ROANOKE
PARKS AND RECREATION

Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
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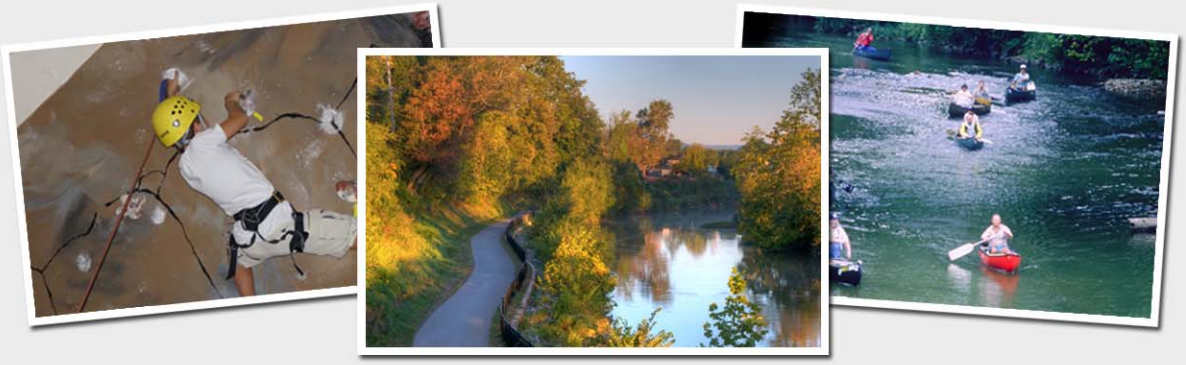
Roanoke Parks and Recreation

UPDATE TO THE 2007 MASTER PLAN

AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 9, 2013



pros consulting LLC

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City of Roanoke

Citizens of Roanoke, Virginia

Steve Buschor, Director of Parks & Recreation
Michael Clark, Parks and Recreation Manager

Nationally Accredited Staff of Roanoke Parks & Recreation

Project Manager
Donnie Underwood, Parks & Greenways Planner

PROS Consulting

Leon Younger, President
Neelay Bhatt, Vice-President and Project Manager
Sarah Durham – Consultant

Endorsements

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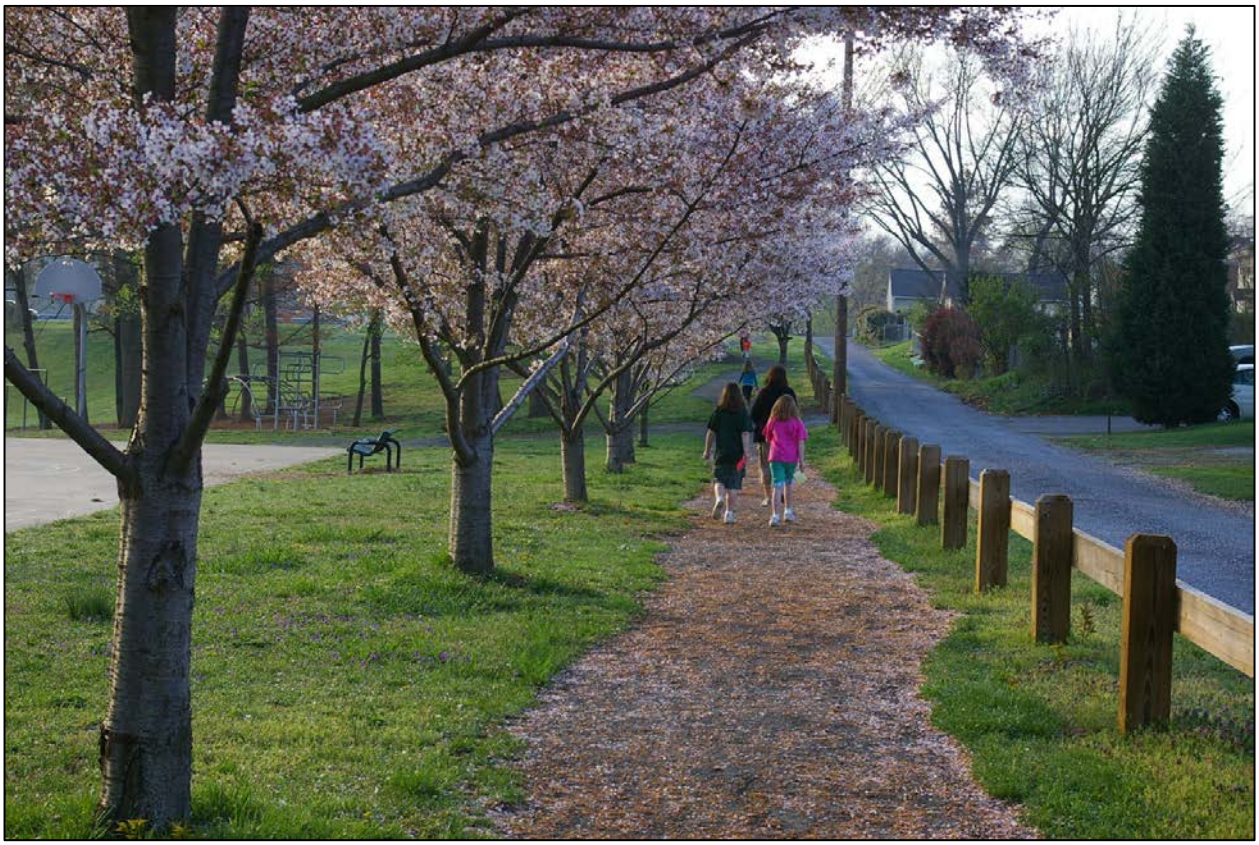
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Roanoke desired to update its Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The previous parks and recreation master plan was completed in 2007 and the City, in keeping with its progressive and proactive attitude, chose to undertake a 5 year update. Through the commitment from City Council to provide high quality parks, recreation facilities, and recreation programs for residents, many of the goals set in the previous master plan were achieved.



This Master Plan update will enable the City to recalibrate its goals and actions as a result of evolving community needs, constantly changing trends and the new economic normal that exists in light of the economic downturn that occurred after the initial Master Plan was completed. The plan's recommendations will focus on meeting the needs of the changing demographics and ensure sustainable operations of the City's parks, open spaces greenways and trails

1.2 PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an updated assessment of the general needs and opportunities and strategies to address those needs. The analysis conducted seeks to provide direction to City staff and the City Council for future development and enhancement of the City's park system, open space, greenways, trails, recreation facilities, recreation programs, and services.

While this is a forward looking and dynamic action plan, the Consulting team wanted to ensure that the current update furthers the 2007 Master Plan in areas where continuity is required and redirects it in areas where updated strategies and action items are merited.

CHAPTER TWO - COMMUNITY / STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The PROS team along with the City of Roanoke staff undertook a wide public input and participation process as part of this *Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update.* Focus groups and stakeholder meetings as well as public meetings were held on September 13-14, 2012.

Eight (8) stakeholder focus groups and one (1) open community meeting and a statistically-valid third-party citizen survey were all used to collect the plan's foundational data.

2.1 INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

The qualitative data collected included multiple focus groups and community meetings. A summary of the public input opportunities to date is provided below.

Note: *The findings listed below are solely the opinion of the attendees at these meetings and do not reflect the overall community, staff or the consultant's opinion.*

- Eight (8) stakeholder group interviews and focus groups were conducted to be representative, but not exhaustive of interests affecting parks and recreation in the City of Roanoke. These sessions included:
    - Stakeholders
    - Users and non-users of the parks and recreation system
    - Parks, recreation, sports and trail user groups
    - Biking and Hiking groups
    - Business and community leaders
- One (1) open community meeting was conducted in order to capture representative interests, needs, and priorities of residents through an open forum. The meeting was organized and promoted locally and was very well attended with well over 100 community members participating

The quantitative input included the following:

- A community-wide mail survey was conducted by Leisure Vision/ETC Institute which gathered users and non-users input to help establish priorities for the future development and improvements of parks, trails and recreation facilities in the City of Roanoke. 298 households' surveys were completed with a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-5.7%.

2.2 GENERAL FINDINGS

2.2.1 STRENGTHS

The key strengths of the system centered on:

	Strengths
1.	***The Staff (responsive and collaborative)***
2.	***Variety of offerings***
3.	***Trails and Greenways***
4.	***Outdoor Facilities***
5.	***Operations and Maintenance (within available resources)***
6.	***Communication and Outreach***

2.2.1.1 STAFF AND COLLABORATION

- Council support is encouraging
- Collaborative staff (communication/culture)
- Forward-looking (responsive) staff
- Partnerships(collaboration with other jurisdictions, sports tourism) are encouraged
- staff is very responsive with a can-do attitude
- Collaboration for accessible, healthy recreation options for wellness/improved health (i.e. greenways)
- Encouraging community input and acting upon it
- Creativity
- They do a good job based on limited resources
- Staff is progressive and in-tune with changing community needs
- Staff is nice, responsive and accessible to users
- Staff is progressive and innovative/open to new ideas
- Staff professionalism is commendable
- Staff is always open to working with volunteer groups (athletics and trails) and cultural groups (non-profits)
- Appreciation and support of diversity is a plus
- Utilization of volunteers and volunteer partnerships are encouraged
- Staff has been a reliable and responsible partner with non-profits, i.e. Local Colors and Kiwanis Club

- Urban Forestry leaders
- Landscape architectural services (environmentally sensitive design)
- There is a strong focus on economic development

2.2.1.2 VARIETY OF OFFERINGS

- Abundant park lands/spaces/active/passive
- Unique cultural events
- Types of events/races
- Creative challenges and types of programs
    - 100 miles in 100 days program (city council and leadership support)
- Diversity of offerings, events, programs
- Lots/variety of parks for everyone and greenspaces too
- Recreation sports options for kids
- Participation and support for non-mainstream sports
- Availability of land and open space
- Outdoor programming (classes and events)
- Offer park programs for everyone
- Variety and number of events/races is great
- Activities attracting young professionals (outdoor activities like kickball leagues)
- Balanced offerings (active sports vs. outdoors)
- Organized sports/events/leagues

2.2.1.3 TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

- Trail system
- Greenways: enviro-friendly, good signage, restrooms
- Greenways
- Implementation of greenways
- Bike routes
- Accessibility/connectivity for overall park network
- Natural trails
- Connect Mill Mountain trails to the Roanoke River Greenway and Garden City neighborhood

2.2.1.4 OUTDOOR AMENITIES

- Making good headway with Carvins Cove
- Mill Mountain Park

- Discovery Center
- Carvins cove and mill mountain trails/maintenance

2.2.1.5 MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

- Maintenance is good despite limited resources
- Use performance metrics to drive results
- They avoid duplication of services
- They are good financial stewards
- Good value in pricing
- Intelligent mowing
- ADA accessibility
- Value for money, fair pricing
- Progressive
- Equity in park distribution
- Serves a regional audience of all age segments

2.2.1.6 COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications (PLAY, new website, FB, social media, emails)
- Communications are informative and well-targeted
- Marketing Roanoke's outdoors (to visit/relocate)
- Community engagement/Play/Events
- Promotion and focus on outdoor recreation

2.2.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

	Opportunities
1.	***River Access and Additional Water-based recreation***
2.	***Facility Needs including sports fields and courts / picnic facilities and Skateboard / BMX space***
3.	***Parks, Trails and Greenways (wider, interconnected with more staff support)***
4.	***Upkeep and Maintenance (update and maintain what exists)***
5.	***Collaboration (Schools, Local Groups and Regional Jurisdictions)***
6.	***Communication (Increased Awareness and Better Customer Service)***
7.	***Operations (Prioritized resource allocation)***

2.2.2.1 WATER-BASED RECREATION

- Managed trout fishing on Roanoke River between Wasena Park and Piedmont Park would be desirable
- Provide fishing opportunities and setting areas for families to experience
- Maximize opportunities at the River and create a destination
- Offer greater access to Roanoke River for canoe/kayak etc. is desired
- The River is unutilized and should be utilized more
- We would like to see white water offerings for Roanoke river
- Canoe/kayak opportunities for the Roanoke river
- Swimming hole in river
- Provide parking at canoe/kayak sites

2.2.2.2 FACILITY NEEDS

- There is a potential for Rivers Edge Park-North site for new park development
- New master plan for Rivers Edge Park-North (artificial turf fields, river access, naturally re-vegetate)
- Lack of picnic facilities throughout system; need better/modern public restrooms that are open year-round
- Need better/modern facilities
- Access to multi-generational space is critical
- 8-10 rectangular field tournament quality facility (natural turf)
- Add more public fields at Countryside Park
- Evaluate adding Indoor tennis and swimming at Countryside Park
- Tournament quality tennis courts (12) at Rivers Edge
- More sports fields for community and tournament usage (soccer/lacrosse) are required
- Need additional event space instead of fields
- Recycling
    - At sports fields (use volunteer support)
    - Sporting goods
- Skateboard/bike/BMX facility in NW and the entire City of Roanoke open skate parks for multi-use (have lights)
- Evaluate establishing more rectangular fields at Countryside
- More multi-use fields (HS has multi-use artificial turf fields)
- More picnic shelters/tables at Carvins Cove would be helpful
- Need more Community gardens (engage in mini-grant communities) / Orchards

- More 18 hole disc golf courses
- More tree canopy/geo caching on greenways would be nice
- Artificial turf and outdoor track access is desired

2.2.2.3 PARKS AND TRAILS

- Staff for Volunteer trail management: greenways and natural trails
- Update sidewalks and create safer places for bladeing and boarding
- Create greenway trails and include lighting, where possible
- Need additional on-road bike routes for active cyclists and also connectivity through trails for rec bikers, runners, walkers(use sidewalks as default)
- New mountain bike trails between Mill Mountain and Explore Park
- NE needs greenways and trails (partner with Roanoke County)
- More bike parking facilities (garages and racks)
- Use park space for food production/community gardens, tie into a holistic healthy/active living approach for department
- Connect and expand greenway and trail system into neighborhoods
- Botanical gardens and more greenspace at Countryside Park would be nice
- Wider greenway trails to provide for more opportunities in congested areas
- Staff support for trails, coordination of volunteers, nature education staff
- Geo-caching opportunities

2.2.2.4 UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE

- Update and rehab what we have
- Repurpose unused tennis courts and centralize
- Better athletic turf maintenance
- Update equipment at Rivers Edge park, expand Rivers Edge and other places where possible
- Restore/preserve historic structures
- Update aging facilities/parks/centers/pools
- Playing facilities could be better (Rivers Edge needs turf for championship play)
- Frequency and maintenance of some parks is poor
- Safety concerns with homeless population in certain parts of the system
- Manage or increase number of sports fields/better maintenance

2.2.2.5 COLLABORATION

- Partner more with non-profits and schools to spread information/marketing
- Revisit schools joint use agreement and public recreational needs

- Regional cooperation to promote sports tourism and economic impact (more fields/infrastructure planning)
- More jurisdictional collaboration (facilities/maintenance)
- Partner with neighborhood groups to build a sense of community/better leverage of existing resources
- Partnerships with other local organizations (scouting)
- Increase advocacy, minimize red-tape for volunteer support (liability)

2.2.2.6 COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

- Better communication about parks/offerings (coordinate offerings)
- Enhance customer service through reduced bureaucracy in
    - Inter-departmental processes
    - Permits
    - Procurement
    - Contracting
- Communicate programs/offerings in schools
- Additional opportunities for technology resources at Senior Centers
- Better awareness of offerings (print and online, better web site needed)
- Cater to new active adult needs (seniors)
- Update Youth Athletic Council's laws and promote clearly on website
- Build more trust between City and Youth Athletic Council
- Better communication through media about trail safety and etiquette

2.2.2.7 OPERATIONS

- Need to shift resources to areas in greater need
- Need more resources to sustain operations
- Diversified activities to attract younger generation are required
- Access to people with disabilities beyond merely physical challenges
- Incentivize youth participation in unstructured outdoor activities
- Remove non-native, invasive species along greenways and rivers/stream

2.2.3 MOST IMPORTANT THING

Most Important Thing
• ***Greater river access***
• ***Additional sports fields***
• ***Expanded and interconnected trails and greenways system***
• ***Upgrade and maintain what exists***
• ***Better Advertising and Marketing***
• ***Provide opportunities for year-round recreation***
• ***Greater Local and Regional Cooperation***
• ***Additional resources for Parks and Recreation offerings***

- Arts in parks
- Balanced level of service
- 6 field softball/baseball complex, natural turf and lighted
- Activities and spaces for active adults (technology)
- Have 1% of all park lands dedicated for Urban Agriculture
- Maintain and enhance the top of Mill Mountain, preserve it in its natural state
- Parks need to become bird sanctuaries (plant shrubs that bear nuts, berries)
- Programs welcoming people with Dementia
- Better maintenance (more resources)
- Finish central greenway artery to Salem
- 10-12 lighted rectangular, synthetic turf fields
- Safety in public areas
- Greenways/river
- Better marketing and communication
- Provide new resources for successful implementation
- Regional engagement during and after master plan process
- Actively manage passive areas
- Update landscaping/improve indoor and outdoor facilities
- Indoor program space needed

- New, updated revenue sources/fee structure/direct revenue recovery
- Allocate more resources to Parks and Recreation
- Dedicated trail maintenance/management staff (Mill Mountain, Carvins Cove)
- More and better multi-use fields at Rivers Edge
- More recreational trails along street system that are separated from traffic when off-road
- Better wayfinding for walkers, bicyclists, runners, etc. from greenway trails to park and community resources
- Staffing for natural trails
- Multi use professional skate/bike park
- Recycling at the new, better maintained rectangular athletic fields
- Continued preservation of Mill Mountain Park
- More regional cooperation for events
- Events calendar/kiosks in downtown
- Get kids moving-greater outreach and partnerships
- Upgrade and modernize existing parks facilities and centers
- Consolidate unused tennis courts and create a central tennis venue at Rivers Edge – 12 courts
- Establish local food production into parks/education
- Continue developing rec biking / outdoor and river opportunities
- Indoor tennis
- More picnic shelters
- Year-round usage (more winter activities, indoor and outdoor)
- White water features
- Expand greenway system
- Provide opportunities for youth to be outside
- More natural trail systems
- River access/navigation ability for recreation use
- Enhance accessibility/connectivity through partnerships
- Availability of multiple rec options for all ages
- More outdoor, environmental education for children
- Environmentally sustainable maintenance plans for all parks
- Upgrade/modernize recreation centers (Eureka/Preston)
- Park design, incorporate environmental friendly design
- Enhanced aquatic and outdoor adventure

- Increased volunteerism (on site education/self-directed)
- Expand greenway network within city to connect neighborhoods
- Need holistic opportunities in each neighborhood
- More operational funding
- Better maintenance of premier tennis courts
- 8-10 rectangular field sports complex at Rivers Edge
- 8-10 field facility
- Revise existing mission statement for healthy lifestyles
- Equal access to all organizations to compete and be inclusive to all kids
- Return oldest youth sports org back into the city system
- Repurpose obsolete tennis courts (including crystal spring) and build a new complex at Rivers Edge
- Expand trail system for all types of uses
- Increase neighborhood connectivity through greenways and trails
- Need bridge from SW city to Roanoke river greenway
- Develop more river features
- Bike park (community oriented center) veladrome, combine for multi-functional spaces
- Update/modernize existing skatepark or build a new concrete one elsewhere
- Need more trees on greenway, staff to support forestry
- Need a trail on Mill Mtn incline corridor to connect to other trails
- Better advertising and promotions for marketing and revenue attainment
- BMX dirt track
- Continue using volunteers/partnerships
- Support the youth
- Promote safety
- Eliminate fees from Carvins cove
- Disc golf (18 hole)

2.3 SURVEY RESULTS

2.3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

Leisure Vision conducted a Community Survey on behalf of the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department during December 2012 – January 2013. The survey was conducted as part of a Master Plan update to re-establish priorities for the future improvement of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the community. The survey, administered by a combination of mail and phone, was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Roanoke.

A six-page survey was mailed to a random sample of 1,400 households throughout the City of Roanoke. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed households receiving the survey received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. About two weeks after the surveys were mailed Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone. The results of the random sample of 298 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-5.7%.

2.3.2 VISITATION OF ROANOKE PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, OR SPORTS FIELDS

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of households have visited City of Roanoke parks and recreation facilities or sports fields during the past year.

2.3.3 MOST OFTEN USED PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, OR SPORTS FIELDS

Of the 69% of households that have visited parks, recreation facilities, or sports fields during the past year, households visited paved trails / greenways 37%, visited neighborhood parks 31% of the time and nature trails / greenways 23% of the time.

