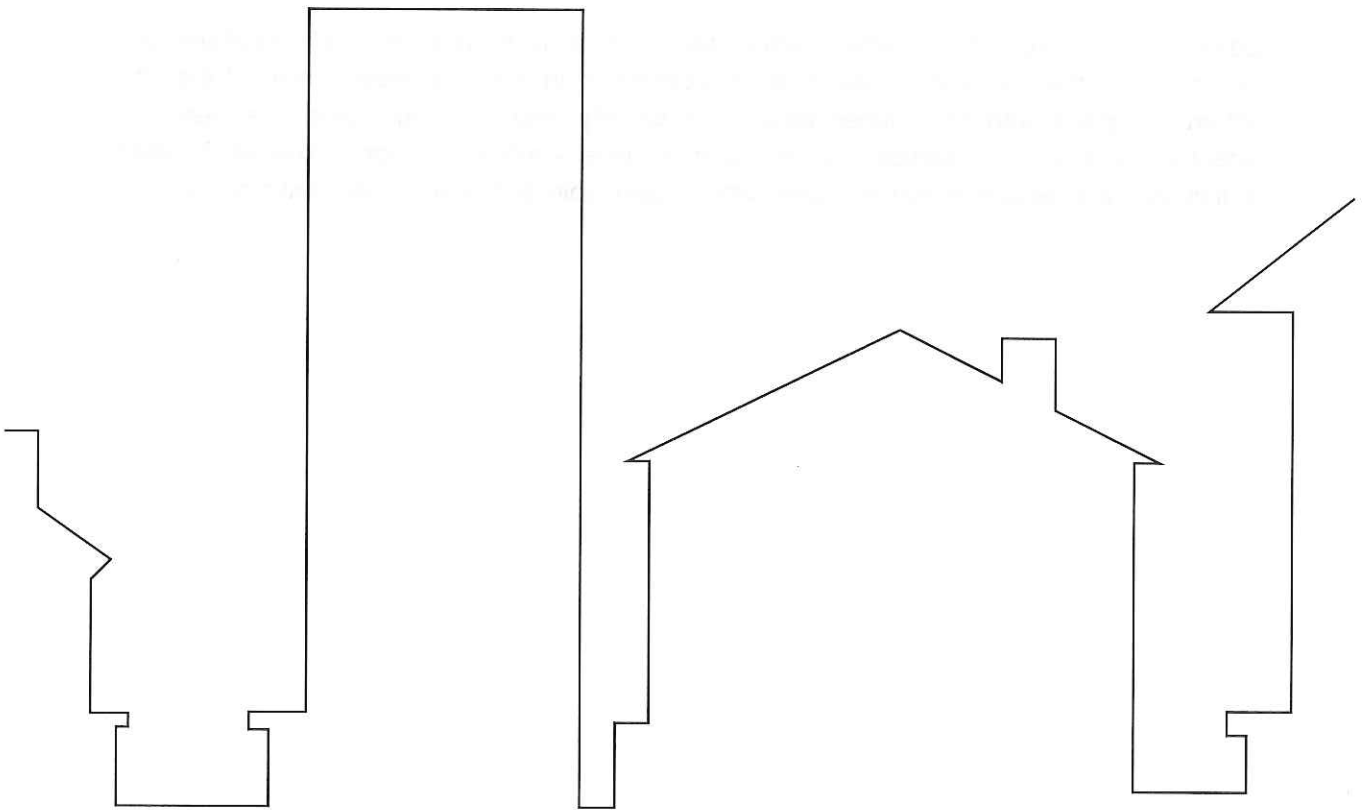


03

Public Input



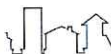
03 Public Input

Public input is the critical component in developing a comprehensive plan for a parks and recreation master department. The citizens are the participants in and users of the parks system and recreation programs, and without strong support and usage by them, the parks system becomes ineffective. For the plan to be effective in improving service delivery and facilities, it must accurately reflect the facilities and programs most desired by the citizens of the community. The recommendations contained later in this master plan were driven by public input gathered through a variety of forums: input recorded in interviews, public meetings, focus group sessions with the steering committee, open houses, emails submitted to the city and an online user survey of the residents of Brookhaven. Quotes throughout this section are selected from the comments on the returned surveys and input sessions.

The public input process started with interviews that included meetings with the Parks Director, City Manager, Assistant City Manager, the Mayor and City Council members as well as individuals representing citizen groups. These interviews were not only necessary to develop an understanding of how the Parks Department and city government function, but also to develop an understanding of issues that exist within the community and the Parks and Recreation Department itself. Interviews with the Mayor and Council members provided the planning team with an overview of how the parks and recreation staff interact with elected officials and share information. The interviews also provided insight into their vision for long-term planning and administration of the Department and on their priorities for the Department as part of the overall city government.

Interviews and Focus Group Findings

Interviews with parks staff, public officials and city administrative staff were conducted April 14 and 15, 2014. These interviews, explored administrative practices, contract maintenance duties, ongoing partnership agreements and factors related to funding and park usage. Interviews with parks and recreation staff revealed information about the daily operations of the Department and also offered insight into the opportunities and constraints that staff are faced with on a day-to-day basis. These interviews provided a historical perspective of the evolution of parks and recreation in the city, as well as additional information about relationships with leagues and organizations and opinions for needed facilities.



The interviews provide the planning team with a historical perspective of how the city was formed and how the newly elected officials want to see the parks and recreation department operate as it moves forward. The interviews also allowed elected officials the opportunity to share concerns over the current condition of the parks and what they felt were important projects to undertake.

Following the interviews a series of focus group meetings were held. Focus group meetings were held on the evenings of April 15, 24 and May 7 and May 8, 2014 to give organized groups that are currently using the parks to program activities a chance to share their input. These meetings included groups who program active sport leagues, private vendors who pay to use the parks, the YMCA, and various park friends groups and volunteer groups.

The following is a bulleted summary of the issues that were the most commonly discussed in the interviews and Focus group meetings.

Operations

- The Parks Manager was the only full-time park staff member at this time the study began and has since hired an administrative assistant and is advertising for other positions
- Management of the city combines a small number of city employees and contract services provided by a variety of firms
- Park operations and programming is done through a combination of contract maintenance crews, contract tennis center staff, contract pool operations staff, and volunteer groups/athletic associations who offer programs and assist with maintenance of facilities
- Programming of youth sports programs as traditionally offered by public recreation agencies is not a priority for the city because they feel the current athletic associations and contract staff are doing a good job. Partnerships or contracted services are currently preferred over traditional programming
- Maintenance operations currently are provided through contract services and should continue to operate in the manner to keep city staff numbers lower
- All policies and agreements should contain general policies and be balanced for all groups
- Swimming pool hours of operations should be set to maximize community access to pools
- All private groups programming in the parks should have an agreement with the city
- Spending on parks should be balanced across the entire city
- Parks should be operated so that they are a recognizable part of the community
- Beautification of the parks should be a priority for the city
- Special activities such as Food Trucks in the park are good for bringing the community together
- YMCA is willing to do outreach to residents in the Buford Highway Corridor



Marketing

- The parks should have a unified look to help brand the city (for example, standardized signage)
- Start a tree planting program to begin to unify the look in parks
- The lack of special events sponsored by the city impacts the image and marketability of the department
- The city should look at ways to work with volunteer groups such as links on the city web page
- Design standards are needed to unify the look of the parks

Funding

- Lack of land and cost of land will impact city's ability to develop additional parks and greenways
- The city funded the park master plan in order to determine needs and capital cost to provide improved parks and recreation services
- In order to keep recreation budget within obtainable limits, partnerships and sponsorships should be stressed over growing the department
- City should reach out to other cities for funding when Brookhaven facilities serve large groups from outside the city
- City should have reasonable fees for programs and activities
- City has increased funding in this year's budget to begin to improve park facilities
- City should consider a major fundraising event that is held on an annual basis
- The city welcomes funding support from user groups

Programs and Facilities

- Swimming Pools need to be upgraded
- Neighbors are impacted when parking spills out into their neighborhood
- Parking is an issue in many of the parks
- There is currently a lack of green space and parkland to meet the needs of the community
- There is a need for greenway development to increase walking and bicycling opportunities
- Most facilities are old and in need of major replacement
- Dogs should only be allowed off leash in designated dog parks to minimize conflicts between park user groups
- Find a use for the old Scout Hut as it is a historic building
- Need a new park in the fourth council district
- Provide different theme gardens in each park
- YMCA uses Blackburn Park and feel there are safety issues crossing the street to reach the park
- Swim team at Murphey Candler is willing to pay for some dedicated time at the pool

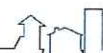


- St. Martins Episcopal Church runs a basketball league and would like access to city gyms
- St. Martins Episcopal Church has 20 team cross-country meet and use Blackburn or Brookhaven Park. When they have a meet there is no room for other park activities
- Private groups are using the parks for such activities as boot camps and tree climbing lessons. There is a concern about soil compactions under trees from overuse of the parks.
- Blackburn tennis center needs major renovations to the building and courts
- There is a shortage of parking for the tennis center
- Parks need better pedestrian access to reduce parking demands
- Better lighting for night time use is needed throughout the park system
- As-built surveys are needed of all the parks for maintenance and future planning
- All the pools need better landscaping
- Remove overgrown areas of parks to make them more attractive
- All pools need shaded areas
- Osborne Park adjacent to Lynwood Park should be developed
- Remove fences in parks to improve access to open space and facilities
- Remove all the small toys from Ashford Park
- Fields and large open lawns in most parks are in poor condition

Public Meeting Findings

Another form of public input used during the master plan process was to conduct two open public meetings during the early stage of the Master Plan. On April 14, 2014 the planning team held two public meetings. One meeting was held at Oglethorpe University's Lupton Hall and the other meeting was at the Briarwood Park Community Center. Both meetings were well attended and followed the same format. The planning team presented an overview of the planning process and allowed citizens to share their opinions of the park system, their desired facilities and programs, and their vision for the future of Brookhaven Parks and Recreation Department and Park Facilities.

Improvements discussed during these meetings included improvements to existing facilities, development of new facilities and new programming opportunities. All of the comments reflected that the citizens care about the parks system and desire a parks system of which they could be proud. The following bulleted lists include the discussed topics and requested items during the public meetings:



Facility and Program Needs/Desires, and General Comments

Trails and Passive Green Space

- Off-road greenways/multi-purpose trails for walking, running and bicycling are needed in both highly populated areas and natural areas
- Connect Brookhaven Park to MARTA Station
- Develop greenway trail along North Fork of Peachtree Creek
- Need more pocket parks
- Make on park an old fashioned park with no vender or building just trees, paths, picnic tables and grills
- Pull down the fences that separate parks and people
- Clear underbrush in parks to open them up
- Provide lots of small parking lots not large jumbo lots and improve parking lot appearance
- Do not fence all play fields in the parks
- Bike lanes on roadways
- Do not add bicycle paths inside Brookhaven Park
- Stop bank erosion in parks

Marketing

- Need improved visibility
- Need to brand parks and develop with uniform signage and architecture

Park Facilities

- Add restrooms in parks
- Provide areas for art in parks
- Provide Wi-Fi in parks
- Provide new playgrounds and have shade at playgrounds
- Preserve granite curbs and park signs
- Make parks more user friendly, fix up all the old facilities in the parks
- Take advantage of underutilized space in parks
- Renovate the community centers
- Develop and indoor pool
- Solve parking problems in parks and more parking
- Improve landscaping in parks
- Provide more parks, purchase more parkland
- Improve trails in parks
- Improve pavilions in the parks
- Provide power for festivals
- Improve vehicular circulation in and out of parks
- Develop kids art and theater facility
- Improve accessibility to all park features



- Provide an amphitheater at Blackburn Park
- Provide better access to Brookhaven Park

Athletic Facilities

Additional athletic fields are needed to provide for the demand of several sports:

- Indoor/outdoor multi-generational facility for tennis and indoor, multi-generational programming space
- Need to improve pools to expand competitive swimming
- Need more tennis facilities
- Need an aquatics facility
- Need to renovate community centers to use gyms
- Murphey Candler is historic baseball facility but does not have enough parking
- Turf condition is a problem at most sport fields other than Murphey Candler

Programs and General Comments

- Continue to work with private groups for sports programming
- Do not charge non-resident fees for youth sports program
- Expand pool hours so people can access the pools
- Beautify the parks and establish standards
- Add more gardens in parks
- Do not use so many fences in the parks
- Food truck program was a success but caused overcrowding in park
- Need summer camps and similar programs
- Need more multi-purpose indoor program and gathering spaces
- Recreation center should offer robust programming
- Do not add more sports fields
- Do not raise taxes to improve parks
- Organize volunteer programs to beautify parks
- Balance investments in all parks
- Overflow programs into other facilities
- Do not break park system into factions
- Use environmentally friendly designs in parks



Steering Committee Workshop

On the evening of April 3, 2014, a Steering Committee Meeting was held. This meeting was a workshop with representatives appointed by the City Council who represented a cross section of recreation and green space issue in the city. The participants worked in small groups and then collectively to respond to a series of questions. The team and collective responses to the questions are provided below.

