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Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Elyria, Ohio

October 17, 2016



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Opportunity





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan Elyria, Ohio

City Administration

Holly C. Brinda, Mayor
Mary Siwierka, Safety Service Director

Elyria City Council

Larry W. Tanner, Ward 1
Brenda K. Davis, Ward 2
Dr. Mark N. Jessie, Ward 3
Mark F. Craig, Ward 4
Marcus D. Madison, Ward 5
Donna Mitchell, Ward 6
Jack W. Cerra, Ward 7
Council at Large
Michael J. Lotko III
Victor F. Stewart III
Thomas G. Callahan
John (Jack) A. Baird
Forrest L. Bullocks, Clerk of Council

City of Elyria Staff

Lisa Bowman, Director
Rob Horwedel, Recreation Supervisor
Jay Horwedel, Maintenance Supervisor
Annette Solet, Recreation Supervisor
Tami Martinak, Secretary
Carrie Reardon, Recreation Supervisor

Master Plan Steering Committee

Sam Battle
Stacey Francis
John Hammond
Mark Jessie
Kurt Koepf
Marcus Madison
Carrie Reardon

Consultant Team Brandstetter Carroll Inc.

2360 Chauvin Drive
Lexington, Kentucky 40517
(859) 268-1933 VOICE
(800) 368-1933
(859) 268-3341 FAX

Architect's Project No. 14091
October 17, 2016

ETC, Leisure Vision, Inc.

Parks and Recreation Board

Sam Battle, Chairperson
John Hammond, Vice Chairperson
Stacey Francis
Kurt Koepf
Rick Stoffer

Lisa Bowman
Rob Horwedel
Jay Horwedel
Annette Solet
Tami Martinak
Rick Stoffer
Jim Wall

Patrick D. Hoagland, ASLA, Project Manager
Keith E. Rodenhauer, Planner
Nancy Nozik, AIA
Mark E. Horman, ASLA, Landscape Architect
Eric M. Lee, Associate ASLA
Lynda Gates, Administrative Assistant

Ronald Vine, Chris Tatham



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sponsored by:
Utilities, Safety &
Environment

B. Davis
J. Cerra
L. Tanner

ORDINANCE NO. 2016- 129

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE ELYRIA PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ELYRIA, STATE OF OHIO:

SECTION 1: That the Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan be and the same is hereby adopted. Said Master Plan is kept on file in the office of the Director of the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department.

SECTION 2: That it is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the passage of this Ordinance were taken in meetings open to the public, in compliance with Ohio law.

SECTION 3: That this Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

PASSED: 10/17/16

Michael J. Lotko III
Michael J. Lotko III, President

ATTEST: Forrest L. Bullocks

Forrest L. Bullocks, Clerk

APPROVED: 10/17/16

Holly C. Brunda
Holly C. Brunda, Mayor

DATE: 10-18-16

Approved as to form:

Amanda R. Oery, Acting 9/09/2016
Scott F. Serazin, Law Director

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

I, THE UNDERSIGNED CLERK OF COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ELYRIA, OHIO, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FULL TEXT OF THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE NO. 2016- 129 WAS POSTED IN THREE PLACES WITHIN THE CITY AS DETERMINED BY COUNCIL, AND THAT SUCH PLACES WERE AS FOLLOWS: CITY HALL, CENTRAL FIRE STATION AND THE POLICE STATION.

DATED: 10/18/16

Forrest L. Bullocks
CLERK OF COUNCIL
CITY OF ELYRIA, OHIO

Date presented to the Mayor: 10/18/16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN CITY OF ELYRIA, OHIO

EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN ELYRIA

The Elyria Parks and Recreation Department currently operates park sites in 16 locations, covering over 260 acres of land. The four regional Community Parks, North, South, East, and West Parks, each serve a quadrant of the City of Elyria. The final Community Park, Vic Janowicz Memorial Park, also provides recreation opportunities for City residents. Elyria also operates two Neighborhood Parks (Hilltop and Academy Circle Parks) and four Mini Parks Abbe Road, Bell Ave, Washington Village, and Westway Garden Parks). The City offers a downtown gathering space at Ely Square Park and the Finwood Estate and Forest, located in northeastern Elyria. These parks provide a variety of facilities including playgrounds, fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, and recreation centers.

Parks and recreation services are currently provided primarily by the City of Elyria through the Parks and Recreation Department. Lorain County Metro Parks also provide land and programs at Black River Reservation, and, since January of 2015, Metro Parks manage Cascade and Elywood Park. Elyria has a Parks and Recreation Board which provides advice on parks and recreation facilities and policies.

In addition to the facilities offered by the City of Elyria, the school district (Elyria City School District) provides playgrounds, athletic fields, and courts at several locations that can be used by the public when schools are not in session. Private organizations, such as homeowners associations, Little League East (manages ballfields at Vic Janowicz), Lorain County Community College, churches, country clubs, and others, also provide recreational facilities for use by the public.

THE NEED FOR A PLAN

The City of Elyria, founded in 1817 by Heman Ely along the banks of the Black River, is located in northeastern Ohio, approximately 30 miles west of Cleveland. Elyria serves as the county seat for Lorain County.

The City of Elyria experienced rapid growth until reaching its peak in 1980 of 57,738 residents. Since then the population has experienced a continuous slight decline to its current population of approximately 54,635. The

composition of these residents is also changing, however, as the City has seen growth in the percentage of the population over age 65 and a decline in the percentage under age 18. More information about demographics can be found in Chapter II.

Changes to the makeup of the population have implications to both the current and future needs for parks and recreation in the City of Elyria. Recognizing that the needs of the population should be reassessed, the City Council and staff of the Parks and Recreation Department determined that a comprehensive process should be completed to determine the needs of the community over the next 10 years (and beyond), leading to the authorization of this Master Plan.

For many residents, parks provide their primary access to the natural environment, and for all residents, parks provide a variety of natural and active outdoor recreational opportunities. Access to these facilities helps to promote the health and wellness of the community.

The quality of a community's parks and recreation system is viewed as one of the indicators of the overall quality of life. A recent study titled, *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation* by John L. Crompton for the Trust for Public Land, included a section on the impact of parks and open space on property taxes. This study indicated that property values were higher for properties near quality parks and open spaces than for similar properties located elsewhere.

In addition, recent surveys of home buyers by the National Association of Home Builders indicated that trails, parks, and playgrounds were three of the top five amenities that a home buyer desires when considering a new home purchase. Finally, the preliminary findings of a recent study, *The Economic Significance of Local and Regional Park Systems' Spending on the United States Economy*, conducted by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University (GMU) for the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) found that local and regional parks created \$140 billion in economic activity per year and supported nearly one million jobs in the United States.

A CITIZEN DRIVEN PLAN

As the purpose of this Master Plan is to address the needs of the community, a primary focus of



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the master planning process was to identify those needs. A number of methods were utilized to determine the needs and desires of Elyria residents for parks and recreation facilities and programs. The public was involved in the process through the following methods:

1. A public workshop that functioned as a kick-off for the process (approximately 55 attendees)
2. A statistically valid Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey conducted by ETC/Leisure Vision that was completed by 485 residents
3. A web-based and handout survey that was completed by 530 residents
4. An active Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee
5. Meetings with over 20 stakeholder groups representing:
 - City Council
 - County Commission
 - Parks and Recreation Board
 - Sports Groups
 - Safety Services
 - City Staff
 - Community Groups
6. Presentations of the public input findings

WHAT ELYRIA RESIDENTS SAID

The information gathered from the various public input methods was used to identify the needs of Elyria residents. A brief summary of the findings and needs as communicated in the various public input methods is described below.

Statistically Valid Mail Survey

1. Eighty-two (82%) of residents visited a park in Elyria over the past year (97% for the Web Survey), and 36% of these residents visited parks more than 20 times.
2. Cascade Park was the most visited park (69% reporting visiting), followed by Ely Square Park (56%).
3. The top reasons for not using parks more often included:
 - Do not know what is offered (39%)
 - Security is insufficient (37%)
 - Safety concerns (32%)
 - Facilities are not well maintained (28%)
4. The improvements households would most like to see to existing parks included:

- Improve/add restrooms (70%)
- Sidewalks/trails (53%)
- Add security cameras (49%)
- Park security lighting (44%)
- Drinking fountains (42%)

5. Sixty percent (60%) of households were "very supportive" of City actions to upgrade older parks and recreation facilities. Other actions with very high levels of support included:

- Develop recreational trails and connect existing trails (47%)
- Upgrade existing youth/adult athletic fields, including new lighting (41%)
- Provide new programs for seniors (40%)
- Provide programs for teens (38%)

Additionally, over 75% of respondents were "very supportive" or "somewhat supportive" of these five improvements.

Web Survey respondents were most supportive of upgrades to the North Park Ice Rink.

6. The greatest unmet needs for parks and recreation facilities were (estimated number of households):

- Indoor swimming pools (8,094)
- Walking and hiking trails (7,604)
- Natural areas/nature parks (7,155)
- Spraygrounds/splash pads (7,131)
- Outdoor swimming pools/aquatic centers (6,771)
- Community centers (6,679)

7. The greatest unmet needs for parks and recreation programs were (estimated number of households):

- Adult fitness and wellness (10,727)
- Nature programs (7,703)
- Water fitness programs (7,424)
- 50+ programs (7,186)
- Summer concerts (6,967)

8. Respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 among different types of parks and recreation facility improvements in Elyria. The top responses ranked as follows:

- Improvements and maintenance of existing parks, playgrounds, game courts and picnic areas
- Development of new walking and biking trails
- Development of a new outdoor family aquatic center



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9. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondent's indicated that they would support a recreation tax (22% strongly support, 33% moderately support)

Public Workshop and Stakeholder Groups

Reoccurring themes included:

- Existing facility improvements
- Improved connectivity (walking and biking trails)
- Athletic facility improvements (ice rink, ballfields, soccer/football fields)
- Dog park
- Recreation center (indoor pool, senior center, expanded programming)
- Community gathering enhancements (multi-generational, daily use and programming)
- Spraygrounds/splash pads
- Partnerships/collaboration

The input gathered from all of the methods yielded similar results. Several common themes appeared in all methods of public input. Residents would like to see upgrades to existing facilities, more trails, aquatic improvements (spraygrounds and a family aquatic center), and more program offerings, especially for seniors.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN ELYRIA

Vision for the Future

The vision for the City of Elyria is to provide a modernized system of clean, safe, attractive, fun, and user-friendly parks, recreation, and fitness opportunities for residents of all ages and ability levels. Residents of all ages, from children to seniors, will be engaged in programming with activities for active and passive pursuits and nature education. An appropriate number of professionally trained staff will lead the opportunities. The community will be interconnected with a series of trails for walking, biking, and fitness. The Department will partner with other organizations to maximize efficiency and community support.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide and direct priorities, actions, and investments. These principles will help City leadership and the Parks and Recreation Board work in concert with other City departments and other partners to ensure that Elyria accomplishes its vision and maintains the qualities that make it a desirable

place to live and visit. Residents and visitors will encounter the following characteristics in the City of Elyria facilities, programs, and interactions with staff.

1. Modernized and Improved Parks System: Parks and Facilities that are Modern, Safe, Clean, User-Friendly, Attractive, and Fun

The City will modernize the parks and recreation system to improve the quality of its facilities, accessibility, and the user experience. All park and program users should feel welcome, safe, and valued. The City will invest in the future of parks for its residents and will maintain continued enthusiasm through the implementation of this plan. Elyria will investigate creative funding mechanisms to ensure continuous improvements to parks and recreation service delivery. The City will pursue the development of unique facilities and programs that take advantage of the City's location and draw people to the community. These opportunities will set Elyria apart from other jurisdictions while respecting the City's history and honoring its founders.

2. Connectivity: Building an Engaged and Connected Community

The City of Elyria will deliver parks and programs to encourage community connectivity, both socially and spatially. The City will promote community cohesion and a sense of togetherness through the provision of places to gather and interact that are both accessible and welcoming to users of all ages and ability levels. The City will promote connectivity both within the parks and in the community as a whole through the development of a system of trails and sidewalks for pedestrians and cyclists with ample signage and wayfinding. The City will utilize these trails to provide opportunities for health and fitness and to connect parks, schools, neighborhoods, and other gathering places. Parks will include linking paths between features and to adjacent neighborhoods to promote accessibility and a walkable environment. Finally, the City will connect residents through the programming of events which will be publicized electronically and accessible online.

The City of Elyria will seek partnerships with other public agencies and private organizations to maximize parks and recreation services and facility offerings to residents and visitors to the community.



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Potential partners for both capital improvements and operations will include: Elyria City Schools, local businesses or sponsors, LCCC, Lorain County Metro Parks, neighborhood associations, non-profits, adjacent communities, community/civic organizations (scouts, foundations, clubs), and conservation agencies. These efforts will extend to improving awareness of all activities in Elyria, including those offered by these other agencies or organizations, through strategies such as cross promotion of events and programs.

3. Programs for All: Providing Opportunities for Entertainment, Education, and Recreation (Active and Passive)

Elyria parks will provide a fun and educational environment with a variety of activities that promote social interaction, relaxation, entertainment, and education for families and individuals of all ages and ability levels. These opportunities, including events and programs, will have the flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of the community, including demographics changes, in order to prepare for the future. Additionally, programs and facilities will promote fitness and healthy lifestyles.

Parks in Elyria will be utilized to promote environmental stewardship and to allow residents to connect with nature. Facilities and programs will make efforts to utilize the character of the natural environment for educational and passive uses, while ensuring that adjacent elements are complementary.

4. Excellence: Providing Outstanding Customer Service

Elyria will strive for excellence in all aspects of parks and recreation. High standards will be expected for facilities, programs, and services. These expectations will extend to staff, coaches, and volunteers and will require ongoing training. This excellence will allow Elyria to serve as a model for parks and recreation delivery. Program registration will be convenient for the user by providing flexibility in methods at the program site, at the office, or online.

An adequate number of well-trained staff will be required to operate and maintain the outstanding parks and recreation system. Furthermore, Elyria will ensure a safe and inviting park environment through uniformity of facility and program presentation, proactive maintenance of

facilities, regulatory compliance, and implementation of ample security systems and practices, including sufficient supervision to assure safety of users and security of facilities.

Proposed Mission Statement for Parks and Recreation

The Mission for the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department is to ensure the availability of modern, safe, equitable, well-maintained, and affordable recreational opportunities that improve fitness and enhance quality of life for residents of all ages and ability levels, while promoting community cohesion and protecting the natural beauty of the environment.

PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

This Master Plan includes four Goals that were each derived from one of the Guiding Principles of the Vision. Objectives describe how to meet those Goals, and Strategies further describe how to meet each Objective. Timeframes for the completion of each strategy, 0-2 years, 3-5 years, or 6-10 years, are also suggested to help set priorities for improvements. Twenty-three (23) objectives and 130 strategies describe in detail how to meet each of the four goals (See Section VIII Action Plan for details on Objectives and Strategies). The following list broadly represents a summary of the primary recommendations for parks and recreation in Elyria.

1. Focus initial investment toward improvements to existing, key facilities such as the recreation centers, ice rink, trails, playgrounds, game courts, picnic shelters, and athletic fields.
2. Improve safety in the parks through the addition of lighting and security cameras
3. Develop all-purpose, paved perimeter loop trails at East, South, West, and Academy Court Parks.





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4. Develop spraygrounds at West, South, and North Parks.



5. Replace and update the Ely Square Fountain with modern fountain technology (LED lighting, sequencing, etc.).
6. Redevelop East Park Pool to a modern family aquatic center.



7. Implement needed improvements to the North Park Ice Rink, including a new compressor, refurbishment of the lobby, concessions, locker rooms, restrooms, and a more functional party room.
8. Develop an all-access, destination playground in at least one park in Elyria.
9. Upgrade the Academy Court site to a Neighborhood Park with walking trails, playground, picnic shelter, and a quality football field (partner with football league).
10. Prepare more detailed Development Plans for East, North, South, and West Parks to ensure that the improvements meet the long-term needs of Elyria residents.
11. Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks throughout the City for exercise and enjoyment.
12. Develop additional reservable picnic shelters at existing parks.