2.3.4 RATING PARKS AND FACILITIES

Of the 69% of households that have visited parks, recreation facilities, or sports fields during the past year, 80% rated the level of maintenance as good or excellent. (**Figure 1**)

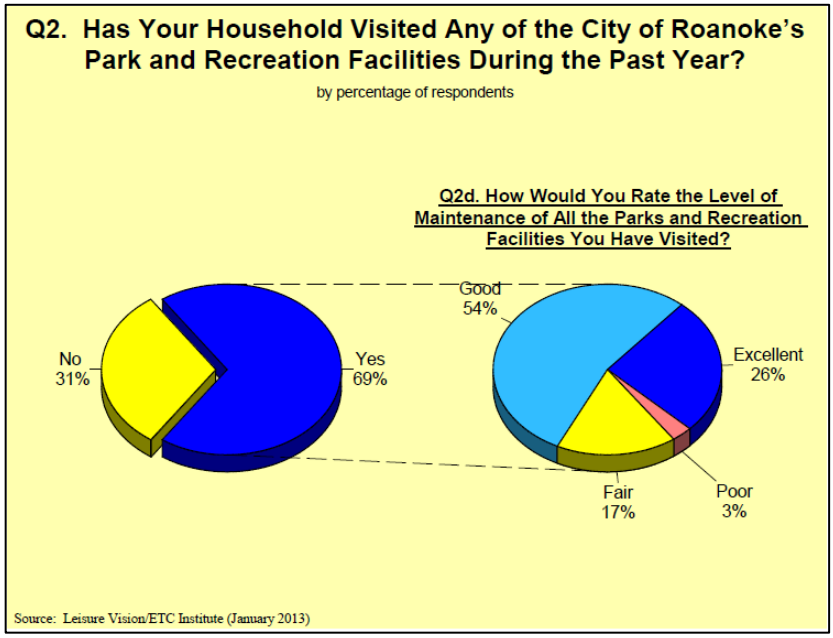


Figure 1 - Rating Parks and Facilities

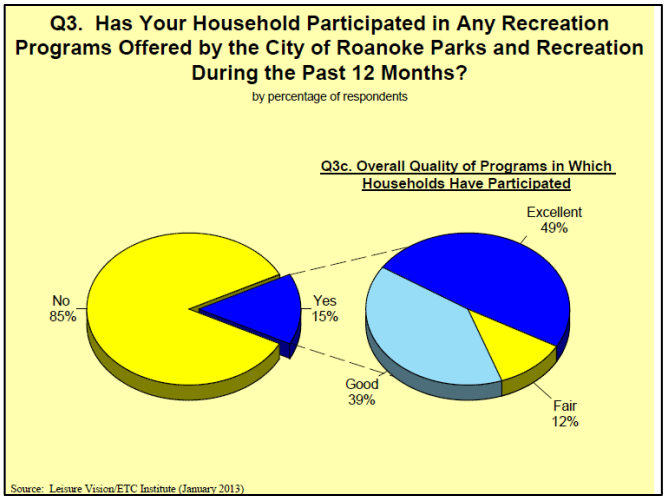
2.3.5 PARTICIPATION IN CITY OF ROANOKE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Fifteen percent (15%) of households have participated in programs or activities offered by the Department during the past 12 months.

While this appears lower than national averages that are around 30%, it is important to note that this figure has not changed since the 2007 update. Additionally, a recurring theme throughout the survey responses is a lack of knowledge of the programs and facilities the Department offers, as the citizens do not know what is being offered. Another contributing factor is the high incidence of trail use and self-directed outdoor recreation that Roanoke residents participate in (hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking etc.).

2.3.6 RATE THE QUALITY OF CITY OF ROANOKE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPT. PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Of the 15% of households that have participated in programs or activities offered by the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department during the past 12 months, 88% rated the overall quality of the programs/activities as either excellent (39%) or above average (49%). These are higher than national numbers which are around 80%.



2.3.7 FREQUENCY OF USE FOR COMMUNITY CENTERS

Eureka Center, Discovery Center and Mountain View Center were the most used ones in the last twelve months.

2.3.8 QUALITY OF COMMUNITY CENTERS

21% of total respondents rated the overall quality of community centers used in the past 12 months are poor (3%) or fair (18%).

2.3.9 NEED FOR PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The parks and recreation facilities that the highest percentage of households has a need for are walking and hiking trails (55%), paved greenway trails (54%), and small neighborhood parks (52%).

2.3.10 ROANOKE HOUSEHOLDS WITH THEIR FACILITY NEEDS BEING 50% MET OR LESS

From a list of 28 parks and recreation facilities, the top 5 highest unmet needs, as shown in **Figure 2** are

- Indoor fitness and exercise facilities
- Indoor walking and running tracks
- Indoor swimming pools
- Outdoor amphitheater
- Small neighborhood parks

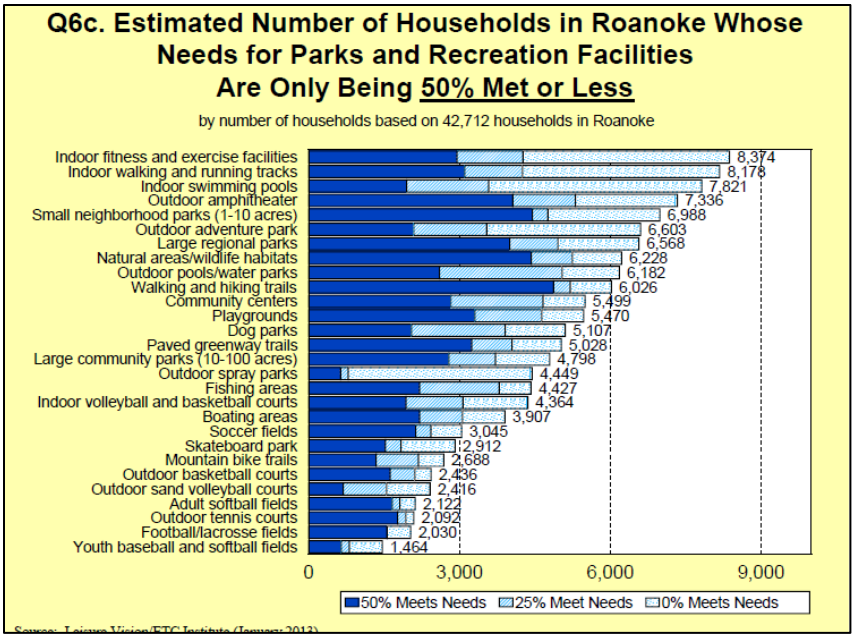


Figure 2 - Households with their Facility Needs Being 50% Met or Less

2.3.11 MOST IMPORTANT PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the parks/facilities that households rated as the most important (as seen in **Figure 3**) are:

- Paved greenway trails
- Walking and hiking trails
- Small neighborhood parks
- Natural areas / wildlife habitats
- Large community parks (10-100 acres)

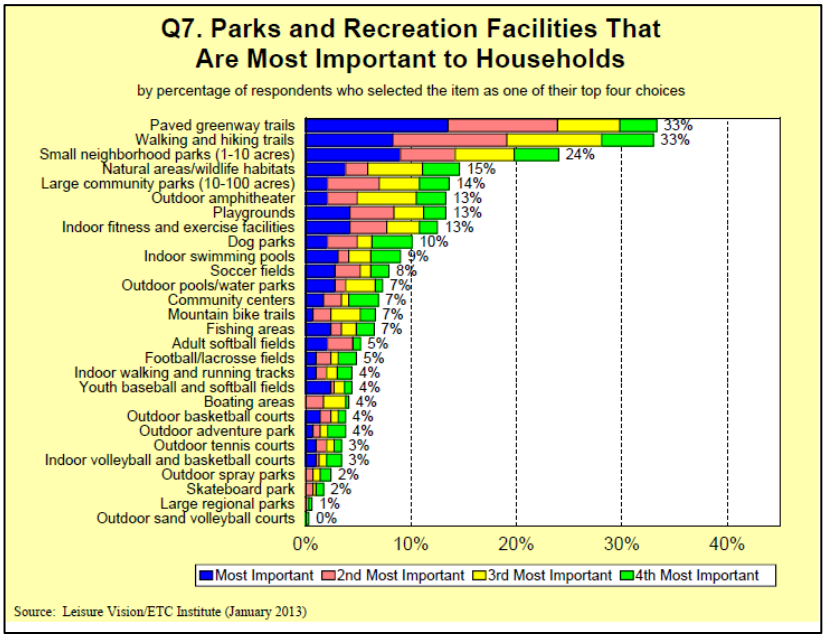


Figure 3 - Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities

2.3.12 NEED FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS

The recreation programs that the highest percentage of households has a need for are: adult fitness and wellness programs (36%), outdoor and nature programs (30%) and special events (28%).

2.3.13 ROANOKE HOUSEHOLDS WITH THEIR PROGRAM NEEDS BEING 50% MET OR LESS

From a list of 21 recreation programs, the top 5 highest unmet needs (**Figure 4**) are:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs
- Outdoor and nature programs
- Special Events
- Water fitness programs
- Adult day trips

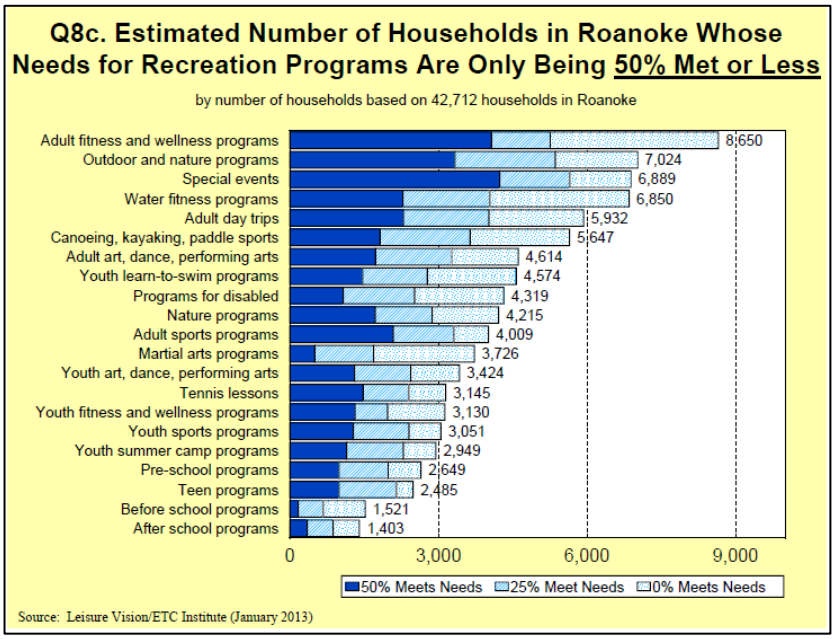


Figure 4 - Households with their Program Needs Being 50% Met or Less

2.3.14 MOST IMPORTANT RECREATION PROGRAMS

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the programs that households rated as the most important are

- Adult fitness and wellness programs
- Special events
- Outdoor and nature program
- Youth sports programs
- Canoeing, kayaking and paddle sports

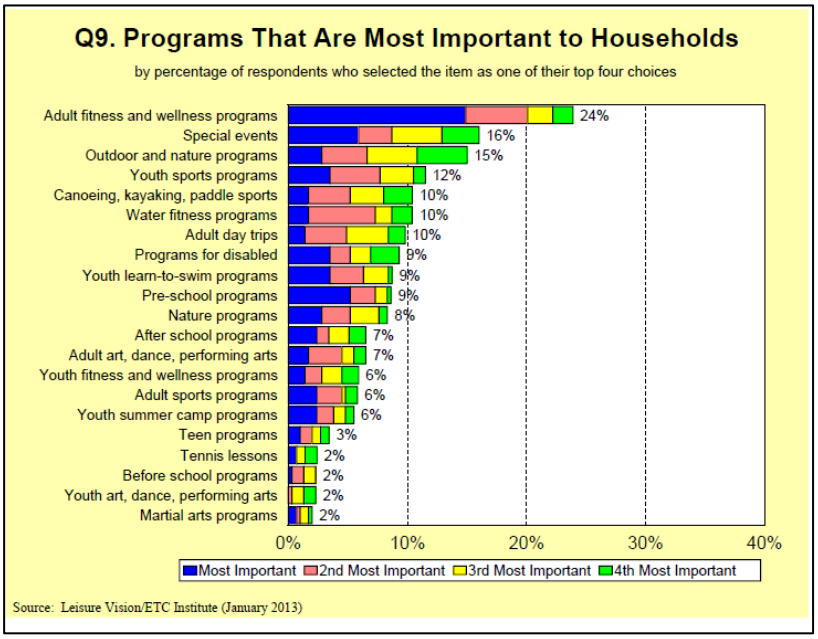


Figure 5 - Most Important Recreation Programs

2.3.15 MOST PARTICIPATED IN PROGRAMS

Special Events (10%), Adult Fitness and wellness programs (7%) and Outdoor and nature programs (7%) were the top three most participated in programs at City of Roanoke facilities.

2.3.16 REASONS PREVENTING THE USE OF PARKS, FACILITIES OR PROGRAMS MORE OFTEN

The reasons preventing the highest percentage of households from using City parks, facilities and programs more often are: "do not know what is being offered" (27%), "program times are not convenient" (19%) and "program or facility not offered" (16%) (**Figure 6**). The first reason directly ties in to the lack of awareness and marketing issue that needs to be addressed in the City.

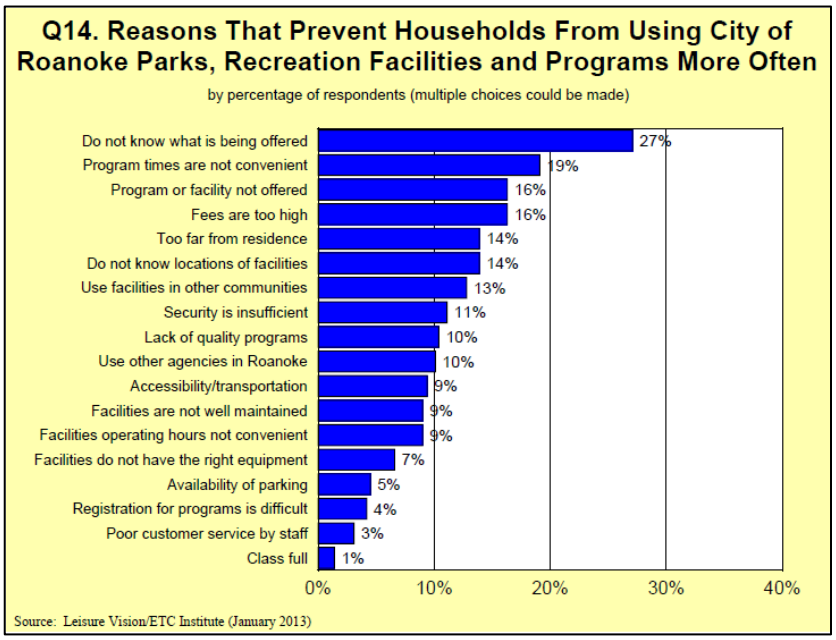


Figure 6 - Reasons Preventing the Use of Parks, Facilities or Programs More Often

2.3.17 SUPPORT FOR ACTIONS TO IMPROVE/EXPAND PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

There are four actions that at least 75% of respondents are very or somewhat supportive of Roanoke taking to improve and expand parks and recreation facilities:

- Upgrade existing neighborhood parks
- Upgrade existing trails
- Acquire open space for passive activities
- Connect greenway trails into neighborhoods

See **Figure 7**.

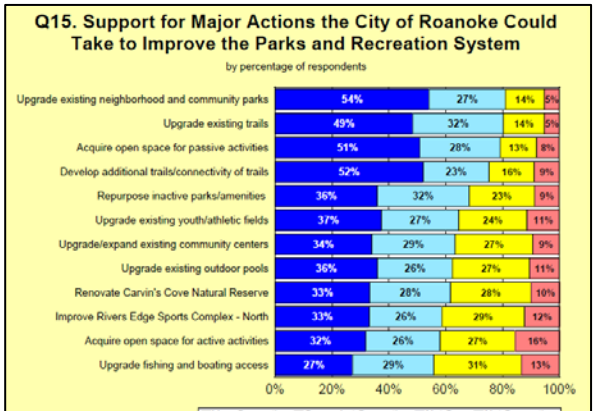


Figure 7 - Support for Actions to Improve/Expand Parks and Recreation Facilities

2.3.18 ACTIONS MOST WILLING TO FUND WITH TAX DOLLARS

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the most important actions households would fund with their tax dollars are:: upgrade existing neighborhood and community parks (41%), acquire open space for passive activities (34%), develop additional trails / connectivity of trails (30%) and upgrade existing trails (29%).

2.3.19 WAYS RESPONDENTS LEARN ABOUT RECREATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The most frequently mentioned ways that respondents learn about recreation programs and activities are newspaper (48%), from friends and neighbors (43%) and City of Roanoke Website (31%) - see **Figure 8**.

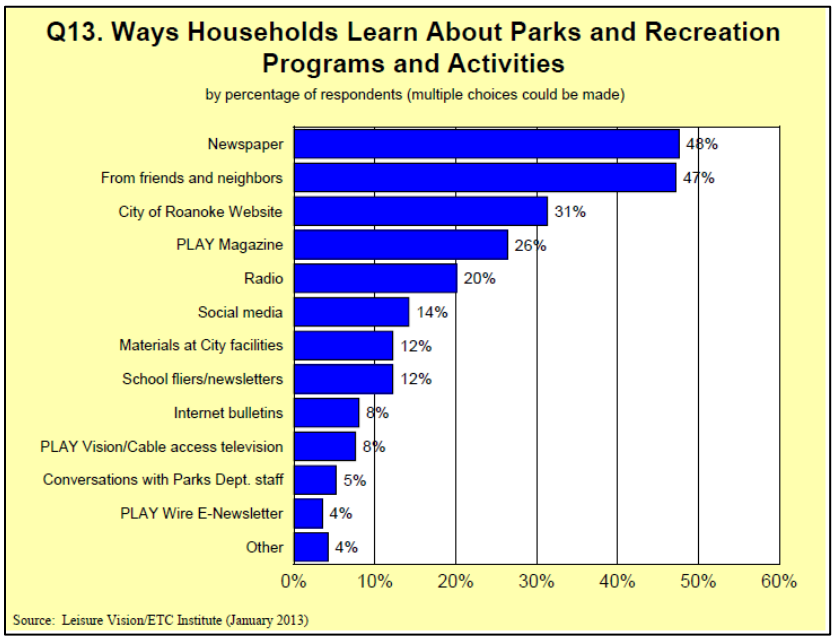


Figure 8 - Ways Respondents Learn About Recreation Programs and Activities

2.3.20 ORGANIZATIONS USED FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES

The most frequently mentioned organizations that households have used for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities are Churches (34%), Virginia State Parks (30%), YMCA (25 %) and Private or Public Schools (21%) followed by City of Roanoke programs (21%).

2.3.21 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE OVERALL VALUE RECEIVED FROM CITY RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Fifty-one percent (51%) of households are either very satisfied (29%) or somewhat satisfied (22%) with the overall value they receive from City recreation facilities and programs. In addition, only 12% of households are either somewhat dissatisfied (8%) or very dissatisfied (4%) with the overall value they receive from Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department facilities and programs.

2.3.22 ALLOCATE $100 AMONG VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF FUNDING

Respondents allocated the highest amount ($31) to maintain existing neighborhood parks. This was followed by develop multi-use trails ($15) and maintain existing / build new indoor community center ($14). See **Figure 9**.

