expenditures have decreased more than \$10,000 from FY2016 to FY2018. There is an overall downward trend. Implementing this plan's recommendations will require an increase in capital outlay expenditures.

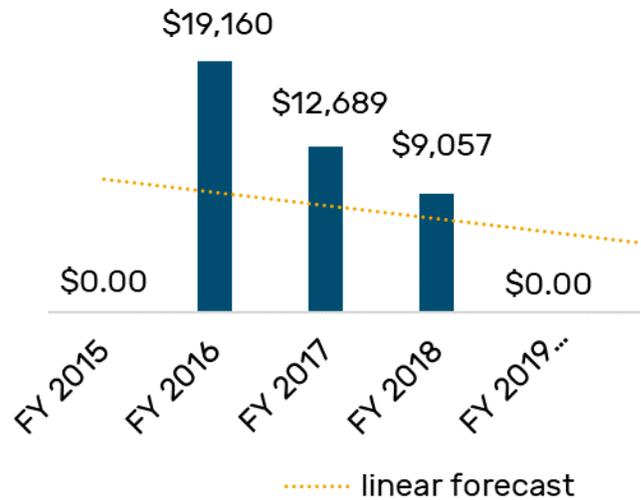


Figure 10 - Capital outlay expenditures

CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDING

The Town has identified capital improvement projects through the fiscal year 2022 annual budget as seen in Figure 17. Most of the projects include park and amenity improvements, new development, replacing and repairing aging amenities and constructing or repairing walkway connections make up the majority of projects. The total capital improvement budget through 2022 is \$343,300.

The Department relies on Capital funding from multiple sources including:

- › Grants
- › Account 10.80.6300.2620
- › Account 10.80.6300.3590
- › Account 10.80.6300.5000
- › Account 10.80.6300.5010

PROJECT ALLOCATIONS:	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	5-YEAR TOTAL
Basketball court maintenance at Slade Park	-	-	-	\$9,950	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$9,950
Connor property purchase	-	\$140,000	-	-	-		\$140,000
Playground equipment	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	10.80.6300.2620	\$31,000
Community Center stucco façade	-	\$6,500	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3510	\$6,500
Slade Park parking	-	\$5,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$5,000
Disc golf course replacement and improvement	-	\$5,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$5,000
Patio and sidewalk addition at Schmidt Community Center	-	\$5,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$5,000
Storage and concession 10X12 at Slade Park	-	\$5,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$5,000
Standalone restroom roof	-	-	\$2,000	-	-	10.80.6300.3510	\$2,000
Schmidt Park entrance sign design and construction	-	\$11,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$11,000
Add Schmidt Park event parking	-	\$10,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$10,000
Event and signage near dog park	-	\$7,500	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$7,500
Bay for lawn equipment and truck at Schmidt Park	-	-	\$9,000	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$9,000
Vehicle and gated utility trailer	-	\$25,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.5000	\$25,000
Schmidt Park connect sidewalk at CC to gazebo	-	-	\$8,400	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$8,400
Schmidt Park connect sidewalk (gazebo to Cook Rd.)	-	-	-	-	\$19,550	10.80.6300.3590	\$19,550
Schmidt Park connect sidewalk (playground to Cook Rd.)	-	-	-	\$3,700	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$3,700
Schmidt Park connect inside loop	-	-	-	\$4,700	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$4,700
Tree / vegetation and markers	\$5,000	-	-	-	-	TBD	\$5,000
Paved trails with compressed CH grit	-	\$5,000	-	-	-	10.80.6300.3590	\$5,000
Rubber mulch in playground	-	-	-	-	\$15,000	10.80.6300.3590	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$10,000	\$91,000	\$35,400	\$25,350	\$41,550		\$343,300

Table 6 – Town of Elon 5-year capital improvement plan for recreation and parks

REVENUE AND FUNDING STRATEGIES

This plan identifies funding strategies with the greatest potential to address the internal and external needs identified through the planning process. Funding strategies include capital funding and operations and maintenance funding. Capital funding strategies help to

create or upgrade new parks and amenities, and operations and maintenance funding expands the operating budget to increase programming or introduce new programming. A discussion of funding sources is included in the Appendix.

CAPITAL FUNDING STRATEGIES

- › Impact fees
- › Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants (LWCF)
- › Recreation Trails Program (RTP)
- › Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)
- › Local nonprofit foundation grants
- › Property taxes
- › Interlocal agreement
- › Crowdfunding
- › Special fundraisers
- › Capital fees
- › Development and redevelopment fees
- › Equipment rental
- › Hotel tax
- › Sales tax
- › Food and beverage tax
- › Greenway utilities
- › Naming rights
- › Leasebacks
- › Easements

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING STRATEGIES

- › Corporate sponsorship
- › Partnerships
- › Foundation gifts
- › Private donations
- › Friends' groups
- › Volunteerism
- › Fees and charges
- › Special use permits
- › Reservations
- › Interlocal agreement
- › Concession management
- › Private concessionaire
- › Advertising sales

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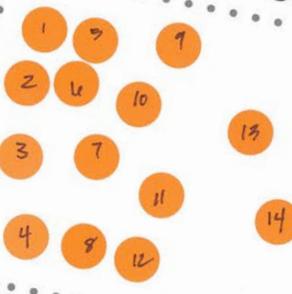
FOR SPECIAL EVENTS



IT IS A GREAT PLACE FOR ENJOYING



REAT PLACE TO PLAY ORGANIZED SPORTS



IT IS A PLACE I FEEL SAFE VISITING



PLACE FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



IT IS EASY TO GET TO THIS PARK FROM WORK OR



5

community engagement



CHAPTER 5 > COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community input is an essential part of any planning process and the most effective plans are firmly rooted in the realities and visions of the communities that create them. This plan uses a combination of input from community members, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee, and Town of Elon staff to inform the community engagement portion of the information-gathering process.

METHODOLOGY

The Department and project team designed the public engagement process to maximize the amount of input and feedback from community members and Department staff. The process was intended to be equitable and inclusive, offering a variety of input opportunities and methods for all community members to have a comfortable platform for expressing their input.

Each meeting with community members and town staff has its own purpose and outcomes. Meetings at the beginning of the planning process had a broad approach with the Town and project team intending to inform attendees about the planning process and solicit input regarding community values, customer satisfaction and the recreational needs and wants of the community. Meetings later in the process took a more focused approach, seeking feedback on proposed recommendations.

The community input process included a statistically valid survey which polled a representative portion of Elon's population. The survey provides an opportunity to reach individuals who would not typically attend a meeting or otherwise participate in a public engagement process.

The public engagement process included the following elements:

- > Three open houses
- > One staff meeting
- > One steering committee meeting
- > Stakeholder interviews
- > Statistically valid survey

PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS

DATES

April 3, June 5,
September 27

37
ATTENDEES

PURPOSE

To solicit input regarding community values, satisfaction and recreational needs and wants.

BIG IDEAS

Community Values

- › People + Community
- › Environment + Nature
- › Health + Fitness

Reasons for visiting parks

- › It is a great place for enjoying nature
- › It is a relaxing and peaceful environment
- › It is a great place for special events

Programs residents would like to see

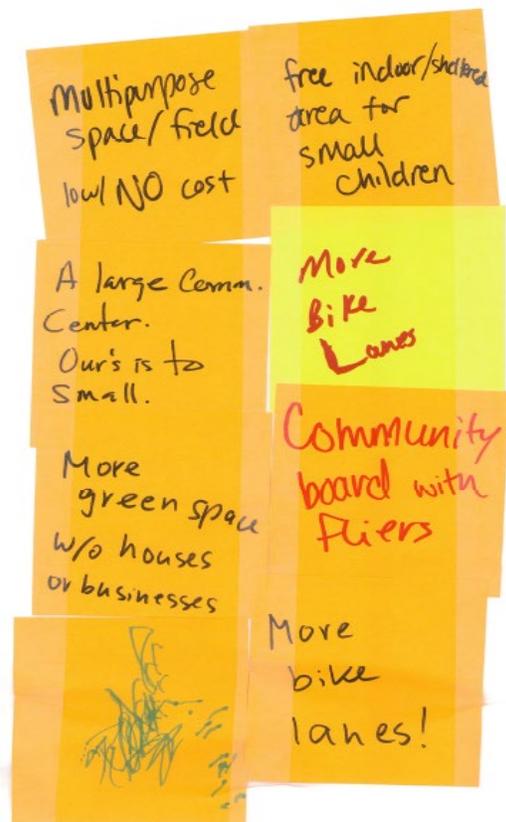
- › Outdoor music and concerts
- › All ages fitness + wellness
- › Afterschool + summer camp

Amenities residents would like to see

- › Greenways + trails
- › Dog park
- › Multipurpose fields
- › Outdoor amphitheater
- › Gymnasium or indoor facility space
- › Classroom, meeting + event space

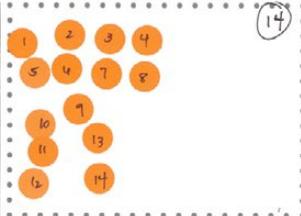
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Community engagement identified a strong sense of community satisfaction with the town’s current recreation and parks offerings. Residents acknowledge that the playground at Beth Schmidt Park is one of the best playgrounds in the area, and that they enjoy attending community events the Town hosts. The community input indicates a need for expanded greenway trails, indoor facility space, youth programming for afterschool events. The responses identify a need for outdoor amphitheater and outdoor music and concerts indicates the potential for expanding the town’s current outdoor music and movie offerings.

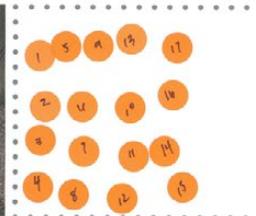




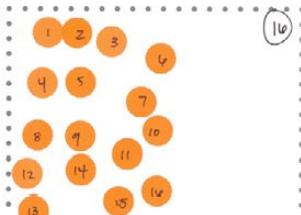
IT IS A GREAT PLACE FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



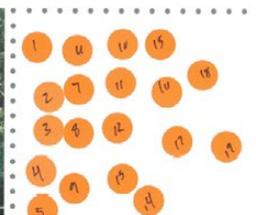
IT IS A GREAT PLACE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



IT IS A GREAT PLACE FOR SPECIAL EVENTS



IT IS A GREAT PLACE FOR ENJOYING NATURE



COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

DATE

Distributed for approximately three weeks during the fall of 2018

305
RESPONDENTS*

PURPOSE

To solicit feedback on the recreational needs and wants of the community. Responses are reflective of the town's demographics.

BIG IDEAS

High priority facilities

- › Greenway trail system
- › Nature trails
- › Indoor fitness + exercise facilities
- › Senior center
- › Community gardens

High priority youth programs

- › Youth + teen sports programs
- › Special events + family festivals
- › Outdoor music + concerts
- › Outdoor adventure programs
- › Art, dance, performing arts programs
- › Aquatic programs

High Priority adult programs

- › Adult fitness + wellness programs
- › Outdoor music + concerts
- › Special events + family festivals
- › Senior citizen programs

METHODOLOGY

A survey contractor mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in the Town of Elon. Each survey packet contained a cover letter signed by the Town Manager, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey could return the survey by mail or complete it online. A detailed description of ETC Institute's methodology for ensuring statistically valid results is contained in the Appendix.

*Number of responses:

305 residents responded, exceeding a goal of 300 residents. A survey sample of 305 has a precision of +/-5.6 percent at a 95 percent level of confidence.

SUMMARY

Nearly half of Elon’s residents indicate their household uses facilities every couple of months. Six percent use them once a week, nine percent use them a few times a week, 16 percent use them once a month, and 20 percent use them a few times a month. Twenty-two percent of

respondents indicated their household has participated in a special event during the past 12 months. Ninety percent of respondents indicated the quality of the special event their household participated in was excellent or good.

The survey asked about public perceptions of the Town’s parks and recreation offerings:



Respondents indicated that their willingness to pay for Town of Elon parks and recreation facilities and programs were as follows:



willing to pay a fee for town programming



willing to pay a tax increase for new programs



willing to pay tax increase for new facilities

Respondents indicated that they learn about Town of Elon parks and recreation offerings in the following ways:



banners in public places



Town of Elon newsletter



word of mouth

Respondents indicated that they do not use Town of Elon parks and recreation offerings more frequently because of the following barriers:



lack information about offerings



do not have enough time



not interested in what is provided

RECREATION + PARKS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATES

May 11, 2018

9
ATTENDEES

PURPOSE

To introduce the planning process and present the results of the inventory and analysis phase to this stakeholder group selected by town staff

BIG IDEAS

The Town hosts great events that provide a large amount of community benefit

Challenges with wayfinding. Except for the sign at Schmidt Park, residents or visitors may not know what is available

The new Town branding project will present an opportunity to create a recreation identity as well

Trails and connectivity are important to the Town

SUMMARY

The Advisory Committee meeting for the Town of Elon Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan began at noon on May 11, 2018 with the introduction of the project team. After introductions, the project team gave a summary of the comprehensive planning process, and project schedule. Then followed a discussion of strategic questions which the attendees discussed in small groups and then shared with the larger group. The project team recorded attendee responses. Stars next to responses indicate that multiple groups responded with that answer.

What are things the Department is currently doing well?

- › **Cleanliness:** Elon University students planned a cleanup day and had difficulty finding trash to clean up from the park. There is a good number of trash can furnishings throughout the park.
- › **Beautification:** Parks are well landscaped, and improvements are ongoing
- › **Events:** Events are fun and well-attended and for the whole family, especially families with younger kids. Events are a community effort and a good example of partnerships and local volunteer efforts.
- › **Safe environment:** Parks are well cared for and the Town of Elon is overall very safe. Beth Schmidt park is staffed. Schmidt is well-traveled, Slade is more isolated. Different programs at each park. Users in parks are there for the parks' intended uses. Expectations and rules are posted clearly at parks

If someone were visiting the Town of Elon, what would their overall impression of the park system be?

- › Where are the parks?
- › Elon Town limits are not well-defined leading to a challenge in whether park visitors even know they are visiting a Town of Elon park. It's not clear that Elon owns the parks
- › Where does Elon come from vs. where is Elon going? Do parks reflect this?
- › What is Elon's identity apart from Elon University? Association with the University provides benefits to the Town. Some people don't even know that Elon is a town. There is a need to be a part of but separate from the University.
- › No downtown gathering space and the area feels like a part of the University.
- › A new Town branding exercises is in progress.
- › Need a plan to connect the Town's two parks via a greenway
- › There are lots of opportunities for arts and culture
- › Desire for Elon to be known for walkability, connectivity, and parks.

Where do you see geographic gaps in parks and what park amenities can the Town provide to enhance the park system?

- › Trails: Trails for biking and hiking, a trail to connect the two parks, and trails to connect the parks to other civic destinations.
- › The Town wants to be known for a healthy lifestyle and a connected park system is a part of this vision. Want to be able to say "Elon is the best walkable community" – minimize parking constraints, take advantage of transportation funding, and build community bonds.
- › Need to determine what role the University plays in this plan.
- › Need for soccer fields; fields nearby aren't accessible
- › Rec leagues – is Elon big enough to support a rec league? Most youth participate in nearby sports leagues. Opportunities for partnering and improving/formalizing partnerships with adjacent towns.
- › University students use Elon parks for running and disc golf.
- › Trail connection to the Mountains to Sea Trail.
- › Sidewalks needed for students running. (Safety issue)

STAFF INPUT MEETINGS

DATE

June 28, 2018

PURPOSE

To receive detailed input on things the Department does well, things the Department could do better, and staff's impressions of external influences into how the Department operates.

BIG IDEAS

Town of Elon parks are well loved and currently serve a variety of Elon's needs

The Town expands their recreation impact by partnering with schools and maximizing their visibility

Programming is currently limited and there are no sports offerings

There are opportunities to expand the park system, but there is lots of competition in a small Town to incorporate projects into the CIP

Opportunity to create flexible spaces with multiple uses within an area to maximize use

New programming staff can expand program offerings

There is interest in a facility, but Town staff is uncertain that this is a feasible option for Elon

SUMMARY

Parks and Facilities Strengths

- › The Town is efficient with its recreation and parks budget
- › Parks are safe and clean, well-used and well-attended
- › Playgrounds, walking trails, accessible ADA and seniors, dog park
- › Variety of amenities at Beth Schmidt
- › Christmas in the park and Bunny Hop are well attended
- › Having staff onsite at Beth Schmidt Park is a huge asset
- › Nice meeting space
- › Listening + responsive staff + bringing in help when needed
- › Engaged community with ongoing communication
- › Visibility on main road
- › Interlocal agreements for school facilities
- › Elon has people who want to engage in parks and recreation programming

Parks and Facilities Weaknesses

- › Limited signage throughout town
- › Connections and connectivity - no accessibility across street to Gibsonville
- › Parking at large events at Slade Park. Both parks have overflow parking options.
- › What acreage is there and is it available for park development? Need to consider stormwater and impervious surface
- › Recreation and parks has limited staffing
- › Grants are a possible but there is a need for support administering and pursuing them and matching funds must already be budgeted to apply for many grants creating challenges for planning ahead.
- › No sports leagues currently
- › Limited parking at Slade Park (7 spots)
- › How can the Town establish itself as a park provider?

Parks and Facilities Opportunities

- › Recently acquire property near Schmidt Park
- › Skate park and bike area would be a beneficial amenity
- › Multi use area with flexible space
- › Disc golf - used to offer but needed to move. Redesign in progress
- › Community garden - is it something people want? (Statistically valid survey results indicate yes)
- › Partnerships - Alamance Wellness Collaborative, City of Burlington
- › Need for library space (digital) mobile library on site
- › Gauging interest in more permanent facility
- › Destination for children - child development
- › Role of parks in wellness, autonomy, value of play
- › Resource for community engagement, education and wellness
- › New staff for programming
- › Need for coordination between all recreation providers in Elon with a possibility for shared facilities with Twin Lakes, and Elon University
- › Connection between two parks
- › Neighborhood takes pride in parks, especially Slade Park
- › Investment in town
- › Opportunities for expansion of town into ETJ area and ability to incorporate green space during growth
- › Discussion of Alamance-wide sports league
- › New school with opportunity for park expansions
- › Updating UDO impact fees greenway + Developments

Parks and Facilities Threats

- › Competing priorities in a small-town CIP
- › New residents with ideas of what should be provided - balance with long-term residents
- › Scalability of Schmidt park success
- › Recreation and parks is a revenue and business development source
- › Quiet community
- › No tax revenue from Elon university or Twin Lakes
- › Market competition with other recreation and parks providers
- › Expanding ideas for recreation past "parks" only. Includes programming and other elements of town life.

Operations + Maintenance Strengths

- › Efficient with existing budget
- › Quality facilities are well maintained
- › Growth to date has occurred in a way that is manageable and maintainable.
- › Review process is currently done by Staff, they have a list of potential projects
- › Surveillance cameras
- › Public works very responsive
- › Contract: pond, deep clean, playground install, etc.
- › Ability to rent equipment for maintenance
- › Staff member is a certified equipment inspector
- › Budget determined annually based on past years
- › Fundraising capacity for capital improvements
- › Collaboration with nearby communities
- › Not duplicating services - but complementing

Operations + Maintenance Weaknesses

- › Facility rental tracking - manually and annually
- › Public works may have higher priorities (than R + P)
- › Education and communication, features, advantages, benefit
- › Customer service (only due to limited staff)
- › Storage - equipment - office
- › Storage becoming a safety issue - chairs - office
- › Staff has limited time for marketing
- › Competing priorities for \$
- › Staffing need below management level
- › Reservations haven't increased - determined informally
- › Complaint of needing additional shade at playground

Operations + Maintenance Opportunities

- › Satisfaction surveys for facility rentals and personal conversations
- › Comment box
- › People will call and use website for feedback
- › Online registration for rentals
- › 311 Work order system will become public
- › Performance measures Town-wide
- › Automated phone menu -reservations - info - work orders
- › Revenue recovery goals for upcoming fee schedule adoption
- › Additional training from horticultural expert for public works. Staff pursuing Master Gardener certification
- › Events are not revenue driven
- › Understand total cost of ownership
- › Save slide for replacement
- › Inventory management plan
- › Identify recreation niches
- › Growth of young professional families
- › University students want to use parks
- › Fundraising with adopt a tree (currently no guidelines) need better markers

Operations + Maintenance Threats

- › Challenge of resident versus non-resident fee structure because jurisdictions are so close
- › Property acquisition - need plan
- › Natural hazards or disasters
- › Implementing fees would be a challenge
- › Cost of ownership for future acquisitions.

STAFF INPUT MEETINGS

DATE

Winter 2018

37
ATTENDEES

PURPOSE

To receive strategic input from key individuals with specific knowledge and interest in recreation and parks planning in the surrounding communities.

BIG IDEAS

Strong network of service providers in Alamance County

Alamance County provides nature trails and paddle trails in the County

The City of Burlington has community facilities and is working to create a trail network linked with Elon

Twin Lakes provides amenities within a senior community. Potential for partnering to provide a joint facility.

Elon University is developing facilities and may have an expanded ability to partner for more public access in the future.

SUMMARY

Alamance County has a rich network of recreation and parks providers working in a close proximity. These groups have effectively managed their efforts to create offerings that complement what the town offers for recreation and parks services.

The Alamance County Wellness Collaborative is a network of agencies, organizations and health providers and creates health and wellness priorities that members can pursue within their own missions. The Town is an active member in the Collaborative, which means they are poised to access certain funding sources only available to Collaborative members. Impact Alamance is a foundation that is part of the Wellness Collaborative and funds projects in line with the Collaborative's goals. The Collaborative has a focus on the built environment, indicating that the Town can use this as a source of funding improvements to parks that improve health outcomes for the Town.

Alamance County is the location of two regional trails, the Haw River Trail and the Mountains to Sea Trail. While neither trail is located in the Town of Elon, Alamance County Parks and Recreation is heavily focused on providing this type of passive recreation amenity. The Town plans to commission a highest and best use study to determine the future of the 72-acre parcel in the northern portion of the ETJ. If the Town decides to use some portion of the property for passive recreation, there are opportunities to partner with Alamance County for planning, construction or maintenance of the park.

Partners mentioned the possibility of the Town of Elon negotiating a joint use agreement with the forthcoming elementary school construction. If Alamance County Schools is favorable to partnering with the Town, there is potential for providing a recreational field or facility that the Town could leverage for participation in the Alamance County collaborative youth sports league.

Other facilities that pose opportunities for partnerships include greenway trails with the City of Burlington, indoor recreation facility with the City of Burlington, senior recreation with Twin Lakes and indoor recreation facilities with Elon University.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The table below provides a summary of community input from various sources.

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY	COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING	STAFF + ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT
<p>High priority facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Greenway trail system › Nature trails › Indoor fitness + exercise facilities › Senior center › Community gardens <p>High priority youth programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Youth + teen sports programs › Special events + family festivals › Outdoor music + concerts › Outdoor adventure programs › Art, dance, performing arts programs › Aquatic programs <p>High Priority adult programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Adult fitness + wellness programs › Outdoor music + concerts › Special events + family festivals › Senior citizen programs 	<p>Community Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › People + Community › Environment + Nature › Health + Fitness <p>Reasons for visiting parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › It is a great place for enjoying nature › It is a relaxing and peaceful environment › It is a great place for special events <p>Programs residents would like to see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Outdoor music and concerts › All ages fitness + wellness › Afterschool + summer camp <p>Amenities residents would like to see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Greenways + trails › Dog park › Multipurpose fields › Outdoor amphitheater › Gymnasium or indoor facility space › Classroom, meeting + event space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The Town hosts great events that provide a large amount of community benefit › Challenges with wayfinding. Except for the sign at Schmidt Park, residents or visitors may not know what is available › The new Town branding project will present an opportunity to create a recreation identity as well › Trails and connectivity are important to the Town › Town of Elon parks are well loved and currently serve a variety of Elon’s needs › The Town expands their recreation impact by partnering with schools and maximizing their visibility › Programming is currently limited and there are no sports offerings › There are opportunities to expand the park system, but there is lots of competition in a small Town to incorporate projects into the CIP › Opportunity to create flexible spaces with multiple uses within an area to maximize use › New programming staff can expand program offerings › There is interest in an indoor facility, but Town staff is uncertain that this is feasible

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6

benchmarking +
level of service



CHAPTER 6 > BENCHMARKING + LEVEL OF SERVICE

A benchmarking analysis is a quantitative assessment of key data points from parks and recreation agencies with similar characteristics to the Town of Elon. This assessment uses data from the National Recreation and Parks Association which aggregates self-reported data from agencies across the country.

This benchmarking summary provides a valuable reference point for statistics associated with the management of parks and recreation departments. This analysis depicts raw data points and presents data as a ratio in order to provide appropriate context for interpreting statistics. For example, data related to department budgets is presented as operating cost alone and as operating cost per acre of parkland. The information included here can inform Town management's understanding of how the Department is functioning with the resources they have as compared to other departments.

METHODOLOGY

This summary uses characteristics and effectiveness of parks and recreation departments as a basis for comparison. It focuses on parkland, staffing levels, operating budget, capital budget and amenities. Programming is not included in the benchmarking report but is extensively detailed elsewhere in this plan. This report analyzes the following data points:

- › Developed and undeveloped park acreage – acreage the department provides
- › Trail mileage – mileage the department provides
- › Total park acres per full time equivalency – maintenance responsibility per staff member
- › Operating expense per park acre – funding available per park acre
- › Capital budget per park acre – funding available for investing in parkland and facility improvements and expansion

DATA SOURCE

The data in this analysis is from the National Recreation and Parks Association as part of their annual Park Metrics report that gathers self-reported data from agencies across the country and summarizes it into a report of national standards. The NRPA notes that the report “contains data from 1,069 park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported between 2015 and 2017. Note: Not all agencies answer every single question.” The data is presented as the median of all reported responses and the number of reported responses is included with each datapoint.

The NRPA describes their data source as “a suite of tools that help evaluate your agency’s performance, so you can more effectively manage and plan operating resources and capital facilities. You can use these tools to easily... compare your agency to others to gain more funding support, improve operations and better serve your community.” The NRPA encourages departments to use this data as a resource for decision-making but emphasizes that this information should not be used as a “final answer” for identifying a department’s best interests.

SELECTION PARAMETERS

The analysis uses the five following selection parameters to tailor the aggregate data to resemble the Town of Elon as closely as possible. Data is pulled in the aggregate for each parameter individually to create five individual datasets, rather than using all parameters to return one data set. This is for two reasons: first, there would be few to no communities that meet all selection parameters, and two, separating data out by

parameter creates a diversity of responses and each parameter suggests department dynamics that may inform decision-making based on the data. For example, an agency wanting to emphasize land banking, may emphasize the similar total park acres parameter whereas a department focused on programming may emphasize the similar FTEs parameter.

SELECTION PARAMETER	TOWN OF ELON	SUMMARY OF PARAMETER	METHOD OF DETERMINATION
Towns with similar budgets	\$317,400	\$302,000 to \$333,000	Town of Elon’s budget (+) and (-) 5 percent
Towns with similar number of parks	2	1 to 5 parks	General range
Towns with similar FTEs	3	1 to 5 FTEs	General range
Towns with similar populations	9,419*	9,000 to 10,000 population	Town of Elon’s population (+) and (-) 5 percent
Towns with similar population density	1,885	1,790 to 1,980 people per sq. mile	Town of Elon’s people per sq. mile (+) and (-) 5 percent

Table 1 - Selection Parameters

*This benchmarking summary uses the 2010 U.S. Census population estimate for the Town of Elon. All other population projections are based on the Envision Elon 2040 Report.

LIMITATIONS

As previously mentioned, the data included in this report is self-reported by agencies that opt-in to participating. This means that datasets may be incomplete and may contain inaccuracies. To acknowledge this limitation, the number of reporting agencies is included with each corresponding datapoint. With this information included, it is clear how many agencies the data

represents, and also indicates how many agencies have reported for a particular data point.

This report uses the median as the measure of central tendency to mitigate the influence of outliers and to mirror the NRPA’s methodology of using the median as the primary strategy for summarizing data.

ANALYSIS

This analysis draws benchmarking comparisons based on park acreage, trail mileage, full time equivalents and operating budgets.

PARK ACREAGE

The Town of Elon currently offers a standard of 2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, the lowest rate among similar communities. It appears as though the Town is offering a lesser amount of parkland than similar communities, but the parkland that the Town does offer is incredibly high quality and meticulously maintained. Both of Elon’s parks have a variety of high-quality amenities and structures available for reservation.

Regardless of the quality of the existing parkland, the significantly low ranking among communities with similar characteristics suggests that the Town should consider acquiring new acreage for parks or developing new parkland. The Town currently owns 27.9 acres of parkland.

SELECTION PARAMETERS	ACRES OF DEVELOPED PARKLAND PER 1,000
Town of Elon	2.5
Towns with similar budget	3.1
Towns with similar park number	8.5
Towns with similar FTEs	12.6
Towns with similar density	18.4
Towns with similar population	19.1
MEDIAN	10.5

Table 1 – Acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents.
 Source: National Recreation and Parks PRORAGIS

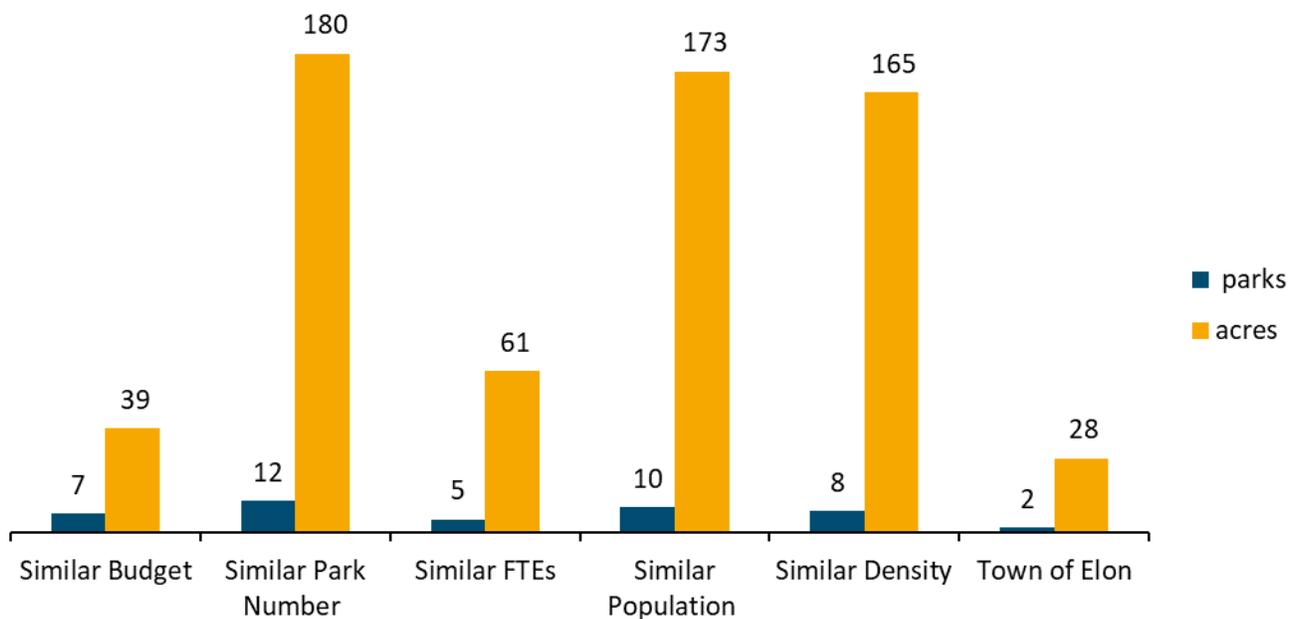


Figure 1 – Number of parks, acreage of parkland

Source: National Recreation and Parks PRORAGIS

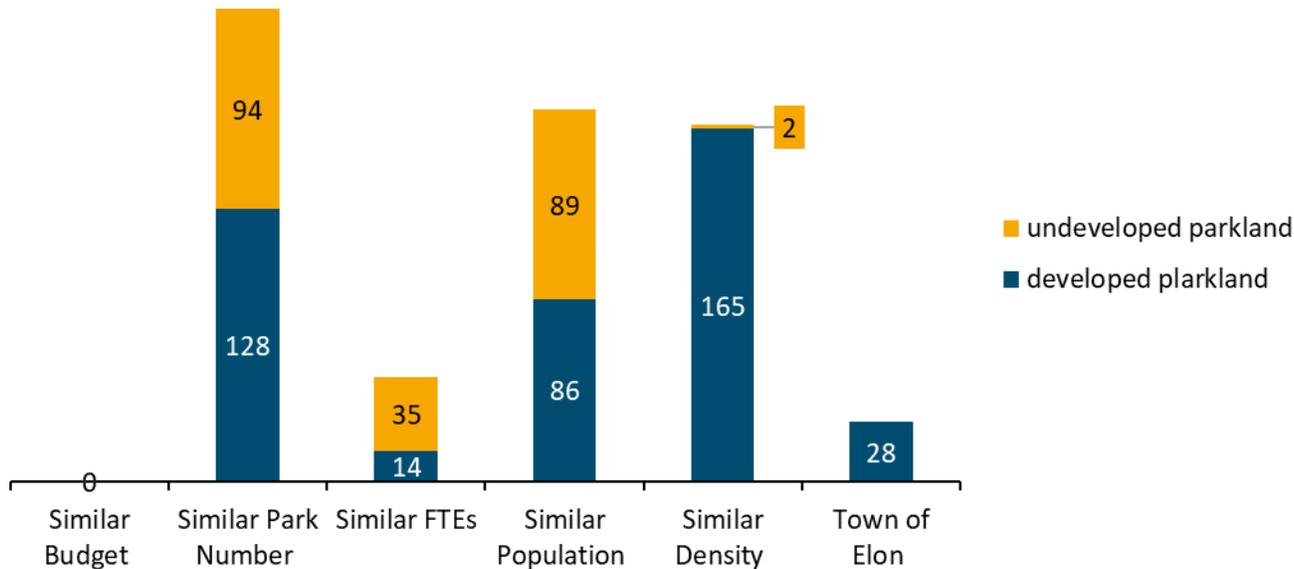


Figure 2 – Proportion of developed and undeveloped parkland

Source: National Recreation and Parks PRORAGIS. No data reported for parkland in communities with similar budgets.

NOTE: There were no reporting agencies for Communities with Similar Budgets.

TRAILS

The NRPA does not provide a ratio for trail miles per population, but communities do report on total trail miles offered. Trail miles counted here may be paved or natural surface and may include greenways, hiking, trails or fitness loops. Elon currently provides a gravel hiking trail through Beth Schmidt Park and a fitness walking loop in

Lawrence Slade Park. The Town is considering the construction of a greenway network to connect both parks to downtown, the University and other important destinations. The Town is coordinating with the City of Burlington on a trail to connect the Burlington and Elon downtowns via Front Street.

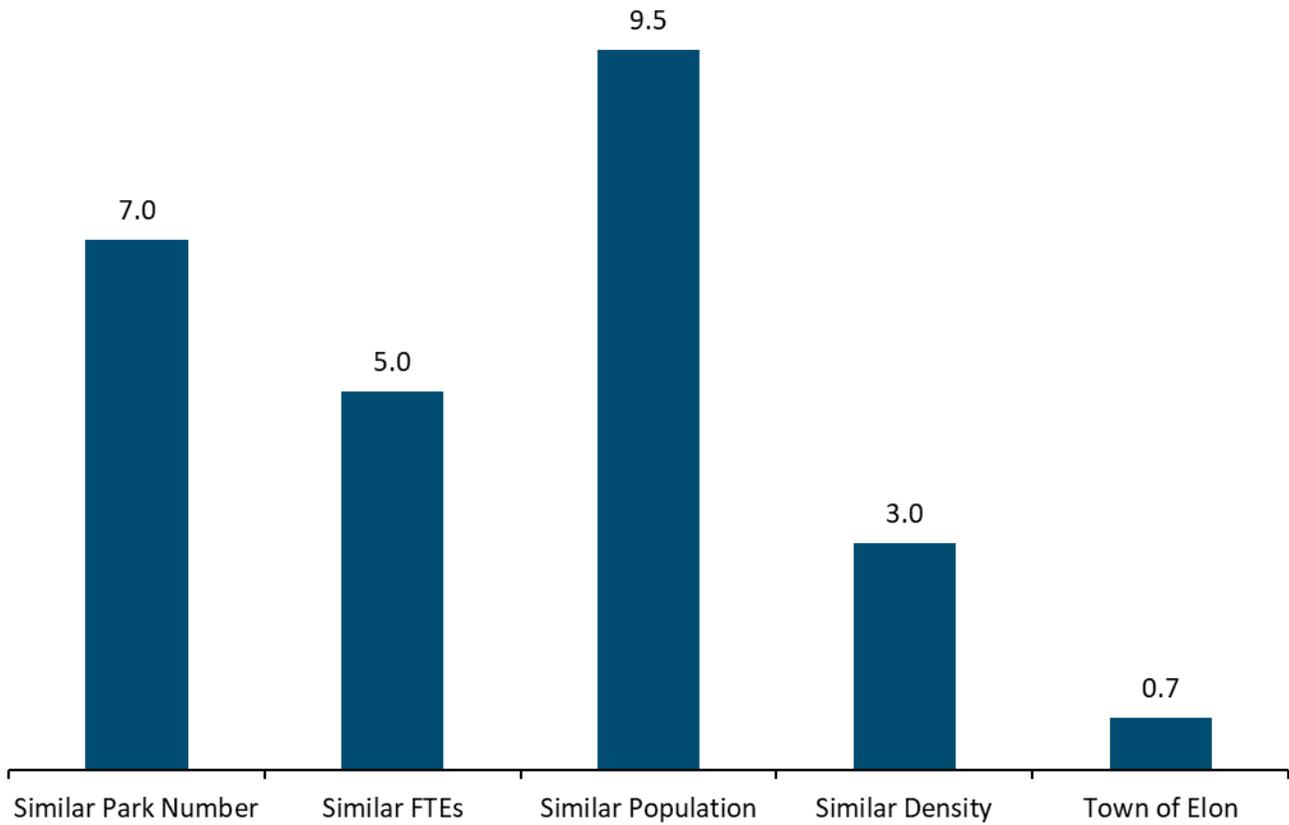


Figure 3 – Trail mileage
 Source: National Recreation and Parks PRORAGIS

BENCHMARKING +
 LEVEL OF
 SERVICE

FULL TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES

The Town currently has 3 full time equivalent staff members per 10,000 population. Recreation and parks has dedicated staff whose jobs are focused fulfilling the community’s parks and recreation needs. This number of staff per 10,000 residents is below the median and is consistent with the low park acreage per population and limited programming. This number should be considered with recognition that the Town provides high-quality parks that are intensively and meticulously maintained. As the town’s parks and recreation program grows, establishing policies and procedures will ensure that staff time continues to be used efficiently. Creating procedural efficiencies will allow the park system to grow in acreage and only add staff time when additional staff support is needed.

Elon offers a low number of staff as compared to other communities with a similar number of parks. For this analysis, the number of parks does not equal the number of acres maintained, which may be a better indicator of the true maintenance

and administrative demands of a park system. As the Town expands the park system, the development of a specific maintenance plan should be developed to determine the number of acres maintained at each maintenance level. This will inform future maintenance staffing needs required as the Town scales up its park offerings.

An alternative or supplement to increasing staff numbers as acreage increases is altering the maintenance levels required for certain areas of parks. Maintenance levels recognize that all areas of a park do not need the same amount of maintenance attention in order to provide the highest quality of services to park users. Maintenance levels prioritize high visibility areas and areas with heavy maintenance need, while placing less emphasis on natural areas. By reducing the maintenance need of certain areas of a park, the department can reduce the need for additional staff as the park system grows while still providing well-maintained parks.

SELECTION PARAMETERS	FTEs PER 10,000 POPULATION
Towns with similar budgets	2
Towns with similar FTEs	3
Town of Elon	3
Towns with similar populations	7
Towns with similar number of parks	9
Towns with similar population density	10
Median	5

Table 2 – Acres of parkland per full time equivalent (FTE)
 Source: National Recreation and Parks PRORAGIS

OPERATING BUDGET

The town’s ratio of operating expenditures per capita is lower than the median, while operating expenditures per acre of parkland is above the median. This indicates that the Town is likely providing adequate service to their population on a smaller amount of acreage than is typical. Operating expenditures per acre of parkland is likely to remain high if the Town expands the model of providing special events programming, attractive rental spaces, and a variety of amenities

on a small acreage of parkland. The number can be expected to decrease if the Town decides to develop parkland for passive recreation use, such as expanding hiking trails or a nature preserve.

If the department plans to expand the acreage of parkland, they must also increase the amount of budget allocated for parks and recreation in order to maintain high-quality parks with thorough maintenance and diversity of park amenities offered that town residents and visitors expect.

SELECTION PARAMETERS	OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA
Towns with similar budgets	\$26
Towns with similar FTEs	\$26
Town of Elon	\$29
Towns with similar populations	\$50
Towns with similar number of parks	\$96
Towns with similar population density	\$65
Median	\$49.50

Table 3 – Operating expenditures per capita
 Source: National Recreation and Parks PRORAGIS

SELECTION PARAMETERS	OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER ACRE OF PARKLAND
Towns with similar populations	\$4,232
Towns with similar population density	\$4,232
Towns with similar FTEs	\$4,413
Towns with similar budgets	\$8,462
Towns with similar number of parks	\$9,329
Town of Elon	\$11,364
Median	\$6,437

Table 4 – Operating expenditures per acre of parkland
 Source: National Recreation and Parks PRORAGIS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The benchmarking summary findings indicate that the Town of Elon is dedicated to providing high-quality and well-maintained parks on a small amount of acreage as compared to other jurisdictions.

The department offers a low amount of parkland and trails, but there is no doubt that the amenities that currently exist are well used. The program's offices are onsite at Beth Schmidt Park which means that staff is present and ready to respond to maintenance and customer service needs

quickly at the system's most popular park site.

As the program grows, the Town can determine whether to replicate the current model of intensively maintained parkland with a wide variety of amenities or pursue alternative recreational goals such as providing athletic fields or nature-based recreational opportunities. The Town may also choose to diversify offerings by providing programming through sports leagues, fitness classes, arts and culture lessons, and more.

Level of Service

The level of service standard is a metric used to determine deficits or surpluses of parkland, facilities, and amenities in a park system based on the population of the jurisdiction. The analysis begins with an inventory of existing facilities, synthesizes the benchmarking data, national standards and staff input, and creates a tailored level of service standard that will reflect the increase in parks and recreation needs through the 10-year planning horizon. The final output of the analysis is a table of 2018 and 2028 levels of service which show deficits and surpluses in parkland and facilities based on population projects for the next 10 years.

METHODOLOGY

The level of service analysis uses a ratio of the number or amount of parkland, an amenity, or a facility per 1,000 residents. For example, the town offers 2.5 acres of developed parkland per 1,000. Based on national averages and what peer communities provide, department staff can determine what level of service they should provide to Elon residents.

The formula for calculating level of service is as follows:

$$\text{Level of Service} = \left(\frac{\text{acreage, amenity, facility}}{\text{population}} \right) \times 1,000$$

Three measures contribute to the creation of Elon's level of service standard. The current inventory serves as a baseline, the benchmarking analysis provides peer community context and the National Recreation and Parks Association provides national trends.

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

The level of service standard tailored for the Town of Elon reflects standards set by the benchmarking summary, national standards, best practices, and community engagement.

PARKLAND

The national standard for parkland level of service is 10.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents in a jurisdiction. The Town of Elon is currently offering a level of service of 2.77 acres of parkland per 1,000 Elon Residents. The town’s level of service standard includes Beth Schmidt Park and

Lawrence Slade Park.

The Level of service analysis indicates that the Town of Elon will need to acquire 83.9 acres by 2028 to meet the recommended level of service of 8 acres per 1,000 residents.

PARKLAND	CURRENT OFFERING	CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	NEEDED TO MEET 2019 LEVEL OF SERVICE	NEEDED TO MEET 2029 LEVEL OF SERVICE
developed parkland	29.8 acres	2.77	8	56.4	83.9
TOTAL	29.8 acres	2.77	8	56.4 acres	83.9 acres

Table 5 – Parkland level of service

CURRENT STANDARDS IN ACRES OF PARKLAND PER 1,000 RESIDENTS		RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE
Current level of service	2.77	8 Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents
Benchmarking median	10.5	
National median	10.1	
Best practice standard	10.1	

Table 6 – Recommended parkland level of service

GREENWAYS + TRAILS

Connectivity emerged as a key theme of the Comprehensive Plan. Parks and Recreation envisions providing parkland that is connected to the University, downtown area, other parks and residential areas through a network of greenways and trails. The trail inventory defines trails as paved, natural surface, and walking loops.

This plan recommends that the Town increase its trail level of service to one mile of trail per 1,000 residents. This standard falls between the current level of service and the best practice standard. National standards do not currently include a

level of service standard for trail mileage, which also limits the calculation of this standard as part of the benchmarking summary. The level of service recommended for this plan falls between the current level of service and the best practice standard. One mile of trail per 1,000 residents within 10 years is an ambitious but achievable goal for the Town of Elon.

The level of service analysis indicates that the Town of Elon will need to construct 13.5 miles of trail by 2029 to maintain a level of service of 1 mile of trail per 1,000 residents.

TRAILS	CURRENT OFFERING	CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	NEEDED TO MEET 2018 LEVEL OF SERVICE	NEEDED TO MEET 2029 LEVEL OF SERVICE
Paved trails	0.0 miles	0.0	0.5	5.4 miles	7.1 miles
Natural surface trails	0.7 miles	0.06	0.4	3.6 miles	5.0 miles
Walking loops	0.0 miles	0.0	0.1	1.1 miles	1.4 miles
TOTAL	0.7 miles	0.06	1	10.1 miles	13.5 miles

Table 7 – Trail mileage level of service

CURRENT STANDARDS IN TRAIL MILEAGE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS		ELON SHOULD OFFER
Current level of service	0.06	1 Mile of trail per 1,000 residents
Benchmarking median	NA	
National median	NA	
Best practice standard	1.5	

Table 8 -Recommended trail mileage level of service

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Elon's current park system provide a high level of customer service and both parks are intensively developed with a variety of recreational opportunities. Both sites host regular programming. This plan recommends that the Town continue to provide new parks that offer this same intensity, as well as offer passive parks that provide opportunities for hiking in nature, meditation, and quiet retreat.

The Town will implement the creation of a trail network by partnering with developers, integrating

trail development into planned transportation improvements and pursuing trail development as independent capital projects. Partnerships with developers and integration with transportation improvements are effective for constructing planned greenway networks, but trail networks must be identified and adopted before these strategies are effective. Natural surface trails and walking loops are more likely to be pursued as independent capital projects or as part of park development.



7

health + wellness



CHAPTER 7 > HEALTH + WELLNESS

Recreation and parks foster a direct catalyst for a healthier Elon, in both the individual and community. The Town of Elon, a community within Alamance County, was part of the 2015 Alamance County Community Assessment where county-wide representative sampling from every demographic, focus groups and community forums provided data to objectify goal accomplishable within three years of the report's completion. To aid in accomplishing the three priority areas of community health, this Health Assessment will relate the goals of the 2015 Alamance County Community Assessment to improve health outcomes influenced by access to recreation and parks.

THE CASE FOR PARKS + HEALTH

It is not difficult to make the case for the integral relationship between parks and health. The first parks in the United States were developed in the 19th century as public health resources. Conceived as 'green refuges' in urban areas, parks were designed with the aim of improving the health and the quality of life for all residents by offering places for recreation, spiritual transformation through nature, exposure to fresh, clean air, and social interaction that transcended class.¹ Since that time, public investment in parks has been a priority for every level of government and the evidence suggesting that parks are 'green health spaces' has grown.

Among an endless list of benefits, some of the documented health-related benefits of parks are increased physical activity, reduced stress, improved mental health, and increased social connectivity² (Figure 1).



Image: Active Recreation, Beth Schmidt Park

¹ The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space. Paul Sherer. Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006. Accessed at: <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/cloud.tpl.org/pubs/benefits-park-benefits-white-paper12005.pdf>

² Barret, Meredith, Miller, Daphne, and Frumkin, Howard. Parks and Health: Aligning Incentives to Create Innovation in Chronic Disease Prevention. Preventing Chronic Disease, 11:130407. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.58888/pcd11130407>

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Counties with more facilities and more acreage devoted to recreation have a lower proportion of the population reporting insufficient physical activity	People who use parks and open spaces are 3 times more likely to achieve the recommended levels of physical activity than nonusers	People who live near trails are 1.5 times more likely to meet physical activity guidelines	Access to outdoor space that is well-maintained and safe has been associated with initiating and maintaining physical activity and reducing obesity
Time spent outdoors is predictive of higher levels of activity in children	Children living within 1/2 mile of a park are more likely to have higher levels of physical activity	Studies have shown that a 1% increase in park and recreation areas is associated with a 1.2% to 1.4% increase in young children’s physical activity	

MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS

Higher levels of neighborhood green space are associated with significantly lower levels of symptomology for depression, anxiety and stress.	Outdoor exercise improves mental and physical well-being more so than indoor activity	In one study, more than 70% of participants had fewer symptoms of depression after going on an outdoor walk.
Exposure to nature can reduce stress levels in children by 28%	Even a 20-minute walk in nature can help children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder concentrate better	

SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

Parks have been shown to serve as places where people of different cultures interact acting as a catalyst for interactions between people of different backgrounds and reducing intolerance.	The casual interactions that happen between people in parks—a simple hello, nod, or wave of the hand—have been shown to be important in fostering a sense of community and feelings of inclusion	Older adults who have more exposure to green common spaces report a stronger sense of unity among residents within their local neighborhood, and experience a stronger sense of belonging to the neighborhood
Outdoor common areas in low-income housing neighborhoods that featured more greenery have been shown to lead to more social activity and stronger feelings of belonging		

Figure 1: Highlighted Research Findings on Health-Related Benefits of Parks
 Source: National Recreation and Parks Association <https://www.nrpa.org/>

The public health impact of these documented benefits are “broad and cross-cutting”³ with the ability to impact population health in the most holistic sense of the word. Physical inactivity has been identified as a primary cause of most chronic health conditions⁴ including, cardiovascular disease, Type II Diabetes, obesity, certain cancers, depression, and anxiety. One study estimated that 11 percent of all deaths in the United States are attributable to physical inactivity and projected that life expectancy in the United States would be increased by 0.78 years with the elimination of physical inactivity.⁵ The direct and indirect cost burden of chronic illnesses associated with physical inactivity exceeds \$500 billion a year in the United States.⁶

Depression, anxiety, and chronic stress are also major public health concerns. In 2016, approximately one in five adults in the United States (43.8 million individuals) had a mental illness.⁷ More than a third of these adults (16 million individuals) were living with major depression. Anxiety disorder is even more prevalent. It is estimated that 18 percent of American adults (42 million individuals) are living with anxiety disorder.⁸ Among youth the prevalence is high as well. 20 percent of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition, 11 percent have depression, and 8 percent have an anxiety disorder.⁹ Sadly, these numbers have been on the rise the past few years.

The consequences of the high prevalence of mental illness in the United States are significant. For instance, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the 3rd leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. For every suicide death, it is estimated that there are 11.4 hospital visits for suicide attempts. Notably, 90 percent of those who die by suicide had an

underlying mental illness with depression being the most common underlying disorder (30 to 70 percent of suicide victims).¹⁰ Additionally, depression has been associated with reduced educational attainment, lower earning potential, increased chance of teenage childbearing, higher unemployment, and increased work disability.¹¹ A recent study estimated that the workplace and medical cost burden of depression in the United States is \$210.5 billion a year and that 62 percent of these costs were incurred as a result of co-occurring disorders like anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and chronic pain.¹²

While social cohesion is a broader and less measurable concept, there is evidence of its importance for fostering a healthy community. Healthy People 2020 identified social cohesion as a key issue in shaping social determinants of health. According to Healthy People 2020, social relationships, which are conceptualized with concepts like social cohesion, social capital, and social support, are important for health and well-being.¹³ Studies have found that social capital, for example, is associated with mortality¹⁴ and social support serves as a protective factor against risk factors that cause poor health¹⁵. Another study of social cohesion and health found that countries with higher levels of social inclusion, social capital, and social diversity had populations who were more likely to report good health.¹⁶ Global economists, political scientists, and social scholars have gone as far as arguing that social cohesion is an important factor in promoting economic growth and population health worldwide.¹⁷

When it comes to parks and recreation planning, it is clear that individual, population, and community health are all impacted by how a community plans and invests in their parks system.