13. Begin implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 Greenway and Trail Master Plan.



14. Improve connectivity between parks, schools, neighborhoods, and other popular destinations.
15. Improve nature trails, boardwalks, and overlooks to take advantage of existing natural resources at the Finwood Estate, Finwood Forest, and Black River Audubon properties.
16. Provide Wi-Fi Hotspots in community and neighborhood parks.
17. Develop programs to utilize all new facility developments.
18. Provide restroom facilities at most parks and drinking fountains at all parks.
19. Provide paved walkways to all facilities and spectator areas to improve access and meet ADA guidelines.
20. Pursue grants for development of trails, parks, and facilities as well as for operations of these improvements.
21. Partner with other agencies and organizations to provide programs and facilities and for cross promotion of these offerings.
22. Encourage volunteer opportunities.



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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

I. INTRODUCTION

THE NEED FOR A PLAN

The City of Elyria, founded in 1817 by Heman Ely along the banks of the Black River, is located in northeastern Ohio, approximately 30 miles west of Cleveland. Elyria serves as the county seat for Lorain County.

The City of Elyria experienced rapid growth until reaching its peak in 1980 of 57,738 residents. Since then the population has experienced a continuous slight decline to its current population of approximately 54,635.¹ The composition of these residents is also changing, however, as the City has seen growth in the percentage of the population over age 65 and a decline in the percentage under age 18. More information about demographics can be found in Chapter II.

The provision of parks in Elyria dates back to 1822 when the City's founder, Heman Ely, donated Ely Park to the Township to develop a ballfield. The land for Cascade and Elywood Parks were donated to the City by the Ely family in 1894, 1900, and 1925.

Parks and recreation services are currently provided primarily by the City of Elyria through the Parks and Recreation Department. Lorain County Metro Parks also provide land and programs at Black River Reservation, and, since January of 2015, Metro Parks manage Cascade and Elywood Park. Elyria has a Parks and Recreation Board which provides advice on parks and recreation facilities and policies.

The City is primarily served by Cascade/Elywoods which serves the entire community, and four regional parks at East, West, South and North Parks. Smaller Neighborhood and Mini Parks serve as close-to-home options.

In addition to the facilities offered by the City of Elyria, the school district (Elyria City School District) provides playgrounds, athletic fields, and courts at several locations that can be used by the public when schools are not in session. Private organizations, such as homeowners associations, Little League East, Lorain County Community College, churches, country clubs, and others, also provide recreational facilities for use by the public.

Changes to the makeup of the population have implications to both the current and future needs for parks and recreation in the City of Elyria. Recognizing that the needs of the population should be reassessed, the City Council and staff of the Parks and Recreation Department determined that a comprehensive process should be completed to determine the needs of the community over the next 10 years (and beyond), leading to the authorization of this Master Plan.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARKS

This master planning effort, which will help determine the future of parks and recreation in Elyria, is important because parks provide a number of benefits and services to the community. Additionally, local agencies have the responsibility to manage parkland in an efficient manner that is consistent with the health, safety, and welfare of the community, and this Master Plan is intended to assist and direct the management of these lands and facilities. For many residents, parks provide their primary access to the natural environment, and for all residents, parks provide a variety of natural and active outdoor recreational opportunities. Access to these facilities helps to promote the health and wellness of the community.

The quality of a community's parks and recreation system is viewed as one of the indicators of the overall quality of life. A recent study titled, *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation* by John L. Crompton for the Trust for Public Land, included a section on the impact of parks and open space on property taxes. This study indicated that property values were higher for properties near quality parks and open spaces than for similar properties located elsewhere. In addition, recent surveys of

¹ Source: Esri forecasts

home buyers by the National Association of Home Builders indicated that trails, parks, and playgrounds were three of the top five amenities that home buyers desire when considering a new home purchase. Finally, the preliminary findings of a recent study, *The Economic Significance of Local and Regional Park Systems' Spending on the United States Economy*, conducted by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University (GMU) for the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) found that local and regional parks created \$140 billion in economic activity per year and supported nearly one million jobs in the United States.

1. The residents and leadership of the City of Elyria place a high value on parks and recreation services. Based on the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, 82% have visited a park in Elyria in the last year, 90% of residents support upgrading older parks and facilities and 80% support development of trails (See Chapter V for more information). Finally, parks are important because they can serve as gathering places for the community and help to provide a positive community identity for Elyria.

MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The planning process consisted of several different phases with frequent meetings between representatives of the City of Elyria and the Consultant. Each phase concluded with the submittal of a report and a presentation of findings to that point of the process. A summary of the process and details of each phase are outlined below.

Planning Context

The first phase of the planning process launched with meetings with City of Elyria representatives, the gathering of information on City demographics and a review of existing data.

1. Master Plan Steering Committee

The City appointed a Master Plan Steering Committee to work with the Consultants throughout the process. The Consultants met regularly with the Steering Committee with updates of findings, from which the Committee assisted in establishing the future vision, goals, objectives, and priorities.

2. Demographic Analysis

Using information provided by the City of Elyria and other sources, the Consultant performed an analysis of the demographic and population characteristics of the City of Elyria. Demographic trends and characteristics within the City limits were gathered from various sources. Information included:

- Demographic characteristics (quantity, ages, race, etc.)
- Five year population projections
- Household size
- Median household income and per capita income

3. Review of Previous Studies

Previous studies related to the delivery of parks, recreation and leisure services were reviewed to evaluate existing conditions leading up to the start of the master planning process. These previous studies included: comprehensive plans, policies, use agreements, brochures, and other planning studies.

Existing Parks, Facilities, and Programs Analysis and Needs Assessment

This phase of the process consisted of an analysis of existing parks, facilities, and programs in their current form. This analysis was important in order to assess current conditions to compare against the desires of City residents as expressed in the following needs assessment phase.

1. Parks, Open Space, and Facilities Inventory

This process entailed an inventory of all existing parks and recreation facilities offered in and adjacent to the City of Elyria, including parks and facilities operated by others such as Lorain County Metro Parks, Elyria City Schools, and private organizations. Visits were made to all City of Elyria facilities to identify the current conditions and assess opportunities for improvements. The facilities and characteristics of each property are provided in Chapter III.

2. City-Wide Park and Recreation Facilities Map

A map was prepared using GIS software to illustrate all of the City-owned parks and recreation facilities as well as those of Metro Parks, Elyria City Schools, and other providers in the area.

3. Public Workshops

The initial public workshop and kick-off event was held at the East Recreation Center on November 15, 2015 to identify the public perception of park facilities and programming needs. The purpose of this public workshop was to solicit input from citizens and users regarding their concerns and opinions about existing facilities and programs and to determine their desires for future facilities and programs. The workshop was interactive and involved all participants in a variety of methods.

A second public workshop was held at East Recreation Center on February 23, 2016 to present the findings and results from all of the public input, including the statistically valid surveys, handout/web survey, dollar voting, and the initial public workshop. Maps of parks and facility service areas were also presented at this workshop.

4. Staff Input

Meetings and interviews were conducted with City of Elyria staff members regarding their perceptions of the public's needs and concerns, the potential for improved services, facilities, programs, and public access. Staff input was gathered from the Parks and Recreation Department and other City staff to gain their insight.

5. Stakeholder Groups

Meetings and round table discussions were conducted with over 20 stakeholder groups representing a large variety of community and government organizations. These groups included: sports groups, civic clubs, seniors, other recreation providers, and other organizations. The City of Elyria provided invitations and meeting space for these meetings. Questions were prepared in advance and were approved by the Steering Committee. The questions were sent to the stakeholder group participants in advance for discussions with their organizations prior to the meeting with each focus group.

6. Benchmarking Comparisons to Similar Systems

Benchmarking comparisons of similar park systems were compiled for comparisons to similar parks and recreation systems. Comparison between these park systems consisted of a number of criteria such as: park acreage (developed and undeveloped), budgets, capital improvement expenditures, types of facilities offered, and other relevant characteristics. Twenty-one similar systems throughout the State of Ohio were identified for comparison. The analysis used the NRPA PRORAGIS program to compare facilities, programs, and operating procedures with other like agencies.

7. Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

A statistically valid mail survey (Mail Survey) was conducted by ETC/Leisure Vision with 485 responses from residents of Elyria (goals was 400). Surveys were mailed to 3,000 households. The survey was used to identify:

- Current satisfaction levels with programs and facilities

-
- Participation and satisfaction with current programs
 - Parks currently used
 - Needs for various facilities and programs
 - Most needed facilities
 - Primary functions that should be performed by the City of Elyria regarding parks, recreation, open space, trail linkages, programs, and facilities

8. Web-Based Survey

Additionally, a web-based survey (Web Survey) was conducted that asked similar questions to the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey. Where the statistically valid mail survey reached a selected, random sample of residents, the goal of the Web Survey was to engage as many residents as possible. A total of 529 local residents completed the survey. Questions were approved by the Master Plan Steering Committee. The City of Elyria promoted the use of the Web Survey through email blasts, newsletter announcements, placement on their web page, and other methods. A handout version of the survey was also created and completed by residents at the public workshops and other public events. The results of the survey were then analyzed and compared to the Mail Survey.

9. Geographic Distribution – Service Gap Analysis

An analysis was conducted to determine current service gaps by mapping the locations of current facilities with a defined service area. A service area map was prepared for parks by park type based on walking and driving times. Individual maps were prepared for picnic shelters, playgrounds, rectangular fields, baseball/softball diamonds, tennis courts, swimming pools, and basketball courts to identify the distribution of these facilities throughout the community.

10. Level of Service Guidelines

Level of Service Guidelines were developed based on public input, the benchmarking comparison, and standards and guidelines developed by the Consultant through previous experience. These guidelines were presented and approved by the Master Plan Steering Committee.

Vision, Goals and Objectives

The Master Plan Steering Committee and the Consultant produced a vision for the future of parks and recreation services in the City of Elyria. Using the findings of this master planning process, a series of goals and objectives were identified with the Master Plan Steering Committee.

Physical Planning, Program, and Services Recommendations

Using the data collected throughout the Master Plan process, a series of recommendations were formulated to meet the needs and expectations of City Staff and residents of the City of Elyria. The recommendations were separated into the following four categories.

1. City-Wide Park, Program, and Facility Improvement Recommendations

System-wide improvements for facilities, programs, and operations were provided to direct parks and recreation over the next ten years and beyond.

2. Individual Park Recommendations and Costs

Specific potential improvements were identified at each park or recreation facility with an estimate of probable construction cost for each recommended capital improvement.

3. Park Concept Plan

A park concept plan was developed for East Park to illustrate the recommendations at the park site. Recommendations were also provided for improvements to other existing parks.

4. Capital Improvement Priorities

City of Elyria staff and the Master Plan Steering Committee, with the assistance of the Consultant, prioritized each of the capital improvements and acquisitions. This process helped identify the timeframe for each recommendation: short-range (0-2 years), mid-range (3-5 years), long-range (6-10 years), or beyond (over 10 years).

Action Plan

The final phase of the process consisted the creation of an Action Plan, a phased implementation plan, providing strategies for the implementation of the recommendations.

The Action Plan provided specific strategies for:

- Parks, trails, and open space
- Facility recommendations
- Park and facility operations
- Programs and services

This process identified action steps for recommendations in the short-range (0-2 years), mid-range (3-5 years), long-range (6-10 years), or beyond (over 10 years), and the process also identified the responsible party and potential funding sources.

Master Plan Document

A draft of the Master Plan recommendations and Strategic Plan were presented to the Master Plan Steering Committee on June 6, 2016. The Draft Master Plan was presented and provided for review to the Park and Recreation Board, Master Plan Steering Committee, and City Council on August 1, 2016. The Master Plan was adopted by the Elyria City Council on October 17, 2016.

II. PLANNING CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The Planning Context chapter provides a summary of historical factors and trends that may influence the delivery of parks and recreation services throughout the City of Elyria. This chapter begins with a summary of the population and demographic trends in Elyria. Finally, this chapter concludes with a benchmarking analysis that compares the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department with other departments throughout Ohio.

POPULATION TRENDS

An overall understanding of the population trends of Elyria is necessary to identify the present conditions and to anticipate future needs for parks and recreation services and facilities. Needs vary between demographic groups, and these needs also change over time.

Table II-1 illustrates the population change for the City from 1980 to 2020. This table uses U.S. Census Bureau data for historic figures and Esri forecasts for 2015 and 2020 projections. Trends indicate that the population peaked in 1980 and has steadily declined over each ten year period since that time. The population is expected to remain steady (or slight increase) through 2020.

Table II-1: Elyria, Ohio Population History and Projections (1980-2040)

					Projections	
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020
City of Elyria	57,538	56,746	55,953	54,533	54,635	55,127
10 Year Growth %		-1.4%	-1.4%	-2.5%		1.1%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau (1970-2010), Esri forecasts (2015 and 2020)

Households

Table II-2 shows the number of households in 2015 and household size from 2000 to 2020 for Elyria, Ohio, Lorain County, and the USA. The table indicates that in Elyria, the average household size decreased substantially from 2000 to 2010 and is expected to continue to decrease through 2020. In 2015, the average household size for residents in Elyria was much lower than that of Lorain County and was also lower than the State of Ohio and the USA. The household sizes have decreased in all geographic areas but have increased at a greater rate in Elyria and Lorain County.

Table II-2: Household Size (2000 to 2020)

	Households	Average Household Size			
		2000	2010	2015	2020
USA	120,746,349	2.59	2.58	2.57	2.57
Ohio	4,665,872	2.49	2.44	2.42	2.42
Lorain County	118,699	2.61	2.51	2.48	2.47
Elyria	22,732	2.46	2.39	2.37	2.36

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000 and 2010), Esri forecasts (2015 and 2020)

Median Age

Table II-3 shows the median age for Elyria, Lorain County, Ohio, and the USA from 2000 through 2020. The median age in Elyria increased substantially between 2000 and 2015 (from 34.8 to 39.4) but is expected to remain steady through 2020. The increase is consistent with the other geographic levels which have steadily increased. The increase was slower for Lorain County, Ohio, and the USA but is expected to continue to increase through 2020 (unlike in Elyria).

In 2015, the median age in Elyria was lower than Lorain County and the USA but approximately the same as the State of Ohio. The estimated median age in 2015 was 39.4 in Elyria compared to 41.1 for Lorain County, 39.6 for Ohio, and 37.9 for the USA. The age of the residents is important because Elyria needs to plan for the appropriate age groups that it will be serving.

Table II-3: Median Age (2000-2020)

	2000	2010	2015	2020
USA	35.3	37.1	37.9	38.6
Ohio	36.2	38.7	39.6	40.3
Lorain County	36.5	40.0	41.1	41.9
Elyria	34.8	37.9	39.4	39.5
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000 and 2010), Esri forecasts (2015 and 2020)				

Seniors

Table II-4 displays the population age 65 and over from 2000 to 2020 and shows that this age group has increased greatly as a percentage of the population over this time period and is expected to continue to do so through 2020 for all geographic levels. In Elyria, the proportion of the population 65 and over increased slightly between 2000 and 2010 from 13.0% to 14.3% and has continued to grow at an increased rate through 2015. Similar to the trends of the other geographies, the proportion of the population age 65 and over is expected to continue to increase through 2020.

As of 2015, Elyria had a higher percentage of the population in this age cohort at 13.0% than Lorain County or the USA but similar to the State of Ohio. By 2020, Elyria is projected to have over 18% of the total population in this age cohort, and that percentage will be similar to what is expected in Lorain County and Ohio, both of which are projected to be higher than the USA (16.7%). These figures indicate that the importance of facilities and services for seniors will continue to grow.

Table II-4: Population Age 65 and over (2000-2020)

	2000	2010	2015	2020
USA	12.4%	13.0%	14.7%	16.7%
Ohio	13.3%	14.1%	15.9%	18.1%
Lorain County	12.5%	14.3%	16.5%	18.7%
Elyria	13.0%	14.3%	16.3%	18.1%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000 and 2010), Esri forecasts (2015 and 2020)				

Children

Table II-5 presents the population age 14 and under from 2000 to 2020. The table indicates that in Elyria the percentage of this age group decreased from 22.5% in 2000 to 19.1% in 2015. The percentage of the population within this age group is projected to continue to decline through 2020.