1. What are the five most critical issues facing the Brookhaven Parks and Recreation Department?

Group 1

- More active recreation space
- Program diversity; age spans, children to senior citizens
- Parking
- Facilities updating; fencing, pools, playground, bathroom preserve historic structures
- Trail connectivity
- Erosion at lake
- Sub-optimal use of current space, e.g. Lynwood Park
- Removal of invasive species
- Define dog use
- ADA access

Group 2

- Branding of all parks to make it a desired unique destination
- Use underutilized park space
- Programming: to bring in kids and adults to the recreation centers, parks; promote health and wellness
- Connectivity – be able to walk, bike to parks; connect schools to parks
- Murphey Candler. – parking, better landscaping, more native species
- Sustainability – fertilization in backyards, parks, green space; protection of watershed
- Funding new parks and green space in high population, low parks areas
- Visibility of entrances (Brookhaven Park)
- Linear park to connect Brookhaven to beltline

Group 3

- Safety, light, maintenance
- Usage guidelines, vendors and leagues
- Parking, pavement, sidewalks, egress, ingress – in and out of parks
- Staffing – properly (contractors)



03 Public Input

- Vision; end goal defined
- Understanding demographics and needs so we have the right programs and facilities
- Continued public input in process

2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Brookhaven Park and Recreation Department programs and facilities.

Group 1

Strengths

- New leadership and attention
- Parental Involvement

Weaknesses

- Few programs
- Not diverse demographically
- Lack of land use agreement e.g.: sports associations
- Under-utilized space

Facilities

- Passionate volunteers, will invest financially, strong sense of community
- Fairly well dispersed except for district 4

Group 2

Facilities Strengths

- Some are new buildings, Ashford
- At least 3 pools
- Several under-utilized parks that offer diversity

Facility Weaknesses

- Not local food opportunities (gardens)
- No local restaurants access to parks
- Not inviting
- Under-utilized
- Not accessible by bikes, walking
- Invasive plants

Programming Strengths

- Lots of opportunity
- Murphey Candler – strong your program and model



Programming Weaknesses

- Programs, if existing, not advertised
- No inclusive to population of the entire city
- Boys and Girls club can help with programming

Group 3*Facility Strengths*

- Lots of usable spaces (land) footprint, people want to use parks. Seems we have the right funding to make our parks great

Facility Weaknesses

- Public perception of maintenance development working against us
- Underutilized
- Pool ascetics and use
- Equally spread out facilities
- Pavilions look terrible
- Need community meeting facilities

Programs Strengths

- Colts/tennis

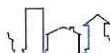
Programs Weaknesses

- Usage not optimized
- Public needs, diversity
- No central communication on what is offered
- Website

3. If money and politics were not issues, what programs would you include in the ideal park system for Brookhaven Parks and Recreation Department? What facilities would you include?

Group 1*Facilities*

- Historically restore shelters in all parks, new and more bathrooms, meeting facilities for all ages: rec centers, caretaker's home at Murphey Candler
- New and more playgrounds, age appropriate
- Athletic fields for special needs kids, artificial turf
- Connected trail system
- Coordination of space with Dekalb City Schools
- Dog park
- Dredge Murphey Candler lake and fix shoreline



03 Public Input

- Remove invasive species
- Fix Murphey Candler parking

Programs

- A variety of programs for youth >12 and adults
- Continue Murphey Candler sports programs “as is”
- Bridge lessons, sessions: rec center
- Festivals and concerts, music, art, fun runs
- Exercise classes in recreation centers, Recreation center programs for Brookhaven kids and teens

Group 2

Facilities

- Linear park to connect to Beltline (along the N Fork of Peachtree Creek)
- Sidewalks & bike paths
- Natural playgrounds with shade
- Outdoor kitchen and grills
- Artificial turf sports field
- Disc golf
- Dog parks
- Usable waterways for kayaking and swimming
- Gymnasiums, recreation centers
- Art center

Programs

- Rec programming: gymnastics, running groups, swim teams, cooking classes, soccer teams, gardening club, yoga, arts classes, tennis
- Regular farmers markets (not just on Saturday)
- Sustainable education classes
- Edible landscaping in parks

Group 3

Facilities

- Improved pools, water park features
- Outdoor theater, amphitheater
- Trails – access for walking, mountain biking
- Bathrooms at all parking areas
- Dog parks, official, see Piedmont as example
- Community gardens
- Nature Center, botanical garden, sculptural garden, nature walk with labeled plants, arboretum



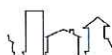
- Playgrounds for multiple age groups: young kids, middle school, adults (crossfit)
- Gyms in recreation centers, meeting facilities in recreation centers, more modern
- Modern new tennis center facilities, observation deck, stands
- Outside beer garden

Programs

- Education: master gardener projects, nature walk, community garden
- Senior programs
- Movies, screen on the green
- Concerts, festivals
- Wellness, tai-chai, yoga, walking, water aerobics
- More family programs
- Food trucks
- Swimming programs
- Summer Camps: tennis, sports, art, nature

4. Prioritize the lists of ideal programs and facilities identified in question 3. (Numbers indicate the numbers of votes received from steering committee members)

Facilities	Votes
Sidewalks & bike paths	9
Dog parks	7
Bathrooms at all parking areas	6
Linear park to connect to Beltline (along the N Fork of Peachtree Creek)	6
Community gardens	5
Dredge Murphey Candler lake and fix shoreline	5
Improved pools, water park features	4
Outdoor theater, amphitheater	4
Nature center, botanical garden, sculptural garden, nature walk with labeled plants, arboretum	4
Fix Murphey Candler parking	4
Playgrounds for multiple age groups: young kids, middle school, adults (CrossFit)	3
Disc golf	3
Historically restore shelters in all parks, new and more bathrooms, meeting facilities for all ages: recreation centers, caretakers home at Murphey Candler	3
Usable waterways for kayaking and swimming	2
Gymnasiums, rec centers	2
New and more playgrounds, age appropriate	2
Athletic fields for special needs kids, artificial turf	2
Coordination of space with Dekalb City Schools	2
Remove invasive species	2



03 Public Input

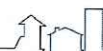
Gyms in Rec Centers, meeting facilities in Rec Center, more modern.	1
Modern new tennis center facilities, observation deck, stands	1
Natural playgrounds with shade	1
Outdoor kitchen and grills	1
Art Center	1
Programs	
Continue Murphey Candler sports programs "as is"	11
A variety of programs for youth >12 and adults	9
Education	8
Master Gardener Projects	
Nature Walk	
Community Garden	
Festivals and concerts, music, art, fun runs	8
Exercise classes in recreation centers, recreation centers programs for Brookhaven kids and teens	7
Regular farmers markets (not just on Saturday)	7
Edible landscaping in parks	6
Senior programs	5
Movies, screen on the green	4
Wellness, tai-chi, yoga, walking, water aerobics	4
Food trucks	4
Summer Camps: tennis, sports, art, nature	3
More family programs	1
Swimming programs	1
Bridge lessons, sessions: recreation center	1
Sustainable education classes	1

5. How should the Brookhaven Parks and Recreation Department fund the recommendations that will be identified in this master plan?

Group 1

Funding

- Grants, sponsorships; federal, local, private, public (arc)
- Programing fees
- Lease space out for organizations to manage programs
- Partnerships with management programs, i.e. park pride
- Swapping flood plain land for developable, marketable land
- Partner with land trust (i.e. Trust for Public Land)



Group 2*Funding*

- Conservancies, friends groups
- Fundraising: Corporate donations (one time) private, community
- Proper fees for service and use: Business, leagues, corporate events, rentals, stays in park
- Pavilion rental
- Dog Park fees, donation box
- Local civic clubs: Rotary, Optimist, Kiwanis, Lions
- Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism tax, impact fees
- Local, state, federal grants (Ray)

Group 3

- Funding, Public Partnerships
- Sharing of facility costs with other municipalities
- Hotel, motel, restaurant tax
- Impact fees
- Federal \$\$

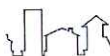
Funding, Private Partnerships

- Private interest groups funding capital projects and mutual interest e.g: conservancies and leagues
- Grants

Community Survey Findings

A community survey was launched on April 28, 2014. It was conducted by posting weblink on the city websites. 1,066 participants logged on to respond to the survey with over 80% completing the majority of the questions. For a population the size of Brookhaven, Lose & Associates' researchers estimate a sampling based on a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of 3. For example, if 40% percent of our sample selects an answer, we can be confident that if we had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 37% (40-3) and 43% (40+3) would have picked that answer.

Survey questions assess the different types of programs that citizens are currently participating in and ones that they show an interest in. The survey results help the planning team to assess the priority for future facility development and types of improvements. They also provide insight into the community's desires for public recreation.



The following charts and graphs illustrate some of the survey results and compare responses. Additionally, some of the comments from respondents are included in this section. To see a copy of the survey questions, refer to the Appendix.

Program and Activity Participation

To find out what programs and activities respondents prefer and which ones they would like to participate in, we asked a series of questions that listed programs and activities typically offered by parks and recreation departments. The programs and activities were classified into several categories: youth (ages 12 and under), youth (ages 13-18), adult, active adult (55 and over) and special events/classes/cultural arts/general park activities. Participants were asked to place a check next to the programs and activities that they or their family members have and/or would like to participate in.

In the analysis of the survey results, the following programs and activities are the top five that respondents and their families have participated in. In both youth categories, the survey results revealed that the majority of the respondents and their family have participated in youth and adult sport activities, such as baseball and soccer.

Top five youth sport activities – Age 12 and under:

Have participated in:

Youth Sports: Baseball League	181 responses
Youth Sports: Soccer League	148 responses
Youth Sports: Swim Team	109 responses
Youth Sports: Basketball League	108 responses
Youth Sports: Tennis Programs	98 responses

When asked to identify the sport activities that they and their families would like to participate in from the same list, respondents revealed a strong desire for tennis programs for youth. Listed below are the five activities and the number of responses.

Would like to participate in:

Youth Sports: Tennis Programs	224 responses
Youth Sports: Swim Team	219 responses
Youth Sports: Soccer League	205 responses
Youth Sports: Baseball League	184 responses
Youth Sports: Basketball League	174 responses

Respondents for ages 13-18 were much lower, suggesting that this age group actually participates less in organized sports although the desire exists.

Top five youth sport activities – Ages under 13-18

Have participated in:

Youth Sports: Baseball League	37 responses
Youth Sports: Swim Team	35 responses
Youth Sports: Soccer League	33 responses(tied)
Youth Sports: Tennis Programs	33 responses
Youth Sports: Softball – Fast/Slow Pitch	26 responses



Would like to participate in:

Youth Sports: Tennis Programs	82 responses
Youth Sports: Baseball League	78 responses
Youth Sports: Swim Team	71 responses
Youth Sports: Basketball League	70 responses
Youth Sports: Soccer League	68 responses

Top five adult sport activities

Have participated in:

Adult Sports: Tennis (team)	110 responses
Adult Sports: Outdoor Fitness Classes	69 responses
Adult Sports: Kickball Leagues	61 responses
Adult Sports: Softball Leagues	50 responses
Adult Sports: Soccer	45 responses

Would like to participate in:

Adult Sports: Outdoor Fitness Classes	292 responses
Adult Sports: Kayaking/ Canoeing Classes	207 responses
Adult Sports: Tennis (team)	173 responses
Adult Sports: Golf Leagues	139 responses
Adult Sports: Kickball Leagues	125 responses

Top five active adult programs (55 and over)

Have participated in:

Active Adult Programs: Aerobics Classes	28 responses
Active Adult Programs: Health/Fitness Classes	26 responses
Active Adult Programs: Gardening	21 responses
Active Adult Programs: Cooking Classes	17 responses(tied)
Active Adult Programs: Nature Programs	17 responses

Would like to participate in:

Active Adult Programs: Gardening	147 responses
Active Adult Programs: Health/Fitness Classes	143 responses
Active Adult Programs: Aerobics Classes	126 responses
Active Adult Programs: Cooking Classes	124 responses
Active Adult Programs: Nature Programs	11 responses



In order to find out what special events, classes, cultural arts and general park activities that respondents have participated in and would like to participate in, we listed special events and classes. In analyzing the survey results, the following programs and activities are the top five that respondents and their families have participated in. Surprisingly, the number of 5K races/triathlons decreased in “would like to,” while yoga and gardening increased.