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7 Any Mental Illness (AMI) Among Adults. (n.d.). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-mental-illness-ami-among-adults.shtml>

8 <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression.shtml>

9 <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

10 Ibid

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12 Greenberg, P. E., Fournier, A. A., Sisitsky, T., Pike, C. T., & Kessler, R. C. (2015). The economic burden of adults with major depressive disorder in the United States (2005 and 2010). *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 76, 155-162. doi: 10.4088/JCP.14m09298

13 <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/social-cohesion>

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16 Social Cohesion Matters in Health. Ying-Chih Chuang, Kun-Yang Chuang. *International Journal for Equity in Health*: 2013 1287 <https://doi.org/10.1186/1475-9276-12-87>

17 Foa, R. (2011). The economic rationale for social cohesion—the cross country evidence. In *The international conference for social cohesion*. OECD. Paris, OECD.

ALAMANCE COUNTY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The 2015 Alamance County Community Assessment identified new and challenging areas throughout the County in need of improvement. Through collaboration between multiple organizations, community surveys, focus groups and County leaders, data was collected, revealing

three priority areas to focus planning and implementation on over three years succeeding the completion of the Assessment: education, economic issues, and access. These three factors are integral in the overall individual and community health and well-being status.

EDUCATION

Statistically, low levels of education are linked with poor health, added stress and poverty. Compared to the State of North Carolina, Elon has a higher percentage of citizens with a high-school or higher education (Table 1). Although having a higher percentage of citizens with at least a high

school education over North Carolina, the Town of Elon exhibits a higher percentage of persons in poverty compared to the State average. Education is also linked to longer life expectancies due to proper life choices such as diet and exercise.

DEMOGRAPHIC	TOWN OF ELON	NORTH CAROLINA
Persons under 65 Years of Age	17.7%	15.9%
Persons in Poverty	18.6%	14.7%
Median Household Income	\$50,521	\$50,320
Per Capita Income (2013-2017)	\$21,939	\$28,123
High School Graduate or Higher (≥25 years old)	95.2%	86.9
Bachelors degree or Higher (≥25 years old)	51.0%	29.9%

Table 1: Highlighted Research Findings on Health-Related Benefits of Parks
Source: American Community Survey <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

As partially influenced by education level, economic issues have been identified as a county-wide area of focus. Economic issues influence the physical and mental health of a person or a group of people, attributing to their overall well-being. As of 2012, Alamance County's unemployment rate aligned with the State average of 9.4 percent

(Table 2). A lower socio-economic status often results in people having a higher risk for medical and health problems such as heart disease and mental health issues. This partially results from lower-income families not having the ability to afford homes near recreational facilities or parks, decreasing the likelihood of a healthy lifestyle.

DEMOGRAPHICS	ALAMANCE COUNTY	NORTH CAROLINA
Total Population (2013 estimate)	154,378	9,948,060
Population Below Poverty Level (2008-2012)	17.43%	16.8%
Persons without Health Insurance (2011)	17.6%	18.9%
Children Living in Poverty (>18 yrs, 2012)	29.2%	25.8%
Unemployed (September 2012)	9.4%	9.5%
Students eligible for Free & Reduced Lunch (2011-2012)	55.6%	56%
Per Capita Income (2012)	\$23,170	\$25,285

Table 2: Alamance County Demographics
Source: 2015 Alamance County Community Assessment

ACCESS TO CARE

An area of concern carried over from the 2011 Alamance County Community Assessment, access to care remains a prioritized issue to be tackled in the three years following the 2015 Assessment. Establishing a lasting relationship with a primary health care provider allows a person to undergo routine physicals, screenings and vaccinations that results in the early detection of what could be potentially serious health conditions. By accomplishing this, people tend to avoid unnecessary medical and hospital bills.

Some barriers that prevent people of the community from achieving this include inadequate health insurance, the inability to pay the cost of medical care, the lack of medical services easily available, and general lack of transportation to and from medical facilities. According to the 2015 Assessment, approximately 1/3 of the residents in any given community in Alamance County do not operate their own vehicle due to limitations. As a result, those who cannot acquire the necessary medical attention because of barriers tend to have chronic, irreversible diseases and

disabilities which would result in added medical cost. Within the built environment, alternative and safe modes of transportation such as buses, bike lanes, sidewalks and greenways would increase the accessibility to medical facilities for those individuals lacking access.

While recreation and parks have an indirect connection with the three priority areas identified by the 2015 Alamance County Community Assessment, overall health and well-being can be improved by engaging in activities often accomplishable through recreational facilities and parks. As of 2013, cancer and heart disease were the top cause of health-related death in Alamance County. Elon can create a healthier community by reinforcing the ideology that exposure to and usage of parkland and facilities decreases the risk of mental and physical health issues through: increasing the availability of parkland to all the citizens of Elon, providing education to at-risk individuals through park facilities and generating revenue through recreational facilities and park visitors, events and associated land values.

PARKS + EQUITY

Health equity can be defined as “the state in which everyone has the opportunity to attain their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or any other socially defined circumstance”¹⁸. The case for achieving health equity through the cross-sector consideration of the ways systems-level policy and planning impact the population’s health rests on the recognition that 80 percent of what leads to health is determined by the environments in which people live, work, play, worship, and age.¹⁹ Community-wide issues like poverty, unemployment, poor education, income inequality, inadequate housing, poor public transportation, exposure to violence, and

racial and ethnic discrimination diminish people’s opportunities to be healthy. Conversely, economic stability, early childhood education, high school and college education, employment, stable housing, and a sense of belonging and security can increase people’s opportunities to be healthy. The result of the unequal distribution of these ‘social determinants of health’ are systematic disparities in health that are directly tied to systems-level policies, structures, and decisions that are enacted across multiple sectors.²⁰ A Health-in-All Policies approach seeks to reduce these disparities by addressing systemic social and economic inequities that prevent all people from achieving their optimal health.

HEALTH-IN-ALL POLICIES

According to the Public Health Institute (PHI), Health-in-All Policies commitment can be a guide to inform state and local governments about the health consequences of various policy options during the policy development process. It is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas.²¹

The Town of Elon adopted a Health-in-All Policies resolution in 2017. The resolution text can be found in the appendix. A Health-in-All Policies approach is only impactful if the alignment of goals across sectors translates into ongoing collaboration, the sharing of resources, and innovative funding partnerships beyond the planning process. In other words, the inclusion of a health element in the Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan only a nominal step. To achieve the full impact of incorporating health equity into the planning process, strategies to successfully pursue shared aims are necessary.

Given the strong relationship between parks and health, it is necessary to purposely address disparities associated with parks and recreation. Currently across the country, local parks systems are not equitable. For instance, research has shown that youth who live in poor or mostly minority neighborhoods are 50 percent less likely to have a recreational facility near their home²² and that 70 percent of predominantly African-American neighborhoods and 81 percent of predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods lack recreation facilities²³. Moreover, even in studies that have found minority and low-income neighborhoods have walkable access to parks, persistent disparities exist in acres of parks per person, park spending, park quality, park maintenance, and park safety when compared to wealthier, non-Hispanic white neighborhoods.²⁴ Disparities in access and utilization exist for other populations as well. Approximately 12 percent of adults aged 18-64 years have a disability, and nearly half are inactive creating a disparity in

18 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Committee on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity in the United States; Baciu A, Negussie Y, Geller A, Weinstein JN, editors. *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017 Jan 11.

19 <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

20 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Committee on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity in the United States; Baciu A, Negussie Y, Geller A, Weinstein JN, editors. *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017 Jan 11.

21 Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K., & Dillon, L. (2013). *Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments*. Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: American Public Health Association and Public Health Institute. 5.

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23 Moore LV, Diez Roux, AC, Evenson KR, et.al. "Availability of Recreational Resources in Minority and Low Socioeconomic Status Areas". *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 34(1): 16-22, 2008.

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the participation rates in leisure engagement for persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, studies have found that despite the American Disabilities Act, many parks and recreation systems fall short of meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

Built and natural environmental features, type of equipment, lack of information, perceptions and attitudes among staff, and availability of resources all serve as barriers to access and participation for this population.²⁵

PARKS PLANNING FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Positive health outcomes is clearly an essential benefit of parks, but inequities in parks and park systems remain. Maximizing the health benefits of parks for all residents requires purposeful planning and ongoing evaluation. Fortunately, there is a growing body of literature outlining the many criteria that can be used to improve the health and equity impact of parks, specifically

though the planning and design process. This health Assessment establishes various criteria for each of the three primary phases of the development process that intend to improve health equity and health and wellness outcomes. The following table offers a summary of some of the cited criteria and their associated measures.

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	MEASURE
Planning determining the where and when of park development	Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Percent of population within ½ mile of a park or shared use recreation area › Location in area with high Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)
	Walking access	› Percent of population with a less than ½ mile walkable route to park (or shared use recreation area) or trail entrance
	Park connectivity	› Ratio of the number of people with less than a half-mile walk route to a public park or trail entrance to the number of people living within a half mile of that specific park or trail corridor boundary.
	Park acreage	› Total land area designated as public parks or trails in a given range ('park deserts', unequal distribution)
	Financial Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Investment per park user › Investment per resident within ½ mile of park › Investment per park acre › Ratio of reinvestment (how much invested in park/total cost of ownership) › Investment strategy that includes consideration of community characteristics and site-specific characteristics
	Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Assessment of community context (demographics, community health, inequality, and assets) informs overall priorities and strategies for inclusion › # of community members from underrepresented social groups actively engaged in the planning process › Proportion of decisions made with stakeholder input › Level of impact of stakeholder / inclusivity consultant involvement

25 Rimmer, J. H., Riley, B., Wang, E., & Rauworth, A., & Jurkowski, J. (2004). Physical activity participation among persons with disabilities. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 26,419-425.

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	MEASURE
Design envisioning the built environment	Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Multiple access/entry points › Extent Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Guidelines are followed › Hierarchy of lighting types and clear sight lines incorporated into design › Wayfinding Signage
	Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Presence of ADA required features › # of entry points › # of connections to nearby neighborhoods, trails, and primary destinations › # of walkable routes to the park › Visible entrance and wayfinding signs › Signage in multiple languages
	Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › # of leisure, moderate, and vigorous physical activity areas › # of park elements for different age groups and populations
	Healthy Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › # of acres dedicated to edible landscapes
	Social Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › # of park elements that encourage social interaction
	Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Proportion of design decisions that are made with stakeholder input (i.e. local community members, underrepresented/excluded social groups) › # of cultural, locally sourced public art, and natural heritage features incorporated into park design
Programming bringing parks to life	Safety	Encourage instructors to achieve CPR certifications
	Access	› Percent of programs that provide transportation for non-vehicular households
	Physical Activity	
	Healthy Eating	
	Inclusion	› Percent of programs dedicated to special needs of under-represented populations
	Social Cohesion	› Percent of programs that encourage social interaction

Table 3 - Measures for Health Communities

*Criteria in this table are derived from a variety of sources including the National Park Service and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s eight common measures, the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC), the Community Parks Assessment Tool, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation’s Equity Action Plan, the Gehl Institute’s Inclusive Places Framework, and professional expertise.

These criteria move beyond traditional park measures by building in criteria that make explicit the elements needed for developing a parks system that promotes health for all residents.

That said, in order to make these criteria meaningful and achievable local parks and recreation systems must take the time to ensure that they are tailored to reflect their specific community context and to identify feasible strategies for achieving the benchmarks. For instance, what serves as a benchmark in an urban environment (i.e., 100 percent of population within a ½ mile of a public park) may be unrealistic in the rural extents of a municipality and alternative measures (i.e. 80 percent of population within a 1 mile of a public park) or strategies (i.e. joint use agreements with schools, churches and other community organizations to ensure 100 percent of population is within a half-mile of a safe place for outdoor exercise and recreation) should be pursued.

To tailor the criteria to meet community health equity, local data is essential. Using data collected through the Master Parks Planning process as well as local health data (see section below) and other secondary sources, the specific needs of the community can be assessed and utilized to guide the planning, design, and programming process. Potential measures to consider are:

- › Crime Rates
- › Population Density
- › Percent population with self-reported safe place to exercise near home
- › Percent population in poverty (Areas of Concentrated Poverty)
- › Percent minority population in poverty (Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty)
- › Percent households with children
- › Percent households with 65+
- › Percent 0 car households
- › Percent population meeting daily physical activity recommendations
- › Percent population meeting daily fruits and vegetables consumption recommendations
- › Percent population with one or more chronic illnesses

Mapping measures like these can take the analysis further and help inform how decisions are made about where parks are located, how they are designed, and what programs need to be offered. They can also help identify opportunities for partnerships and be used to educate decision-makers about the enhanced value of parks and recreation investments in specific locations throughout the community.

Adopting a data-driven approach to Parks and Recreation planning, design, and programming is an example of the type of strategies that are needed to ensure that the criteria for high impact parks are translated into action. The ability to utilize data in this way requires building capacity and strategic partnerships for the collection, sharing, analyzing and reporting of relevant data. Thus, it is important that recommendations in parks and recreation plans explicitly address how shared parks and health aims can be achieved through strategies that leverage the strengths and resources of each sector.

The three takeaways from this section on parks planning for a healthier community are:

1. There are concrete, measurable criteria that can be used through the park planning and design process for creating a parks and recreation system that advances health equity in the community.
2. The criteria are not one-size fits all. The community context including demographics, geography, population health outcomes and behaviors, community preferences and desires, and local budgets should be used to adapt and prioritize criteria that are meaningful and achievable for The Town of Elon.
3. Strategies for leveraging the resources of different sectors towards achieving selected criteria should be incorporated into the recommendations of the Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan to ensure that collaboration with diverse stakeholders is explicitly built into the implementation and evaluation process.

ALIGNMENT OF HEALTH + WELLNESS AND PARKS + RECREATION OBJECTIVES FOR ELON

Based on the preceding sections, the following table seeks to demonstrate the alignment of health objectives and parks and recreation objectives for the Town of Elon. There are opportunities to align around broader population health goals like life expectancy and overall health as well as environmental and conservation goals like increasing the proportion of Elon residents who appreciate and care about the natural environment, increasing the amount of natural green spaces in the community that are preserved and protected, or improving the water quality in our rivers, ponds, and lakes.

The table is meant as an example to demonstrate how an alignment of objectives can be accomplished. The actual objectives to be pursued will be defined with the adoption of the parks and recreation plan and the identification of the specific strategies for collaboration between the public health and parks and recreation sector. That said, since the objectives do reflect the public health priorities for the County, the table can inform how potential collaborative strategies are prioritized within the Town of Elon. For detailed strategies to achieve each recreation and parks objective, see the Action and Implementation Plan in chapter 8.

FOCUS AREA	HEALTH OBJECTIVE	PARKS AND RECREATION OBJECTIVE
Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All Elon residents have a safe place to be physically active near their home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the percentage of Elon residents who live within 1 mile of park, trail/greenway, or shared-use recreation area (i.e. schools, conservation areas, etc.) › Increase the percentage of Elon residents who have a safe route for walking or biking to a park, trail/greenway, or shared-use recreation area › Increase the percentage of Elon residents who report that Elon’s parks are safe spaces for recreation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All Elon adults engage in 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week › All Elon youth engage in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity daily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the percentage of Elon residents who report visiting a Elon park at least 1x/month › Increase the number of Elon adults who participate in parks and recreation programming
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the percentage of Elon residents who report having Very Good to Excellent mental health › Reduce the percentage of Elon youth who report persistent feelings of sadness/hopelessness in past 12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the number of Elon youth who participate in parks and recreation programming › Increase the percentage of park visitors who engage in moderate or vigorous activity
Healthy Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the percentage of Elon residents who report eating the daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables › Decrease the percentage of Elon residents that report consuming more than 1 sugary beverage a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the percentage of locally sourced foods sold at parks and recreation events › Increase the number of healthy food options available at parks and recreation events › Increase the number of healthy eating and cooking programs offered by Elon parks and recreation › Increase the number of parks that incorporate edible landscapes into their design
Social Connection/ Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the percentage of Elon residents who feel connected to their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the number of community gathering spaces in Elon parks (i.e. amphitheaters, picnic shelters, bleachers, community kitchens, etc.) › Increase the number of community events hosted in Elon parks each year › Increase the number of community partnerships that support and sustain Elon recreation and programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the proportion of youth engaged in pro-social activities after school, on the weekends, and during the summer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase the number of recreational programming opportunities available at Elon parks › Increase the number of Elon youth who participate in parks and recreation programming
Tobacco Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Reduce the percentage of adults who smoke/use tobacco products › Reduce the percentage of youth who smoke/use tobacco products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Achieve 100 percent no tobacco or e-cigarette use in Elon parks through adherence and education around the Town’s nicotine-free policy



8

vision + recommendations



CHAPTER 8 > VISION + RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the information gathering portion of the planning process reveal that the Town of Elon provides quality recreation and parks services to Elon residents. The Town is prepared to expand the town's recreation and parks services to formalize a Department within the Town that will construct new parks and trails and offer an expanded suite of programming.

This plan's vision and recommendations result directly from the inventory and analysis process involving current conditions, input from the community, staff, the Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board, and benchmarking standards from other communities.

On November 7, 2018, the project team facilitated a visioning workshop with town staff to create a vision for the town's parks and recreation services. This vision statement will guide the future of parks and recreation planning during the 10-year planning horizon

DEPARTMENT VISION

Making Elon a connected, active, healthy community with high quality parks and facilities, programs, and services.

DEPARTMENT MISSION

Recreation and parks will enhance wellness, connectivity, and quality of life in Elon by creating community spaces, providing unique recreational amenities, hosting events, and expanding program offerings to have an impact on resident's ability to lead active and healthy lives.



PARKLAND

PARKLAND VISION

Provide an inclusive and well-connected park system while ensuring a high level of customer service at each location

GOAL 1 > Intentionally expand parkland acreage.

In the next 10 years the population will increase, and the Town will continue to create an identity separate from but in cooperation with Elon University. Town staff envision parkland and trails as being a key element of the vision for a connected and healthy Elon.

The Town will need to acquire additional parkland and construct new parks in the next 10 years to meet the needs of a growing community. The town's two existing parks are fully developed and offer a variety of amenities and reservable spaces that are suited to events and recreation. The Town has the largest accessible playground in the area that people from surrounding communities travel to visit.

The Town should use its existing parks as a successful model for future park creation or expansion. The signature characteristics of Elon's parks are unique amenities with high community value, and the supporting facilities needed to maximize the functionality of these spaces.

The Town should acquire 83.9 acres of parkland in the next 10 years to achieve a level of service of 10 acres per 1,000 Town of Elon residents. The

Town should carefully consider land acquisition for parks to ensure that the intended type of park development is feasible for the parcel identified. While parcels in floodplains with surficial rock or jurisdictional streams may be affordable, they rarely have the development potential needed to create a park requiring building foundations, expansive impervious surfaces, or significant earthwork and should be avoided.

This plan recommends a high degree of due diligence prior to land acquisition to maximize town resources and inform the decision-making process. The Town can use a parcel scoring system to identify the desired characteristics and then rank each potential acquisition accordingly. This same process can be applied to the town's surplus properties to determine if parcels the Town already holds should be designated for future park uses. A site suitability study provides an overview of the legal and physical opportunities and constraints of the site that can be used to determine if a site is suitable for a desired end use. Site suitability studies provide evidence to validate informed decisions regarding land acquisition.

	SITE SUITABILITY	DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	CHARACTERISTICS
<p>LOW SUITABILITY</p> <p>HIGH SUITABILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Appropriate for passive recreation and minimal disturbance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › More prescriptive › Fewer options › More constraints on developability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Shallow surficial rock › Steep slopes › Poor or hydric soils › Title commitments › Development regulations don't allow intended use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Appropriate for active recreation, maximum disturbance possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Less prescriptive › More options › Few constraints on developability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Road frontage or deeded access › Acreage sufficient for intended use › Development regulations allow for intended use › Less topographical variation › Soils suitable for development
<p>Preference is given to parcels that are adjacent to existing parks, are within proximity to other civic destinations, connect to trail networks or are in areas with gaps in services.</p>			

Table 1 –Considerations for acquiring land suited for park development

The Town has identified some current holdings as appropriate for park development. They hold parcels adjacent to Beth Schmidt Park, and a large parcel in the north of the town’s extraterritorial jurisdiction but should seek others in accordance with Envision Elon 2040.

The Town should expand Beth Schmidt park into the adjacent town-owned parcels and use the Priority Investment Rating from the statistically valid survey to inform park amenity selection, followed by a master planning process to design park development.

The Downtown Master Vision Plan calls for increased green space within the defined Downtown that could serve as a central community gathering location. It poses an excellent opportunity for the Town to define and highlight its identity as developed through the forthcoming marketing and branding efforts. The Town should create a master plan to create a public space with the potential to be used all times of day and year-round. The master planning process should include significant input from the public,

including downtown business owners, downtown workers, students, and full-time residents, and members of the local arts community.

The site with the most potential and yet the most uncertainty is the 72-acre site to the north of town limits. The recently adopted Envision Elon 2040 plan recommends the Town conduct a highest and best use study to inform the town’s decisions about next steps and appropriate partnerships. Examples of possibilities for the land include collaboration with Alamance County to create a regional park, selling the land to another entity to generate revenue for another recreation park or facility identified in this master plan, or establish a public-private partnership to develop a portion of, or all, the land.

This plan will inform the town’s decision to pursue youth sports programming aligned with the Alamance County league or continue directing town residents to join youth leagues in neighboring jurisdictions. Additional consideration of this question is included in the operations discussion.

The Town should develop messages to refresh the

community's concept of Lawrence Slade Park in addition to efforts to acquire and construct new parks. A community-based engagement process and introduction of volunteer days or programming at Lawrence Slade Park can help the community to reimagine, refresh, and rebrand this location. The park should be refreshed based on community input and should incorporate placemaking best practices to create a park with a strong identity that serves the surrounding neighborhood and provides a resource to the wider community.

A master planning process is needed for Beth Schmidt Park to address the newly acquired

parcels north of the park, and the central area between the playground and the dog park. This recent acquisition will enable the town to expand offerings at this location and the priorities identified in this plan can guide selection of amenities to provide. The central area of the park may be underutilized and refreshing this area could create additional opportunities. This area is currently forested with natural-surface hiking trails and buildings that are culturally important to Elon's history. Improving connectivity through this location with a paved trail could improve the park's internal connectivity, as well as situate the park to be externally connected to long-term bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

GOAL 2 > Build great parks for the Elon community.

The success of the town's current parks speaks to the system's diverse offering of recreational amenities, high degree of personalized customer service and quality of experience. The town's parks are characterized by a concentrated mix of recreational amenities and flexible space that serves as venues for town-sponsored special events, reservable event spaces for individuals or unprogrammed play for families. The Town

has achieved this outcome though focused development of two parks and ensuring that park facilities can accommodate programs the Town offers while effectively meeting the community's basic recreational needs. During the 10-year planning horizon, the Town will need to balance providing high quality parkland with personalized customer service with expanding the park system to meet new and growing community needs.

COMMUNITY INPUT

This planning process identified community recreation through community engagement, a statistically valid survey, stakeholder interviews and engagement with community advisory councils. Additionally, this plan considers best practices and trends in the field of park development to provide recommendations for building great parks for the Elon community.

Community engagement indicates that the Town of Elon has a need for the following park amenities:

- > Greenway trail system
- > Nature trails
- > Indoor fitness + exercise facilities
- > Senior center
- > Community gardens
- > Multipurpose fields for open play
- > Dog park
- > Outdoor amphitheater
- > Gymnasium or indoor facility space
- > Classroom, meeting or event space

DEMOGRAPHIC AND RECREATION TRENDS

Demographic trends indicate that the town's population is aging. The Town should ensure that park design can adequately meet the needs of the aging population. Elon is the location of multiple senior living communities, including Twin Lakes, the location of one of the community engagement meetings for this planning process. These communities strive to meet the recreational needs of their communities, indicating that the responsibility for providing senior recreation does not fall exclusively to the Town. The Town can partner with these communities to provide programming for seniors and align the town's recreation offerings with senior's recreation needs. However, the Town must recognize that these communities represent only a portion of Elon's seniors. The Town should also partner with current senior services providers such as Meals on Wheels to ensure that information regarding senior recreation activities reaches low-income or otherwise more vulnerable seniors.

The Department does not currently offer organized sports leagues, and a key consideration of this plan is whether the Town should begin

offering youth sports programming. This plan's analysis indicates that there is an unmet need for sports programming, but sports programming does not necessarily emerge as a clear priority in relation to other priorities for the Town's parks and recreation.

Another demographic consideration is the town's desire to attract or retain young adults and young families to live in Elon. This demographic includes retaining individuals who moved to Elon to attend Elon University, or attracting new residents who have recently graduated or are early career. Parks, trails and recreational opportunities for young adults and young children are often a key consideration for this demographic. Recreation and Parks can help attract this type of resident to settle in Elon.

The Priority Investment Rating from the statistically valid survey indicates that Youth and Teen Sports Programs are the primary priority for recreational programming for the town's youth. However, the Priority Investment Rating does not indicate that any sports program or facility is

considered a “High” priority for the town. Youth soccer and basketball received a “Medium” priority.

Youth sports does not emerge as high enough of a priority relative to other needs to justify heavy investment in the creation of new sports facilities.

Elon exists in a region with other towns offering youth sports programming in close proximity. The Town currently recommends that Elon children join the sports leagues of neighboring communities. This will continue to be an effective strategy to meet the youth sports league needs of Elon residents for the short and medium term.

There have been discussions at the County level about creating a county-wide sports league to coordinate planning efforts and expand the population base of youth participants. Elon should participate in a county-wide league if the opportunity arises. Many collaborative leagues require that each participating jurisdiction provide facility space for games and practices. Elon should consider how to participate in spite of their lack of field and facility space.

Two potential opportunities include:

- › Creating joint use agreements for facility space with schools, churches, homeowner’s associations or other facilities that currently have field space
- › Providing a fee in lieu of facility space that would recoup some of the maintenance costs other communities incur while hosting the league.

The conclusion of this plan is that creating the infrastructure needed to provide youth sports programming would be an expensive investment to meet a limited need. The Town should continue encouraging youth to enroll in the leagues of neighboring communities. Given the opportunity, the Town should explore participating in county-wide youth sports programming. Facility space could potentially be provided through joint use agreements with the school system or other groups that have facilities in town, or Elon can provide payment in lieu of providing facilities in order to participate in a joint league.

PLACEMAKING

There are strong connections between the built environment and perceived feelings of safety, pride and belonging in a community. The built environment expresses a community’s historical, social and cultural identity and tells stories about people and values. Parks present an opportunity to communicate a unique image and brand, distinct community characteristics and ensure vibrant shared public spaces.

These goals are achieved through a group of strategies known as Placemaking. Placemaking balances consistency of signage, furnishings and materiality with the flexibility to express each park’s authentic identity. Elon must incorporate community involvement and public art into park design projects to achieve unique sense of place at each park and allow expression of historical, cultural and social narratives. This will result in a defined park character that reinforces the overall town brand while allowing each park to have a unique vision.

“Creative placemaking for parks is a cooperative, community -based process that uses arts and cultural expression to create or rejuvenate parks and open spaces, thus deepening a sense of place and inspiring community pride”

– The Trust for Public Land & City Parks Alliance

Involving the community in a sensitive and genuine way through park planning, construction, or renovation can create imaginative, inspiring and welcoming public spaces. Using Department or partner programming to activate spaces invigorates these places, bringing people, family, friends and strangers together to connect and celebrate. Engaging the community to activate space with art, culture and social identity will create more meaningful and vibrant public spaces.

Offering visitors unique experiences allows parks to stand out. Highlighting and area’s unique features indicates that users are having an

experience that no other place could offer by connecting them to the area's history, culture, or natural environment. Placemaking taps into why a place is special and creates a defining visual feature or character around that idea.

The Town should integrate placemaking strategies with the current Downtown Elon Master Vision Plan and the town branding effort. After the new town branding standards have been developed, the Town should implement standardized identification and wayfinding signage for parks and future greenways.

Public art is an effective way to highlight the uniqueness of a place. The Town should consider adopting a percent for art approach to funding public art in parks. This program, frequently in the form of a local ordinance, dictates that a designated percentage of any park project must be dedicated to public art. Public art can include installations such as murals or sculptures, but is just as often enhanced site facilities such as custom benches or planters designed by local artists.



Image: Gazebo + Pond, Beth Schmidt Park

GOAL 3 > Leverage parks and greenways as a platform to meet larger community goals.

Integrating parks and recreation objectives into other town priorities will reinforce the priorities of this plan and generate wide community support for the most needed improvements. Towns across the United States are recognizing that the benefits of parks far exceed goals that are traditionally pursued by a parks and recreation department. Communicating the full role of recreation and parks in a community will generate support for the goals of this plan and may identify new implementation measures and funding sources.

The Town of Elon's Strategic Plan, adopted in 2017 creates an approach for this integration. The strategic plan creates a vision and mission for the Town of Elon residents and outlines seven Goals and Strategic Objectives for achieving that vision and mission. Recreation and parks services are

essential to achieving most of the goals below. Trails, parks and programming can directly and indirectly support the Town's goals and objectives.

TOWN OF ELON STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- > Livable, connected and well-maintained neighborhoods
- > Sound stewardship and sustainable services
- > Economic development
- > Community partnerships and engagement
- > Clean and green community
- > Plan for growth and open space
- > Getting around town

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The statistically valid survey indicates that in Elon, 36 percent of residents use the town's recreation and parks system to achieve personal health outcomes. Currently, 52 percent of residents use recreation and parks to meet their physical health outcomes, 25 percent to meet their social health outcomes, 25 percent to meet their environmental health outcomes, and 21 percent to meet their mental health outcomes.

This plan's health and wellness chapter defines the relationship between parks and health. Parks increase physical activity, reduce stress, improve mental health and increase social connectivity, all of which improve positive health outcomes. Given these benefits, this plan recommends improving health equity through the planning and design of parks to improve health outcomes such as obesity, depression and anxiety, and physical inactivity. The most effective strategy for accomplishing this goal is to evolve the way park projects are prioritized and intentionally design parks to include configurations and amenities that promote physical activity, mental health, healthy eating and social connection.

This plan recommends prioritizing park improvements and associated infrastructure to improve health equity. Health equity can be improved by addressing geographic distribution of parks, financial investment and physical access. Geographic equity will address current gaps in service and aim to provide more recreation opportunities for underserved or vulnerable communities.

Tracking investments in parkland can also indicate gaps in equity within a park system. Many factors determine which parks receive public investments. Factors may include the number of visitors to the park, size, types of amenities and more. Understanding the geographic distribution of where the Town directs investment can reveal unintentional gaps in funding. The study should normalize results when possible, for example, tracking investment per park user, investment per residents within a quarter mile, or investment per acre of parkland. The results of any such analysis will need to be properly investigated, appropriately contextualized and should avoid focusing on dollar amounts alone.

Finally, access to parks is another indicator of health equity. Parks must be accessible to all forms of transportation including walking, biking, public transit and driving. The Town must ensure that all users are able to move around the park and benefit from the park's amenities. Accessible parks will meet design requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) outlines, but a truly inclusive park will focus on the experience of users of all ages and ability levels and promote their full involvement in play, fitness and social engagement at parks. The Town should ensure that parks are accessible along public transportation routes and should continue to promote connectivity of parks with the greenway system, ensuring bicycle and pedestrian access where possible.

The town's recreation and park staff are active members in the Alamance Wellness Collaborative. The collaborative recognizes the connection between health outcomes and the built environment and many of their goals and approaches focus on improving the built environment to allow residents to meet their personal health outcomes. The goals outlined in the Alamance Wellness Collaborative Strategic

Plan are as follows:

1. Increase access to active transportation and trails
2. Improve and support healthy school environments
3. Identify and apply for funding for built environment initiatives
4. Increase advocacy at local government level for policy change

The Collaborative is currently updating their strategic plan for the next three-year planning horizon, but stakeholder interviews with Collaborative members indicate that members anticipate maintaining their core goals, especially those focusing on connectivity and the built environment.

Continuing to articulate the connection between parks, connectivity and wellness will allow the Town to achieve their trail construction goals while maximizing partnerships and resource sharing with other local organizations invested in the same outcomes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Many recreation and parks administrations recognize the link between their community's economic development and the parks they maintain but few take the steps necessary to track and communicate how those investments translate into dollar amounts for the community.

Measuring the economic return residents receive on their investments into parks and recreation is a useful metric for understanding the full economic impact of parks and recreation spending. Evaluating parks and recreation's role in economic development includes understanding the economic impact, which refers to direct financial impact and applies a multiplier to indicate its influence on the community, and the economic significance, which refers to a broader influence of certain activities and how they ripple throughout the community.

Understanding the economic impact of recreation and parks can be used as a tool for communicating the system's economic importance. A park

Economic impact - the net economic change in a host economy that results from spending by visitors from outside the community.

Economic significance - measure of the importance or significance of the project or program within the local economy which shows the size and nature of economic activity associated with the project or program in the area.

system impacts the revenue the Town generates with the personal income of employees, sales tax generated through visitor purchase, visitor spending on food, gas, entertainment and even overnight lodging.

Economic significance is used as a communication tool to illustrate the influence that parks and recreation has on the local economy. Economic significance of the park system includes benefits such as improved property values, attracting new businesses and visitors, and expansion of employment opportunities.

Parks have an indirect impact on the local economy. This indirect impact is not tracked but is often determined using a multiplier effect based on a given assumption supported with research and observation. Some of these indirect impacts include property value increases for private property next to parkland, and improved health outcomes that result in decreased health care costs overall.

Recreation and parks are frequently viewed as cost centers that generate revenue for only a fraction of the costs they generate. Parks departments themselves have frequently reinforced this idea by only reporting annual financial data, rather than reporting economic impact data which captures a wider variety of considerations.

Expanding the consideration to include elements outside of direct revenue generation recognizes that parks are assets that attract visitors and induce spending in the local economy that would otherwise not exist. Simply looking at department expenditures fails to measure the economic return residents receive on their investment in parks systems.

Finally, using the expanded model to conceptualize parks and recreation spending as positive economic impact provides important information to decisionmakers. Parks are expensive capital projects but the funds to build and maintain them should be an investment in the community and its economy. A high-quality park system that includes desired amenities can achieve the following:

- › **Increase tourism** through individual trips
- › Create opportunities for tournaments and events drawing large numbers of out-of-town visitors
- › **Attract businesses** seeking to employ individuals who desire living in an area with a high quality of life
- › Maintain or increase **property values** of adjacent properties.

This plan's financial analysis creates a starting point for understanding the influence of the town's recreation and parks system on the local economy. Visitors' Bureaus or Chambers of Commerce frequently have the expertise and understanding to calculate economic impact based on the town's current recreation and parks spending and estimated visitor generation. The Town can partner with the Alamance County Visitors Bureau to determine the most effective way to analyze the economic impact of recreation and parks and communicate that to the Town.



Image: Walking Trail, Beth Schmidt Park

GOAL 4 > Develop a connected network of greenways and trails.

Greenways are recreational and transportation corridors that connect people to the places they want to go and provide recreational and fitness opportunities. Greenways serve multiple community goals, working as a tool for transportation, economic development, environmental preservation and leisure activities.¹

Greenway rights of way are typically 50 to 150 feet in width.² The greenways function or land constraints may determine the desired width, narrow near critical connections where land may be limited, or wider in areas designed as a “linear park” with supporting amenities or comfort facilities. Greenways have low barriers to entry, meaning individuals of all ages and abilities can use greenways with little investment in equipment or user fees.

This plan recommends that the Town of Elon construct 13.5 miles of trail by 2029 to maintain a level of service of 1 mile of trail per 1,000 residents.

North Carolina Department of Transportation recently completed a study on the impact of Shared Use Paths on local economies and concluded that every \$1 invested in trail construction yields \$1.72 annually from local business revenue, sales tax revenue and benefits related to health and transportation.

Approaching greenways and trails systems comprehensively as connected networks maximize the impact of trails and support network construction. A comprehensive greenway and trail plan will inventory existing facilities and identify future needs. A greenway network approach helps prioritize trail construction and identify key connections that frequently pose barriers to network completion. The benefits of a comprehensive greenway and trail network include:

- › **Enhanced health and well-being**
 - access to facilities for active living and connecting with nature
- › **Environmental Stewardship** – support clean air, rivers and preserve habitat; mitigate flooding
- › **Catalyst for Economic Impacts**
 - attract talent and business through public investment
- › **Increase Mobility Options** – creates non-vehicular trip options
- › **Enhance cultural awareness** – define community identity through aesthetic contributions
- › **Education Opportunities**
 - teach children and adults about the natural world

¹ <https://www.americantrails.org/images/documents/TN-trail-ada.pdf>

² The City of Raleigh, Capital Area Greenway Planning & Design, (2010), 7.



Figure 1 - Interrelated benefits of greenways

Greenway networks differ regionally in terms of users and trail surface type, but guiding principles of greenway planning tend to be universal. The

foundational values that guide greenway planning include the following. Trails should be:

- › **Accessible** - construct greenways to design standards that ensure people of all ages and ability levels and access and use them.
- › **Equitable** - distribute greenway investment to ensure all communities and neighborhoods have equitable greenway infrastructure, access and experiences. Equitable access may include prioritizing trails in low-income neighborhoods or areas with lower rates of car ownership.
- › **Experiential** - greenways should provide a positive and healthy user experience. Elements that can contribute to this experience are the sights and sounds of nature, open scenic views, and perceived safety. Greenway trails should contribute to an overall quality of life and provide options for daily use for recreation, commuting or socializing.
- › **Safe** - greenways should minimize the risk of injury, danger and crime. Safe greenway and trail networks are comfortable for users of all ages and ability levels making it easier to walk, hike, jog or ride a bike. Trail safety includes considering the trail as a recreational opportunity as well as transportation infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians.

A connected network of greenways can only be achieved through intentional planning and inter-agency coordination. Planning for implementation of a greenway system begins with development of a master plan and network map. While this plan provides a vision and overall framework for the greenway system, it needs to be “ground-proofed” and funded. By conducting detailed corridor and feasibility studies, a network plan

can evolve into a detailed plan that considers opportunities and resolves constraints. Typically, these factors include input from the public, property or easement acquisition, grading and drainage, environmental impacts, crossings, surface material, comfort facilities, maintenance and connections to adjacent or regional trail networks. The below represents a typical greenway planning process:

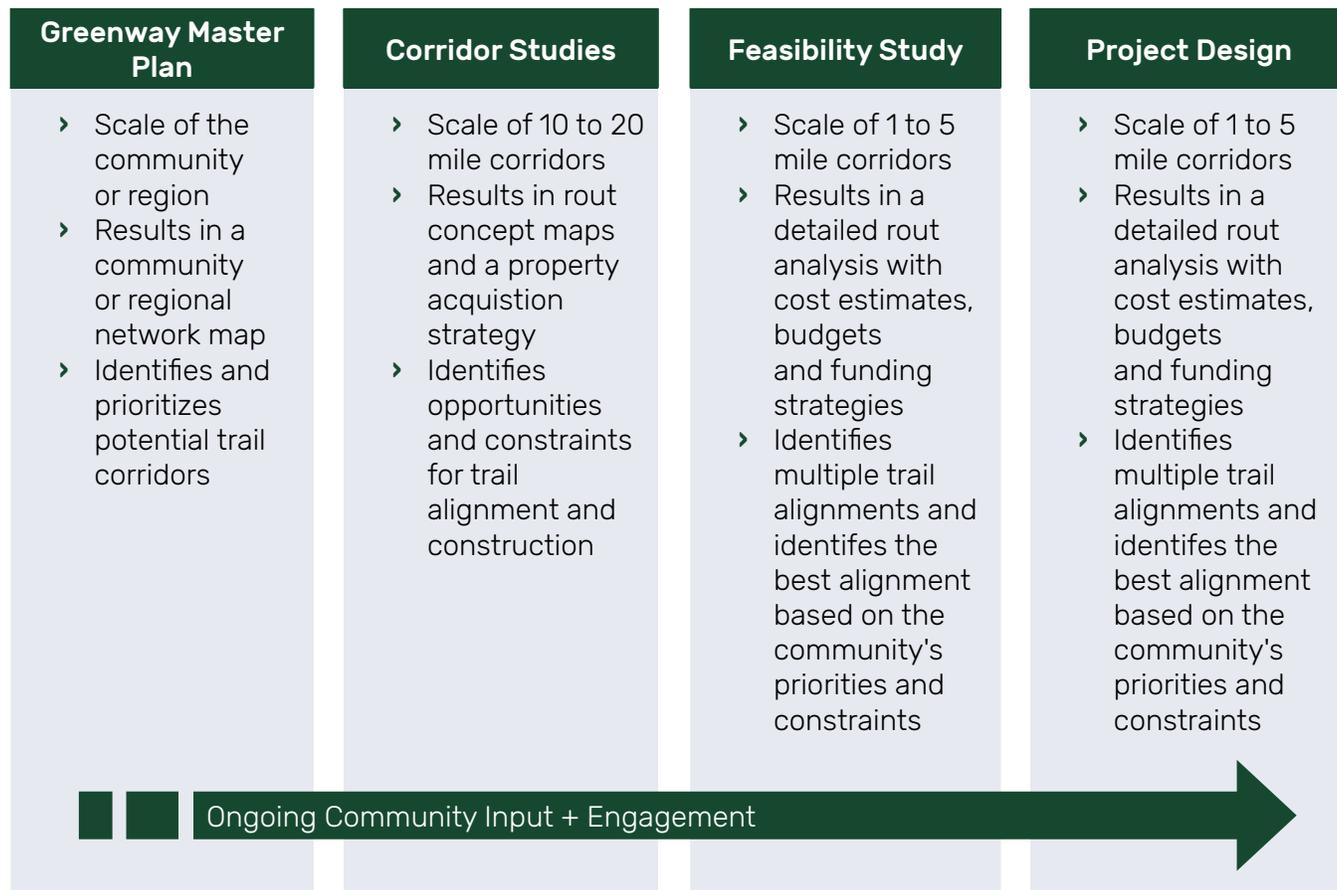


Figure 2 - Greenway trail planning, design and construction process and sequencing

Connectivity is a priority for the Town of Elon and the Town envisions using parks and greenways to create a more connected and cohesive community which promotes pedestrian and cycle transportation throughout town.

This plan recommends that the town create a greenway master plan to guide greenway development in the coming years. A greenways master plan will ensure that the Town has a comprehensive understanding of which corridors will create a connected community that meshes with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. It will also help prioritize trail segments and provide

justification for which projects will be pursued.

A greenway master plan should guide the Town’s greenway construction. Greenway master plans promote stewardship of public investment into trail infrastructure and prioritize needed projects. However, the town has identified two high priority projects that could be pursued prior to the adoption of a greenway master plan. These projects could begin at the corridor study or the feasibility study phase. They include:

Beth Schmidt Park and Lawrence Slade Park Connector – The Town has long envisioned a trail connecting the two parks. The parks are

approximately 0.25 miles apart geographically, but the driving route between the two properties is 2 miles. The land use between these two sites is primarily residential. There are two parcels between town-owned property at Beth Schmidt Park and the stub of Neal Street where a trail or sidepath could easily be connected to Lawrence Slade Park. A detailed feasibility study would be required to identify the best alignment for this trail based on the town's goals and constraints.

Beth Schmidt Park and Joe C. Davidson Park Connector – The City of Burlington will construct a recreation center at Joe C. Davidson Park in the western part of the City in the coming years. The Town and City have discussed possibilities for Elon residents to access the forthcoming facility,

and both jurisdictions recognize the significance of creating a greenway connection between Beth Schmidt Park and Davidson Park.

Other connections that have been identified to pursue include a connection between Lawrence Slade Park and downtown Elon and a connection between downtown Elon and downtown Burlington. The City of Burlington has the funds to complete the downtown connector and the Town of Elon is contributing \$10,000 to complete the connection within Elon. These connections are longer corridors with a greater number of variables and should not be pursued without identifying a Town-wide trail network that aligns with the trail planning efforts of adjacent jurisdictions.

GOAL 5 > Pursue healthy partnerships to provide indoor recreation and aquatic facilities and programming for Town residents.

It is challenging for a community the size of Elon to plan, construct and sustainably manage an indoor recreation facility or community center. These facilities are resource intensive and require a high level of staffing and management. The Town could conduct a market analysis to determine the feasibility of such a facility, but it is unlikely that the Town could support an indoor recreation facility during this 10-year planning horizon.

Instead, the Town may partner with others to provide Elon's residents with indoor recreation facilities. The City of Burlington is constructing an indoor recreation facility in its western region, near the Town of Elon. The two jurisdictions are coordinating to create a greenway connection between Beth Schmidt Park and this forthcoming facility. The City of Burlington and the Town of Elon should work cooperatively during the planning of this indoor recreation facility to maximize its potential to meet the recreational needs of both jurisdiction's residents. There are also opportunities to collaborate with the Town of Gibsonville to provide recreation and parks services. Any partnership should ensure that investment and benefits are equitably distributed to the highest degree possible.

Additionally, the Town of Elon has discussed partnerships with Elon University to provide indoor recreation opportunities to Town residents not associated with the University. The University has recently expanded the recreational facilities they offer students through their Campus Recreation and Wellness Department. The Koury Center is a new facility that offers students gymnasium space, pool facilities and a fitness center. Campus recreational facilities are open to the public on a limited basis, primarily through special events that are open to the public. The

creation of the new facility space on campus will result in expanded availability of recreational space on campus. University staff have not yet fully assessed the availability of space or determined the existence of or extent of any surplus of facility space. Campus Recreation and Wellness will be undertaking a strategic planning process in the short-term and staff has indicated that the University's ability to expand recreational space offering to the wider community will be a key consideration of that planning process.

This plan does not present a standard for indoor recreation space for the Town to achieve during the 10-year planning horizon due to the variable nature of partnerships and need for flexible negotiation. However, it is recommended that the Town work with the City of Burlington and Elon University to expand indoor recreation facility opportunities for Elon's residents. The City of Burlington is currently creating an indoor recreation facility in the western area of the City near to the boundary with Elon. Elon University is currently assessing the availability of recreation space they have for community use.

Once partnerships are established, the Town should integrate advertisement of these opportunities into their communication and marketing strategy to ensure they are properly publicized to the town's residents. The Town should track investment into these partnerships, the resources available to the Town of Elon, and the number of Elon residents accessing the resources in order to determine a partnerships' return on investment. Tracking these statistics will create a foundation for the Town to then create an indoor recreation facility standard that can inform future provision of indoor recreation space.

GOAL 6 > Incorporate recreation and parks opportunities into the evolving downtown streetscape.

The Downtown Elon Master Vision Plan identifies opportunities to expand green spaces in the downtown area as a way of reinforcing the visual character of the town and providing places for people to gather and enjoy downtown.

The Town should ensure that all efforts to expand downtown greenspace are coordinated between

downtown development and recreation and parks. The results of this plan such as the Priority Investment Rating from the statistically valid survey, can inform which amenities would be best suited for these parks. Mini business plans can be used to determine additional operations, maintenance and financial burden.



OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

This section discusses recommendations for Departmental structure and staffing needs, as well as recommending policy and procedure best practices for efficient departmental management.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE VISION:

Develop a sustainable recreation and parks system with functions that meet the communities needs now and in the future.

GOAL 1 > Create a formal recreation and parks department structure to meet existing and future demand

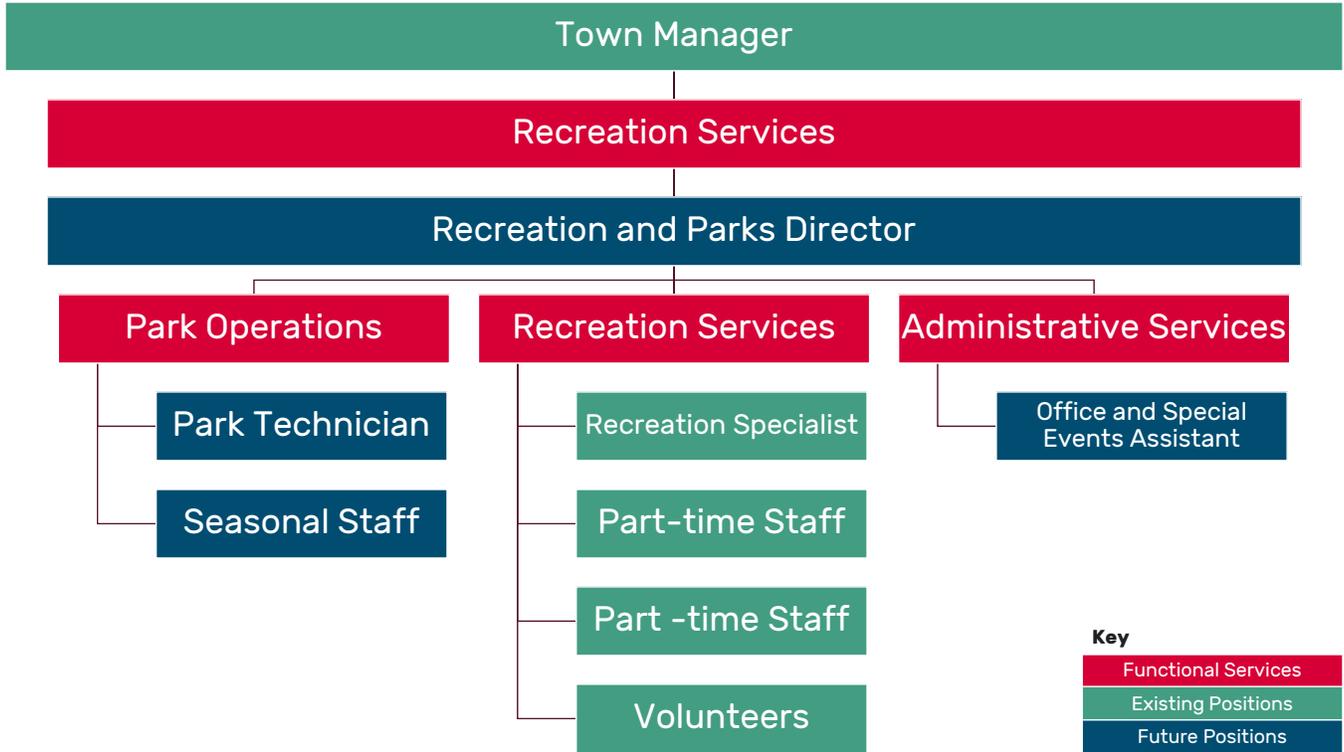
Elon’s park system is evolving with recent investments into the system. The organizational structure is lean and currently consists of recreation services under the responsibility of the Department. Maintaining the park system contributes to the vitality of a community and individual property values. This requires coordination to remain responsive to unmet needs, requests, and operational challenges. Transitioning into a formal department will help the town increase the relevance of recreation and parks services, drive demand, and attract businesses and residents to Elon.

Best practice for efficiency of department operations is for all parks and recreation functions to be within the department structure and overseen by the Administrator. Transitioning to a fully functional recreation and parks department will be essential to achieving efficiency. Special attention must be given to smart growth in the functional services of the Department for increased efficiency. Below is the recommended functional structure of the Department with current functions.



The following chart is recommended organizational structure to continue operations and begin incorporating new functions recommended in this plan into the Department's

weekly responsibilities. When the Town fully implements the staffing structure recommended below, the Town will reach the benchmarking median of five FTEs within the department



POSITION DEVELOPMENT

The opportunity to develop skills within a position will help manage the growth of the Department as new services are added. The Town should develop an approach of progression within positions. A workload management process can be used to build positions from part-time to full-time or position staff to advance their level of responsibility by moving from coordinator or supervisor.