The trend of a declining percentage of children is apparent at the state, regional, and national levels, although all had slightly lower percentages of residents in this age group than Elyria from 2000 to 2015, which is expected to continue through 2020. Although the percentage of the population age 14 and under in Elyria is expected to decline in the future, this cohort will continue to represent a large percentage of the population.

Table II-5: Population Age 14 and Under (2000-2020)

	2000	2010	2015	2020
USA	21.4%	19.6%	19.4%	18.6%
Ohio	21.1%	19.4%	18.5%	18.0%
Lorain County	21.8%	19.6%	18.4%	17.7%
Elyria	22.5%	20.0%	19.1%	18.9%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000 and 2010), Esri forecasts (2015 and 2020)				

Conclusion

This information indicates that the population of Elyria is experiencing similar trends as seen in Lorain County, the State of Ohio and the USA: a decreasing household size, an increasing median age, greater proportion of seniors, and a decreasing percentage of children.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN ELYRIA

The themes of changing household composition, limited income growth, and diversification of the population are apparent through the following trends. Each of these themes highlights particular changes in demographics of the population, but the trends discussed below are linked and will collectively shape the future of Elyria.

Changes in Households

Table II-6 shows the percentage of total households for various household types in 2000 and 2010 as well as the change in the proportion of those households over that time period. The proportion of households made up of families decreased in Elyria as in Lorain County, Ohio, and the USA, although the decrease was greatest in Elyria. The percentage of family households was already lower in Elyria at 66.2% in 2000, decreasing to 62.9% in 2010. In 2010, just over 37% of all households were non-family households in Elyria, and most non-family households consist of a single person living alone (30.5% of all households). This proportion is higher than for Lorain County, the State of Ohio, and the USA.

The proportion of households in Elyria with a child under the age of 18 decreased by 4% between 2000 and 2010, consistent with decreases at the county, state, and national levels. At the same time, the proportion of households with seniors increased by nearly 1.5%, similar to the increases at the state and national levels but significantly lower than the 2.6% increase for Lorain County.

Table II-6: Household Types (2000-2010)

	Family Households			Single Person Households			Households with Children			Households with Seniors		
	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change	2000	2010	Change
USA	68.1%	66.4%	-1.7%	25.8%	26.7%	0.9%	36.0%	33.4%	-2.6%	23.4%	24.9%	1.5%
Ohio	67.3%	65.0%	-2.3%	27.3%	28.9%	1.6%	34.5%	31.3%	-3.2%	23.8%	25.3%	1.5%
Lorain County	72.0%	68.9%	-3.1%	23.6%	26.0%	2.4%	37.1%	32.6%	-4.5%	23.8%	26.4%	2.6%
Elyria	66.2%	62.9%	-3.3%	28.5%	30.5%	2.0%	35.6%	31.6%	-4.0%	23.6%	25.0%	1.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Income

Income in Elyria has grown since 2000 but has not kept up with inflation (see Table II-7). This trend is also apparent at the county, state, and national levels. The 2015 median household income in Elyria (\$41,315) was lower than for the State of Ohio (\$49,011) and the nation (\$53,217). Additionally, the unemployment rate (2014) in Elyria (7.2%) was higher than for the State of Ohio (5.8%) or the USA (5.8%).²

Table II-7: Median Household Income (2000-2020)

	2000	2000 Adjusted (2015 Dollars)	2015	2020
USA	\$41,994	\$57,801	\$53,217	\$60,683
Ohio	\$40,956	\$56,376	\$49,011	\$56,419
Lorain County	\$45,042	\$61,996	\$52,935	\$62,332
Elyria	\$38,156	\$52,518	\$41,315	\$47,793

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000), Esri forecasts (2015)

² 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Growth of Ethnic Populations

Elyria has experienced a reduction in the proportion of the population consisting of White residents while all other minority populations have increased (Table II-8). The White population, while still representing the largest population group, has declined to 77.9% in 2015, compared to 81.3% in 2000. Additionally, over the same time period, the minority population groups have grown rapidly. The Hispanic community has had the largest increase in total numbers (1,422) and as a percentage (91.6%). The Two or More Races population has had the second largest increase as a percentage (74.6%) and in total numbers (1,101).

Table II-8: Race and Hispanic Origin (2000-2015)

	Total Population	White Alone		Black Alone		Asian Alone		Other Race Alone		Two or More Races		Hispanic	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2000	55,953	45,517	81.3%	7,928	14.2%	340	0.6%	693	1.2%	1,475	2.6%	1,553	2.8%
2010	54,533	42,601	78.1%	8,441	15.5%	435	0.8%	802	1.5%	2,254	4.1%	2,649	4.9%
2015	54,635	42,572	77.9%	8,084	14.8%	517	0.9%	885	1.6%	2,576	4.7%	2,975	5.4%
# Change	-1,318	-2,945		156		177		192		1,101		1,422	
% Change	-2.4%	-6.5%		2.0%		52.1%		27.7%		74.6%		91.6%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000 and 2010), Esri forecasts (2015)

As of 2014, the minority population in Elyria at approximately 25% was higher than in Ohio (20%) but lower than the USA (37%).³ The growth rate of minority populations contrasts with a decrease in the total White population in Elyria. While the minority population is still small in Elyria, this trend (growth of ethnic populations) will likely continue and will have substantial impacts on the City's future service needs.

Conclusion

Overall, these trends show an aging of the population of Elyria as well as changes to the composition of the population as a whole, both in terms of the types of households and the characteristics of the residents. The direction chosen for parks and recreation in Elyria will determine the availability of opportunities for these residents and will help to enrich the quality of life in the City for years to come.

BENCHMARKING COMPARISON

One method of evaluating the park and recreation services offered in the community is to use benchmarking comparisons to other communities. For the comparisons to the City of Elyria, averages and medians from jurisdictions participating in the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Parks and Recreation Operating Ratio and GIS (PRORAGIS) Program were used. Communities for comparison were limited to 21 comparable municipalities located in Ohio that participated in the PRORAGIS program (regional and large city or county systems were excluded).

The City of Elyria is not a participant in the PRORAGIS program, so figures for these comparisons were derived from a variety of sources including budgets and department records. Because the data for other park systems was limited to parks and facilities managed by those agencies, only parks and facilities managed by the City of Elyria were included in this analysis (school facilities were not included). The figures used in this analysis for the City of Elyria were for the 2015 fiscal year, and the figures for the comparison municipalities were for the latest available year between 2010 and 2014. The following table (Table II-9) provides a list of the jurisdictions included in this benchmark comparison.

The Benchmarking Comparisons table follows this text (Table II-10) and provides tabular data for all of the information discussed in this text. The analysis of comparisons are organized into the following categories: parkland information, department functions, staffing, operating budget, programs, and facilities. The following text details the findings of these analyses. Note that the figures used in these

³ 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

comparisons are those which were reported to PRORAGIS by the municipalities and may vary from actual budgets and figures.⁴

Table II-9: Benchmark Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Population
City of Avon Parks & Recreation Department	22,000
Beachwood Recreation Department	12,186
City of Beavercreek Parks, Recreation & Culture	45,193
Boardman Township Park	35,000
City of Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Department	30,028
City of Moraine Parks and Recreation	6,000
Dublin Parks & Recreation Department	42,346
Fairborn Parks & Recreation	32,620
Fairfield Parks and Recreation	42,510
Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation	34,355
City of Green Division of Parks and Recreation	26,000
Kettering Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Department	56,163
Miamisburg Parks and Recreation	20,181
City of Piqua Parks Division	20,619
City of Solon Recreation Department	23,348
Trotwood Parks and Recreation Department	24,431
Vandalia Parks & Recreation Department	15,000
West Carrollton Parks & Rec	14,000
Westerville Parks and Recreation	36,665
Westlake Recreation Department	32,729
Willoughby Parks and Recreation	22,500

Parkland Information

The analysis indicates that the City of Elyria provides 4.8 acres of parkland per thousand population. This number is lower than the median of Ohio municipalities of 9.9 acres and as well as the lower quartile value of 6.9 acres. These numbers include the 16 park owned or maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. If Cascade and Elywoods Parks (now managed by Lorain County Metro Parks) were included, the number would increase to 6.8, still just below the lower quartile.

Parks in the City of Elyria are slightly smaller in size, compared to other Ohio municipalities. Elyria averages 16.3 acres per park, slightly below the median of 22.9 acres. These figures suggest that the City of Elyria has smaller parks compared to other Ohio municipalities.

A look at the percentage of parkland that is developed for parks and recreation purposes indicates that 59.5% of Elyria's parkland is developed, compared to the median of 65.5% for the other Ohio municipalities. This number is lower than the lower quartile of 62.7%, but the variation from these comparison values is minimal. Elyria has a slightly lower percentage of parkland that is developed and a slightly higher percentage that is in its natural state than the other Ohio municipalities.

The comparison of total miles of greenways and trails managed by the City of Elyria shows 1.1 miles of trails separated from roads, compared to the average of the other Ohio municipalities of 11.4 miles. Total trail miles per jurisdiction square mile is a measurement that controls for differences in the size of comparative municipalities. Elyria has 0.05 miles of trails per square mile of the city, much lower than the Ohio municipality average of 0.44. If the 2.3 miles of trails offered by Lorain County Metro

⁴ The number of responding municipalities vary by question. The number of responses for each question is included in the table at the end of this section.

Parks are included (not managed by the City), this number would increase to 0.16.⁵ Similarly, the trails per thousand population value of 0.02 is much lower than the median of 0.22 (0.06 if the additional 2.3 miles of trail are included).

Department Functions

A comparison of the services that are offered by the various park and recreation departments in the benchmarking comparison identifies that the City of Elyria Parks and Recreation Department manages most of the services that are commonly offered by other agencies. The only services offered by 50% or more of the comparison municipalities in Ohio that are not managed by the Parks and Recreation Department are maintenance of public areas which is handled by another City department, management of historic properties, and the management of a tournament/event quality outdoor sports complex which the City does not currently operate.

Staffing

The Elyria Parks and Recreation Department employs 11 full-time employees (of which five are related to park maintenance) and the equivalent of 16.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) part-time and seasonal employees. Considering acres of parkland per FTE, the City of Elyria employs one employee per 9.4 acres compared to the median of one employee per 13.6 acres and a lower quartile of 5.0 acres per employee. The City of Elyria has a slightly higher ratio of employees to parkland than the comparison communities, indicating that City of Elyria staff are responsible for less acreage than staff of other communities, possibly because Elyria offers three recreation centers, an ice rink, and two pools which have substantial staffing requirements.

Limiting the analysis to maintenance staff only, Elyria employs one maintenance FTE per 26.8 acres, while the median of the other Ohio communities is one FTE per 28.3 acres, indicating that each maintenance employee is responsible for slightly fewer acres than the comparative municipalities in Ohio. However, this number is much closer to median than the total FTE number.

The analysis of the population served per FTE indicates Elyria has one FTE per 1,956 residents, which is higher than the median (1,567) and close to the upper quartile value of 2,131, indicating that Elyria employs fewer staff per population than the comparison communities.

Operating Budget

The total operating budget related to parks and recreation in 2015 in Elyria was just over \$1.9 million which is just below the \$2.1 million median of the other Ohio municipalities. The per capita operating expenditures for the City of Elyria is \$35.16, compared to the median of \$89.02 and lower quartile of \$41.25. These numbers indicate that the expenditures by the City for Elyria are much lower on a per capita basis than the other Ohio communities. Only 1.6% of Elyria's total city operating budget is devoted to parks and recreation, compared to a median of 6.2% and 4.7% lower quartile for the comparison communities.

A look at the revenue for parks and recreation indicates a total non-tax revenue for the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department at \$530,950, for a non-tax revenue per capita of approximately \$9.72. In contrast, the median non-tax revenue per capita of the comparison communities was \$65.10 with a lower quartile value of \$32.31. The City of Elyria is clearly generating a smaller amount of revenue than these comparison communities.

The breakdown of sources of funding for operating expenditures shows that City of Elyria parks and recreation services are funded primarily through the jurisdiction general fund (62.3%), which is similar to the other communities. Elyria receives a smaller percentage through fees and charges but a larger percentage through grants/trusts and sponsorships/donations. The total operating expenditure per

⁵ The comparison municipalities may also have trails not included in these totals.

acre of land managed or maintained is \$7,379 for the City of Elyria which is similar to the median of \$7,173.

Facilities

An analysis of recreation facilities offered by Elyria compared to other Ohio communities indicates that Elyria offers all of those offered by over 50% of the comparison communities plus gyms which are offered by 42% of the other agencies. The most notable facility not offered in Elyria is a senior center, which is offered by 47% of the other communities.

A comparison between the City of Elyria and other communities in Ohio for population per facility provides a way to evaluate the existing quantity of each type of facility. This comparison with other municipalities will help to identify which facilities the city might want to add in the future. This analysis looks at five types of facilities: playgrounds, tennis courts (outdoor), basketball courts (outdoor), diamond fields (small), and rectangular fields.⁶

The City of Elyria has 10 playgrounds at nine parks throughout the City. The resulting population per playground is 5,464 which is higher than the median of the comparison communities (3,435) and similar to the upper quartile value (5,648). These numbers indicate that Elyria has fewer playgrounds than the comparison communities on a per population basis and would need approximately six more playgrounds to match the median level of service.

The City of Elyria offers six tennis courts at two locations or one for every 9,106 residents, compared to a median of one per every 3,437 residents for the other Ohio communities and an upper quartile of 3,543. Elyria would need approximately 10 additional tennis courts to match the median rate of the other communities.

With nine outdoor basketball courts at seven parks, the City of Elyria has a population per basketball court of 6,071, below the median for the other communities of 7,500. As a result, Elyria provides slightly more of these facilities on a per population bases than the comparison communities.

The Elyria Parks and Recreation Department offers 17 small diamond fields at six parks, yielding a value of 3,214 residents per field. This number is lower than the median for the other Ohio communities of 5,045 but higher than the lower quartile value of 2,101. These numbers suggest that Elyria has a slightly better supply of these fields than the comparison communities.

The last facility type for comparison is rectangular fields of which Elyria has eight (7 large and 2 small fields), giving the city one field per 6,829 residents. The median of the other Ohio communities is 4,459, so based on this comparison, the City's supply of rectangular fields is below what other municipalities are offering on per capita basis.

⁶ The analysis was limited to these five facilities due to availability of data for comparison departments.

