

Needs Assessment Study Citizen Survey



City of Claremont New Hampshire

by

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Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey

Executive Summary of Citizen Survey Results

Overview of the Methodology

The City of Claremont, New Hampshire conducted a citizen survey in the fall of 2001 to help determine citizen usage, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system, including the Goodwin Community Center. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Claremont.

Leisure Vision/ETC Institute worked extensively with Claremont officials in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work included on-site stakeholder interviews, focus groups and a public meeting to gain important feedback and ensure that the questions on the survey addressed issues of key community importance.

The goal was to obtain at least 400 completed surveys. This goal was exceeded and 512 surveys were completed. The results for the random sample of 512 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 4.4%.

This final report contains: 1) an executive summary; 2) graphs and charts of respondent answers; 3) comparisons to national benchmarks; 4) cross tabular analysis by participation in programs, age, and gender of respondents; and 5) a copy of the survey document.

Major Findings:

- ! **Over half (52%) of all respondent households have participated in programs offered by the City's Parks and Recreation Department during the past 12 months.**
- ! **Of those who had participated in City programs during the past year, 61% indicated they had learned of the programs through word of mouth.** This was the most common way that respondents learned of City programs. Other common ways to learn of City programs included: flyers/brochures (46%); newspapers (42%); departmental program brochures (27%); and visiting or calling a parks/recreation office (26%).
- ! **89% of those who had participated in City programs during the past year rated the programs they participated in as either excellent (32%) or good (57%).** Only 9% rated the programs as fair, and less than 1% rated them as poor. 2% indicated "Adon't know".
- ! **Over three-fourths (78%) of all respondent households indicated they had visited a City park during the past year. Of those who had visited a City park during the past year, 75% rated the physical condition of the parks they had visited as either excellent (20%) or good (55%).** 22% rated the physical condition as fair, and just 3% rated them as poor.
- ! **The number one reason that respondent households don't use City parks and recreation facilities and the Goodwin Recreation Center more often is "Ave are too busy or not interested" (27%).** Other common reasons that households don't use City facilities and the Goodwin Recreation Center more often included: inadequate restrooms in parks (26%); lack of knowledge regarding services (19%); hours of operation are not convenient (16%); and lack of quality indoor recreation areas (16%).
- ! **Recreational swimming (33%) was the City program with the highest percentage of participation during the past two years among respondent households.** Other recreational programs that had a high percentage of participation included: arts/theater/outdoor concerts (29%); special events (28%); youth basketball (16%); youth baseball program (16%); and youth swim lessons (15%).
- ! **Based on a sum of their top 4 choices, adult fitness programs (23%) and special events (23%) had the highest percentage of respondents rate them as one of the most important programs.** Following close behind were: arts/theater/outdoor concerts (22%); recreational swimming (20%); and walking programs (18%)

It should also be noted that recreational swimming and arts/theater/outdoor concerts received the most first choices as most important program.

! **Public library facilities (64%) was the most visited City facility during the past two years among respondent households.** Other recreational facilities that were among the most visited included: neighborhood parks (55%); open space (46%); playgrounds for children (46%); the Goodwin Community Center (43%); and large multi use parks (41%).

! **Based on a sum of their top 4 choices, the public library (43%) had by far the highest percentage of respondents rate it as one of the most important facilities.** Other facilities that were most important to a high number of respondent households include: walking/biking trails (25%); neighborhood parks (23%); playgrounds for children (23%); indoor swimming center (20%); and the Goodwin Community Center (20%).

It should also be noted that the public library received by a very wide margin the most first choices as most important facility.

! **From a list of 16 options, respondent households were asked which 3 features they would be most likely to use. An indoor running/walking track (32%) was the feature the highest percentage of respondents indicated they would be most likely to use.** Other features respondents indicated they would be most likely to use include: gymnasium (26%); 25yd indoor pool for exercise/swim lessons (26%); indoor recreational pool w/ water features (21%); weight room/cardiovascular equipment area (19%); and aerobics/fitness space (19%).

! **64% of respondents were either very supportive (35%) or somewhat supportive (29%) of developing a combined community facility with recreation and library facilities.** 20% of respondents were not supportive, and 16% indicated "don't know".

! **Nearly half (49%) of household respondents indicated they would use an indoor recreation facility at least weekly if it had the features they most preferred. 27% indicated they would use the recreation facility weekly, and an additional 22% indicated they would use the facility several times per week.** 20% of respondents indicated they would use the recreation facility a few times per month, with an additional 9% visiting monthly and 11% indicating they would visit several times per year. Only 11% indicated they would never use the recreation facility.

! **From a list of 5 options, respondents were asked which 2 they would support for developing indoor recreation spaces in the City of Claremont. 40% indicated they support developing a new indoor community recreation facility at a larger site. 38% indicated they support developing a new indoor community recreation facility at a larger site AND an addition to the public library, and 38% indicated they support renovating the current indoor facilities at the Goodwin Recreation Center and adding new indoor recreation facilities. 17% indicated they support repairing ONLY the current indoor recreation facility at Goodwin Recreation Center, and just 4% indicated they support doing nothing at all.**

- ! **62% of respondents were either very supportive (35%) or somewhat supportive (27%) of the City exploring the idea of renovating one or more of the Mill Buildings on Water Street into Community Center Space.** 23% were not supportive, and 14% indicated "don't know".
- ! **Those respondents who were not supportive of the City exploring the idea of renovating one or more of the Mill Buildings on Water Street were then asked how they would feel if there were potential for the City to receive some federal grant money to help the renovation.** 72% indicated they were still not supportive. 19% were somewhat supportive, 3% were very supportive, and 5% indicated "don't know".
- ! **83% of respondents indicated that well maintained parks and recreation facilities can provide economic benefits to the City.** Only 4% answered no, and 13% indicated "don't know".
- ! **From a list of 14 options, respondents were asked which 3 parks/facilities they thought were most important for the City to develop. Renovating and reopening Arrowhead Ski Area (38%) was the park/facility that the highest percentage of respondents indicated the City should develop.** Other parks/facilities respondents indicated the City should develop included: multipurpose trails (37%) multipurpose youth sports complex (27%); development of a new indoor community center at a larger site (25%); and renovation of the Goodwin Community Center (20%).
- ! **Respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 among 7 categories of funding. Respondents allocated nearly one-third of the money for improvements/maintenance of existing parks (\$32).** \$20 were allocated to the construction of indoor community recreation facilities, \$15 to the acquisition/development of walking and biking trails, and \$12 to the development of special facilities. Each of the other categories received less than \$8.
- ! **Respondents were asked how they would vote on a bond issue where funds from the tax would be used to improve the City's Parks and Recreation system in ways they prefer most.** 40% indicated they would vote in favor, and 33% indicated they might vote in favor. Only 7% indicated they would vote against the bond, and 19% indicated "not sure".
- ! **Respondents were asked how important it is for the City to fund improvements to the Parks and Recreation system compared to other priorities in the City.** Over 80% indicated it was either very important (42%) or somewhat important (40%). Just 7% indicated "not important", and 10% indicated "not sure".