Top five Special Events, Classes, Cultural Arts and General Park Activities:

Have participated in:

5K Races/Triathlons	343 responses
Aerobics/Group Exercise	138 responses
Yoga	77 responses
Gardening	65 responses
Aquatics Fitness Classes	63 responses

Would like to participate in:

5K Races/Triathlons	316 responses
Yoga	291 responses
Cooking Classes	277 responses
Aerobics/Group Exercise	266 responses
Gardening	258 responses

Next, we requested, “For each of the parks listed below, please indicate how often you and or members of your household have visited in the past year.” See figure 3.1 for the chart and below is a list of the top five most visited parks and the five least know parks in the system.

The five parks with the most visits (12 or more visits a year):

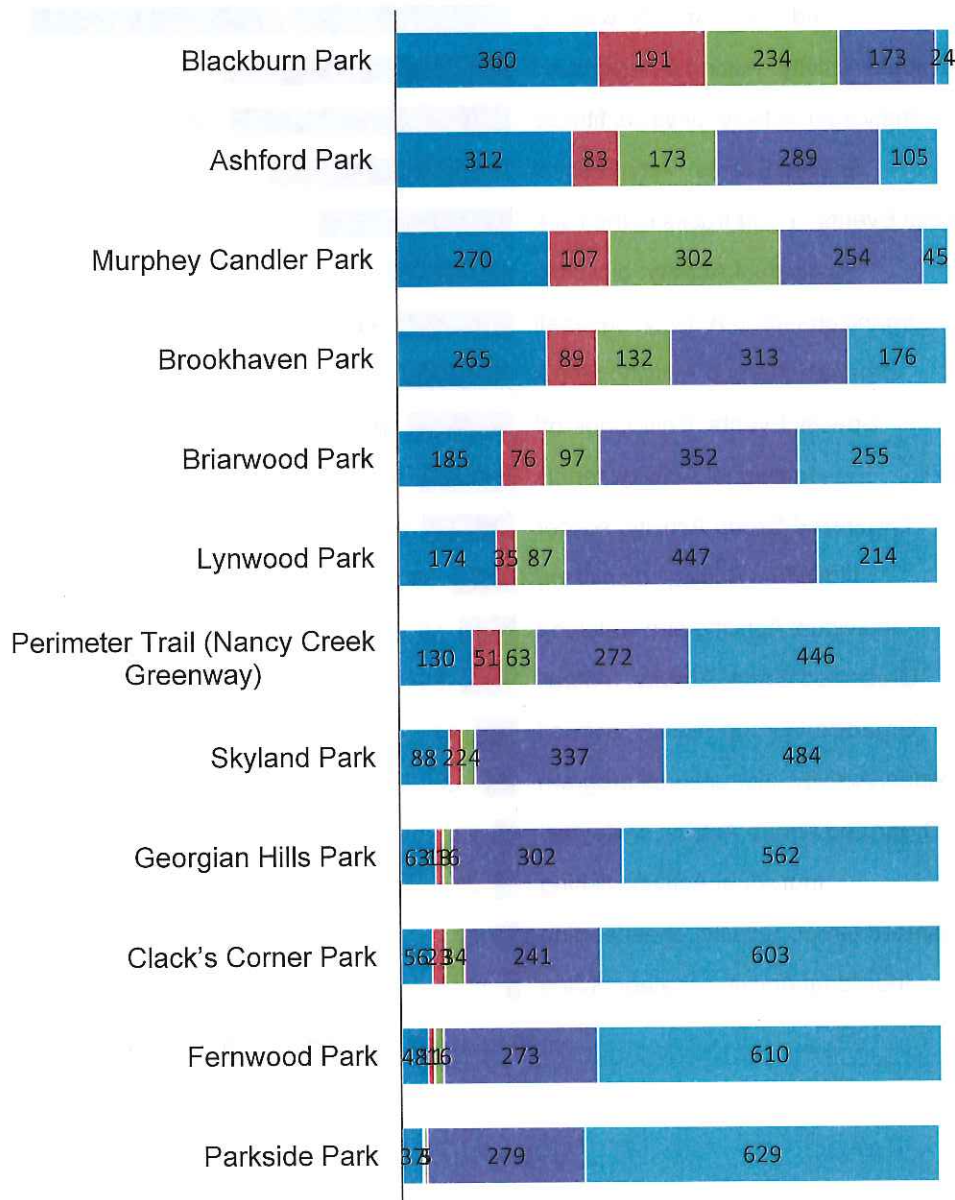
Murphey Candler Park	302 responses
Blackburn Park	234 responses
Ashford Park	173 responses
Brookhaven Park	132 responses
Briarwood Park	97 responses

The five least known parks:

Parkside Park	629 responses
Fernwood Park	610 responses
Clack’s Corner Park	603 responses
Georgian Hills Park	562 responses
Skyland Park	484 responses



Figure 3.1: For each of the parks listed below, please indicate how often you and or members of your household have visited in the past year.



■ 1-5 visits ■ 6-11 visits ■ 12 or more visits ■ No visits this year ■ Not aware of this park

Then, we asked, “using the list below, indicate how often you take part in the following parks and recreation programs.” We listed individual activity, special events and organized group activity. Not surprisingly, we found most individuals had participated in individual and passive park activities.



Figure 3.2: Using the list below, indicate how often you take part in the following parks and recreation programs:



When we compare the top five chosen by gender, we find both males and females had the same top five as listed in figure 3.2. In fact, we find the ranking similar for both males and females throughout with cheerleading and skateboarding scoring the least. It is not usual to find skateboarding and cheering scoring low on this list due to the specialization of these activities.



Barriers to Park Usage

The survey asked residents to indicate what prevents them and their family from using parks, facilities or trails. For this question, respondents could select multiple answers, which is why the percentages listed do not equal 100%. The most votes were given to “condition of parks.” Next, we find “not aware of programs available” as the second most chosen category. See Figure 3.3

Figure 3.3: Barriers to Park Usage

Please indicate if any of the following prevents you and/or members of your household from using Brookhaven’s parks, facilities or trails? Please check all that apply.



Comments regarding lack of amenities included mostly the need for restrooms. In fact, almost 30% of the 238 comments mentioned issues with restrooms or the need for restrooms. The next most common stated subject was lack of pool/aquatic facilities, which included several comments about existing pool hours. We then had roughly 27 comments about maintenance issues and about the same number of comments related to lack or issues with playgrounds. The lack of trails, sidewalks and access to parks was another concern mentioned by many of the respondents. We also had several comments noting the lack of dog parks and tennis facilities.



Access to the Parks

As part of the survey, respondents were asked how far they would be willing to walk or bike to parks and recreation facilities.

A total of 90% indicated they would walk up to two miles or 2-5 miles to reach parks and only 7% said they would not walk. The reason for those who would not walk could be influenced by perceptions of safety along the roadways or sidewalks, the distance of their homes from existing parks, and preference for automobile travel.

Biking had a lower percentage of respondents who would not bike (5%), which leaves an impressive 95% willing to bike. In comparison with survey conducted in other cities, Brookhaven has a high majority of respondents willing to walk or bike. With more bicycle infrastructure at parks and the addition of other safety improvements such as bike lanes and greenways, Brookhaven could see an increase in alternative transportation.

When asked about driving to parks, Lose & Associates' researchers found that most respondents prefer to drive under 15 minutes (74%).

As a follow-up question, we asked, if you would not walk or bicycle, why? Most of the comments related to safety concerns. Other comments also noted the lack of a bike ownership or health problems that prevented them from riding a bike.

Figure 3.4: Walk

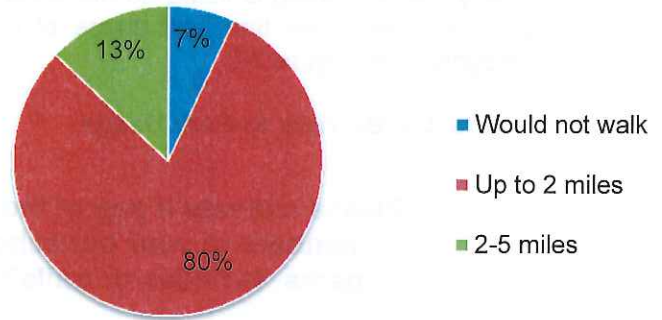


Figure 3.5: Bike

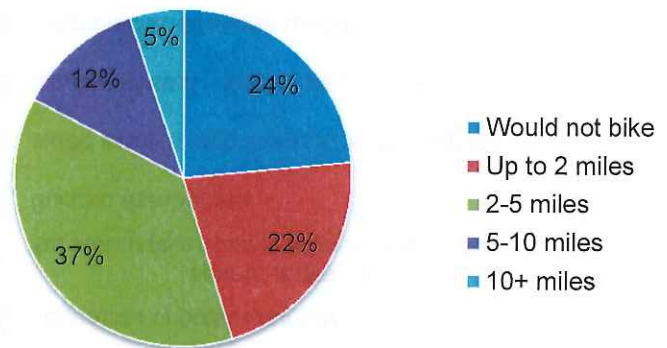
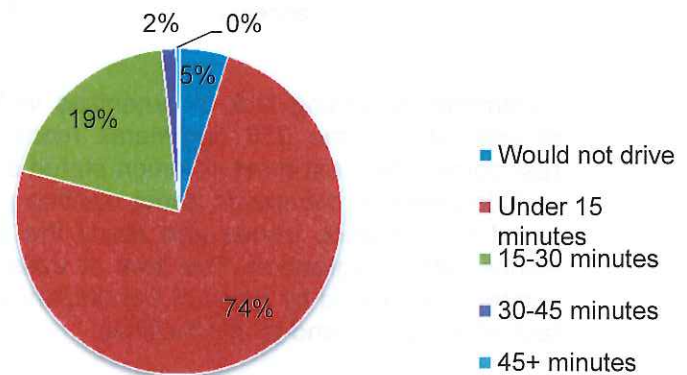
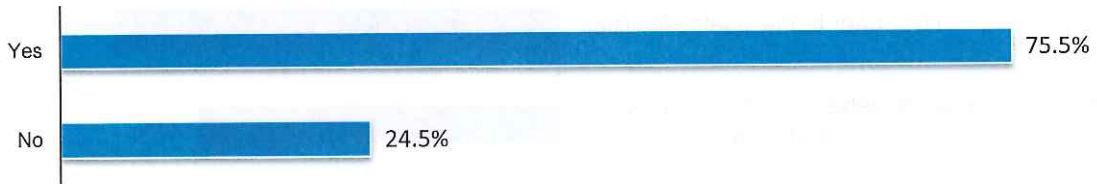


Figure 3.6: Drive



Next, Lose & Associates' researchers wanted to find out about other providers of parks and recreation activities located outside of Brookhaven. In Figure 3.7, we find that most respondents travel outside Brookhaven to use other parks and recreation facilities.