Table II-10: Benchmarking Comparisons

PARKLAND INFORMATION⁴	Elyria	Benchmark
Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Population		
Number of Responses		18
Lower Quartile		6.9
Median	4.8	9.9
Upper Quartile		19.9
Acres per Park		
Number of Responses		18
Lower Quartile		14.3
Median	16.3	22.9
Upper Quartile		31.6
Acres of Parkland Managed or Maintained per Jurisdiction Sq. Mi.		
Number of Responses		17
Lower Quartile		11.2
Median	12.6	22.5
Upper Quartile		40.1
Percent of Acreage Developed for Parks and Recreation Purposes		
Number of Responses		16
Lower Quartile		62.7%
Median	59.5%	65.5%
Upper Quartile		88.9%
Total Mileage of Greenways and Trails Managed by Agency		
Number of Responses		14 ³
a. Multi-purpose - No Equestrian	0	8.8
b. Multi-purpose - Equestrian permitted	0	0.1
c. Hiking/walking only	1.1	1.9
d. Bicycling only	0	0.5
e. Equestrian only	0	0.1
f. Other	0	0.0
Total	1.1	11.4
Total Trail Miles per Jurisdiction Square Mile		
Number of Responses		13
Lower Quartile		0.23
Median	0.05	0.44
Upper Quartile		0.71
Total Trail Miles per 1,000 Population		
Number of Responses		14
Lower Quartile		0.16
Median	0.02	0.22
Upper Quartile		0.51
DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONS	Elyria	Benchmark
Does the department...		
Number of Responses		20
a. Provide recreation programming and services	X	95.0%
b. Operate parks and facilities	X	100.0%
c. Maintain street trees and medians	X	45.0%
d. Actively manage open space	X	75.0%
e. Maintain public school grounds and recreational facilities		25.0%
f. Maintain jurisdiction public areas		65.0%
g. Manage major aquatic complex	X	65.0%
h. Manage or maintain public cemeteries	X	30.0%
i. Manage or maintain fairgrounds		0.0%
j. Maintain, manage or lease indoor performing arts center		10.0%

DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONS	Elyria	Benchmark
k. Manage historic properties		50.0%
l. Administer or manage farmer's markets		20.0%
m. Administer community gardens	X	40.0%
n. Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters		30.0%
o. Administer or manage Professional or college-type stadium/arena/racetrack		0.0%
p. Administer or manage Tournament/Event quality Indoor Sports Complexes		15.0%
q. Administer or manage Tournament/Event quality Outdoor Sports Complexes		50.0%
r. Conduct major Jurisdiction wide special events	X	90.0%
s. Have snow plowing responsibility other than in the parks	X	30.0%
t. Provide environmental education or natural history interpretive programs	X	20.0%

STAFFING	Elyria	Benchmark
Number of Full-Time Employees		
Number of Responses		16 ³
a. Department's top executives and related staff	1	1.8
b. Administrative (Human Resources, Finance, Accounting, etc.)	1	1.4
c. Operations (staffing and operating facilities)	0	2.2
d. Programs (programming classes and all events)	4	2.2
e. Maintenance (maintaining buildings, grounds, structures, and fleet)	5	6.1
f. Planning and Development	0	0.1
g. Other	0	0.3
Total	11	13.9

Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff		
Number of Responses		13
Lower Quartile		11.0
Median	27.6	18.0
Upper Quartile		60.0

Population Served per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)		
Number of Responses		16
Lower Quartile		685
Median	1,956	1,567
Upper Quartile		2,131

Acres of Parkland per FTE		
Number of Responses		13
Lower Quartile		5.0
Median	9.4	13.6
Upper Quartile		23.3

Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Maintenance Staff		
Number of Responses		13
Lower Quartile		4.0
Median	9.7	14.7
Upper Quartile		18.7

Acres of Parkland per Maintenance FTE		
Number of Responses		13
Lower Quartile		18.4
Median	26.8	28.3
Upper Quartile		44.8

OPERATING BUDGET	Elyria	Benchmark
What are your department's TOTAL operating expenditures for your fiscal year?		
Number of Responses		16
Lower Quartile		\$1,118,231
Median	\$1,920,832	\$2,094,977
Upper Quartile		\$4,108,723

OPERATING BUDGET		Elyria	Benchmark
Department budget as a percentage of jurisdiction total budget			
Number of Responses			7
Lower Quartile			4.7%
Median	1.6%		6.2%
Upper Quartile			8.8%
What are your department's TOTAL non-tax revenue for your fiscal year?			
Number of Responses			4
Lower Quartile			\$736,657
Median	\$530,950		\$1,909,325
Upper Quartile			\$3,246,315
What percentage of your total operating expenditures are in the following categories?			
Number of Responses			13 ³
a. Personnel Services (expenditures for all salaries, wages and benefits)	63.1%		57.6%
b. Operations (expenditures for all functions of the Department)	35.3%		38.2%
c. Capital (capital equipment, projects, and debt service from operating funds.)	1.6%		3.8%
d. Other	0.0%		0.7%
What percentage of your total operating expenditures came from the following sources?			
Number of Responses			11 ³
a. Jurisdiction general fund	62.8%		65.4%
b. Agency fees and charges	23.3%		34.8%
c. Tax levy (specific parks and recreation)			5.4%
d. School District Taxes			0.0%
e. Foundation Grants/Trusts	9.6%		0.1%
f. Sponsorships/Donations	4.3%		0.7%
g. Endowment			0.0%
h. Special use taxes			0.5%
i. State Grants			0.1%
j. Federal Grants			0.1%
k. Other			0.4%
Operating Expenditures per Capita			
Number of Responses			16
Lower Quartile			\$41.25
Median	\$35.16		\$89.02
Upper Quartile			\$172.06
Operating Expenditures per Acre of Land Managed			
Number of Responses			16
Lower Quartile			\$4,100
Median	\$7,379		\$7,173
Upper Quartile			\$13,614
Non-Tax Revenue per Capita			
Number of Responses			4
Lower Quartile			\$32.31
Median	\$9.72		\$65.10
Upper Quartile			\$96.08
CAPITAL BUDGET			
What are your department's TOTAL capital budget?			
Number of Responses			11
Lower Quartile			\$87,500
Median	\$0		\$128,459
Upper Quartile			\$373,660

CAPITAL BUDGET		
Total Capital Costs per Capita		
Number of Responses		11
Lower Quartile		\$3.77
Median	\$0.00	\$4.70
Upper Quartile		\$10.95
What is your department's amount of new capital need?		
Number of Responses		11
Lower Quartile		\$241,250
Median	N/A	\$1,000,000
Upper Quartile		\$3,650,000
What is your department's amount of renovation need?		
Number of Responses		10
Lower Quartile		\$225,000
Median	N/A	\$518,283
Upper Quartile		\$1,065,998
FACILITIES	Elyria	Benchmark
Does your department offer...		
Number of Responses		19
Playground	X	100.0%
Picnic areas with shelters	X	100.0%
Basketball court (outdoor)	X	94.7%
Diamond fields (e.g. baseball/softball)	X	89.5%
Rectangular fields (e.g. football/soccer)	X	73.7%
Tennis court (outdoor)	X	89.4%
Volleyball court	X	84.2%
Swimming pool (outdoor)	X	73.7%
Skate park	X	63.2%
Recreation/community center	X	63.0%
Community gardens	X	52.6%
Senior center		47.4%
Gyms	X	42.1%
Golf course		42.1%
Dog park		15.8%
POPULATION PER FACILITY	Elyria	Benchmark
Playgrounds		
Number of Responses		16
Lower Quartile		2,369
Median	5,464	3,435
Upper Quartile		5,648
Tennis Courts (Outdoor)		
Number of Responses		13
Lower Quartile		1,925
Median	9,106	3,437
Upper Quartile		3,543
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)		
Number of Responses		16
Lower Quartile		5,205
Median	6,071	7,500
Upper Quartile		9,250
Diamond Fields (50-65 ft base paths)		
Number of Responses		11
Lower Quartile		2,101
Median	3,214	5,045
Upper Quartile		11,354

II. PLANNING CONTEXT

POPULATION PER FACILITY		Elyria	Benchmark
Diamond Fields (90 ft base paths)			
Number of Responses			10
Lower Quartile			5,901
Median		32,729	10,105
Upper Quartile			20,525
Rectangular Fields (Soccer, Lacrosse, Field Hockey)			
Number of Responses			12
Lower Quartile			2,746
Median		6,829	4,459
Upper Quartile			9,618

Notes:

1. Figures obtained through the City of Elyria Parks and Recreation Department and City of Elyria Annual Operating Budget (Fiscal Year 2016). Revenue for Fiscal Year 2015. Population estimate for 2015 from Esri forecasts.
2. Comparison to 21 Ohio communities that participated in the NRPA PRORAGIS Program with available data for the years between 2010 and 2014. Median values were used unless otherwise noted.
3. Average values used.
4. Park properties (and acreage) include the 16 Elyria parks operated and maintained by Elyria Parks and Recreation.

III. FACILITY AND PROGRAM INVENTORY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Master Plan identifies existing conditions of parks and recreation facilities and programs in Elyria. The chapter begins with a description of park type classifications to provide an understanding of the functions of the various park types. An inventory of parks in Elyria (and nearby) follows, including park locations, facilities offered, and other observations. Finally, parks and recreation program availability and participation rates are analyzed.

PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The purpose of developing a parkland classification system for a community is to evaluate and measure the total recreation opportunities that are available to the public. Often, a community will “meet the standard” in terms of acreage, but this provision may be met through only a single park that does not provide for the entire community. Therefore, a system of parks should be developed that provides a combination of local space such as Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks with support from county, regional, and state parks.

The parks and recreation facilities inventory in this section identifies each park by its park type category and also lists the specific facilities that are located within each park. Table III-1 defines each park category by its typical size and service area, population served by each park, typical features and facilities, and desirable characteristics. The categories and descriptions were adapted from the Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines which was published by the National Recreation and Park Association in 1987 and 1995.

A park system is generally reviewed and analyzed as a composite of recreation areas, each existing to meet a particular public need. Based on a review of national and regional standards, a parks and recreation area classification system has been developed to reflect the actual conditions and opportunities for the City of Elyria.

Table III-1: Recommended Classification System for Parks and Recreation Areas

PARK TYPE	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Local Space				
Mini-Park (MP) or Pocket Park	+/- 1 Acre	0.5 Acre/1,000	Typical facilities may include playgrounds, small multi-use court area, and benches.	Often provided in association with school facilities.
	1/8 – 1/4 Mile Service Radius 5 minute walk			May also provide open space as needed to serve high density neighborhoods where children do not have adequate yard space.
Neighborhood Park (NP)	5-15 Acres	2.0 Acres/1,000	Suited for intense development.	Easily accessible to neighborhood population (safe walking and bike distance).
	½-1.0 mile service radius 10 minute walk To serve a population up to 5,000			May be developed as park/school facility or in conjunction with service agency facility. May not be needed in areas served locally by “community”, “county” or “regional” parks.

PARK TYPE	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Community Park (CmP)	25-50+ Acres 1.0-2.0 mile service radius 5 minute drive To serve several neighborhoods with populations up to 20,000+	5.0 Acres/1,000	Typical facilities include all those listed for Neighborhood Parks plus; major swimming pool, field or court game complex, major recreation or community center, etc. May be an area of natural quality for picnicking, walking, etc.	Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities; or, provides one or two activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas. Park should ideally be located at or near a school. May meet needs of a neighborhood park for users within a 1-mile radius.
Linear Park (LP)	N/A	N/A	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel (pleasure driving, hiking, walking, jogging, biking, etc.). May also include active play areas, fitness courses, picnic areas, etc.	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel (pleasure driving, hiking, walking, jogging, biking, etc.). May also include active play areas, fitness courses, picnic areas, etc.
Special Use-Local (SUL)	Serves community-wide area	N/A	Area for specialized or single purpose recreational activities, such as golf courses, plazas in commercial areas, major pools, riverfront park areas, indoor facilities, etc.	Area should be located to meet the special needs of the intended use.
Regional Space				
County Park (CoP)	100 + Acres 5-6 mile service radius To serve most of the County. Located in rural areas but readily accessible to most of the city population. Travel time within 20 minutes.	10.0 Acres/1,000	Large properties that contain some active recreation facilities and a large percentage of natural or geographical features. Target size of 100 or more acres with up to 50% developed for active recreation. Should be located off of major roads. Destination-oriented parks. Should connect to linear park system.	Capable of providing a range of specific recreational facilities. Should include unique natural areas of ecological interest. May meet needs of neighborhood and/or community park for users within the service areas for those park types.

PARK TYPE	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Nature Parks (NaP)	Size as needed to protect the resource	N/A	<p>Majority of park to remain in its natural state.</p> <p>Facilities should focus on education by use of "nature activities" and should reinforce that philosophy by offering habitat enhancement, trails, nature centers, interpretive signage, parking and restrooms.</p> <p>The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions.</p>	<p>Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest.</p> <p>Typical size should be over 50 acres for management efficiency and to promote ecosystem services.</p>

OVERVIEW OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN ELYRIA

The residents of Elyria, Ohio are offered a variety of parks and recreation facilities. The community's needs are currently being met by the City of Elyria, Lorain County Metro Parks, and school facilities. Table III-2 provides a summary of the parks, recreation areas, and facilities within the City of Elyria and also indicates the park type category for each existing park. Figure III-1 shows the location of each of the parks and recreation areas in Elyria. The following text provides a detailed narrative summary of the parks and recreation facilities offered in Elyria (by the City of Elyria or other providers).

COMMUNITY PARKS

East Park – 26 acres

East Park was acquired in 1954, and its first improvement was a swimming pool which was constructed in 1959.⁷

1. Site Location

East Park is located on Prospect Street and is adjacent to Eastern Heights Middle School and across the street from Prospect Elementary School, creating a large expanse of public space. The main features of the park are the Charles Hyman Recreation Center and East Pool. This is one of four Community Parks which each geographically serve a quadrant of the city.

2. Existing Facilities

Facilities of this park include:

- Two baseball/softball diamonds with no outfield fences
- One outdoor basketball court (currently being upgraded and renovated with new paved surface and new goals), which is heavily used
- One playground



⁷ Source: Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1975, by J. K. Hughes & Associates

- East Pool with rectangle lap pool and wading pool
- Charles Hyman East Recreation Center (built in 1968) which includes a gym floor, meeting rooms, kitchen and offices
 - Restrooms on the rear of the center are accessible to park users.
- Exercise stations
- 1.1 mile walking trail loop through the wooded areas which also provide access from the adjacent neighborhoods



3. Facility Issues

- The pool is aging and needs upgraded or replaced.
- The wooded area has several isolated wetland areas; sometimes the trail is in the wet areas.
- The trail through the woods was once gravel, but has degraded to be dirt, and some areas are mulched. The path remains very wet in some locations.
- The parking lot has degraded with large cracks and potholes.
- Accessibility of facilities and seating areas is limited.
- Several trees are in poor health and should be trimmed or removed.
- The playground is not located near a parking lot.
- The park restrooms on the exterior of the Recreation Center are hidden behind the building and, therefore, are uninviting.

North Park – 35.5 acres

North Park was acquired in 1961 and expanded to its current size in 1966.⁸ Little League North leases 25.48 acres for their facilities.

1. Site Location

North Park is located off of Duffey Street which is accessible from Abbe Road.

2. Existing Facilities

The main features of this park are the North Park Ice Rink, North Pool, and Little League North Baseball Complex. The ice rink is partially enclosed with openings on the sides. The rink generates revenue which typically is larger than the expenses. Facilities of this park include:

- Four Little League fields that are leased to Little League North
- This complex includes a restroom/concession building and a picnic shelter (20' x 50' with a gravel floor).
- A separate large baseball field with grass infield and a pressbox
- Ice rink with building that also serves the pool, with concession area, locker rooms, restrooms, and lobby



⁸ Source: Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1975, by J. K. Hughes & Associates

- A small former closet is being used as a party room for rentals.
- “L” shaped swimming pool with lap pool and wading pool
- Playgrounds that are newer than most in the park system

3. Park Issues

- The roofs on the dugouts at the large baseball field are in poor condition.
- The compressor and machinery at the ice rink are aging and need to be replaced.
- The ice rink locker rooms are insufficient for hockey use. Several teams practice at this facility and must share locker rooms. In addition, the public restrooms are accessible only through the locker rooms, resulting in less secure locker rooms and a lack of privacy while changing equipment and clothes. At least four locker rooms are desired.
- Ice hockey groups have requested that the rink become completely enclosed to allow for more comfortable temperatures for spectators. Currently, there are space heaters above the spectator areas.
- The sidewalk to the pool and ice rink entry is in poor condition, with several large cracks.



South Park – 39.6 acres

The initial 26.6 acres for South Park were purchased by the City in 1953 by the Water Department. The initial improvements were made in 1962.⁹

1. Site Location

South Park is located on 16th Street near East River Road.

2. Existing Facilities

- Thomas Shores Recreation Center with two gym courts, meeting room, kitchen, and restrooms
- Three (3) lighted basketball courts which are heavily used
- One shelter/restroom structure
- Two playground areas near the Recreation Center and basketball courts
- The closed South Pool
 - Parts have been removed to be used to keep the pools at East and North Parks in operation.
- One new baseball field which was funded through CDBG Funds
- Four (4) tennis courts



3. Park Issues

- The tennis courts and fencing are in need of resurfacing and replacement.
- Park lacks handicapped accessible walkways to the playgrounds and shelter.
- The playgrounds need to be replaced as they are rusting and older.
- The parking lots need resurfacing.