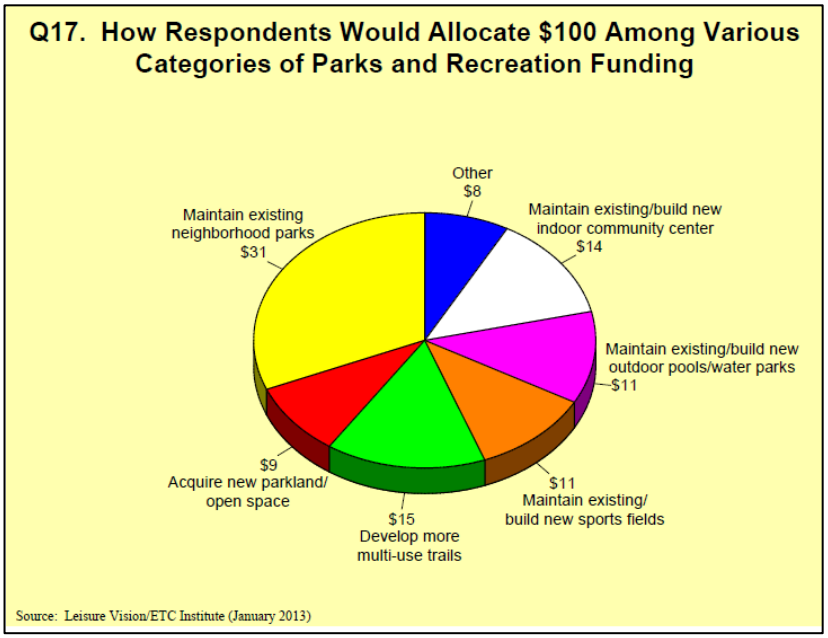


Figure 9 - Allocate $100 Among Funding Sources

CHAPTER THREE - DEMOGRAPHIC AND TRENDS ANALYSIS

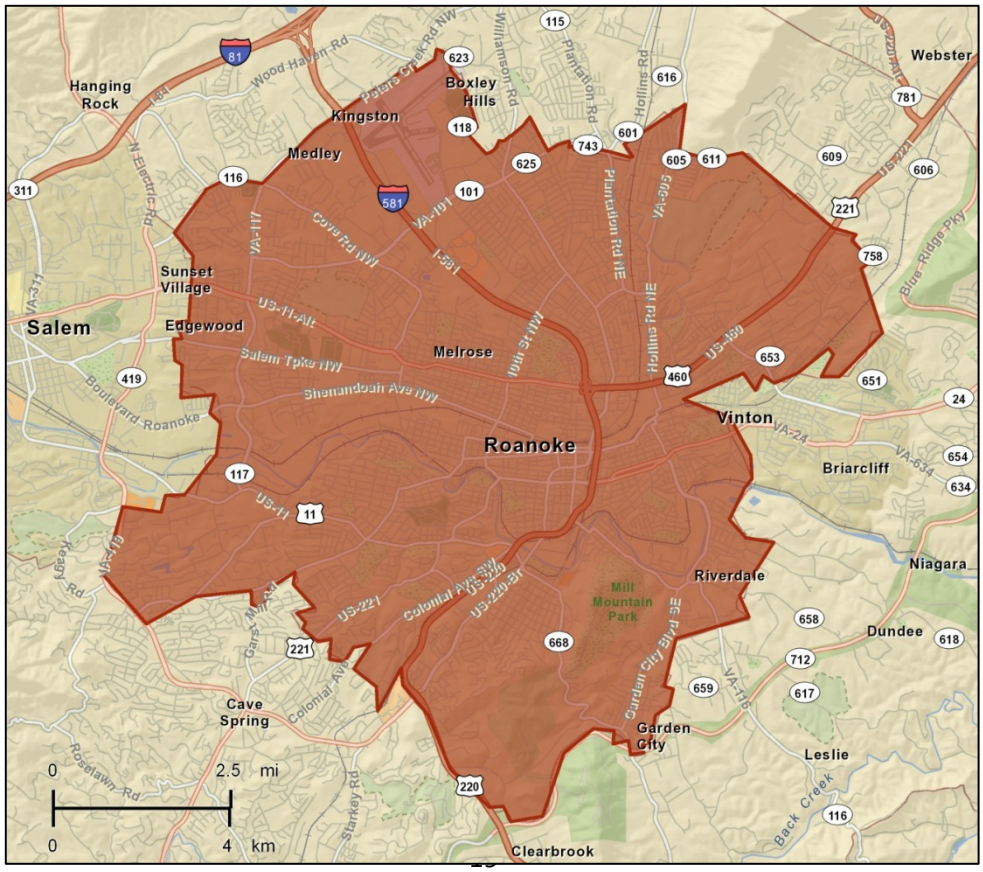
The Demographic and Trends Analysis provides an understanding of the population of the City of Roanoke as well as future trends that could impact participation. This analysis demonstrates the overall size of total population by specific age segment, race and ethnicity, and the overall economic status and spending power of the residents through household income statistics. It is important to note that while the demographics analysis evaluates the population characteristics based on the geographic area, the Parks and Recreation Department does tend to serve an audience outside that as well.

All future demographic projections are based on historical trends. All projections should be utilized with the understanding that unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the projections could have a significant bearing on the validity of the final projections.

3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS ASSESSMENT

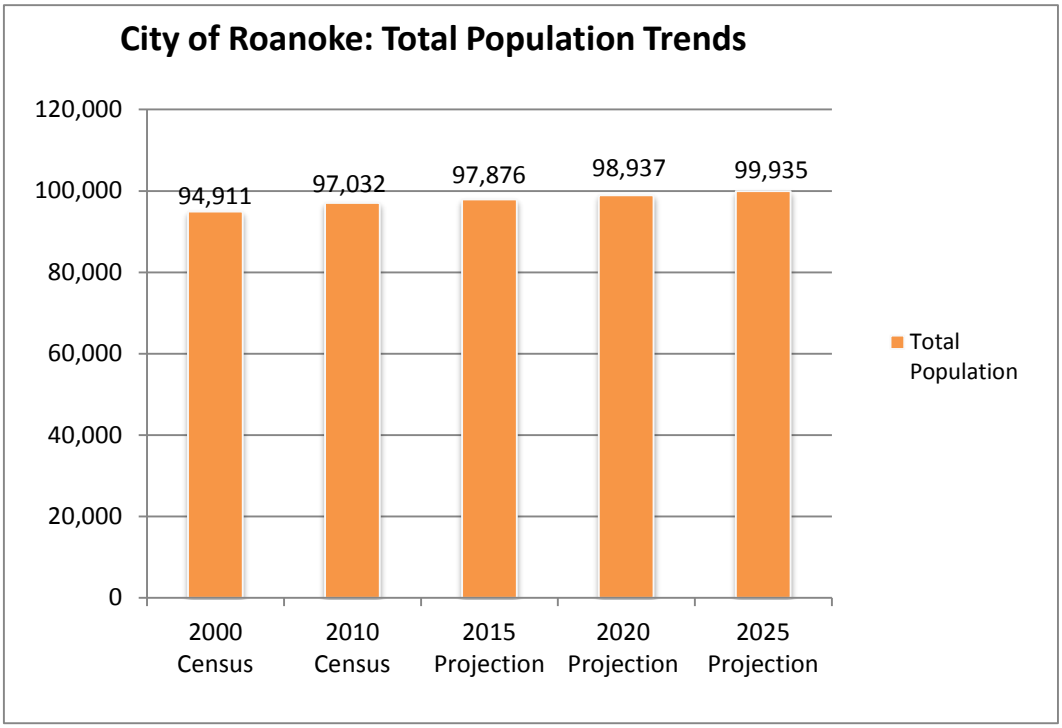
Methodology

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in September 2012, and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2000 and 2010 Census and estimates for 2015 as obtained by ESRI. Straight line linear regression was utilized for projected 2020 and 2025 demographics. The City of Roanoke geographic boundary was utilized as the demographic analysis boundary shown below.



Total Population

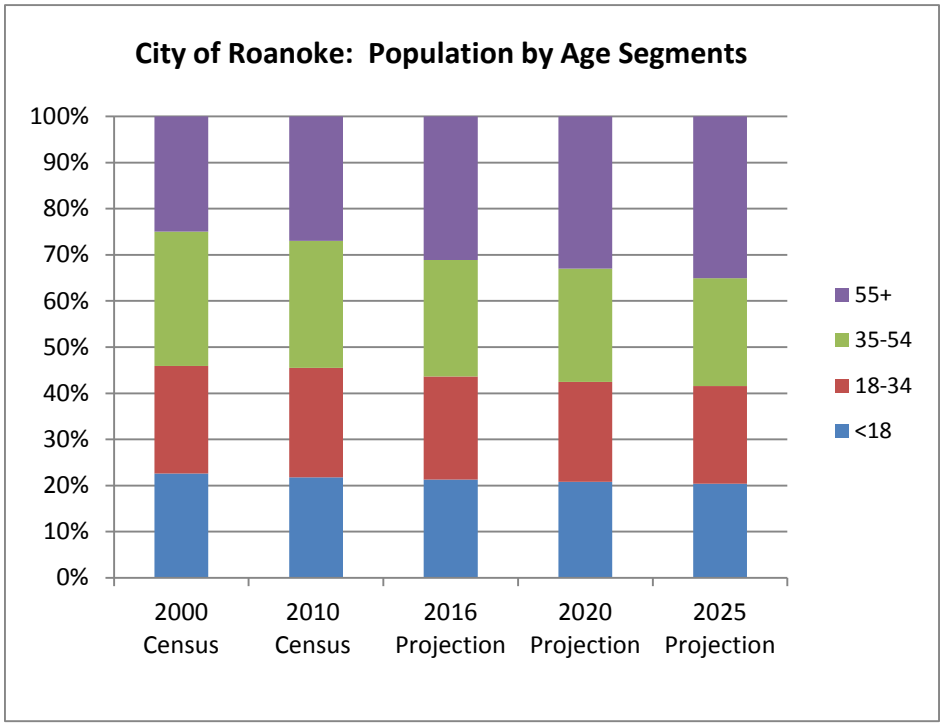
The City of Roanoke has grown at a mild pace over the last few years. From 2000 to 2010, the City's total population increased by 2.2% or an annual rate of 0.2%. This is noticeably less than national growth averages which were just over 1% annually. Projecting ahead, the growth rate is expected to flat line for the next 15 year time frame. Based on the projections through 2025, the service area is expected to have approximately 99,935 residents living within 43,664 households.



Age Segment

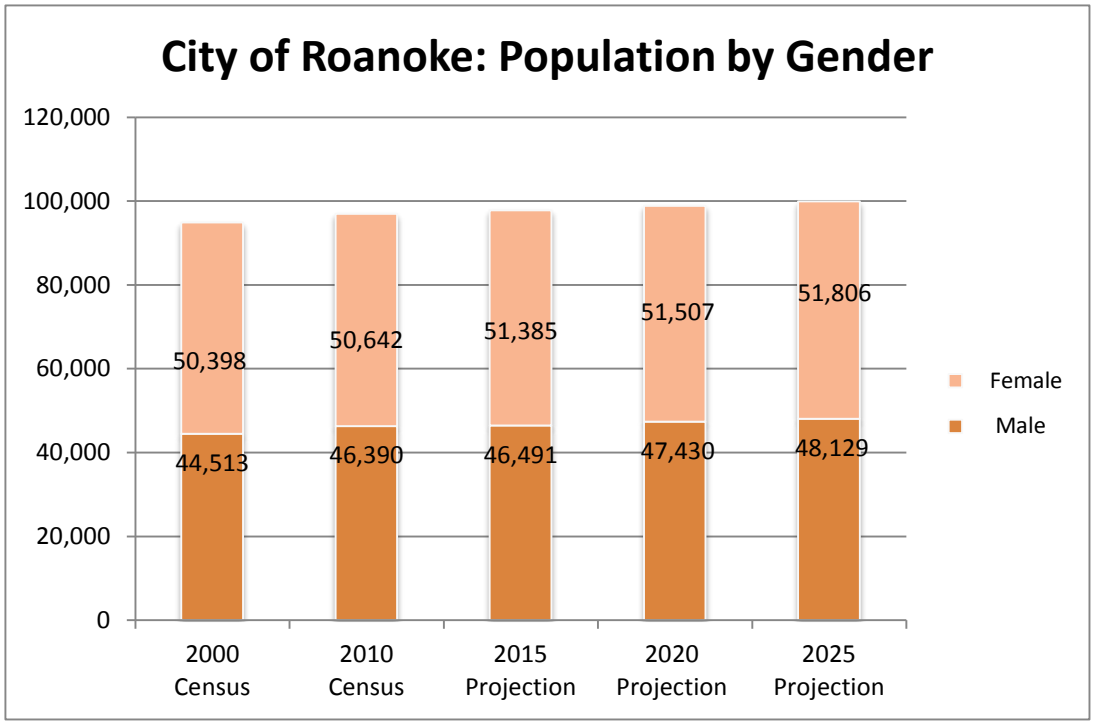
Evaluating the distribution by age segments, the service area is fairly balanced between youth, families, and active adult populations. The highest segment by population is the 35-54 with 27.5% and the lowest is the 18-34 population with 21.8% thus indicating a very narrow range of variation between all the age groups.

Over time, there is projected to be a rapid aging trend with the active adult (55+ population) growing from 24.9% in 2000 to 35.1% by 2025. This will make it the single largest age segment while the other groups are gradually shrinking in size. This echoes, general national trends where the 55+ age group has been growing as a result of increased life expectancies and the baby boomer population entering that age group.



Gender

The gender distribution for the service area is skewed toward the female population. The female population currently accounts for 52.2% of the population. This distribution is projected to remain fairly constant throughout the next five, ten, and fifteen year study periods.



Recreational trends from the last few years indicate that, on average, Americans participate in a sport or recreational activity of some kind at a relatively high rate (65%). Female participation rates, however, are slightly lower than their male counterparts – 61% of females participate at least once per year in a sport or recreational activity compared to a 69% participation rate of men.

According to recreational trends research performed in the industry over the past twenty years, the top ten recreational activities for **females** are currently:

1. Walking
2. Aerobics
3. General exercising
4. Biking
5. Jogging
6. Basketball
7. Lifting weights
8. Golf
9. Swimming
10. Tennis

The top ten recreational activities for **males** are:

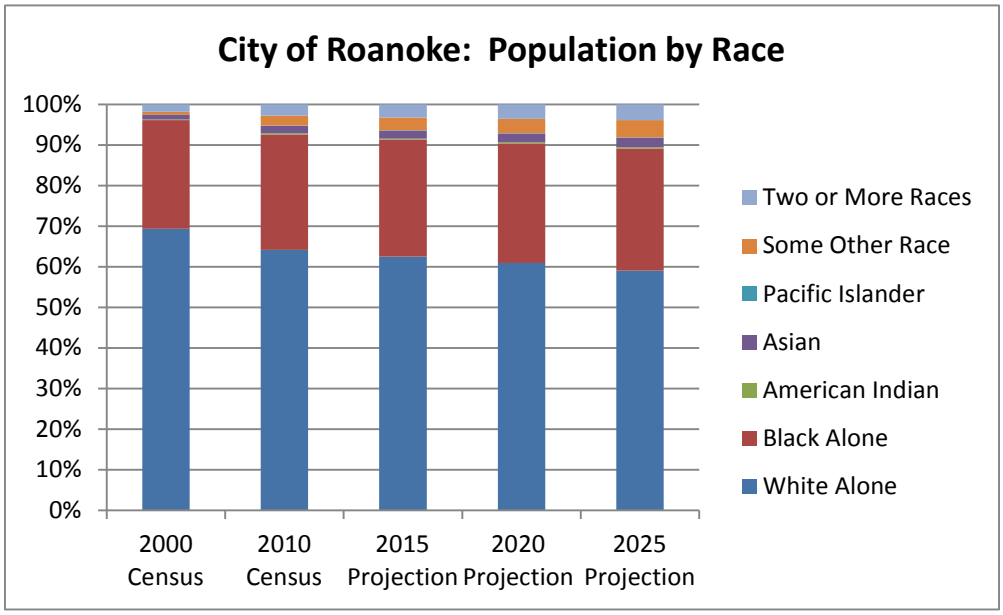
1. Golf
2. Basketball
3. Walking
4. Jogging
5. Biking
6. Lifting weights
7. Football
8. Hiking
9. Fishing
10. Hunting

While men and women share a desire for six of the top ten recreational activities listed above, men claim to participate in their favorite activities more often than women in any ninety-day span. With more women not only comprising a larger portion of the general populace during the mature stages of the lifecycle, but also participating in recreational activities further into adulthood, a relatively new market has appeared over the last two decades.

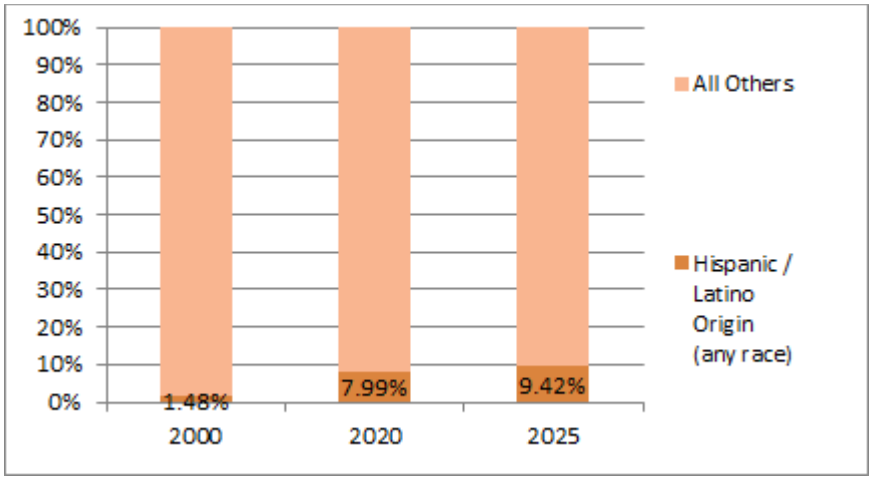
This mature female demographic is opting for less team oriented activities which dominate the female youth recreational environment, instead shifting more towards a diverse selection of individual participant activities, as evident in the top ten recreational activities mentioned above.

Race and Ethnicity

From a race standpoint, the City has a diverse landscape. The diversity in the community is projected to increase with the majority Caucasian population (69% in 2000) reducing to 59% by 2025 with those belonging to Black Alone increasing the most. Those classified as Black, Two or More Races, and Some Other Race make up the majority of the rest.



A significant shift, and one that will have a bearing on the nature of recreation offerings in the City of Roanoke, is witnessed in the rapid change in ethnicities. Those being classified as being of Hispanic / Latino origin of any race are expected to grow the most (by percentage) among all the other races from 2000 to 2025. This segment is expected to increase from 1.48% in 2000 to 9.42% by 2025.



Participation Trends by Race/Ethnicity

Utilizing the Ethnicity Study performed by American Sports Data, Inc., a national leader in sports and fitness trends, participation rates among recreational and sporting activities were analyzed and applied to each race/ethnic group.

The **White Alone** population as a whole participates in a wide range of activities, including both team and individual sports of a land and water based variety; however, the White Alone populace has an affinity for outdoor non-traditional sports.

Ethnic minority groups in the United States are strongly regionalized and urbanized, with the exception of Native Americans, and these trends are projected to continue. Different ethnic groups have different needs when it comes to recreational activities. Ethnic minority groups, along with Generations X and Y, are coming in ever-greater contact with Caucasian middle-class baby-boomers with different recreational habits and preferences. This can be a sensitive subject since many baby-boomers are the last demographic to have graduated high school in segregated environments, and the generational gap magnifies numerous ideals and values differences which many baby-boomers are accustomed to. This trend is projected to increase as more baby-boomers begin to retire, and both the minority and youth populations continue to increase.

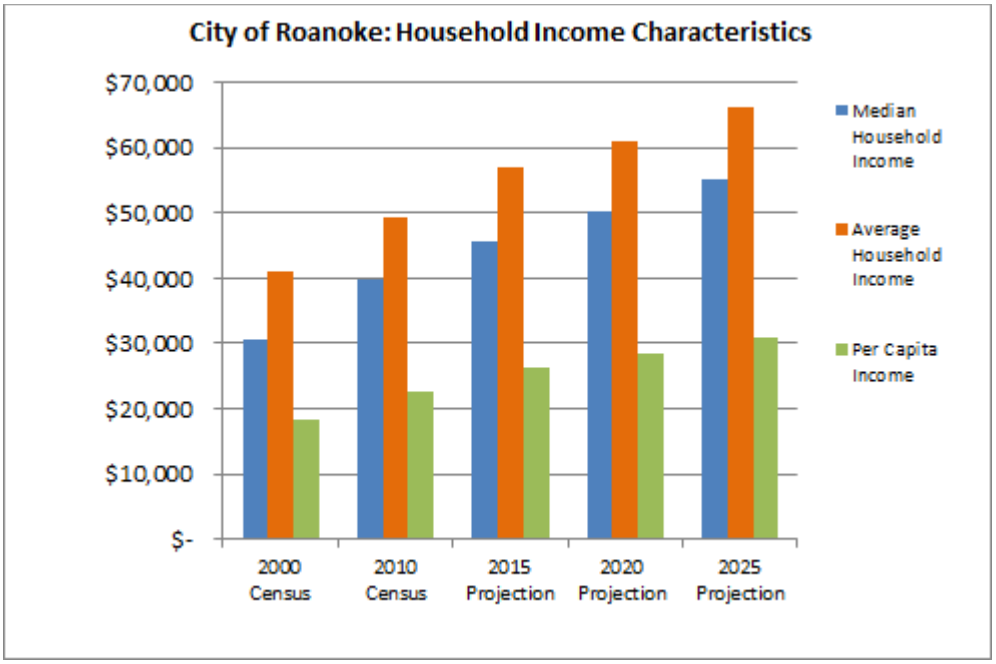
Hispanic and Latino Americans have strong cultural and community traditions with an emphasis placed on the extended family, many times gathering in large recreational groups where multiple activities geared towards all age segments of the group may participate. Large group pavilions with picnicking amenities and multi-purpose fields are integral in the communal pastime shared by many Hispanics.