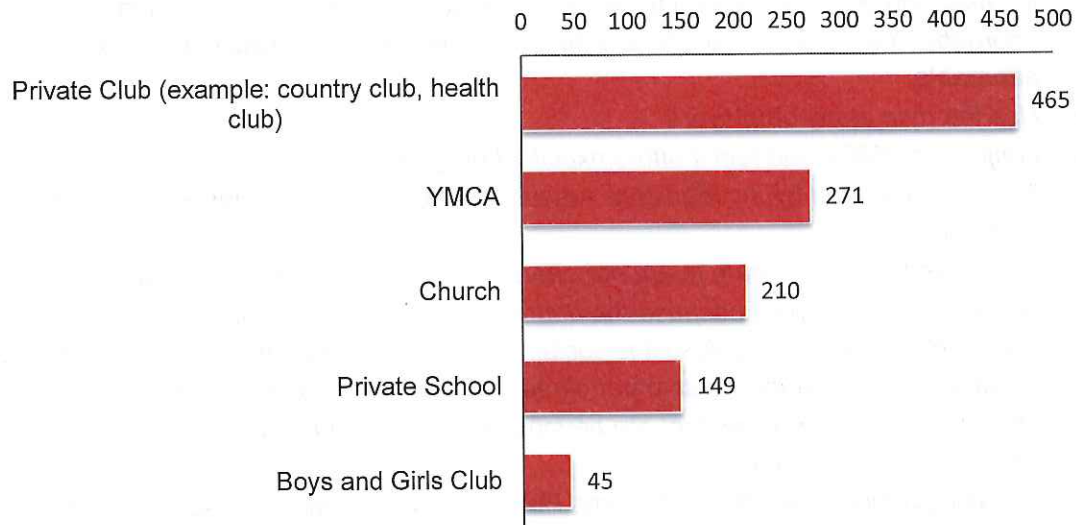
Figure 3.7: Do you travel outside Brookhaven to use parks and recreation facilities?



When we asked why they travel outside of Brookhaven, we had 567 comments. The most comment response mentioned Piedmont Park (approximately 128) others mentioned parks in Dunwoody, specifically Brook Run, as well as Atlanta Parks such as Chastain Park, and the Beltline. Respondents also mentioned Sandy Springs/Morgan Park, East Cobb, Cobb County parks, Chamblee parks, the Silver Comet Trail, state parks and other facilities.

Next, we asked, “do you use recreation facilities offered by a church or other private providers?”

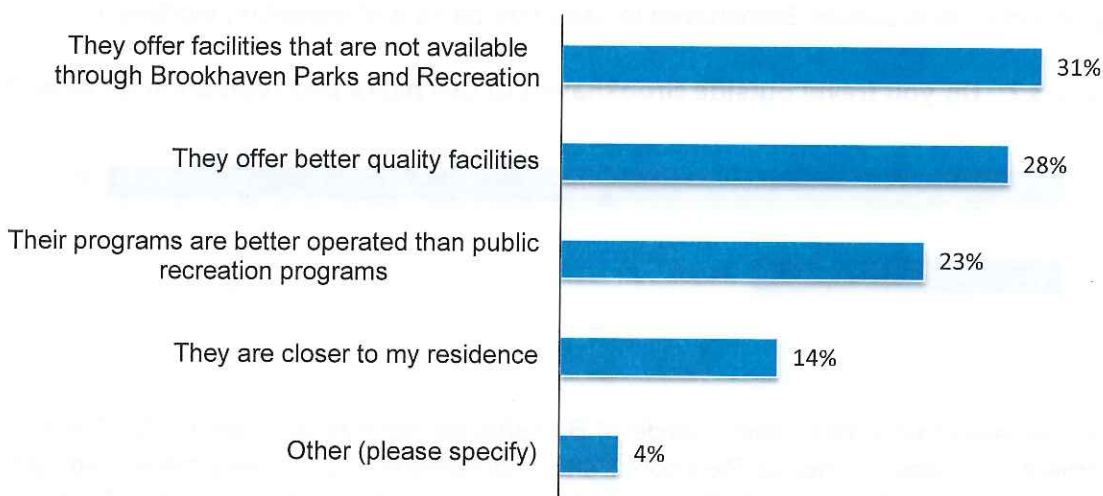
Figure 3.8: Other Providers



To understand why respondents use these other providers, we find that, mostly, it is because the other providers offer facilities not provided by Brookhaven (31%) and/or the facilities are better quality (28%). (See Figure 3.9)



Figure 3.9: Factors that influence use of other facilities.



Under “other” comments included the following:

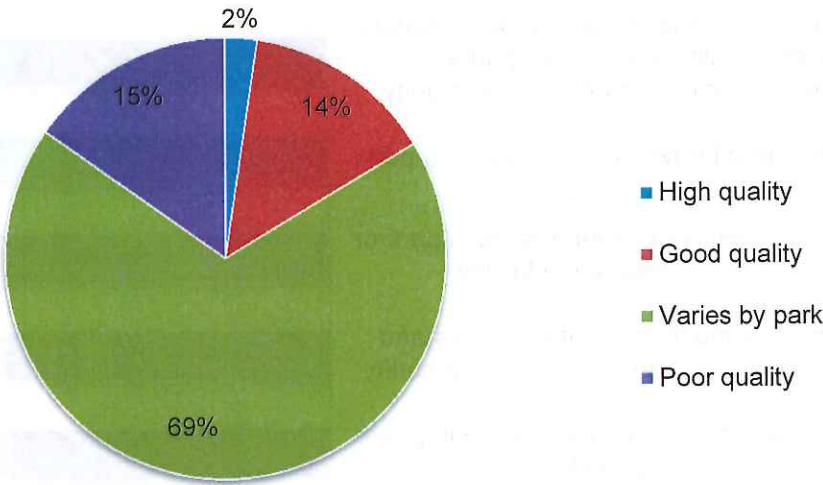
- *The city park system does not need to do everything. So for exercise programs there is the YMCA or other programs. We do not need our parks to be in charge of large buildings and expansive programs or for that matter an amphitheater. Just take care of our parks, which is something that hasn't been done in a long time.*
- *My husband goes to Dynamo because it is close, well run, year-round and affordable. I used to pay to attend a fitness center because it was close and affordable.*
- *Use the gym at my employers*
- *I enjoy the YMCA and feel it offers excellent programs.*
- *They are operated by my Medicare Advantage program and comes with my health insurance.*
- *Programs that I participate in are not offered currently in Brookhaven P&R*
- *We go to a private pool because the hours are better, there is shade and seating, and there is a clubhouse. Also it is social. We've used a church for summer camp as an alternate to Chamblee's summer camp, but we prefer Camp Chamblee.*
- *The YMCA offers services that are beyond the function of municipal government, and it should remain thus.*
- *Speaking a bit toward MC pool. Dirty, Horrible hours for any working parent, the only shade or tables are given to the campers, horrible bathrooms and you have to request toilet paper, no Family Days or Movie Nights anymore....very poor when compared to every other DeKalb county pool.*
- *I'm not aware of any gym with workout equipment available in Brookhaven parks.*
- *Rec Center is typically closed evening/weekend when we are home to use them.*



Overall Performance

Respondents were asked to rate the condition of Brookhaven's park facilities. This question provides insight into the overall perception of the parks. We found only 14% rated the park facilities as "good quality." In comparison to a similar survey question asked in other communities, this rating is low. We find that most respondents in this survey selected "varies by park" at 69%. This finding is consistent with the park assessments that were conducted as part of the master plan process. These facilities in need of repair may affect the view of the overall system. For this reason, we were not surprised to see only 2% of respondents gave a "high quality" rating.

Figure 3.10: How would you rate the condition of Brookhaven's park facilities.

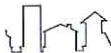


In order to get a better understanding of the facility priorities, we asked respondents to indicate if you "agree," "disagree" or "do not know" about the following statements (see Figure 3.11 and the top five choices). Note the high number of positive responses as opposed to the low number of disagree responses.

Notably, 94% (756 respondents) to this question feel that a good parks and recreation system is just as important as schools, fire and police protection. As shown in Figure 3.11, this statement had the second highest selection for "agree."

The top five "Agree" choices were:

- I support the city's effort to improve Brookhaven Parks' facilities and programs.
- Compared to other priorities (public safety, streets, utilities, schools), parks and recreation is important to a community.
- I feel that I have good access to a park.
- I feel safe when visiting a park or recreation facility.
- I understand the role of the Parks and Recreation Department in our community.



The top five “Disagree” choices were:

- I feel safe when visiting a park or recreation facility.
- I am willing to help with fundraisers to improve our parks.
- I am able to contact parks and recreation staff for information easily.
- Additional sport fields are needed.
- Parks are well distributed.

Figure 3.11: Please indicate if you agree, disagree or do not know about the following statements.

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Do not know

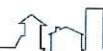
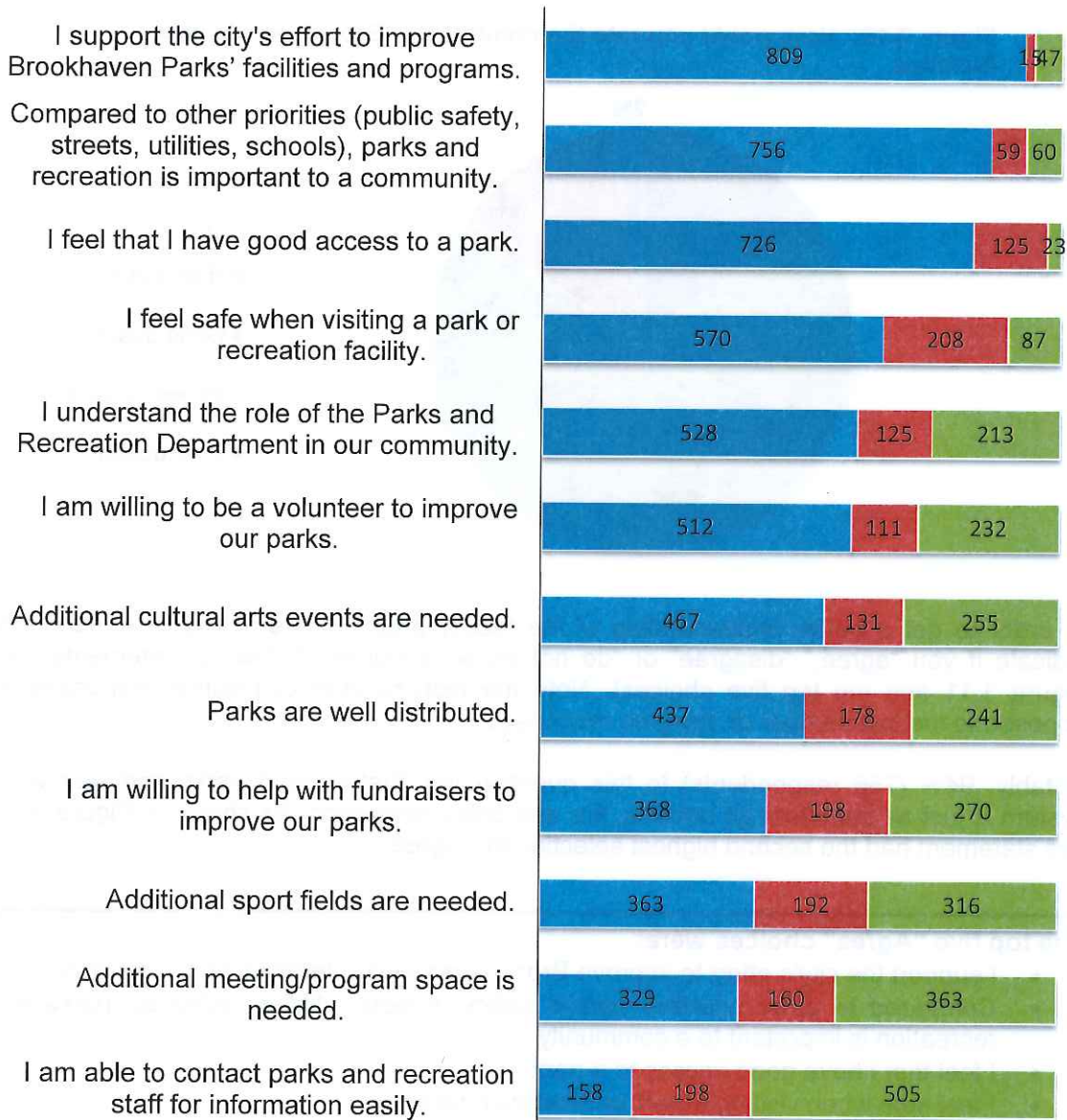
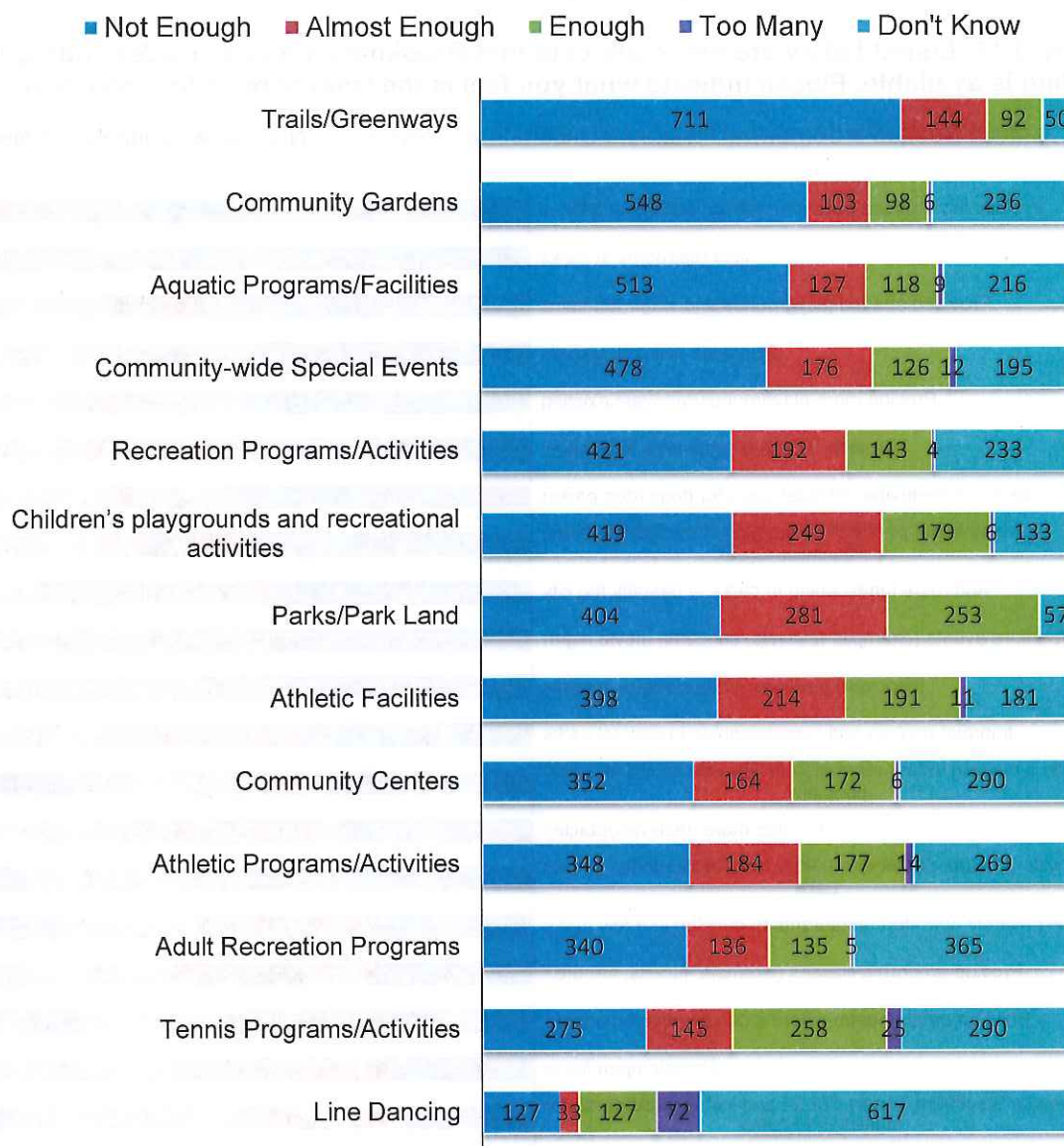