⁹ Source: Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1975, by J. K. Hughes & Associates

- The pool and bathhouse are deteriorating and need to be removed.

West Park – 42.7 acres

The original 28 acres of land for West Park were purchased in 1951.¹⁰ The City leases five acres from the Elyria Fraternal Order of Eagles (which expires on May 31, 2017) with a condition that the lease can be renewed on an annual basis.

1. Site Location

West Park is located north of Route 113. Access is available from several streets, including Foster Avenue to the main entrance, Clemens Avenue to the soccer fields from Route 113, and Lowell Street on the south side to access the softball fields. The park is adjacent to Oakwood Elementary School and shares open space with the school. Some of the baseball fields are on School property. Little League West maintains their fields.

2. Existing Facilities

West Park is a hub of activity serving the western portion of the City. The park serves as the home of Little League West.

- Charles Hoagland West Recreation Center (built in 1987) with one game court, meeting room, vending area, and restrooms
- Four (4) lighted softball fields
- Skatepark which was developed on former tennis courts
- The closed West Pool
- Building with picnic shelter, concession stand, restrooms, and softball office to serve the softball complex
- Two playgrounds, one near the softball complex and the other near the recreation center
- Eight (8) soccer fields operated by GESA (the number varies depending on the layout of varying size fields)
- Maintenance building
- Two (2) sand volleyball courts
- Outdoor basketball court

3. Park Issues

- The closed pool is an eyesore and safety hazard.
- The Recreation Center roof has leaked. The perimeter of the gym floor is in poor condition.
- There is a lack of handicapped accessible pathways to the playgrounds and fields.
- The parking lots need to be replaced.
- Many residents complained about the distance from the soccer complex and Little League fields to the restrooms near the pool and about the condition of the restrooms.



¹⁰ Source: Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1975, by J. K. Hughes & Associates

- West Little League requested lights on their fields.

Vic Janowicz Memorial Park – 3.1 acres (City owned) and 16.9 acres (Little League owned)

1. Site Location

This park is located off of Chestnut Ridge Road in southeast Elyria. Portions of the site are owned by the East Little League, with a smaller portion City owned. The park is primarily a youth baseball and softball complex. The park is classified as a Community Park due to its combined overall acreage. Little League East leases the city owned portion for the League's use.



2. Existing Facilities

- Eight youth baseball and softball fields
- Restroom/shelter/concession building
- Parking for 40 parking spaces on the City owned portion and another 204 on the Little League owned portion

3. Park Issues

- The park is a single use facility.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Hilltop Park – 9.4 acres

Hilltop Park was originally part of a 75 acre tract purchased for the City's sewage treatment facility in 1927. The first recreation facilities were developed in 1970.¹¹ The former residence served as the Parks and Recreation Department's headquarters until the current City Hall was constructed on Court Street.



1. Site Location

Hilltop Park is located at the corner of Burns Road at Gulf Road in the northern part of the City. Entrances are provided off of both roads.

2. Existing Facilities

- Two (2) picnic shelters (25' x 40')
- Playground
- Two (2) tennis courts (unlighted)
- Restroom building
- One (1) baseball field with grass infield
- One (1) outdoor basketball court with new goals on the ends and old goals on the sides
- Unimproved trails



3. Park Issues

- Parking lots are in poor condition with large potholes and cracks.

¹¹ Source: Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1975, by J. K. Hughes & Associates

- The restroom building has suffered from vandalism.
- Lack of walkways to the playground and shelters. Some are too narrow for a wheelchair.
- The tennis courts need resurfaced, and the fences need painted.
- The baseball field backstop needs a bottom rail.

Academy Court Park – 8.0 acres

1. Site Location

This park is located in the far west part of the City at the end of Academy Court cul-de-sac which is accessible from Brunswick Drive. The entry is shared with the Elyria Retirement Community. The park is primarily used by youth football organizations.

2. Existing Facilities

- One (1) youth football field
- Storage building
- Backstop playfield
- One set of four swings

3. Park Issues

- The park lacks parking, which currently takes place on the grass.
- A former playground area is a depression. The swings have no safety surfacing.
- The backstop playfield is unusable due to its poor condition and tall weeds.
- The football practices and games attract large crowds, and there are only portable toilets, no parking, no spectator areas, and a makeshift concession stand.
- No walkways lead to the facilities.
- This area of the City is densely population and needs parks and playgrounds.
- The football field turf is poor.



MINI PARKS

Abbe Road Park – 2.6 acres

1. Site Location

Abbe Road Park is located on North Abbe Road in the northeastern portion of Elyria. It is also accessible from Salem Avenue where the six car parking lot is located.

2. Existing Facilities

This Mini Park primarily serves residents in the adjacent neighborhood and offers a small playground and a basketball court.

Facilities of this park include:

- Small playground
- Basketball court (two good goals and two old posts with no backboards)
- Six car parking lot

3. Park Issues

- Parking lot and basketball court are cracking.



- The gate to the parking lot remains closed to prevent people using it (at the request of the neighbors).
- Water stands in the playground area and needs drainage improvements.
- The basketball posts need to be painted.

Bell Avenue Tot Lot – 0.34 acres

1. Site Location

This park is located at the corner of Bell Avenue and Keys Drive.

2. Existing Facilities

- A playground and park sign

3. Park Issues

- Playground wood edging is in poor condition.
- No accessible path from the sidewalk to the playground.
- The playground is rusting and needs to be replaced.



Washington Village Park – 1.7 acres

1. Site Location

This park is located on Monticello Drive in the western part of the City.

2. Existing Facilities

- Playground
- One basketball court

3. Park Issues

- Basketball court surface and goals need to be replaced.
- The fall safety zone at the swings does not meet playground safety standards.
- No accessible path leads to the playground or basketball court.



SPECIAL USE PARKS

Ely Square Park – 1.7 acres

Elyria's founder, Heman Ely, donated the land for Ely Square to the Township for a ballfield in 1822. Since 1850, a major attraction of the park has been a fountain which was replaced in 1870, 1902, 1930, 1959, and 1981.¹² In the 1930's, this was the one of the first "electric" fountains in the USA.

1. Site Location

Ely Square is located in the heart of Downtown Elyria, bounded by Broad Street, Second Street, Court Street, and Middle Avenue.



¹² Source: Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1975, by J. K. Hughes & Associates.

2. Existing Facilities

Ely Square is the cultural center of the City and is the home of programs such as holiday lights, special events, weddings, and concerts.

- Fountain focal point
- Gazebo
- Landscaping
- Civic plaza space
- Information kiosk
- Memorials and statue



3. Park Issues

- The fountain was last renovated in 1986 and is in need of replacement.

Finwood Estate – 46.5 acres

1. Site Location

The Finwood Estate is located on north Abbe Road, just south of Lorain County Community College and across Abbe Road from the Finwood Forest. Brandstetter Carroll Inc. prepared a master plan for the park in 2001 which provided several recommendations.

2. Existing Facilities

Finwood Estate is the former home of Judge Guy B. and Jennie C. Findley and was donated to the City as part of a living trust which is provided funds for the maintenance, improvement, and operation as a city park. The Tudor style home is used for meetings, rentals, and summer camp programs.



- The only facilities are the home and parking lots. The three-car garage is currently used for summer camps, and there is an apartment above the garage.
- Informal trails extend into the wooded area and follow the creek.

3. Park Issues

- A pavilion with restrooms is needed to support rentals, summer camp programs, and other activities. A restroom would keep daily users out of the home.
- The trail system with wayfinding signage would support more and safer use of the scenic trails.
- The 2001 master plan recommended a boardwalk area to traverse over wetlands along the stream which has not yet been implemented.
- A corner of the property is located off of Burns Road, and the master plan recommended the development of a small picnic shelter, small parking lot, and loop walking trail (not implemented).
- An overlook to view the stream, north of the home site, has not yet been implemented.
- The house is on a sanitary septic system, and this system will need to be expanded to accommodate the new restrooms.

- Ideally a method to safely cross Abbe Road should be developed to connect to Finwood Forest and Hilltop Park.

OPEN SPACE

Audubon Park – 1.1 acres

1. Site Location

Audubon Park is a small passive park located on West Bridge Street and the space backs up to the Black River.

2. Existing Facilities

This is primarily a natural area with a few trees planted near the open area at the street. A steep slope traverses down to the Black River.

3. Park Issues

- The Black River Audubon Society suggested a pavilion, benches, overlook and river and bank cleanup which have not been completed. Only native species should be planted here.

Finwood Forest – 33.0 acres

1. Site Location

Finwood Forest is located across Abbe Road from the Finwood Estate and extends west to Hilltop Park.

2. Existing Facilities

Finwood Forest was part of the life estate from Judge Findley as discussed under the Finwood Estate property. A small parking lot for about ten cars is located along Abbe Road which provides access to a natural trail. A footbridge crosses the creek to allow access to the rest of the property and to Hilltop Park. The trail is very steep in places leading to Hilltop Park.



3. Park Issues

- The footbridge is narrow, with a railing on only one side, and a lot of deflection upon walking upon it. The bank has washed away at the abutments.

Lake Avenue Open Space – 5.50 acres

1. Site Location

The Lake Avenue Common space is a gateway park bordered by Lorain Blvd. (Route 57), Gateway Blvd., Highland Court, and Lake Avenue. The only parking is on-street parking along Highland Court.

2. Existing Facilities

A series of concrete walkways traverse the park. The walkways are lighted. A main feature is a shrub bed in the center which spells out "Elyria." A plaque indicates the Elyria garden, and lighting was made possible by efforts and donations from the Elyria Sunrise Rotary.



3. Park Issues

- Sidewalks are cracking, and vegetation is growing in the cracks.

Figure III-1: Existing Parks and Trails

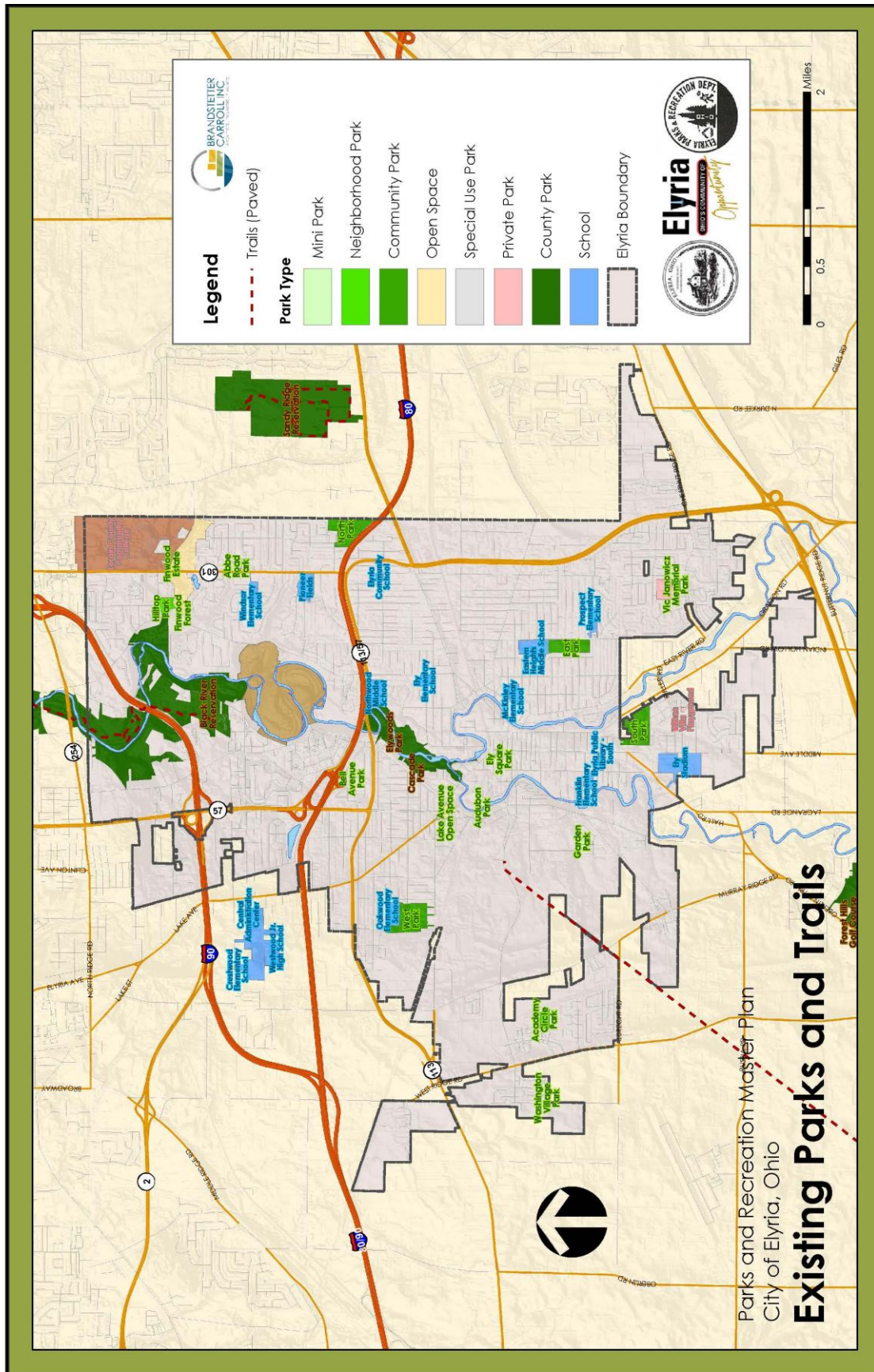


Table III-2: Elyria Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory

Facility Name	Park Type	Devel. Acres ¹	Total Acres ²	Baseball/Softball ³					Fields ⁴			Courts					Outdoor Swimming Pool	Trails		Indoor		Shelters		Support		Other Comments	
				Small Grass Infield	Small Skinned Infield	Large Grass Infield	Large Skinned Infield	Bathing Cages (Outdoor)	Playfield	Small Rectangular	Large Rectangular	Volleyball Court	Tennis Court	Outdoor Basketball Court				Playground	Skate Park	Paved	Unpaved	Community/Recreation Center	Indoor Ice Rink	Gym	Large Pavilion		Small Pavilion / Gazebo
CITY OF ELYRIA																											
City Parks																											
Abbe Road Park	Mini Park	2.6	2.6										1	1											6		
Academy Circle Park	Neighborhood	8.0	8.0						1		1														0	Youth football; parking in grass	
Bell Avenue Tot Lot	Mini Park	0.3	0.3											1											0		
East Park, Pool, & East Recreation Center	Community	12.0	26.0		1		1						1	1		1		1.1	1		1				89		
Hilltop Park	Neighborhood	8.8	9.4	1									2	1	1						2		1	103			
North Park, Pool, & Ice Rink	Community	20.6	35.5	4		1								1		1				1		1		1	180	Home of Little League North	
South Park and Recreation Center	Community	39.6	39.6		1								4	3	1				1		2				145	Swimming pool closed; youth ball diamond under construction	
Vic Janowicz Memorial Park	Community	3.1	3.1	1	2																				40		
Washington Village Park	Mini Park	1.7	1.7											1	1										3		
West Park and Recreation Center	Community	42.7	42.7	1			5			2	6	2		1	2	1			1		1				428	Swimming pool closed	
Westway Garden Park	Mini Park	3.5	3.5											1	1							1			0		
Subtotal - Elyria City Parks		143.0	172.5	7	4	1	6	0	1	2	7	2	6	9	10	1	2	0.0	1.1	3	1	4	3	1	2	994	
Special Use Parks																											
Ely Square Park	Special Use	1.7	1.7																			1		OS	Fountain; downtown gathering space		
Finwood Estate	Special Use	3.0	46.5																						45	Home used for rentals; home of holiday lights display.	
Subtotal - Special Use Parks		4.7	48.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	45	
Open Space																											
Audubon Park	Open Space	0.0	1.1																						0	Natural area	
Finwood Forest	Open Space	1.8	33.0																						0		
Lake Avenue Open Space	Open Space	5.5	5.5																						0		
Subtotal - Open Space		7.3	39.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL - CITY OF ELYRIA PARKS		154.9	260.3	7	4	1	6	0	1	2	7	2	6	9	10	1	2	0.0	1.1	3	1	4	3	2	2	1039	