The **Black Alone** population has historically been an ethnic group that participates in active team sports, most notably football, basketball, and baseball. The African-American populace exhibits a strong sense of neighborhood and local community through large special events and gatherings with extended family and friends, including family reunions. Outdoor and water based activities, such as, hiking, water skiing, rafting, and mountain biking, are not much of a factor in the participatory recreational activities.

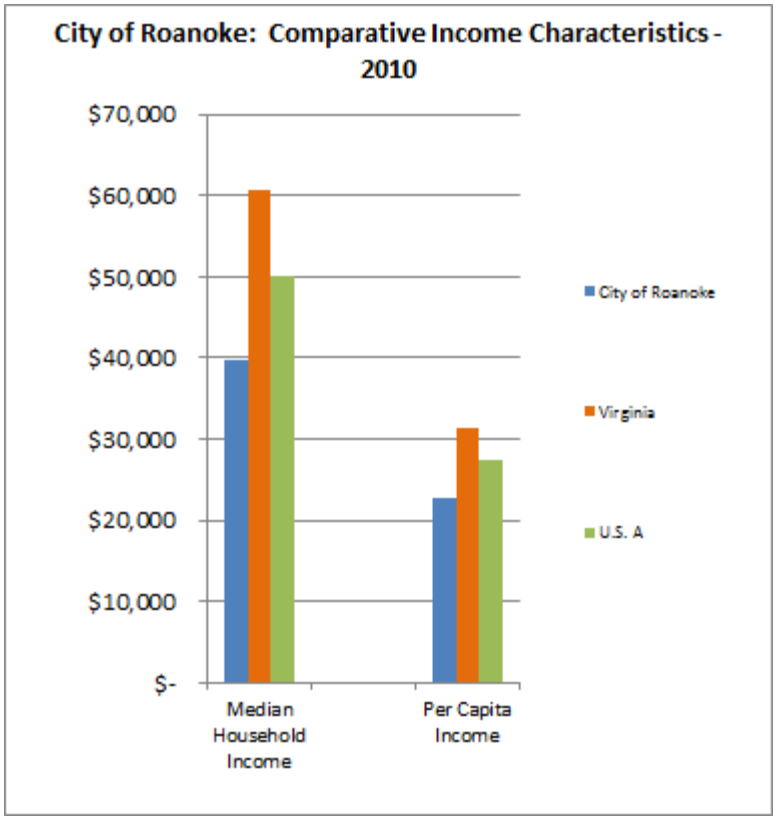
The **Asian** population a very different yet distinct ethnic group compared with the three main groups in the U.S. – Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic. The Asian population has some similarities to the Hispanic population, but many seem to shy away from traditional team sports and outdoor and water based activities.

Households and Income

The City's income characteristics demonstrate rapid growth trends. The median household income was $30,696 in 2000 and $39,675 in 2010 and is projected to grow to 54,981 by 2025. The median household income represents the earnings of all persons age 16 years or older living together in a housing unit. The per capita income, too, is projected to increase from $18,468 in 2000 and $22,672 in 2010 to $30,958 by 2025.



As seen below, the City of Roanoke service area's median household and per capita income is considerable lower than State and National averages. For the City, it will be important to provide offerings focused on a value for money proposition while offering a good quality product with exceptional customer service.



3.2 RECREATION IN AMERICA

Our understanding of outdoor recreation trends in America has evolved significantly over the past four decades since the first national survey was conducted in 1960 by the congressionally created Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC). Since that time, a long series of statistics have been gathered through seven reiterations of the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) that identify notable trends in participation and the evolution of new forms of recreation activities enjoyed by Americans. The most recent of these updated reports was from the NSRE conducted in 2003-2004. Participation in 37 outdoor recreation activities was evaluated in this study.[1]

Those activities with great relevance to Roanoke community interests are presented in the table below. Participation is measured in millions of people and percentage of total U.S. population.

Activity	Participation (millions)	Percent of Population
Trail, Street, or Road Activities	188.2	88.3
Traditional Social Activities	171.8	80.6
Outdoor Team Sports	48.4	22.7
Swimming Activities	130.6	61.3
Outdoor Adventure Activities	118.7	55.7

Supporting these statistics are the findings from the recently completed *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2011,* conducted by the Outdoor Industry Foundation. During January and February 2011, a total of 38,742 online interviews were carried out with a nationwide sample of individuals and households from the US Online Panel operated by Synovate. A total of 15,086 individual and 23,656 household surveys were completed. The total panel has over one million members and is maintained to be representative of the US population.

Oversampling of ethnic groups took place to boost response from typically under-responding groups. A weighting technique was used to balance the data to reflect the total US population aged six and above. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, household size, region and

[1] United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service. National Survey of Recreation and the Environment. 2003-2004.

population density. The total population figure used was 283,743,000 people aged six and above. The report details participation among all Americans, youth, young adults and adults.

From these results, a current and accurate picture of outdoor recreation participation trends can be ascertained. Below are some of the key findings associated with this report.[2]

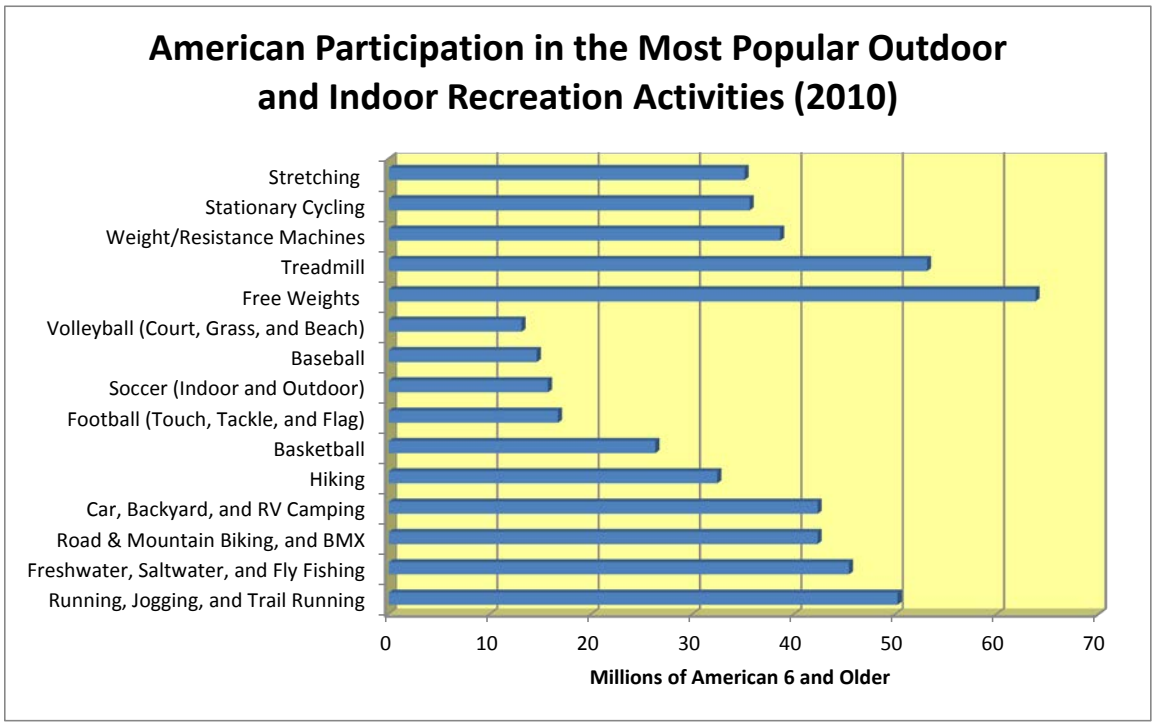
3.2.1 PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR, NATURE-BASED ACTIVITIES

An interesting note for many public park and recreation agencies whose facilities and programs are heavily geared for traditional and team sports, the largest areas of overall participation and growth in participation are in outdoor, non-traditional sports and activities. An example of this is the finding that participation in traditional triathlon, boardsailing/windsurfing, and non-traditional triathlon increasing by 64%, 43%, and 39% respectively from 2009 to 2010, while participation in stand up paddling is a new and upcoming outdoor recreation that is being tracked in 2010. Other noticeable increases are whitewater kayaking (35%), BMX biking (31%), and adventure racing (23%). Improving access, programs, and facilities at Carvin's Cove, Mill Mountain, and along rivers/streams would be beneficial for the City.

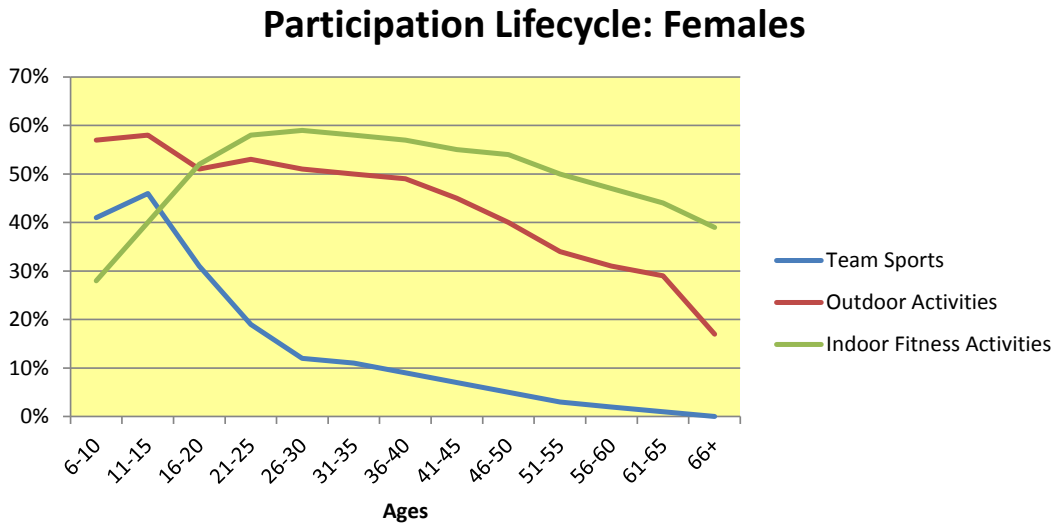
A graph of participation in the most popular indoor recreation, team sports, and outdoor recreation activities in 2010 is provided below. Note that team sport participation in baseball, volleyball, soccer, football, and basketball is considerably less than both indoor and outdoor recreation.[3]

[2] Outdoor Industry Foundation. Outdoor Recreation Participation Study: 2011, 12th Edition. Boulder, Colorado, 2011.

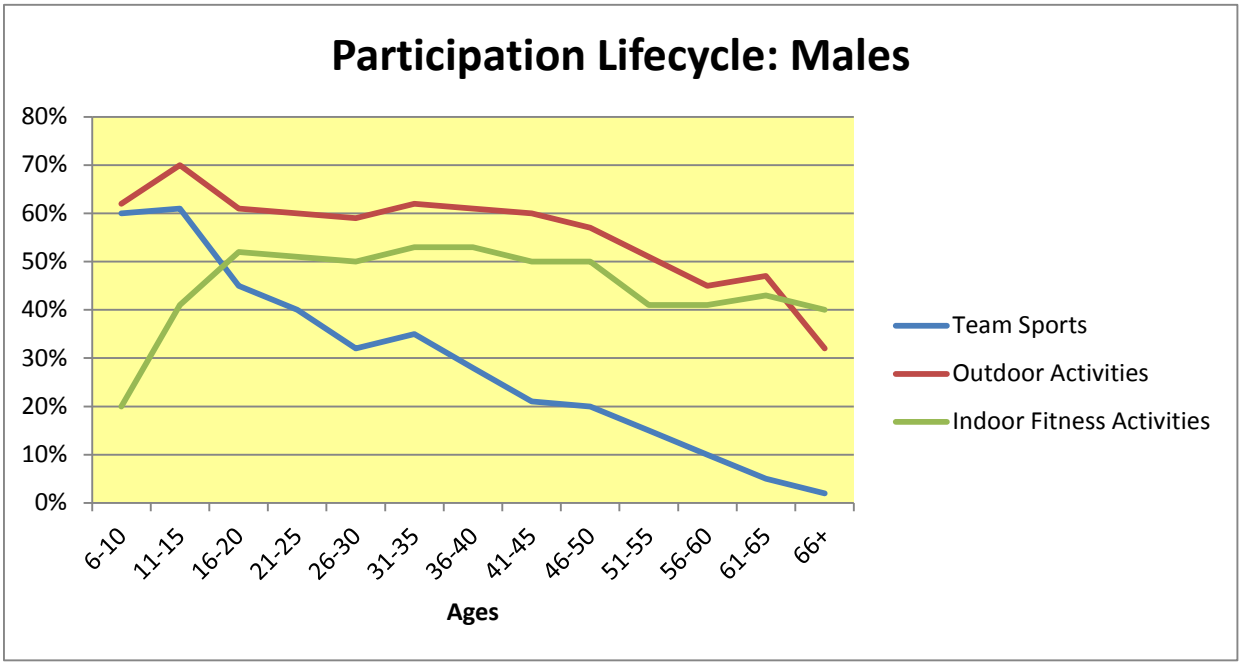
[3] Outdoor Industry Foundation. Outdoor Recreation Participation Study: 2011, 12th Edition. Boulder, Colorado, 2011.



The graphs below detail the lifecycle participation in recreational pursuits in both female and male participants, as identified in the Outdoor Industry Foundation's 2010 Participation Study. These trends can help to determine which areas of focus and categories of recreational activities are going to appeal best to different age segments by gender among residents of Roanoke.[4]

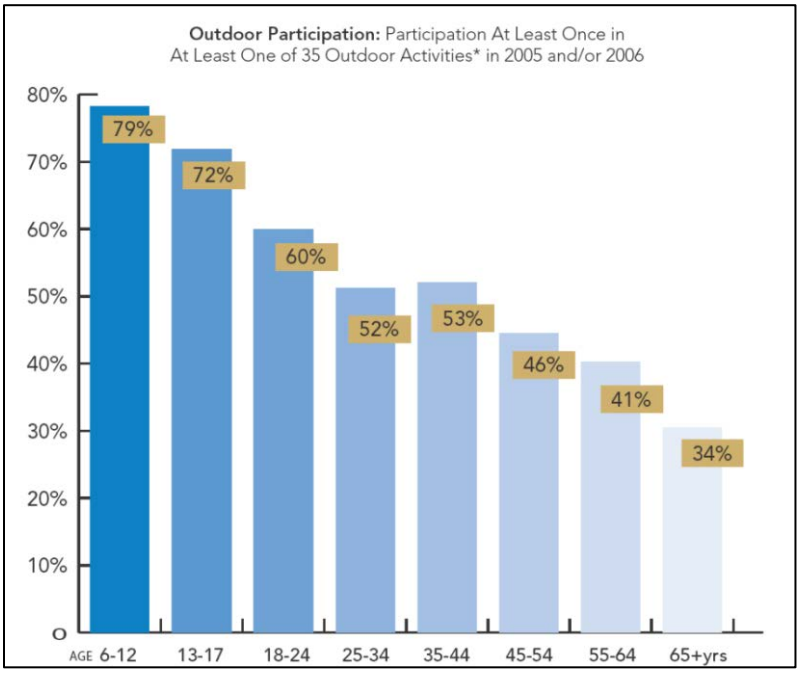


[4] Outdoor Industry Foundation. Outdoor Recreation Participation Study: 2011, 12th Edition. Boulder, Colorado, 2011.



3.2.2 PARTICIPATION TRENDS BY AGE

The Outdoor Industry Association identifies two major generational categories in the U.S.: Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and Millennials (born between 1978 and 2003). These two generational cohorts have distinct differences in their preferences for an active lifestyle. Baby boomers have shed the image of the relaxed, sedentary lifestyle of generations past pursue a more active form of "retirement". Many boomers continue the active and healthy lifestyle they converted to in midlife, as evidenced by the increasing number of seniors who participate in the fitness industry. Scott Parmelee, publisher of Outside magazine, describes a boomer as a "hybrid person" who enjoys "less



strenuous" activities while still connecting with nature and the outdoors. [5]

While many boomers use outdoor experiences for personal growth, the Millennials seek the thrill. Millennials pioneered adventure and extreme sports and have been most responsible for the decline in the traditional "bat and ball" sports leagues targeting young adults. They elect less structured activities such as skateboarding, rock climbing, and mountain biking in place of organized youth activities like baseball, football, and soccer.

In recent years, the Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF), a 501(c)(3) organization chartered to research trends and support growth of the outdoor industry, has produced annual reports of the state of the industry and outdoor recreation participation. In early 2007, OIF surveyed 60,169 households from a representative sample that reflects the demographic and socio-economic composition of the United States to determine the highlights of current outdoor recreation trends in America. Results from this survey were published as *The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants – 2005/2006* by the OIF in late 2007.

This report finds that participation in outdoor activities at least once per year drops off dramatically with age. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents aged 6 – 12 years reported participating at least once in one of the 35 outdoor recreation activities polled, while only 34% of respondents aged 65 years and older reported the same level of participation. This is illustrated in the graph to the right.[6]

Americans are exposed to and participate in outdoor recreation activities considerably more when they are younger, and therefore it is critical to understand the preferences of our young recreationists to stay aligned with evolving trends. The top five outdoor recreation activities by *frequency of outings* in 2008 and in 2010 of Americans aged 6 to 24 years are detailed in the table below. Note the general consistency over the two-year period.

Top Five Outdoor Recreation Activities in 2008[7]	Top Five Outdoor Recreation Activities in 2010[8]
1. Bicycling	**1. Running / jogging / trail running**
2. Running / jogging / trail running	**2. Bicycling**
3. Skateboarding	**3. Skateboarding**
4. Fishing	**4. Bird watching**
5. Car and backyard camping	**5. Hunting**

[5] Outdoor Industry Association. State of Industry Report: 2006. Boulder, Colorado. 2006.

[6] Outdoor Industry Foundation. The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants – 2005/2006. Boulder, Colorado. 2007

[7] Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2009 Participation Study. Boulder, Colorado. 2009.

[8] Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2011 Participation Study. Boulder, Colorado. 2011.

The tables below detail the participation in these top five outdoor recreation activities in 2010 for all Americans aged six and older, as well as the top five team sport activities and top five indoor recreation activities participated in during the same year.[9]

Outdoor Recreation Activities – All Persons Aged 6+		
Activity	**% of Americans**	**Total Participants**
Running, jogging, trail running	18%	50.2 million
Freshwater, salt water, and fly fishing	16%	45.4 million
Road biking, mountain biking, BMX	15%	42.3 million
Car, backyard, and RV camping	15%	42.3 million
Hiking	11%	32.4 million

Team Sport Activities - All Persons Aged 6+		
Activity	**% of Americans**	**Total Participants**
Basketball	9%	26.3 million
Football (touch, tackle, and flag)	6%	16.7 million
Soccer (indoor and outdoor)	6%	15.7 million
Baseball	5%	14.6 million
Volleyball (court, grass, and beach)	5%	13.1 million
Indoor Recreation Activities - All Persons Aged 6+		
Activity	**% of Americans**	**Total Participants**
Free weights	22%	63.8 million
Treadmill	18%	53.1 million
Weight / resistance machines	14%	38.6 million
Stationary cycling	13%	35.6 million
Stretching	12%	35.1 million

[9] Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2011 Participation Study. Boulder, Colorado. 2011.

On the older end of the age spectrum, active retirees are one of the largest emerging markets for the recreation and tourism industry. Retirees sixty-five and older remain active in many activities well into their senior years. Just under thirty-five million Americans, or about one of every eight persons (12.4%), were sixty-five years or older at the time of the 2000 Census. Over ninety percent of these older Americans are retired; almost all are retired by age seventy-five.

For purposes of this study, retirees were divided into three age groups, 65-74, 75-84, and 85+. Data was gathered from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). Across all the activities surveyed, with the only exception being gardening or landscaping for pleasure, the percentage of retirees who participate in an activity is less for persons aged 65 and older than for those under age 65. With a few exceptions among activities, participation percentage falls from age sixty-five to age eighty-five and above. For the more passive activities, such as walking, family gatherings outdoors, sightseeing and viewing/photographing wildlife and flowers, the decrease with age is gradual. With the more physically demanding activities, such as swimming, hiking and mountain biking, the decrease in percentage participating sharply increases with age. However, some percentage of even the oldest retirees participates across most activities, regardless of how physically demanding they are.

Although age does play a role in the ability to participate in all activities, eleven activities surveyed by NSRE remain popular among aging Americans over 65 years of age[10]:

- Walking for pleasure
- Family gatherings
- Gardening and landscaping for pleasure
- View/photograph natural scenery
- Visit nature centers, etc.
- Driving for pleasure
- Picnicking
- Sightseeing
- Visit historic sites
- View/photograph other wildlife
- View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.