Financial resources are not immediately present to move to the staffing levels identified within the proposed organizational chart above. Eventually, the Town should develop each

position immediately beneath the Functional Service should be developed to be a manager where direction is created with the Department Administrator and Town Manager for the service and responsibilities are managed with minimal supervision. Becoming known for developing skills in people attracts and retains staff. A natural progression of a position to accept additional responsibilities as an individual expands their capacity as they become more proficient is a best practice to help a department evolve when resources are limited. The graph below provides an example of advancement within a position.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

The actions for achieving this objective are in line with best practices in service delivery, workload

management and accountability. To fully implement this objective, the department will



need to determine the hours of each position and the top five responsibilities and resources needed to successfully complete the responsibilities. This can be accomplished by using a workload management process and form will accomplish this tracking and will serve as the foundation for staff time needed to accomplish tasks. The process should include quarterly meetings to discuss workload during the transition and workload development period.

The Department should discuss the responsibilities of each position to manage workloads. An example of a workload management form is below. This record will define roles and responsibilities, with the employee, providing direction to the employee and supervisors on major functions of each position. Updates to the defined roles and responsibilities will help to ensure accountability within the process and position. This document can be used to facilitate dialogue and document the evolution of the position as the responsibilities change.

Workload Management and Resources

Name:

Job/Position Title:

Please list your top five position/job responsibilities (please be as descriptive as you can):

	Responsibility	Percent of Time Spent on Each Responsibility (monthly)
#1		%
#2		%
#3		%
#4		%
#5		%

Resources:

- What resources are needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the position?
 - Office...
 - Field...
 - Technology...
 - Training...

Figure 3 – Sample Workload Management Worksheet



Assistant Director - Recreation Services Responsibilities

This list is to be used as a guide for the responsibilities that fall under this position. This list should not be considered all inclusive, rather, clarification to current duties as outlined in the job description.

Daily

- Office Operations – These are requirements only when you are not in the field or in trainings.
 - Assist with registration for programs and facilities.
 - Assist with handling the administrative office in case of a staffing shortage.
 - Answering the phone and assisting customers with program and facility questions when it rings through.
 - Assist with overall management of office complex including ensuring facilities are clean and organized, trash is emptied, any snow/ice is removed, and all other duties needed in day to day operations.
 - Assist with all other administrative duties, as needed.
- Recreation Division Operations
 - Maintain positive relationships with parents and school staff through responsiveness to customer complaint resolution, program and facility evaluation, and being proactive in assessing and fixing potential risk management and image issues.
 - Create and review work plans for Recreation staff. Updating daily the status on tasks, projects and other responsibilities to report when needed to the Director on progress.
 - Supervise program staff in way of audits, evaluations and coaching.
 - Supervise programs and events in the way of:
 - Reviewing paperwork, P.O.s, and reports
 - Receipts, Purchase Requisitions, Program Packages, Contracts, Agreements, Partnerships, Staff Evaluations, Program Audits, Equipment Inventories, Financial progress reports, Post-program/event documentation, etc.
 - Assisting with setting up and tearing down equipment, organizing, storing equipment, maintaining equipment.
 - Communication with vendors, volunteers, and other staff on upcoming programs.
 - Monitor registration numbers.
 - Coordinate content for Community Engagement Manager for messaging on social media, and website. Also, work with Community Engagement Manager to create marketing plans finding unique and efficient ways to promote individual recreation services.
 - Cover, when needed, staff shortages in programming.
 - Coordinate payroll and clean-up deficiencies in Kronos.
 - Attending meetings and trainings, as required.

PROGRAMMING

Elon has expressed interest in determining whether the Department should develop additional recreation services in programming and events. This is supported by the recently adopted Strategic Plan and the survey results identified a strong interest in additional recreation programs for youth and adults. Programs energize spaces in parks and facilities and foster a sense of community in participants and an appreciation for the recreation and parks system. A discussion of how the Town should pursue decisions regarding providing youth sports programming is included in Parkland Goal 2.

RECREATION PLAN COMPONENTS

- Target market
- Service Lines
- Program Standards
- Defined Outcomes
- Pricing Strategies
- Similar Provider Analysis
- Customer Service Standards

A Recreation plan is the primary tool Department's use to establish a sustainable program portfolio that meets community needs and responds to changing demand, trends, demographics and interests. A Recreation Plan identifies a program's target market, service lines, program standards, defined outcomes, pricing policy, similar provider analysis and customer service standards. Though the results of this planning process do not indicate youth sports leagues as a high priority relative to other programming types, a Recreation Plan would further identify similar providers, how much of the market they control, and the impact of additional staffing and facility needs.

Recommended staffing levels identified above are to implement this master plan and still handle daily operations in a quality manner. The Recreation Plan would identify the staffing needs required to implement any additional programming identified during that process and would create an updated staffing chart. Staff workloads would need to be updated to accommodate additional responsibilities. It may be difficult for the current capacity to support an inhouse recreation plan and hiring a consultant may be necessary, if appropriate.

BEST PRACTICES

Elon has expressed interest in determining if the Department should transition parks services in maintaining parks and facilities into the Recreation and Parks Department. A Maintenance Management Plan for recreation and park facilities, amenities and infrastructure directs staff in how to manage the park system by identifying maintenance needs and organizing responsibilities on a daily, weekly, annual and longer-term basis.

Developing a maintenance management plan will establish a foundational understanding of the system's maintenance needs for a sustainable, safe and functional park system. A Maintenance Management Plan should include inventory, routine maintenance needed, maintenance standards, defined maintenance levels or outcomes, definitions of in-house capabilities and tasks to outsource, asset preservation tasks, and lifecycle replacement schedules. It may be difficult for the current capacity to support an inhouse maintenance plan and hiring a consultant may be necessary, if appropriate.

The Town should develop policies and procedures to support the Maintenance Management Plan and assist with additional land management outcomes as the system acquires land for future parks. Ensuring an appropriate level of maintenance will help the Town manage the growth of the system to keep pace with community needs and not outpace financial or organizational resources. Investments in technology and software applications may increase capacity of operations and maintenance.

MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPONENTS

Inventory
 Routine Maintenance Needs
 Maintenance Standards
 Defined Maintenance Levels
 Definitions of in-house capabilities versus contracted services
 Asset Preservation Tasks Lifecycle Replacement Schedules

DEVELOP THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION

Best practice is for the Recreation Commission to work with Town leaders to establish direction as it pertains to parks, facilities, amenities, and staffing. Direction includes approved plans, policies, and procedures in providing parks and recreation services. Town staff work to address needs and issues while providing updates through reports for historical understanding.

Staff should bring policies and procedures for the Department to the Commission to ensure alignment with vision, mission and values. Once considered and approved, items from the Commission should be sent to the Town Board of Alderman for consideration and if appropriate, approval.

The Recreation and Parks Department's organization, duties, and major functions will be needed as a chapter of Town Code if the Town chooses to move forward with creating the department to oversee all functions within the

system. Adding clarity to operating measures sets boundaries and expectations for Commission members' responsibilities.

The Town can improve the experience of Recreation Commission members and expand the Commission's capacity by further formalizing and detailing the Commission's operations. A formalized Recreation Commission member onboarding process and handbook is a foundational piece of this formalization. This handbook should achieve the following objectives:

- › Briefly capture the history of the recreation and parks system development
- › Define roles and responsibilities
- › Outline the mission and vision for the future
- › Inform Commissioners of Town Code, legal matters and liability pertaining to the Department system
- › Illustrate lines of communication.

The onboarding process and handbook should include an annual Recreation and Parks Commission workplan. Developing this annually will help keep the Commission and Department working together to achieve the Town's goals for recreation and parks services. Weave this in with annual training that includes organizational structure, governing laws, projects, strengths, challenges and opportunities within the Recreation and Parks Department. Annual training ensures that the Commission and Department are fulfilling core and important functions as mandates and operations change. Conduct at least one joint Recreation Commission-Town Board work session annually. This will maintain focus and communication



Image: Recreation and Parks Office, Beth Schmidt Park

GOAL 2 > Develop policies and operating procedures specific to recreation and parks services.

The Town should dedicate resources to develop plans, policies, standards and procedures needed to establish a fully functioning Recreation and Parks Department. Plans, policies, standards and procedures will define the evolving Department’s scope of services and delivery. Focus and definition is essential for moving parks and recreation to a

formalized Department. Best practice indicates that a Parks and Recreation Department should have the following plans, policies, standards and procedures. Those listed in **bold** are plans, policies, standards and procedures that the Town does not currently have in place.

PLANS	POLICIES	STANDARDS + PROCEDURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Department Master Plan > Business Plan > Recreation Plan > Marketing Plan > Site Development Plans > Maintenance Management Plan > Trails and Greenways Plan > Emergency Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Park Rules and Regulations ordinance and enforcement Policy > Land Acquisition and Use Policy > Purchasing Policy > Pricing Policy > Refund Policy > Cost Recovery Policy > Partnership Policy > Sponsorship Policy > Volunteer Policy > Special Event Policy > Cash Handling Policy > Communications Policy > Program Development Policy > Memorial Policy > HR Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintenance Standards > Recreation Program Standards > Marketing Standards and Brand Style Guide > Office Standard Operating Procedures > Marketing Procedure > Performance Evaluation Procedure > Onboarding Procedure > Training Standards > Customer brochures

GOAL 3 > Continue to invest in and enhance the technology and marketing of the Town's Recreation and Parks services.

The Department has expressed interest in increased participation and increased revenue to assist in meeting needs of the Town. This can be accomplished by tracking the return on investment, developing a strategic marketing plan for the Town's recreation and park services, and establishing a pricing policy to direct staff on setting fees for existing and new programs.

Strategic marketing plans

A strategic marketing plan is key to increasing awareness, public engagement and marketing Department services. The Town should establish priority marketing methods using demographics and trends information and statistically valid survey results to determine new programs and services. It is important to regularly review marketing efforts and their return on investment.

STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN COMPONENTS

- Market Research
- Target Market
- Brand Positioning
- Competitor Analysis
- Marketing Strategy
- Budget
- Metrics

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Marketing and communications strategies and spending should ensure maximum return on the investment. Tracking measures can assist staff in understanding the efficacy of specific marketing strategies and should be analyzed when possible. The following outlines the process for tracking marketing return on investment and provides a template for evaluating marketing initiatives. Tracking marketing return on investment with user information and participation metrics can include:

Encourage User Sign-up

Provide incentives for online registration through discounts or promotions. For example, use codes to provide discounts for early bird registration. Using a variety of codes will also track marketing methods and identify what source is effectively driving registrations. It is best to use this with larger programs.

Short Messaging Service Codes (SMS)

Create unique offers with event or program-specific codes to those who opt-in to receive messages. It would be easy to track source of information through unique codes.

Social Networking Groups

Those who are 'fans' on Facebook could be provided specific incentives to sign up.

Web analytics (e.g. Google Analytics)

Google Analytics can help identify most popular pages, and sections or sub-sections that users view. Additionally, web analytics information regarding key phrases entered into search engines to locate the Town's services and web sites driving more traffic to the website.

Track sources of information during registration, special events and at facilities

Ensure every program registration format obtains the source of information that drove the participant to sign up for the program. During special events, partner with a high school statistics class or other institutions to utilize students as part of a data-collection drive. Create questions that will obtain useful information over time.

Build database identifying sources of information for participants and corresponding revenue generated

It is possible to identify individual marketing methods and corresponding revenue they generate. Developing a database or spreadsheet that documents sources of information used by respondents and corresponding fee and dollar spending for those programs will demonstrate the return on investment.

Document true costs of marketing

Utilize the Cost of Service Model's structure to track true costs of marketing for a specific activity or program, event, or facility. The true cost would include all direct costs associated with the activity including cost of printing, mailing, buying advertisements etc. It would include direct and overhead time allocated towards it.

The table on the next page depicts a sample return on investment analysis for email and direct mail marketing. Employees must provide the input variables and the outputs are driven by the model. The Town should consider installing a digital sign along the frontage of Schmidt Park for communicating programs, events and public meetings. A digital sign can be updated remotely, cycle multiple messages, and expand the Town's reach and public awareness. The Town's Unified Development Ordinance outlines design specifications and the approval process for digital signs that should guide the permitting

and approval process. The Town should follow the same permitting and approval process as all other entities. If successful with permitting and construction, the Town should establish a municipal digital sign policy that addresses the purpose, priority content and number of messages in a cycle. The Town should consider whether the sign can be a resource for outside organizations and include in the policy, what types of content from outside organizations can be included, the number of messages allowed, or articulate why the Town will not provide space for messages from outside organizations.

The Department should build its internal marketing and communications capacity. The Town should explore partnering with Elon University to develop a marketing and communications internship focused on content development. Internships can expand the Town's reach and position itself as a leader in developing young professionals. It is not uncommon for students who have developed a deep appreciation for the University and its setting within Elon to stay and work locally. Internships are an easier way for the Town to ease into a part-time or fulltime position over time. The Town can begin developing the responsibilities during the internship with the student into a part-time or fulltime position. This could be the internship project that the student will complete over the course of their time with the Town while handling daily marketing and communication needs.

$$\text{Marketing ROI} = \frac{\text{Contribution (\$) generated from externally referred customers}}{\text{(\$) for employee interaction \& other costs to manage \& engage in the process}}$$

	EMAIL MARKETING	DIRECT MARKETING POSTCARDS	ADDITIONAL METHODS	TOTAL
Input				
Total number of units sent, or people reached	2,500	10,000		
Total Cost (Direct and Indirect)	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,500.00		
Response Rate	30%	10%		
Conversion Rate	10%	10%		
Average Spending by Buyer*	\$ 20.00	\$ 12.00		
Output				
Total number of units sent	2,500	10,000		
Total cost	\$ 500	\$ 2,500		
Cost per unit	\$ 0.20	\$ 0.25		
Responses				
Response Rate [^]	30%	10%		
Number of responses	750	1,000		
Cost per response	\$ 1.00	\$ 3.00		
Conversion Rate				
Conversion rate	10%	10%		
Number of buyers	75	100		
Cost per Buyer*	\$ 6.67	\$ 25.00		
ROI Metrics				
Revenue Generated	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,200		
Net Profit or (Loss)	\$ 1,000	\$ (1,300)		

*Buyer refers to the number of participants
[^]Percent of responses to the marketing method

NUMBERS FOR EXAMPLE ONLY. DATA NOT REFLECTIVE OF THE TOWN OF ELON

Figure 4 - Sample marketing Return on Investment analysis. Numbers are for illustration only and are not representative of Elon.

Technology and software are important tools for the Town to maximize its marketing and outreach efforts. Three important applications include registration and reservation software, social media post scheduling software and the 3-1-1 system to track maintenance and develop work orders.

Registration software allows people to reserve facilities online and register for future programs. This decreases walk-ins and increases customer satisfaction and convenience. The software allows users to create a household account and use the system for recreation needs. This will allow staff more time to focus on additional functions and build capacity within the Department.

Social Media post schedulers allow users to schedule social media posting ahead of scheduling, allowing marketing staff to batch social media content creation, then target key times of day for posts. The benefits of this software include content that reinforces the Department's brand, communicates upcoming events, recognizes milestone days in the development of the park system and fun posts on national days or contests.

3-1-1 is a non-emergency municipal services hotline that many communities use to serve as a resource hub for their residents. Residents can call for information or to report non-emergency situations such as needed repairs or park vandalism. This reporting service can

be integrated with a work-order system so that maintenance staff can address reports in a timely manner. The system should help identify the workload and responsiveness of the Department when fully utilized. In some instances, the software incorporates a cost component, so the Town can identify the cost of annual park maintenance. If the 3-1-1 system does not allow for full tracking and cost accounting, then another software should be researched to achieve all these needs from the data. Research and invest in technology and software applications to increase data tracking, enable online registration/reservation, enhance the customer experience, and increase capacity in service delivery must be part of the approach to move the Department forward.



FINANCE

These recommendations encourage the Town to establish adequate funding for the department with best practices to develop a long-term sustainable system. Developing and implementing these financial recommendations will help ensure consistent progressive operations commensurate with resources. Establishing this foundation will empower the Town to meet expectations identified within the survey results.

FINANCIAL VISION

Enact financial best practices to ensure a sustainable recreation and parks system that thrives for current and future residents.

GOAL 1 > Develop a consistent and diversified approach to financing the system.

Short- and long-range financial planning will be essential for funding the current recreation and parks system and expand offerings to the desired level of service identified in the statistically valid survey. Where most departments encounter the greatest financial challenge is the cost of capital improvements that have the greatest impact on quality of life. Capital improvements are often the greatest costs and provide the greatest community benefit. The Town should update the 5-year capital improvements draft plan to reflect new priorities identified in the statistically valid survey results. This will manage and identify funding needs, so the Town can strategically plan for allocations and grants.

Including operational costs associated with

improvements creates a comprehensive understanding of operational costs the capital improvements will generate. A long-term financial strategy with a 5-year budget worksheet can be reviewed and updated annually to capture operational costs in the fiscal year the improvements are completed. This total cost of ownership approach provides leadership with better tools for financial forecasting. Included in the total cost of ownership is upfront costs, long-term maintenance costs, and replacement costs. The Town should continue to expand the Department's ability to track revenues and expenses by core program area and facility. Simple spreadsheets are the only tool needed for tracking and results from this analysis will be great talking points for communicating the department's needs, priorities and successes.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Policies direct and empower staff to accomplish goals. The most effective policies provide structure and outline desired outcomes, while providing enough flexibility to allow staff the freedom to respond to changes in information. The Town should develop an earned income policy to direct staff on pricing services and capturing potential external revenues. An earned income policy should address internal and external revenues. Where there is potential in bringing in revenue from the Department's services, the Town should decide how best to review and update the fee structure. After policies are defined, the Town can advertise earned income opportunities to the residents and surrounding jurisdictions. The Town should develop marketing materials for earned

income opportunities including memorial revenues, sponsorship opportunities, partnerships, and capital campaigns. As services expand, the marketing materials should be updated to keep talking points on the benefits relevant to conditions.

Another important component to the financial stability of the Department is appropriate cost containment measures. The Town should define preferred cost containment measures and train the staff on the outcomes. To ensure that the measures address the operational needs, planning needs, and desired new services, continue to include the Recreation and Parks Department staff in the process of setting the guidelines moving forward.

GOAL 2 > Incorporate different funding strategies to finance the system.

The Town should conduct focus groups organizations that currently use park property for events. In the focus groups, ask what current uses are for their event, what are the current challenges, what would they add to the event, and any solutions brainstormed to address their current challenges. The focus groups will help to define potential services and the Town can determine what is feasible. Essential services are a baseline of what the Town needs to provide for any program or event to take place on Town property or in parks. Important services are those things that benefit all who attend and the community. Value added is above and beyond

what the Town typically provides for events and will add cost to operations. Defining outside organization’s needs and the specific uses into the categories will help Elon establish a fee collection philosophy and amend existing fees to be more sustainable, where appropriate. Developing a spreadsheet on the information gleaned from the focus groups will help the Town use what was learned from the user groups for decision making purposes. Be sure to incorporate the favorable tasks and outcomes desired by the Town in to the fee collection philosophy and define them as essential, important, and value-added for each.

PRICING STRATEGIES

Internal pricing for programs can help establish quality in the minds of potential customers. Free and reduced fee programs are important to some users but can deter people from participating if they perceive the quality to be minimal based on the associated fee. To balance this the Town

should define pricing strategies to incorporate into a fee collection for new programs added to the services of the Town. An example of pricing strategies and example core program areas can be found in the table below.

PRICING STRATEGY	CULTURAL ARTS	EDUCATIONAL	HEALTH + WELLNESS	SPECIAL EVENTS	INCLUSIVE	CAMPS	ATHLETICS
Age Segment - Different prices offered for different ages							
Family - Different prices offered for household groups							
Residency - Different prices for residents and non-residents							
Weekday + Weekend - Different price by day of week							
Prime + Non-Prime Time - Different price by time of day							
Group Discounts - Different prices for groups							
Location - Different prices by location							
Market Rate - Competitor’s price influences price							
Cost Recovery Goals - Department cost recovery goals influence price							
Ability to Pay - Scholarships available or income level influences price							

Table 6 – Pricing strategies used by program area

When considering new programming identify any gaps in funding and any potential partners and sponsors to help provide the services. Where the Town can decrease the resources contributed to each program will in turn help manage workloads and keep the quality of programs consistent. In-kind and financial contributions should be spelled

out and the level needed should be understood to avoid falling short of needed assistance. More specifically, supplies, venue, instructor, volunteers, financial contributions, equipment and special skills can be sought out by the Town from sponsors and potential partners.

REVENUE GENERATION

Exploring opportunities for alternative funding is an important component to success and take a significant amount of time. To maximize efforts, staff with the deepest understanding, contacts, and genuine interest in financing should be assigned to explore the strategies identified within the financial analysis and determine the strongest potential. Thorough documenting the progress of each funding strategy, any restrictions, and unexpected opportunities, staff have supporting information for the decision to seek or pass on each potential funding source.

There are opportunities to partner on capital improvements within the system that when first achieved can lead to greater future success. Naming rights for future development along with sponsorship and advertising on printed materials and social media are becoming more common in municipal settings. Develop a few opportunities and get the word out to generate interest. Use these successes to leverage future opportunities. Begin by exploring all capital and user fees to determine if appropriate. If so, include into the overall approach

to funding the system. Some opportunities require initial contact on potential public private partnerships happen before planning begins. In most instances private companies need greater flexibility than what exists after a project has already begun. The town can develop a list to identify a company's history of giving, partnering, and success. This can be included in exploring and determine the best opportunities for franchise and licenses to help with development of the system and services.

The Appendix includes options for the Town to consider in identifying funds to support the recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Some of these funding sources may already be in use. Conversely, some may not have precedence in the state of North Carolina but could be pursued through legislative means should the community see the value in accessing these funding sources. Regardless, this list is intended to serve as a resource to fit a variety of project-, operational-, or partner-specific initiatives as well as provide inspiration in considering other strategies beyond these suggestions.

PARKS FOUNDATION

Park foundations are becoming more popular to assist with the development of park systems across the United States. These citizen advocate groups can help the Town leverage funds, projects, and resources to gain additional financial support. In order to fully explore the opportunity, the Town should identify all park foundations within the region to research bylaws, organization, and fundraising efforts. Determine the level of support these organizations can provide and if their service area crosses over into the Town of Elon. If conditions are favorable to continue for the Town, then identifying connected individuals with a history of philanthropic giving to approach about serving on the park foundation. It would help to develop the talking points for potential members and the media before marketing the foundation externally.

Provided all factors are still positive for Elon, the Town should establish an annual giving component to being on the foundation board before approaching individuals. Once the board is set, the Town should work with the foundation board to identify fundraising efforts to be pursued. As part of this, a memorandum of understanding should be created defining the type and amount of resources the Department will provide to the foundation board. Another important component to follow this will be to identify capital projects for the foundation to adopt as signature projects and begin a campaign for private funding at multiple levels. The campaign includes promotional materials and a mechanism for online giving to the project.

Goal 3 > Develop a consistent per capita and per acre funding strategy.

Identifying the cost of operations per capita and per acre is an important indicator of performance and a useful unit to make comparisons of standards and economic contributions to similar agencies in the industry. Per capita and per acre can also be direction to staff for applied management principles. Using the benchmark from the comprehensive plan process, establish a per capita and per acre cost goal and policy for the Town. Identifying a consensus on where the park system should operate on a per capita and per acre basis will keep the goal reasonable and

allow staff to be responsive to challenges along the way.

It is important to develop a process for monitoring and collecting data in determining the most appropriate cost of service per capita and per acre. Annually updating the per capita and per acre performance measures will ensure accountability and results. Once results are identified, communicate the effort of the Town to leadership and citizens for deeper understanding of operations.

DEVELOP DEPARTMENTAL STANDARDS

Benchmarking is a known way to discover the best performance being achieved by a group of selected providers. This information is important to identifying gaps in management processes in order to improve outcomes. When selecting the control group for benchmarking, it is important to understand the intended use of the information before beginning and ensure the data points are tracked and accurate. Regularly benchmarking

Elon against local and regional similar providers can help establish uses for data received including establish goals and performance measures for the department and communicate results to leadership and citizens to add context to the operations. The messaging of results also helps residents appreciate the fiscal stewardship demonstrated by the Town. In turn this increases support and approval of future efforts.

REVENUE AND FUNDING OPTIONS FOR GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

The greenway funding opportunities cited below are sources available to the Town of Elon. The most common method for funding greenways is to combine local, public sector and private sector funds with funds from state, federal and additional private-sector sources. Many communities involved with greenway implementation are choosing to leverage local money as a match for outside funding sources, in essence multiplying their resources.

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

Local and State Funding Sources

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

Tax Increment Financing (TIF Funds): The concept behind the tax increment financing is that taxes in a designated area are frozen and the redevelopment that occurs in the blighted, conservation, or economic development area will increase the assessed valuation of the property

and generate new property tax revenues. The increase can be used on an annual basis to retire revenue bonds issued to finance redevelopment costs. A great deal of development is required to generate enough revenues to make this funding source work.

Sale of Development Rights below the Ground:

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

Special Recognition License Tag:

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

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

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

Greenway Trust Fund: Another strategy used by several communities is the creation of a trust fund for land acquisition and facility development that is administered by a private greenway advocacy group, or by a local greenway commission. A trust fund can aid in the acquisition of large parcels of high-priority properties that may be lost if not acquired by private sector initiative. Money may be contributed to the trust fund from a variety of sources, including the municipal and county general funds, private grants, and gifts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

and/or improving community facilities and services, especially in low to moderate income areas.

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

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

Recreational Trails Program: Cities and villages, counties, townships, special districts, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations in Ohio are eligible. Up to 80 percent matching federal funds is reimbursed. Eligible projects include development of urban trail linkages, trail head and trailside facilities; maintenance of existing trails; restoration of trail areas damaged by usage; improving access for people with disabilities; acquisition of easements and property; development and construction of new trails; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; environment and safety education programs related to trails.

Impact Fees are on top of the set user rate for accessing facilities such as golf courses, recreation centers and pool facilities to support capital improvements that benefit the user of the facility. Impact fees are based on development that adds users to the system and are designed to maintain a set standard during periods of increased residents. These funds are for land acquisition only.

Volunteer Assistance and Small-Scale Donation Programs

Greenway Sponsors: A sponsorship program for greenway amenities allows for smaller donations to be received both from individuals and businesses. The program must be well planned and organized,

with design standards and associated costs established for each amenity. Project elements that may be funded can include mile markers, call boxes, benches, trash receptacles, entry signage and bollards, and picnic areas.

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

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

Federal Government Funding Sources

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

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Grants: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program provides up to 50 percent reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas. Funding is issued to the state and it is at the state's discretion how much of that funding will be made available for local government.

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)

provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for parks and recreational projects to serve the public.

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

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention (Small Watersheds) Grants: The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding to state and local agencies or nonprofit organizations authorized to carry out, maintain and operate watershed improvements involving less than 250,000 acres. The NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible projects to improve watershed protection, flood prevention, sedimentation control, public water-based fish and wildlife enhancements, and recreation planning. The NRCS requires a 50-percent local match for public recreation, and fish and wildlife projects.

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

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

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

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

Grants through Private Foundations and Corporations

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

World Wildlife Fund Innovative Grants Program: This organization awards small grants to local, regional and statewide nonprofit organizations to help implement innovative strategies for the conservation of natural resources. Grants are offered to support projects that accomplish one or more of the following:

1. Conserve wetlands
2. Protect endangered species
3. Preserve migratory birds
4. Conserve coastal resources
5. Establish and sustain protected natural areas, such as greenways.

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

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

Wal-Mart Foundation: This foundation supports local community and environmental activities and educational programs for children (among other

things). An organization needs to work with the local store manager to discuss application. Wal-Mart Foundation only funds 501(c)3 organizations.

PARKS & RECREATION FUNDING SOURCES THAT FUND OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL COSTS

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

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

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

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

Park Income Tax Issue or Levy: This would require residents to vote on an additional income tax issue or property tax levy to develop or enhance existing and new parks.

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

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

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

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

OPERATIONAL FUNDING COSTS OPPORTUNITIES

The Town has numerous revenue sources to draw from to support operational and management costs, including long term capital replacement costs. The following are funding options to consider regarding operations of the system:

User fees: User fees to access or use elements of parks exist currently but could be expanded to include fees to participate in recreation and education programs or access a nature center, sports complex, ice skating rink, or golf in the form of green fees, carts, leagues, and lessons. The Town does a good job in accessing user fees now.

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

Parking Fees: During major tournaments, the Town could charge a \$5 parking fee for parking in the park lot.

Field Permits: The Town can issue field permits for practice or games. Permits should cover the operational cost of each field and management costs. If a private operator desires to rent the site for a sporting tournament for private gain, the Town should provide a permit fee plus a percentage of gross sales the event for the exclusive use of the fields.

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

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

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

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

Wi-Fi Revenue: The Town can set up a Wi-Fi area whereby a Wi-Fi vendor is able to sell the advertising on the Wi-Fi access banner to local businesses targeting the users of the site.

Cell Tower: Cell tower leases can be used. This revenue source would support \$35,000-\$50,000 annually for the site if a cell tower can be placed in the park.

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

Special Event Sponsors: Special Events provide a great venue for event sponsors as it applies to a concert, stage, or entertainment.

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

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

Special Fundraiser: Many agencies hold special fundraisers on an annual basis to help cover the cost of specific programs and capital projects. The funds can be dedicated to a specific facility or the Town as a whole.

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

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9

action + implementation plan



CHAPTER 9 > ACTION + IMPLEMENTATION

An implementation plan with prioritized action items is outlined below. The recommendations presented in Chapter six have been further refined into strategies and prioritized as short-term, mid-term, long-term or ongoing. Action items receiving higher priority are those supported by significant community input or are items that have been delayed or postponed in the past but have significant bearing on achieving the goals of this plan. Each action item indicates a responsible party to foster accountability within the department.

Priority Key:

Short-Term (1 - 3 years)

Mid-Term (4 - 7 years)

Long-Term (7 - 10+ years)

Ongoing



Image: Picnic Shelter, Beth Schmidt Park



PARKLAND

PARKLAND MISSION

Provide an inclusive and well-connected park system while ensuring a high level of customer service at each location

GOAL 1 > Intentionally expand parkland acreage.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
1.1 Maintain a level of service of 8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents during the 10-year planning horizon	1.1.1 - Acquire 83.9 acres of land by 2029 for development into parks		long term
	1.1.2 - Use site suitability analysis to determine whether a parcel should be acquired for parkland development.		on going
	1.2.3 - Expand Beth Schmidt park amenities to the Town-owned parcels to the north of the existing park		mid term
1.2 Conduct a highest and best use analysis for the 72-acre parcel in the northern area of the ETJ	1.2.1 - Work with a consultant to determine analysis parameters and include parkland as a potential use among other Town priorities.		short term

GOAL 2 > Build great parks for the Elon community.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
2.1 Construct new amenities based on the results of community input	2.1.1 - Identify construction opportunities for the following amenities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Greenway trail system > Nature trails > Indoor fitness + exercise facilities > Senior center > Community gardens > Multipurpose fields > Dog park > Outdoor amphitheater > Gymnasium or indoor facility space > Classroom, meeting or event space 		ongoing
2.2 Provide amenities to populations identified in the demographic analysis	2.2.1 - Partner with senior residential communities to provide an integrated senior recreation program		short term
	2.2.2 - Partner with community organizations such as Meals on Wheels to ensure information reaches vulnerable populations		short term
	2.2.3 - Continue encouraging Elon families to participate in youth athletics programming offered by other towns.		ongoing
	2.2.4 - If the opportunity arises, participate in a County-wide youth sports league serving all communities in Alamance County.		mid term
2.3 Integrate placemaking strategies into park design	2.3.1 - Implement signage standards and install wayfinding signage		short term
	2.3.2 - Pursue implementing a Percent for Art strategy to fund public art installations in public parks and greenways		mid term

GOAL 3 > Leverage parks and greenways as a platform to meet larger community goals.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
3.1 Create parks where people can use them to achieve personal health and wellness goals	3.1.1 - Prioritize park improvements and associated infrastructure to improve health equity using the follow guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Geographic distribution > Financial investment > Physical access 		ongoing
	3.1.2 - Track investments in parkland to ensure geographically equitable distribution of public investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Investment per park users > Investment per residents within a quarter-mile > Investment per acre of parkland > Additional considerations that contextualize dollar amounts spent 		ongoing
	3.1.3 - Ensure parks are accessible along public transportation routes		ongoing
	3.1.4 Promote park connectivity using strategic greenway connections.		ongoing
3.2 Communicate the park system’s impact and significance to the Town’s economy	1.2.1 - Use this plan’s financial analysis as a foundation for a broader economic impact and economic significance study		mid term
	1.2.2 - Partner with groups that have the ability and knowledge to conduct an economic impact analysis, such as the Alamance County Visitors Bureau		mid term
	1.2.3 - Effectively communicate the indirect impacts of the parks system, such as an increase in property values and a reduction in vehicle miles traveled		short term

GOAL 4 > Develop a connected network of greenways and trails.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
4.1 Create Greenway Master Plan to guide future construction of an Elon Greenway Network.	4.1.1 - Identify greenway corridors of +/- 4 miles to prioritize for construction		short term
	4.1.2 - Use the following characteristics to guide master planning for an Elon Greenway Network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Accessible > Equitable > Experiential > Safe 		mid-term
	4.1.3 - Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions to ensure that an Elon Greenway Network makes important connections to existing and future trails		short term
	4.1.4 - Promote park connectivity using strategic greenway connections.		ongoing
4.2 Pursue construction of trail connections already identified as high priority	4.2.1 - Plan and construct trail connection between Beth Schmidt Park and Lawrence Slade Park		short term
	4.2.2 - Plan and construct trail connection between Beth Schmidt Park and Davidson Park in partnership with the City of Burlington		mid term
	4.2.3 - Plan and construct trail connection between downtown Elon and downtown Burlington		mid term
4.3 Maintain a level of service of 1 mile of trail per 1,000 residents during the 10-year planning horizon	4.3.1 - Construct 13.5 miles of greenway and natural surface trail by 2029		ongoing

GOAL 5 > Pursue healthy partnerships to provide indoor recreation and aquatic facilities and programming for Town residents.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
5.1 Provide Town of Elon residents with opportunities for indoor recreation	5.1.1 - Create a memorandum of understanding with the City of Burlington to define partnership with the Town of Elon for the City’s forthcoming recreation center at Davidson Park		short term
	5.1.2 - Create memorandum of understanding with Elon University to define a partnership with the Town of Elon for the University’s indoor recreation space, including aquatics facilities		mid term
	5.1.3 - Create memorandum of understanding with Twin Lakes to define a partnership with the Town of Elon for indoor recreation space.		short term

GOAL 6 > Incorporate recreation and parks opportunities into the evolving downtown streetscape.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
6.1 Pursue park expansion through the implementation of the 2014 Downtown Elon Master Vision Plan.	6.1.1 - Ensure the creation of public open space during the implementation of the Downtown Elon Master Vision Plan		ongoing
	3.1.2 - Include park elements into downtown streetscape enhancements		ongoing
	3.1.4 Promote park connectivity using strategic greenway connections.		ongoing



OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE MISSION

Develop a sustainable recreation and parks system with functions that meet the community's needs now and in the future.

GOAL 1 > Create a formal recreation and parks department structure to meet existing and future demand.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
1.1 Transition into a fully functional Recreation and Parks Department with appropriate dedicated staffing.	1.1.1 - Use survey results and the Town's strategic plan to define the Department's core functions		short term
	1.1.2 - Adopt the recommended organizational structure for the department and hire staff to meet the identified staffing levels		short term
	1.1.3 - Build staff capacity by training and developing existing staff		short term
	1.1.4 - Hire new staff based on defined selection criteria and skillset to achieve departmental functions		short term
	1.1.5 - Standardize job titles and pay grades for each position based on job function with a fully staffed department		short term
	1.1.6 - Transition park maintenance responsibilities and staff into the Recreation and Parks Department for cohesive operations.		mid term

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
<p>1.2 Develop operational functions, roles and responsibilities to ensure appropriate responsibility, and management levels</p>	1.2.1 - Use workload management and resources form for developing new positions and tracking workload functions		short term
	1.2.2 - Create and document a work plan identifying the roles and responsibilities of each position daily, weekly monthly, quarterly and annually.		short term
	1.2.3 - Create evaluation process with performance measures based on S.M.A.R.T. goals for each position.		short term
	1.2.4 - Promote internally as staff members increase responsibility and management level		ongoing
<p>1.3 Develop an Elon Recreation Plan to guide provision of essential, important, and value-added services</p>	1.3.1 - Create a consistent program development process with a form to guide the process		short term
	<p>1.3.2 - Develop program standards that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Arrival time › Set up instructions › Competitor analysis › Target markets › Recreation trends › Quality assurance standards › Quality audits › Customer feedback process 		on going
	1.3.3 - Develop recreation program performance indicators used to track and report program success		short term
	1.3.4 - Develop a pricing policy and cost recovery goals for programs.		mid term
	<p>1.3.5 - Provide high priority programming for youth and adults:</p> <p>Youth programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Youth and teen sports programs › Special events and family festivals › Outdoor music and concerts › Outdoor adventure programs › Art, dance, performing arts › Aquatic programs <p>Adult programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Adult fitness and wellness programs › Outdoor music and concerts › Special events and family festivals › Senior citizen programs 		ongoing

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
1.4 Incorporate park maintenance best practices to create quality parks, facilities, and amenities	1.4.1 - Invest in a Maintenance Management Plan to coordinate operations and maintenance		short term
	1.4.2 - Integrate and create policies and procedures to assist with park land planning		ongoing
	1.4.3 - Ensure park system growth keeps pace with community needs without outpacing the Town's financial or organizational resources		ongoing
	1.4.4 - Invest in technology and software applications to increase service delivery capacity in operations and maintenance		mid term
	1.4.5 - Determine whether park maintenance functions should be incorporated into the Recreation and Parks Department		mid term
1.5 Develop Recreation and Parks Commission members and build their capacity to advocate for the priorities identified in an annual workplan.	1.5.1 - Create a formalized onboarding process for Park Commission members		mid term
	1.5.2 - Create and update an annual Recreation and Parks Commission workplan		short term
	1.5.3 - Conduct annual training for Recreation and Parks Commission members to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ organizational structure ➤ governing laws ➤ projects ➤ strengths, challenges and opportunities within the Recreation and Parks Department 		mid term
	1.5.4 - Conduct annually at least one joint work session with the Recreation and Parks Commission and Town Board of Aldermen		mid term

GOAL 2 > Develop policies and operating procedures specific to recreation and parks services.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
2.1 Develop policies to guide departmental operations. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Land acquisition > Land management > Conservation and environmental conditions 	2.1.1 - Develop land acquisition criteria and policy consistent with recommendations in Parkland Goal 1.1		mid term
	2.1.2 - Develop land management and land use policy that recommends a ratio of developed versus undeveloped parkland		mid term
	2.1.3 - Develop a Good Neighbor policy to guide resolving encroachment issues		mid term
	2.1.4 - Develop a fencing and screening policy to guide design standards for new parks adjacent to residential areas or other land uses		mid term
	2.1.5 - Develop design standards to address conservation and environmental conditions for development of new parks		mid term
2.2 Develop operational policies that address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Facility pricing > Refunds > Cost recovery > Partnerships, > Sponsorships > Volunteers > Non-Town special events > Program development > Memorials 	2.2.1 - Develop pricing policy for existing and new facilities and auxiliary services		mid term
	2.2.2 - Develop a refund policy and process and consider including an administrative fee for changes and refund requests.		short term
	2.2.3 - Develop a cost recovery policy for facilities and programs and overall expenditures.		mid term
	2.2.4 - Develop a partnership and sponsorship policy directing staff minimum requirements for equitable partnerships.		mid term
	2.2.5 - Review and update the newly created Non-Town Special Event policy		short term
	2.2.6 - Create program development policy		short term
	2.2.7 - Develop a volunteer program and policy		mid term
	2.2.8 - Develop a memorial policy including cost, maintenance, and replacement.		mid term

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
2.3 Develop standards for the following operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maintenance – Recreation programs – Marketing – Business operations 	2.3.1 - Develop maintenance standards and assign appropriate park maintenance levels to all park areas		short term
	2.3.2 - Develop program and event standards for all events on Town property that includes logistics and ensures a safe and enjoyable experience for all		short term
	2.3.3 - Develop marketing standards that include brand requirements and style guidelines		short term
	2.3.4 - Develop business office standard operating procedures to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Customer greetings › Customer service › IT management › Opening procedures › Closing procedures 		short term

GOAL 3 › Continue to invest and enhance the technology and marketing of the Town’s recreation and parks services.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
3.1 Develop a marketing and communications plan for the Town’s recreation and parks services including other quality of life services	3.1.1 - Develop marketing and communications outcomes for the Town’s recreation and parks services and other quality of life services		mid term
	3.1.2 - Develop social media use policy		short term
	3.1.3 - Consider a digital sign along the frontage of Schmidt Park for communicating programs, events and public meetings.		mid term
	3.1.4 - Partner with Elon University to develop marketing and communication internship to assist the Department with content development		mid term
	3.1.5 - Research and invest in technology and software applications to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increase data tracking › Enable online registration and reservation › Enhance customer experience › Increase service delivery capacity 		mid term



FINANCES

FINANCES GOAL

Enact financial best practices to ensure a sustainable recreation and parks system that thrives for current and future residents.

GOAL 1 > Develop a consistent and diversified approach to financing the system.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
1.1 Ensure financial stability through short- and long-range financial planning	1.1.1 - Update five-year Capital Improvement Plan to account for facility priorities identified in the statistically valid survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Greenway trails > Nature trails > Indoor fitness and exercise facilities > Senior center > Community gardens 		short term
	1.1.2 - Develop a long-term financial strategy that includes implementing a five-year budget worksheet reviewed and updated annually		short term
	1.1.3 - Ensure financial forecasting uses a Total Cost of Ownership approach that addresses the following for assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Upfront costs > Long-term maintenance costs > Replacement costs. 		short term
	1.1.4 - Continue to expand the Department's ability to track revenues and expenses by program area and facility		short term

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
<p>1.2 Develop financial policies to support the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Earned income ➤ Cost recovery ➤ Cost containment 	<p>1.2.1 - Develop an earned income policy directing staff on capturing potential external revenues</p>		short term
	<p>1.2.2 - Develop marketing materials for earned income opportunities including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Memorial revenues ➤ Sponsorship opportunities ➤ Capital improvements. 		short term
	<p>1.2.3 - Define the Town's preferred cost containment measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consumables ➤ Design, ➤ Value engineering ➤ New services 		ongoing

GOAL 2 > Incorporate different funding strategies to finance the system.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
2.1 Adopt a fee collection philosophy and framework for user groups, programs and reservations based on a classification of services model	2.1.1 - Conduct a current user group analysis to inform the fee collection philosophy		short term
	2.1.2 - Classify the department's services into core, important or value-added		short term
	2.1.3 - Create a fee structure based on the combined results of the user group analysis and services classification		short term
	2.1.4 - Define pricing strategies so that new programs can be incorporated the fee collection policy		short term
	2.1.5 - When considering new programming identify potential partners and sponsors to help finance the services		ongoing
2.2 Establish mechanisms to capture revenues from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > External funding sources > Capital fees > User fees > Grants > Tax support > Franchises and licenses 	2.2.1 - Explore grants identified within the financial analysis and determine the funding sources that are the best fit for the Town		ongoing
	2.2.2 - Explore tax support opportunities to support the Town's decision to seek or pass on a potential funding source		short term
	2.2.3 - Explore capital and user fees to determine if appropriate to include into the overall approach to funding the system		short term
	2.2.4 - Explore and determine the best opportunities for franchise and licenses that could expand the system's services		short term

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
2.3 Develop a parks foundation to supplement capital funding for the Recreation & Parks budget	2.3.1 - Identify all park foundations within the region to research bylaws, organization, and fundraising efforts		ongoing
	2.3.2 - Identify connected individuals with a history of philanthropic giving to approach about serving on the park foundation		short term
	2.3.3 - Establish an annual giving component to foundation board membership		mid term
	2.3.4 - Work with the foundation board to identify fundraising strategies		ongoing
	2.3.5 - Identify capital projects for the foundation to adopt as signature projects and begin a campaign for private funding at multiple levels		short term

GOAL 3 > Develop a consistent per-capita and per acre funding strategy.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	GROUP RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY
3.1 Establish cost goals for the Town based on per capita costs and per acre costs.	3.1.1 - Using existing data, identify where the park system should operate on a per capita and per acre basis		ongoing
	3.1.2 - Develop a process for collecting data and monitoring the cost of service per capita and per acre		short term
	3.1.3 - Annually update the cost of service per capita and per acre performance measures		short term
	3.1.4 - Communicate performance measures to Town leadership and residents to deepen understanding of recreation and parks operations		short term
3.2 Benchmark local and regional agencies to identify the cost of service per capita and per acre for similar communities	3.2.1 - Regularly benchmark against similar providers locally and regionally		short term
	3.2.2 - Use benchmark data to establish departmental goals and performance measures		short term
	3.2.3 - Communicate results to Town leadership and residents to add context to the operations		short term



10 appendix



APPENDIX CONTENTS

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 - Park Assessments
 - Park Classifications
- 2 METHODS**
 - Benchmarking Community Selection
- 3 STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS**
- 4 FUNDING SOURCES**
- 5 BEST PRACTICES**
 - Partnership
- 6 HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES RESOLUTION**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX 1 - PARKLAND ANALYSIS

EXISTING PARKS

Beth Schmidt Park

Lawrence Slade Park

SYSTEM RATING

OVERALL

GOOD

EXCELLENT

ACCESSIBILITY

GOOD

SIGNAGE

FAIR

ACCESS, LINKAGE
& SAFETY

EXCELLENT

SENSE OF
PLACE

FAIR

SUSTAINABILITY



MCADAMS

ANALYSIS THEMES

Accessibility

Is the park designed so people of all abilities can access this park and all of its amenities?

Sense of Place

Does park design support the intended use of the park and create an enjoyable place to pursue those activities?

Access, Linkage & Safety

Does this park connect to its surroundings through sidewalks and

greenways, and do people feel safe here?

Signage

Are people able to identify this park as a Town of Elon park and easily navigate to the park and within the park?

Sustainability

Does this park promote green building practices and promote environmental sustainability?

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department owns and maintains two parks open to the public. The parks provide active and passive recreation amenities such as walking paths, playgrounds, and more. These parks meet important community needs and provide a sense of identity.

While Elon acquires parkland for new facilities to meet this increasing demand, maintaining existing parks, providing facilities that meet current trends, and improving safety and accessibility will remain important. This assessment provides a tool for assessing existing parks and makes recommendations to improve access, safety, aesthetics, and sense of place. This report uses a weighted scoring system to generate a rating for each park. The ratings are described below. The analysis tool and score weights are included at the end of this analysis.

This assessment focuses primarily on aspects of the built environment. Rankings are not intended to assess the park's role in the community or people's enjoyment of the park. Park ratings are intended to establish recommendations and design standards to improve existing parks and provide standards to help future parks meet desired design standards.

EXCELLENT scores indicate park exceeds assessment criteria.

GOOD scores indicate park meets most assessment criteria.

FAIR scores indicate park meets some assessment criteria.

POOR scores indicate few assessment criteria met.

CASE STUDY

BETH SCHMIDT PARK

ADDRESS

2150 ELON PARK DRIVE
ELON, NC 27244

PARK CLASSIFICATION

GOOD

PARK ACREAGE

19.96



PARK RATING

OVERALL RATING

GOOD

EXCELLENT

ACCESSIBILITY

EXCELLENT

SIGNAGE

GOOD

ACCESS, LINKAGE
& SAFETY

EXCELLENT

SENSE OF PLACE

FAIR

SUSTAINABILITY



MCADAMS

AMENITY INVENTORY

- Community Center
- Two Gazebos
- Picnic Pavilion
- Picnic Shelter
- Story Walk
- Inclusive Playground
- Historic Loy Homestead Garden
- Natural Surface Trail Loops
- Dog Park

OVERALL IMPRESSION

The lively Beth Schmidt Park is located on the main highway closely circumnavigating the heart of the Town of Elon and Elon University. The park is truly a family destination with a playground for kids of all ages and abilities, nature walking loops, two gazebos, and a dog park. Passive and active recreation opportunities for all ages are balanced. Trails and forested areas allow visitors to interact with the natural environment.

PERCEIVED STRENGTHS OF THIS PARK

Featured in the main area of the Schmidt Park, the inclusive playground, community center and picnic pavilion were created to be used by multiple users regardless of age or ability. The park is well-maintained and provides a welcoming environment for users. The park is connected by natural-surface trails and sidewalks to the surrounding community. Restrooms, benches, and shelters provide the comfort facilities needed for extended stays at this park for adults and small children.

PERCEIVED WEAKNESSES OF THIS PARK

Although the main area's facilities exhibits ADA capabilities, there are several features throughout the park, such as the gazebos and pond area, that lack ADA connectivity. Also, Beth Schmidt Park is inadvertently divided into different parks due to the absence of internal connectivity between features. This has resulted in the park seemingly divided into four separate areas: the main amenity area, the Loy Homestead Gardens and pond feature, the cultural structures, and the K-9 Corner dog park. In order to use a pedestrian-dedicated paved surface to reach each section, the users must exit the park and utilize the sidewalk adjacent to the main road.

CASE STUDY

BETH SCHMIDT PARK



PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

Beth Schmidt Park is a highly used park but lacks the interconnectivity necessary for a park offering the amount of features and programs currently available. Maintaining and enhancing the strong sense of place observed is crucial for the park to continue serving the citizens of Elon.

PLAYGROUND

- Equipment appears in good working order with maintenance likely needed within next two to five years.
- Consider an approved ADA play surface to allow access to all features of the playground.
- The inclusion of an edging between the concrete path and mulched areas would aid in maintenance and reduce tripping hazards.

ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIONS

- Providing a paved path transversing the park from the community center to the dog park would create a cohesive, uninterrupted experience.
- The conversion of a natural surface loop in the naturalized area to a paved surface would improve the experience for all users.
- Remove small stumps from the natural surface trails.
- Connect Beth Schmidt Park with Lawrence Slade Park via sidewalks and trails.

POND AND GAZEBO

- Enlarging the pond and reducing the turbidity would enhance the water clarity without the need for increasing the depth.
- Complete the paved path from the parking lot to the gazebo, over the bridge and returning to the restroom structure.

EDGES AND NATURAL AREAS

- Repair and enhancing paths, edges, and signage of naturalized area to enhance this unique offering.

LANDSCAPING

- Consider irrigation for lawns and planting beds.



CASE STUDY

LAWRENCE SLADE PARK

ADDRESS

404 Ball Park Avenue
Elon, NC 27244

PARK CLASSIFICATION

GOOD

PARK ACREAGE

3.11 ACRES



PARK RATING

OVERALL RATING

GOOD

EXCELLENT

ACCESSIBILITY

GOOD

SIGNAGE

FAIR

ACCESS, LINKAGE & SAFETY

EXCELLENT

SENSE OF PLACE

FAIR

SUSTAINABILITY



MCADAMS

AMENITY INVENTORY

- Basketball Court (Six Goals)
- Two Picnic Shelters
- Restrooms
- Two Bocce Ball Courts
- Two Cornhole Courts
- Playground
- Gravel Walking Loop
- Amphitheater with Lawn Seating

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Hidden within a neighborhood only a few blocks outside the heart of Elon, Lawrence Slade Park offers active and passive opportunities for all site users. Renovated in 2014 to include a picnic shelter and restrooms, the park contains a basketball court equipped with six goals, bocce ball courts, a playground and even cornhole courts. An amphitheater shell flanks an event lawn suited for performances and community events. With a few enhancements, the park could provide a premier local gathering place within walking distance to downtown.

PERCEIVED STRENGTHS OF THIS PARK

The park offers a diverse array of programming due to the amount of facilities. Basketball courts and a walking loop cater to users who desire an active experience, whereas the shelters and cornhole courts appeal to the non-active users. The location within Morgan Place neighborhood and the proximity to downtown Elon makes the park very convenient.