Table III-2: Elyria Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory (Continued)

County Parks																												
Black River Reservation	County	52.0	464.5															1.8						9		2		436 additional acres located outside of Elyria (901 total)
Cascade Park	County	37.0	63.7												2				0.8					3		2		Nature center; sledding hill, overlooks
Elywoods Park	County	10.0	49.6												1									2		1		
Other Trails	Linear	N/A	N/A															0.6										
School Parks																												
Central Administration & Kindergarten Village	School (Neighborhood)	15.0	15.0		2			1			2				1													
Crestwood Elementary	School (Mini Park)	8.0	8.0												1													
Eastern Heights Middle	School (Neighborhood)	6.5	6.5						1		1																	Tennis courts have no nets, poor condition
Ely Elementary	School (Mini Park)	4.2	4.2						2					2	1													
Ely Stadium	School (Private)	16.6	16.6		1	1					2		7															Football game and practice site
Elyria Pioneer Fields	School (Private)	10.0	10.0								2																	
Franklin School	School (Mini Park)	1.0	1.0											1	1													
McKinley Elementary	School (Mini Park)	4.9	4.9						1					1	1													
Northwood Middle	School (Mini Park)	5.0	5.0								1																	Safety Town
Oakwood Elementary	School (Mini Park)	7.30	7.30												1													
Prospect Elementary	School (Mini Park)	5.6	5.6						1																			
Westwood Middle	School (Neighborhood)	6.0	6.0		1																							
Windsor Elementary	School (Mini Park)	5.8	5.8						1					1	1													
Subtotal - School Parks		95.9	95.9	0	4	1	0	1	6	0	8	0	7	5	7	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	
Subtotal - Public Facilities		349.8	934.0	7	8	2	6	1	7	2	15	2	13	14.0	18	1	2	2.3	1.9	3	1	4	14	2	5	N/A		
Other Agency Public and Private Facilities																												
Elyria Public Library South Branch	Mini Park	0.1	0.1												1													South Branch Library and Head Start
Vic Janowicz Little League East	Community	16.9	16.9			1	4	1	1															1		1	204	
Wilkes Villa	Mini Park	1.2	1.2												1													
Subtotal - Other Public Agency and Private Facilities		18.2	18.2	0	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	N/A	
TOTAL - ELYRIA FACILITIES		368.0	952.1	7	8	3	10	2	8	2	15	2	13	14	20	1	2	2.3	1.9	3	1	4	15	2	6	N/A		

1. Developed Acres are estimated based on GIS measurements and aerial photography.
2. Total school acres exclude school building structures and parking lots.
3. Small grass or skinned infields can accommodate 60 ft. or shorter baselines, while large grass infields can accommodate 90 ft. baselines, and large skinned infields can accommodate 75 ft. baselines.
4. Large rectangular fields (used for football, soccer, lacrosse) measure at least 300 x 200 ft., and small rectangle fields (soccer only) measure 200 x 150 ft. or smaller. Playfields are smaller/unprogrammed grass areas.
5. Parking space counted only for City-owned facilities.

SCHOOL SITES

School sites typically have outdoor recreation areas for students that function as parks for nearby residents when schools are not in session. Schools in the City of Elyria are operated by Elyria City School District.

Elementary school properties are more likely to provide an experience similar to what might be expected at a public park, for they offer facilities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, and open play areas that are typically found in a Mini or Neighborhood Park. Middle and high school recreation facilities, in contrast, tend to be limited to baseball/softball diamonds, rectangular fields, and tennis courts developed specifically for school sports teams and are often locked or otherwise closed for public use. These school parks are more accurately classified as Special Use Parks.

School sites include 13 properties and are also shown on the Figure III-1, Existing Parks and Trails. The facilities provided at each are listed on Table III-2.

FACILITIES BY OTHERS

Black River Reservation – Lorain County Metro Park – 901.2 acres

1. Site Location

The Black River Reservation includes over 900 acres in the far north portion of Elyria, located between Gulf Road and West River Road. The park extends into Sheffield Lake.

2. Existing Facilities

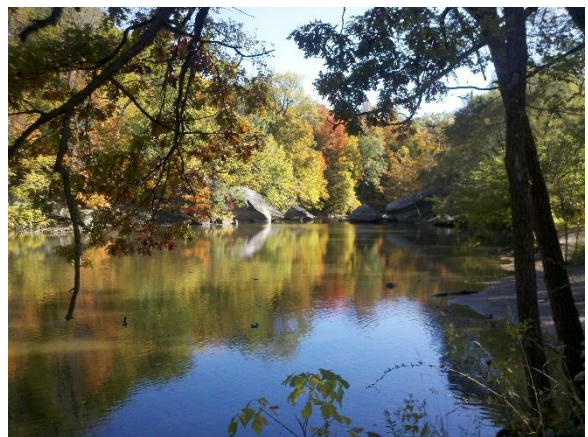
The park is a passive park with the following facilities:

- 1.8 miles of paved trails in Elyria (5.5 miles total)
- Nine large picnic shelters
- Two restroom building to serve the day use areas

Cascade and Elywoods Park – Lorain County Metro Parks – Cascade 63.7 acres, Elywoods 49.6 acres

Cascade and Elywoods Parks are located in the center of Elyria, just north of Downtown. The East and West Branches of the Black River join in the park. Waterfalls are located just north of Downtown Elyria. The City and Metro Parks entered into an agreement with the Metro Parks taking over operations of the parks in January 2015. The Metro Parks have been preparing a Master Plan for the park, which is not complete at the time of this Master Plan.

The park has served as the crown jewel in the Elyria Park System for over 100 years and is a sentimental favorite of many residents. The park has changed much over its history as the result of population changes, recreation trends, and the results of frequent flooding of the Black River.



1. Site Location

Elywoods Park is located on the east side of the Black River and is accessible from Washington Street. Cascade Park is located on the west side of the river and is accessible from Hillsdale Court from Furnace Street to the main portion of the park, and from Floradale Street from West River Road in the northern portion of the park.

2. Existing Facilities

Elywoods Park includes a playground, two picnic shelters, and a restroom building inside a paved circular loop road. This road connects to a ford of the Black River, which is currently closed.

Cascade Park has several areas. The main area includes a large sled hill, picnic shelter, large playground, nature center (former pool house), and a restroom building. The 19-acre portion in the north from Floradale Street includes picnic areas with a playground, picnic shelter, and restrooms. The Elyria Parks Maintenance Complex is located near the entrance to this portion of the park.



The area to the south of the main park has several unpaved trails which lead to the two waterfall areas. There is an overlook to the East Falls off of Kerstetter Way, just one block from the center of Downtown, which includes a paved parking lot and overlook boardwalk structures.

Elyria Public Library South Branch – 4.4 acres (Mini Park)

1. Site Location

This mini-park is located on Middle Avenue at 13th Street. The building is the former Hamilton School.

2. Existing Facilities

A small playground is located in front of the library.

Wilkes Villa – 1.2 acres (Mini Park)

1. Site Location

The small mini-park is located in the center of the housing complex on Pratt Blvd. from Fuller Road, and west of Grafton Road.

2. Existing Facilities

The site includes a small playground. A picnic shelter has been changed to a shelter for mailboxes.

PROGRAMS INVENTORY

Quality recreational programming is an important aspect of a healthy community. As citizens of all ages seek to enrich their lives with productive use of leisure time, the availability of a diverse range of recreational activities becomes increasingly vital. Quality recreational programs also promote societal values such as civic pride and improve a community's attractiveness to parents and business leaders.

The City has been providing programs for several decades and offers a wide variety of programs. Due to funding cuts during the recent recession in the economy, some programming has been reduced, but many have been returned to operation.

Elyria Programs

The City offers a very wide variety of programs for residents of all ages. The programs will vary based upon need, suggestions, attendance, popularity, and trends. Listed below are several of the programs offered in 2015 and 2016.

The City offers a variety of recreational level sports programs, including:

- Youth Soccer (spring, summer and fall)

-
- Flag Football
 - Youth Tennis lessons
 - Volleyball Skills Clinic
 - And Junior Volleyball League
 - Archery
 - Ice Skating Lessons
 - Adult Softball
 - Adult Volleyball
 - Smart Start Basketball and Skills Clinic
 - Youth Basketball Leagues
 - Youth T-Ball and Baseball

Summer Camp Programs include:

- Cheerleading
- Volleyball
- Basketball

Reach and Rise Summer Discovery Camps offer:

- Arts and Music
- Sports and Healthy Living
- Environmental Science
- Elyria Firefighters Basketball
- Extreme Adventures
- Explore Lorain County
- Rec & Tech
- Motivational Leadership Basketball Camp
- YTeen Girls Leadership Camp

Swimming programs include:

- Swim lessons
- Life Saving
- Parent & Tot Open Swim
- Swim Teams
- Waterwalking
- Lap Swim

Senior Activities/The Active People programs include:

- Early Bird Exercise,
- Chair Yoga
- Modified Volleyball
- Cards
- Walking
- Pickleball
- Line Dancing
- Shuffleboard
- Active People Golf League
- Aerobics
- Bus trips
- Luncheons
- Themed parties

Other programs include:

- Safety Town

Special Events include:

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Candlelight Vigil
- Super Hero Saturday
- Pride Day
- Elyria Band Appreciation
- Memorial Day Parade
- Summer Reading
- Summer Concerts
- Flag Day
- July 4th Fireworks
- Voices for Children Fun Day
- Taste of South
- Donna Diner Car Show
- LaFlavour Concert
- Parks Golf Classic
- Pops Concert
- Punt, Pass & Kick
- Apple Festival
- MADD Festival
- Fall Festival
- Halloween Parade
- Festival of Lights
- Holiday at Finwood

The Active People Program

The Active People programs increased steadily from 7,991 participants in 2010 to 14,285 participants in 2014.

Recreation/Sports Programs

The City offers a variety of recreation sports programs with a summary of their attendance listed here. The majority of these programs are provided for youth, with the exception of volleyball and softball which are provided for adults:

Year	Participants	Teams
2010	2164	145
2011	3101	188
2012	3303	231
2013	3305	223
2014	3657	230

Metro Park Programs

Metro Parks offer a variety of nature walks, snowshoe walks, and other activities at Black River Reservation and Cascade Parks within the City, as well as a wide variety of other programs at nearby Carlisle Reservation, Sandy Ridge Reservation, and other parks.

Sports League Organizations

In addition to the athletic programs offered by the City, the following organizations offer sports leagues:

- Greater Elyria Soccer Association (GESA)
- Elyria Ice Hockey
- Elyria Mini-Pioneers Football
- Little League East
- Little League West
- Little League North

Swimming Pools Performance

The two swimming pools operate at a funding deficit. The table below (Table III-3) summarizes the attendance, income and expenses for 2012 through 2015. The programs generate revenue, but it is not enough to offset the pool operating expenses. These figures will vary depending on the weather and other factors. The overall deficit varied between 2012 and 2015, from a low of \$44,153 in 2015 to a high of \$73,936 the previous year.

Table III-3: Swimming Pool Attendance, Revenue & Expenses (2012-2015)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Attendance				
Total Attendance	12,986	12,890	11,596	10,419
Swim Lessons	635	790	882	753
Swim Team	38	30	30	31
Parent & Tot	13	14	14	16
Diving	16	11	9	7
Lifeguarding	15	15	9	11
Adult Learn to Swim	23	18	16	28
Private Lessons			30	28
Revenue				
East Pool	\$ 19,370	\$ 22,023	\$ 17,461	\$ 19,850
North Pool	\$ 13,218	\$ 10,182	\$ 11,110	\$ 13,110
Season Passes	\$ 6,870	\$ 8,597	\$ 6,578	\$ 5,955
Admissions Revenue Total	\$ 39,458	\$ 40,802	\$ 35,149	\$ 38,915
Program Revenue	\$ 36,385	\$ 45,105	\$ 44,480	\$ 46,005
Total Revenues	\$ 75,843	\$ 85,907	\$ 79,629	\$ 84,920
Expenses				
Program Expenses	\$ 22,385	\$ 27,129	\$ 27,019	\$ 25,163
Operations Expenses	\$125,065	\$125,374	\$126,546	\$103,910
Total Expenses	\$147,450	\$152,503	\$153,565	\$129,073
Total Deficit	-\$71,607	-\$66,596	-\$73,936	-\$44,153

North Park Ice Rink Performance

The North Park Ice Rink is very popular for open skating, lessons and programs, and ice hockey. Table III-4 summarizes the attendance, revenue and expenses for the North Park Ice Rink from 2010 to 2015. The ice rink generates revenue over expenses, and, between 2000 and 2015, this difference ranged from a high of \$101,115 in 2012-2013 to low of \$71,083 in 2014-2015. The rink generates revenue over expenses for admissions, rentals, and for concessions. The attendance for general skating sessions has varied from just over 40,000 in 2010-2011 to a high of 48,151 in 2012-2013.

Table III-4: North Park Ice Rink Attendance, Revenue & Expenses (2010-2015)

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Attendance					
Total Admissions Attendance	40,845	44,051	48,151	44,071	41,745
Revenue					
Admissions & Skate Rentals	\$ 48,685	\$ 50,015	\$ 48,036	\$ 53,285	\$ 54,264
Season Passes	\$ 680	\$ 250	\$ 315	\$ 360	\$ 730
Program Revenue	\$ 11,260	\$ 12,223	\$ 16,649	\$ 14,420	\$ 8,960
Concession Revenue	\$ 24,466	\$ 24,466	\$ 25,080	\$ 25,517	\$ 24,159
Ice Rentals	\$ 91,495	\$ 99,790	\$102,975	\$ 87,941	\$ 92,780
Total Revenues	\$176,586	\$186,744	\$193,055	\$181,523	\$ 180,893
Expenses					
Program Expenses	\$ 4,443	\$ 6,879	\$ 7,163	\$ 8,178	\$ 5,122
Operations Expenses	\$ 99,233	\$100,831	\$ 84,777	\$ 85,863	\$104,688
Concession Expenses	\$ 17,096	\$ 20,635	\$ 25,180	\$ 22,147	\$ 22,291
Total Expenses	\$103,676	\$107,710	\$ 91,940	\$ 94,041	\$109,810
Total Revenue Over Expenses	\$72,910	\$79,034	\$101,115	\$87,482	\$71,083

RESERVABLE FACILITIES

Reservable facilities allow users to schedule independent programs and events. Groups making reservations have exclusive access to a facility, assuring the facility is available for their needs at the time, date, and location of the scheduled event.

Elyria Reservable Facilities

The City of Elyria offers reservable picnic shelters at Hilltop (2 shelters), South and West Parks. The gazebo in Ely Square is also rentable. The gyms and meeting rooms in the East, South, and West Recreation Centers are also rentable, as is the Finwood Estate. The pools and the ice rink are also rentable.

County Reservable Facilities

Lorain County Metro Parks offers reservable shelters at Black River Reservation, Cascade Park, and Elywoods Park in Elyria, as well as at other nearby County Parks.

CORE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The core program concept provides direction in the planning, scheduling, and coordination of community-based recreational activities. The guidelines are general, and emphasis must be given to the involvement of Elyria community representatives, parents, participants, and advisory groups in the planning and development of programs to meet these core guidelines. These descriptions detail program formats, primary values served by the activity, and provide a list of specific program examples.

Core Program Components

1. Broad Appeal

Parks and community centers should have broad appeal by conducting activities and special events for people young and old and of varying needs and skill levels. Target groups for programs include:

- Preschool
- Elementary School Age
- Teens

-
- Adults
 - Seniors
 - Intergenerational
 - Multiple Ages
 - Special Needs

2. Administratively Feasible

Activities should be administratively feasible and the following factors should be considered as part of any program development process:

- Facility and Equipment Requirements
- Safety
- Cost vs. Benefits
- Specialized Instruction Requirements

3. Coordination

Program and service offerings should be of a coordinated nature within the community, thus serving to complement rather than duplicate activities already provided elsewhere by other organizations or agencies.