As the retiree population grows in future years, accessible opportunities to these popular activities by active, older adults should be accommodated while ensuring a balance between attracting young people to the community and providing adequate offerings for middle-aged individuals as well.

[10] United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service. National Survey of Recreation and the Environment. 2003-2004

CHAPTER FOUR - FACILITY AND PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

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

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

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

This scoring system considers the following:

- Community Survey
    - Unmet needs for facilities and recreation programs – This is used as a factor from the total number of households mentioning whether they have a need for a facility / program and the extent to which their need for facilities and recreation programs has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify this for 28 different facilities / amenities and 22 recreation programs.
    - Importance ranking for facilities – This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility or program by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important facilities and recreation programs.
- Consultant Evaluation
    - Factor derived from the consultant's evaluation of program and facility priority based on survey results, demographics, trends and overall community input.

The weighted scores were as follows:

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

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

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

4.1.1 FACILITY/AMENITY PRIORITY RANKINGS

As seen in **Figure 10**, Small Neighborhood Parks, Indoor Fitness and Exercise Facilities, Paved Greenway Trails, Walking and Hiking Trails, and Playgrounds were the top five priorities for the community.

Roanoke Facility/Amenity Priority Rankings	Overall Ranking
Small neighborhood parks (1-10 acres)	1
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	2
Paved greenway trails	3
Walking & hiking trails	4
Playgrounds	5
Natural areas/wildlife habitats	6
Indoor swimming pools	7
Dog parks	8
Outdoor amphitheater	9
Indoor walking & running tracks	10
Community centers	11
Large community parks (10-100 acres)	12
Outdoor pools/water parks	13
Outdoor adventure park	14
Outdoor spray parks	15
Fishing areas	16
Soccer fields	17
Indoor volleyball & basketball courts	18
Large regional parks	19
Boating areas	20
Mountain bike trails (natural surface)	21
Adult softball fields	22
Youth baseball & softball fields	23
Outdoor basketball courts	24
Football/lacrosse fields	25
Skateboard park	26
Outdoor tennis courts	27
Outdoor sand volleyball courts	28

Figure 10 - Facility / Amenity Priority Rankings

4.1.2 PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

As seen in **Figure 11**, Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs, Outdoor and Nature Programs, Special Events, Water Fitness programs and Canoeing, Kayaking and Paddle Sports comprised the top five priorities for the community.

Roanoke Program Priority Rankings	
	Overall Ranking
Adult fitness & wellness programs	1
Outdoor and nature programs	2
Special events	3
Water fitness programs	4
Canoeing, kayaking, paddle sports	5
Youth Learn to Swim programs	6
Adult day trips	7
Programs for disabled	8
Youth sports programs	9
Nature programs	10
Pre-School programs	11
Adult art, dance, performing arts	12
Adult sports programs	13
Youth summer camp programs	14
Martial arts programs	15
Youth fitness & wellness programs	16
After school programs	17
Teen programs	18
Youth art, dance, performing arts	19
Tennis lessons	20
Before school programs	21

Figure 11 - Program Priority Rankings

CHAPTER FIVE - UPDATED FACILITY LEVELS OF SERVICE

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

PROS evaluated park facility levels of service using a combination of resources. These resources included: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, recreation activity participation rates reported by American Sports Data as it applies to activities that occur in the United States and region around Roanoke, community and stakeholder input, findings from the prioritized needs assessment report and general observations by PROS.

Based on the existng levels of inventory and the priority rankings established by the community in the previous chapter, the following are the key areas that need to be addressed in Roanoke in the upcoming years.

5.1 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Based on the priority rankings provided in **Chapter 4**, neighborhood parks are the highest priority for the community in Roanoke at this point. While the overall acreage purely for neighborhood parks may seem deficient, the Consultant Team is aware that many large community parks (e.g. Booker T. Washington Park) serve as neighborhood parks for their residents as well.

Thus, the Consultant team does not advocate an approach that focuses solely on land acquisition and building new parks but, at minimum, updating existing parks in areas of greatest need and focusing on offering a wider breadth of experiences at existing parks. In accordance with neighborhood park design standards, PROS recommends that the City develop such an inventory and upgrade at least two parks annually through their Capital Improvements Program.

5.2 OFF-LEASH AREA

These are only increasing in popularity and based on the existing inventory, the City would be in need of at least one additional off-leash space that the community could have access to. Evaluate adding an off-leash area at Thrasher Park.

5.3 SKATE PARK

While the City's population does show an aging trend, there still is a high concentration of youth population that would seek access to. Outdoor Recreation Trends in 2008 and 2010 both had Skateboarding in the top 3 most popular activities and the community input meetings had several individuals indicate a need for a Skateboard / BMX Park in Roanoke as well. It would be viable opportunity for the City to partner with a private enterprise and user-groups to conduct a feasibility study to determine the type/size, and location of both a new Skate and BMX park.

5.4 MULTIPURPOSE FIELD SPACE

With participation trends moving more towards multi-use with soccer, lacrosse, flag football and even rugby. It is reccomended that the City consider public/private partnerships and evaluate adding more multi-purpose field spaces, particularly for games. The City could address this deficit in two phases:

- As part of the redesign the northern portion of Rivers Edge Park, create two large, lit rectangular athletic fields that have irrigation to complement the regional character of Roanoke's primary hub of recreation

- Repurpose two of the four existing athletic fields at Rivers Edge Park-South to provide synthetic turf that allows for maximum capacity of use and utilization.

5.5 INDOOR RECREATION SPACE

While Roanoke has exceptional outdoor venues and opportunities, the overall system is lacking programmable indoor spaces. To be an effective park system, it is important to have a balance between indoor and outdoor recreation and active and passive spaces for community use. Both our 2012 and 2008 citizen survey data reveal that our citizens have a need for better, more attractive, and versatile indoor spaces for recreational programming; 64% of Roanoke residents believe that the City is lacking in this service area.

Close-to-home, community based programs and services delivered by indoor recreation spaces are of preference for Roanoke as follows: 1) Before and after school spaces for children; 2) Multi-faceted gymnasiums for indoor soccer basketball, volleyball, camps, and drop-in play for children, adults, and teens; 3) Community spaces for senior, arts, educational, wellness, and instructional classes; and 4) Event spaces for community gatherings, weddings, reunions etc. are all preferred types of spaces that would be necessary for a well-rounded park and recreation service system.

The City currently has 38,165 square feet of available space to conduct programming described above. This represents a deficit of 107,857 square feet based on Roanoke's population size (approximately 97000 residents). Local governments nationally average 1.5 SF of non-aquatic indoor recreation space per resident; Roanoke's rate is 0.04 SF per resident. In order to address this deficit, PROS recommends a multi-phased approach:

A) Evaluate adding new indoor spaces to the existing centers at Eureka Park and Preston Park
B) Develop two new, neighborhood based centers at Norwich Park and Fallon Park
C) Revise and execute the joint-use agreement with the Roanoke City Schools

Existing centers at both Eureka and Preston Parks should be expanded such that each has a multi-functional high school size gymnasium, partitioned multi-functional spaces, offices, lobby, parking, fitness and wellness spaces, child-watch areas, warming kitchen, restrooms/showers/lockers, and indoor walking / jogging track. The existing facility at Norwich Park should be razed and replaced with a neighborhood recreation center that is also recommended for Fallon Park. The Norwich and Fallon facilities would consist of a high school size gymnasium, partitioned multi-use spaces, warming kitchen, fitness and wellness areas for adults and children, child care spaces, parking, offices, and restrooms. The City should also evaluate repurposing the Garden City Center as an arts center at-large, divesting the Grandin Court Center from the system and adding additional class/event space to the Discovery Center.

PROS would suggest that the City adopt the philosophy of a holistic "community-use" school system whereas the public services of Parks and Recreation have second priority of use without additional fees and charges within all elementary, middle, and high school facilities. The Community-School model with procedures and policies set forth to ensure weekday, afterschool, evening, and full weekend parks and recreation programming would significantly reduce the need for larger, more expensive new indoor facilities.

AQUATICS

Roanoke's Comprehensive Plan recommends that outdoor pools need to be repurposed. Being more than thirty years of age, the facilities have outlived their design and useful purposes. This results in less than optimal operations and additional maintenance costs leading to an operational subsidy of $200,000+ annually. Through a feasibility analysis in 2007, the City found that by converting a pool into a family aquatic facility, they would substantially reduce their annual subsidies and attain revenue recovery levels upwards of 70 percent.

PROS recommends converting one of the outdoor pools into a family aquatic facility, and updating the remaining pool and bathhouse so that it can continue to serve in its present programmatic capacity.

CHAPTER SIX - UPDATED VISION, MISSION AND ACTION ITEMS

The Vision and Mission of the Department developed during the previous plan update continues to be adhered to and guide the actions of the Department and its staff moving forward.

6.1 VISION

The following vision presents how the department desires to be viewed in the future:

The City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department seeks to be positioned as a premier, "best in class," parks and recreation system that provides high quality, maintained parks, recreation facilities and programs that are accessible and cost effective, as well as support the citizen's vision for cultural unity and a livable and healthy lifestyle that creates high economic impact and value for living and working in Roanoke.

6.2 MISSION

"Our mission is to maximize all available resources to deliver parks, recreation facilities, and programs that are attractive, clean, accessible, and provide memorable experiences. The Department will serve citizens of all ages to create a desirable community to live, work, and play. We measure our success by customer satisfaction, efficiency, and community development of our public spaces and

6.3 BIG MOVES

- Develop a system-wide marketing and branding plan to create a consistent Identity and maximize outreach to drive greater participation and revenues
- Update existing neighborhood parks to better serve community needs
- Increase levels of service for indoor recreation space as through a combination of expanding current facility space, developing new space and partnering for existing space as mentioned in **Section 5.5**
- Focus on enhancing the existing culture of partnerships, locally and regionally, to better meet community needs in a financially sustainable manner

6.4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This section reiterates objectives and recommendations from the 2007 Master Plan update to ensure continuity of vision and goals. As mentioned before, this current Master Plan update is not an overhaul of the previous plan but simply a check-point and a course correction, where required to ensure that the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation Department continues to meet and exceed the goals and vision of the community for the years to come.

6.4.1.1 COMMUNITY MANDATES

- Strategy 1.1) Finish the greenway and trail system in the City and connect to the future regional system with Salem, Carvin's Cove, Vinton, and Roanoke County.
- Strategy 1.2) Complete the joint Rivers Edge Park (North and South) , and the Roanoke River Greenway as a combined signature recreational "hub" for the City
- Strategy 1.3) Evaluate each existing park site to continually update long-term maintenance needs and include capital improvements for each site that will enhance the use and value to the community, the neighborhood, and visitors to the park. The evaluation could also include assessing areas of the park that are largely unused and can be naturalized to reduce

maintenance demands and offer a higher level of maintenance in the areas which are used by the community.

- Strategy 1.4) Upgrade existing sports fields in the community to maximize the capacity of use as it applies to baseball, softball, lacrosse, rugby, and soccer fields.
- Strategy 1.5) Together with the Roanoke City Schools and / or Roanoke County, develop the number of sports fields outlined in the regional facility standards plan to adequately service the youth and adults sports needs in the City
- Strategy 1.6) Create a Downtown Parks and Landscape Plan that focuses on how to maximize usability, attractiveness and available amenities at existing green spaces, plazas, gateways, parks, and trails for citizens living and working in downtown Roanoke
- Strategy 1.7) Plant additional trees in the City to maintain the 40% canopy goal to cool down the City and parks throughout the system
- Strategy 1.8) Improve and upgrade neighborhood parks in the underserved areas of the City
- Strategy 1.9) Add off-leash dog areas in the City
- Strategy 1.10) Improve Mill Mountain as a destination park; develop shared trails systems with the NPS and consider developing/managing camping facilities.
- Strategy 1.11) Develop Carvin's Cove as a destination outdoor adventure park site in keeping with environmental design standards and principles
- Strategy 1.12) Covert one outdoor pool into a family aquatics facility and update the other facility as an outdoor 50-meter pool with zero-depth entry areas for toddlers and seniors.

6.5 CONSISTENT QUALITY STANDARDS

- Strategy 2.1) Update maintenance standards for parks, trails, play fields, floral gardens, and recreation amenities, as well as budget accordingly to meet the desired standards
- Strategy 2.2) Measure the operational impact of new capital improvements prior to development to secure maintenance and operating funding commitment so as to not deplete existing funding levels or overextend staff and equipment
- Strategy 2.3) Design parks and recreation facilities in the future that can produce operational revenue to offset operational costs
- Strategy 2.4) A regional approach to maintenance standards and operational costs shared with users is required to eliminate conflict with the City and County parks and recreation departments
- Strategy 2.5) Work in partnership with the School District to enhance school sites and school park sites

6.6 BASELINE RECREATION SERVICES

- Strategy 3.1) Establish core recreation programs in coordination with Roanoke County on what services each Department will provide individually and the core programs that could be joined together as one to maximize each other's talents and resources
- Strategy 3.2) Establish core recreation facilities that are needed in the City and County to properly address the recreation needs in the Roanoke Valley
- Strategy 3.3) Develop a Marketing Plan for the Department to position the core recreation programs and facilities appropriately in the City and the region
- Strategy 3.4) Develop new core recreation programs for residents of the City in coordination with the County

- Strategy 3.5) Develop adult and youth wellness and fitness, senior adult programs, city-wide community events, aquatic programs, family programs, outdoor adventure, environmental education, adult sports, and performing arts programs as core programs for the City in coordination with the County's core services
- Strategy 3.6) Continue to be a youth and adult field sports provider in cooperation with Roanoke County and the School Districts

6.7 FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

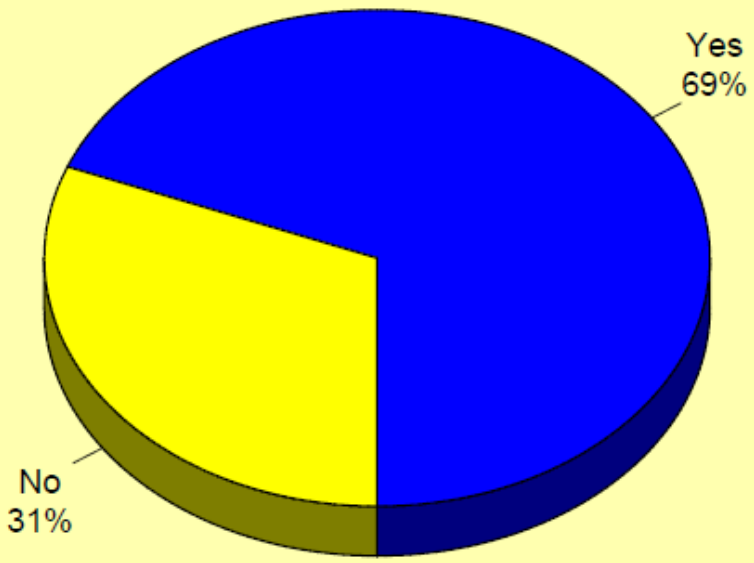
- Strategy 4.1) Develop and manage a Financial Plan for the parks and recreation system
- Strategy 4.2) Develop strong and equitable partnerships with public agencies, not-for-profits, and for-profit agencies
- Strategy 4.3) Develop a regional approach to park and recreation management

CHAPTER SEVEN - APPENDIX I

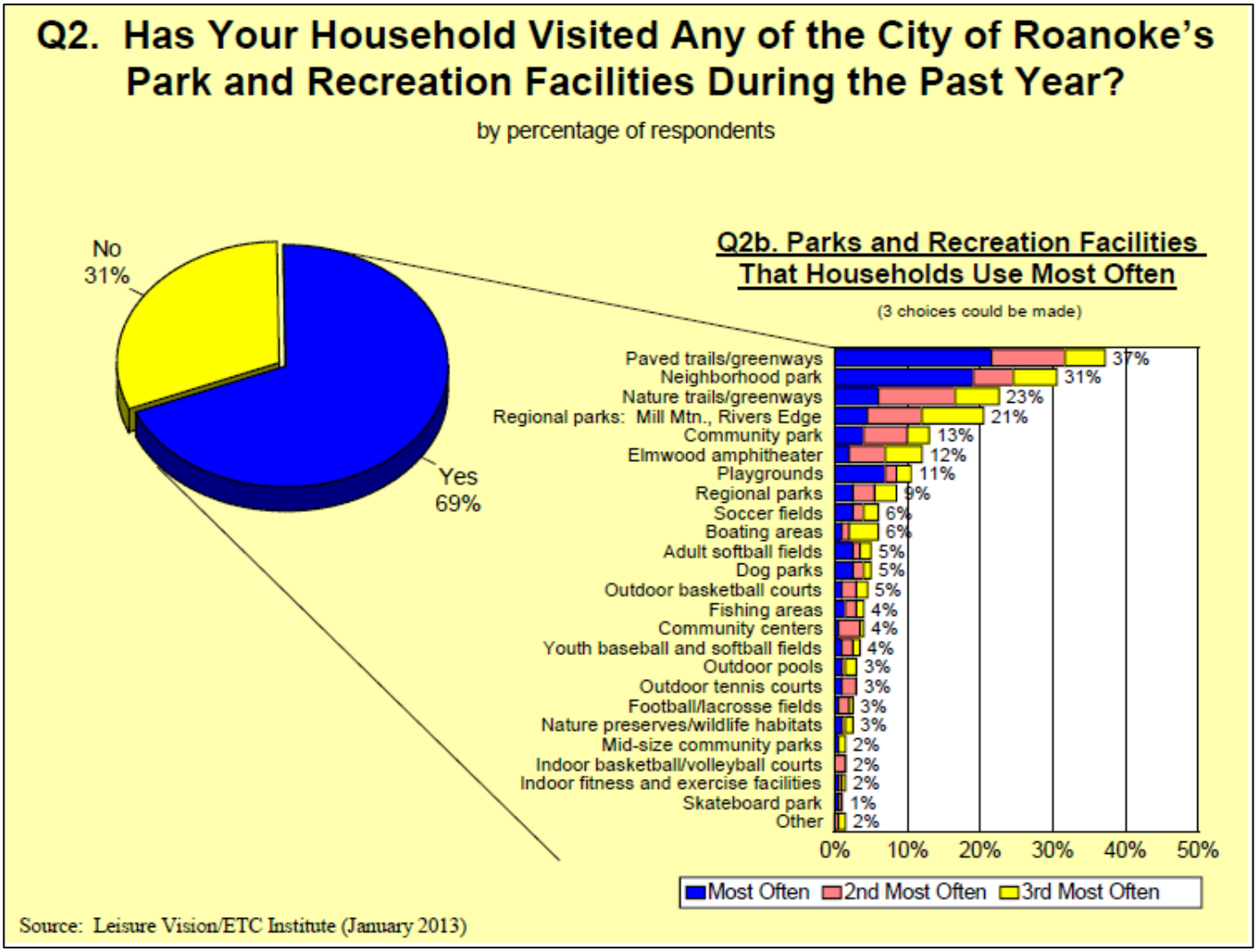
7.1 DETAILED SURVEY FINDINGS

Q2. Has Your Household Visited Any of the City of Roanoke's Park and Recreation Facilities During the Past Year?