PERCEIVED WEAKNESSES OF THIS PARK

Parking is one of the leading challenges at Lawrence Slade Park. With eight parking stalls currently in place, the park does not seem suitable for events. Although an accessible route traversing the park has been created linking the two parking nodes, the existing loop around the park has not been well maintained and is currently littered with tripping hazards due to washout.

CASE STUDY

LAWRENCE SLADE PARK



PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

Lawrence Slade Park is ideally located within a diverse community, easily accessible by the nearby residents. The inclusion of more parking stalls would advance the number of users driving in from the larger community. To accommodate the current and future park users, some paved and turf surfaces will need replacement or reinforcement.

PARKING

- More on-street parking would expand the event opportunities for the park.

FURNISHINGS AND COMFORT FACILITIES

- Future opportunities for replacement of furnishings should be used to install furnishings with finishes that are consistent in character.

ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIONS

- Consider providing wheelchair accessible seating at the amphitheater.
- Resurfacing the walking loop around the park would provide a safe surface for all users.
- Public sidewalks and crosswalks connecting the park with the greater community would improve connectivity.
- Connect Lawrence Slade Park with Beth Schmidt Park via sidewalks and trails.

NATURAL CHARACTER

- Consider the addition of shrubs and understory trees to enhance the vegetative community, integrative with the mature trees.
- Using shrubs would create a definitive boundary between the park and residential lots to the north.
- Consider using vegetation to define spaces and bring a level of comfort to the pedestrian experience in areas where natural vegetation does not exist.
- The event lawn flanked by the amphitheater shell could be enhanced with engineered soil and a durable, irrigated lawn panel.





TOWN OF ELON

PARK CLASSIFICATION APPENDIX

2019





INTRODUCTION

This appendix outlines the Town of Elon's park classification system including a summary of the adopted park classification system and the newly proposed park classification system which include park types found in Elon that are not represented in the national park classification standards.

The purpose of the park classification system is to provide a conceptual framework for the parks and recreation departments to understand the park usage and programming, site selection, maintenance standards, and design standards for a park. The park classification system can be used both to understand the maintenance needs and design standards suitable for an existing park based on park size and park use, or it can be used to inform the site selection, design standards and maintenance requirements for a future park as land is acquired. When properly applied, the park classification system will result in a park system that is diverse, cohesive, well-maintained and safe.

- > **Site selection:** How does an available site influence what type of park can be built there? Or, how do community needs influence acquisition decisions to ensure the site will be adequate for the identified need?
- > **Park usage:** How do visitors use this park?
- > **Maintenance standards:** What is the expected maintenance load to keep this park safe and clean?
- > **Design Standards:** What design standards must be met for the park to fulfill its purpose for as many people as possible?

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The proposed park classification system is a comprehensive standard that incorporate a fine level of detail into how a park is designed and used. Some of these details include site selection, maintenance standards, detailed design standards, and length of stay. The new system builds upon the existing Town of Elon park facilities and anticipates classifications that will potentially be needed in the future.

The park classification system is an important tool for parks and recreation departments, but this system has its limitations. The National Recreation and Parks Association's 1996 document that establishes the park classification standards currently in use addresses this idea. The report states that "A standard for parks and recreation cannot be universal, nor can one town be compared with another even though they are similar. The proposed park classifications include:

- > Pocket park
- > Community park
- > Regional park
- > Special Use Park or Facility
- > Greenways, multi-use paths and trails
- > Sports complexes
- > Nature parks



POCKET PARK

Pocket parks are small outdoor spaces with an intimate feel surrounded by commercial buildings or houses serving as play areas for children, spaces for relaxing and socializing, taking lunch breaks, and can act as small event spaces.

Successful pocket parks are safe and accessible for all pedestrians, allow people to engage in self-led recreational activities such as playing or relaxing, and are comfortable and inviting spaces where visitors can expect to interact with friends and neighbors.

In general, pocket parks offer minimal amenities on site and are not designed to support programmed activities, except for small neighborhood events such as farmers’ markets or shelter rentals. The service area for pocket parks is typically a quarter-mile or less and they are intended for users within a close walking distance away.

This type of park may be found within the public park system, but are also commonly designed, constructed and maintained as a commonly held area within a private residential development and managed by a homeowner’s association or as part of a commercial building plaza. Pocket parks may also be located on underutilized urban land repurposed for parks or located in-between buildings in an urban environment.

SITE SELECTION

- Location
 - Within areas with frequent pedestrian use
 - Adjacent to residential or commercial areas
 - On neighborhood streets or areas protected from heavy automobile traffic
 - On underutilized urban land
-

- Sizing
 - Approximately 0.5 to 3 acres
-

- Connectivity
 - Should connect to commercial and residential developments when possible
 - May connect to multi use paths, greenways, or other urban trails
 - Visitors to the park will typically come from a 0.25-mile radius
-

PARK USAGE

- Visit Duration
 - Visitors tend to stay an hour or less
-

- Programming
 - Parks are designed primarily for passive or unprogrammed recreation
 - Special events such as farmers’ markets may occur onsite
 - Amenities are unprogrammed and can be used on a first-come, first-served basis
-

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

- Level 1
 - Applied to park as funding and resources are available
 - May be applied to an individual amenity or high visibility park that requires a higher level of upkeep
-

- Level 2
 - Required for this park
-

- Level 3
 - Standard is inadequate for this park



DESIGN STANDARDS

Amenities	– Should include amenities for passive recreation such as fitness walking loops, playgrounds, and picnic shelters
Comfort Facilities	– Restrooms are not provided – Water fountains may be provided
Sports	– May feature unprogrammed small sports fields or courts
Playgrounds	– Designed for ages 2 to 5 years and 5 to 12 years – Should include shade – Should be ADA accessible
Furnishings	– Benches and garbage cans should be located near amenities – Park furnishings should meet jurisdiction’s style and design standards
Landscaping	– Appropriately designed to complement park theme – Will enhance visitor experience – Will not obscure visibility of park’s amenities to ensure safety.
Signage	– Consistent style within park and park system – May include entrance signage – Wayfinding signs within park if needed – Pedestrian-scale wayfinding signs to direct visitors to park – Park and amenity rules will be posted
Transportation Access	– Handicapped parking may be provided – Little or no other parking – Widened on-street parking near park boundaries – Bicycle parking should be available – Sidewalk access to park should include curb cuts to accommodate wheelchairs and strollers
Traffic Calming	– Traffic calming methods should be used on streets adjacent to the park to enhance pedestrian access to the park
Lighting	– Security lighting should be kept on all night
Naming	– Park name should be consistent with the jurisdiction’s ordinances
Art	– Public art may be included – Should represent the character, context, and brand of the adjacent neighborhood – Local artists should be commissioned to provide art installations
Other	– Pocket park design can be tailored to the specific recreation needs or demographics of the surrounding neighborhood – Safety design of park should meet established standards of crime prevention through environmental design standards



COMMUNITY PARK

Community parks are accessible to multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. This park offers a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities such as multiple athletic fields or a combination of multiple uses and may include indoor recreation facilities. Community parks should offer passive and active recreational opportunities and can preserve natural habitat. It is important to link these community parks within the pattern of green space as they offer a broader variety of park facilities. Community parks should be large enough to adequately accommodate multiple amenities. Unprogrammed open space is available at this park and may provide greenway access to other parks or natural features.

SITE SELECTION

Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Along two collector streets, preferably including one arterial street – May be in non-residential areas – Surrounded by streets on all sides or adjacent to a community anchor such as a school
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appropriately sized to accommodate multiple park amenities – Most parks will be between 10-30 acres
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linkages to other parks with sidewalk, greenway, or trail connections – Conveniently located to pull visitors from many surrounding neighborhoods – May link to regional park through a greenway system. – Visitors to this park will generally come from a 2-mile service radius

PARK USAGE

Visit Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visitors tend to stay 2 to 3 hours at this park
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should have a minimum of four essential program services such as sports practice or games, camps, or aquatics – Revenue generating facilities are an important feature of this park and generate many of the park’s visits – 65 percent of this park is actively programmed or developed with amenities – 35 percent is open and unprogrammed space – Jurisdiction may partner with community groups such as sports leagues to offer programming – May be the location of indoor recreational facilities

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Applied to park as funding and resources are available – May be applied to an individual amenity or high visibility park that requires a higher level of upkeep
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Required for this park
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Standard is inadequate for this park



DESIGN STANDARDS

Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should have up to four signature amenities – Amenities should have broad community appeal
Comfort facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Restrooms should be provided – Water fountains should be provided
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sports fields should be programmed for practice and organized league play
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Designed for ages 2 to 5 years and 5 to 12 years – Should include shade – Should be ADA accessible
Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should meet jurisdictions style and design standards within park and park system
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Edges and boundaries should enhance an atmosphere of quiet enjoyment by defining park boundaries near heavily trafficked streets with natural or artificial barriers. – Appropriate design to complement park theme – Enhance the visitor experience – May be enhanced at entryways or near facilities – May be provided as a stand-alone amenity such as a demonstration garden
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consistent style within park and park system – May include entrance signage or monumentation – Wayfinding signs within park – Posted rules for park and amenities – Kiosks may include wayfinding or interpretive information – Wayfinding signage located at arterial roads should direct visitors to park
Transportation Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Must provide ample parking for auto-based trips to park – Parking provision may be determined based on traffic generation of programs and amenities – Should occupy no more than 10 percent of the park but must meet local development standards – Should include a combination of lot parking and widened on-street parking – Bicycle parking should be provided – Curb cuts in and around the park should accommodate wheelchairs and strollers
Traffic Calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should be used on streets adjacent to the park to enhance pedestrian access to the park
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sports field lighting should be provided as needed – Should be constructed to sports field standards – Amenities, areas near sports fields, paths and parking should be lighted for use after daylight hours with pedestrian-scale lighting for safety



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Dual system should allow 50 percent of pedestrian-scale lighting to remain on all night– Athletic field and parking lot lighting should be designed to minimize light pollution and spillover onto adjacent parcels
Naming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Park name should be consistent with the jurisdiction’s ordinances
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Public art may be included– Should represent the character, context, and brand of the adjacent neighborhood– Local artists should be commissioned to provide art installations
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Required stormwater management facilities should be well-integrated into the landscape and overall site design.– Should use current best practices in stormwater management such as low impact design approaches– Design of parks should employ best practices in sustainable site design such as those outlined by the Sustainable Sites Initiative <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Safety design of park should meet established standards of crime prevention through environmental design standards



REGIONAL PARK

Regional parks offer large-scale recreational opportunities and tend to offer access for residents and regional visitors to pursue passive recreation, such as boating, camping, hiking, self-guided environmental education, or exploration. Regional parks can be managed as nature preserves and can protect high-quality natural areas for their unique ecological characteristics. These large tracts of land can offer unique recreational opportunities suited to larger areas such as disc golf, mountain biking, or equestrian riding, while still offering more traditional recreational opportunities like playgrounds, play lawns, or athletic fields and courts.

SITE SELECTION

- Location – May be located to protect natural resources such as wetlands, streams, and other geographic features or sites with significant cultural or historic features
 - Size – Should be located on sites with enough acreage to accommodate multiple park amenities and provide ample space for day-long hikes, outings, or special events
 - Will vary in size but generally will be less than 100 acres in size
 - Connectivity – Locate on roads capable of handling the anticipated traffic generated by the amenities onsite, including special events
 - Link to major trail systems
 - Park should be accessible by public transportation.
 - Include area in trails master planning and include as destination for regional trail systems
-

PARK USAGE

- Visit Duration – Visitors will make day-long trips to this park
 - Programming – Space should be a combination of programmed and unprogrammed areas
 - Amenities will be a combination of revenue generating and non-revenue generating
 - Revenue generating programs and facilities should be priced to offset operational or maintenance costs of park programs and amenities with a revenue recovery target of 90 to 100 percent
 - Up to 50 percent will be programmed space
 - 50 percent or more will be unprogrammed for passive recreation
 - Programs should meet at least four of the community’s core parks and recreation needs
-

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

- Level 1 – Applied to park as funding and resources are available
 - May be applied to an individual amenity that requires a higher level of upkeep
 - Level 2 – Minimum for this park
 - Level 3 – Inadequate for this park
-



Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dedicated site managers should be on-duty to address ongoing and emergency maintenance needs – Develop stand-alone business plan to promote accountability
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DESIGN STANDARDS

Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should offer between 10 and 12 amenities – Amenities should have regional appeal – Special facilities with regional appeal may include golf courses, tennis complexes, sports complexes, lakes, regional playgrounds, reservable shelters, camping, outdoor or extreme sport access, recreation centers, pools, gardens, trails, zoos, and more – Revenue generating facilities may include gift shops for the sale of retail or park-branded merchandise or concessions – Programming may include pay-to-play, value-added amenities such as supervised rock climbing – May include facilities for large outdoor special events including amphitheaters or event fields with vendor hookups
Comfort facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Restrooms should be provided – Drinking fountains should be provided – Concessions stands or restaurants may be provided – Comfort facilities should meet the needs of visitors for day-long or overnight visits – Water, sewer, and cable hookups should be provided where recreational vehicle camping is offered
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sports facilities or sports complexes may be one amenity offered at the park (although sports complex is a separate classification)
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Playground units should be placed to complement other amenities
Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should meet jurisdiction’s style and design standards within park and park system
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should be appropriate design to complement park theme and use. – Should enhance the visitor experience. – May be enhanced near entryways or amenities – Landscaping may extend through park
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consistent style within park and park system – Should provide entrance signage or monumentation – Wayfinding signs or kiosks within park – Posted rules for park and amenities – May provide interpretive kiosks – Wayfinding signage located at arterial roads should direct visitors to park
Transportation Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should accommodate parking needs on high volume days – Overnight parking available when camping is offered – Special event or overflow parking provided if needed.



Traffic Calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Methods should be used within the park to ensure pedestrian safety along walking routes between amenities
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amenities, paths, and parking should be lighted for use after daylight hours with pedestrian-scale lighting for safety – Dual system should allow 50 percent of pedestrian-scale lighting to remain on all night – Sports field lighting should be provided as needed – Should be constructed to sports field standards – Athletic field and parking lot lighting should be designed to minimize light pollution and spillover onto adjacent parcels
Naming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Park name should be consistent with the jurisdiction’s ordinances
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public art may be included – Should represent the character, context, and brand of the adjacent neighborhood, the jurisdiction, or wider region – Local artists should be commissioned to provide art installations
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Required stormwater management facilities should be well-integrated into the landscape and overall site design – Should use current best practices in stormwater management such as low impact design approaches – Design of parks should employ best practices in sustainable site design such as those outlined by the Sustainable Sites Initiative <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Safety design of park should meet established standards of crime prevention through environmental design standards



SPECIAL USE PARK OR FACILITY

Special use parks and facilities are those that serve a single niche purpose rather than providing a well-rounded offering of park amenities. It is possible for a special use facility to be located inside a larger park with a different classification. The special use park or facility classification is intended to be a generalized and flexible classification. Parks falling in this classification would benefit from explicitly defining parameters for all the elements below based on the specifics of the facility. Additional Features of Special Use Facilities include:

SITE SELECTION

Location	– Facility should be located at a site appropriate for the intended use
Sizing	– Varies based on facility
Connectivity	– Provide greenway trail and pedestrian connectivity to the extent possible and as suggested by complementary plans such as transportation plans or greenway master plans

PARK USAGE

Visit Duration	– Varies based on facility
Service Radius	– Varies based on facility
Programming	– Varies based on facility – Typically serves special user groups and historically underserved populations – Should generate revenue to support the operations and maintenance of the facility – Cost recovery should be determined based on the jurisdiction’s program cost recovery policies

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Standard	– Provide the highest-level maintenance with available funding – Level 2 maintenance should be minimum standard while some amenities may require a level 1 standard.
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DESIGN STANDARDS

Amenities	– May have broad appeal or cater to specific recreation needs of select communities – Amenities offered should support uses complementary to specialty amenity – Amenities should be regionally unique offerings
Comfort Facilities	– Varies based on facility
Sports	– Varies based on facility – May provide facilities for niche sports
Playgrounds	– May be placed to complement other amenities
Furnishings	– Should meet jurisdiction’s style and design standards within park and park system



Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should be appropriate design to complement park theme and use – Should enhance visitor experience – May be enhanced near entryways or amenities
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consistent style within park and park system – Should provide entrance signage or monumentation – Wayfinding signs or kiosks within park – Posted rules for park or facility – May vary based on facility
Transportation Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On street or off-street parking should be provided as appropriate – Handicapped parking should be provided – Should accommodate parking needs on high volume days – Should be determined based on the expected trip generation of the facility
Traffic Calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Methods should exist within the park and on pedestrian routes accessing the park
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amenities, paths, and parking should be lighted for use after daylight hours with pedestrian-scale lighting for safety when applicable – Lightning needs should be based on facility needs
Naming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Park name should be consistent with the jurisdiction’s ordinances
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public art may be included – Should represent the character, context, and brand of the adjacent neighborhood, the jurisdiction, or wider region – Local artists should be commissioned to provide art installations
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Required stormwater management facilities should be well-integrated into the landscape and overall site design – Should use current best practices in stormwater management such as low impact design approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Design of parks should employ best practices in sustainable site design such as those outlined by the Sustainable Sites Initiative <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Safety design of park should meet established standards of crime prevention through environmental design standards



GREENWAYS, MULTI-USE PATHS AND TRAILS

Greenways, multi-use paths and trails are essential elements of a park system, creating connections between recreational spaces, serving as recreational spaces themselves, and providing linkages among the places where people live, work, and play.

A greenway, path, or trail may be paved, gravel, or natural surface, depending on its purpose and intended use. These trails may connect users to destinations outside of parks, or provide loops for walking, jogging, or running. Trails are opportunities to use otherwise undevelopable land such as utility easements and stream buffers. They are frequently locations where people can interact with natural features such as forests or streams.

Trails and paths serve many purposes. They offer safe routes for biking and other forms of alternative transportation and provide safe locations for individuals to pursue fitness activities. Greenbelts provide urban wildlife corridors and offer sites for outdoor recreation and environmental interpretation.

Connectivity is key for creating a comprehensive greenways and trails system but in reality, trail plans are often implemented piecemeal, only achieving true connectivity after years of dedicated effort. Greenbelts, greenways, paths, and trails should receive their own planning effort to ensure regional connectivity and long-term viability. Any standards contained herein should ultimately coordinate with relevant transportation or greenway plans.

SITE SELECTION

Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All trails should be located to maximize connectivity of park system – Locating greenway systems should be a result of comprehensive planning processes to ensure long-term connectivity and viability
Sizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 30-foot right of way of unencumbered land for a greenbelt – 10-foot paved or gravel trail width for multi-use pedestrian and bicycle uses – 3-foot natural surface trail width for open space trails – Equestrian trails require a 10-foot trail width in addition to multiuse trail width. Design standards specify a 5-foot decomposed granite path, plus a 5-foot landscaped separation from pedestrian and bike uses in urban areas, and a 5-foot wide natural surface, plus a 5-foot landscaped separation from pedestrian and bike uses in open space settings.
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trails should connect the jurisdiction’s park system – Trails should connect the areas where people live, work, and play – Trails should link into existing bicycle and pedestrian transportation infrastructure

PARK USAGE

Visit Duration	– Varies
Programming	– Site will not be actively programmed, though special events such as nature walks and races may occur along trails and greenways



MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

-
- Standard – Maintenance standard should be determined based on season, usage rates, and available funding
-

DESIGN STANDARDS

-
- Amenities – Amenities may be provided to enhance the user experience
 - Interpretive signage or public art can enhance the visitor experience
 - Comfort Facilities – Provide restrooms at major trail heads
 - Sports – Not applicable
 - Playgrounds – Not applicable
 - Furnishings – Should meet jurisdiction’s style and design standards within park and park system
 - Location of furnishings along trails should balance needs of convenience for users, access for maintenance, and visibility for safety
 - At a minimum, should provide benches and trash receptacles at regular intervals
 - Bike maintenance stations and emergency blue light alert phones may be provided at regular intervals
 - Landscaping – Landscaping and planting scheme in urban areas
 - Landscaping at trail heads
 - Limited or no planting in open space areas
 - Prioritize use of native plant species
 - Signage – Mileage markers at half mile intervals
 - Interpretive kiosks as appropriate
 - Wayfinding signage at trailheads
 - Street identification signage at road crossings
 - Transportation Access – Provide some parking at major trailheads
 - Account for additional parking need when greenway trailhead is located within existing park
 - Traffic Calming – Traffic calming is essential at locations where urban trails cross traditional road ways
 - Signage should indicate trail crossing to motorists and trail users
 - Crossings may be painted, lighted with push-button activation, raised, or other
 - Lighting – Security lighting at trailheads is preferred
 - Naming – Greenways, paths, and trails should be consistent with the jurisdiction’s ordinances
 - Art – Public art may be included
 - Should represent the character, context, and brand of the adjacent neighborhood, the jurisdiction, or wider region
 - Local artists should be commissioned to provide art installations
-



Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Required stormwater management facilities should be well-integrated into the landscape and overall site design– Should use current best practices in stormwater management such as low impact design approaches<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Design of parks should employ best practices in sustainable site design such as those outlined by the Sustainable Sites Initiative <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Safety design of park should meet established standards of crime prevention through environmental design standards



SPORTS COMPLEXES

Sports complexes are developed to provide four to 16 fields or courts in one setting. A sports complex may also support extreme sports facilities, such as BMX and skateboarding. Sports complexes can be single focused or multi-focused and can include indoor or outdoor facilities to serve the needs of both youth and adults. Outdoor fields should be lighted to maximize value and productivity of the complex. Agencies developing sports complexes focus on meeting the needs of residents while also attracting sport tournaments for economic purposes to the community.

Sport field design includes appropriate field distances for each sport’s governing body and support amenities designed to produce revenue to offset operational costs. Signature sports complexes include enhanced amenities such as artificial turf, multipurpose field benches and bleachers, scoreboards, amplified sound, scorer’s booths, etc. Enhanced amenities would be identified through discussion between the jurisdiction, the school district, and sports associations, dependent upon adequate funding. Additional features include:

SITE SELECTION

Location	– Should be located on or near arterial streets for a stand-alone sports complex
	– Streets on four sides, or three sides with school or municipal use on fourth side.
	– Service radius determined by community demand

Size	– 40 acres or more for stand-alone sports complexes
------	---

Connectivity	– Accessible by public transportation when provided
	– Located on roads capable of handling anticipated traffic generated at peak hours
	– Link to major trail systems

PARK USAGE

Visit Duration	– Two- to three-hour experience for single activities
	– Can be all day for tournaments or special events.

Programming	– Four or more revenue generating facilities or programs
	– 90 percent active programming
	– 10 percent passive programming
	– Focus is on active programming of most amenities
	– Sports complexes may embody the “park within a park” concept which describes facilities that exist as a portion of a larger park. Both facilities benefit from the proximity of the other

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Level 1	– Ideal maintenance standard for this park
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Level 2	– Adequate during off-seasons or when funding and resources are not available
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Level 3	– Inadequate for this park
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Other	– Annual plan for turf maintenance
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DESIGN STANDARDS

Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 4 to 16 fields or sports courts – Provide a range of amenities to serve recreation needs and interests of users not specifically engaged in programmed sport or athletics, such as walking trails, playgrounds, etc.
Comfort facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Restrooms should be located at multiple strategic locations – Drinking fountains should be provided – Concessions stands should be provided – Comfort facilities should meet the needs of visitors for day-long visits
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sports programming, practice, league play, and tournaments are the primary purpose of this facility
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – May be provided as support amenity
Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should meet jurisdiction’s style and design standards within park and park system
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appropriate design to enhance park theme and use – Should enhance visitor experience – Enhanced landscape at entrances and throughout complex – Landscaping should be used to provide shade when possible – Shadows should not interfere with player visibility.
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Entryway signage or monumentation – Park and amenity rules posted – Wayfinding signage within park – Field names or numbers identified and clearly displayed – Wayfinding signage located at arterial roads should direct visitors to park
Transportation Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adequate parking and circulation for high-volume days – Overflow parking options
Traffic Calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Methods should be used within the park to ensure pedestrian safety along walking routes between amenities – Pedestrian connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods if possible
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sports field lighting – Should be constructed to sports field standards – Amenities, paths, and parking should be lighted for use after daylight hours with pedestrian-scale lighting for safety – Dual system should allow 50 percent of pedestrian-scale lighting to remain on all night
Naming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Park name should be consistent with the jurisdiction’s ordinances
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public art may be included – Should represent the character, context, and brand of the adjacent neighborhood, the jurisdiction, or wider region



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Local artists should be commissioned to provide art installations
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Required stormwater management facilities should be well-integrated into the landscape and overall site design– Should use current best practices in stormwater management such as low impact design approaches<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Design of parks should employ best practices in sustainable site design such as those outlined by the Sustainable Sites Initiative <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Safety design of park should meet established standards of crime prevention through environmental design standards



NATURE PARKS

Open space and natural areas are undeveloped but may include natural or paved trails. Natural areas may be preserved for their unique natural features or may be incidental to other uses such as easements or stream buffers, such as early successional areas in utility easements, and forested stream buffers. Open space and natural areas contain natural resources that can be managed for recreation and natural resource conservation values such as a desire to protect wildlife habitat, ecological function, water quality and endangered species. Open space can also provide opportunities for nature-based, unstructured, low-impact recreational opportunities such as walking, photography, and wildlife viewing.

SITE SELECTION

Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should be located to protect natural resources such as wetlands, streams, forests and other geographic features or sites with significant cultural or historic features – Should provide pedestrian access to notable natural features such as mature forests, streams, and lakes if access will not negatively impact the ecological integrity of the features
Sizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should be sized according to goals of natural area and conservation and land management best practices – Should be large enough to provide trail desired mileage without seeming overcrowded – Should be large enough to preserve environmental features identified for protection
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should connect to greenway system when possible.

PARK USAGE

Visit Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visitors may stay 2 to 6 hours
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Up to 100 percent will be unprogrammed space – Jurisdictions or community partners may provide environmental education or health and wellness programming onsite – May be site of day camps focused on outdoor activities or extreme sports as facilities and natural features allow – In cases where public access is not allowed, park should fulfill specifically articulated environmental service such as water filtration or viewshed protection

MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Demand-based maintenance with available funding – Environmental management practices observed and implemented
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DESIGN STANDARDS

Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amenities should accommodate passive recreation needs
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amenities may include paved or natural surface trails, wildlife viewing areas, outdoor or extreme sports facilities, disc golf, environmental or cultural interpretive signage, educational facilities
Comfort Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Restrooms should not be provided unless there is an adequate budget for regular upkeep – Potable restroom facilities can be provided during special events
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sports facilities should not be located at this park
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Natural playscapes may be provided at trail heads
Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should meet jurisdiction’s style and design standards within park and park system – Location of furnishings along trails should balance needs of convenience for users, access for maintenance, and visibility for safety
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Areas are generally not landscaped – Entryways or areas around buildings may be landscaped – Prioritize use of native plant species – Protect naturally-occurring vegetation – Implement invasive species management or other natural resource management plans as necessary to maintain ecological integrity of site
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wayfinding signage at trailheads – Trail intersections marked – Color-coded blazes along trails – Interpretive kiosks at locations of interest
Transportation Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parking should be adequate for estimated trip generation of onsite amenities – Parking may need to accommodate site-specific features such as boat launches or trailer turnarounds
Traffic Calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Methods used in parking areas to ensure pedestrian safety
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – None
Naming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Naming should be consistent with the jurisdiction’s ordinances
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Land management plan developed and implemented.

**MAINTENANCE STANDARDS**

Level 1 Maintenance – High profile areas where the entire area is visible to foot traffic such as entrances to community centers and areas where funding permits a higher level of maintenance. Example of maintenance activities include: Mowing and edging twice per week during peak growing season, 95 percent turf coverage at start of season with 5% weeds and 0 percent bare area, edging once per week, tree pruning cycle once annually, litter pickup twice per week.

Level 2 Maintenance – Moderate to heavy use typical of most parks. Example maintenance activities include: Mowing and edging once per week, 80 percent turf coverage at start of season with 5-10% weeds and 5 percent bare area, tree pruning cycle every several years, litter pickup once per week.

Level 3 Maintenance – Typical for low usage parks or when funding is limited very limited. Example maintenance activities include: Mowing and edging every 2 weeks, 80 percent turf coverage at start of season with 20 percent weeds, edging once per week or every 2 weeks in off-season, tree pruning cycle every 10 years, litter pickup every other week. In areas where turf does not impact quality of experience (i.e., dog parks) or non-landscaped open space areas, demand-based maintenance is provided according to funding availability.

BENCHMARKING COMMUNITIES

LIST OF PEER COMMUNITIES FROM NATIONAL RECREATION
AND PARK ASSOCIATION'S PARK METRICS



The following table summarizes the selection criteria used to pull peer community information from the National Recreation and Park Association’s website to conduct the benchmarking summary.

SELECTION PARAMETER	TOWN OF ELON	SUMMARY OF PARAMETER	METHOD OF DETERMINATION
department budget	\$317,400	\$285,660 to \$349,140	Town of Elon's budget (+) and (-) 5 percent
parks maintained	2	1 to 5 parks	General range
FTEs	3	1 to 5 FTEs	General range
population	9419	9000 to 10000 population	Town of Elon's population (+) and (-) 5 percent
population per square mile	1885	1,790 to 1,980 people per sq. mile	Town of Elon's people per sq. mile (+) and (-) 5 percent

The Park Metrics tool allows users to search by criteria. The Park Metrics tool returned the following communities as results for a search for similar communities. Some communities qualified for more than one criteria. The table indicates which characteristics the community shares with the Town of Elon.

COMMUNITIES	STATE	BUDGET	PARKS MAINTAINED	FTEs	POPULATION	POPULATION DENSITY
New Boston Recreation	NH	x	x	x		
Pittsboro Parks	NC	x	x	x		
Town of Hilliard	FL	x		x		
Blacksburg Parks and Recreation	VA		x			
Carbondale Recreation & Community Center	CO		x			
Cary (Town of)	NC		x			
Cornelius Parks, Arts, Recreation & Culture (PARC) Department	NC		x			
Coventry Parks and Recreation Department	CT		x			
Darien Parks and Recreation	CT		x			
Davidson (The Town of)	NC		x			
East Greenwich Parks & Recreation Department	RI		x			
East Hampton Parks and Recreation	CT		x			
Fairfield (Town of)	CT		x			x
Falmouth Parks & Community Programs	ME		x			
Georgetown Parks & Recreation Commission	CO		x	x		
Groton Parks and Recreation	CT		x			

Herndon (Town of) Parks and Recreation Dept	VA		x			
Hilton-Parma Parks & Recreation	NY		x			
Jamestown (Town of) Parks & Recreation	RI		x			
Lexington Recreation Department	MA		x			x
Medfield Parks & Recreation	MA		x			
Miami Lakes	FL		x			
Mount Pleasant (Town of)	NY		x			
Mount Pleasant SC Recreation Department	SC		x			x
Normal Parks & Recreation Department	IL		x			
Oro Valley Parks Recreation Library & Cultural Resources Department	AZ		x			
Plattsburgh (Town of) Parks & Recreation Dept.	NY		x	x		
Queen Creek (Town of) Communications, Marketing, & Recreation	AZ		x			
Waynesville Parks and Recreation Department	NC		x		x	
White Settlement (City of) PARD	TX		x			
Cheney Recreation Commission	KS			x		
Holderness Recreation Department	NH			x		
Nashville (Town of) Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources	NC			x		x
Town of Mukwonago Parks & Recreation Department	WI			x		
Hebron Park & Recreation Dept	CT				x	
Town of Warrenton Parks and Recreation	VA				x	
Williston Recreation & Parks	VT				x	
Garner (Town of)	NC					x

Town of Elon

Recreation and Parks

Survey

...helping organizations make better decisions since 1982

Findings Report

Submitted to The Town of Elon:

ETC Institute
725 W. Frontier Lane,
Olathe, Kansas
66061

March 2019





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The Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Survey Executive Summary

Overview

ETC Institute administered a recreation and parks survey for the Town of Elon during the fall of 2018. The survey was administered as part of the Town's first Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan. The survey and its results will be used to guide the development of the town's parks, facilities, and programs over the next 10 years. The time invested in completing this survey will aid the Town in taking a resident-driven approach to making decisions that will enrich the future of our community and positively impact the lives of residents.

Methodology

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in the Town of Elon. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it on-line at www.elonsurvey.org.

Ten days after the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent emails and placed phone calls to the households that received the survey to encourage participation. The emails contained a link to the on-line version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete the survey. To prevent people who were not residents of the Town of Elon from participating, everyone who completed the survey on-line was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered on-line with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed on-line did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the on-line survey was not counted.

A total of 305 residents completed the survey. The overall results for the sample of 305 households have a precision of at least +/-5.6% at the 95% level of confidence.

This report contains the following:

- Charts showing the overall results of the survey (Section 1)
- Priority Investment Rating (PIR) that identifies priorities for facilities and programs (Section 2)
- Benchmarking analysis comparing the Town's results to national results (Section 3)
- Tabular data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey (Section 4)
- A copy of the survey instrument (Section 5)

The major findings of the survey are summarized on the following pages.

Facility Use

Respondents were asked to indicate if they have used eight different facilities and indicate approximately how often their household has visited the facility.

- 60% of respondents have used Beth Schmidt Park
- 15% of respondents have used the Heritage Place Community Center at Beth Schmidt Park
- 13% of respondents have used the Elon Dog Park-K9 Corner
- 13% of respondents have used any reservable picnic shelter at Beth Schmidt Park

Most respondents (49%) indicated their household uses facilities every couple of months, 6% use them once a week, 9% use them 2-3 times a week, 16% use them once a month, and 20% use them a few times a month.

Respondents were given a list of potential indoor facilities that could be added or expanded and were asked to check all the facilities their household would use. Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents would use a walking and jogging track, 39% would use an exercise facility for adults 50+ years, 33% would use a senior center, 29% would use an aerobics/fitness/dance class space, 26% would use a leisure pool, and 25% would use a weight room/cardiovascular equipment area.

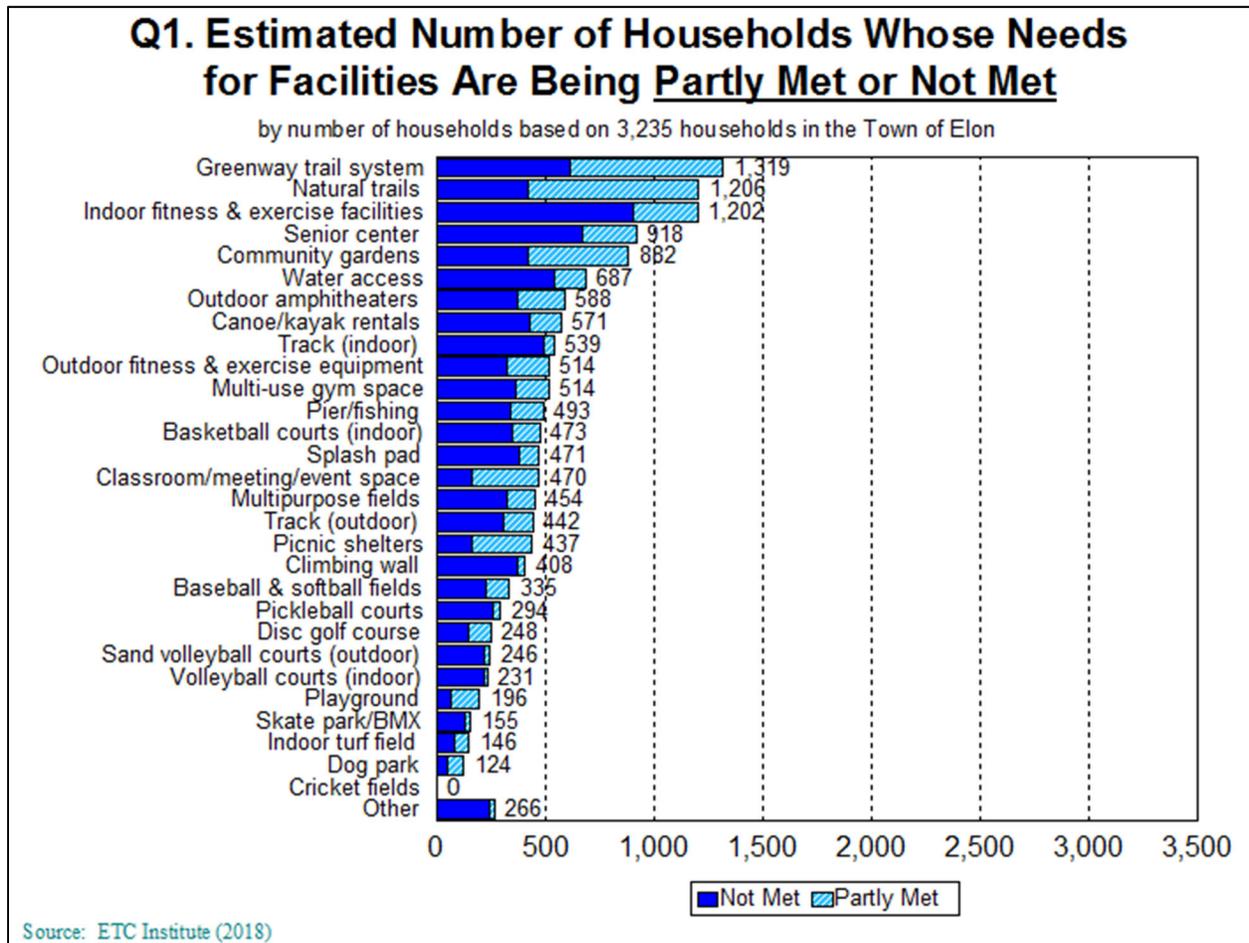
Facility Needs and Priorities

Facility Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 30 recreation facilities and amenities and rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities.

The three recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need were:

1. Greenway trail system – 1,319 households,
2. Nature trails – 1,206 households, and
3. Indoor fitness and exercise facilities – 1,202 households.

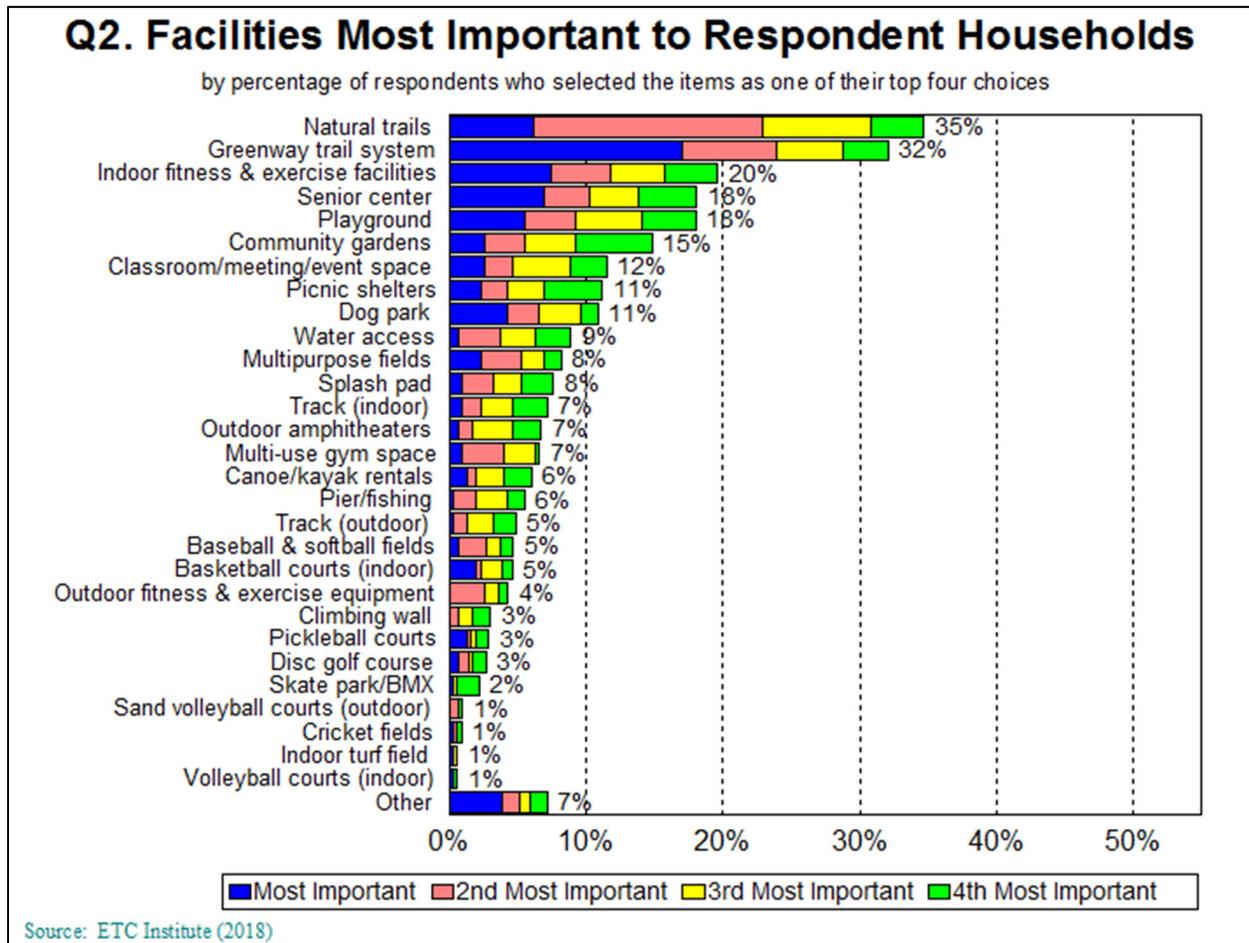
The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 30 facilities that were assessed is shown in the chart on the following page



Facility Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each facility. Based on the sum of respondents’ top four choices, the three most important facilities to residents were:

1. Nature trails (35%),
2. Greenway trail system (32%), and
3. Indoor fitness and exercise facilities (20%).

The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart on the following page.

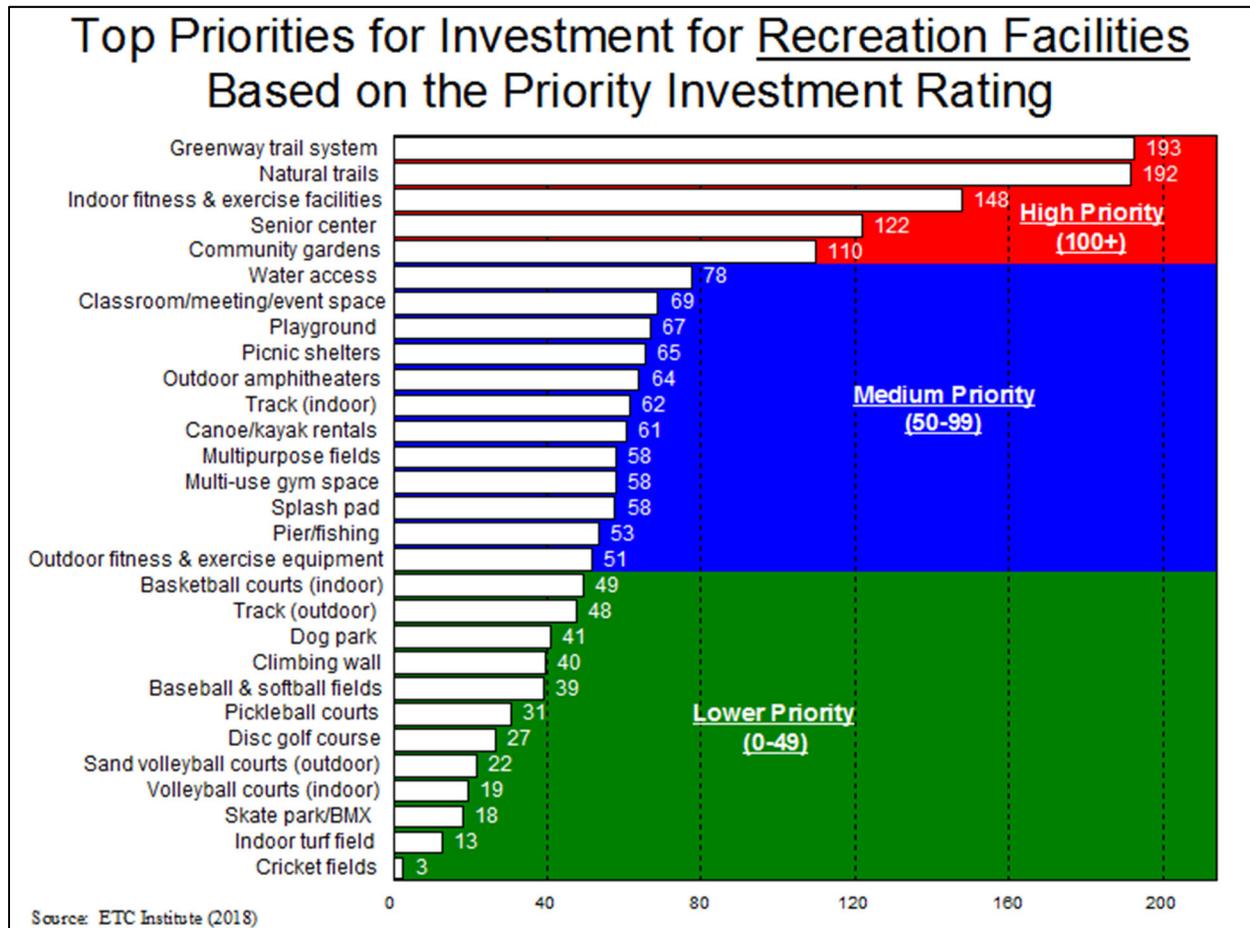


Priorities for Facility Investments: The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 2 of this report.]

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

- Greenway trail system (PIR=193)
- Natural trails (PIR=192)
- Indoor fitness and exercise facilities (PIR=148)
- Senior center (PIR=122)
- Community gardens (PIR=110)

The chart on the following page shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the facilities/amenities that were assessed on the survey.



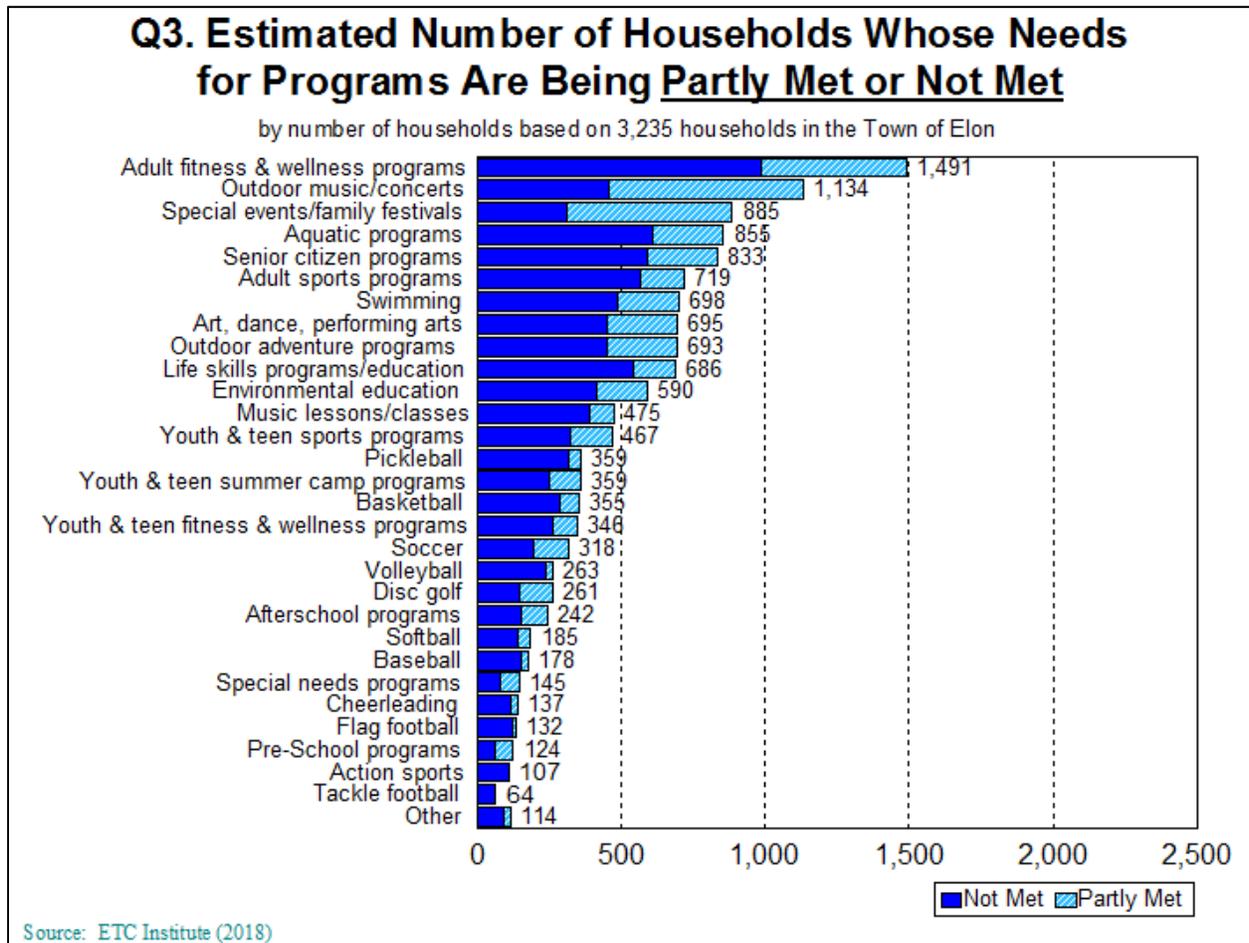
Programming Needs and Priorities

Programming Needs. Respondents were also asked to identify if their household had a need for 30 recreational programs and rate how well their needs for each program were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had “unmet” needs for each program.

The two recreation programs with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need were:

1. Adult fitness and wellness programs – 1,491 households and
2. Outdoor music/concerts– 1,134 households.

The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the programs that were assessed is shown in the chart on the following page.



Program Importance. In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents place on each program. Based on the sum of respondents’ top four choices, the most important programs to Youth were:

1. Youth and teen sports programs (12%) and
2. Special events/family festivals (8%).

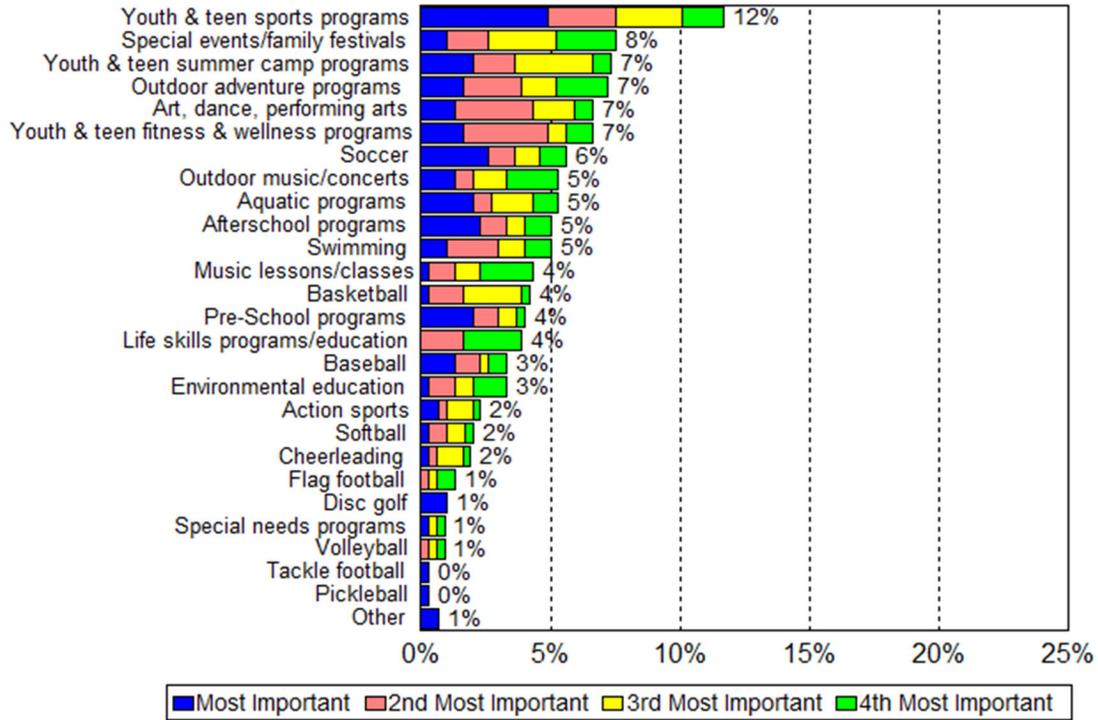
Based on the sum of respondents’ top four choices, the four most important programs to Adults were:

1. Adult fitness and wellness programs (42%),
2. Senior citizen programs (25%),
3. Special event/family festivals (25%), and
4. Outdoor music/concerts (24%).