4. Variety of Settings

Activities should be conducted in a variety of settings and formats, formal and informal. Examples include:

- Instructional Classes
- Progressive Skill Levels
- Drop-In
- Special Events
- Special Interest Clubs
- Leagues and/or Tournaments
- Outings and Field Trips

5. Constructive Nature

Programs should be constructive in nature and satisfy the creative, cultural, physical, and social desires of the participants.

6. Diverse Range of Activities

A diverse range of activities should be offered and should include a balanced mix of the following broad program categories:

- Athletics
- Creative Arts
- Games
- Health and Wellness Education
- Outdoor/Nature Education
- Performing Arts
- Education and Seminars
- Special Events

IV.NEEDS ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Master Plan comprises the identification of needs in Elyria and consists of the following elements:

1. Parkland and recreation area needs and level of service analysis.
2. Facilities needs analysis and level of service standards.
3. Geographic analysis of the distribution of parks and recreation facilities.
4. A discussion of recent trends in parks, recreation, and leisure services.

This information and the public input (Chapter V) form the basis of the recommendations for improvement in this plan which are presented in Chapters VI through VIII.

PARK AND RECREATION AREA NEEDS BY PARK TYPE

The parkland classifications were described in Section III, followed by a description of each facility in Elyria, and these classifications are generally consistent with the National Recreation and Park Association Guidelines with some modifications to match local circumstances. Level of Service Standards (acres per thousand population) for each park classification in Elyria were established following a thorough analysis of the existing conditions and public input. These goals are consistent with communities throughout Ohio and the nation in addition to recent plans completed by the Consultant. Table IV-1, Level of Service Standards by Park Type, provides a breakdown of the needs for each type of park in the City of Elyria.

This table includes public parks that are part of school sites (as Mini or Neighborhood Parks), because they serve some of the park needs for nearby residents. The parkland at the elementary and middle schools is counted as part of this analysis because it is available for public use, while the land at Ely Stadium and Pioneer Fields is not counted because it is not available for public use. Additionally, Cascade and Elywoods Parks are counted as Community Parks for this analysis because they meet similar needs for local residents.

Table IV-1: Level of Service Standards by Park Type

Park Type	Existing Developed Acres	Recommended Acres/1000 Population	2015 Recommended Acres	2015 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2020 Recommended Acres	2020 Surplus(+) Deficit(-)
Mini Park ¹	51.3	0.5	27.3	23.9	27.6	23.7
Neighborhood ²	44.3	2	109.3	-65.0	110.3	-66.0
Community	181.9	5	273.2	-91.3	275.6	-93.7
Total	277.5	7.5	409.8	-132.3	413.5	-136.0

1. Mini Parks include 41.8 acres at school sites and 1.3 acres at other sites.

2. Neighborhood Parks include 27.5 acres at school sites.

3. Community Parks include 16.9 acres at Vic Janowicz Little League East Park and 47.0 acres at Cascade/Elywoods Parks.

4. See Chapter II for population estimates

This table identifies the current park acreage for the City of Elyria and estimates the future needs through 2020 based on the population projections discussed in Section II. Table IV-1 identifies a current deficit of 132.3 acres of developed parkland in 2015 which will increase to 136.0 by 2020, a minimal increase because the population of the City of Elyria is expected to increase slowly in the future.

The 2015 deficit of parkland would be greater if not for the availability of recreation land at schools in Elyria. Most of the Mini Park and over half of the Neighborhood Park acreage in Elyria is located on school properties. The City has a deficit (as of 2015) of acreage for two of the three park types

with the largest deficit, 91.3 acres, in Community Parks. The City has a surplus of Mini Park acreage (23.9 acres) in 2015 which mitigates some of the Neighborhood Park deficit.

FACILITIES NEEDS ANALYSIS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Similar to the recommendations for parkland described previously, Table IV-2 Facility Level of Service Goals, details the facilities by type with the available supply compared to the needed supply to meet the goals established in this Master Plan. These goals were developed using a combination of existing standards and guidelines, desires of the Steering Committee, public input, and the past experience of the Consultant. Like the park acreage totals, the values in this table include many facilities that are located on school sites (and other sites) because they serve some of the needs for residents. The diamond and rectangle fields at Ely Stadium and Pioneer Fields are not included, because the facilities primarily serve the school athletic programs, rather than the public as a whole. Section V, Public Input, provides details on the results of the public input portion of the master planning process.

Table IV-2: Facility Level of Service Goals

Facility	Population Goal (1 Per)	2015 Existing Supply ²	2015 Required ¹	2015 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2020 Required ¹	2020 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Outdoor Areas						
Picnic Shelter	2600	15	21.0	-6.0	21.2	-6.2
Playground	2500	20	21.9	-1.9	22.1	-2.1
Paved Trails (miles)	5000	2.3	10.9	-8.6	11.0	-8.7
Unpaved Trails (miles)	5000	1.9	10.9	-9.0	11.0	-9.1
Swimming Pool	40000	2	1.4	0.6	1.4	0.6
Outdoor Theater	30000	0	1.8	-1.8	1.8	-1.8
Outdoor Fields & Court Areas						
Small Diamonds (50-65' bases)	2000	29	27.3	1.7	27.6	1.4
Large Diamond (90' bases)	25000	2	2.2	-0.2	2.2	-0.2
Rectangular Fields ³	3000	11	18.2	-7.2	18.4	-7.4
Basketball Courts	3000	14	18.2	-4.2	18.4	-4.4
Tennis Courts	5000	6	10.9	-4.9	11.0	-5.0
Sand Volleyball Courts	15000	2	3.6	-1.6	3.7	-1.7
Indoor Areas/Specialized Facilities						
Indoor Pool	60000	0	0.9	-0.9	0.9	-0.9
Game Court/Gym	15000	4	3.6	0.4	3.7	0.3
Recreation/Community Center	15000	3	3.6	-0.6	3.7	-0.7

1. See Chapter II for population estimates

2. All city or county owned/leased facilities and facilities at schools that are accessible to the public are included.

3. Soccer/football/lacrosse fields. Small-sided fields counted as 0.5 fields.

The values in the figure above indicate a need for various additional facilities. Based on these numbers, the most significant facility needs are for rectangular fields, picnic shelters and additional trails, both paved and unpaved. Elyria currently has unpaved trails only in three parks (East Park, Finwood Estate, and Cascade Park) and paved trails are located only in one park (Black River Reservation Park) and along the rail corridor in the southwestern portion of the City (North Coast Inland Trail). The City also has a substantial deficit in the number of tennis courts and a slight deficit in the number of playgrounds. Elyria has no outdoor theater or amphitheater, but many residents would like to see one developed in the City. The City, similarly, has no indoor pool.

Open Space Guidelines

Open space provides benefits to the environment and human health, including improvements to air and water quality, increased biodiversity, wildlife habitat protection, noise reduction, reduction of

erosion, and protection of water resources,¹³ although some of these benefits may be reduced in developed portions of parks. Additionally, proximity to open space has been shown to improve quality of life and increase property values. Table IV-3 identifies the total acres of parks and open space, developed and undeveloped, in the City of Elyria.¹⁴

The values in this table indicate a target of 20 acres of open space per 1,000 population, which represents a slight increase from the current level of open space of 16.9 acres per 1,000 population. The target acres of open space would also maintain the current ratio of approximately two acres of County parkland to each acre of City parkland. Based on the guidelines presented in IV-3, approximately 250 additional acres are required in addition to existing properties.

Table IV-3: Open Space Guidelines

Sector	Existing Acres	Existing Acres Per 1000 Population	Target Acres/1000 Population	2015 Target	2015 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2020 Target	2020 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Elyria Parks	260.3	4.8	6.5	355.1	-94.8	358.3	-98.0
County Parks	577.8	10.6	13.5	737.6	-159.8	744.2	-166.4
Schools	69.3	1.3	N/A	69.3	0.0	69.3	0.0
Other	18.2	0.3	N/A	18.2	0.0	18.2	0.0
Total	925.6	16.9	20.0	1,092.7	-254.6	1,190.0	-264.4

1. See Chapter II for population estimates.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS

The spatial distribution of parks throughout the City of Elyria is important because residents are more able and willing to access facilities that are close to their homes. Figure IV-1, Park Service Areas, indicates an inventory of the existing parks (and schools) with service areas by park type. Service areas are also shown for select private parks that meet some public recreational needs.

The brown areas show portions of the City within a five minute walk of a Mini Park, Neighborhood Park, or Community Park,¹⁵ while the green areas represent portions of the City within a ten minute walk of a Neighborhood Park or Community Park. The yellow areas indicate portions of the City within a five minute drive of a Community Park. Finally, the blue areas show portions of the City within a five minute walk of a school park, and the pink areas represent the service areas of a private park (five minute walk). This map serves to indicate the gaps where neighborhoods are not served very well by parks.

As a result of the location of the four regionally located Community Parks (North, South, East, and West) throughout the City of Elyria, plus Cascade Park and Vic Janowicz Memorial Park, most residents live within a five minute drive of a Community Park. The most notable area outside of the service areas for Community Parks is the southwestern portion of the City near Washington Village and Academy Circle Parks.

A smaller but still substantial proportion of residents live within the five and ten minute walk ranges to Mini and Neighborhood Parks. The majority of the most populated portions of the City are located within these walkable areas to parks; however, five notable portions of Elyria are located outside of these service areas:

- The southwest portion of the City (south of Academy Circle Park)
- The area south of Interstate 80 and east of Lake Avenue
- The central portion of the City between downtown and Franklin Elementary, east of the Black River

¹³ De Brun, Constance T.F., ed. Economic Benefits of Land Conservation. N.p.: Trust For Public Land, 2007. Web. July 18, 2016.

¹⁴ These totals do include some structures, but these features represent a small percentage of the total acreage.

¹⁵ Community Parks include Cascade/Elywoods and Vic Janowicz Parks.

- The eastern portion of the City, south of Interstate 80, west of US 20, and northeast of East Park
- The area just north of Interstate 80 and west of North Abbe Road

Overall, this map (Figure IV-1) demonstrates that the parks in Elyria are fairly well distributed and have been developed in the more densely populated portions of the City. Nearly all City residents live within a short drive of a Community Park and many residents live within a walking distance of a park or school park.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES

Another portion of the needs analysis consists of a review of the geographic distribution of specific types of facilities provided to residents. Service areas for these key facilities are indicated in Figures IV-2 through IV-9. These maps present areas of Elyria that are located within the service areas of these facilities. The service areas vary depending in the facility, because some facilities are intended to serve greater population and residents are typically willing to travel greater distances for those amenities. In contrast, some facilities serve smaller, more local populations, generally within walking distance. Only facilities that are open for public use are included in the following analysis. The ensuing analysis lists portions of the City that are located outside of the service areas for each facility. A new facility is not necessarily recommended in these areas as this analysis is only a portion of the overall needs assessment.

Playgrounds

Figure IV-2 identifies area within a ten minute walk of a playground in Elyria and indicates that these facilities are fairly well distributed. The City is generally well-served by playgrounds as most of the high density areas are located within these service areas.

The most notable locations outside of these service areas are:

- The southwest portion of the City (south of Academy Circle Park)
- The area south of Interstate 80 and east of Lake Avenue
- The eastern portion of the City, south of Interstate 80, west of US 20, and northeast of East Park
- The area just north of Interstate 80 and west of North Abbe Road
- The area in the southeastern portion of the City near Vic Janowicz Park

Outdoor Basketball Courts

Service areas representing ten minute walk to an outdoor basketball courts are displayed in Figure IV-3. The facilities are distributed throughout the City, but some notable gaps appear, including:

- The southwest portion of the City (south of Academy Circle Park)
- The area around and to the northwest of Cascade Park
- The eastern portion of the City, south of Interstate 80, west of US 20, and northeast of East Park
- The area just north of Interstate 80 and west of North Abbe Road
- The area in the southeastern portion of the City near Vic Janowicz Park

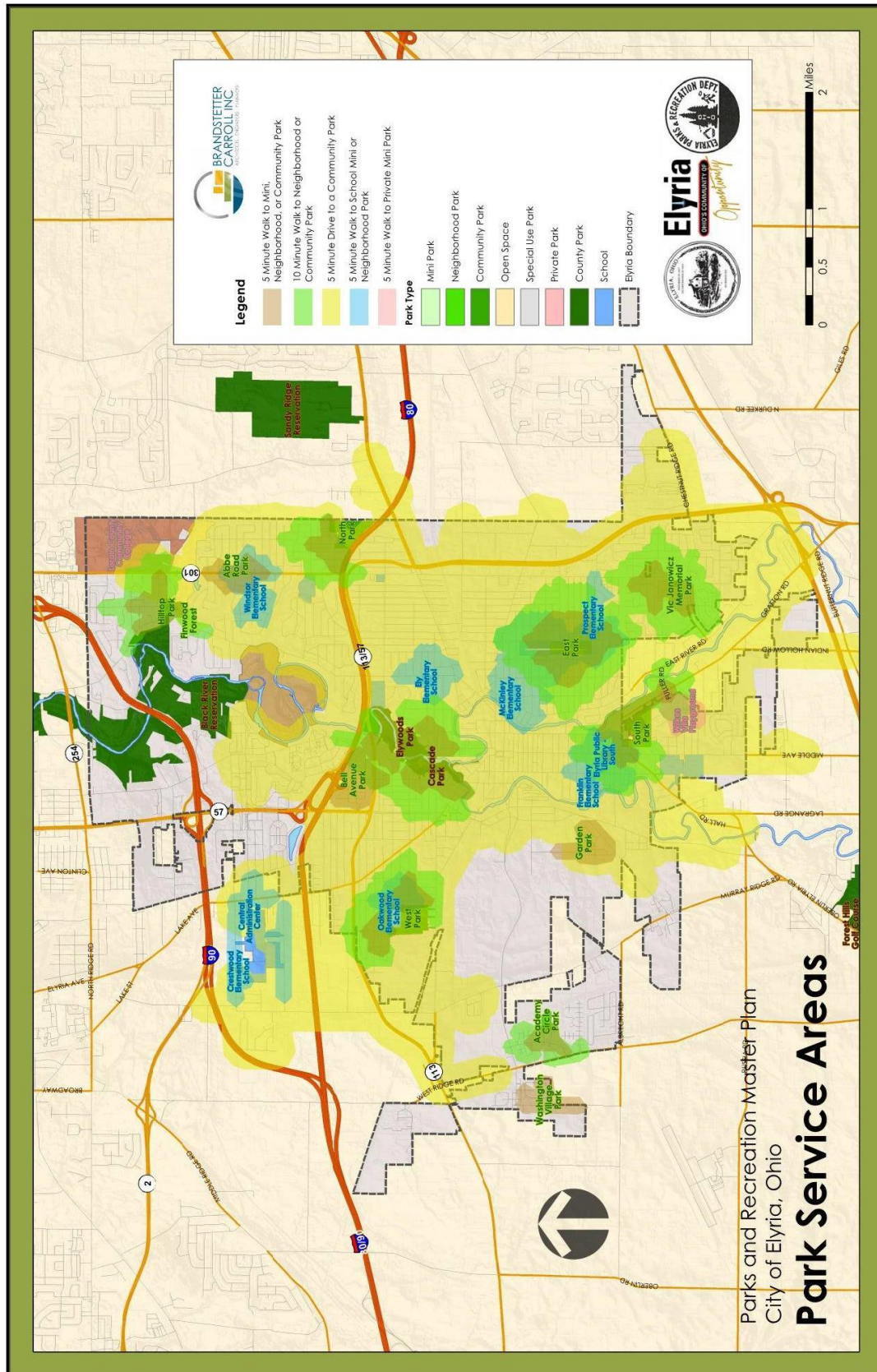
Picnic Pavilions

Service areas for picnic pavilions are depicted in Figure IV-4, showing the portions of the City of Elyria that are within a five minute drive of a large pavilion. Small shelters and gazebos with few tables as well as shelters that are part of concession buildings are excluded from this analysis as they are not suitable for planned events. The only notable part of Elyria located outside of these service areas is the southwest portion of the City.