by percentage of respondents

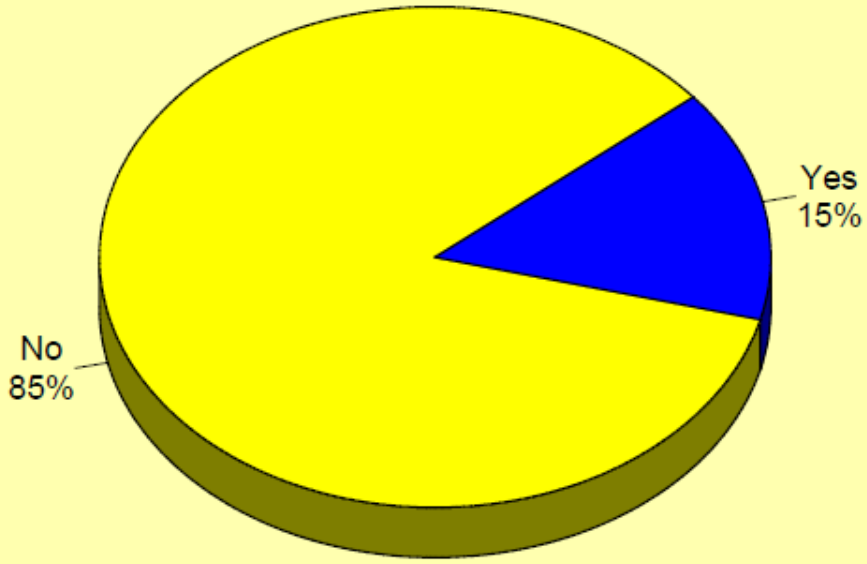


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

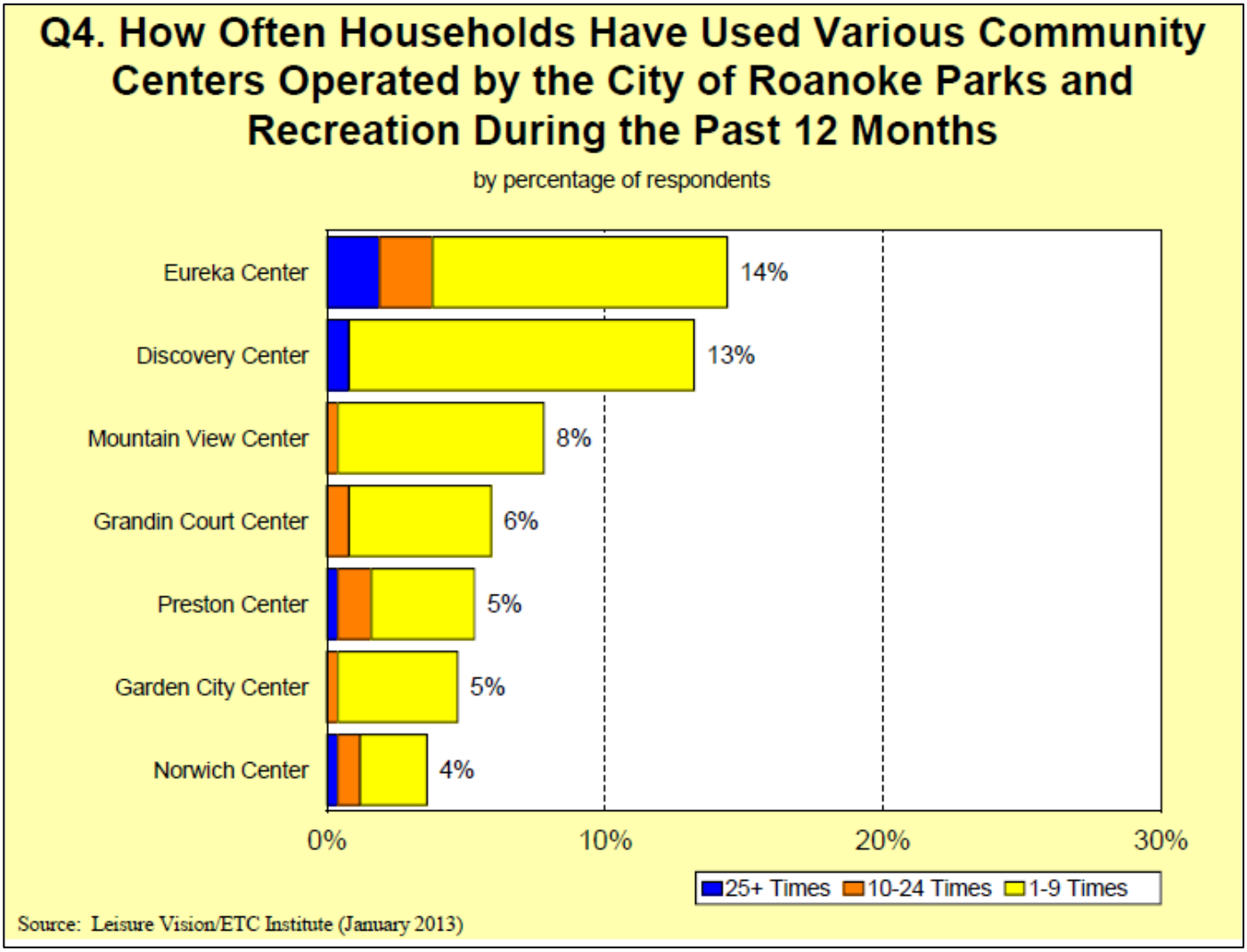

Q2. Has Your Household Visited Any of the City of Roanoke's Park and Recreation Facilities During the Past Year?
by percentage of respondents
No 31%
Yes 69%
Q2b. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Use Most Often
(3 choices could be made)
Paved trails/greenways 37%
Neighborhood park 31%
Nature trails/greenways 23%
Regional parks: Mill Mtn., Rivers Edge 21%
Community park 13%
Elmwood amphitheater 12%
Playgrounds 11%
Regional parks 9%
Soccer fields 6%
Boating areas 6%
Adult softball fields 5%
Dog parks 5%
Outdoor basketball courts 5%
Fishing areas 4%
Community centers 4%
Youth baseball and softball fields 4%
Outdoor pools 3%
Outdoor tennis courts 3%
Football/lacrosse fields 3%
Nature preserves/wildlife habitats 3%
Mid-size community parks 2%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts 2%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities 2%
Skateboard park 1%
Other 2%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%
Most Often
2nd Most Often
3rd Most Often
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

Q3. Has Your Household Participated in Any Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation During the Past 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents

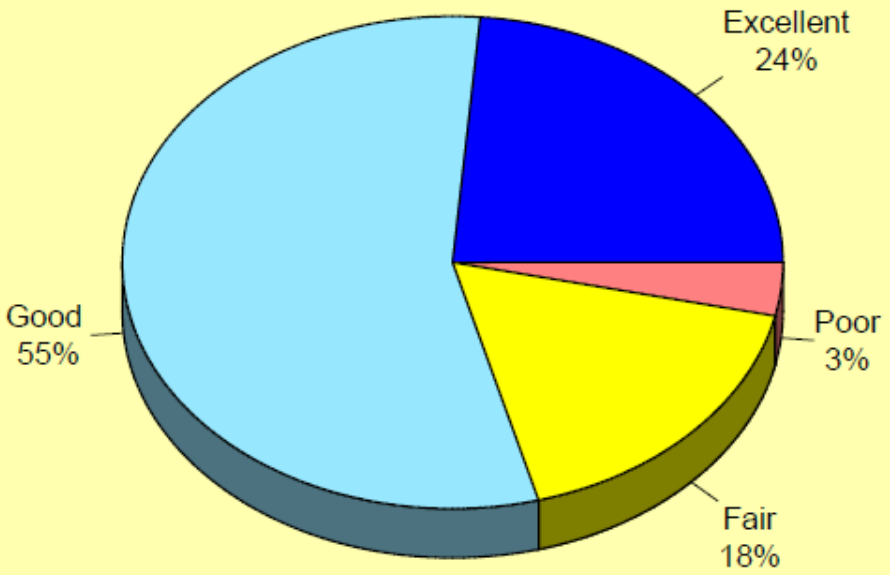


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

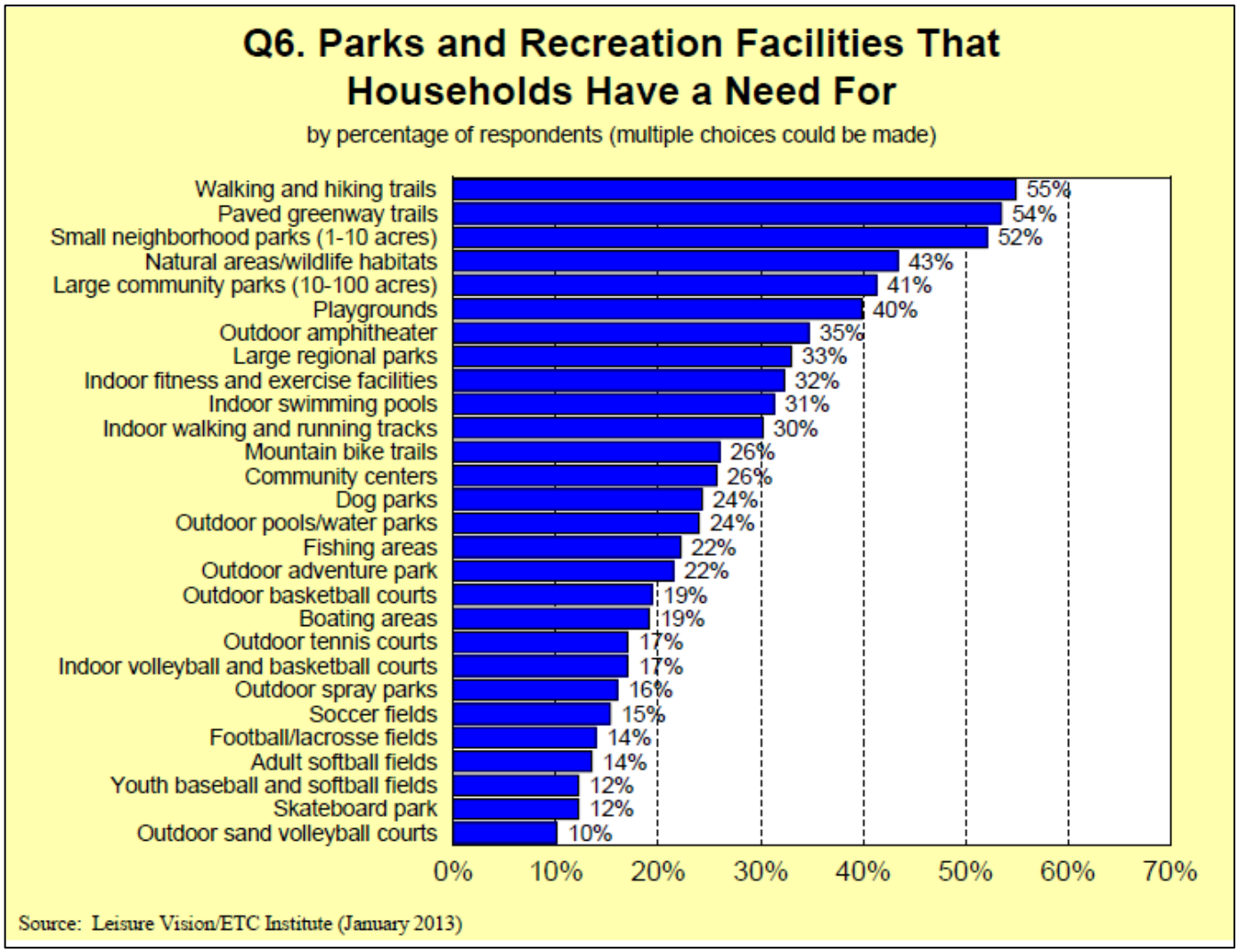

Q4. How Often Households Have Used Various Community Centers Operated by the City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation During the Past 12 Months
by percentage of respondents
Eureka Center
14%
Discovery Center
13%
Mountain View Center
8%
Grandin Court Center
6%
Preston Center
5%
Garden City Center
5%
Norwich Center
4%
0%
10%
20%
30%
25+ Times
10-24 Times
1-9 Times
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

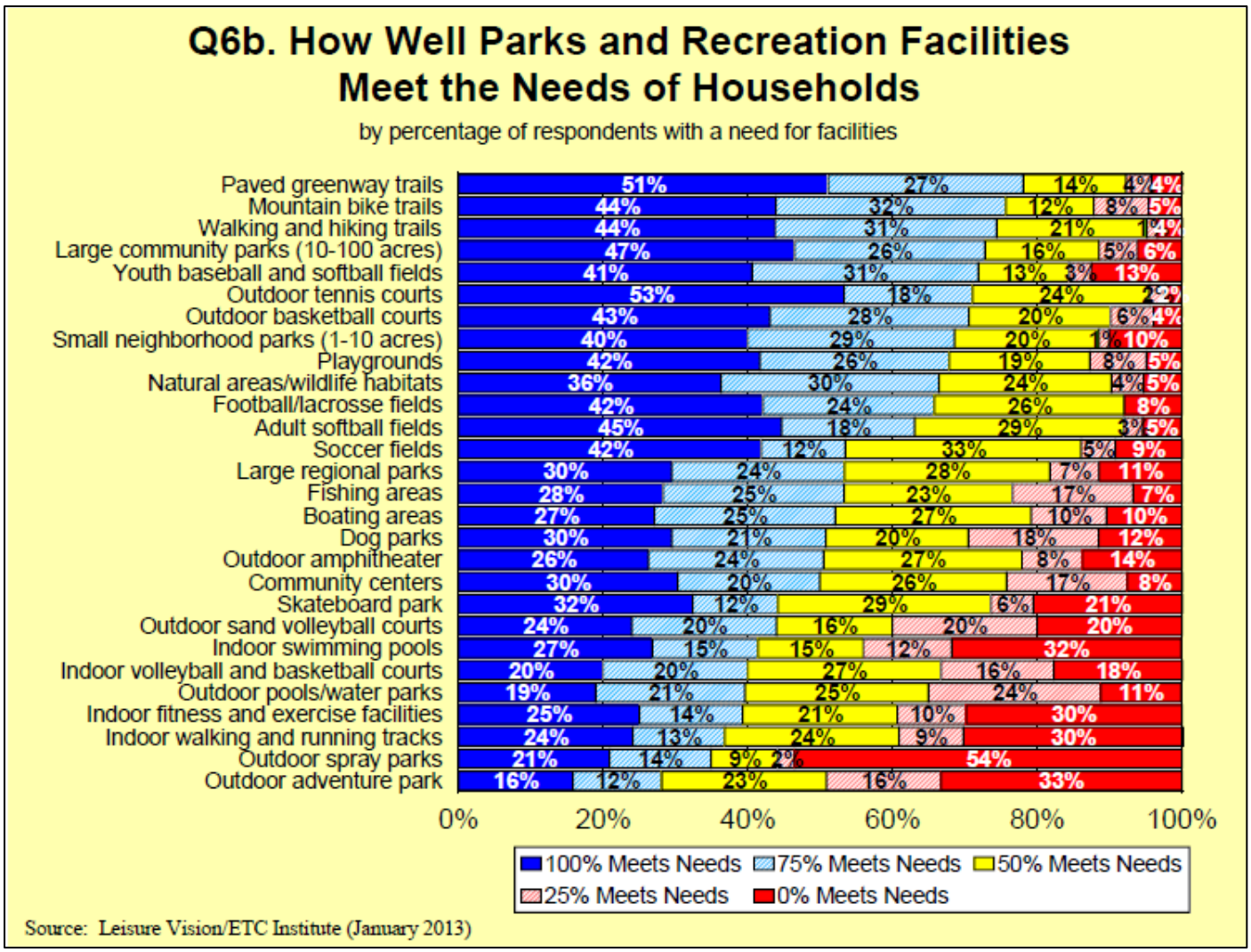
Q5. Overall Quality of Community Centers Used During the Past 12 Months