The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top four choices is shown in the charts on the following page.

Q4. Programs That Are Most Important to Youth in Households

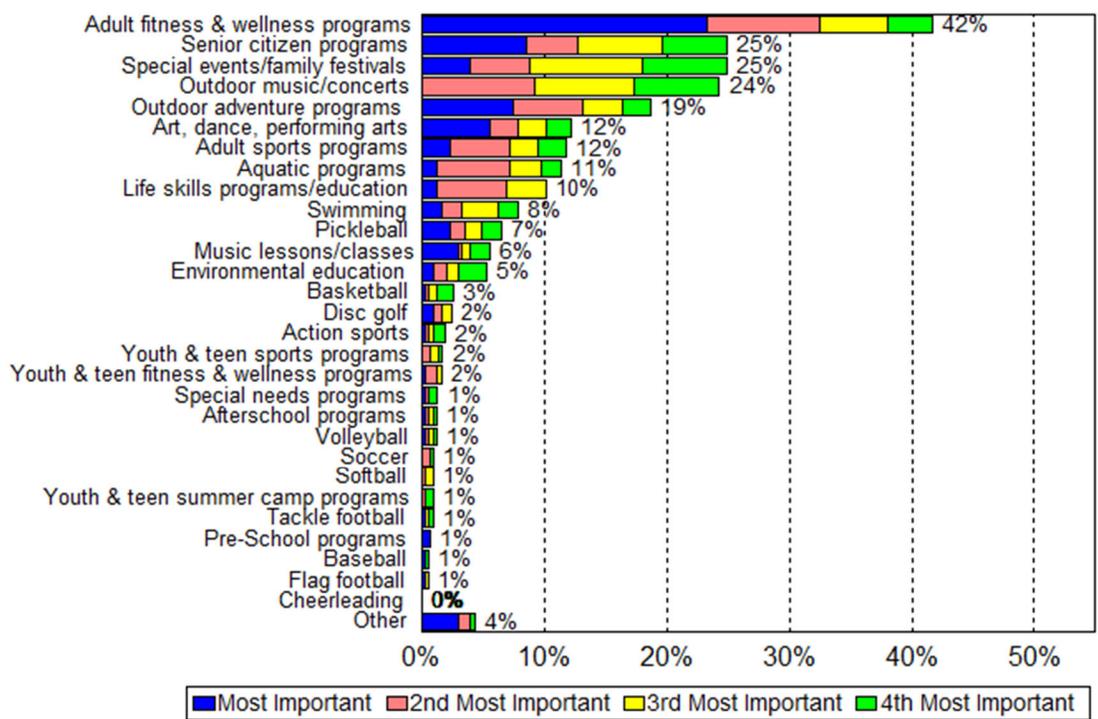
by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q5. Programs That Are Most Important to Adults in Households

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

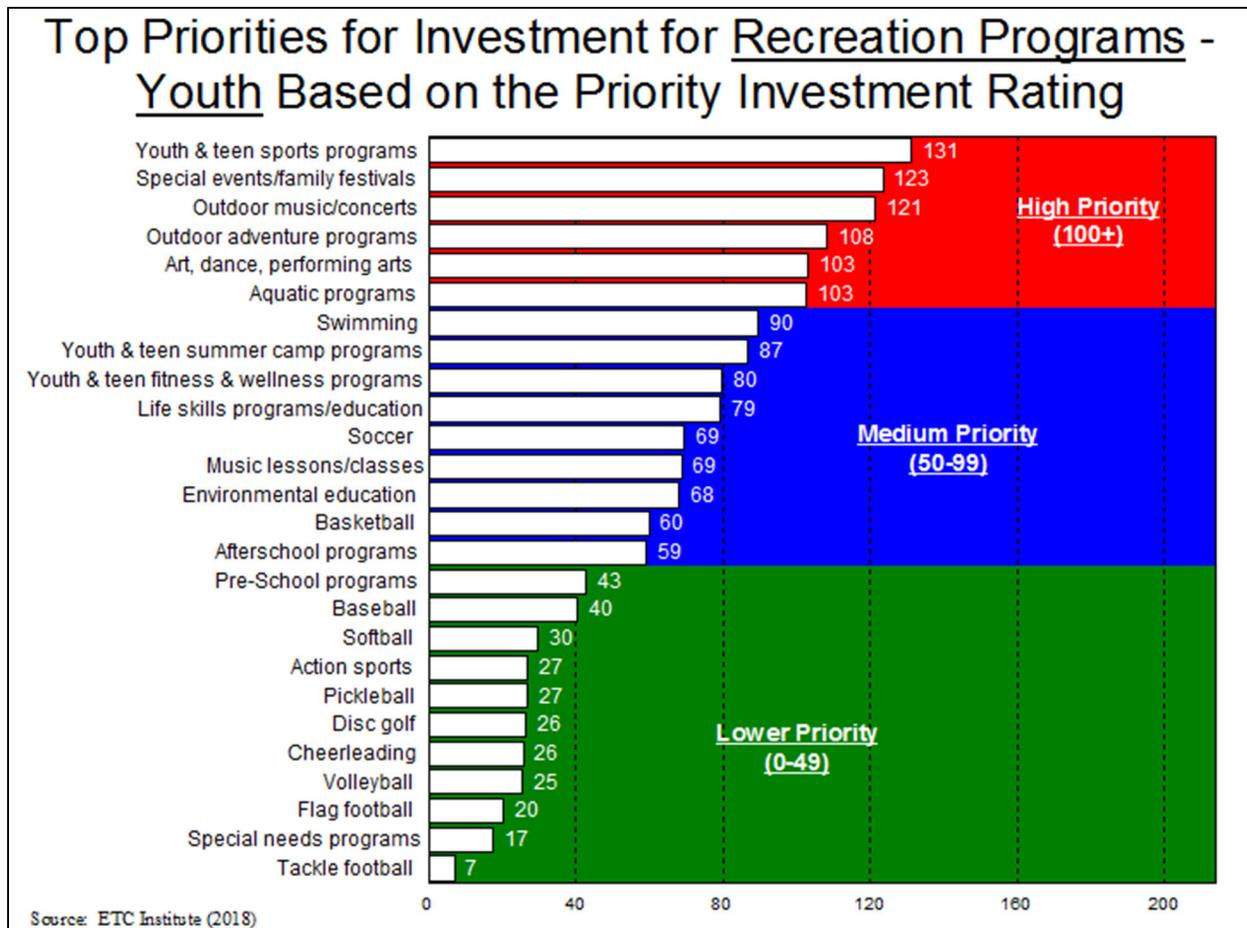


Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Priorities for Programming Investments. Based on the priority investment rating (PIR), which was described briefly on page iv of this Executive Summary and is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report, the following six programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment for Youth in Elon:

- Youth and teen sports programs (PIR=131)
- Special events/family festivals (PIR=123)
- Outdoor music/concerts (PIR=121)
- Outdoor adventure programs (PIR=108)
- Art, dance, performing arts (PIR=103)
- Aquatic programs (PIR=103)

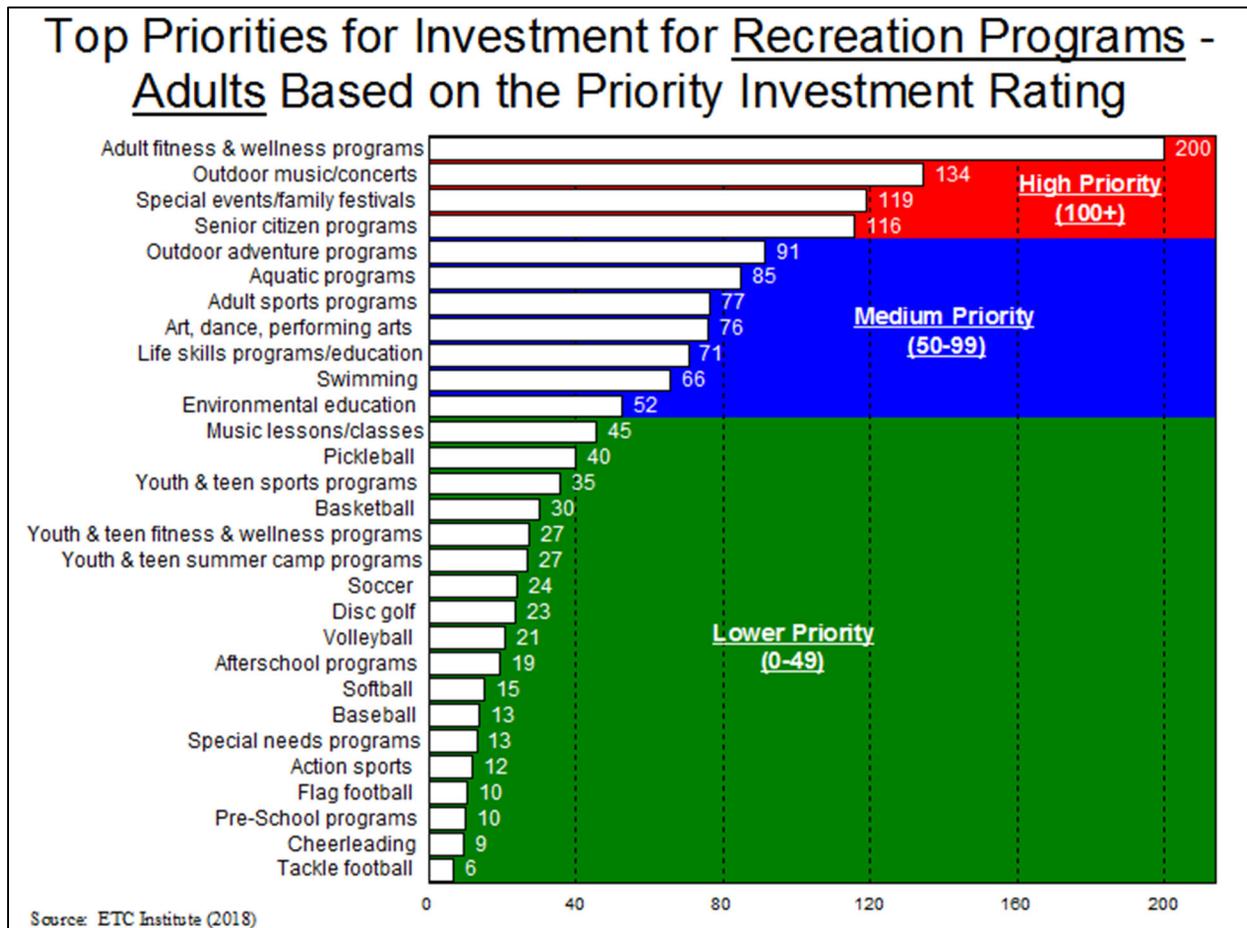
The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the programs that were rated for Youth.



The following four programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment for Adults in Elon:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=200)
- Outdoor music/concerts (PIR=134)
- Special events/family festivals (PIR=119)
- Senior citizen programs (PIR=116)

The chart below the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the programs that were rated for Adults.



Willingness to Support or Expand Facilities and Programs

Respondents were given a list of five different actions they could take to support expanding or implementing Recreation and Parks facilities and programs in the Town of Elon. For each potential action respondents were asked to indicate how willing they would be to take the action on a four-point scale where 4 means “very willing” and 1 means “not willing.” The actions respondents were most willing to take to support expanding or implementing Recreation and parks facilities and programs, based upon the combined percentage of “very willing” and “willing” responses were: paying a fee to attend or participate in Town of Elon sponsored recreational programs (45%), paying a slight increase in taxes to implement recreation programs in the Town of Elon (41%), and paying an increase in taxes to support the development of new recreation facilities in the Town of Elon (38%).

Additional Findings

- Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents indicated their household has participated in a special event offered by the Town of Elon Parks and Recreation Department during the past 12 months. Ninety percent (90%) of respondents indicated the quality of the special event their household participated in was either “excellent” (35%) or “good” (55%), and 9% gave a “fair” rating.
- Most respondents (56%) indicated they use banners in public places to learn about Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department parks, facilities, and special events, 45% use the Town newsletter, and 40% use word of mouth.
- Thirty percent (30%) of respondents indicated a lack of information/not knowing what is offered is the biggest barrier to using parks and facilities more often, 28% indicated they do not have enough time or are too busy, and 20% are not interested in what is provided.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) of respondents, who had an opinion, either “strongly agree” (63%) or “agree” (29%) with the statement: Public parks add to the quality of life in the community.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of respondents, who had an opinion, either “strongly agree” (48%) or “agree” (36%) with the statement: recreation and parks is an essential service to the Town.
- The Town of Elon (53%) and Burlington Recreation and Parks (53%) were the two organizations most used by respondents for recreation facilities.
- Burlington Recreation and Parks (32%) and Town of Elon Recreation and Parks (29%) were the two organizations most used by respondents for programs.

Conclusions

To ensure that the Town of Elon continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, ETC Institute recommends that the Recreation and Parks Department sustain and/or improve the performance in areas that were identified as “high priorities” by the Priority Investment Rating (PIR). The facilities and programs with the highest PIR ratings are listed below.

Facilities: Greenway trail system (PIR=193), Natural trails (PIR=192), Indoor fitness and exercise facilities (PIR=148), Senior center (PIR=122), Community gardens (PIR=110).

Programs for Youth: Youth and teen sports programs (PIR=131), Special events/family festivals (PIR=123), Outdoor music/concerts (PIR=121), Outdoor adventure programs (PIR=108), Art, dance, performing arts (PIR=103), and Aquatic programs (PIR=103).

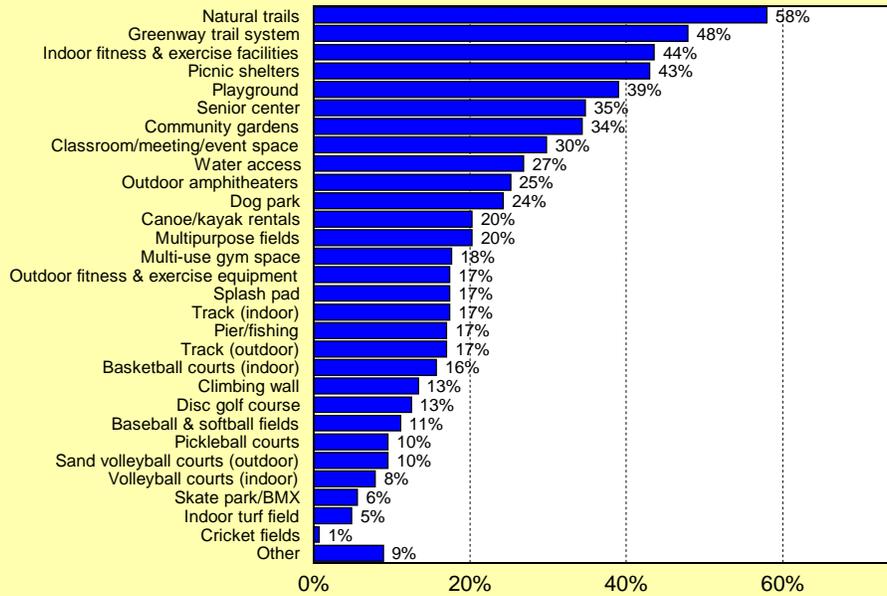
Programs for Adults: Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=200), Outdoor music/concerts (PIR=134), Special events/family festivals (PIR=119), and Senior citizen programs (PIR=116).

Section 1

Charts and Graphs

Q1. Facilities or Amenities Respondent Households Have a Need For

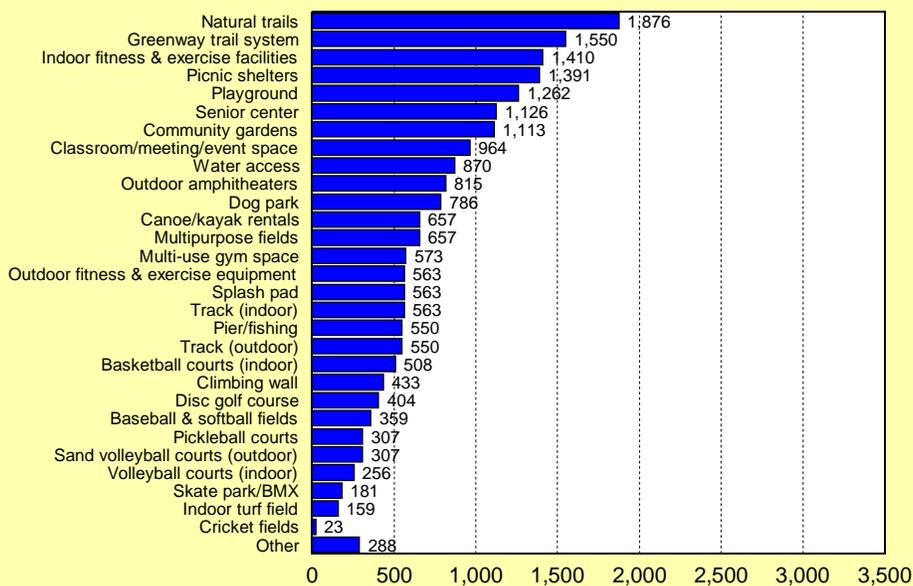
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q1. Estimated Number of Households That Have a Need for Various Facilities

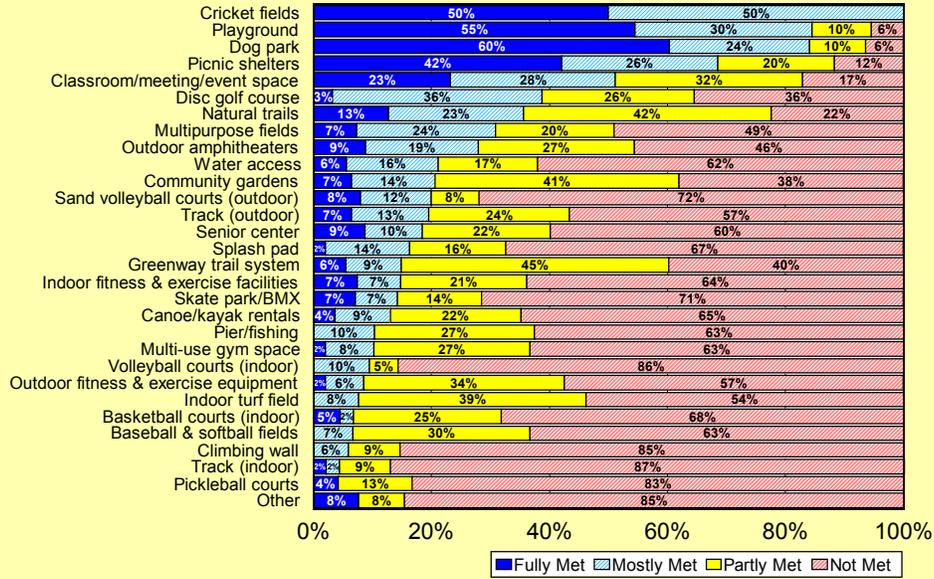
by number of households based on 3,235 households in the Town of Elon



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q1. How Well Recreation and Parks Facilities Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

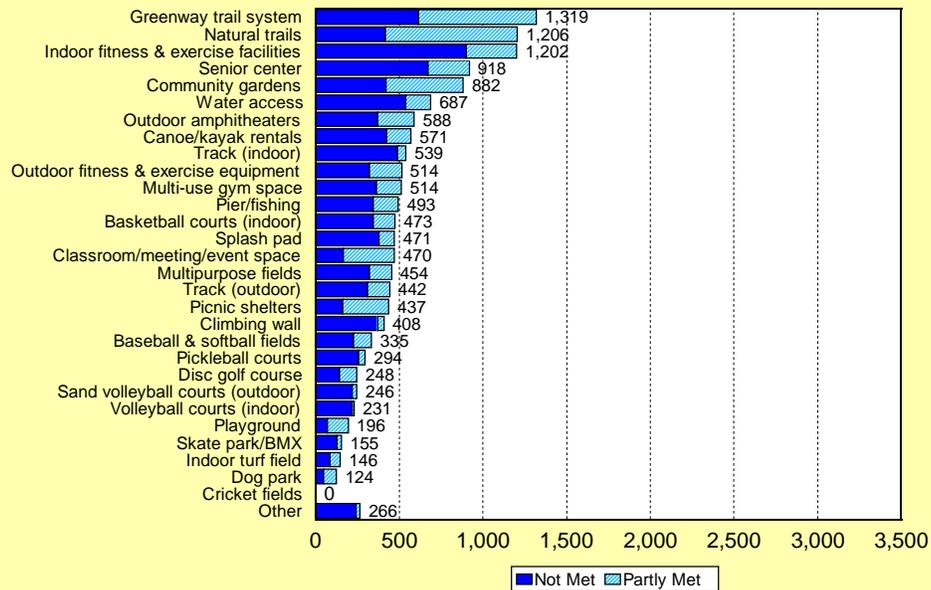
by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q1. Estimated Number of Households Whose Needs for Facilities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

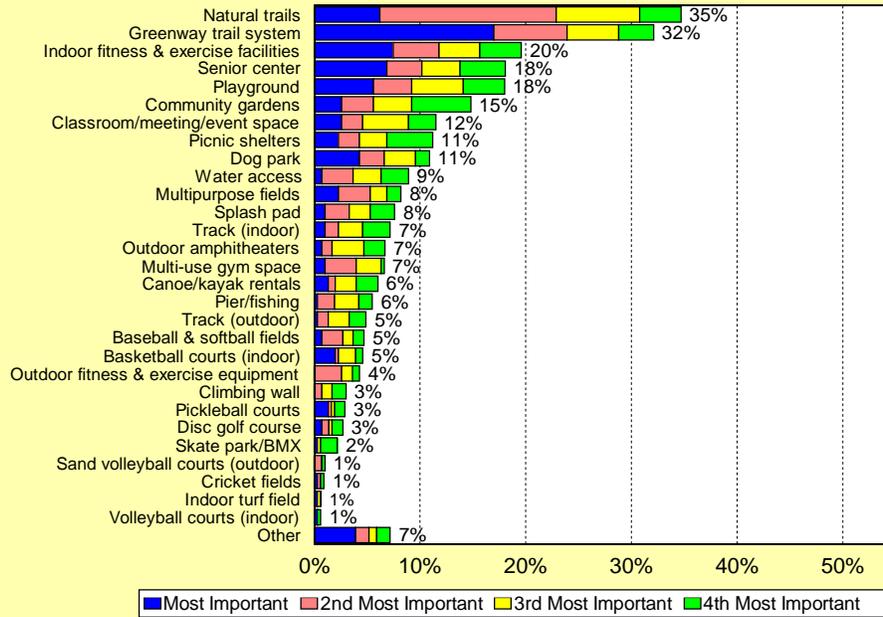
by number of households based on 3,235 households in the Town of Elon



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q2. Facilities Most Important to Respondent Households

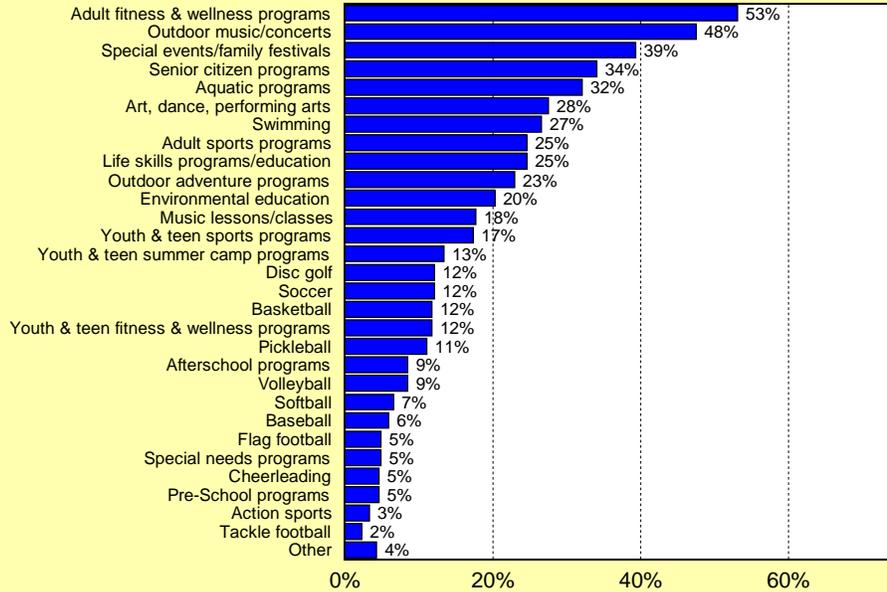
by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q3. Programs & Activities Respondent Households Desire to Participate In

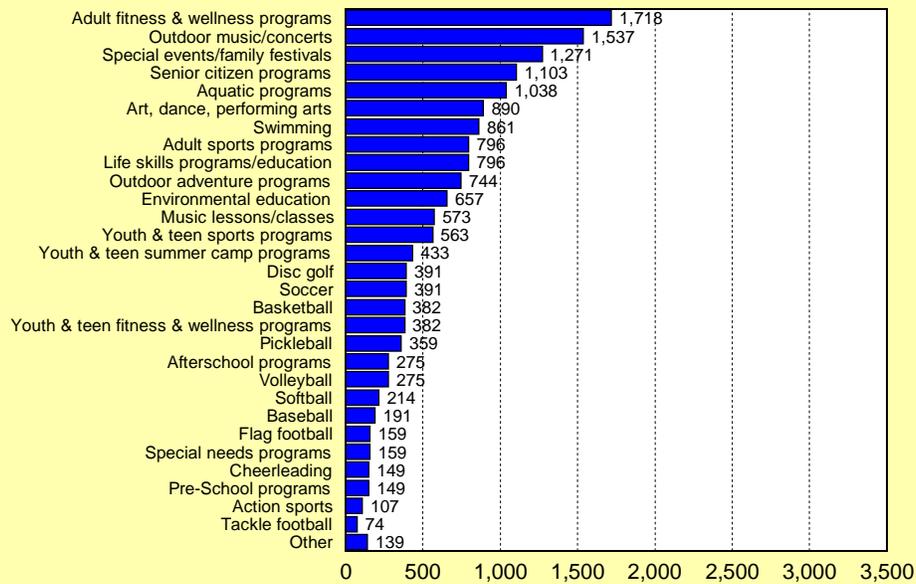
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q3. Estimated Number of Households That Have a Desire to Participate in Various Programs

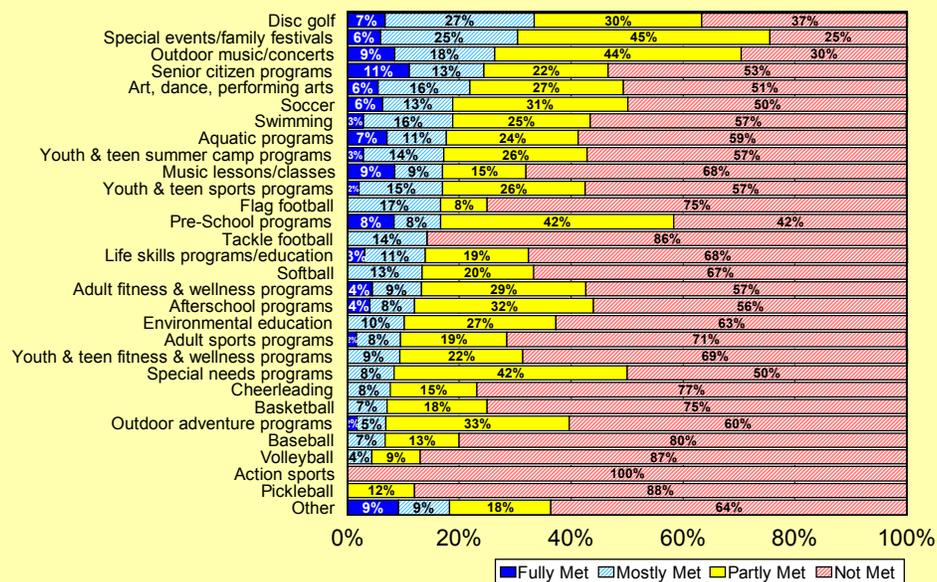
by number of households based on 3,235 households in the Town of Elon



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q3. How Well Recreation and Parks Programs Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

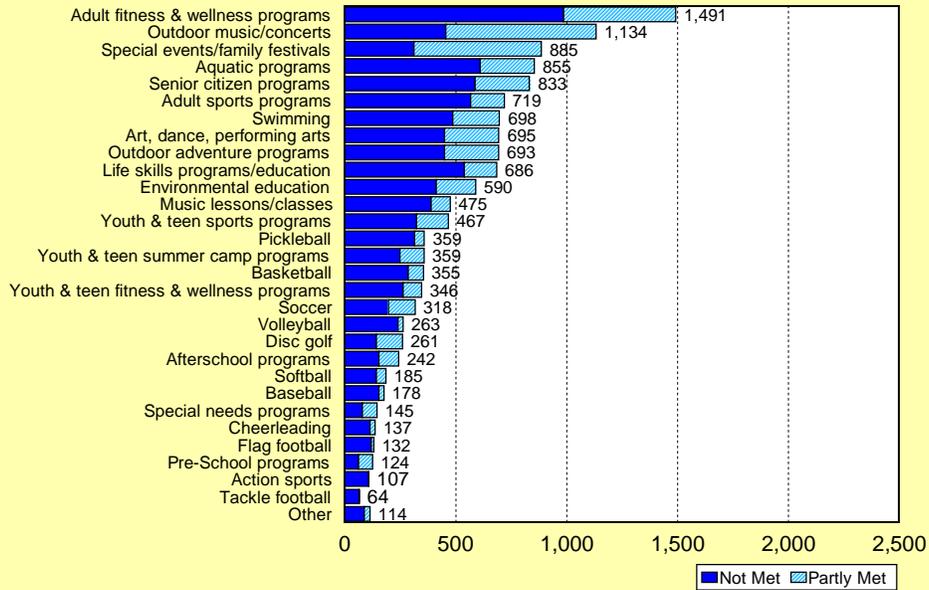
by percentage of respondents with a desire for programs



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q3. Estimated Number of Households Whose Needs for Programs Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

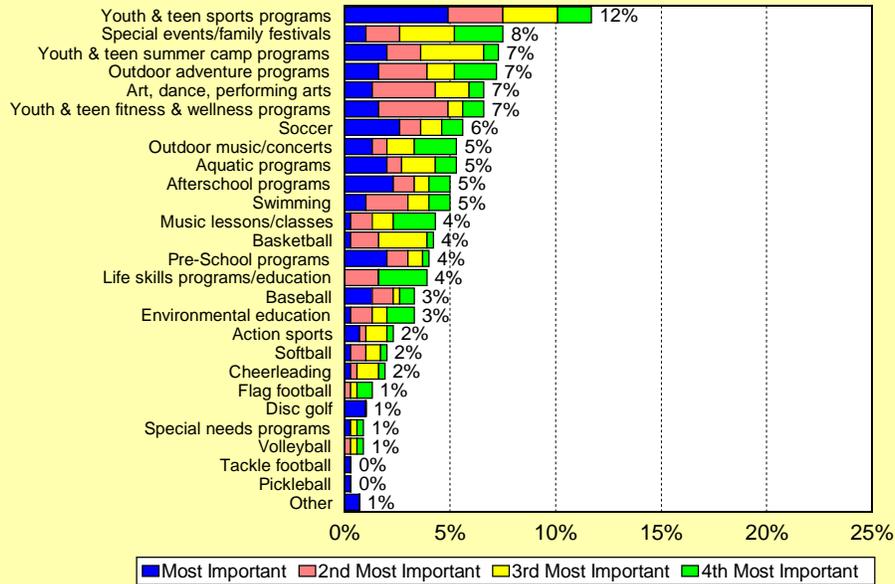
by number of households based on 13,010 households in the Town of Elon



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q4. Programs That Are Most Important to Youth in Households

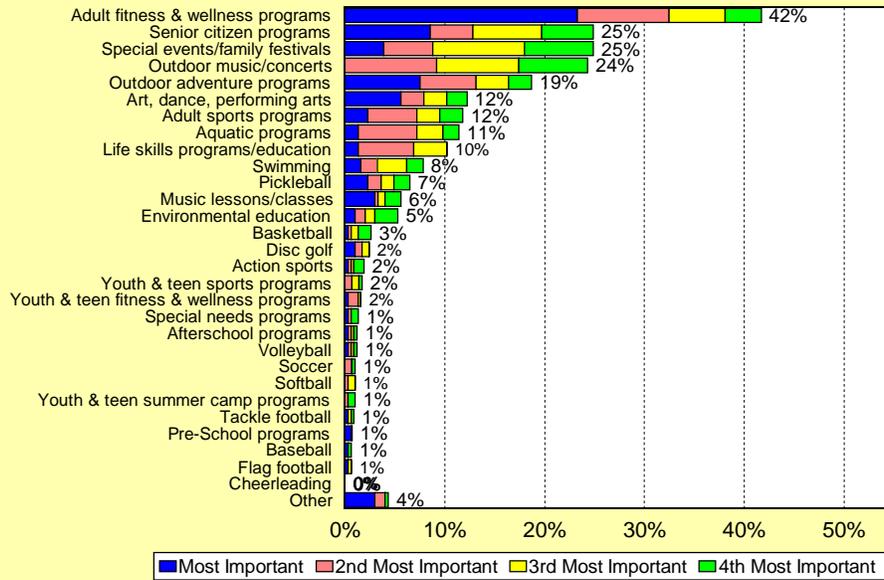
by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q5. Programs That Are Most Important to Adults in Households

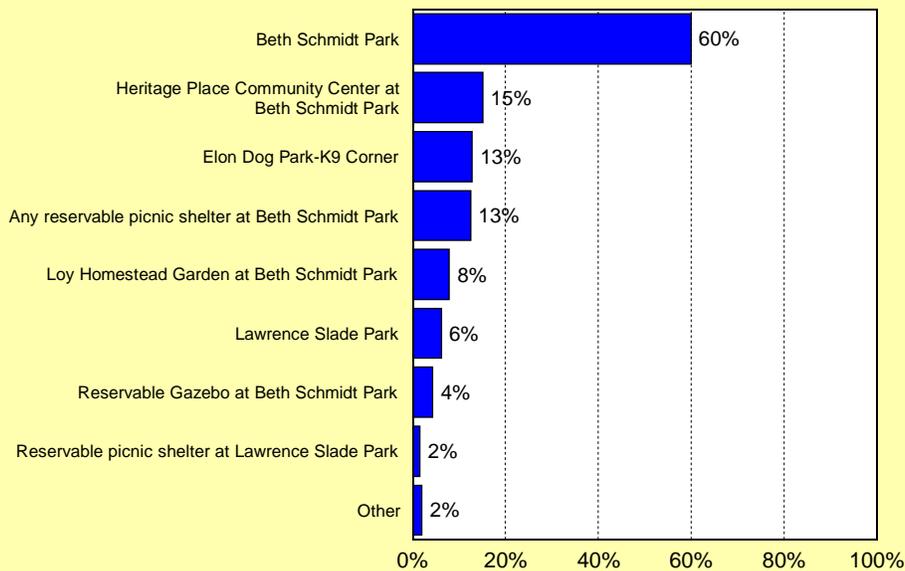
by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q6. Town of Elon Parks and Facilities Respondent Households Have Used In the Past 12 Months

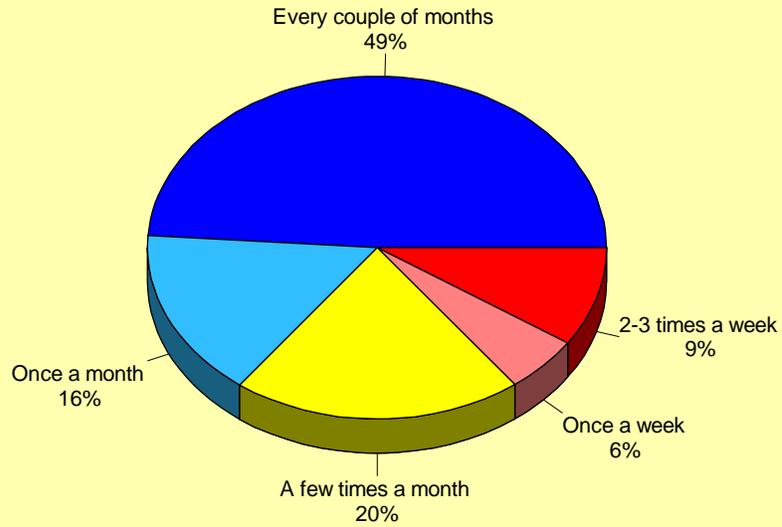
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q6a. How Many Times Respondent Households Have Visited Any Parks and Facilities

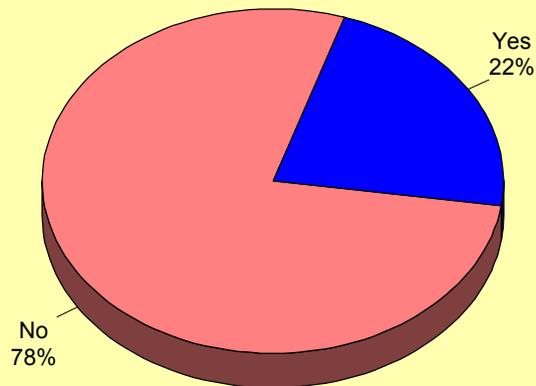
by percentage of households that have visited parks and facilities in the past 12 months



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q7. In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household participated in any special events offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department?

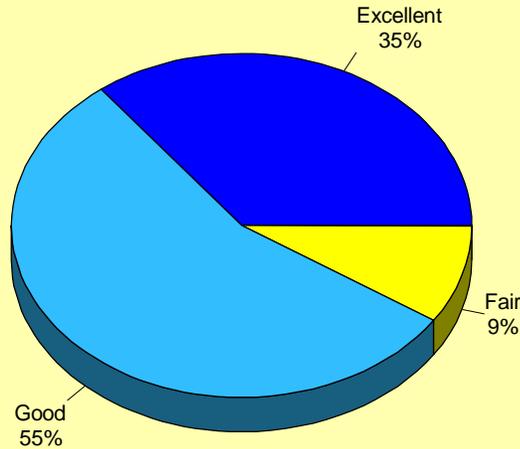
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q7a. How would you rate the overall quality of special events that you and members of your household have participated in?

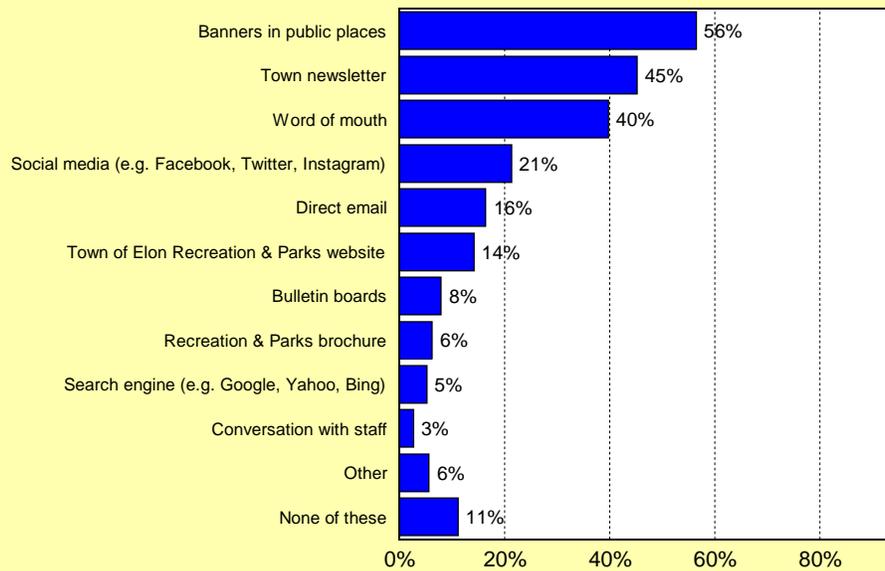
by percentage of households that have participated in programs in the past 12 months



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q8. Ways Respondents Learn About Town of Elon Recreation & Parks Department Parks, Facilities & Special Events

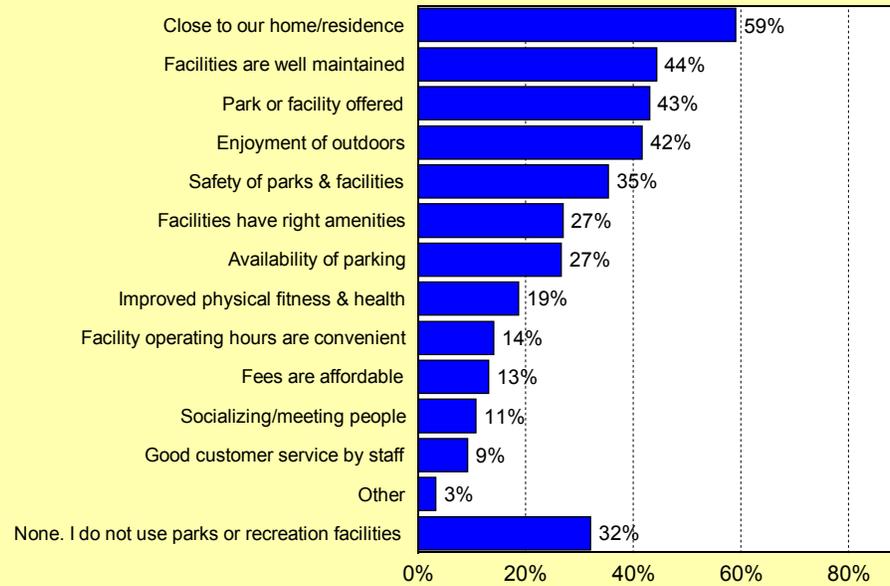
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q9. Reasons Households Use the Parks & Facilities Offered by the Town of Elon Recreation & Parks Department

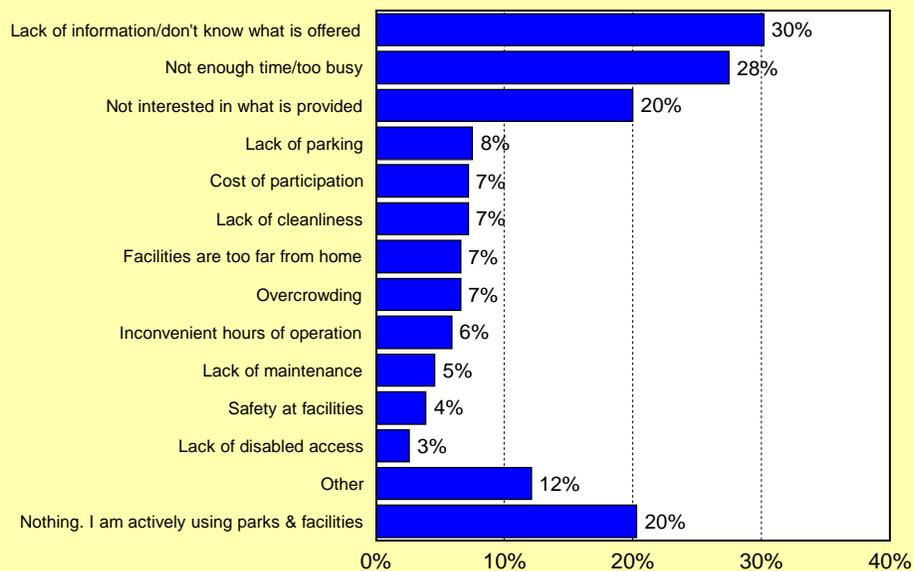
by percentage of households



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q10. Reasons Preventing Households From Using Parks & Facilities More Often

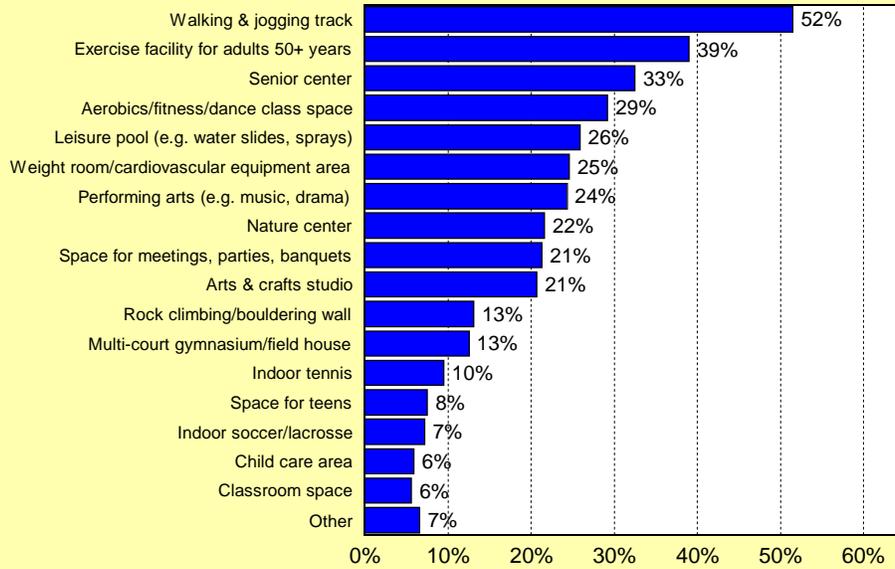
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q11. Potential Indoor Facilities That Could be Added or Expanded That Respondent Households Would Use

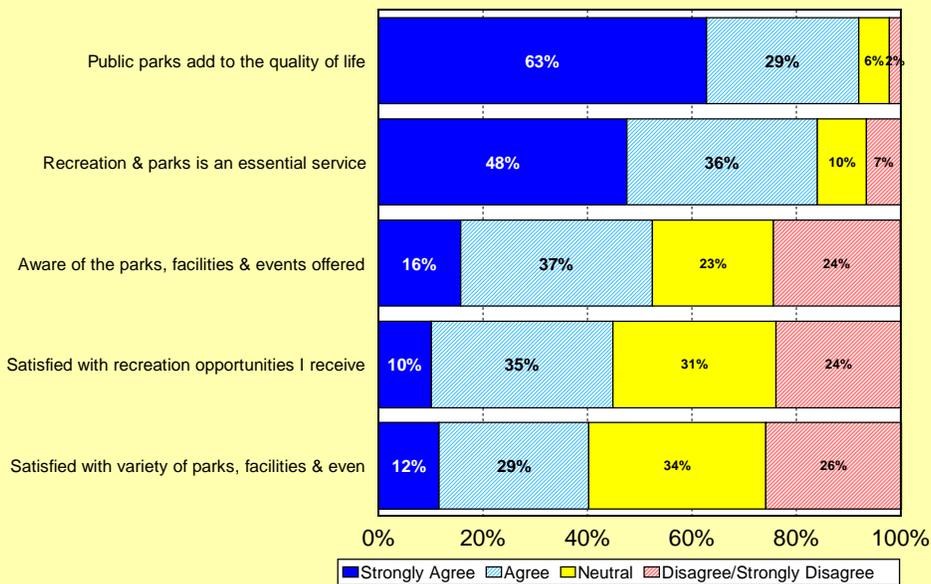
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



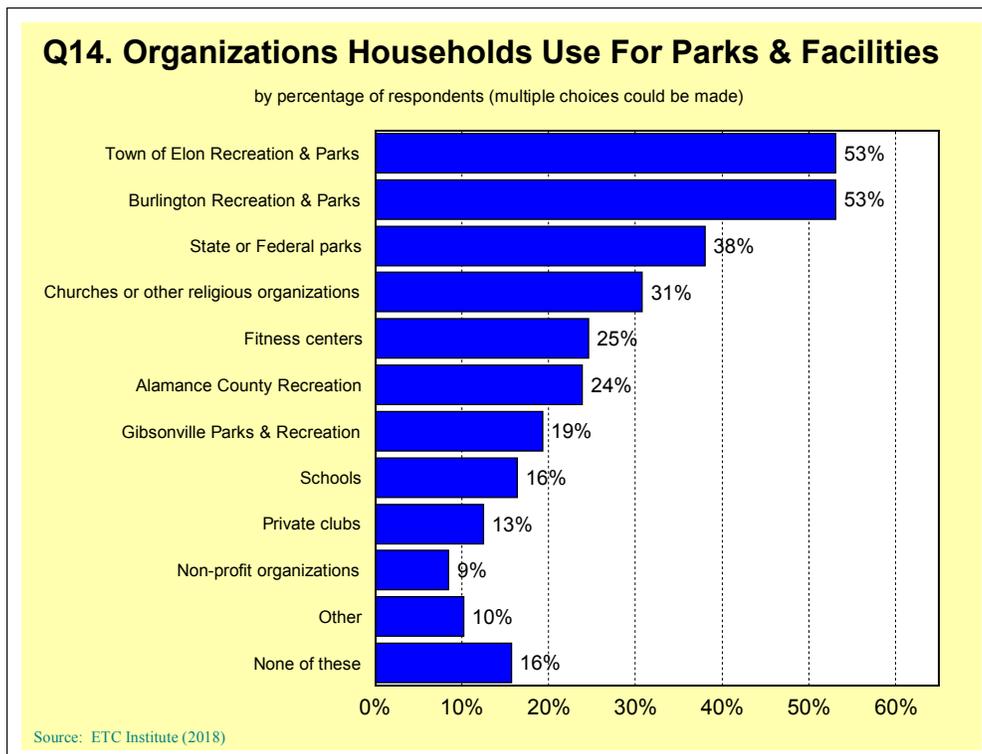
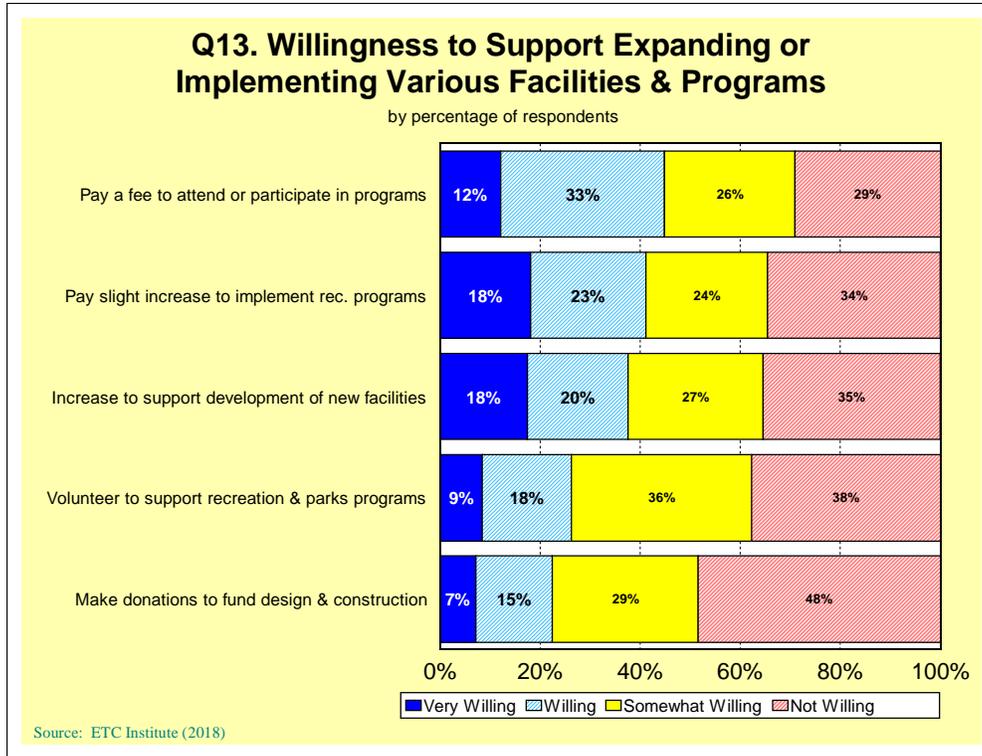
Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q12. Level of Agreement With Various Statements Regarding the Town of Elon Recreation & Parks Department

by percentage of respondents

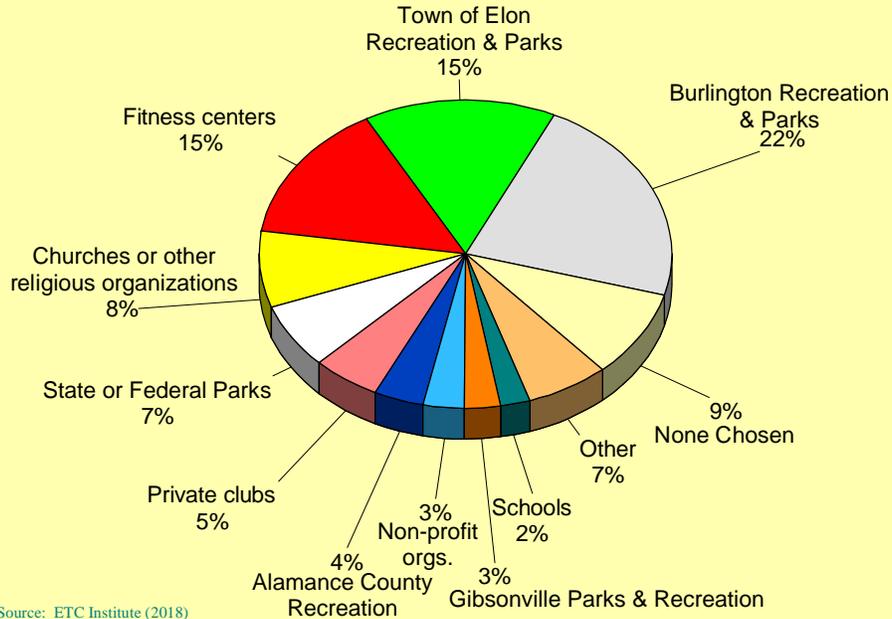


Source: ETC Institute (2018)