Figure 3.12: Overall, how well do you think the following facilities, former programs and activities previously provided by DeKalb County met the needs of the community? Please check appropriate response.



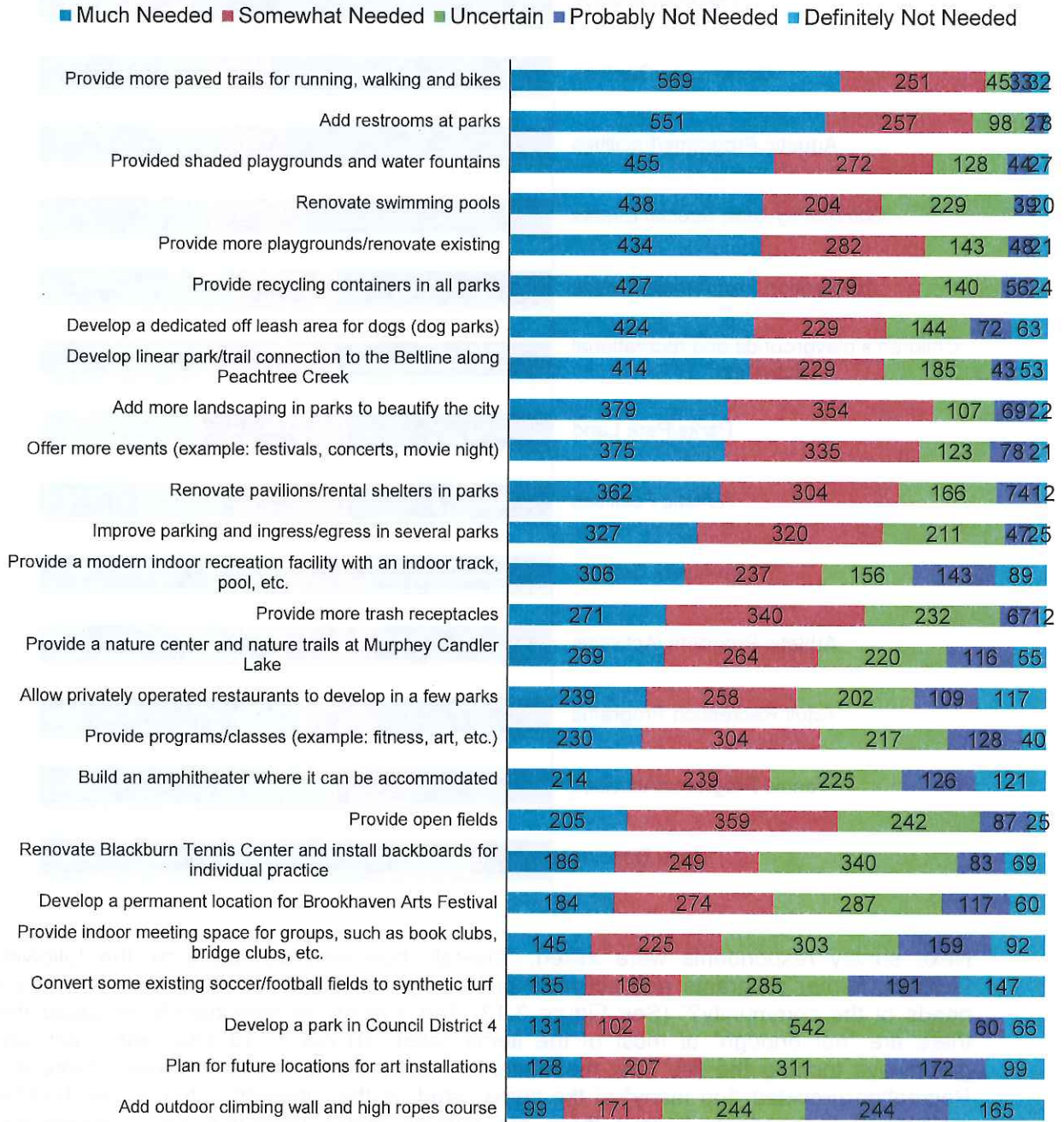
Next, survey respondents were asked, “Overall, how well do you think the following facilities, former programs and activities previously provided by DeKalb County met the needs of the community?” (See Figure 3.12) The majority of respondents indicated that there are “not enough” of most of the items listed (10 out of 13 total) with trails and greenways topping the list. Few respondents indicated that the Brookhaven Parks and Recreation provided “too many” of the items listed. In the “enough” category, we find the majority of respondents believe there are enough tennis programs and activities and parkland.



Facility Priorities

In order to get a better understanding of the facilities priorities, we asked respondents to help prioritize funding improvements (see Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13: Listed below are some projects that Brookhaven may consider adding if funding is available. Please indicate what you feel is the level of need for each item.



Below are the top five selected as “most needed”, the top five “somewhat” and “much needed” and five “definitely not needed” items.

Top five most needed:

- Provide more paved trails for running, walking and bikes (569 responses)
- Add restrooms at parks (551 responses)
- Provided shaded playgrounds and water fountains (455 responses)
- Renovate swimming pools (438 responses)
- Provide more playgrounds/renovate existing (434 responses)

Top five somewhat AND much needed:

- Provide more paved trails for running, walking and bikes (820 responses combined)
- Add restrooms at parks (808 responses combined)
- Add more landscaping in parks to beautify the city (733 responses combined)
- Provided shaded playgrounds and water fountains (727 responses combined)
- Provide more playgrounds/renovate existing (716 responses combined)

Top five definitely not needed:

- Add outdoor climbing wall and high ropes course (165 responses)
- Convert some existing soccer/football fields to synthetic turf to increase access to more users (147 responses)
- Build an amphitheater where it can be accommodated (121 responses)
- Allow privately operated restaurants to develop in a few parks (117 responses)
- Plan for future locations for art installations (99 responses)

In reviewing answers for this question, it is clear that responders desire more paved trails for running, walking and riding bikes. They also support adding restrooms at parks and providing shaded playgrounds and water fountains at parks. We notice that adding an outdoor climbing walk and high ropes course scored low on this question. Given some of the comments at the end of the survey, Lose & Associates’ researchers believe one reason for the low score is due to safety concerns. Additional community outreach with a focus on safety concerns would be needed if the city considers adding this type of facility in the future. Notable, we find an overall low amount of votes given to the top “definitely not needed” items.

In order to determine if respondents support or oppose building a recreation center, we asked the following question and found that a majority (74.5%) would support it: however, based on some comments found in the following question, some residents feel it could compete with the existing YMCA facility.

Figure 3.14: Do you support or oppose Brookhaven developing a modern large recreation center that allows year-round programming of recreation and athletic programs?

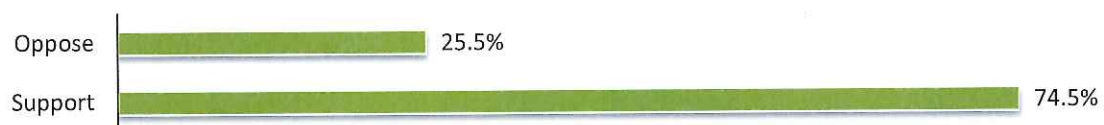
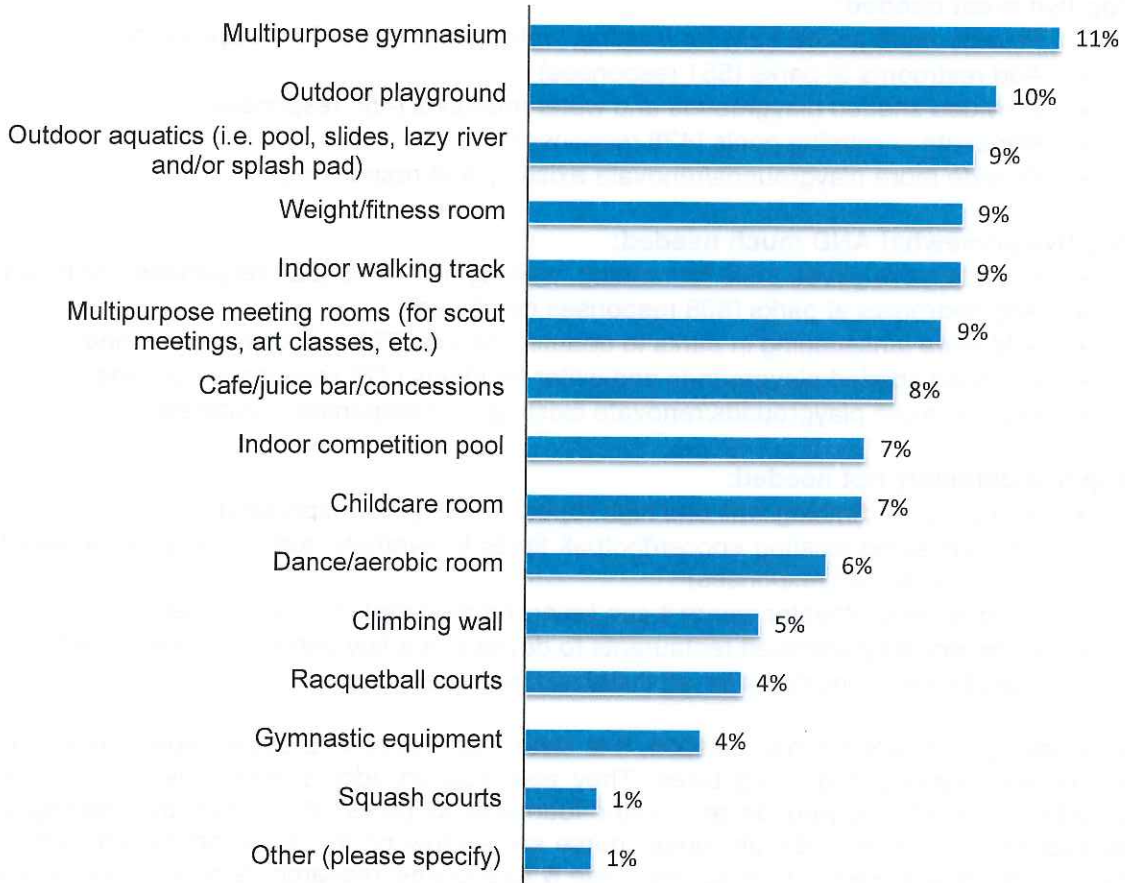