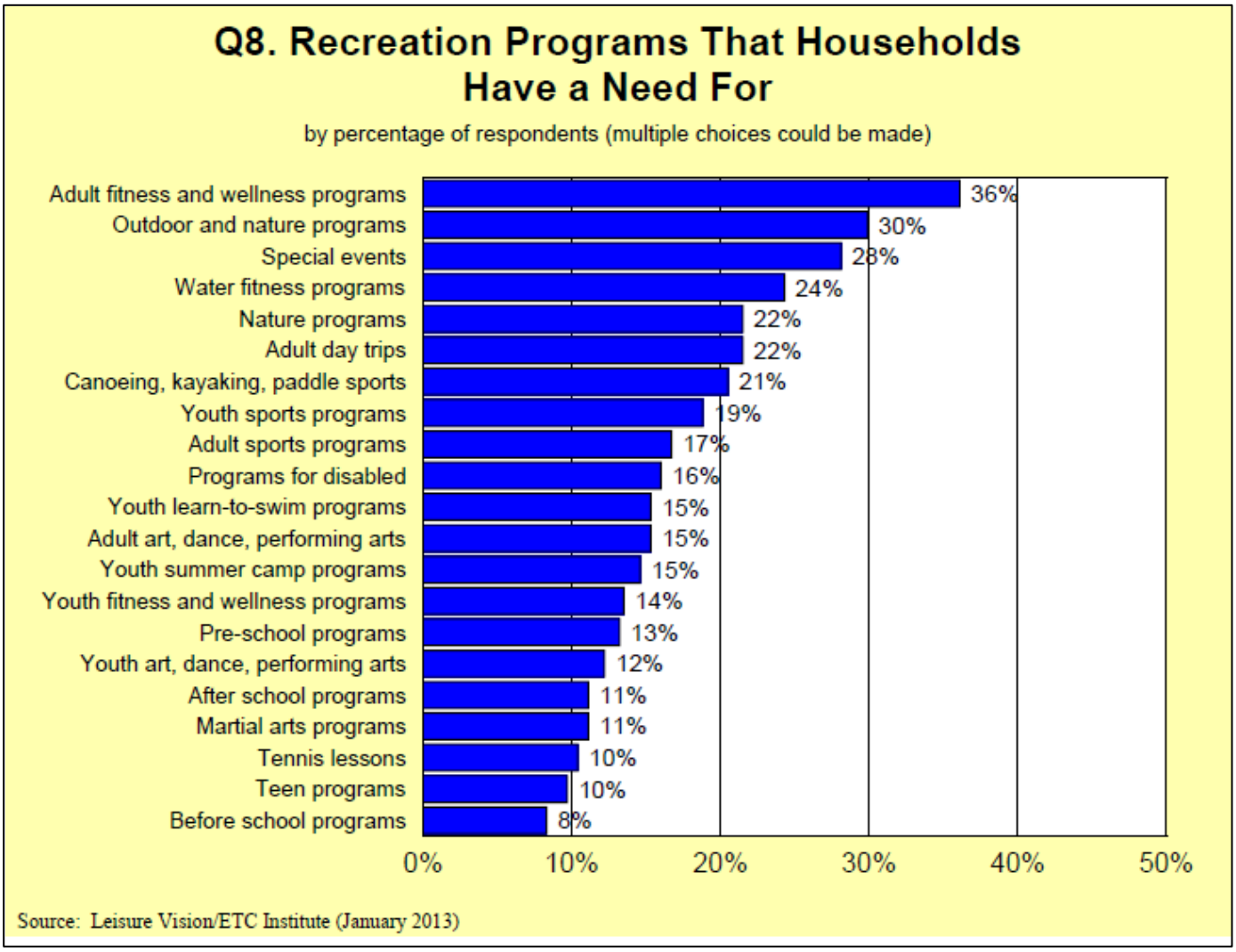
by percentage of respondents

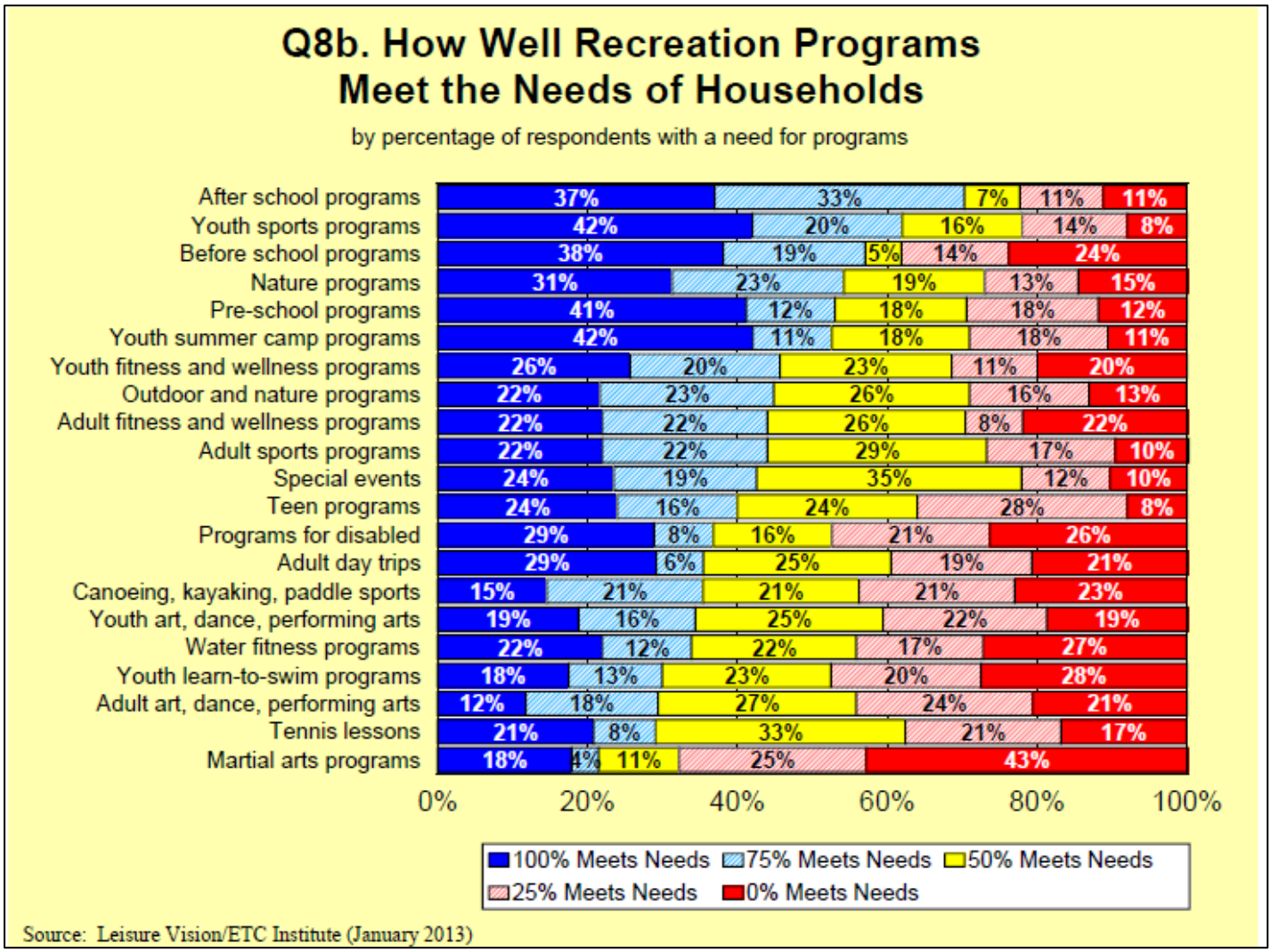


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

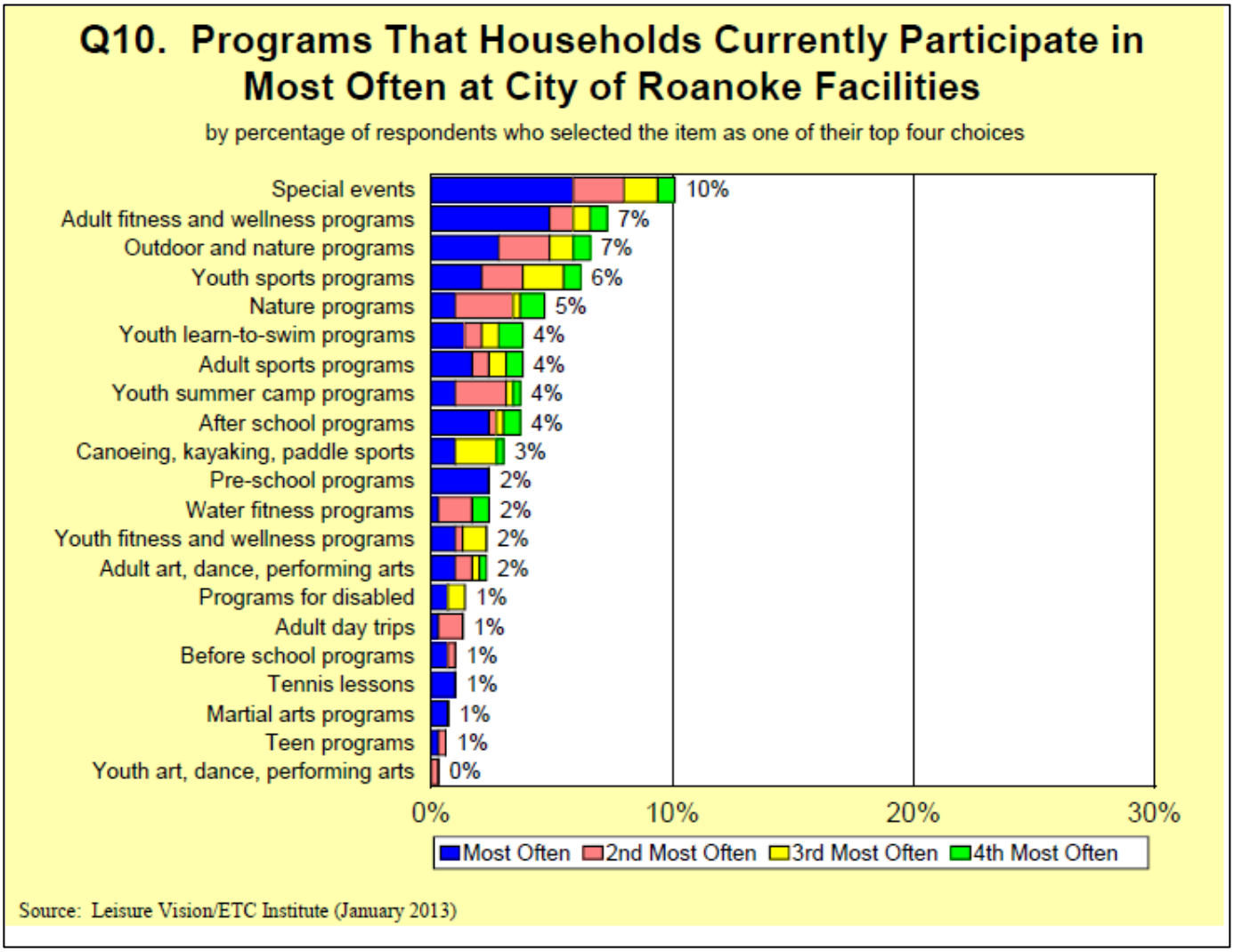

Q6. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have a Need For
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)
Walking and hiking trails 55%
Paved greenway trails 54%
Small neighborhood parks (1-10 acres) 52%
Natural areas/wildlife habitats 43%
Large community parks (10-100 acres) 41%
Playgrounds 40%
Outdoor amphitheater 35%
Large regional parks 33%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities 32%
Indoor swimming pools 31%
Indoor walking and running tracks 30%
Mountain bike trails 26%
Community centers 26%
Dog parks 24%
Outdoor pools/water parks 24%
Fishing areas 22%
Outdoor adventure park 22%
Outdoor basketball courts 19%
Boating areas 19%
Outdoor tennis courts 17%
Indoor volleyball and basketball courts 17%
Outdoor spray parks 16%
Soccer fields 15%
Football/lacrosse fields 14%
Adult softball fields 14%
Youth baseball and softball fields 12%
Skateboard park 12%
Outdoor sand volleyball courts 10%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

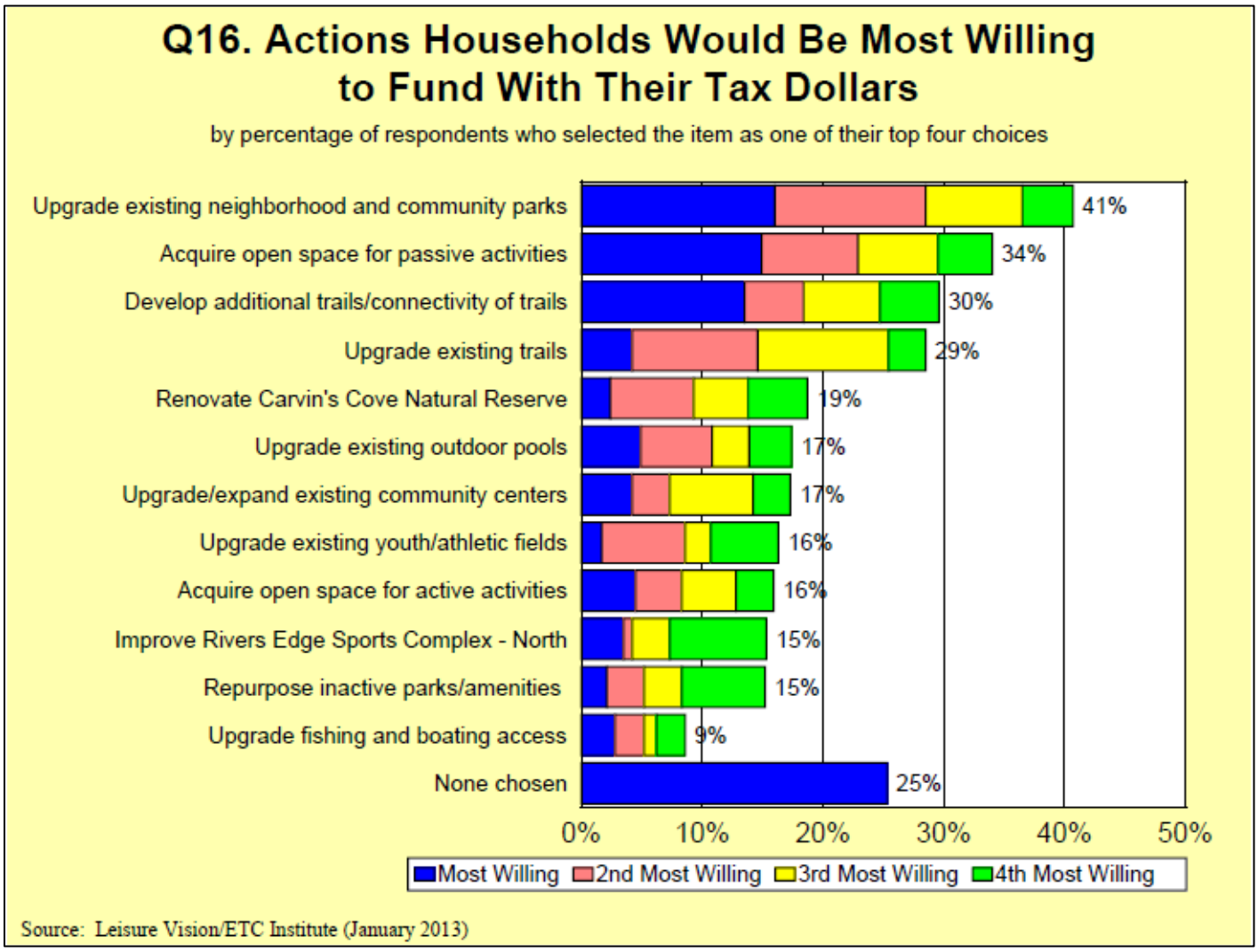

Q6b. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities Meet the Needs of Households
by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities
Paved greenway trails 51% 27% 14% 4% 4%
Mountain bike trails 44% 32% 12% 8% 5%
Walking and hiking trails 44% 31% 21% 1% 4%
Large community parks (10-100 acres) 47% 26% 16% 5% 6%
Youth baseball and softball fields 41% 31% 13% 3% 13%
Outdoor tennis courts 53% 18% 24% 2% 2%
Outdoor basketball courts 43% 28% 20% 6% 4%
Small neighborhood parks (1-10 acres) 40% 29% 20% 1% 10%
Playgrounds 42% 26% 19% 8% 5%
Natural areas/wildlife habitats 36% 30% 24% 4% 5%
Football/lacrosse fields 42% 24% 26% 8%
Adult softball fields 45% 18% 29% 3% 5%
Soccer fields 42% 12% 33% 5% 9%
Large regional parks 30% 24% 28% 7% 11%
Fishing areas 28% 25% 23% 17% 7%
Boating areas 27% 25% 27% 10% 10%
Dog parks 30% 21% 20% 18% 12%
Outdoor amphitheater 26% 24% 27% 8% 14%
Community centers 30% 20% 26% 17% 8%
Skateboard park 32% 12% 29% 6% 21%
Outdoor sand volleyball courts 24% 20% 16% 20% 20%
Indoor swimming pools 27% 15% 15% 12% 32%
Indoor volleyball and basketball courts 20% 20% 27% 16% 18%
Outdoor pools/water parks 19% 21% 25% 24% 11%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities 25% 14% 21% 10% 30%
Indoor walking and running tracks 24% 13% 24% 9% 30%
Outdoor spray parks 21% 14% 9% 2% 54%
Outdoor adventure park 16% 12% 23% 16% 33%
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
100% Meets Needs
75% Meets Needs
50% Meets Needs
25% Meets Needs
0% Meets Needs
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

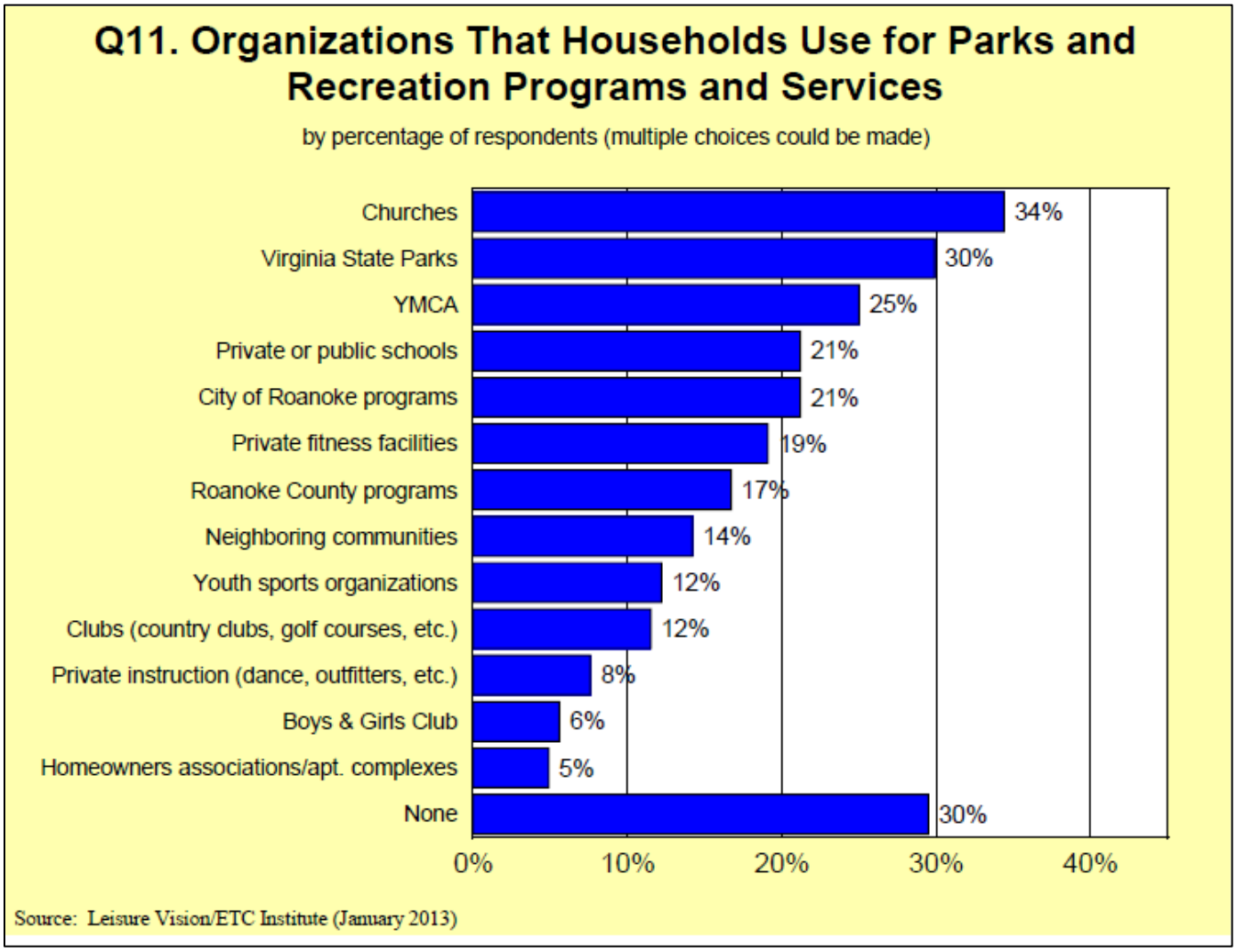

Q8. Recreation Programs That Households Have a Need For
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)
Adult fitness and wellness programs 36%
Outdoor and nature programs 30%
Special events 28%
Water fitness programs 24%
Nature programs 22%
Adult day trips 22%
Canoeing, kayaking, paddle sports 21%
Youth sports programs 19%
Adult sports programs 17%
Programs for disabled 16%
Youth learn-to-swim programs 15%
Adult art, dance, performing arts 15%
Youth summer camp programs 15%
Youth fitness and wellness programs 14%
Pre-school programs 13%
Youth art, dance, performing arts 12%
After school programs 11%
Martial arts programs 11%
Tennis lessons 10%
Teen programs 10%
Before school programs 8%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

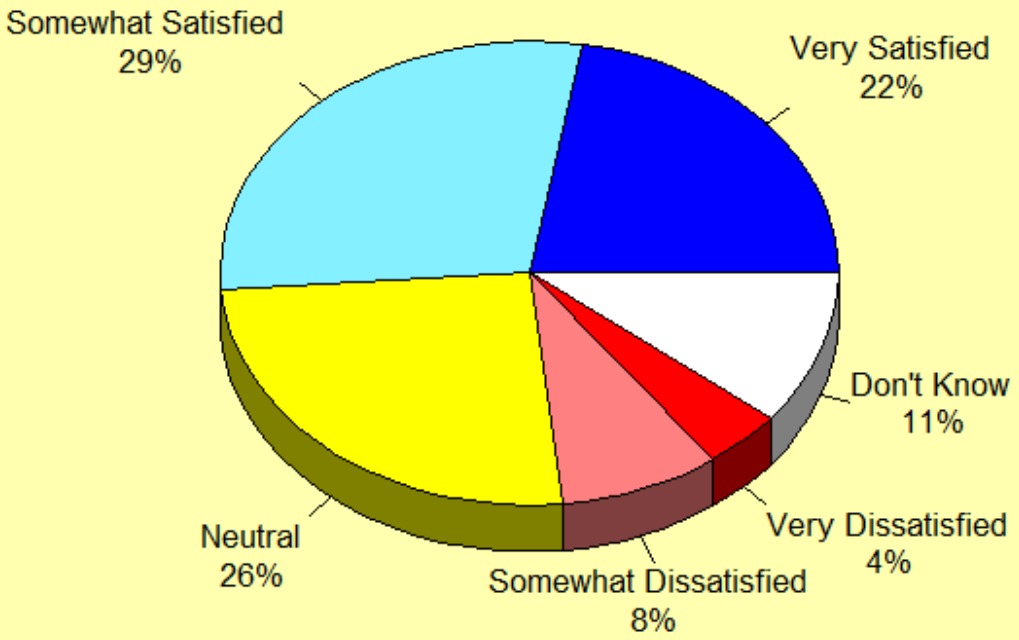

Q10. Programs That Households Currently Participate in Most Often at City of Roanoke Facilities
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices
Special events 10%
Adult fitness and wellness programs 7%
Outdoor and nature programs 7%
Youth sports programs 6%
Nature programs 5%
Youth learn-to-swim programs 4%
Adult sports programs 4%
Youth summer camp programs 4%
After school programs 4%
Canoeing, kayaking, paddle sports 3%
Pre-school programs 2%
Water fitness programs 2%
Youth fitness and wellness programs 2%
Adult art, dance, performing arts 2%
Programs for disabled 1%
Adult day trips 1%
Before school programs 1%
Tennis lessons 1%
Martial arts programs 1%
Teen programs 1%
Youth art, dance, performing arts 0%
0%
10%
20%
30%
Most Often
2nd Most Often
3rd Most Often
4th Most Often
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)


Q16. Actions Households Would Be Most Willing to Fund With Their Tax Dollars
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices
Upgrade existing neighborhood and community parks
41%
Acquire open space for passive activities
34%
Develop additional trails/connectivity of trails
30%
Upgrade existing trails
29%
Renovate Carvin's Cove Natural Reserve
19%
Upgrade existing outdoor pools
17%
Upgrade/expand existing community centers
17%
Upgrade existing youth/athletic fields
16%
Acquire open space for active activities
16%
Improve Rivers Edge Sports Complex - North
15%
Repurpose inactive parks/amenities
15%
Upgrade fishing and boating access
9%
None chosen
25%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
Most Willing
2nd Most Willing
3rd Most Willing
4th Most Willing
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