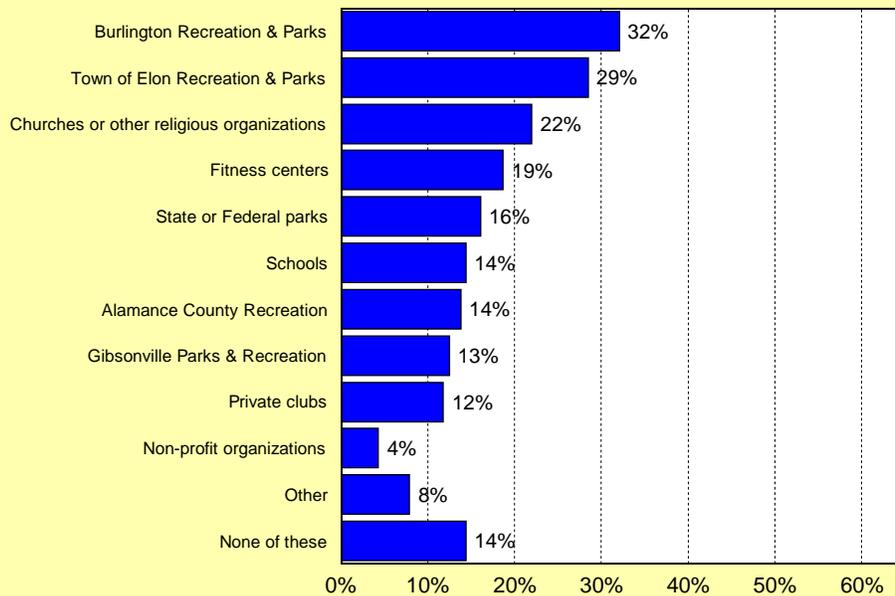
Q15. Organization Used Most For Parks & Facilities

by percentage of respondents who use organizations



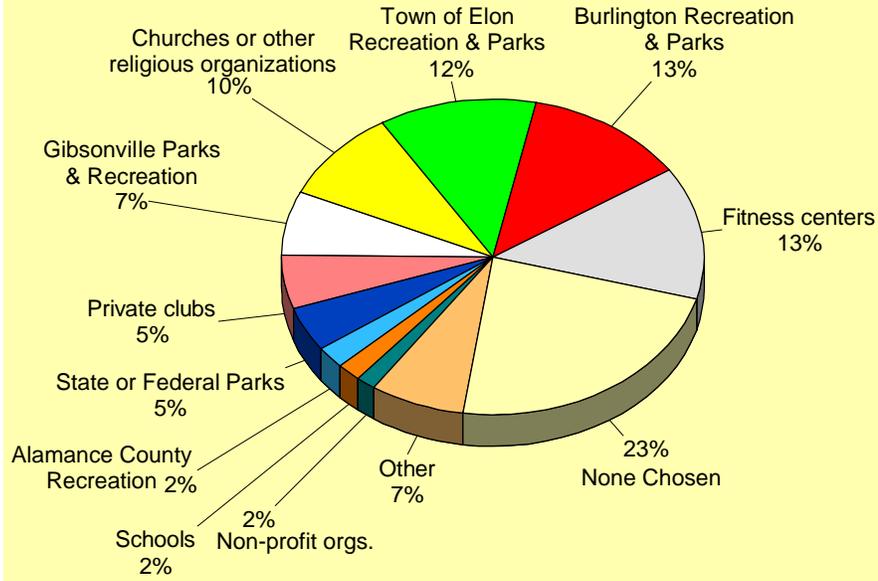
Q16. Organizations Households Use For Programs

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Q17. Organization Used Most For Programs

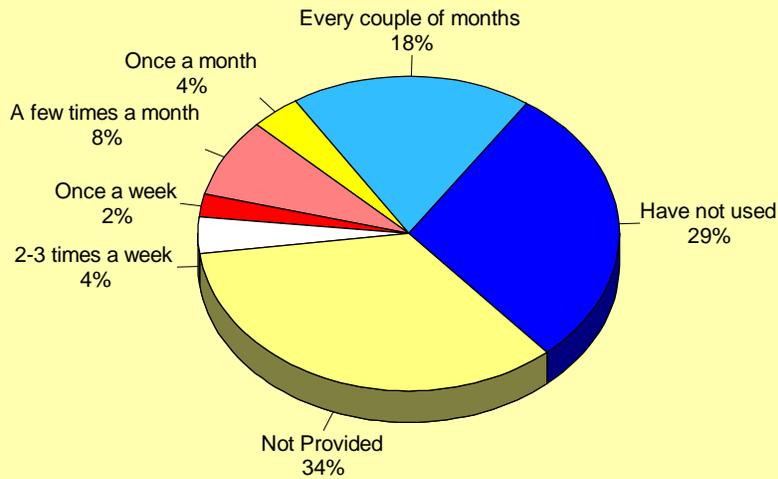
by percentage of respondents who use organizations



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q18. How Often Respondent Households Used Town of Elon Parks & Facilities to Achieve Personal Health Outcomes

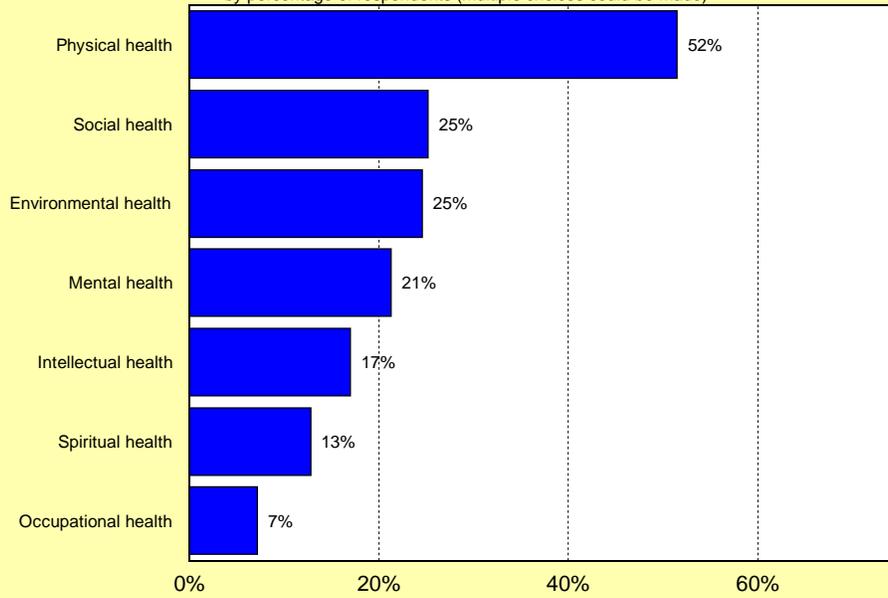
by percentage of households



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q19. Respondents with Desire to Use Recreation & Parks Resources to Meet Health & Wellness Needs

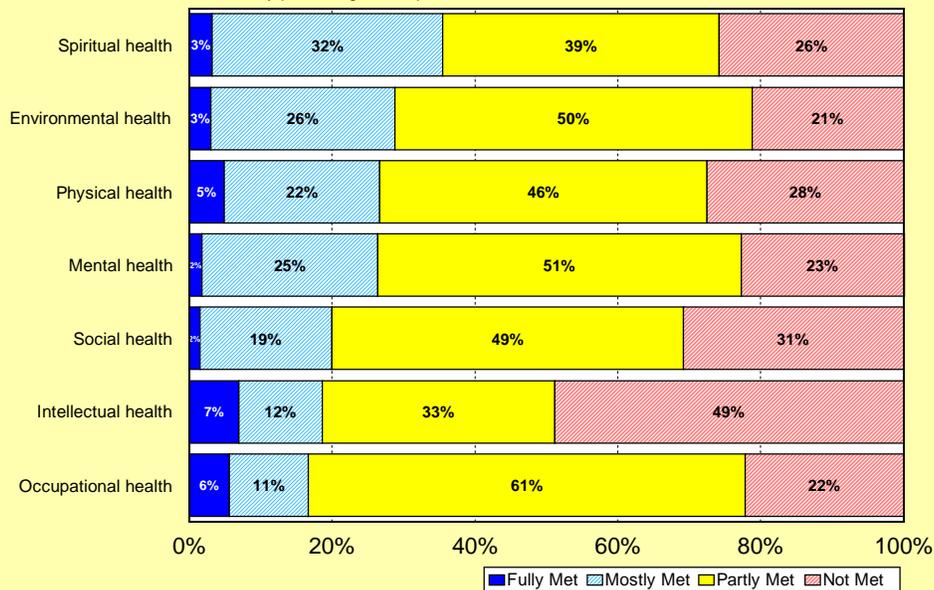
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q19. How Well Elements of Health & Wellness Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

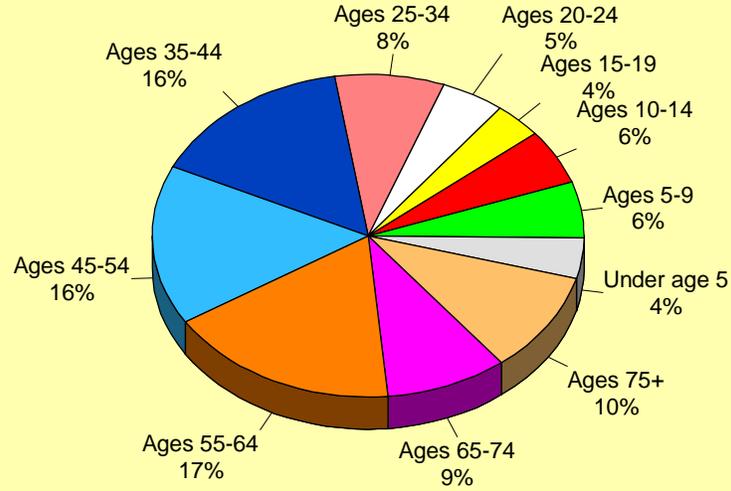
by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q20. Demographics: Ages of People in Household

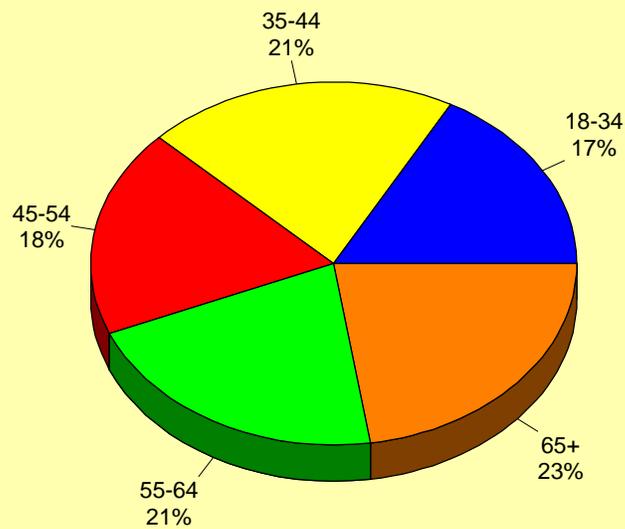
by percentage of household occupants



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q21. Demographics: What is your age?

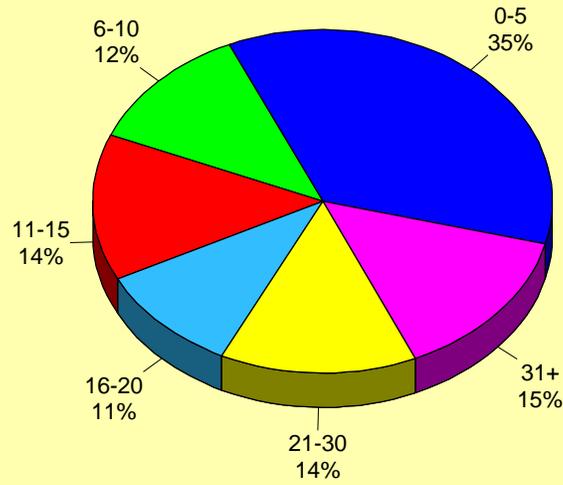
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q22. Demographics: How many years have you lived in the Town of Elon?

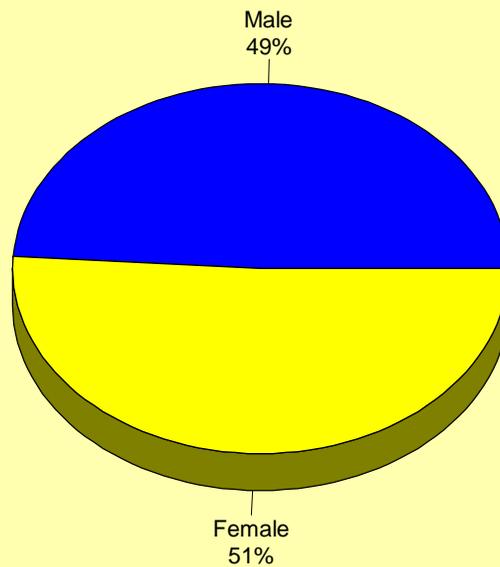
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q23. Demographics: Your gender:

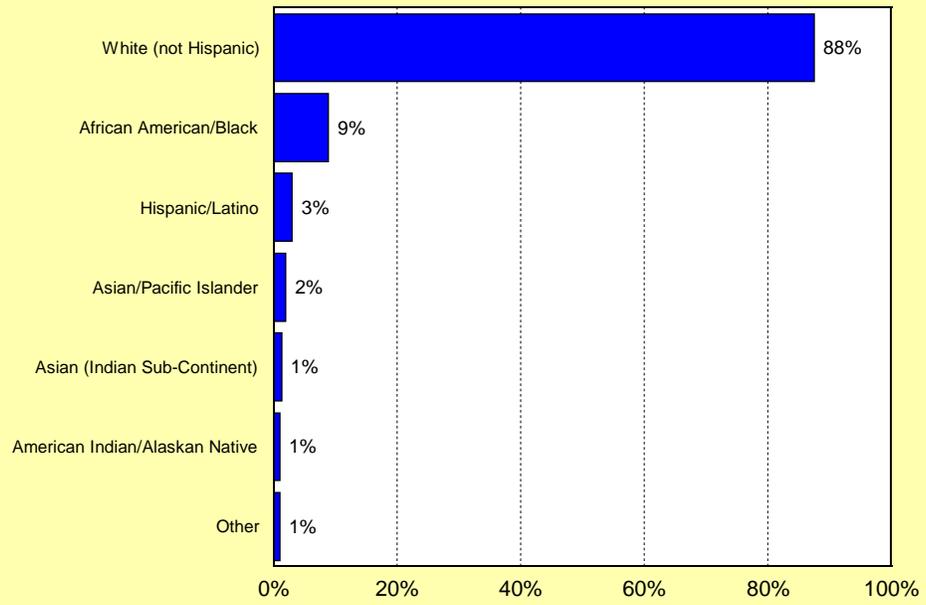
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Q24. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Section 2

Priority Investment Rating

Priority Investment Rating

Elon, North Carolina

The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed by ETC Institute to provide governments with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks and recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating was developed by ETC Institute to identify the facilities and programs residents think should receive the highest priority for investment. The priority investment rating reflects the importance residents place on items (sum of top 4 choices) and the unmet needs (needs that are only being partly or not met) for each facility/program relative to the facility/program that rated the highest overall. Since decisions related to future investments should consider both the level of unmet need and the importance of facilities and programs, the PIR weights each of these components equally.

The PIR reflects the sum of the Unmet Needs Rating and the Importance Rating as shown in the equation below:

$$\text{PIR} = \text{UNR} + \text{IR}$$

For example, suppose the Unmet Needs Rating for playgrounds is 26.5 (out of 100) and the Importance Rating for playgrounds is 52 (out of 100), the Priority Investment Rating for playgrounds would be 78.5 (out of 200).

How to Analyze the Charts:

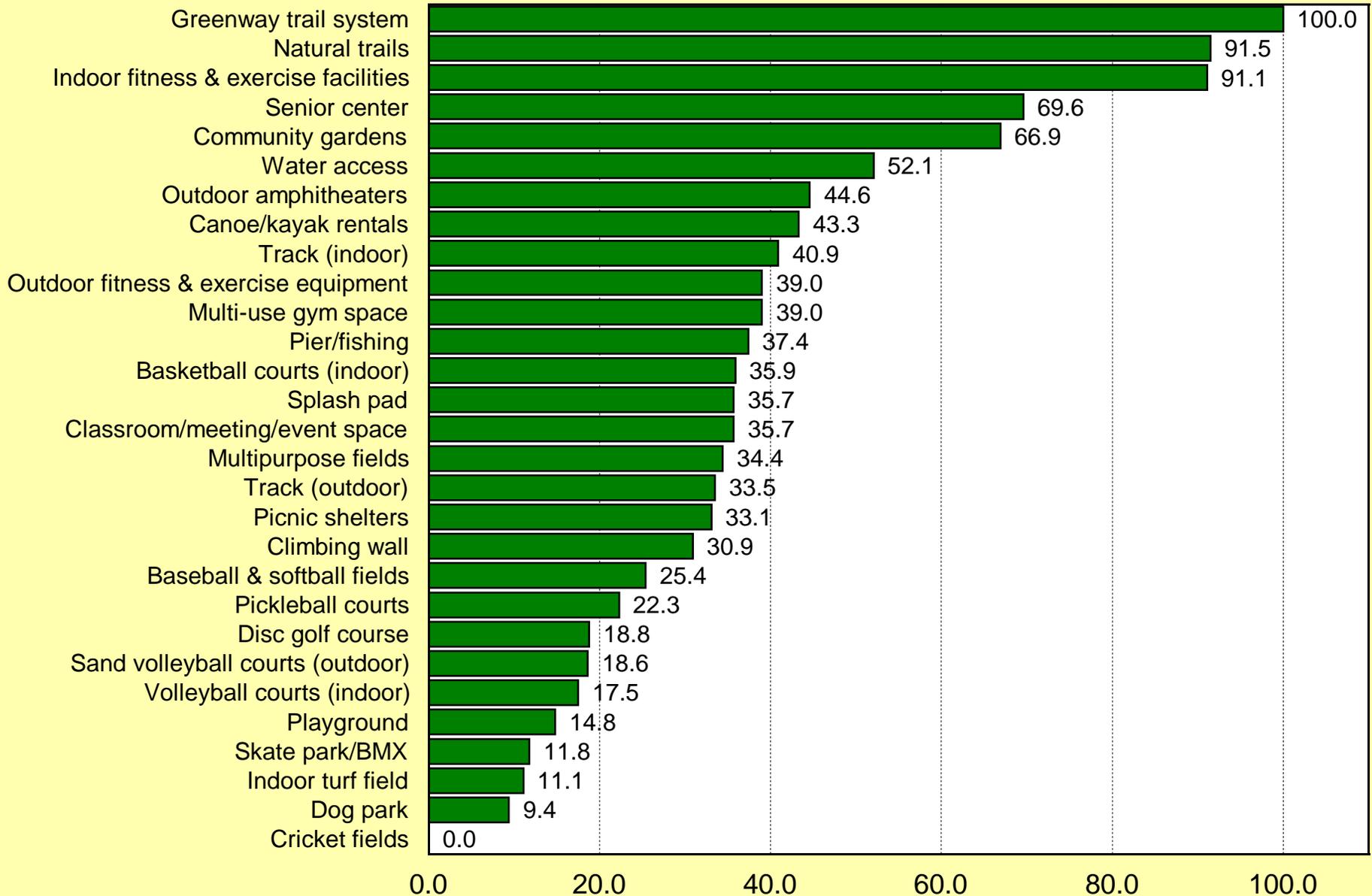
- **High Priority Areas** are those with a PIR of at least 100. A rating of 100 or above generally indicates there is a relatively high level of unmet need and residents generally think it is important to fund improvements in these areas. Improvements in this area are likely to have a positive impact on the greatest number of households.
- **Medium Priority Areas** are those with a PIR of 50-99. A rating in this range generally indicates there is a medium to high level of unmet need or a significant percentage of residents generally think it is important to fund improvements in these areas.
- **Low Priority Areas** are those with a PIR below 50. A rating in this range generally indicates there is a relatively low level of unmet need and residents do not think it is important to fund improvements in these areas. Improvements may be warranted if the needs of very specialized populations are being targeted.

The following pages show the Unmet Needs Rating, Importance Rating, and Priority Investment Rating for facilities and programs.

Unmet Needs Rating for Recreation Facilities

the rating for the item with the most unmet need=100

the rating of all other items reflects the relative amount of unmet need for each item compared to the item with the most unmet need

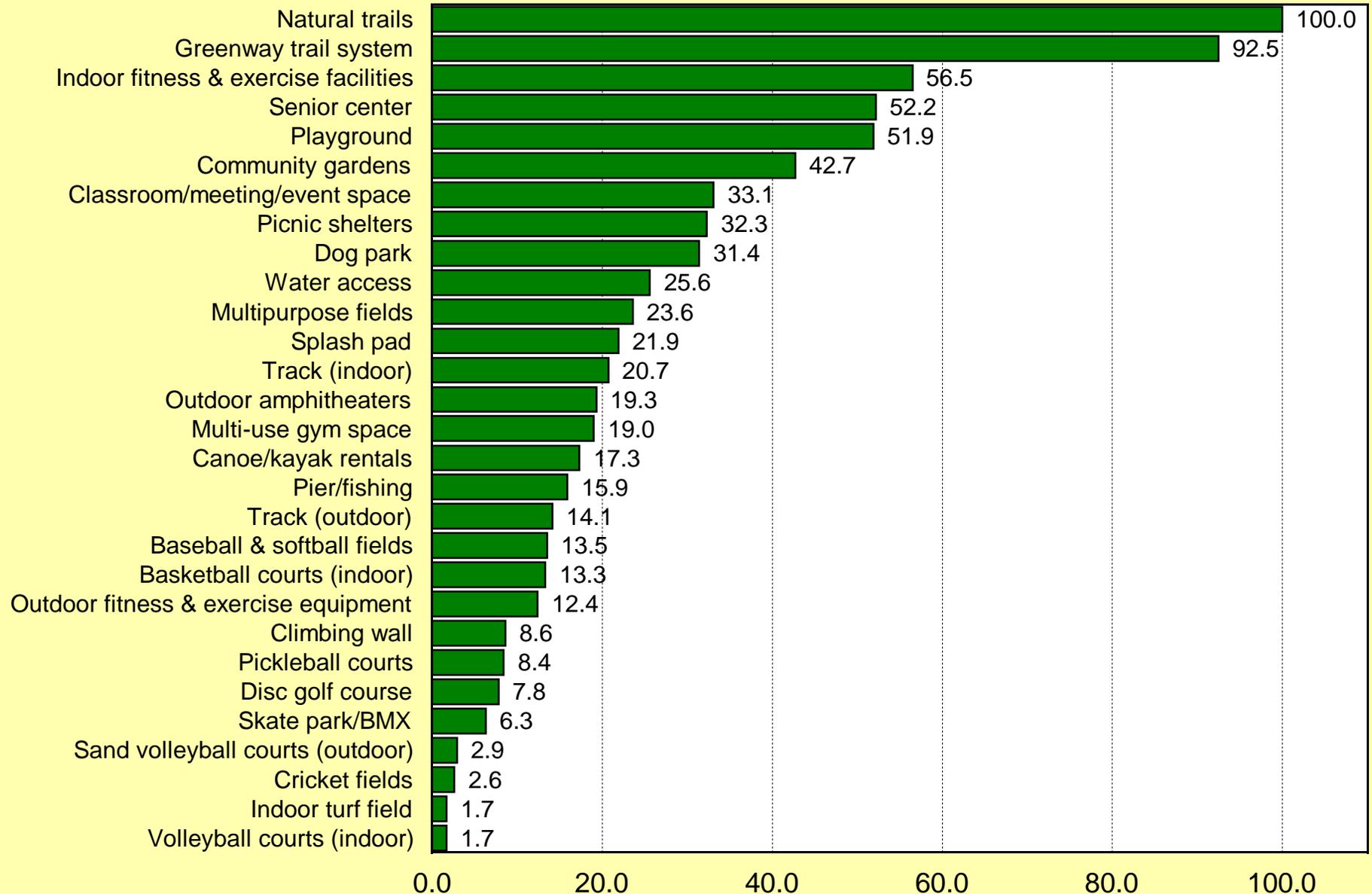


Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Importance Rating for Recreation Facilities

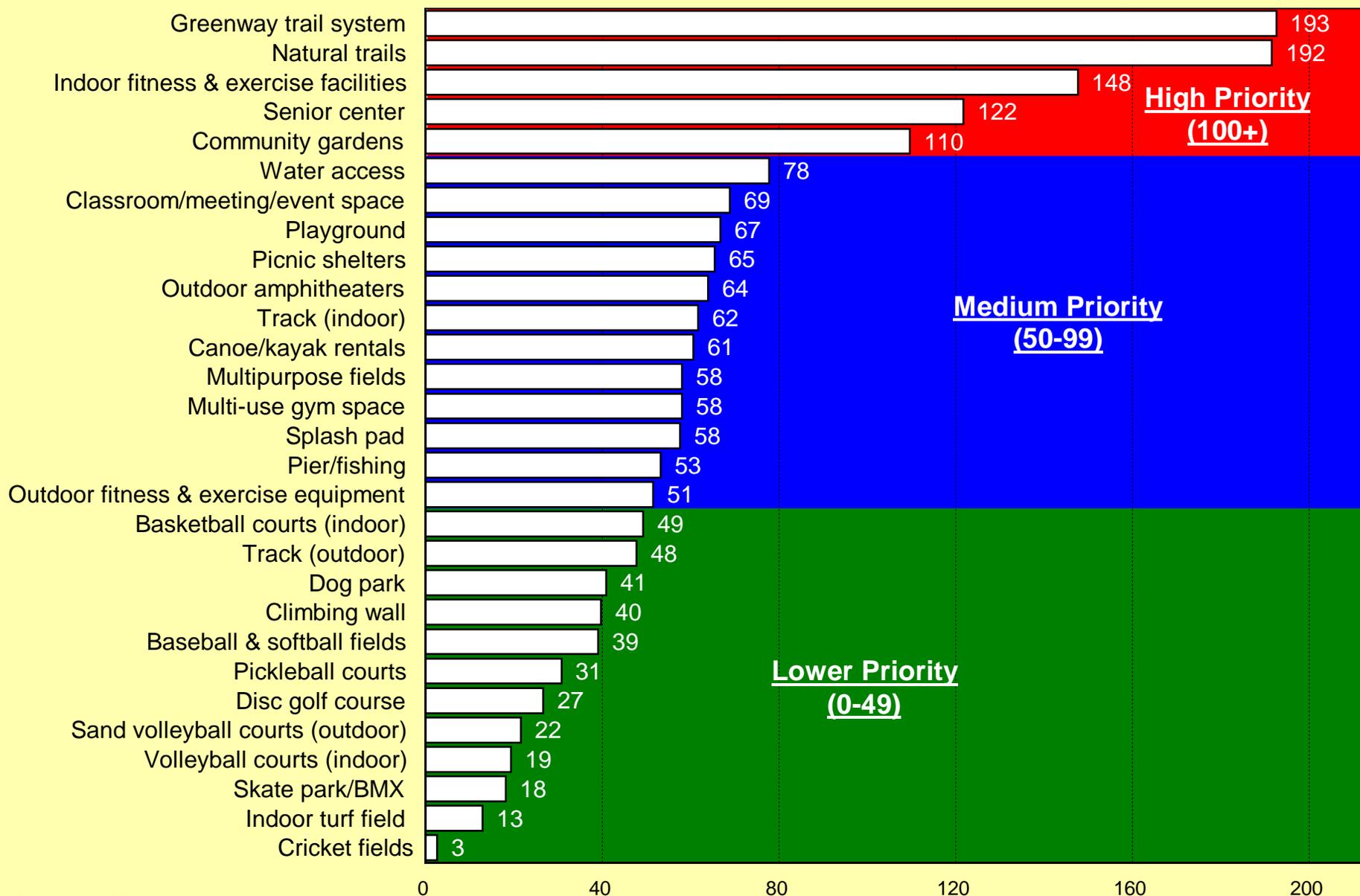
the rating for the item rated as the most important=100

the rating of all other items reflects the relative level of importance for each item compared to the item rated as the most important



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Top Priorities for Investment for Recreation Facilities Based on the Priority Investment Rating

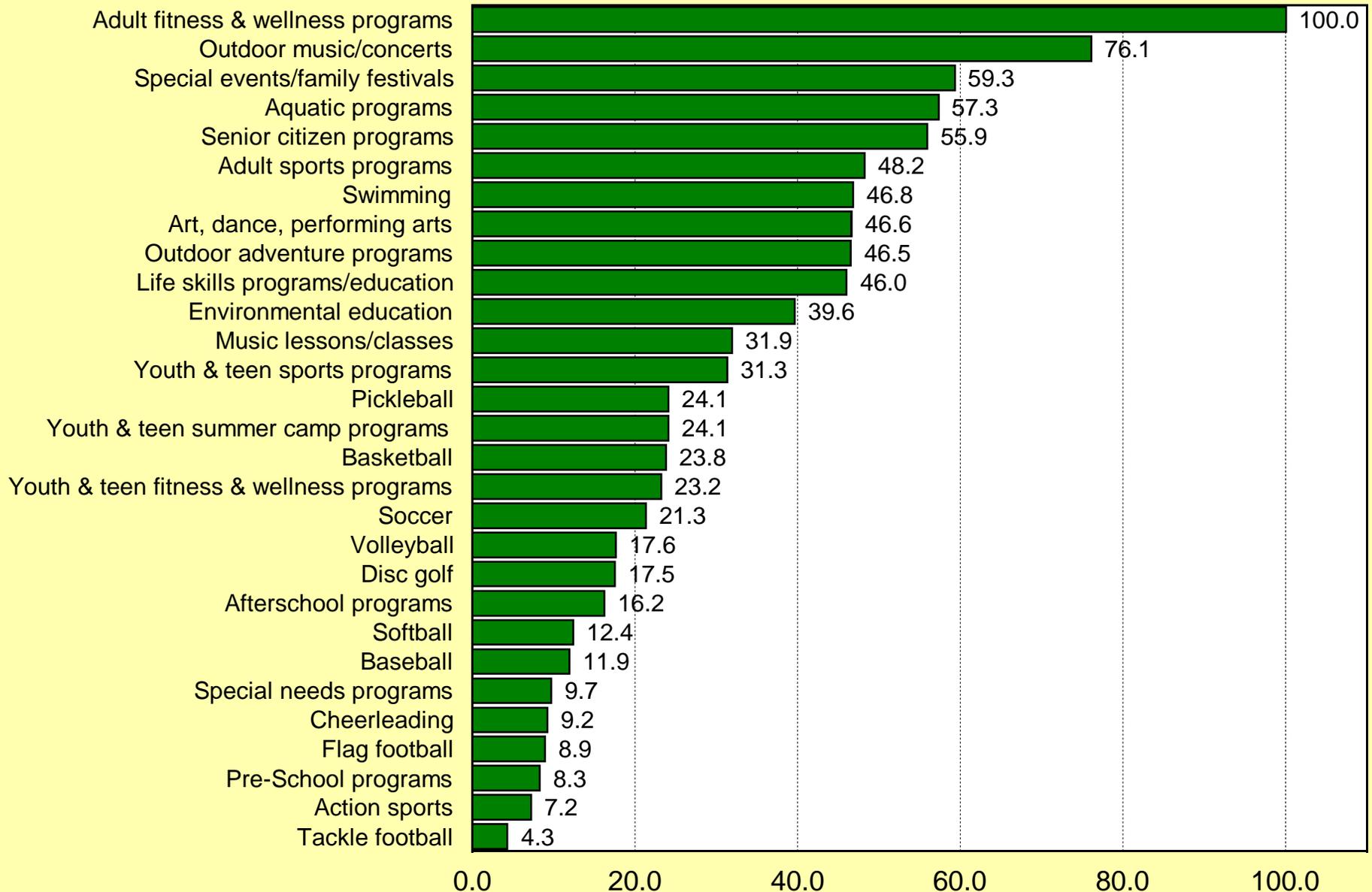


Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Unmet Needs Rating for Recreation Programs

the rating for the item with the most unmet need=100

the rating of all other items reflects the relative amount of unmet need for each item compared to the item with the most unmet need

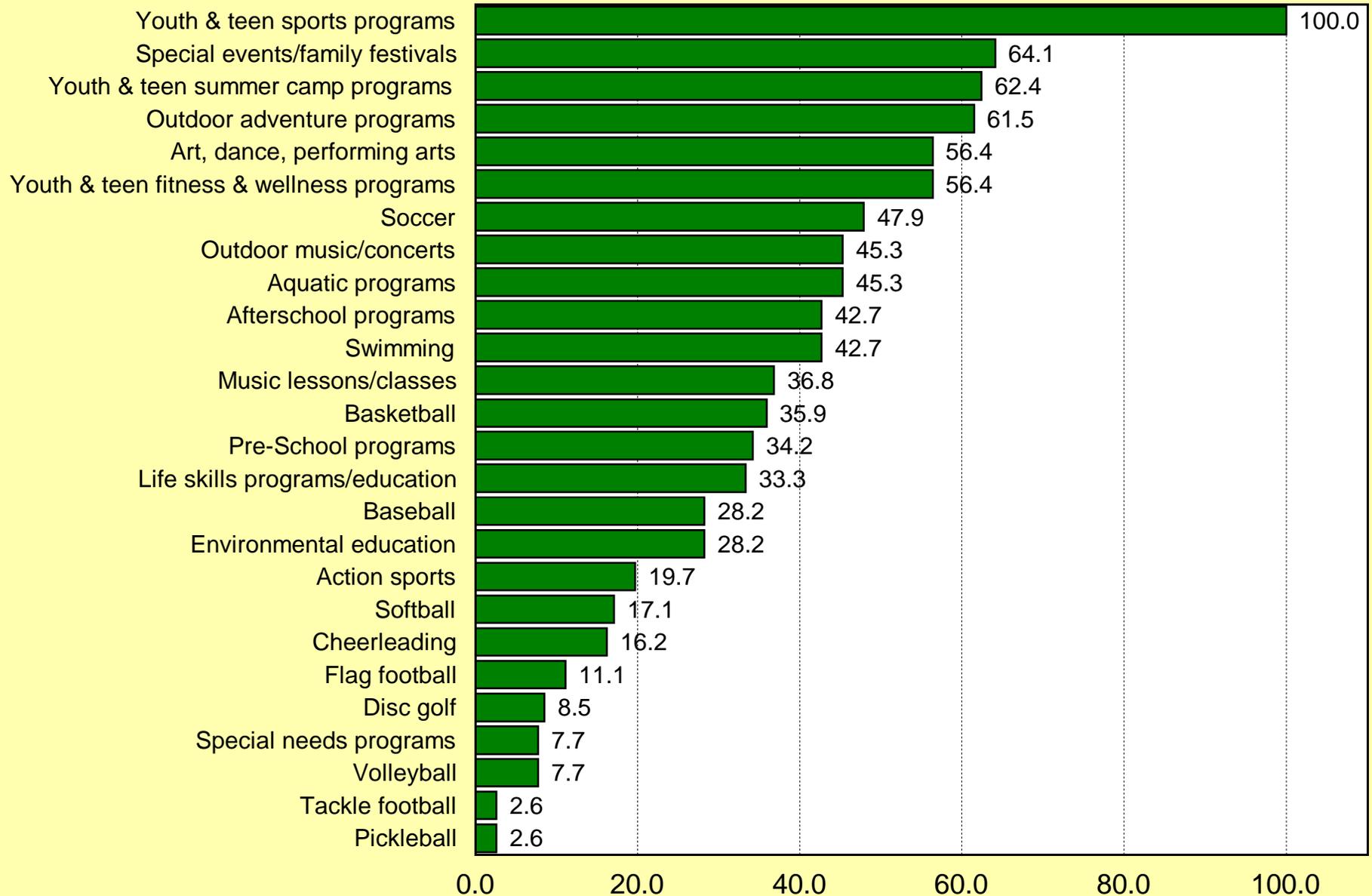


Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Importance Rating for Recreation Programs - Youth

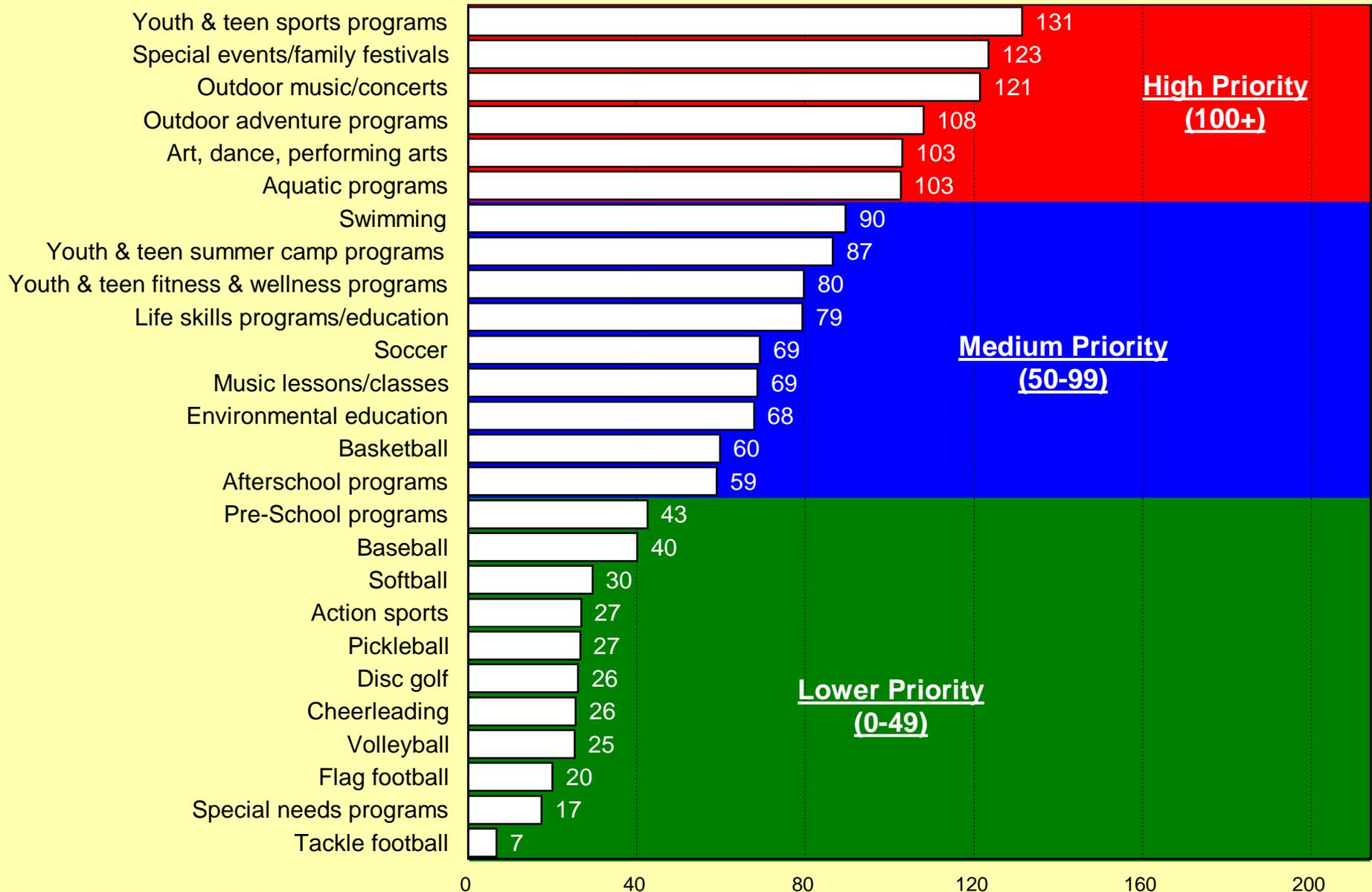
the rating for the item rated as the most important=100

the rating of all other items reflects the relative level of importance for each item compared to the item rated as the most important



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Top Priorities for Investment for Recreation Programs - Youth Based on the Priority Investment Rating

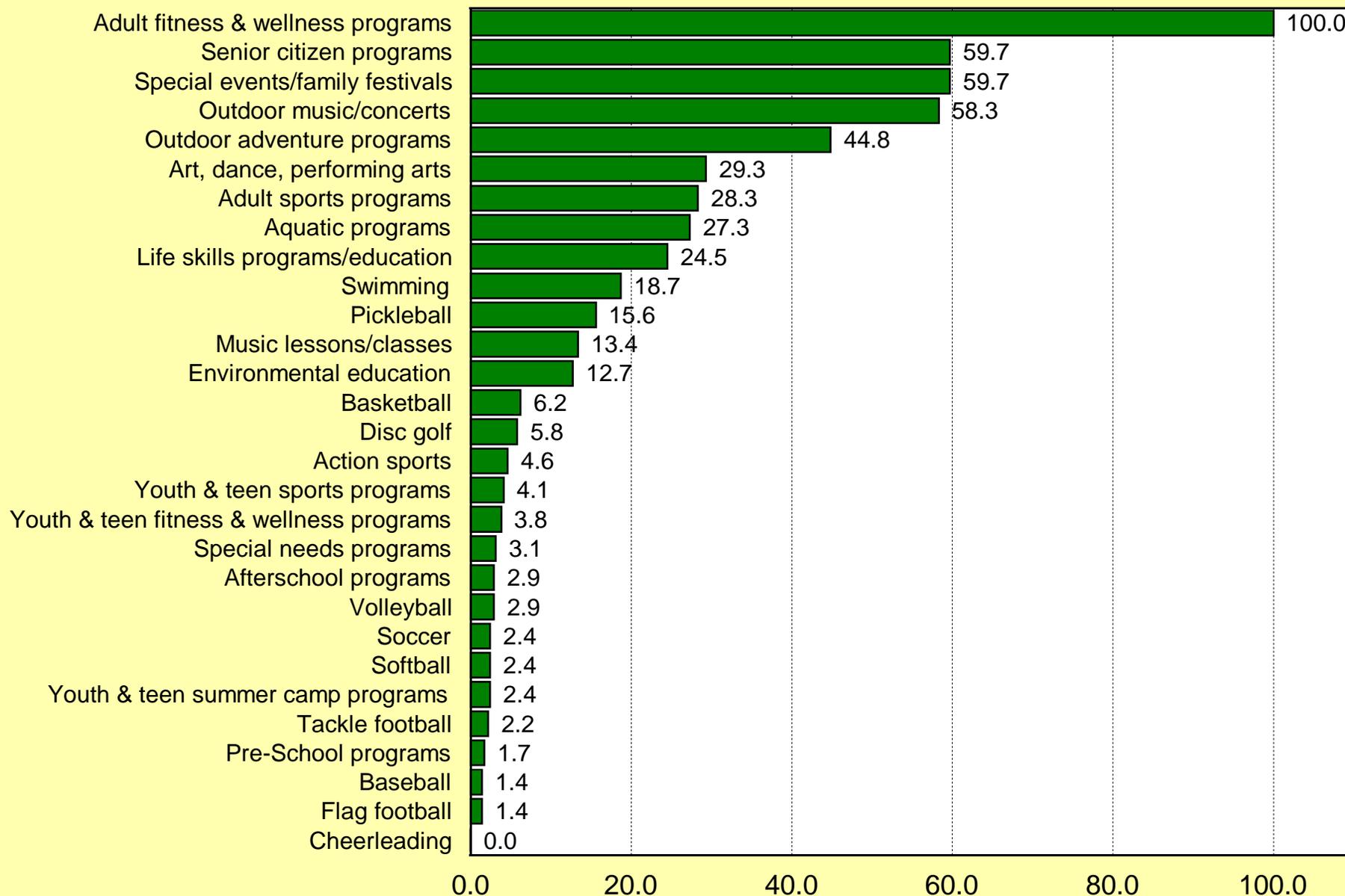


Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Importance Rating for Recreation Programs - Adults

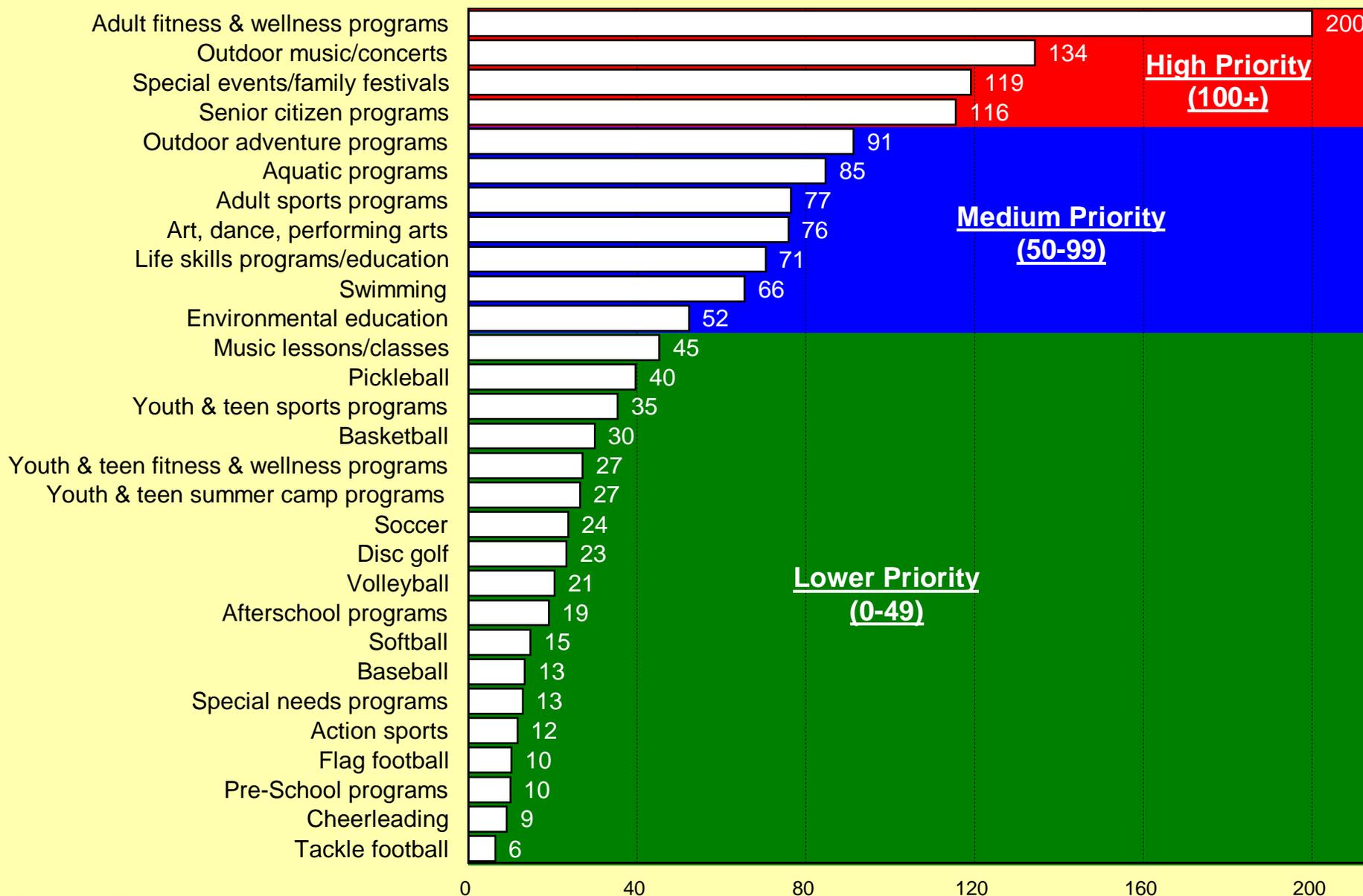
the rating for the item rated as the most important=100

the rating of all other items reflects the relative level of importance for each item compared to the item rated as the most important



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Top Priorities for Investment for Recreation Programs - Adults Based on the Priority Investment Rating



Source: ETC Institute (2018)

Section 3

Benchmarking Analysis

Benchmarking Summary Report

Elon, North Carolina

Since 1998, ETC Institute has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 400 communities in 49 states across the country.

The results of these surveys has provided an unparalleled data base of information to compare responses from household residents in client communities to “National Averages” and therefore provide a unique tool to “assist organizations in better decision making.”

Communities within the data base include a full-range of municipal and county governments from 20,000 in population through over 1 million in population. They include communities in warm weather climates and cold weather climates, mature communities and some of the fastest growing cities and counties in the country.

“National Averages” have been developed for numerous strategically important parks and recreation planning and management issues including: customer satisfaction and usage of parks and programs; methods for receiving marketing information; reasons that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often; priority recreation programs, parks, facilities and trails to improve or develop; priority programming spaces to have in planned community centers and aquatic facilities; potential attendance for planned indoor community centers and outdoor aquatic centers; etc.

Results from household responses for Elon, North Carolina were compared to National Benchmarks to gain further strategic information. A summary of all tabular comparisons are shown on the following page.

Note: The benchmarking data contained in this report is protected intellectual property. Any reproduction of the benchmarking information in this report by persons or organizations not directly affiliated with the Town of Elon is not authorized without written consent from ETC Institute.