Figure 3. 15: If Brookhaven were to build a large recreation center, which of the components listed below should be included? Please check all components you want included.

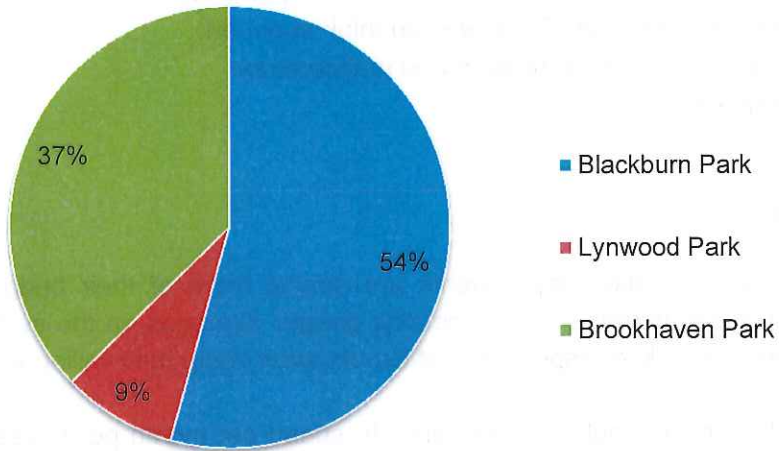


Comments provided in “Other(please specify)” included, spin room, basketball court, tennis courts, pickleball, ping pong tables. Several also reiterated the need for a pool facility. Approximately 20% of the 76 comments indicated “none” and/or mentioned concerns over the need for such as facilities, mentioning that improvements to the pools at Briarwood Park and Murphey Candler Park would be enough.

Next, we asked respondents which park would you choose as the location for the Brookhaven Arts Festival? We find that the majority are supportive of moving the festival to Blackburn Park with 54% (540 votes) supporting it over Brookhaven with 37% (370 votes) and Lynwood Park 9% (83 votes) for a total of 993 responses to this question.



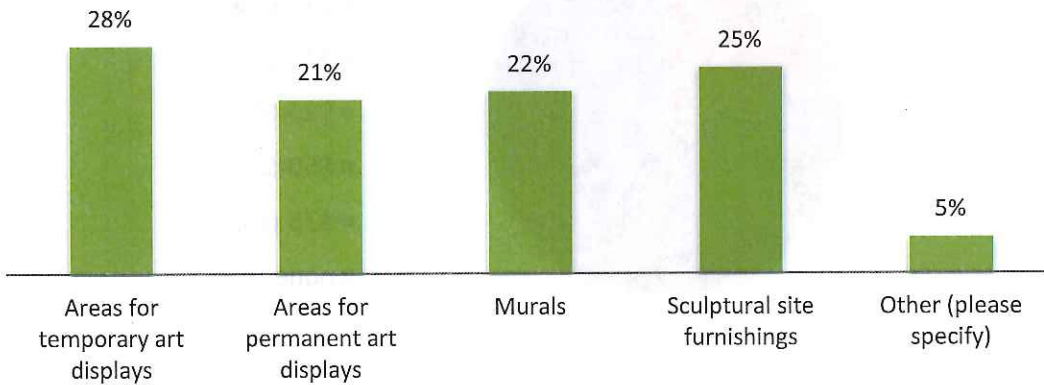
Figure 3. 16: From the list of Brookhaven Parks below, which park would you choose as the location for the Brookhaven Arts Festival?



54% SUPPORT

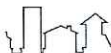
Cultural arts can be an important part of park enjoyment. With this in mind, Lose & Associates' researchers asked what types of art installations would you like to see in the parks.

Figure 3.16: Please check all types of art installations you would like to see in Brookhaven Parks.



Of the comments under "other," most respondents noted that they do not want to see art at Brookhaven Park. Other comments include:

- Bike trails, basketball courts
- Water gardens/ fountains
- A mural at Peachtree and Redding Road



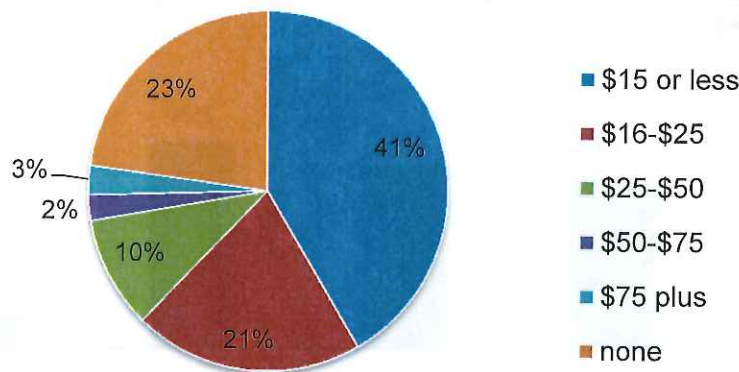
- Botanical Gardens
- I'd like to see better maintained playground equipment. I don't see a need for art. Parks are parks not art displays.
- Not sure what you mean. Let's clean up our parks first, make them safe and work to improve what we have. Then we can think about art.
- None- spend money on upkeep and maintenance
- Interactive art

Funding

Many parks and recreation departments are seeing more of their budgets cut and tax payers resisting any increase to fees despite greater demands on the system. In our next set of questions, we asked respondents of Brookhaven about their willingness to contribute.

We asked, "How much would you be willing to spend per month per household to support improved park maintenance and recreation services?" We found that overall, 77% would be willing to provide some type of financial support for improved park maintenance and recreation services with only 23% unwilling to provide any support. See figure 3.17 for a breakdown of the categories.

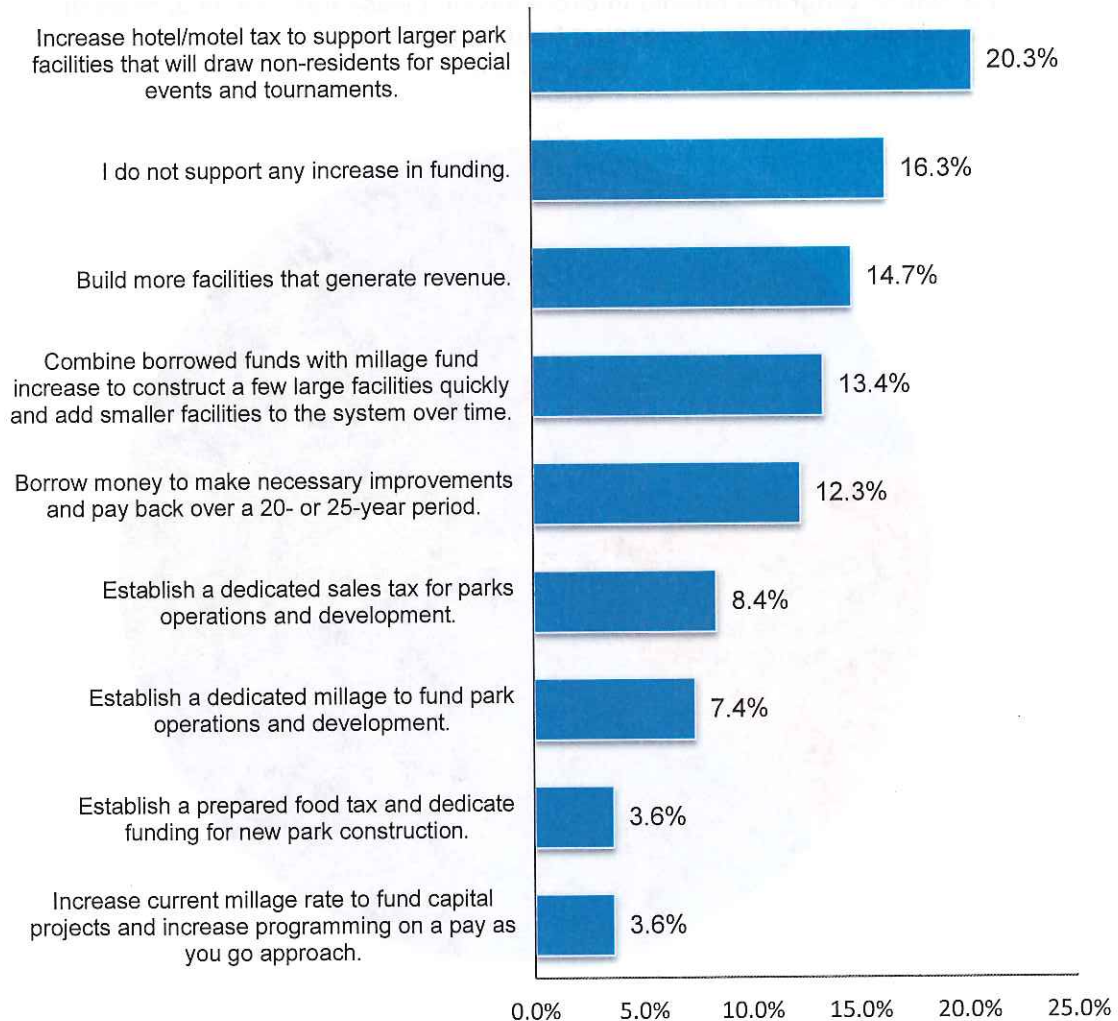
Figure 3.17: How much would you be willing to spend per month per household to support improved park maintenance and recreation facilities and services? (Check ONE)



The following question asked respondents what methods of funding they prefer for parkland acquisition, greenway and park facility renovation and development. Respondents were asked to indicate all funding options that they would support. The strongest support was "increase lodging tax to support larger park facilities that will draw non-residents for special events and tournaments" followed by "I do not support any increase in funding."