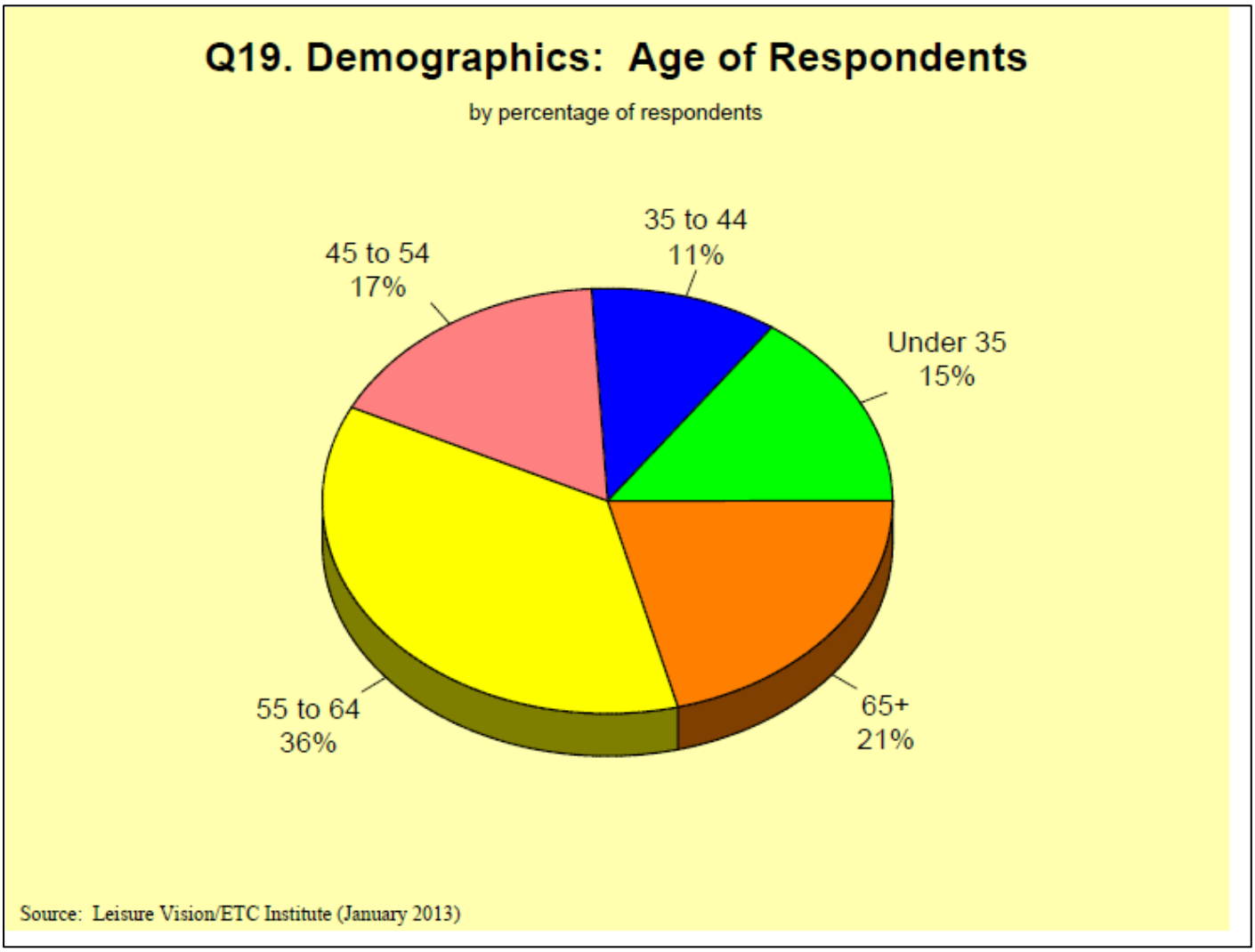

Q11. Organizations That Households Use for Parks and Recreation Programs and Services
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)
Churches 34%
Virginia State Parks 30%
YMCA 25%
Private or public schools 21%
City of Roanoke programs 21%
Private fitness facilities 19%
Roanoke County programs 17%
Neighboring communities 14%
Youth sports organizations 12%
Clubs (country clubs, golf courses, etc.) 12%
Private instruction (dance, outfitters, etc.) 8%
Boys & Girls Club 6%
Homeowners associations/apt. complexes 5%
None 30%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

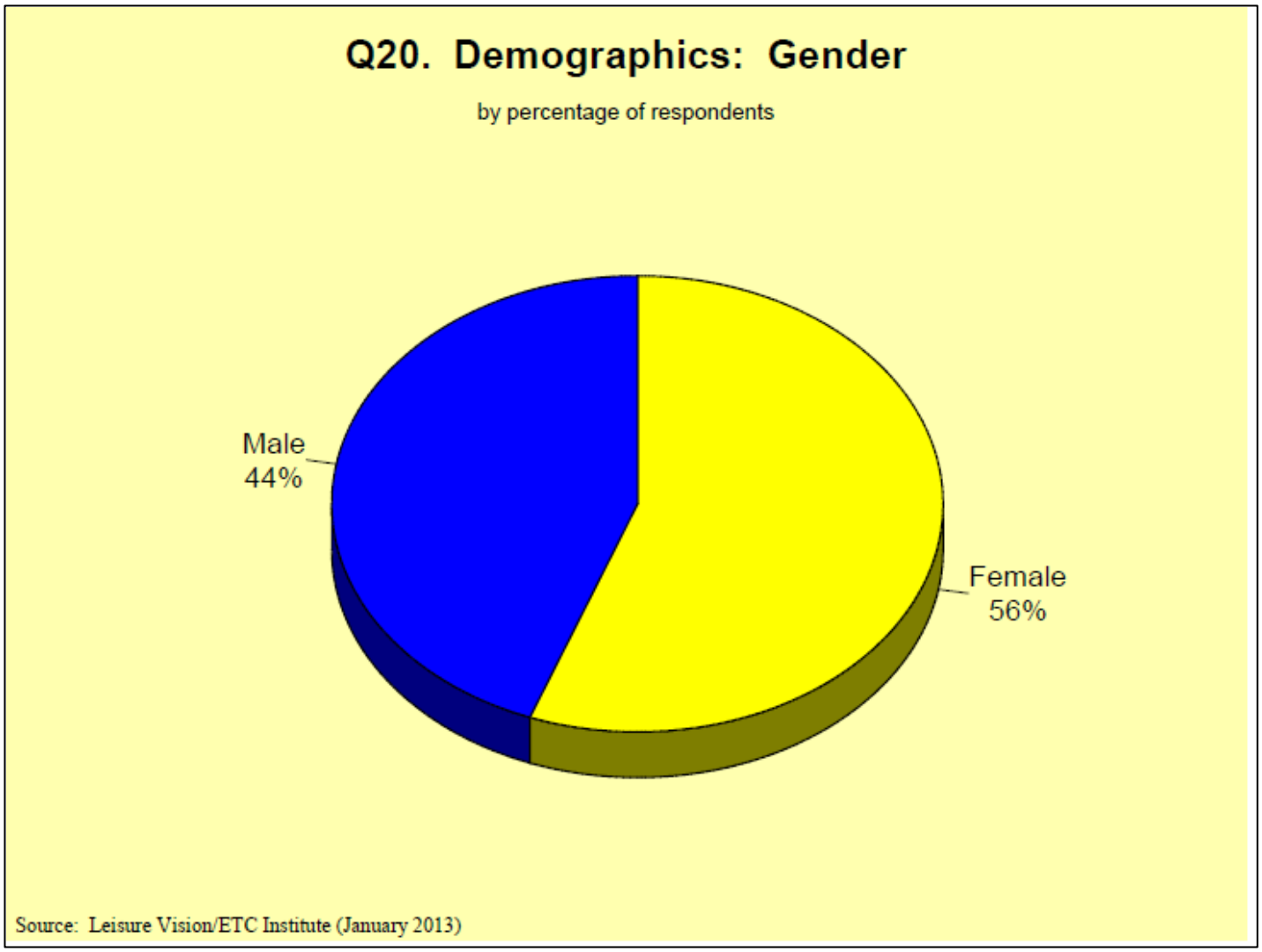
Q18. Satisfaction with Overall Value Received from the City's Recreation Facilities and Programs

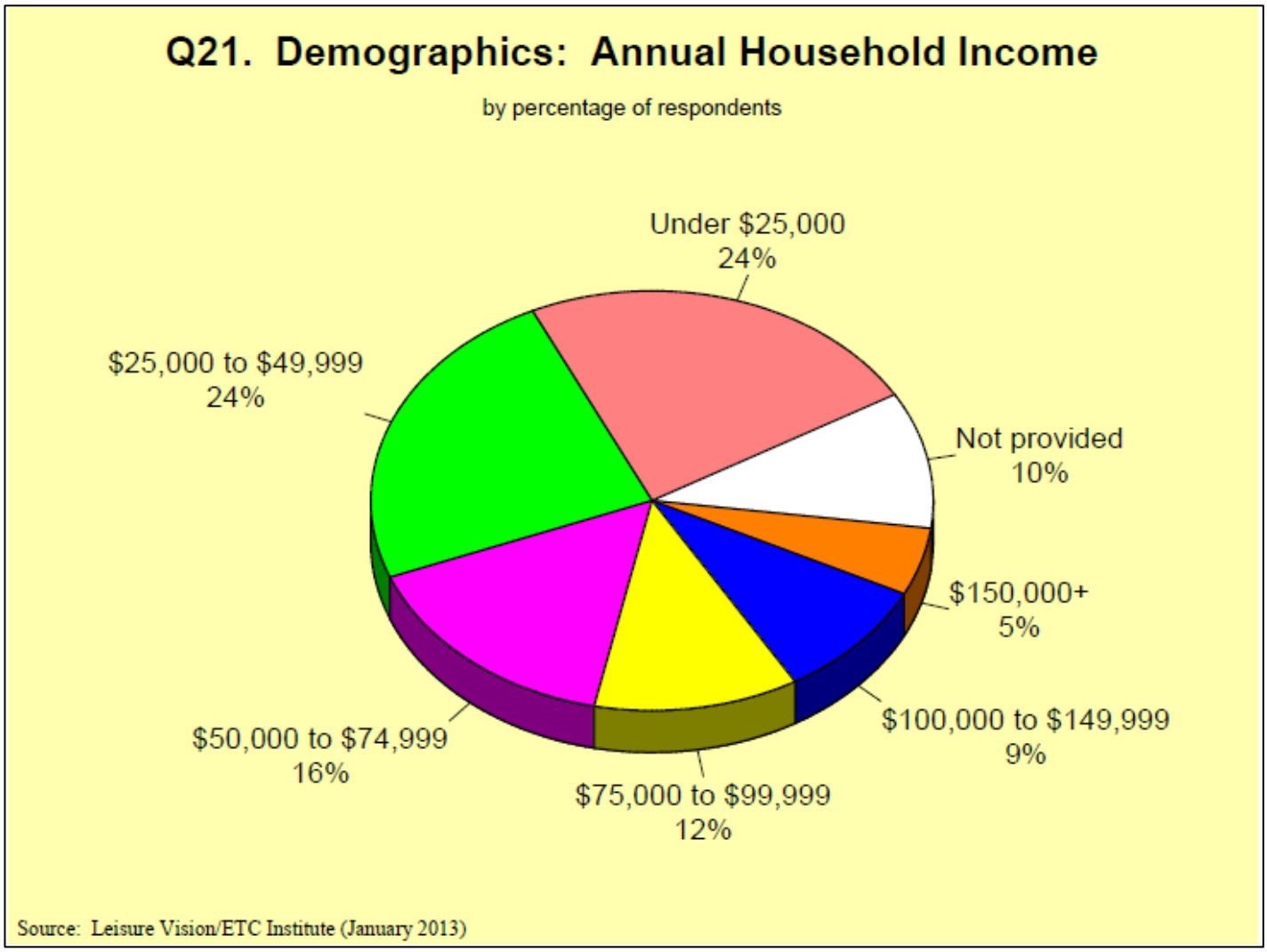
by percentage of respondents

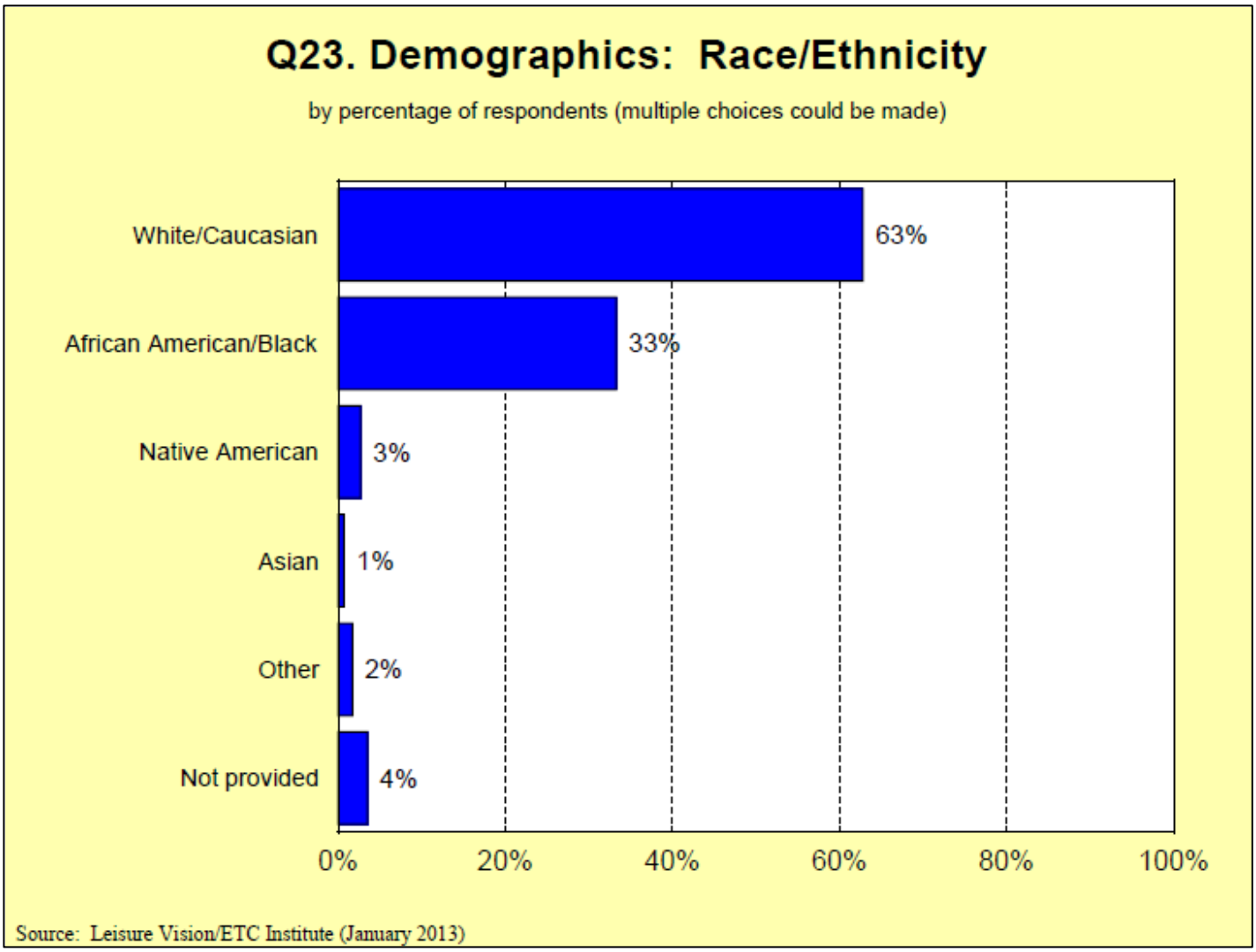


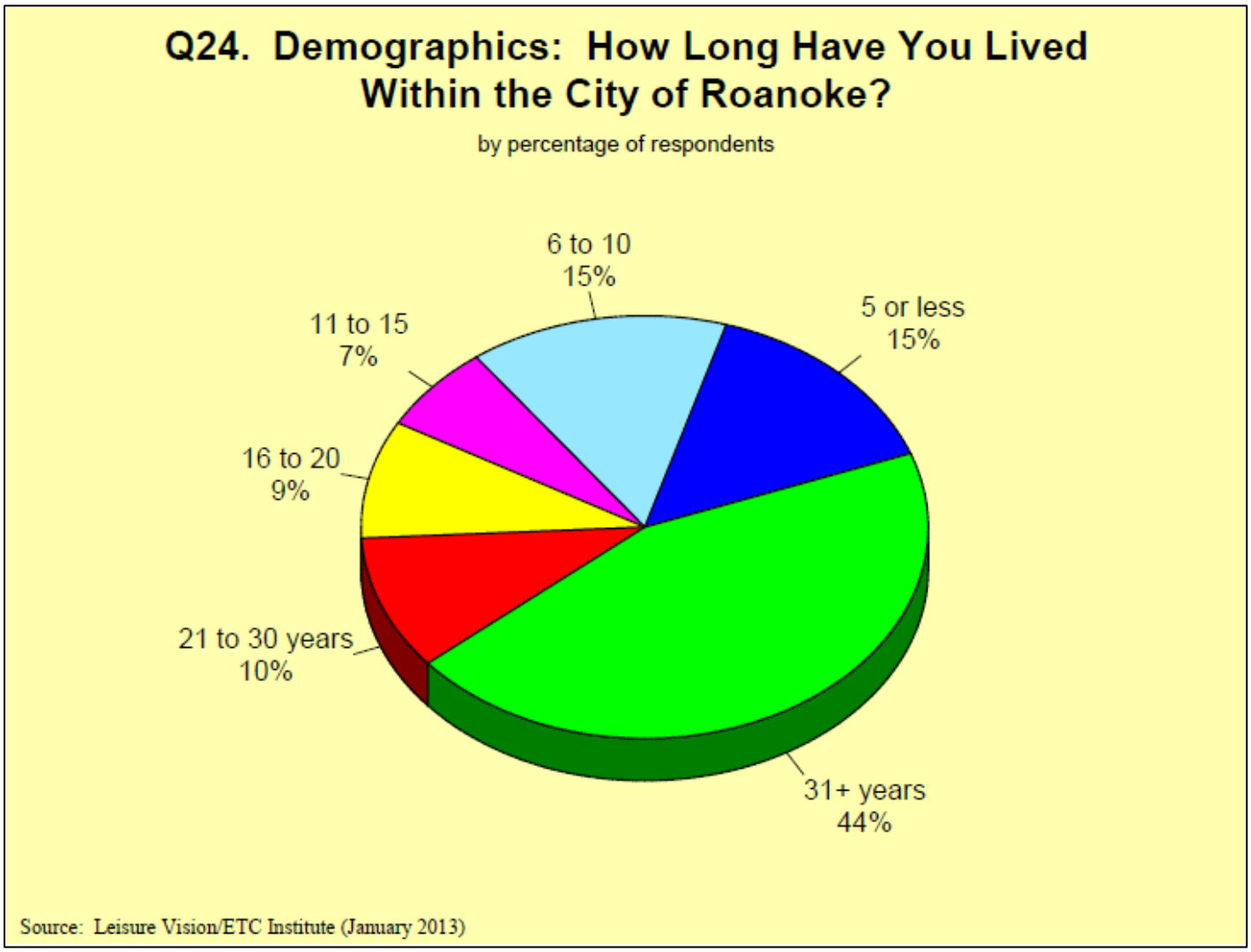
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (May 2012)


Q19. Demographics: Age of Respondents
by percentage of respondents
35 to 44
11%
45 to 54
17%
Under 35
15%
55 to 64
36%
65+
21%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)


Q20. Demographics: Gender
by percentage of respondents
Male
44%
Female
56%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)


Q21. Demographics: Annual Household Income
by percentage of respondents
Under $25,000
24%
Not provided
10%
$150,000+
5%
$100,000 to $149,999
9%
$75,000 to $99,999
12%
$50,000 to $74,999
16%
$25,000 to $49,999
24%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)


Q23. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)
White/Caucasian
63%
African American/Black
33%
Native American
3%
Asian
1%
Other
2%
Not provided
4%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)


Q24. Demographics: How Long Have You Lived Within the City of Roanoke?
by percentage of respondents
6 to 10
15%
5 or less
15%
11 to 15
7%
16 to 20
9%
21 to 30 years
10%
31+ years
44%
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (January 2013)

7.2 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

In 2007, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan defined design standards for the various park types within the City: mini parks/plazas, neighborhood parks, community, regional and athletic complexes, preservation areas, and greenways/multi-purpose trails. Based upon land use, visitation and park use patterns, PROS recommends the following classifications:

Mini Parks and Plazas

- Andrews, Argonne Circle, Century Plaza, Entranceway, Gateway, Harkrader, Lee Plaza, SunTrust Plaza, Triangle, Railside Plaza, and Wells Fargo Plaza

Neighborhood Parks

- *Bennington, Bowman, Brown-Robertson, Eastgate, Fern, Garden City, *Ghent Hill, Golden, Horton, Huff Lane, Hurt, Kennedy, Lakewood, Loudon, Masons Mill, Melrose, *Memorial Bridge, Morningside, Norwich, Perry, Piedmont, Preston, Raleigh Court, Ridgewood, Shrine Hill, Smith, Staunton, Sunrise, Third & Campbell, +Valley Avenue, Vic Thomas, Villa Heights, West End, and Woodlawn.

Community

- Countryside, Eureka, Fallon, Fishburn, Highland, Jackson, Strauss, Thrasher, Wasena, and Washington.

Regional and Athletic Complexes

- Breckenridge Athletic Fields, ** Crystal Spring Park, Elmwood, Preston Athletic Fields, Westside Athletic Fields, and Rivers Edge Park (North and South).

Preservation Areas

- Mill Mountain, Carvin's Cove, Yellow Mountain,

Greenways and Trails

- Roanoke River, Lick Run, Tinker Creek, Murray Run, Mill Mountain, Fishburn Park trails, Carvin's Cove trails, and Mill Mountain park trails.

*Recommend inclusion within the Roanoke River Greenway linear park classification.

** Real Property owned by the Western Virginia Water Authority

+Consider divesting from the park system