Benchmarking for the Town of Elon, North Carolina		
	<i>National Average</i>	<i>Elon 2018</i>
Ways respondents learn about recreation programs and activities		
Word of Mouth/Friends/Coworkers	49%	40%
Social media - Facebook/Twitter	25%	21%
E-mail bulletins/notification (Email)	15%	16%
Website	37%	14%
Departmental Brochure (Seasonal program guide)	42%	6%
Conversations with City/County/Park District staff	6%	3%
Organizations used for parks and recreation programs and facilities		
Tow Parks & Recreation Department	52%	53%
State of Federal Parks	38%	38%
Churches	26%	31%
School District	24%	16%
Private Clubs	22%	13%
Reasons preventing the use of parks and recreation facilities and programs more often		
I do not know what is being offered	34%	30%
We are too busy	33%	28%
Lack of parking	8%	8%
Cost of participation	16%	7%
Inconvenient hours of operation	10%	6%
Lack of maintenance	10%	5%
Safety at facilities	9%	4%
Lack of disabled access	3%	3%
Recreation programs that respondent households have a need for		
Adult fitness and wellness programs	49%	53%
Special events	39%	39%
Seniors/Adult programs for 50 years and older	25%	34%
Adult sports programs	23%	25%
Nature programs/environmental education	30%	20%

Benchmarking for the Town of Elon, North Carolina		
	<i>National Average</i>	<i>Elon 2018</i>
Youth sports programs	22%	17%
Youth summer camp programs	19%	13%
Youth fitness and wellness programs	17%	12%
After school programs	16%	9%
Pre-school programs	13%	5%
Special needs programs	10%	5%
Parks and recreation facilities that respondent households have a need for		
Nature Trails	51%	58%
Indoor Fitness and Exercise Facilities	47%	44%
Picnic Areas and Shelters	49%	43%
Playground Equipment for Children	41%	39%
Senior Centers (Senior activity space)	24%	35%
Community Gardens	31%	34%
Outdoor Amphitheater	32%	25%
Off-leash dog parks	30%	24%
Soccer, Lacrosse Fields (Outdoor field space)	21%	20%
Indoor Gyms/Multi-Purpose Rec Center	29%	18%
Fishing areas (Fishing piers)	30%	17%
Indoor running/walking track	39%	17%
Splash park/pad	25%	17%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts (Gymnasiums)	20%	16%
Ultimate Frisbee/Disc Golf	13%	13%
Baseball Fields	19%	11%
Volleyball courts (outdoor sand)	16%	10%
Indoor sports complex (Indoor sports fields)	14%	5%
Most important parks and recreation facilities (sum of top choices)		
Nature Trails	20%	35%
Indoor Fitness and Exercise Facilities	20%	20%
Playground Equipment for Children	18%	18%
Senior Centers (Senior activity space)	10%	18%

Benchmarking for the Town of Elon, North Carolina		
	<i>National Average</i>	<i>Elon 2018</i>
Community Gardens	9%	15%
Off-Leash Dog Park	15%	11%
Picnic Areas and Shelters	14%	11%
Soccer, Lacrosse Fields (Outdoor field space)	7%	8%
Splash park/pad	8%	8%
Indoor Gyms/Multi-Purpose Rec Centers	10%	7%
Indoor running/walking track	15%	7%
Outdoor Amphitheater	8%	7%
Fishing areas	11%	6%
Baseball Fields	6%	5%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts (Gymnasiums)	4%	5%
Ultimate Frisbee/Disc Golf	3%	3%
Indoor sports complex (Indoor sports fields)	5%	1%
Volleyball Courts (outdoor sand)	2%	1%

Section 4

Tabular Data

Q1. Please indicate if you have a need for each of the following recreation facilities or amenities.

(N=305)

	Yes	No
Q1-1. Baseball & softball fields	11.1%	88.9%
Q1-2. Basketball courts (indoor)	15.7%	84.3%
Q1-3. Canoe/kayak rentals	20.3%	79.7%
Q1-4. Classroom/meeting/event space	29.8%	70.2%
Q1-5. Climbing wall	13.4%	86.6%
Q1-6. Community gardens	34.4%	65.6%
Q1-7. Cricket fields	0.7%	99.3%
Q1-8. Disc golf course	12.5%	87.5%
Q1-9. Dog park	24.3%	75.7%
Q1-10. Greenway trail system	47.9%	52.1%
Q1-11. Indoor turf field	4.9%	95.1%
Q1-12. Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	43.6%	56.4%
Q1-13. Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	20.3%	79.7%
Q1-14. Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	17.7%	82.3%
Q1-15. Natural trails	58.0%	42.0%
Q1-16. Outdoor amphitheaters	25.2%	74.8%
Q1-17. Outdoor fitness & exercise equipment	17.4%	82.6%
Q1-18. Pickleball courts	9.5%	90.5%
Q1-19. Picnic shelters	43.0%	57.0%
Q1-20. Pier/fishing	17.0%	83.0%

Q1. Please indicate if you have a need for each of the following recreation facilities or amenities.

	Yes	No
Q1-21. Playground	39.0%	61.0%
Q1-22. Sand volleyball courts (outdoor)	9.5%	90.5%
Q1-23. Senior center	34.8%	65.2%
Q1-24. Skate park/BMX	5.6%	94.4%
Q1-25. Splash pad	17.4%	82.6%
Q1-26. Track (indoor)	17.4%	82.6%
Q1-27. Track (outdoor)	17.0%	83.0%
Q1-28. Volleyball courts (indoor)	7.9%	92.1%
Q1-29. Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	26.9%	73.1%
Q1-30. Other	8.9%	91.1%

Q1. If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?

(N=256)

	Fully met	Mostly met	Partly met	Not met
Q1-1. Baseball & softball fields	0.0%	6.7%	30.0%	63.3%
Q1-2. Basketball courts (indoor)	4.5%	2.3%	25.0%	68.2%
Q1-3. Canoe/kayak rentals	3.7%	9.3%	22.2%	64.8%
Q1-4. Classroom/meeting/event space	23.2%	28.0%	31.7%	17.1%
Q1-5. Climbing wall	0.0%	5.9%	8.8%	85.3%
Q1-6. Community gardens	6.5%	14.1%	41.3%	38.0%
Q1-7. Cricket fields	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q1-8. Disc golf course	3.2%	35.5%	25.8%	35.5%
Q1-9. Dog park	60.3%	23.8%	9.5%	6.3%
Q1-10. Greenway trail system	5.5%	9.4%	45.3%	39.8%
Q1-11. Indoor turf field	0.0%	7.7%	38.5%	53.8%
Q1-12. Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	7.4%	7.4%	21.3%	63.9%
Q1-13. Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	7.3%	23.6%	20.0%	49.1%
Q1-14. Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	2.0%	8.2%	26.5%	63.3%
Q1-15. Natural trails	12.7%	22.9%	42.0%	22.3%
Q1-16. Outdoor amphitheaters	8.8%	19.1%	26.5%	45.6%
Q1-17. Outdoor fitness & exercise equipment	2.1%	6.4%	34.0%	57.4%
Q1-18. Pickleball courts	4.2%	0.0%	12.5%	83.3%
Q1-19. Picnic shelters	42.1%	26.4%	19.8%	11.6%
Q1-20. Pier/fishing	0.0%	10.4%	27.1%	62.5%

Q1. If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?

	Fully met	Mostly met	Partly met	Not met
Q1-21. Playground	54.5%	30.0%	10.0%	5.5%
Q1-22. Sand volleyball courts (outdoor)	8.0%	12.0%	8.0%	72.0%
Q1-23. Senior center	8.7%	9.8%	21.7%	59.8%
Q1-24. Skate park/BMX	7.1%	7.1%	14.3%	71.4%
Q1-25. Splash pad	2.0%	14.3%	16.3%	67.3%
Q1-26. Track (indoor)	2.2%	2.2%	8.7%	87.0%
Q1-27. Track (outdoor)	6.5%	13.0%	23.9%	56.5%
Q1-28. Volleyball courts (indoor)	0.0%	9.5%	4.8%	85.7%
Q1-29. Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	5.6%	15.5%	16.9%	62.0%
Q1-30. Other	7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	84.6%

Q1-30. Other

<u>Q1-30. Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Tennis courts	3	11.1 %
Library	3	11.1 %
Pool	2	7.4 %
Indoor tennis	2	7.4 %
Indoor swimming pool	1	3.7 %
Outdoor basketball courts	1	3.7 %
Outdoor pool	1	3.7 %
Indoor playground	1	3.7 %
Inside air conditioned space	1	3.7 %
Outdoor swimming pool	1	3.7 %
Indoor swimming	1	3.7 %
Bicycle trail	1	3.7 %
Golf driving range, green, Par 3	1	3.7 %
Tennis courts with soft composite surface	1	3.7 %
Bike lanes and sidewalks	1	3.7 %
Community swimming pool	1	3.7 %
Kids sports program	1	3.7 %
Extended bike path	1	3.7 %
Permanent farmers market like one in Greensboro	1	3.7 %
Lap swimming pool	1	3.7 %
<u>Aquatic</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3.7 %</u>
Total	27	100.0 %

Q2. Which FOUR of the facilities or amenities from the list in Question 1 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?

Q2. Top choice	Number	Percent
Baseball & softball fields	2	0.7 %
Basketball courts (indoor)	6	2.0 %
Canoe/kayak rentals	4	1.3 %
Classroom/meeting/event space	8	2.6 %
Community gardens	8	2.6 %
Cricket fields	1	0.3 %
Disc golf course	2	0.7 %
Dog park	13	4.3 %
Greenway trail system	52	17.0 %
Indoor turf field	1	0.3 %
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	23	7.5 %
Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	7	2.3 %
Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	3	1.0 %
Natural trails	19	6.2 %
Outdoor amphitheaters	2	0.7 %
Pickleball courts	4	1.3 %
Picnic shelters	7	2.3 %
Pier/fishing	1	0.3 %
Playground	17	5.6 %
Senior center	21	6.9 %
Skate park/BMX	1	0.3 %
Splash pad	3	1.0 %
Track (indoor)	3	1.0 %
Track (outdoor)	1	0.3 %
Volleyball courts (indoor)	1	0.3 %
Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	2	0.7 %
Other	12	3.9 %
None chosen	81	26.6 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q2. Which FOUR of the facilities or amenities from the list in Question 1 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?

Q2. 2nd choice	Number	Percent
Baseball & softball fields	6	2.0 %
Basketball courts (indoor)	1	0.3 %
Canoe/kayak rentals	2	0.7 %
Classroom/meeting/event space	6	2.0 %
Climbing wall	2	0.7 %
Community gardens	9	3.0 %
Cricket fields	1	0.3 %
Disc golf course	2	0.7 %
Dog park	7	2.3 %
Greenway trail system	21	6.9 %
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	13	4.3 %
Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	9	3.0 %
Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	9	3.0 %
Natural trails	51	16.7 %
Outdoor amphitheaters	3	1.0 %
Outdoor fitness & exercise equipment	8	2.6 %
Pickleball courts	1	0.3 %
Picnic shelters	6	2.0 %
Pier/fishing	5	1.6 %
Playground	11	3.6 %
Sand volleyball courts (outdoor)	2	0.7 %
Senior center	10	3.3 %
Splash pad	7	2.3 %
Track (indoor)	4	1.3 %
Track (outdoor)	3	1.0 %
Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	9	3.0 %
Other	4	1.3 %
None chosen	93	30.5 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q2. Which FOUR of the facilities or amenities from the list in Question 1 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?

Q2. 3rd choice	Number	Percent
Baseball & softball fields	3	1.0 %
Basketball courts (indoor)	5	1.6 %
Canoe/kayak rentals	6	2.0 %
Classroom/meeting/event space	13	4.3 %
Climbing wall	3	1.0 %
Community gardens	11	3.6 %
Disc golf course	1	0.3 %
Dog park	9	3.0 %
Greenway trail system	15	4.9 %
Indoor turf field	1	0.3 %
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	12	3.9 %
Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	5	1.6 %
Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	7	2.3 %
Natural trails	24	7.9 %
Outdoor amphitheaters	9	3.0 %
Outdoor fitness & exercise equipment	3	1.0 %
Pickleball courts	1	0.3 %
Picnic shelters	8	2.6 %
Pier/fishing	7	2.3 %
Playground	15	4.9 %
Senior center	11	3.6 %
Skate park/BMX	1	0.3 %
Splash pad	6	2.0 %
Track (indoor)	7	2.3 %
Track (outdoor)	6	2.0 %
Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	8	2.6 %
Other	2	0.7 %
None chosen	106	34.8 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q2. Which FOUR of the facilities or amenities from the list in Question 1 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?

Q2. 4th choice	Number	Percent
Baseball & softball fields	3	1.0 %
Basketball courts (indoor)	2	0.7 %
Canoe/kayak rentals	6	2.0 %
Classroom/meeting/event space	8	2.6 %
Climbing wall	4	1.3 %
Community gardens	17	5.6 %
Cricket fields	1	0.3 %
Disc golf course	3	1.0 %
Dog park	4	1.3 %
Greenway trail system	10	3.3 %
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	12	3.9 %
Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	4	1.3 %
Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	1	0.3 %
Natural trails	12	3.9 %
Outdoor amphitheaters	6	2.0 %
Outdoor fitness & exercise equipment	2	0.7 %
Pickleball courts	3	1.0 %
Picnic shelters	13	4.3 %
Pier/fishing	4	1.3 %
Playground	12	3.9 %
Sand volleyball courts (outdoor)	1	0.3 %
Senior center	13	4.3 %
Skate park/BMX	5	1.6 %
Splash pad	7	2.3 %
Track (indoor)	8	2.6 %
Track (outdoor)	5	1.6 %
Volleyball courts (indoor)	1	0.3 %
Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	8	2.6 %
Other	4	1.3 %
None chosen	126	41.3 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q2. Which FOUR of the facilities or amenities from the list in Question 1 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household? (top 4)

Q2. Sum of top 4 choices	Number	Percent
Baseball & softball fields	14	4.6 %
Basketball courts (indoor)	14	4.6 %
Canoe/kayak rentals	18	5.9 %
Classroom/meeting/event space	35	11.5 %
Climbing wall	9	3.0 %
Community gardens	45	14.8 %
Cricket fields	3	1.0 %
Disc golf course	8	2.6 %
Dog park	33	10.8 %
Greenway trail system	98	32.1 %
Indoor turf field	2	0.7 %
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	60	19.7 %
Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	25	8.2 %
Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	20	6.6 %
Natural trails	106	34.8 %
Outdoor amphitheaters	20	6.6 %
Outdoor fitness & exercise equipment	13	4.3 %
Pickleball courts	9	3.0 %
Picnic shelters	34	11.1 %
Pier/fishing	17	5.6 %
Playground	55	18.0 %
Sand volleyball courts (outdoor)	3	1.0 %
Senior center	55	18.0 %
Skate park/BMX	7	2.3 %
Splash pad	23	7.5 %
Track (indoor)	22	7.2 %
Track (outdoor)	15	4.9 %
Volleyball courts (indoor)	2	0.7 %
Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	27	8.9 %
Other	22	7.2 %
None chosen	81	26.6 %
Total	895	

Q3. Please indicate if you have a desire to participate in each of the following recreation programs or activities.

(N=305)

	Yes	No
Q3-1. Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	3.3%	96.7%
Q3-2. Art, dance, performing arts	27.5%	72.5%
Q3-3. Adult fitness & wellness programs	53.1%	46.9%
Q3-4. Adult sports programs	24.6%	75.4%
Q3-5. Afterschool programs	8.5%	91.5%
Q3-6. Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	32.1%	67.9%
Q3-7. Baseball	5.9%	94.1%
Q3-8. Basketball	11.8%	88.2%
Q3-9. Cheerleading	4.6%	95.4%
Q3-10. Disc golf	12.1%	87.9%
Q3-11. Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	24.6%	75.4%
Q3-12. Environmental education	20.3%	79.7%
Q3-13. Flag football	4.9%	95.1%
Q3-14. Tackle football	2.3%	97.7%
Q3-15. Music lessons/classes	17.7%	82.3%
Q3-16. Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	23.0%	77.0%
Q3-17. Outdoor music/concerts	47.5%	52.5%
Q3-18. Pickleball	11.1%	88.9%
Q3-19. Pre-School programs	4.6%	95.4%
Q3-20. Special needs programs	4.9%	95.1%

Q3. Please indicate if you have a desire to participate in each of the following recreation programs or activities.

	Yes	No
Q3-21. Senior citizen programs	34.1%	65.9%
Q3-22. Soccer	12.1%	87.9%
Q3-23. Softball	6.6%	93.4%
Q3-24. Special events/family festivals	39.3%	60.7%
Q3-25. Swimming	26.6%	73.4%
Q3-26. Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	11.8%	88.2%
Q3-27. Youth & teen sports programs	17.4%	82.6%
Q3-28. Youth & teen summer camp programs	13.4%	86.6%
Q3-29. Volleyball	8.5%	91.5%
Q3-30. Other	4.3%	95.7%

Q3. If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?

(N=237)

	Fully met	Mostly met	Partly met	Not met
Q3-1. Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Q3-2. Art, dance, performing arts	5.5%	16.4%	27.4%	50.7%
Q3-3. Adult fitness & wellness programs	4.4%	8.8%	29.4%	57.4%
Q3-4. Adult sports programs	1.6%	7.9%	19.0%	71.4%
Q3-5. Afterschool programs	4.0%	8.0%	32.0%	56.0%
Q3-6. Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	7.1%	10.6%	23.5%	58.8%
Q3-7. Baseball	0.0%	6.7%	13.3%	80.0%
Q3-8. Basketball	0.0%	7.1%	17.9%	75.0%
Q3-9. Cheerleading	0.0%	7.7%	15.4%	76.9%
Q3-10. Disc golf	6.7%	26.7%	30.0%	36.7%
Q3-11. Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	3.1%	10.8%	18.5%	67.7%
Q3-12. Environmental education	0.0%	10.2%	27.1%	62.7%
Q3-13. Flag football	0.0%	16.7%	8.3%	75.0%
Q3-14. Tackle football	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	85.7%
Q3-15. Music lessons/classes	8.5%	8.5%	14.9%	68.1%
Q3-16. Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	1.7%	5.2%	32.8%	60.3%
Q3-17. Outdoor music/concerts	8.5%	17.8%	44.1%	29.7%
Q3-18. Pickleball	0.0%	0.0%	12.0%	88.0%
Q3-19. Pre-School programs	8.3%	8.3%	41.7%	41.7%
Q3-20. Special needs programs	0.0%	8.3%	41.7%	50.0%

Q3. If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?

	Fully met	Mostly met	Partly met	Not met
Q3-21. Senior citizen programs	11.1%	13.3%	22.2%	53.3%
Q3-22. Soccer	6.3%	12.5%	31.3%	50.0%
Q3-23. Softball	0.0%	13.3%	20.0%	66.7%
Q3-24. Special events/family festivals	5.9%	24.5%	45.1%	24.5%
Q3-25. Swimming	2.9%	15.9%	24.6%	56.5%
Q3-26. Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	0.0%	9.4%	21.9%	68.8%
Q3-27. Youth & teen sports programs	2.1%	14.9%	25.5%	57.4%
Q3-28. Youth & teen summer camp programs	2.9%	14.3%	25.7%	57.1%
Q3-29. Volleyball	0.0%	4.3%	8.7%	87.0%
Q3-30. Other	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%	63.6%

Q3-30. Other

Q3-30. Other	Number	Percent
Tennis	2	15.4 %
Walking on trails, bicycling on roads	1	7.7 %
Safe walking areas with more sidewalks	1	7.7 %
Library	1	7.7 %
Corn Hule	1	7.7 %
Hang Gliding/Hot Air Balloon	1	7.7 %
Golf driving range, green, Par 3	1	7.7 %
Tennis court with soft courts	1	7.7 %
Running/walking track	1	7.7 %
Adult kickball	1	7.7 %
Wine & beer festivals/food festival	1	7.7 %
Geenway 5K	1	7.7 %
Total	13	100.0 %

Q4. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to YOUTH (under age 18) in your household?

Q4. Top choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	2	0.7 %
Art, dance, performing arts	4	1.3 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	4	1.3 %
Afterschool programs	7	2.3 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	6	2.0 %
Baseball	4	1.3 %
Basketball	1	0.3 %
Cheerleading	1	0.3 %
Disc golf	3	1.0 %
Environmental education	1	0.3 %
Tackle football	1	0.3 %
Music lessons/classes	1	0.3 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	5	1.6 %
Outdoor music/concerts	4	1.3 %
Pickleball	1	0.3 %
Pre-School programs	6	2.0 %
Special needs programs	1	0.3 %
Soccer	8	2.6 %
Softball	1	0.3 %
Special events/family festivals	3	1.0 %
Swimming	3	1.0 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	5	1.6 %
Youth & teen sports programs	15	4.9 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	6	2.0 %
Other	2	0.7 %
No youth in household	157	51.5 %
None chosen	53	17.4 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q4. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to YOUTH (under age 18) in your household?

Q4. 2nd choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	1	0.3 %
Art, dance, performing arts	9	3.0 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	1	0.3 %
Adult sports programs	1	0.3 %
Afterschool programs	3	1.0 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	2	0.7 %
Baseball	3	1.0 %
Basketball	4	1.3 %
Cheerleading	1	0.3 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	5	1.6 %
Environmental education	3	1.0 %
Flag football	1	0.3 %
Music lessons/classes	3	1.0 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	7	2.3 %
Outdoor music/concerts	2	0.7 %
Pre-School programs	3	1.0 %
Soccer	3	1.0 %
Softball	2	0.7 %
Special events/family festivals	5	1.6 %
Swimming	6	2.0 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	10	3.3 %
Youth & teen sports programs	8	2.6 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	5	1.6 %
Volleyball	1	0.3 %
None chosen	216	70.8 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q4. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to YOUTH (under age 18) in your household?

Q4. 3rd choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	3	1.0 %
Art, dance, performing arts	5	1.6 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	2	0.7 %
Adult sports programs	1	0.3 %
Afterschool programs	2	0.7 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	5	1.6 %
Baseball	1	0.3 %
Basketball	7	2.3 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	3	1.0 %
Environmental education	2	0.7 %
Flag football	1	0.3 %
Music lessons/classes	3	1.0 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	4	1.3 %
Outdoor music/concerts	4	1.3 %
Pre-School programs	2	0.7 %
Special needs programs	1	0.3 %
Senior citizen programs	1	0.3 %
Soccer	3	1.0 %
Softball	2	0.7 %
Special events/family festivals	8	2.6 %
Swimming	3	1.0 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	2	0.7 %
Youth & teen sports programs	8	2.6 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	9	3.0 %
Volleyball	1	0.3 %
None chosen	222	72.8 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q4. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to YOUTH (under age 18) in your household?

Q4. 4th choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	1	0.3 %
Art, dance, performing arts	2	0.7 %
Afterschool programs	3	1.0 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	3	1.0 %
Baseball	2	0.7 %
Basketball	1	0.3 %
Cheerleading	1	0.3 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	7	2.3 %
Environmental education	4	1.3 %
Flag football	2	0.7 %
Music lessons/classes	6	2.0 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	6	2.0 %
Outdoor music/concerts	6	2.0 %
Pre-School programs	1	0.3 %
Special needs programs	1	0.3 %
Senior citizen programs	5	1.6 %
Soccer	3	1.0 %
Softball	1	0.3 %
Special events/family festivals	7	2.3 %
Swimming	3	1.0 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	3	1.0 %
Youth & teen sports programs	5	1.6 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	2	0.7 %
Volleyball	1	0.3 %
None chosen	229	75.1 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q4. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to YOUTH (under age 18) in your household? (top 4)

Q4. Sum of top 4 choices	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	7	2.3 %
Art, dance, performing arts	20	6.6 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	7	2.3 %
Adult sports programs	2	0.7 %
Afterschool programs	15	4.9 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	16	5.2 %
Baseball	10	3.3 %
Basketball	13	4.3 %
Cheerleading	3	1.0 %
Disc golf	3	1.0 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	15	4.9 %
Environmental education	10	3.3 %
Flag football	4	1.3 %
Tackle football	1	0.3 %
Music lessons/classes	13	4.3 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	22	7.2 %
Outdoor music/concerts	16	5.2 %
Pickleball	1	0.3 %
Pre-School programs	12	3.9 %
Special needs programs	3	1.0 %
Senior citizen programs	6	2.0 %
Soccer	17	5.6 %
Softball	6	2.0 %
Special events/family festivals	23	7.5 %
Swimming	15	4.9 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	20	6.6 %
Youth & teen sports programs	36	11.8 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	22	7.2 %
Volleyball	3	1.0 %
Other	2	0.7 %
No youth in household	157	51.5 %
None chosen	53	17.4 %
Total	553	

Q5. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to ADULT (aged 18 and above) members of your household?

Q5. Top choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	1	0.3 %
Art, dance, performing arts	17	5.6 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	71	23.3 %
Adult sports programs	7	2.3 %
Afterschool programs	1	0.3 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	4	1.3 %
Baseball	1	0.3 %
Basketball	1	0.3 %
Disc golf	3	1.0 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	4	1.3 %
Environmental education	3	1.0 %
Flag football	1	0.3 %
Tackle football	1	0.3 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	9	3.0 %
Outdoor music/concerts	23	7.5 %
Pickleball	7	2.3 %
Pre-School programs	2	0.7 %
Special needs programs	1	0.3 %
Senior citizen programs	26	8.5 %
Special events/family festivals	12	3.9 %
Swimming	5	1.6 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	1	0.3 %
Volleyball	1	0.3 %
Other	9	3.0 %
None chosen	94	30.8 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q5. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to ADULT (aged 18 and above) members of your household?

Q5. 2nd choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	1	0.3 %
Art, dance, performing arts	7	2.3 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	28	9.2 %
Adult sports programs	15	4.9 %
Afterschool programs	1	0.3 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	18	5.9 %
Basketball	1	0.3 %
Disc golf	2	0.7 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	17	5.6 %
Environmental education	3	1.0 %
Music lessons/classes	1	0.3 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	17	5.6 %
Outdoor music/concerts	28	9.2 %
Pickleball	4	1.3 %
Special needs programs	1	0.3 %
Senior citizen programs	13	4.3 %
Soccer	2	0.7 %
Softball	1	0.3 %
Special events/family festivals	15	4.9 %
Swimming	5	1.6 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	3	1.0 %
Youth & teen sports programs	2	0.7 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	1	0.3 %
Volleyball	1	0.3 %
Other	3	1.0 %
<u>None chosen</u>	<u>115</u>	<u>37.7 %</u>
Total	305	100.0 %

Q5. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to ADULT (aged 18 and above) members of your household?

Q5. 3rd choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	1	0.3 %
Art, dance, performing arts	7	2.3 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	17	5.6 %
Adult sports programs	7	2.3 %
Afterschool programs	1	0.3 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	8	2.6 %
Basketball	2	0.7 %
Disc golf	2	0.7 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	10	3.3 %
Environmental education	3	1.0 %
Flag football	1	0.3 %
Tackle football	1	0.3 %
Music lessons/classes	2	0.7 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	10	3.3 %
Outdoor music/concerts	25	8.2 %
Pickleball	4	1.3 %
Senior citizen programs	21	6.9 %
Softball	2	0.7 %
Special events/family festivals	28	9.2 %
Swimming	9	3.0 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	1	0.3 %
Youth & teen sports programs	2	0.7 %
Volleyball	1	0.3 %
None chosen	140	45.9 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q5. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to ADULT (aged 18 and above) members of your household?

Q5. 4th choice	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	3	1.0 %
Art, dance, performing arts	6	2.0 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	11	3.6 %
Adult sports programs	7	2.3 %
Afterschool programs	1	0.3 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	5	1.6 %
Baseball	1	0.3 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	4	1.3 %
Environmental education	7	2.3 %
Tackle football	1	0.3 %
Music lessons/classes	5	1.6 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	7	2.3 %
Outdoor music/concerts	21	6.9 %
Pickleball	5	1.6 %
Special needs programs	2	0.7 %
Senior citizen programs	16	5.2 %
Soccer	1	0.3 %
Special events/family festivals	21	6.9 %
Swimming	5	1.6 %
Youth & teen sports programs	1	0.3 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	2	0.7 %
Volleyball	1	0.3 %
Other	1	0.3 %
None chosen	171	56.1 %
Total	305	100.0 %

Q5. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to ADULT (aged 18 and above) members of your household? (top 4)

Q5. Sum of top 4 choices	Number	Percent
Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	6	2.0 %
Art, dance, performing arts	37	12.1 %
Adult fitness & wellness programs	127	41.6 %
Adult sports programs	36	11.8 %
Afterschool programs	4	1.3 %
Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	35	11.5 %
Baseball	2	0.7 %
Basketball	4	1.3 %
Disc golf	7	2.3 %
Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	35	11.5 %
Environmental education	16	5.2 %
Flag football	2	0.7 %
Tackle football	3	1.0 %
Music lessons/classes	8	2.6 %
Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	43	14.1 %
Outdoor music/concerts	97	31.8 %
Pickleball	20	6.6 %
Pre-School programs	2	0.7 %
Special needs programs	4	1.3 %
Senior citizen programs	76	24.9 %
Soccer	3	1.0 %
Softball	3	1.0 %
Special events/family festivals	76	24.9 %
Swimming	24	7.9 %
Youth & teen fitness & wellness programs	5	1.6 %
Youth & teen sports programs	5	1.6 %
Youth & teen summer camp programs	3	1.0 %
Volleyball	4	1.3 %
Other	13	4.3 %
None chosen	94	30.8 %
Total	794	

Q6. Please CHECK ALL of the following Town of Elon parks and facilities that you or other members of your household have used in the past 12 months.

Q6. All Town of Elon parks & facilities you have used in past 12 months	Number	Percent
Beth Schmidt Park	183	60.0 %
Lawrence Slade Park	19	6.2 %
Heritage Place Community Center at Beth Schmidt Park	46	15.1 %
Any reservable picnic shelter at Beth Schmidt Park	38	12.5 %
Reservable Gazebo at Beth Schmidt Park	13	4.3 %
Loy Homestead Garden at Beth Schmidt Park	24	7.9 %
Reservable picnic shelter at Lawrence Slade Park	5	1.6 %
Elon Dog Park-K9 Corner	39	12.8 %
Other	6	2.0 %
None of the above	105	34.4 %
Total	478	

WITHOUT "NONE OF ABOVE"

Q6. Please CHECK ALL of the following Town of Elon parks and facilities that you or other members of your household have used in the past 12 months. (without "none of above")

Q6. All Town of Elon parks & facilities you have used in past 12 months	Number	Percent
Beth Schmidt Park	183	91.5 %
Lawrence Slade Park	19	9.5 %
Heritage Place Community Center at Beth Schmidt Park	46	23.0 %
Any reservable picnic shelter at Beth Schmidt Park	38	19.0 %
Reservable Gazebo at Beth Schmidt Park	13	6.5 %
Loy Homestead Garden at Beth Schmidt Park	24	12.0 %
Reservable picnic shelter at Lawrence Slade Park	5	2.5 %
Elon Dog Park-K9 Corner	38	19.0 %
Other	6	3.0 %
Total	372	

Q6-9. Other

Q6-9. Other	Number	Percent
Joe Davidson Park	2	33.3 %
Twin Lakes	1	16.7 %
Picnic tables	1	16.7 %
DISC GOLF	1	16.7 %
NATURE TRAILS	1	16.7 %
Total	6	100.0 %

Q6a. In the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or members of your household visited any Town of Elon parks or facilities?

Q6a. How often have you visited any Town of
Elon parks or facilities in past 12 months

	Number	Percent
Every couple of months	89	44.5 %
Once a month	29	14.5 %
A few times a month	37	18.5 %
Once a week	10	5.0 %
2-3 times a week	17	8.5 %
Not provided	18	9.0 %
Total	200	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q6a. In the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or members of your household visited any Town of Elon parks or facilities? (without "not provided")

Q6a. How often have you visited any Town of
Elon parks or facilities in past 12 months

	Number	Percent
Every couple of months	89	48.9 %
Once a month	29	15.9 %
A few times a month	37	20.3 %
Once a week	10	5.5 %
2-3 times a week	17	9.3 %
Total	182	100.0 %

Q6b. Which THREE parks or facilities do you visit or reserve MOST OFTEN? (1st)

<u>Q6b. Top choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Beth Schmidt Park	149	85.1 %
Elon Dog Park	6	3.4 %
Dog park	5	2.9 %
Lawrence Slade Park	3	1.7 %
Beth Schmidt Park nature trails	2	1.1 %
Beth Schmidt Park playgrounds	2	1.1 %
Trails	1	0.6 %
Beth Schmidt Park walking trails	1	0.6 %
Cedar Rock Park	1	0.6 %
30th st	1	0.6 %
Heritage Place	1	0.6 %
Elon does not have any parks that are of interest	1	0.6 %
Springwood Park	1	0.6 %
Beth Schmidt playground	1	0.6 %
Total	175	100.0 %

Q6b. Which THREE parks or facilities do you visit or reserve MOST OFTEN? (2nd)

<u>Q6b. 2nd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Beth Schmidt Park	10	24.4 %
Lawrence Slade Park	8	19.5 %
Dog park	2	4.9 %
Elon Dog Park	2	4.9 %
Elon Dog Park K9 Corner	2	4.9 %
Heritage	2	4.9 %
Reservable gazebo	1	2.4 %
Twin Lakes	1	2.4 %
Shallow Ford	1	2.4 %
Any reservable picnic shelter at Beth Schmidt Park	1	2.4 %
Elon University, Mary Lakes	1	2.4 %
Loy Homestead Garden	1	2.4 %
Trails across for playground	1	2.4 %
Reservable picnic shelter	1	2.4 %
Beth Schmidt Park walking trails	1	2.4 %
Karson Farms Park	1	2.4 %
Elon University	1	2.4 %
Beth Schmidt Park trails	1	2.4 %
Heritage Place Community Center	1	2.4 %
Community Center	1	2.4 %
Heritage Place	1	2.4 %
Total	41	100.0 %

Q6b. Which THREE parks or facilities do you visit or reserve MOST OFTEN? (3rd)

<u>Q6b. 3rd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Loy Homestead	4	25.0 %
Elon Dog Park	2	12.5 %
Lawrence Slade Park	2	12.5 %
Joe Davis	1	6.3 %
Beth Schmidt Park	1	6.3 %
Walking the Elon Campus	1	6.3 %
Heritage Place Community Center	1	6.3 %
Picnic shelters	1	6.3 %
Bathrooms in both parks when running	1	6.3 %
Heritage Place	1	6.3 %
Reservable Picnic Shelter	1	6.3 %
Total	16	100.0 %

Q7. In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household participated in any special events offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department?

Q7. Have you participated in any special events offered by Town of Elon Recreation & Parks Department in past 12 months

Department in past 12 months	Number	Percent
Yes	65	21.3 %
No	227	74.4 %
Not provided	13	4.3 %
Total	305	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q7. In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household participated in any special events offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department? (without "not provided")

Q7. Have you participated in any special events offered by Town of Elon Recreation & Parks Department in past 12 months

Department in past 12 months	Number	Percent
Yes	65	22.3 %
No	227	77.7 %
Total	292	100.0 %

Q7a. How would you rate the overall quality of special events that you and members of your household have participated in?

Q7a. How would you rate overall quality of special events you have participated in

special events you have participated in	Number	Percent
Excellent	23	35.4 %
Good	36	55.4 %
Fair	6	9.2 %
Total	65	100.0 %

Q8. From the following list, please CHECK ALL of the ways you learn about Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department parks, facilities and special events.

Q8. All ways you learn about Town of Elon Recreation Parks Department parks, facilities & special events

	Number	Percent
Banners in public places	172	56.4 %
Bulletin boards	24	7.9 %
Conversation with staff	8	2.6 %
Direct email	50	16.4 %
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks website	43	14.1 %
Recreation & Parks brochure	19	6.2 %
Town newsletter	138	45.2 %
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	65	21.3 %
Search engine (e.g. Google, Yahoo, Bing)	16	5.2 %
Word of mouth	121	39.7 %
Other	17	5.6 %
None of these	34	11.1 %
Total	707	

WITHOUT "NONE OF THESE"

Q8. From the following list, please CHECK ALL of the ways you learn about Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department parks, facilities and special events. (without "none of these")

Q8. All ways you learn about Town of Elon Recreation Parks Department parks, facilities & special events

	Number	Percent
Banners in public places	172	63.5 %
Bulletin boards	24	8.9 %
Conversation with staff	8	3.0 %
Direct email	50	18.5 %
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks website	43	15.9 %
Recreation & Parks brochure	19	7.0 %
Town newsletter	138	50.9 %
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	65	24.0 %
Search engine (e.g. Google, Yahoo, Bing)	16	5.9 %
Word of mouth	121	44.6 %
Other	17	6.3 %
Total	673	

Q8-11. Other

<u>Q8-11. Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Newspaper	9	52.9 %
News	1	5.9 %
Church newsletter	1	5.9 %
Live nearby	1	5.9 %
Times news	1	5.9 %
Newspaper/times news	1	5.9 %
Club use of facilities	1	5.9 %
TV	1	5.9 %
View from University Drive	1	5.9 %
Total	17	100.0 %

Q9. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons that you and members of your household use the parks and facilities offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department.

Q9. All reasons you use parks & facilities offered by Town of Elon Recreation & Parks Department	Number	Percent
Park or facility offered	131	43.0 %
Safety of parks & facilities	108	35.4 %
Facilities have right amenities	82	26.9 %
Facilities are well maintained	135	44.3 %
Close to our home/residence	180	59.0 %
Enjoyment of outdoors	127	41.6 %
Fees are affordable	40	13.1 %
Good customer service by staff	28	9.2 %
Facility operating hours are convenient	43	14.1 %
Availability of parking	81	26.6 %
Improved physical fitness & health	57	18.7 %
Socializing/meeting people	33	10.8 %
Other	10	3.3 %
<u>None. I do not use parks or recreation facilities</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>32.1 %</u>
Total	1153	

Q9. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons that you and members of your household use the parks and facilities offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department. (without "none")

Q9. All reasons you use parks & facilities offered by Town of Elon Recreation & Parks Department	Number	Percent
Park or facility offered	130	62.8 %
Safety of parks & facilities	108	52.2 %
Facilities have right amenities	82	39.6 %
Facilities are well maintained	135	65.2 %
Close to our home/residence	179	86.5 %
Enjoyment of outdoors	126	60.9 %
Fees are affordable	40	19.3 %
Good customer service by staff	28	13.5 %
Facility operating hours are convenient	43	20.8 %
Availability of parking	81	39.1 %
Improved physical fitness & health	57	27.5 %
Socializing/meeting people	33	15.9 %
Other	10	4.8 %
Total	1052	

Q9-13. Other

<u>Q9-13. Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Parks for children	1	11.1 %
Volunteer opportunities	1	11.1 %
Grandchildren	1	11.1 %
Health	1	11.1 %
Planning event	1	11.1 %
Use the walking trail	1	11.1 %
Good place to take grand kids to	1	11.1 %
Elon community church picnic	1	11.1 %
Once a year shred it day	1	11.1 %
Total	9	100.0 %

Q10. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons that may prevent you or other members of your household from using the parks and facilities offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department (or, if you currently use them, what prevents you from using them more often)?

Q10. All reasons that may prevent you from using parks & facilities offered by Town of Elon

Recreation & Parks Department	Number	Percent
Cost of participation	22	7.2 %
Facilities are too far from home	20	6.6 %
Inconvenient hours of operation	18	5.9 %
Lack of cleanliness	22	7.2 %
Lack of disabled access	8	2.6 %
Lack of information/don't know what is offered	92	30.2 %
Lack of maintenance	14	4.6 %
Lack of parking	23	7.5 %
Not enough time/too busy	84	27.5 %
Not interested in what is provided	61	20.0 %
Overcrowding	20	6.6 %
Safety at facilities	12	3.9 %
Other	37	12.1 %
Nothing. I am actively using Town's parks & facilities	62	20.3 %
Total	495	

WITHOUT "NOTHING"

Q10. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons that may prevent you or other members of your household from using the parks and facilities offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department (or, if you currently use them, what prevents you from using them more often)? (without "nothing")

Q10. All reasons that may prevent you from using parks & facilities offered by Town of Elon

Recreation & Parks Department	Number	Percent
Cost of participation	21	8.6 %
Facilities are too far from home	19	7.8 %
Inconvenient hours of operation	17	7.0 %
Lack of cleanliness	22	9.1 %
Lack of disabled access	8	3.3 %
Lack of information/don't know what is offered	89	36.6 %
Lack of maintenance	13	5.3 %
Lack of parking	22	9.1 %
Not enough time/too busy	83	34.2 %
Not interested in what is provided	61	25.1 %
Overcrowding	20	8.2 %
Safety at facilities	11	4.5 %
Other	37	15.2 %
Total	423	

Q10-14. Other

<u>Q10-14 Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Age	7	20.6 %
Not interested in playground	1	2.9 %
Age and health	1	2.9 %
Too old	1	2.9 %
Widow	1	2.9 %
Twin Lakes	1	2.9 %
Age, physical condition	1	2.9 %
I love walking thru the park	1	2.9 %
Not much offered	1	2.9 %
Physical mobility	1	2.9 %
Health	1	2.9 %
Child grew up	1	2.9 %
Not enough for seniors	1	2.9 %
New resident	1	2.9 %
Poorly advertised	1	2.9 %
Homebound	1	2.9 %
Only 1 park that I know of is close by	1	2.9 %
Age and live in a community that provides my needs	1	2.9 %
Trails are too limited and bike path goes nowhere	1	2.9 %
Use facilities of Twin Lakes	1	2.9 %
Not able to participate	1	2.9 %
Lack of senior center	1	2.9 %
Not interested	1	2.9 %
Poor sidewalks and no greenway	1	2.9 %
Just moved here	1	2.9 %
I live at Twin Lakes	1	2.9 %
Senior citizen retirement home has its own facilities	1	2.9 %
<u>Benches on trails</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2.9 %</u>
Total	34	100.0 %

Q11. From the following list of potential indoor facilities that could be added or expanded, please CHECK ALL of the ones you or members of your household would use.

Q11. Potential indoor facilities that could be added or expanded you would use	Number	Percent
Walking & jogging track	157	51.5 %
Arts & crafts studio	63	20.7 %
Aerobics/fitness/dance class space	89	29.2 %
Space for teens	23	7.5 %
Weight room/cardiovascular equipment area	75	24.6 %
Leisure pool (e.g. water slides, sprays)	79	25.9 %
Child care area	18	5.9 %
Exercise facility for adults 50+ years	119	39.0 %
Rock climbing/bouldering wall	40	13.1 %
Indoor soccer/lacrosse	22	7.2 %
Multi-court gymnasium/field house	38	12.5 %
Classroom space	17	5.6 %
Space for meetings, parties, banquets	65	21.3 %
Indoor tennis	29	9.5 %
Nature center	66	21.6 %
Performing arts (e.g. music, drama)	74	24.3 %
Senior center	99	32.5 %
Other	20	6.6 %
Total	1093	

Q11-18. Other

Q11-18. Other	Number	Percent
Indoor pickleball	1	5.6 %
Indoor lap pool	1	5.6 %
NOT INTERESTED	1	5.6 %
Classes for children, fitness, crafts	1	5.6 %
Library could provide #4, #12, #13, #17 in Q11	1	5.6 %
Towncraft and farmers market running year long	1	5.6 %
Pool	1	5.6 %
Indoor basketball courts	1	5.6 %
More pickleball courts	1	5.6 %
Lap pool	1	5.6 %
Library	1	5.6 %
Don't waste our tax dollars	1	5.6 %
Swimming pool laps and aerobics	1	5.6 %
None are necessary	1	5.6 %
Indoor tennis	1	5.6 %
Lap pool/lanes	1	5.6 %
Pool/Gym	1	5.6 %
Indoor Children Play Park	1	5.6 %
Total	18	100.0 %

Q12. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department, where 5 is "strongly agree" and 1 is "strongly disagree."

(N=305)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Q12-1. I am aware of parks, facilities & events that are offered	14.6%	34.0%	21.5%	13.2%	9.4%	7.3%
Q12-2. I am satisfied with recreation opportunities I receive for my tax dollars	8.7%	30.0%	26.8%	11.5%	9.1%	13.9%
Q12-3. I am satisfied with variety of parks, facilities & events Town offers	10.2%	25.3%	29.8%	16.5%	6.3%	11.9%
Q12-4. Recreation & parks is an essential service to Town	45.6%	34.8%	9.1%	2.8%	3.5%	4.2%
Q12-5. Public parks add to quality of life in community	60.6%	28.2%	5.6%	1.0%	1.0%	3.5%

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"

Q12. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department, where 5 is "strongly agree" and 1 is "strongly disagree." (without "don't know")

(N=305)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q12-1. I am aware of parks, facilities & events that are offered	15.7%	36.7%	23.2%	14.2%	10.1%
Q12-2. I am satisfied with recreation opportunities I receive for my tax dollars	10.1%	34.8%	31.2%	13.4%	10.5%
Q12-3. I am satisfied with variety of parks, facilities & events Town offers	11.6%	28.7%	33.9%	18.7%	7.2%
Q12-4. Recreation & parks is an essential service to Town	47.6%	36.4%	9.5%	2.9%	3.6%
Q12-5. Public parks add to quality of life in community	62.8%	29.2%	5.8%	1.1%	1.1%

Q13. Please indicate how willing you would be to do the following to support expanding or implementing Recreation and Parks facilities and programs in the Town of Elon.

(N=305)

	Very willing	Willing	Somewhat willing	Not willing	Don't know
Q13-1. Pay a slight increase in taxes to implement recreation programs in Town of Elon	17.0%	21.5%	22.8%	32.2%	6.6%
Q13-2. Pay an increase in taxes to support development of new recreation facilities in Town of Elon	16.3%	18.7%	24.9%	32.9%	7.3%
Q13-3. Volunteer to support recreation & parks programs	7.6%	15.9%	32.2%	33.9%	10.4%
Q13-4. Make donations to fund design & construction of new recreation & parks facilities in Town of Elon	6.2%	13.1%	25.3%	41.9%	13.5%
Q13-5. Pay a fee to attend or participate in Town of Elon sponsored recreational programs	11.1%	30.3%	24.0%	26.8%	7.7%

WITHOUT "DON'T KNOW"

Q13. Please indicate how willing you would be to do the following to support expanding or implementing Recreation and Parks facilities and programs in the Town of Elon. (without "don't know")

(N=305)

	Very willing	Willing	Somewhat willing	Not willing
Q13-1. Pay a slight increase in taxes to implement recreation programs in Town of Elon	18.1%	23.0%	24.4%	34.4%
Q13-2. Pay an increase in taxes to support development of new recreation facilities in Town of Elon	17.5%	20.1%	26.9%	35.4%
Q13-3. Volunteer to support recreation & parks programs	8.5%	17.8%	35.9%	37.8%
Q13-4. Make donations to fund design & construction of new recreation & parks facilities in Town of Elon	7.2%	15.2%	29.2%	48.4%
Q13-5. Pay a fee to attend or participate in Town of Elon sponsored recreational programs	12.1%	32.8%	26.0%	29.1%

Q14. Please CHECK ALL of the following organizations that provide the PARKS and FACILITIES that you and other members of your household use for recreation.

Q14. Organizations that provide parks & facilities you use for recreation	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	162	53.1 %
Schools	50	16.4 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	162	53.1 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	59	19.3 %
Alamance County Recreation	73	23.9 %
State or Federal parks	116	38.0 %
Non-profit organizations	26	8.5 %
Private clubs	38	12.5 %
Fitness centers	75	24.6 %
Churches or other religious organizations	94	30.8 %
Other	31	10.2 %
None of these	48	15.7 %
Total	934	

Q14. Please CHECK ALL of the following organizations that provide the PARKS and FACILITIES that you and other members of your household use for recreation. (without "none of these")

Q14. Organizations that provide parks & facilities you use for recreation	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	162	63.0 %
Schools	50	19.5 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	162	63.0 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	59	23.0 %
Alamance County Recreation	73	28.4 %
State or Federal parks	116	45.1 %
Non-profit organizations	25	9.7 %
Private clubs	38	14.8 %
Fitness centers	75	29.2 %
Churches or other religious organizations	94	36.6 %
Other	31	12.1 %
Total	885	

Q14-7. Non-profit organizations:

<u>Q14-7. Non-profit organizations</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
YMCA	7	46.7 %
Elon University	1	6.7 %
Elon University, YMCA	1	6.7 %
Private schools	1	6.7 %
Twin Lakes	1	6.7 %
Children's museum	1	6.7 %
Twin Lakes Community	1	6.7 %
Stair walks	1	6.7 %
Elm Community Church	1	6.7 %
Total	15	100.0 %

Q14-8. Private clubs:

<u>Q14-8. Private clubs</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Old Forest Racquetball Club	9	52.9 %
Gibsonville Swim & Racquet	1	5.9 %
Alamance Country Club	2	11.8 %
POOL	1	5.9 %
Graham Pool	1	5.9 %
Lee Bros Tks	1	5.9 %
Burlington Soccer Club	1	5.9 %
Ultimate Gym	1	5.9 %
Total	17	100.0 %

Q14-9. Fitness centers:

<u>Q14-9. Fitness centers</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
YMCA	8	24.2 %
The Edge	6	18.2 %
Gold's Gym	5	15.2 %
Planet Fitness	2	6.1 %
Gold's Gym, Burlington Better Yoga	1	3.0 %
The Edge Health & Fitness, Super Fit	1	3.0 %
Almance Country Club	1	3.0 %
Work facility	1	3.0 %
Twin Lakes	1	3.0 %
Elon University, YMCA	1	3.0 %
Gold's gym, The Edge	1	3.0 %
Complete Fitness	1	3.0 %
Local private gym	1	3.0 %
Elon Hair	1	3.0 %
Feel Better Yoga	1	3.0 %
Peak Performance	1	3.0 %
Total	33	100.0 %

Q14-11 Other:

<u>Q14-11. Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Elon University	7	23.3 %
Twin Lakes	5	16.7 %
Twin Lakes Community	2	6.7 %
YMCA	2	6.7 %
Elon College	1	3.3 %
Guilford County Lake Mackintosh	1	3.3 %
Alamance libraries	1	3.3 %
Blakey Hall Hamlet	1	3.3 %
Futbolfit (indoor soccer)	1	3.3 %
Gibsonville Swim & Racquet Club	1	3.3 %
Elon University track, Olde Forest Racquetball Club	1	3.3 %
Greensboro R&P	1	3.3 %
Mebane R&P	1	3.3 %
YMCA in Burlington	1	3.3 %
Facilities of retirement community	1	3.3 %
Saxaphaw Haw River	1	3.3 %
Senior citizen retirement community	1	3.3 %
Joe Davidson Park	1	3.3 %
Total	30	100.0 %

Q15. Of the organizations listed in Question 14, which ONE do you USE MOST for your household's recreation needs?

Q15. Which organization do you use most	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	38	14.8 %
Schools	6	2.3 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	57	22.2 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	7	2.7 %
Alamance County Recreation	10	3.9 %
State or Federal parks	18	7.0 %
Non-profit organizations	8	3.1 %
Private clubs	14	5.4 %
Fitness centers	38	14.8 %
Churches or other religious organizations	20	7.8 %
Other	17	6.6 %
None chosen	24	9.3 %
Total	257	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NONE CHOSEN"

Q15. Of the organizations listed in Question 14, which ONE do you USE MOST for your household's recreation needs? (without "none chosen")

Q15. Which organization do you use most	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	38	16.3 %
Schools	6	2.6 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	57	24.5 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	7	3.0 %
Alamance County Recreation	10	4.3 %
State or Federal parks	18	7.7 %
Non-profit organizations	8	3.4 %
Private clubs	14	6.0 %
Fitness centers	38	16.3 %
Churches or other religious organizations	20	8.6 %
Other	17	7.3 %
Total	233	100.0 %

Q16. Please CHECK ALL of the following organizations that provide the RECREATION PROGRAMS that you and other members of your household use for recreation.