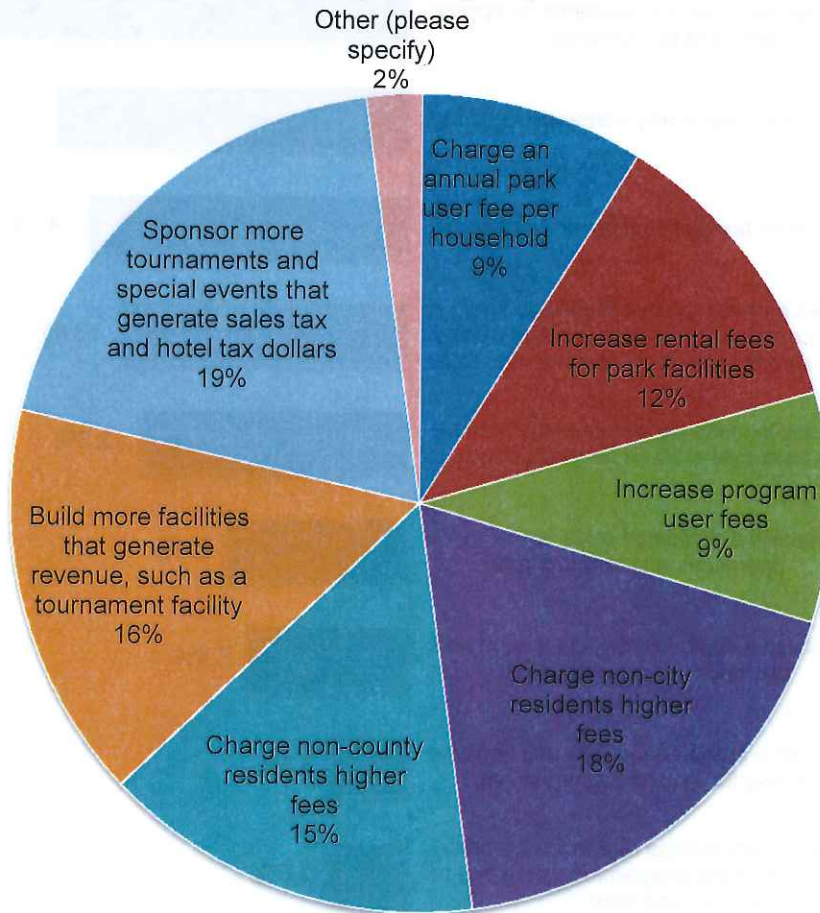
Figure 3.18: Which method of funding for park land acquisition, greenway and park facility renovation and development would you prefer?



In order to generate revenue to improve park maintenance and recreation programs offered in Brookhaven, we asked respondents to indicate all options that you would support for increasing funding for parks. The most popular answer was, “Sponsor more tournaments and special events that generate sales tax and hotel tax dollars” and “Charge non-city residents higher fees.” The least favorite options were “Charge an annual park user fee per household” which tied with “Increase program user fee.”



Figure 3.19: In order to generate needed revenue to improve parks and recreation programs offered in Brookhaven, please indicate all options that you would support for increasing funding for parks:

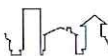


When asked what other ideas that respondents had for generating revenue, they stated that funding levels were fine and the city needs to spend wisely. Below are some additional comments from respondents (note: some answers were combined and/or paraphrased).

- *Love the idea of sponsored walks/runs and tournaments to generate revenue, awareness, and things to do. Also would love to see more food events with portion of proceeds to help parks*
- *Hold fund raising events*



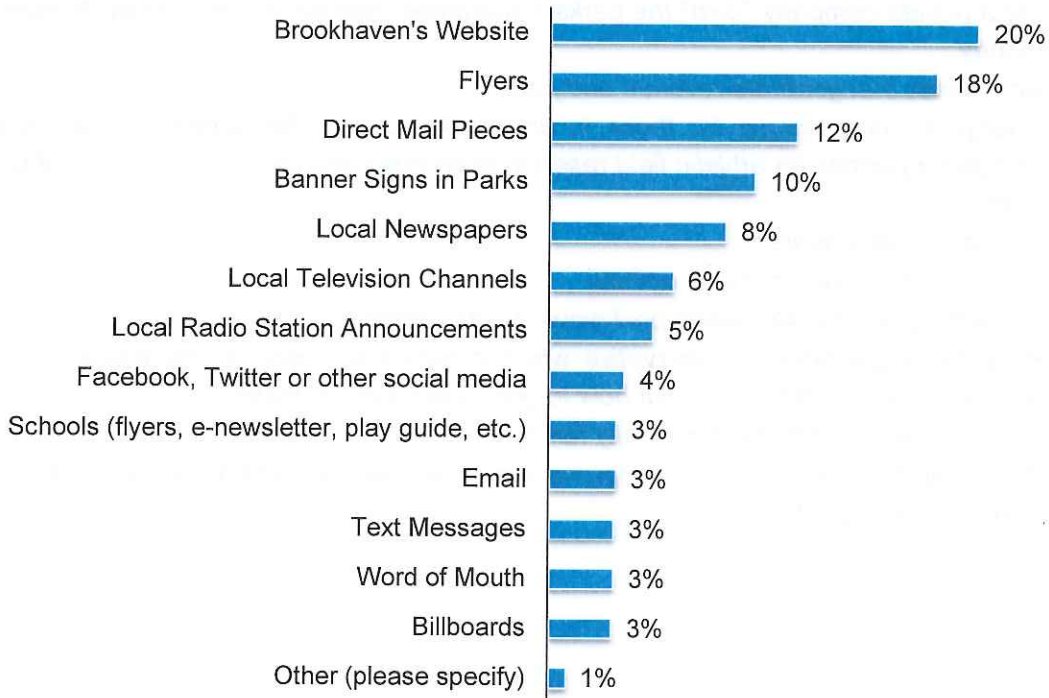
- *I do not fundamentally believe that we should be viewing our parks as a means to generate funding. We pay a considerable sum of taxes that can be used for this purpose.*
- *Increase gasoline taxes to get people out of their cars and onto trails and into parks with their families.*
- *Impact fees for new developments*
- *Homeowners should incur the cost of supporting high quality parks and facilities and keep costs down for general public users*
- *Allow commercial enterprises to establish facilities that pay rent. We don't have to run everything.*
- *Let a private company "own" the parks-I guarantee they will figure out how to make money.*
- *Art classes that generate revenue and jobs*
- *Charge for dog license for those in dog parks, charge for permits for shelters, charge for permits for athletic field reserve-all charges should be more for out of city users*
- *Disc golf tournaments*
- *I do not support any of these options*
- *Something like the Alpharetta pool would be awesome!*
- *Keep the expectations conservative when it comes to spending the money. That way, you don't have to figure out how to generate so much money.*
- *Parks are an amenity funded by city funds*
- *We generate enough money to improve & maintain facilities and amortize the debt*
- *Start a benevolent fund*



Marketing

To determine how individuals find out about upcoming activities, the survey asked respondents to indicate the most common method for obtaining information about Brookhaven's recreation events and programs. The most common information dissemination methods were through the Brookhaven Parks and Recreation Website (20%). The next most common method was "flyers" (18%). See Figure 3.21.

Figure 3.20: Please indicate which of the following ways you currently as well as prefer to get information about events and programs?

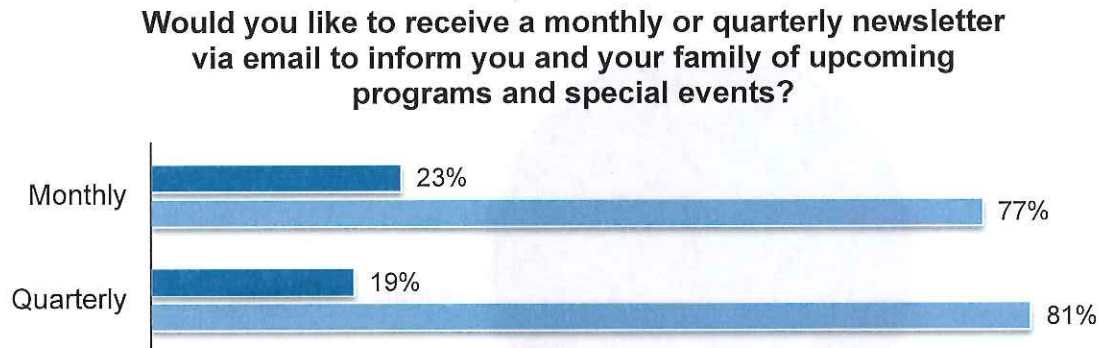


The Lose & Associates' researchers found the website to be up to date and easy to use. We found the calendar of events listed on the website helpful and suggested using an emailed monthly newsletter to publicize upcoming events. We recommend reviewing Team Green's website at www.teamgreenadventures.com for an example of a simple newsletter that provides a user-friendly and simple format for its members.



Below is the response to receiving a monthly or quarterly newsletter. We believe that Brookhaven should provide a monthly newsletter to keep users more informed about parks and recreation by having a sign-up on the Brookhaven website and an unsubscribe option on the newsletter itself.

Figure 3.21: Do you prefer a monthly or quarterly newsletter?

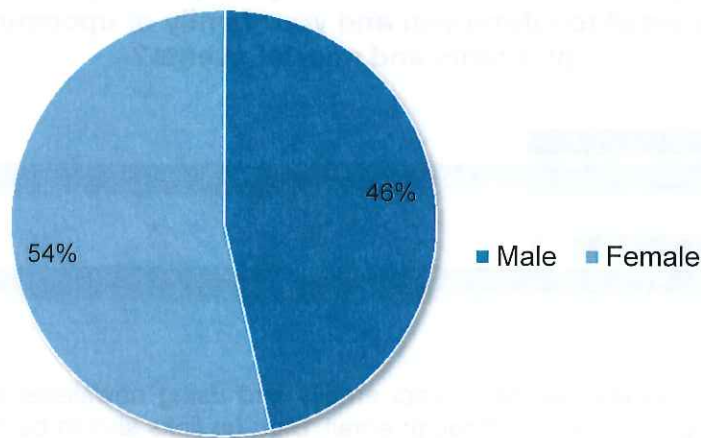


Brookhaven could consider sending direct emails and using newsletter services such as [Emma](#) or [MailChimp](#) for marketing through email. Sign-up links should be marketed through the Brookhaven website and through other social media outlets. The newsletters could solely focus on parks and recreation or include other city related information. Additional efforts might include utilizing radio advertising, which can be one of the most cost-efficient forms of advertising.

Respondents' Demographics

We find that for the gender and age groups of respondents (see Figure 3.32); females represented the majority of respondents in the surveys (54%), which is typically the case in the surveys we have conducted.

Figure 3.22: Please indicate your gender.



Lose & Associates' researchers found the majority of the respondents were in the 35-44 age groups (32%).

Figure 3.23: Please indicate your age.

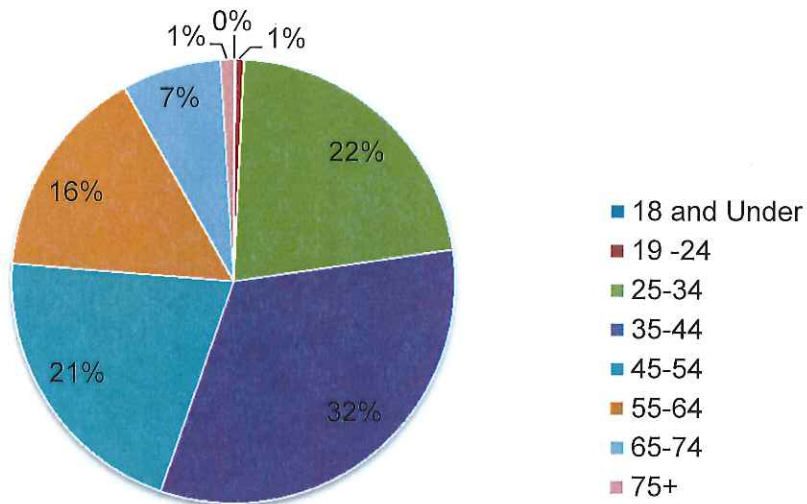


Figure 3.24 is a chart indicating how long respondents have lived in Brookhaven. The majority have lived in Brookhaven 6-10 years (29%)

Figure 3.24: How long have you lived in Brookhaven?

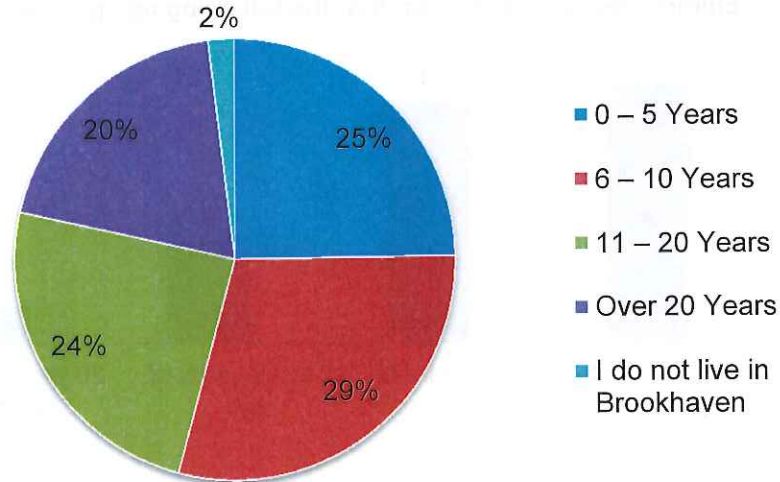


Figure 3.25 is a chart of the respondents' household types. The majority of respondents were couples with children (53%). Of those respondents that had children in their homes, most had children under 5 years old (374 total). The next most common household for the respondents was couples with children but children no longer at home (347 total).