Q16. Organizations that provide recreation programs you use for recreation	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	87	28.5 %
Schools	44	14.4 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	98	32.1 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	38	12.5 %
Alamance County Recreation	42	13.8 %
State or Federal parks	49	16.1 %
Non-profit organizations	13	4.3 %
Private clubs	36	11.8 %
Fitness centers	57	18.7 %
Churches or other religious organizations	67	22.0 %
Other	24	7.9 %
None of these	44	14.4 %
Total	599	

WITHOUT "NONE OF THESE"

Q16. Please CHECK ALL of the following organizations that provide the RECREATION PROGRAMS that you and other members of your household use for recreation. (without "none of these")

Q16. Organizations that provide recreation programs you use for recreation	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	87	33.3 %
Schools	44	16.9 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	98	37.5 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	38	14.6 %
Alamance County Recreation	42	16.1 %
State or Federal parks	49	18.8 %
Non-profit organizations	13	5.0 %
Private clubs	36	13.8 %
Fitness centers	57	21.8 %
Churches or other religious organizations	67	25.7 %
Other	24	9.2 %
Total	555	

Q16-7. Non-profit organizations:

Q16-7. Non-profit organizations	Number	Percent
YMCA	5	55.6 %
Burlington Soccer Club	1	11.1 %
Twin Lakes	1	11.1 %
Alamance libraries	1	11.1 %
Twin Lakes Community	1	11.1 %
Total	9	100.0 %

Q16-8. Private clubs:

Q16-8. Private clubs	Number	Percent
Old Forest Racquetball Club	7	46.7 %
Alamance Country Club	2	13.3 %
Edge Gym	1	6.7 %
Lee's White Tiger	1	6.7 %
Gibsonville Swim & Racquet	1	6.7 %
Elon University	1	6.7 %
Lee Bros Tkd	1	6.7 %
Burlington Soccer Club, Old Forrest Racquetball Club	1	6.7 %
Total	15	100.0 %

Q16-9. Fitness centers:

Q16-9. Fitness centers	Number	Percent
The Edge	6	27.3 %
YMCA	4	18.2 %
Gold's Gym	2	9.1 %
Feel Better YOGA	2	9.1 %
Gold's Gym, Burlington Better YOGA	1	4.5 %
Gold's Gym in Burlington	1	4.5 %
Om Shanti YOGA, Feel Better YOGA	1	4.5 %
Twin Lakes	1	4.5 %
YOGA Studio	1	4.5 %
Complete Fitness	1	4.5 %
Local private gym	1	4.5 %
Elon Hair	1	4.5 %
Total	22	100.0 %

Q16-11 Other:

<u>Q16-11. Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Twin Lakes	4	17.4 %
YMCA	3	13.0 %
Elon University	2	8.7 %
Greensboro Aquatic Center, Competitive Swimming	1	4.3 %
Blakey Hall Hamlet	1	4.3 %
Bowling center	1	4.3 %
Alamance Arts Council	1	4.3 %
Twin Lakes Community	1	4.3 %
Futbolfit	1	4.3 %
Mebane R&P	1	4.3 %
YMCA in Burlington	1	4.3 %
Facilities of retirement community	1	4.3 %
Saxaphaw/Haw River kayaking	1	4.3 %
Elon Hair	1	4.3 %
Senior citizen retirement community	1	4.3 %
Joe Davidson Park	1	4.3 %
Cub Scouts	1	4.3 %
Total	23	100.0 %

Q17. Of the organizations listed in Question 16, which ONE do you USE MOST for your household's recreation needs?

Q17. Which organization do you use most	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	31	11.9 %
Schools	5	1.9 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	33	12.6 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	17	6.5 %
Alamance County Recreation	6	2.3 %
State or Federal parks	12	4.6 %
Non-profit organizations	4	1.5 %
Private clubs	14	5.4 %
Fitness centers	35	13.4 %
Churches or other religious organizations	25	9.6 %
Other	19	7.3 %
None chosen	60	23.0 %
Total	261	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NONE CHOSEN"

Q17. Of the organizations listed in Question 16, which ONE do you USE MOST for your household's recreation needs? (without "none chosen")

Q17. Which organization do you use most	Number	Percent
Town of Elon Recreation & Parks	31	15.4 %
Schools	5	2.5 %
Burlington Recreation & Parks	33	16.4 %
Gibsonville Parks & Recreation	17	8.5 %
Alamance County Recreation	6	3.0 %
State or Federal parks	12	6.0 %
Non-profit organizations	4	2.0 %
Private clubs	14	7.0 %
Fitness centers	35	17.4 %
Churches or other religious organizations	25	12.4 %
Other	19	9.5 %
Total	201	100.0 %

Q18. Within the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or members of your household used any Town of Elon parks and facilities to achieve personal health outcomes?

Q18. How often have you used any Town of Elon parks & facilities to achieve personal health outcomes within past 12 months

	Number	Percent
Have not used parks or facilities	89	29.2 %
Every couple of months	56	18.4 %
Once a month	12	3.9 %
A few times a month	25	8.2 %
Once a week	7	2.3 %
2-3 times a week	11	3.6 %
Not provided	105	34.4 %
Total	305	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q18. Within the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or members of your household used any Town of Elon parks and facilities to achieve personal health outcomes? (without "not provided")

Q18. How often have you used any Town of Elon parks & facilities to achieve personal health outcomes within past 12 months

	Number	Percent
Have not used parks or facilities	89	44.5 %
Every couple of months	56	28.0 %
Once a month	12	6.0 %
A few times a month	25	12.5 %
Once a week	7	3.5 %
2-3 times a week	11	5.5 %
Total	200	100.0 %

Q19. Please indicate if you have a desire to use Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department parks and facilities to meet your health and wellness needs.

(N=305)

	Yes	No
Q19-1. Physical health	51.5%	48.5%
Q19-2. Mental health	21.3%	78.7%
Q19-3. Social health	25.2%	74.8%
Q19-4. Spiritual health	12.8%	87.2%
Q19-5. Intellectual health	17.0%	83.0%
Q19-6. Environmental health	24.6%	75.4%
Q19-7. Occupational health	7.2%	92.8%

Q19. If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?

(N=166)

	Fully met	Mostly met	Partly met	Not met
Q19-1. Physical health	4.9%	21.8%	45.8%	27.5%
Q19-2. Mental health	1.8%	24.6%	50.9%	22.8%
Q19-3. Social health	1.5%	18.5%	49.2%	30.8%
Q19-4. Spiritual health	3.2%	32.3%	38.7%	25.8%
Q19-5. Intellectual health	7.0%	11.6%	32.6%	48.8%
Q19-6. Environmental health	3.0%	25.8%	50.0%	21.2%
Q19-7. Occupational health	5.6%	11.1%	61.1%	22.2%

Q20. Including yourself, how many people in your household are...

	Mean	Sum
Under age 5	0.1	28
Ages 5-9	0.1	39
Ages 10-14	0.1	40
Ages 15-19	0.1	26
Ages 20-24	0.1	34
Ages 25-34	0.2	57
Ages 35-44	0.4	111
Ages 45-54	0.4	112
Ages 55-64	0.4	124
Ages 65-74	0.2	65
Ages 75+	0.2	73

Q21. What is your age?

Q21. Your age	Number	Percent
18-34	51	16.7 %
35-44	62	20.3 %
45-54	55	18.0 %
55-64	63	20.7 %
65+	68	22.3 %
Not provided	6	2.0 %
Total	305	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q21. What is your age? (without "not provided")**

Q21. Your age	Number	Percent
18-34	51	17.1 %
35-44	62	20.7 %
45-54	55	18.4 %
55-64	63	21.1 %
65+	68	22.7 %
Total	299	100.0 %

Q22. Approximately how many years have you lived in the Town of Elon?

Q22. How many years have you lived in Town of

Elon	Number	Percent
0-5	104	34.1 %
6-10	36	11.8 %
11-15	40	13.1 %
16-20	31	10.2 %
21-30	40	13.1 %
31+	43	14.1 %
Not provided	11	3.6 %
Total	305	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q22. Approximately how many years have you lived in the Town of Elon? (without "not provided")**

Q22. How many years have you lived in Town of

Elon	Number	Percent
0-5	104	35.4 %
6-10	36	12.2 %
11-15	40	13.6 %
16-20	31	10.5 %
21-30	40	13.6 %
31+	43	14.6 %
Total	294	100.0 %

Q23. Your gender:

<u>Q23. Your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	149	48.9 %
Female	155	50.8 %
Not provided	1	0.3 %
Total	305	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q23. Your gender: (without "not provided")**

<u>Q23. Your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	149	49.0 %
Female	155	51.0 %
Total	304	100.0 %

Q24. Please CHECK ALL of the following that best describe your race/ethnicity.

<u>Q24. Your race/ethnicity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Asian/Pacific Islander	6	2.0 %
Asian (Indian Sub-Continent)	4	1.3 %
African American/Black	27	8.9 %
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	1.0 %
Hispanic/Latino	9	3.0 %
White (not Hispanic)	267	87.5 %
Other	3	1.0 %
Total	319	

Q24-7. Other

<u>Q24-7. Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Mixed	2	66.7 %
Black & Asian	1	33.3 %
Total	3	100.0 %

Section 5

Survey Instrument



Town of Elon

104 S. Williamson Ave. • P.O. Box 595 • Elon, NC 27244

Phone: 336-584-3601 • Fax: 336.584.5334

www.elonnc.com

July 17, 2018

Dear Town of Elon Resident,

Your response to the enclosed survey is extremely important.

The Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department strives to meet the recreational needs of our community. To continue meeting this goal, the Town is creating its first Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan, which will guide the development of the town's parks, facilities, and programs over the next 10 years. The most important part of this planning process is gathering input about Elon residents' recreation needs and wants.

Your household was one of a limited number selected at random to receive this survey. It is very important that we have your participation!

We appreciate your time.

This survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete and each question is important. The time you invest in completing this survey will aid the Town in taking a resident-driven approach to making decisions that will enrich the future of our community and positively affect the lives of residents.

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

We have selected ETC Institute, an independent consulting company, as our partner to administer this survey. They will compile the data received and present the results to the Town.

Your responses will remain confidential.

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope addressed to ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061.

The survey is a tool that will benefit all residents. Please take this opportunity to have your voice heard. If you have any questions, please contact me at rwhite@ci.elon.nc.us. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Richard J. White III
Town Manager

2018 Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Survey

Your input will be used to assess community recreation and parks needs and priorities for the Town of Elon. If you prefer, you may complete the survey on-line at www.elonsurvey.org.



1. Please indicate if you have a need for each of the following recreation facilities or amenities by circling either "Yes" or "No." If "Yes," answer the question in the shaded area to the right.

Facilities and Amenities	Do you have a need for this facility or amenity?		If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?			
	Yes	No	Fully Met	Mostly Met	Partly Met	Not Met
01. Baseball and softball fields	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
02. Basketball courts (indoor)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
03. Canoe/Kayak rentals	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
04. Classroom/Meeting/Event space	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
05. Climbing wall	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
06. Community gardens	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
07. Cricket fields	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
08. Disc golf course	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
09. Dog park	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
10. Greenway trail system	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
11. Indoor turf field	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
12. Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
13. Multipurpose fields (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
14. Multi-use gym space (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
15. Natural trails	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
16. Outdoor amphitheatres	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
17. Outdoor fitness and exercise equipment	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
18. Pickleball courts	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
19. Picnic shelters	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
20. Pier/Fishing	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
21. Playground	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
22. Sand volleyball courts (outdoor)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
23. Senior center	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
24. Skate park/BMX	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
25. Splash pad	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
26. Track (indoor)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
27. Track (outdoor)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
28. Volleyball courts (indoor)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
29. Water access (e.g. boating, kayaking, canoeing)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
30. Other: _____	Yes	No	4	3	2	1

2. Which FOUR of the facilities or amenities from the list in Question 1 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household? [Write in your answers below using the item numbers from the list in Question 1, or circle "NONE."]

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

3. Please indicate if you have a desire to participate in each of the following recreation programs or activities by circling either "Yes" or "No." If "Yes," answer the question in the shaded area to the right.

Programs and Activities	Do you have a desire to participate in this activity?		If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?			
	Yes	No	Fully Met	Mostly Met	Partly Met	Not Met
01. Action sports (e.g. skateboarding, BMX)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
02. Art, dance, performing arts	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
03. Adult fitness and wellness programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
04. Adult sports programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
05. Afterschool programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
06. Aquatic programs (e.g. swim lessons, fitness)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
07. Baseball	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
08. Basketball	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
09. Cheerleading	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
10. Disc golf	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
11. Life skills programs/education (e.g. cooking, budgeting)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
12. Environmental education	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
13. Flag football	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
14. Tackle football	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
15. Music lessons/classes	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
16. Outdoor adventure programs (e.g. canoeing, camping)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
17. Outdoor music/concerts	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
18. Pickleball	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
19. Pre-School programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
20. Special needs programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
21. Senior citizen programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
22. Soccer	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
23. Softball	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
24. Special events/family festivals	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
25. Swimming	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
26. Youth and teen fitness and wellness programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
27. Youth and teen sports programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
28. Youth and teen summer camp programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
29. Volleyball	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
30. Other: _____	Yes	No	4	3	2	1

4. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to YOUTH (under age 18) in your household? [Write in your answers below using the item numbers from the list in Question 3, or circle "NONE." If you do not have youth in your household, circle "No Youth in Household."]

1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ 4th: ____ NONE No Youth in Household

5. Which FOUR of the programs and activities listed in Question 3 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to ADULT (aged 18 and above) members of your household? [Write in your answers below using the item numbers from the list in Question 3, or circle "NONE."]

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

6. Please CHECK ALL of the following Town of Elon parks and facilities that you or other members of your household have used in the past 12 months.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Beth Schmidt Park | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Reservable picnic shelter at Lawrence Slade Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Lawrence Slade Park | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Elon Dog Park - K9 Corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Heritage Place Community Center at Beth Schmidt Park | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Any reservable picnic shelter at Beth Schmidt Park | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) None of the above [Skip to Q7.] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Reservable Gazebo at Beth Schmidt Park | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Loy Homestead Garden at Beth Schmidt Park | |

6a. In the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or members of your household visited any Town of Elon parks or facilities?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Every couple of months | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) A few times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) 2-3 times a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Once a week | |

6b. Which THREE parks or facilities do you visit or reserve MOST OFTEN?

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

7. In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household participated in any special events offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department?

- (1) Yes [Answer Q7a.] (2) No [Skip to Q8.]

7a. How would you rate the overall quality of special events that you and members of your household have participated in?

- (1) Excellent (2) Good (3) Fair (4) Poor

8. From the following list, please CHECK ALL of the ways you learn about Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department parks, facilities and special events.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Banners in public places | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Town newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Bulletin boards | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Conversation with staff | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Search engine (e.g. Google, Yahoo, Bing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Direct email | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Word of mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Town of Elon Recreation and Parks website | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Recreation and Parks brochure | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) None of these |

9. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons that you and members of your household use the parks and facilities offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Park or facility offered | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Good customer service by staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Safety of parks and facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Facility operating hours are convenient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Facilities have the right amenities | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Availability of parking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Facilities are well maintained | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Improved physical fitness and health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Close to our home/residence | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Socializing/Meeting people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Enjoyment of the outdoors | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Fees are affordable | <input type="checkbox"/> (14) None; I do not use parks or recreation facilities |

10. Please CHECK ALL of the following reasons that may prevent you or other members of your household from using the parks and facilities offered by the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department (or, if you currently use them, what prevents you from using them more often)?

- (01) Cost of participation
- (02) Facilities are too far from home
- (03) Inconvenient hours of operation
- (04) Lack of cleanliness
- (05) Lack of disabled access
- (06) Lack of information/don't know what is offered
- (07) Lack of maintenance
- (08) Lack of parking
- (09) Information is only available in English
- (10) Not enough time/too busy
- (11) Not interested in what is provided
- (12) Overcrowding
- (13) Safety at facilities
- (14) Other: _____
- (15) Nothing; I am actively using the Town's parks and facilities

11. From the following list of potential indoor facilities that could be added or expanded, please CHECK ALL of the ones you or members of your household would use.

- (01) Walking and jogging track
- (02) Arts and crafts studio
- (03) Aerobics/Fitness/Dance class space
- (04) Space for teens
- (05) Weight room/cardiovascular equip. area
- (06) Leisure pool (e.g. water slides, sprays)
- (07) Child care area
- (08) Exercise facility for adults 50+ years
- (09) Rock climbing/bouldering wall
- (10) Indoor soccer/lacrosse
- (11) Multi-court gymnasium/field house
- (12) Classroom space
- (13) Space for meetings, parties, banquets
- (14) Indoor tennis
- (15) Nature center
- (16) Performing arts (e.g. music, drama)
- (17) Senior center
- (18) Other: _____

12. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department, where 5 is "Strongly Agree" and 1 is "Strongly Disagree."

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1.	I am aware of the parks, facilities and events that are offered	5	4	3	2	1	9
2.	I am satisfied with recreation opportunities I receive for my tax dollars	5	4	3	2	1	9
3.	I am satisfied with the variety of parks, facilities and events the Town offers	5	4	3	2	1	9
4.	Recreation and parks is an essential service to the Town	5	4	3	2	1	9
5.	Public parks add to the quality of life in the community	5	4	3	2	1	9

13. Please indicate how willing you would be to do the following to support expanding or implementing Recreation and Parks facilities and programs in the Town of Elon.

How willing would you be to...		Very Willing	Willing	Somewhat Willing	Not Willing	Don't Know
1.	Pay a slight increase in taxes to implement recreation programs in the Town of Elon	4	3	2	1	9
2.	Pay an increase in taxes to support the development of new recreation facilities in the Town of Elon	4	3	2	1	9
3.	Volunteer to support recreation and parks programs	4	3	2	1	9
4.	Make donations to fund the design and construction of new recreation and parks facilities in the Town of Elon	4	3	2	1	9
5.	Pay a fee to attend or participate in Town of Elon sponsored recreational programs	4	3	2	1	9

14. Please CHECK ALL of the following organizations that provide the PARKS and FACILITIES that you and other members of your household use for recreation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Town of Elon Recreation and Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Non-profit organizations: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Schools | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Private clubs: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Burlington Recreation and Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Fitness centers: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Gibsonville Parks and Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Churches or other religious organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Alamance County Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) State or Federal Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) None of these [Skip to Q20.] |

15. Of the organizations listed in Question 14, which ONE do you USE MOST for your household's recreation needs? [Write in your answer below using the numbers from the list in Question 14.]

Organization used most: _____

16. Please CHECK ALL of the following organizations that provide the RECREATION PROGRAMS that you and other members of your household use for recreation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Town of Elon Recreation and Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Non-profit organizations: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Schools | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Private clubs: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Burlington Recreation and Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Fitness centers: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Gibsonville Parks and Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Churches or other religious organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Alamance County Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) State or Federal Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) None of these [Skip to Q20.] |

17. Of the organizations listed in Question 16, which ONE do you USE MOST for your household's recreation needs? [Write-in your answer below using the numbers from the list in Question 16.]

Organization used most: _____

18. Within the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or members of your household used any Town of Elon parks and facilities to achieve personal health outcomes?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Have not used the parks or facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Once a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Every couple of months | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) A few times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) 2-3 times a week |

19. Please indicate if you have a desire to use Town of Elon Recreation and Parks Department parks and facilities to meet your health and wellness needs by circling either "Yes" or "No." If "Yes," answer the question in the shaded area to the right.

Elements of Health and Wellness	Do you desire using recreation and parks resources to meet this need?		If "Yes," how well are your needs being met?			
	Yes	No	Fully Met	Mostly Met	Partly Met	Not Met
1. Physical health	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
2. Mental health	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
3. Social health	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
4. Spiritual health	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
5. Intellectual health	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
6. Environmental health	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
7. Occupational health	Yes	No	4	3	2	1

Demographics

20. Including yourself, how many people in your household are...

Under age 5: _____ Ages 15-19: _____ Ages 35-44: _____ Ages 65-74: _____
 Ages 5-9: _____ Ages 20-24: _____ Ages 45-54: _____ Ages 75+: _____
 Ages 10-14: _____ Ages 25-34: _____ Ages 55-64: _____

21. What is your age? _____ years**22. Approximately how many years have you lived in the Town of Elon? [Write "0" if less than one year.]**
_____ years**23. Your gender:** _____(1) Male _____(2) Female**24. Please CHECK ALL of the following that best describe your race/ethnicity.**

____(1) Asian/Pacific Islander _____(5) Hispanic/Latino
 ____ (2) Asian (Indian Sub-Continent) _____(6) White (not Hispanic)
 ____ (3) African American/Black _____(7) Other: _____
 ____ (4) American Indian/Alaskan Native

25. If you would like to receive future information regarding the Town of Elon Recreation and Parks, or updates on the Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Plan, please provide your contact information below.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

This concludes the survey – Thank you for your time!

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope addressed to:
 ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061

Your responses will remain completely confidential. The information printed to the right will ONLY be used to help identify unmet needs for leisure and recreation services in our community. If your address is not correct, please provide the correct information. Thank you!



TOWN OF ELON

FUNDING STRATEGIES APPENDIX

2019



**FUNDING SOURCES FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT DOLLARS AND OPERATING COSTS:**

The following financial options outline opportunities to consider in supporting the capital improvements as well as operational costs associated with managing the system for the future. Many of these funding sources may not be allowed or have never been used but should be pursued through legislative means should the Department see the value in pursuing these funding sources.

General Obligation Bond: A general obligation bond is a municipal bond secured by a taxing authority to improve public assets that benefits the municipal agency involved that oversee some of the parks and recreation facilities in the city. General Obligation Bonds are a tool used by local governments to borrow money. The bonds are guaranteed by the governing body's full faith and credit and backed by property tax revenues. Departments can use revenue generated from the sale of general obligation bonds to fund a park project and repay the bonds and interest with future property tax revenue.

General Obligation Bonds should be considered for park and recreation facility projects; such as an update to Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks, trails, recreation centers, aquatic centers, or a sports complexes. Improvements to parks should also be covered by these funding sources because there are very little operational revenues associated with these parks to draw from and some of the parks improvements are in need of upgrades and renovations limiting the uses of other revenue sources. These parks help frame the image and benefit to a wide age segment of users and updating these parks will benefit the community as a whole and stabilize neighborhoods and other areas. This has to be viewed as an economic impact improvement to stabilize neighborhoods and invite people to live in these neighborhoods because of the quality of parks in their neighborhood. If the parks are maintained to a higher level than the neighborhood it raises the value of property. If parks are maintained below the level of existing homes in the neighborhood it will bring the property values down.

Independent Municipal Corporations like a Facility Authority can issue debt up to 2% of the debt limit of the city in most states for bond funding. This opportunity is subject to approval of city council.

Local Option Income Tax for Public Safety- Many cities in Ohio has used this funding source to help support law enforcement in parks and in their city. Other cities have incorporated this option and moved dollars related to this funding source to support park infrastructure in their parks in Ohio.

Economic Impact Income Tax- EDIT Funds. These funds are used to support economic impact projects in parks in many cities. This may be an opportunity to create this funding source for park related economic improvements related to parks.

Levy on Property Tax: Public agencies around the country receive funding through property tax revenues. State laws vary on how these funds can be used- rather applied to operating cost or capital investments.



Special Purpose Levies: Public agencies, including parks can receive funding through a tax levy designated to a specific purpose and generally for a limited period of time. This could be a one-time, special purpose levy implemented for a limited time period.

Recreation and Park Impact Fees: implementing a recreation impact fee if the Department wanted to pursue these funds from developers. Impact fees generally provide some capital funds but rarely are they sufficient to provide full funding of large projects.

Internal Park Improvement Fund: This funding source is created from a percentage of the overall park admissions to attractions such as sport complexes, golf courses, aquatic centers, fieldhouses or special events in a park and would allow a percentage usually in the 3-5% of gross revenues to be dedicate to the park or recreation facility for existing and future capital improvements. This type of user fee does not require voter approval but is set up in a dedicated fund to support the existing park for future capital, maintenance and improvements.

Tax Increment Finance District: Commonly used for financing redevelopment projects. A Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) involves the issuance of tax-exempt bonds to pay front-end infrastructure and eligible development costs in partnership with private developers that are considered Quality of Life improvements that capture increases in property tax revenue within a designated geographic area and allocates it for a specific public purpose. TIF revenue has been used towards park acquisition, maintenance, and improvements in certain cities. As redevelopment occurs, the "tax increment" resulting from redevelopment projects is used to retire the debt issued to fund the eligible redevelopment costs. The public portion of the redevelopment project funds itself using the additional taxes generated by the project. TIFs can be used to fund park improvements and development as an essential infrastructure cost. These funds would work well in the downtown park redevelopment and in trail development.

Sales Tax: Some cities and states allocate a percentage of local or state-wide sales taxes specifically for parks. A general sales tax applies to a broad base of goods, which means that "a substantial amount of revenue can be generated with a relative low tax rate. This keeps the burden on household's low. This has been used in Texas to fund Texas State Parks from the sale of outdoor recreation equipment and in other states to fund trails and city-wide improvements.

Developer Cash-in-Lieu of meeting the Open Space Requirement: Ordinances requiring the dedication of open space within developments to meet the park and recreation needs of the new residents often have provisions allowing cash contribution to substitute for the land requirement.

Park Land Dedication Fee: A park land dedication fee requires that a portion of any housing or commercial/industrial development be dedicated to public use, in the form of parks, recreation facilities, playgrounds, etc. Alternatively, the development may pay cash in lieu of a land dedication, which would be put in a special fund and used for future park acquisition.



Business Improvement District: The public private partnership collects additional taxes from business within a designated area. The fees are used for public projects, based on the notion that a well maintained public space will increase commerce for local businesses. Generally used in downtown areas, a Business Improvement District is a useful strategy for pooling revenue to support a common goal. BID funding is managed by a nonprofit corporation created through the city. This BID district can help support downtown parks as well.

Impact Development Fees: Impact Development Fees are one-time fees assessed on residential or commercial development based on the theory that growth pays for growth. Revenue generated from impact fees are allocated towards public infrastructure, including parks. This is a major source of funding for many fast-developing communities.

Facility Authority: A Facility Authority is sometimes used by park and recreation agencies to improve a specific park or develop a specific improvement such as a stadium, large recreation center, large aquatic center, or sports venue for competitive events. Repayment of bonds to fund the project usually comes from a sales tax in the form of food and beverage. A facility Authority could oversee improvements for the large facilities; such as an aquatic center and sports field complex. The Department could seek out a private developer to design build a field house facility for Parks and Recreation by paying back these costs over a 20-year period through the facility authority. The Facility Authority could include representation from the schools, the city/town and private developers.

Utility Lease Fee: Utility lease fees have been used to support parks in the form of utility companies supporting a park from utility easements, storm water runoff and paying for development rights below the ground. This funding source is derived from fees on property owned based on measures such as the amount of impervious surfacing as well as fees from utility companies having access through the park. It is used by many cities to acquire and develop greenways and other open space resources that provide improvements in the park or development of trails. Improvements can include trails, drainage areas, and retention ponds that serve multiple purposes such as recreation, environmental protection, and storm water management. This could be a source for the utilities to make a contribution to support the parks and trails in the future. This has been very successful in Houston along their bayous and in King County Washington.

Transient Occupancy Tax: This funding source is used by many cities and counties to fund improvements to parks from hotels that benefit from the parks in the form of sporting events or entertainment where participants stay in hotels when they use city or county owned sports complexes or competitive facilities. The Transient Occupancy Taxes are typically set at 3-5% on the value of a hotel room a 1% sales tax that can be dedicated for park and recreation improvement purposes as well. Because of the value that parks could provide in the way of events, sports, entertainment and cultural events, hotels in the area that benefit could be set up with a portion of their occupancy funds going to support park and recreation related improvements. Tracking the economic value back to the hotels is important to build trust with the hotel business community.



Food and Beverage Tax: These dollars can come from the local community as well as visitors to help pay for a bond to finance future park and recreation related improvements. Food and Beverage Taxes are very well accepted in most communities. Many park and recreation agencies have a 1% food and beverage tax to support land acquisition across the country.

Special Service District: Many cities have moved parks and recreation services to a Special District especially in Ohio, Illinois, California and Oregon. Businesses and property owners within a designated area can request that a city authorize a Special Service District. Within the district, property owners and businesses pay a service charge that is used for special services, such as park improvements for operations and maintenance.

Capital Improvement Fee: A capital improvement fee can be added to an admission fee to a recreation facility or park attraction to help pay back the cost of developing or updating the facility or attraction. This fee is usually applied to golf courses, aquatic facilities, recreation centers, stadiums, amphitheatres, and special use facilities such as sports complexes. The funds generated can be used either to pay back the cost of the capital improvement on a revenue bond that was used to develop or redevelop the facility. Capital improvement fees normally are \$5 per person for playing on the improved site or can be collected as a parking fee or admission fee.

Capitalizing Maintenance Costs: Levies and bonds for new projects do not always account for the ongoing maintenance and operations funding that these projects will require. By capitalizing maintenance costs, cities include those anticipated costs into the specific levy or bond proposal and then set the funding aside in an endowment to cover the future costs.

Lease Back: Lease backs are a source of capital funding in which a private sector entity such as a development company buys the park land site or leases the park land and develops a facility such as a park, recreation attraction, recreation center, pool, or sports complex; and leases the facility back to the municipality to pay off the capital costs over a 20 to 30-year period. This approach takes advantage of the efficiencies of private sector development while relieving the burden on the municipality to raise upfront capital funds. This funding source is typically used for recreation and aquatic type facilities, stadiums, civic buildings, and fire stations.

Capital Improvement Fund Purpose: The purpose of the Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Fund is to allow for the collection of fees, donations, and revenue from vending machines, and to allow for depositing those fees, donations, revenues from vending machines in the fund for the purpose of future land acquisition or specific capital improvements as may be deemed necessary for future improvement or expansion of the Parks Department.

Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Fund: Fees, donations, and revenue from vending machines established. Fees may be established and collected by the Park and Recreation Board for particular special events held on park property as the Board may deem necessary for that specific event. Private organizations who hold their event on park property and who charge admission for the event shall



donate a portion of those charges to The Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Fund. Revenue from all vending machines placed on park property and accessible to the public shall be placed in the fund.

Partnerships: Most do not have equitable agreements for how the partnership is financed. Establishing policies for public/public partnerships, public/not-for-private partnerships and public private partnerships needs to be established with measurable outcomes for each partner involved. The Departments can gain a lot of operational monies back to the department if they can manage their partnerships in a more equitable manner.

Land Leases/Concessions: Land leases and concessions are public/private partnerships in which the municipality provides land or space for private commercial operations that will enhance the park and recreational experience in exchange for payments to help reduce operating costs. They can range from food service restaurant operations to retail operations on city owned property such as marinas and bait shops. Leases usually pay back to the city a percentage of the value of the land each year in the 15% category and a percentage of gross from the restaurant or retail attraction. They also pay sales tax and employee income taxes to the city which supports the overall government system in the city.

Admission to the Park: Many park and recreation systems in the United States have admission fees on a per car, per bike and per person basis to access a park that can be used to help support operational costs. Car costs range from \$3 to \$5 a car and \$2 dollars a bicycle or \$2 dollars a person. This is occurring in many park and recreation systems especially at large regional parks. This would really only apply to regional parks or special use sports complexes in city if it is considered. This fee may be useful for large events and festivals that have the capability to be set up as a fee based park at least on weekends.

Parking Fee: Many parks that do not charge an admission fee will charge a parking fee. Parking rates range from \$3 to \$4 dollars a day. This funding source could work for helping to support special events, festivals and tournaments. City and County park systems in Florida and Maryland charge parking fees for beaches, sports complexes and special event sites. They also have parking meters in parks to support the system or individual park and this could be applied to some parks that have high levels of people parking for free in city parks and going to work close by.

User Fees: User fees are fees paid by a user of recreational facilities or programs to offset the costs of services provided by Departments in operating a park, a recreation facility or in delivering programs and services. A perception of "value" has to be instilled in the community by staff for what benefits the system is providing to the user. As the Department continues to develop new programs, all future fees should be charged based on cost recovery goals developed in a future Pricing Policy. The fees for the parks and/or core recreation services are based on the level of exclusivity the user receives compared to the general taxpayer. It is recommended that user fees for programs be charged at market rate for services to create value and operational revenue. For services that cannot move forward on adequate user fees to obtain the required cost recovery, consideration of contracting with a not-for-profit and/or private company to help offset service costs should be pursued. This would save the system dollars in



their operational budgets while still ensuring the community receives the service to keep the quality of life at a high standard.

Corporate Naming Rights: In this arrangement, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a park in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a ten-year period. The cost of the naming right is based on the impression points the facility or event will receive from the newspapers, TV, websites, and visitors or users to the park. Naming rights for park and recreation facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic facilities, stadiums, and events. Naming rights are a good use of outside revenue for parks, recreation facilities or special attractions.

Corporate Sponsorships: Corporations can also underwrite a portion or all of the cost of an event, program, or activity based on their name being associated with the service. Sponsorships typically are title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors. Many agencies seek corporate support for these types of activities.

Advertising Sales: on sports complexes, scoreboards, gym floors, trash cans, playgrounds, in locker rooms, at dog parks, along trails, flower pots, and as part of special events to help support operational costs have been an acceptable practice in parks and recreation systems for a long time and can support operational costs.

Maintenance Endowment Fund: This is a fund dedicated exclusively for a park's maintenance, funded by a percentage of user fees from programs, events, and rentals and is dedicated to protect the asset where the activity is occurring.

Park and Recreation Revenue Revolving Fund: This is a dedicated fund to be used for park purposes only that is replenished on an ongoing basis from various funding sources such as grants, sponsorships, advertising, program user fees and rental fees within the park system.

Permit Fees: This fee is incorporated for exclusive reservations for picnic shelters, sports fields, special events that are for competition tournaments by other organizations who make a profit off of the Department owned facilities. Permit fees include a base fee for all direct and indirect costs for the Department to provide the space on an exclusive basis plus a percentage of the gross for major special events and tournaments held on park owned permitted facilities. Alcohol permits should be explored and if determined worthwhile, added to these permits which would generate more dollars for these special use areas. These dollars could be applied to a Recreation and Park Revolving Fund to help support park improvements and operations in the future.

Tipping Fees: In Michigan some park systems get tipping fees collected at city/county owned landfills are redirected back to their parks systems to help pay for the cost of litter pick up in city and county parks.



Land Leases: Many communities across the United States have allowed land leases for commercial retail operations along trails as a source of funding. The communities that have used land leases look for retail operations that support the needs of recreation users of the trails. This includes coffee shops, grill and food concessions, small restaurants, ice cream shops, bicycle shops, farmer's markets and small local business. The land leases provide revenue to maintain the trails and/or to be used for in-kind matching. The City of Indianapolis has many concession leases along the 100+ miles of trails to support the operational costs of trails.

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



PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES

Hire a Grant Writer: There are many local and national grant writers who can help the system acquire local, state and national grants for a relatively low cost.

Business/Citizen Donations: Individual donations from corporations and citizens can be sought to support specific improvements and amenities. Crowd funding is used by many park and recreation agencies.

Exclusive Product Placement: Many cities have the official drink or food of parks and recreation, buying the right to be exclusively sold at kiosks and concession stands. They all pay for the right to be exclusive.

Private Foundation Funds: Nonprofit community foundations can be strong sources of support for The Departments and should be pursued for specific park and recreation amenities. This can come from a community foundation or a private foundation. Most large park systems have their own parks foundation as well.

Nonprofit Organizations: Nonprofit organizations can provide support for green space and parks in various ways. Examples include the following:

- > **Conservancy or Friends Organization:** This type of nonprofit is devoted to supporting a specific park like Centennial Park. These Park Conservancy's or Friends Groups are a major funding source for parks in the United States.
- > **Greenway Foundations:** Greenway foundations focus on developing and maintaining trails and green corridors on a County-wide basis. Departments could seek land leases along their trails as a funding source, in addition to selling miles of trails to community corporations and nonprofits. The development rights along the trails can also be sold to local utilities for water, sewer, fiber optic, and cable lines on a per mile basis to support development and management of these corridors. Some greenway foundations have created its own specific Greenway Trail license plate to help support the development and maintenance of trails.

Floodway Funding Sources: Many cities and counties have used floodway funding sources to support development and operations of greenways. This funding source is used extensively in Houston, Texas, and in Cleveland, Ohio for their park systems.

Greenway Trust Fund: Another strategy used by several communities is the creation of a trust fund for land acquisition and facility development that is administered by a private greenway advocacy group, or by a local greenway commission. A trust fund can aid in the acquisition of large parcels of high-priority properties that may be lost if not acquired by private sector initiative. Money may be contributed to the trust fund from a variety of sources, including the municipal and county general funds, private grants, and gifts.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



VOLUNTEER SOURCES

Adopt-an-Area of a Park: In this approach local neighborhood groups or businesses make a volunteer commitment to maintaining a specific area of a park. Adopt-an-Area of a Park arrangements are particularly well-suited for the Department.

Adopt-a-Trail: This is similar to Adopt-an-Area but involves sponsorship of a segment of a trail (e.g., one mile) for maintenance purposes.

Community Service Workers: Community service workers are assigned by the court to pay off some of their sentence through maintenance activities in parks, such as picking up litter, removing graffiti, and assisting in painting or fix up activities. Most workers are assigned 30 to 60 hours of work. This would seem to be a good opportunity for the parks to work with the sheriff's department on using community service workers.

VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE AND SMALL-SCALE DONATION PROGRAMS

Greenway Sponsors: A sponsorship program for greenway amenities allows for smaller donations to be received both from individuals and businesses. The program must be well planned and organized, with design standards and associated costs established for each amenity. Project elements that may be funded can include mile markers, call boxes, benches, trash receptacles, entry signage and bollards, and picnic areas.

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

**OPERATIONAL FUNDING COSTS OPPORTUNITIES**

The following are funding options to consider in operations of a system.

Concessions: Concessions can be leased out to a private operator for a percentage of gross profits. Typically, 15%-18% of gross profits for concessions of a profit operator, or a managing agency over a park site could manage concessions. This can include retail goods as well at golf pro-shops and tennis centers.

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

Field Permits: Department can issue recreational use permits for activities, practice or games. Permits should cover the operational cost of each field and management costs. If a private operator desires to rent the site for a sporting tournament for private gain, Departments should provide a permit fee plus a percentage of gross from the event for the exclusive use of the fields.

Reservation Fees: Reservation fees for picnic shelters, hospitality spaces and special use facilities are a great source of revenue for the system if priced correctly and include all operational and capital costs in the fee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



OTHER GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

Governmental Funding Programs: A variety of funding sources are available from federal and state government for park-related projects.

For example, the **Land and Water Conservation Fund** funding program has been reinstated for 2016 levels at 150 million and can provide capital funds to state and local governments to acquire, develop, and improve outdoor recreation areas. **Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** funds are used to support open space related improvements including redevelopment and new development of parks and recreation facilities. **Transportation Enhancement Funds** available through SAFETELU, the current approved federal transportation bill, can be used for trail and related green space development, **AmeriCorps Grants** can be used to fund support for park maintenance. These examples are outlined below:

SAFETULU Funds as well as Safe Routes to School Funds should be pursued for the trail improvements outlined in the plan as well and **Transportation Enhancement Funds**. **Transportation Enhancement Funds monies** require a 20% match and Safe Routes to School Funds require no match.

CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) funds are used by many cities and counties to enhance parks. These funds should be used to support the re-development of major facilities based on its location and what it will do to enhance the neighborhood and schools surrounding the park which is the purpose for CDBG monies.

AmeriCorps Grants should be pursued by the Parks Division to support park maintenance and cleanup of drainage areas where trails are located and small neighborhood parks.

Federal Housing Grants can also help support parks near federal housing areas and should be pursued if appropriate.

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

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

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



acres. The NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible projects to improve watershed protection, flood prevention, sedimentation control, public water-based fish and wildlife enhancements, and recreation planning. The NRCS requires a 50-percent local match for public recreation, and fish and wildlife projects.

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

Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program: A program of the NC Forest Service, the U&CF grant program funds projects which lead to a more effective management of urban and community forests, and improve public understanding of the benefits of preserving existing tree cover in communities. Funds are for creating new programs, expanding existing programs, assisting communities with meeting Tree City USA standards, etc. Grants open January 1 and close March 31. Attendance at an applicant workshop is required. Funds range from \$2,500 - \$15,000.

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

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

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

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



TOWN OF ELON

BEST PRACTICES APPENDIX

2019





VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

In developing the volunteer program, some best practices that the Town should be aware of in managing volunteers include:

- > 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.
- > Ensure volunteers are coordinated strategically through any Town departments using volunteers. This plan recommends the department continue to build volunteerism to serve marketing and communication efforts. Communicating with associated park staff to staying fully informed about the strategic direction of the agency overall, including strategic initiatives for all divisions. Periodically identify, evaluate, or revise specific tactics the volunteer services program should undertake to support the larger organizational mission.
- > Develop a good reward and recognition system to maintain the desirability of volunteerism in the agency. 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 Town function. Identify and summarize volunteer recognition policies in a Volunteer Policy document.
- > Update volunteer position descriptions regularly. Include an overview of the volunteer position lifecycle in the Volunteer Policy, including the procedure for creating a new position.
- > Add end-of-lifecycle process steps to the Volunteer Policy to ensure that there is formal documentation of resignation or termination of volunteers. Also include ways to monitor and track reasons for resignation/termination and perform exit interviews with outgoing volunteers when able.
- > In addition to number of volunteers and volunteer hours, categorize and track volunteerism by type and extent of work, such as:
 - **Regular volunteers:** Those volunteers whose work is considered to be continuous, provided their work performance is satisfactory and there is a continuing need for their services.
 - **Special event volunteers:** Volunteers who help out with a particular event with no expectation that they will return after the event is complete.
 - **Episodic volunteers:** Volunteers who help out with a particular project type on a recurring or irregular basis with no expectation that they will return for other duties.
 - **Volunteer interns:** Volunteers who have committed to work for the agency to fulfill a specific higher-level educational learning requirement.
 - **Community service volunteers:** Volunteers who are volunteering over a specified period of time to fulfill a community service requirement.



PARTNERSHIPS - GENERAL

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

- > Each partner will meet with or report to Department 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 Town-appointed lead, 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

PARTNERSHIPS - PUBLIC / PRIVATE

The recommended policies and practices for public/private partnerships that may include businesses, private groups, private associations, or individuals who desire to make a profit from use of Department 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 publicly-owned property, or who has a contract with the agency to provide a task or service on the agency'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, Town 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 Department.
- > As an outcome of the partnership, the Town 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



agency. The outcomes will include standards of quality, financial reports, customer satisfaction, payments to the agency, and overall coordination with the Town for the services rendered.

- > Depending on the level of investment made by the private contractor, the partnership agreement can be limited to months, a year or multiple years.
- > If applicable, the private contractor will provide a working management plan annually they will follow to ensure the outcomes desired by the Department. The management plan can and will be negotiated, if necessary. Monitoring of the management plan will be the responsibility of both partners. The agency 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 agency advisory or governing boards for renewal of a contract. Any such action will be cause for termination. All negotiations must be with the Town Manager.
- > The agency has the right to advertise for private contracted partnership services, or negotiate on an individual basis with a bid process based on the professional level of the service to be provided.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

FUNDRAISING:

- > Departments should consider establishing more park related Friends Groups, establishing a Park Foundation, or the development of a future Park Conservancy to help raise money for the system or a specific park as needs to continue grow. Example. Average park foundations in cities the size of Nashville typically raise 4-5 million a year for the parks system they represent. Some cities also create Park Conservancy's for a specific large park or attraction. Example: The city of St. Louis has a Park Conservancy for Forest Park called Forest Park Forever that has raised over 200 million dollars for updating Forest Park and it manages elements of the park on a yearly basis to keep their investment working for the long term. They raise on average approximately 4 million a year for operations of that park. There are 39 such Conservancy's managing signature parks in cities across the United States now based on TPL.
- > Find philanthropists that will support users that do not have the ability to pay for services and have them invest in these users through a park foundation or friends group established for this purpose.
- > Teach and train your key park and recreation related boards or city leaders that Friends Groups, Conservancy's and Park Foundations are not in competition with you but need to act as your advocate. Placement of the right types of people on these boards is a very important process that needs to be taught and put into practice. These types of boards can meet the level of fundraising desired by the agency if the right people are on the board. Management agreements between each fundraising group needs to be completed each year with goals, dollars to be raised for what purpose and benefit to the Department.

**PARTNERING:**

- > Never allow a private or a not-for-profit group to make money off of Department owned facilities without the Department receiving a share of the gross revenue. Make sure the Department split covers the true costs and then the revenue desired based on an operating pro-forma from the event they are creating in the recreation or park facility it is being provided in.
- > Privatize services where the Departments does not have the capital dollars to operate and maintain the facility, park or service that the system owns to a competitive cost per acre level.
- > Have working, signed agreements with all types of partners to include (public/private, public/not for profit and public/public partners). This requires separate operational policies on each type of partnership that is established. Avoid partnership principles that entitle the partner to the benefits of the partnership.
- > Do not partner with any single group unless the Departments has their own direct and indirect costs determined. Understand the equitable investment the potential partner or partners are putting into the relationship.
- > All partnerships must have working agreements with measurable outcomes. They are to be reviewed at least every two years as one means to hold each other accountable.
- > Ask the private sector to develop team building days in the Departments' parks and facilities by creating cleanup and fix up days. This builds community support and it will overnight enhance The Departments' parks or facilities to a much higher level and it gives the corporate partner a selling point to their value in the community.
- > Determine sponsorship opportunities and levels of sponsorships for the Departments system every five years. Hire a private sponsorship contractor who knows the value of sponsorships for a percentage of the total amount raised instead of doing it yourself. Chicago Park District raises large sums of money to support operational costs through sponsorships of its system.

GOVERNMENT FINANCE:

- > Know the value of the system less land value and what the assets are worth and where those assets are in their life cycle. This will allow the Department to determine where capital improvements need to be made and the cost benefit of those improvements to the system. Best practice agencies are investing at a minimum 3-5% a year to protect the assets they own. Example; Columbus Ohio invests 30 million a year in maintaining the public assets they own now. This was accomplished by a voter bond issue in 2014 for the next ten years.
- > The Department needs to find dedicated funding sources they can count on annually to support their operational and capital needs.
- > Develop a Business Development division within the Departments to pursue grants, establish and manage effective partnerships, create more earned income, and develop business plans with staff managing revenue producing facilities to maximize each site's earned income capability.
- > Consider setting up business enterprise systems for revenue producing parks or facilities.



- > Develop a cost benefit analysis on all capital improvement projects prior to developing these future parks or facility sites to determine if it is financially feasible and rather operational dollars will be available to support it.
- > Submit two budgets for approval. One that is only tax support and one that is earned income revenue only. This way elected officials can focus on tax related budget items only and revenue related items second.
- > Know how to properly execute an Annual Budget. There is a lot of time spent in the formulation of a budget, but it is the execution of the budget that saves a system. Issues like review, explaining variances, adjustments, operating within it, insuring that all managers are aware of its importance to the financial stability of the agency.
- > Understand the real details of "Capital." What are the carrying costs of land, facilities, and equipment? Do not burden the Department with capital projects that cost the agency more to own than the land is worth.

COST RECOVERY:

- > Replace revenue-producing equipment every 5 years to keep the user experience relevant and competitive with other service providers.
- > Include senior management staff on all design decisions. Force landscape designers and facility architects to outline the maintenance costs on all parks and facilities they design to ensure their design is aligned with the Department's maintenance and recreation operating budgets.
- > Consider acquiring additional land along trails to setup the potential for land leases for concession operations for a land lease to help support operational costs of the trails system.
- > Know your true costs to deliver program services, maintain parks, trails and facilities, both direct and indirect costs so that the Department can determine the true costs of services on a unit cost basis. This helps to determine how to establish equitable partnerships and when to outsource tasks that are too expensive to provide with public employees.
- > Develop business plans on any program service or facility that the Departments operates that costs more to operate than \$100,000 a year with a goal to deliver a cost recovery goal of 50% at a minimum.
- > Classify services based on core essential, important and value-added criteria and then price services that are furthest away from their mission at full cost recovery levels.

ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT:

- > Set up business enterprise systems for revenue producing facilities and programs.
- > Design parks and recreation facilities for efficiency, productivity and to produce revenue that will offset operational costs at a predetermined cost recovery goal.
- > Develop a financial policy that allows the Department to keep all earned income revenue in your operating budget without lowering tax dollars received. The Department should not be penalized for generating revenue to keep the system well positioned for the future.
- > Every three years bid out services where the costs are higher than the private sector to keep the Department's costs competitive in the market place.
- > Develop an annual revenue plan.



- > Find dedicated funding sources that the Department can count on annually.
- > When building a park or trail system, require an agreement from your elected officials that you will receive the appropriate amount of operational funding to ensure that the Department can maintain these facilities once developed so you do not put undue pressure on the agency's budget. This requires that the staff develop an operational impact cost for each capital improvement developed for the system.
- > Budget for marketing and branding of revenue producing facilities at 3-5% of total operational costs.
- > Do not give any group in the community a larger than necessary discount because of their age, their occupation, their military service etc. All citizens are valuable and should be treated the same. Understand the size of the market for core programs and facilities and how much of the market the Department controls. Is there opportunity to penetrate the market further?
- > Study and understand market strategies that will make a measurable difference and improve the economic positioning of the program or facility the system is targeting.
- > Inform users and partners of what the Department's costs are so they appreciate the value the Department puts into place into the facility or service. This strategy will help to reduce entitlement of users.
- > Track user analytics to understand who and how often the system is being used by patrons.
- > Understand concession management, what it takes to make it worth the time and investment for the Department to provide the service versus an outside contractor. Don't allow special interest groups to have exclusive rights to concession operations without paying the Department some level of gross revenue.

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT:

- > The Department needs to consider not maintaining things in the park system that nobody uses and remove them from the park system. This is a waste of money.
- > Manage by standards and track costs to implement each type of standard for park maintenance and program services.
- > Train staff, regularly on business principals, cost recovery, cost of service and customer service.
- > Know the demographics of users to determine their needs and capability of supporting programs and capital costs.
- > Track population trends and figure out how demographic changes will affect the Department in the future.
- > Hold staff accountable to cost recovery goals for programs, facilities and parks the Department maintains with revenue to support those services. This includes tracking performance outcomes.
- > Track employee costs of similar sized park systems. Review the wages and benefits for all positions every five years to understand how competitive the Department wages are with other systems. Judge if you are below an acceptable level with or above the standard desired for wages and benefits. The goal for total wages including salaries and benefits should be no more than 55-60% of total operational budget costs.



- > Employ the right people for the right job, for the right pay, to achieve the right outcome and benefits to the agency. Learn and apply the correct functionality and desired productivity of key positions within the system so that it is not personality driven but functionally driven.
- > Reward employees for efficiency and productivity.
- > Train staff to understand the management strategies of their supervisors as one way to prepare them for positions at the next level of responsibility.
- > Develop annual revenue and efficiency work sessions with your staff.
- > Properly train staff in business management of concession operations.
- > Hold employees accountable to productivity standards of facilities and programs and cost recovery levels and give them measurable outcomes to manage to and report out quarterly or every six months.
- > Develop sustainability performance outcomes to hold all divisions accountable.

**HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES
RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, throughout the United States, chronic disease is on the rise; health care costs continue to rise; and more children are suffering from illnesses that have historically been associated with adults; and

WHEREAS, it is now widely accepted that the conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, and age (known as the social determinants of health) have the greatest influence on health outcomes across populations; and

WHEREAS, the policies typically implemented by local municipalities are outside of the traditional health sector that significantly affect the social determinants of health including policies related to food access, housing, transportation, public safety, education, sustainability, climate change, parks, air and water quality, criminal justice, and economic development, and healthy choices; and

WHEREAS, public health agencies and organizations will need to work with those who are best positioned to create policies and practices that promote healthy communities and environments through healthy public policies; and interagency collaboration can lead to improved decision-making and outcomes and greater efficiencies in service delivery; and

WHEREAS, Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas; encompasses a wide spectrum of activities and can be implemented in many different ways requiring innovative solutions and a new policy paradigm; and

WHEREAS, the health and well-being of Elon residents are critical for a prosperous and sustainable community while simultaneously advancing other goals such as promoting job creation, economic stability, transportation access and mobility, a strong agricultural system, environmental sustainability, and educational attainment; and

WHEREAS, *The Town of Elon Bicycle, Pedestrian and Lighting Plan Update* is a renewed effort to develop a strategy for the development of a safe, secure and comprehensive network of sidewalks, trails and on-road bicycle lanes that serve recreation and transportation needs. In addition, Town is addressing health in the Land Development Ordinance, the Code of Ordinances, lighting, traffic calming, and the planning effort is a major step forward for walking and bicycling in Elon, and

WHEREAS, by adopting a "Health In All Policies" approach, the Town of Elon recognizes that all local municipalities can have a role in achieving health equity, defined as the attainment of the highest level of health for all people; and

WHEREAS, achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally and addressing avoidable inequalities, historical, and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and healthcare disparities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Elon will consider health in policy development and implementation and service delivery and will make an effort to identify and pursue opportunities to improve health through safe and healthy housing; active living and transportation; access to healthy food, clean air, water, and soil; parks, recreation, and greenspaces; economic opportunity; and safety and violence prevention. Adopted this 11th day of April 2017.


Mayor

ATTEST:


Town Clerk