Figure 3.25: Which of the following best describes your household?

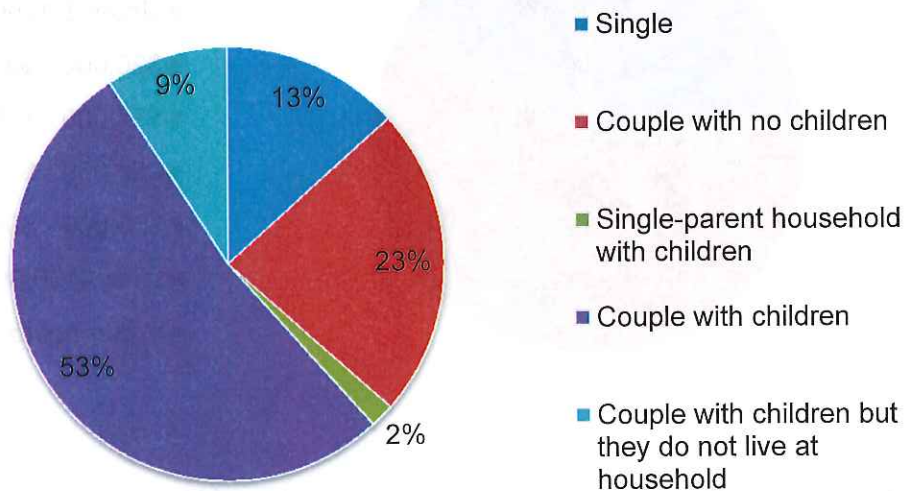
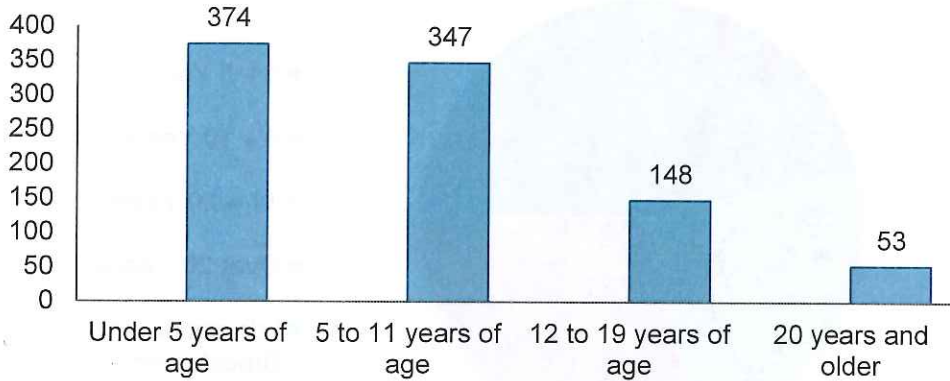
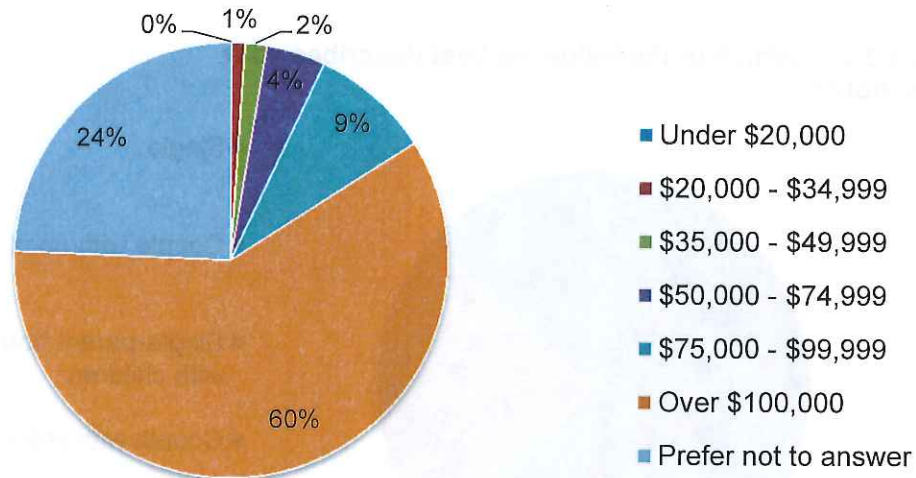


Figure 3.26: If you have children at home, how many children do you have in each of the following age groups?

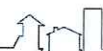


The next charts illustrate respondent's income and housing status. In summary, 60% make over \$100,000 in total annual household income and 96% of respondents own their own home. We also found that 96% of the respondents are homeowners.

Figure 3.37: What is your total annual household income?



The last question in the survey asked, "Do you have any additional comments?" We had almost 320 responses (listed on the following pages).



Do you have any additional comments? Open-Ended Response

- I have lived in the Murphey Candler neighborhood for 41 years and love our park but it is in terrible shape from the eroding of the lake shore the dangerous playgrounds, the overgrown vegetation, broken fences , tennis courts in bad shape, needed general maintenance on trails and shelters. I do think the baseball and football programs at Murphey Candler have always been our biggest asset as they have always kept the fields in first rate condition with great volunteers!! It is well known everywhere and a great program for our young children. Hopefully this will stay the same. From the meetings I have attended about the parks in Brookhaven most have lots of problems that we need to address. So my suggestion for our parks is that we first clean them up and then improve with what we have making them safe and enjoyable. That would include safe playgrounds and good maintenance!!.*

I would love to see separate small and large dog parks as well as lighted tennis courts. I am a walker and it's very dangerous to walk to parks because of the lack of sidewalks in Brookhaven neighborhoods.
- If you have to pick one area to improve immediately, it would be the playground equipment. For example, Ashford Park has had the same playground for over 25 years. It is sorely in need of replacing. If you focused on updating the playground equipment in all of the parks, you would most likely see a lot of happy residents, especially those with children. :-) Thank you for listening to my opinion!*
- Higher quality parks for Brookhaven should be a priority. Increased budgets are good, but attention should be paid to the promises/projections made when city was incorporated. In particular, the idea of amphitheater might seem tempting to some, but traffic and surrounding infrastructure make it very difficult to see this as a benefit rather than as a grandiose idea that would simple compete with other nearby venues. Parkland acquisition and improvement should be approached with the idea that the first order of business should be the basics - open space, green space, activities that can encourage participation by all age groups, some emphasis on facilities for younger families. Use historically successful park projects as models, rather than ideas that may flourish for only a limited amount of time.*

I support any development of trails, walks - anything that encourages walking for all ages.
- Some facilities are in good shape (baseball, softball, football) but the pools are in terrible condition and swim team needs a serious boost! We spend about \$75/month for gym memberships and would be happy to move that money to Brookhaven if we were able to receive similar services. Tear down the Murphey Candler ugly house by the ball park!*
- Parks are so important to the quality of life for all ages. Brookhaven has a need for updated and new facilities.*
- Is the purchase of Bill Morrison's property a possibility? If so, a park with an outdoor pool would be beautiful there! Thanks for this survey.*
- We would support a pool at Ashford Park with membership fee*

Would love more playgrounds.



- *Please get toilets in our parks. thanks.*
- *I would love to see separate small and large dog parks as well as lighted tennis courts. I am a walker and it's very dangerous to walk to parks because of the lack of sidewalks in Brookhaven neighborhoods.*
- *We really need a city indoor pool facility (with usage fee is fine). Right now, there are no indoor pool options anywhere near unless you join the Y. There are many times during the winter I wish we were near to one. As it is now, we drive out to Gwinnett County to use an indoor pool.*
- *I've coached over 70 soccer teams at the Adymca and Buckhead and we need soccer facilities badly. Concorde hogs all the local fields and schools and the recreation teams get the shaft. It's going on as I type!*
- *We need to solve the traffic issues in Brookhaven prior to developing massive recreational centers. We have a HUGE traffic problem on Ashford-Dunwoody and we won't be able to handle high-volume activities at Blackburn or Murphey Candler Parks.*
- *This survey was heavy on references to Blackburn Park, which is disturbing. It already is the nicest park in the city. Other parks need love too. Also, few, large parks are a disservice because of large city size and traffic congestion, so getting there would be tough. More connectivity of alternative transport, and more parks is better.*
- *I'm obviously not familiar with all Brookhaven parks. but am interested in learning more. Perhaps an e-mail listing the parks and addresses would be helpful. I would like to see natural areas in parks and unpaved trails -- not all buildings, fields and pavement.*
- *Briarwood Pool and recreation center need desperately to be remodeled, updated, & enhanced to be in keeping with the improvements & developments from the communities and subdivision surrounding this park (we want it to be similar to Garden Hills). Our community is very involved and will continue to support Briarwood park and Brookhaven to continue improvements to Briarwood so that it is the best it can be.*
- *We live in Lynwood Park and never went to the pool last season. Having a 2 year old and 4 year old we want to use the pool but the hours are 12-6 5 days a week. Not open on Sunday. Even if they could open at 10 one day a week or stay open until 8 one day it would help. Being open both weekend days would also help.*
- *I appreciate being able to use Brookhaven park to play Ultimate Frisbee. I bring my wife and kids there and there is a playground (older), but also shade trees to sit under. The dog owners are for the most part agreeable and pick up their mess, but there needs to be more garbage cans and it would be nice to have an accessible (and clean, which is the hard part for sure) bathroom. Members from our group helped with maintaining the park and I think that's a good way to bring the community together as well as save money.*

One of the reasons we supported the creation of Brookhaven was to keep local tax dollars here and to use those to make our parks better. I want to see how those funds can be used before the city proposes bonds or increased taxes for new facilities. Also, a city-owned recreation center is not a priority unless it was a public-private partnership that would be minimal cost to city residents. The number one capital project that the city should focus on is multi-use trails and connectivity.

Access to the parks by walking and bicycle are very important. Currently many of the parks are surrounded by busy streets with no crosswalks or bike ways to get there.



Summary of Public Input

The public input process helped us gather information from staff, stakeholders, steering committee and residents. The survey respondents' demographics were similar to the community demographics as a whole and included both users and non-park users, which is why it is such an important component of the overall response. When comparing staff workshop comments to citizen workshop comments and survey results, we find, while some had stronger desires for specific facilities over others, the overall direction for future improvements was relatively parallel among the groups. The priorities were also consistent with the deficiencies noted during the planning team's analysis of the current parks and recreation system.

In summary, the public input process brought forward consistent themes. Below highlights some of the insight gained during the process and opinions expressed by a majority of respondents:

- Provide more paved trails for running, walking and bikes – connect parks to neighborhoods and other area attractions
- Provide clean, well-maintained restrooms at all parks
- Provide shaded playgrounds and water fountains at parks
- Desire for renovations at existing pool facilities, longer pool hours and new pools and aquatic facilities
- Provide more classes such as yoga and gardening
- There is a strong willingness to walk and bike to parks
- More marketing is needed to promote events. Consider using direct email newsletter to promote facilities and programs.

Various funding solutions were discussed throughout the public input process. The response by survey participants support increase to hotel/motel tax to support larger park facilities that will draw non-residents for specific events and tournaments.

In conclusion, the people of Brookhaven want programs that meet their needs and the needs of their families; they want walking and biking trails; they want to feel safe at their parks; they want facilities that will provide a range of recreation opportunities; and they want to be informed along the way. They want parks that are convenient and not overcrowded and they want the parks to be well maintained and safe.



Summary of Public Input

The summary of public input is provided in the following table. The table lists the comments received from the public and the response to those comments. The table is organized into two columns: "Comments" and "Responses".

The following table provides a summary of the public input received during the public input process. The table lists the comments received from the public and the response to those comments.

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