Baseball/Softball Diamonds

The areas within a five minute drive to baseball/softball diamonds in Elyria are presented in Figure IV-5. This map indicates that the diamond fields are well distributed throughout the City. The only location outside of these service areas the southwest portion of the City.

Figure IV-1: Park Service Areas



Rectangular Fields

Figure IV-6 displays the five minute drive service areas for rectangular fields in the City of Elyria, and shows that, because rectangular fields are located at only two locations in Elyria (Academy Circle and West Parks), much of the City is located outside of these service areas, including the eastern and southeastern portions of the City. Some playfields and school fields are located in some of these areas which allow for neighborhood pickup games.

Tennis Courts

As presented in Figure IV-7, tennis courts are available in only two location in Elyria (Hilltop and South Parks). As a result, much of the City is located outside of the service areas (five minute drive). Specifically, the eastern portion of the City, south of Interstate 80, and the western portion of the City are more than a five minute drive from tennis courts.

Recreation Centers

The portions of the City located within a five minute drive of one of the three recreation centers can be seen in Figure IV-8. Aside from the northern portion of the City (which has better access to the ice rink at North Park), only the southwest portion of the City is located outside of these service areas.

Swimming Pools

Figure IV-9 shows the portions of the City of Elyria that are located within a five minute drive of one of the two (currently open) swimming pools, located at East and North Parks. Because of the location of these two facilities in the eastern portion of the city, the western portion of the City lies outside of these service areas.

COMPOSITE GEOGRAPHIC PARK SERVICE AREAS

While the preceding text describes the level of access to park by classification and an assortment of recreation facilities in Elyria, a composite analysis provides a better idea of the overall level of service by location throughout the City.

Composite Service Areas

Each of the service areas for parks and facilities were assigned a point for facilities located in parks and a half of a point for those located at schools (due to their availability only when schools are not in session. Next, GIS analysis was used to produce an overlay with a combined score for all areas of the City of Elyria. The resulting figure (Figure IV-10 shows the composite service areas for the City based on the percentage of overall access to parks and recreation facilities (or percentage of possible points in the analysis).

In the figure, darker shades of blue indicate a greater level of access to parks and facilities for that location within Elyria. For example, a resident living within one of the darkest areas would likely be within a walking distance of a park and a short drive to most of the other facilities described in the previous section.

Based on this figure, a relatively small portion of the City lies within the highest level of service (80% to 100%), but a substantial amount of the City is located within the second highest level of service (60% to 80%). The area with the lowest level of service is the southwestern portion of the City. As a result, this analysis indicates that this area has the greatest need for additional recreation facilities. A few other notable areas have levels of service in the middle range (40% to 60%), and may also have needs for additional amenities. These areas include the area north of Interstate 80 and west of North Abbe Road, the central portion of the City between downtown and Franklin Elementary (east of the Black River), and the eastern portion of the City, south of Interstate 80, west of US 20, and northeast of East Park.

The percentage of the population living within each of the composite service areas, plus the percentage of land area covered, can be seen in Table IV-4. Based on this table, only 7% of the population lives in the areas with highest service level (80% to 100%); however, 35% of the population lives within the first or second highest ranking. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the population lives in middle ranked service areas (40% to 60%) or higher. While 46% of the total area of Elyria is located in areas with lower levels of service (between 0% and 40% of services), only 22% of the population lives in those areas. Adding parks and facilities to the areas described above, including at existing parks, would greatly increase the percentage of the population living within the better served areas.

Table IV-4: Population by Composite Service Area

Percent Score	Proportion within Composite Service Area			
	Population	Cumulative Population	Area	Cumulative Area
80% to 100%	7%	7%	5%	5%
60% to 80%	28%	35%	15%	20%
40% to 60%	42%	78%	34%	54%
20% to 40%	17%	95%	27%	81%
0% to 20%	5%	100%	19%	100%

IV. NEEDS ANALYSIS



Figure IV-3: Basketball Court Locations and Service Areas

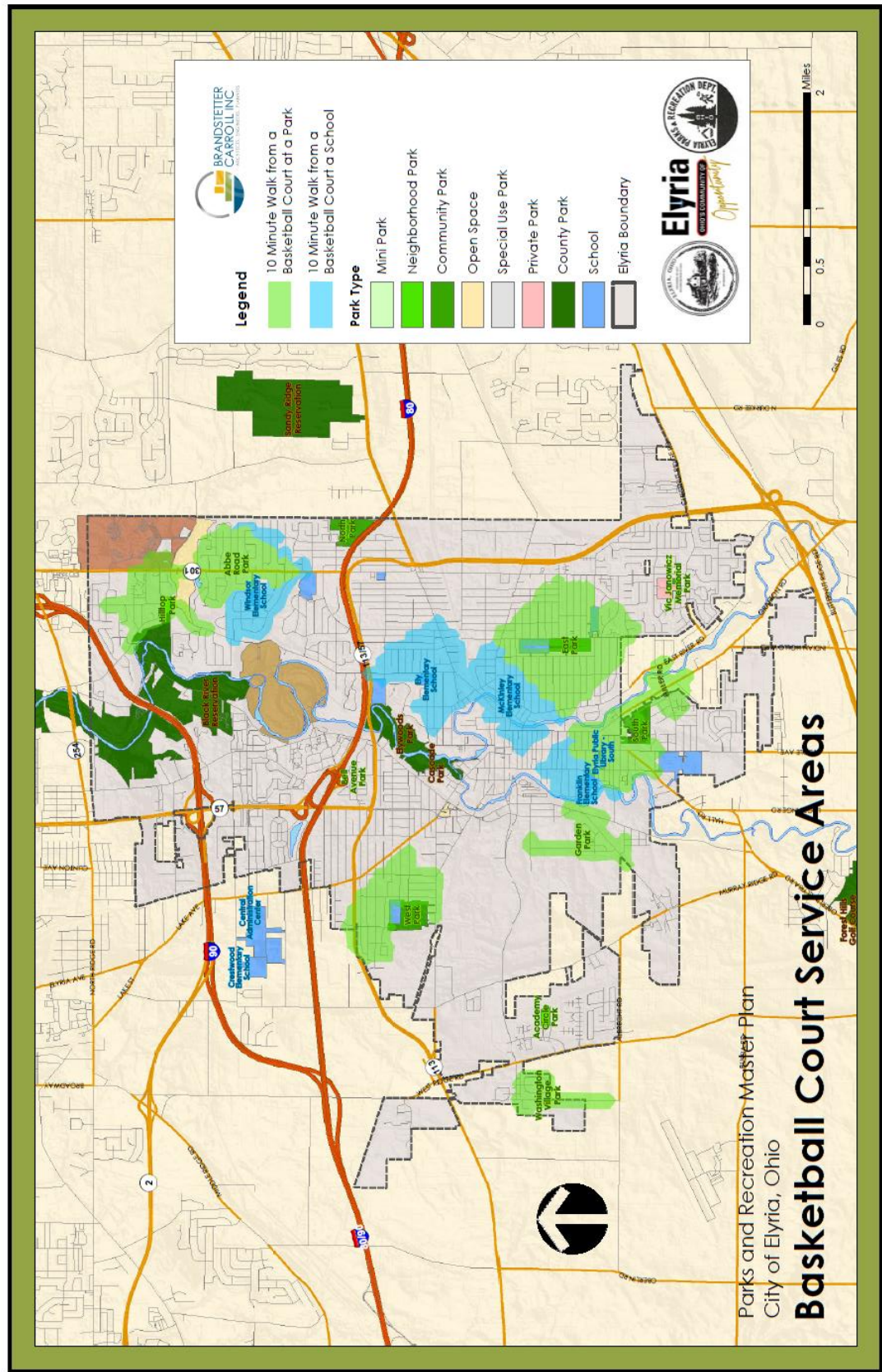
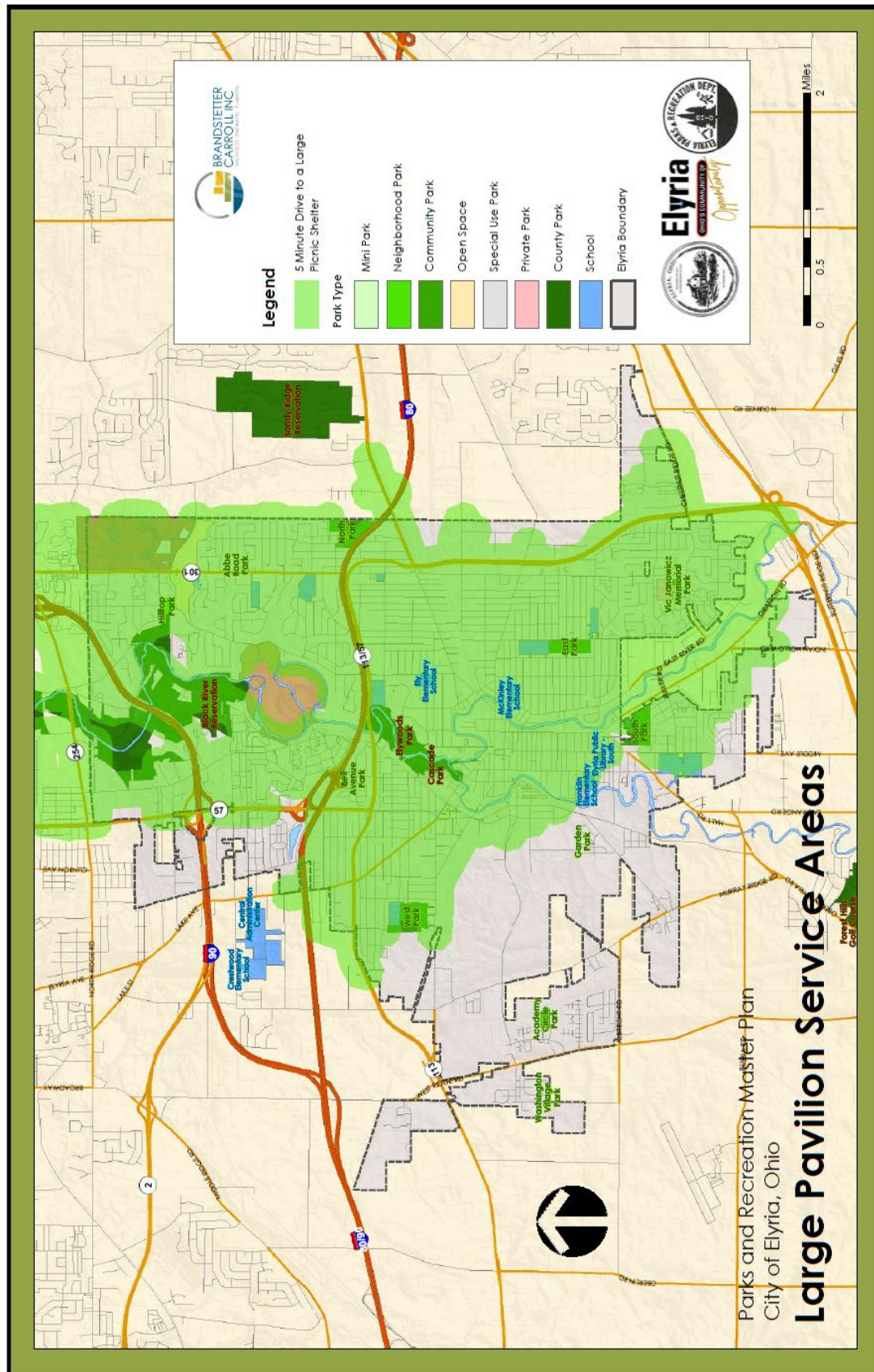


Figure IV-4: Large Pavilion Locations and Service Areas



IV. NEEDS ANALYSIS



Legend

5 Minute Drive to a Rectangular Field

Park Type

Mini Park

Neighborhood Park

Community Park

Open Space

Special Use Park

Private Park

County Park

School

Elyria Boundary

Elyria
OHIO COMMUNITY
Opportunity

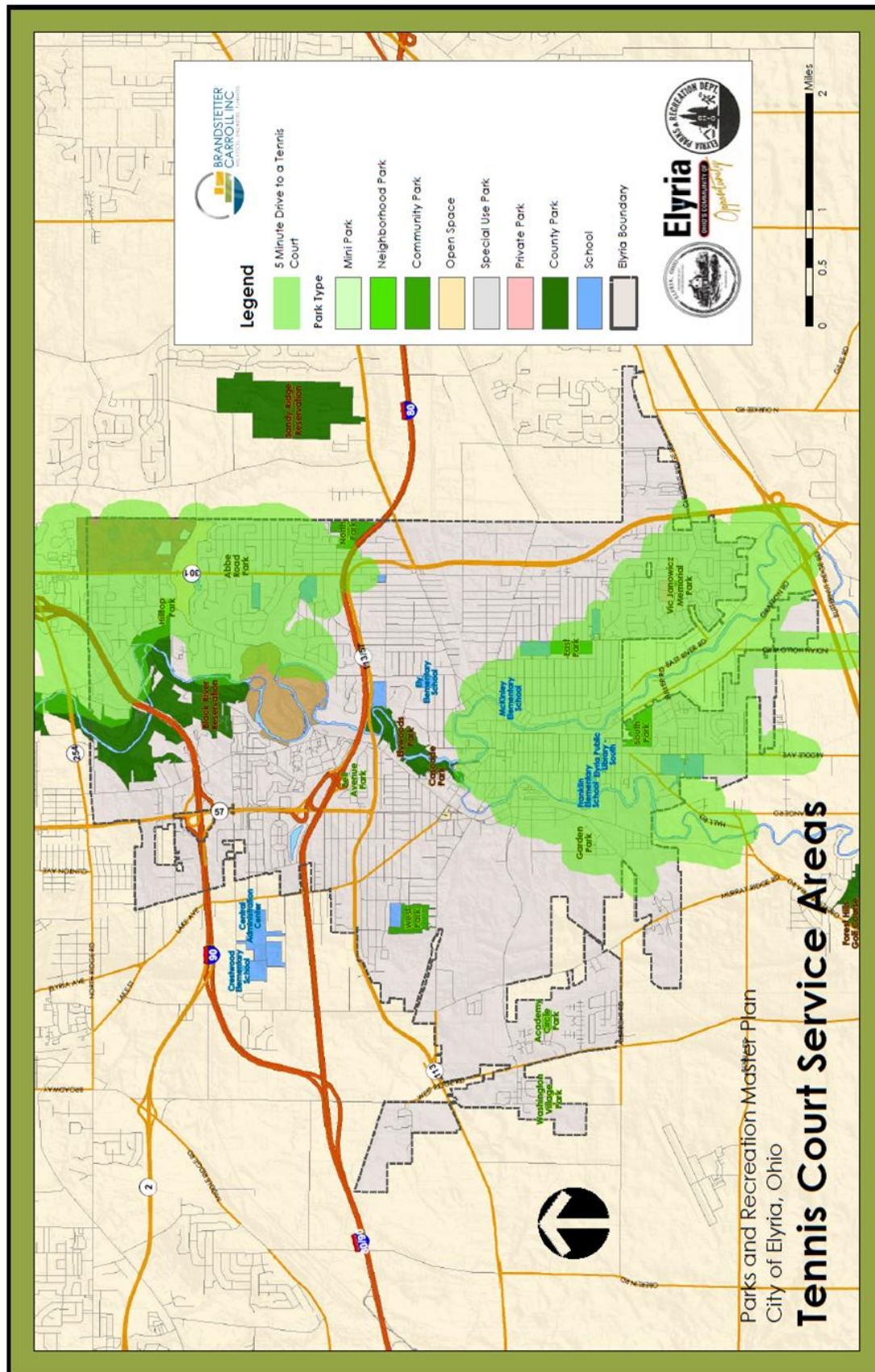
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
City of Elyria, Ohio

Rectangular Field Service Areas

Scale: 0 to 2 Miles

North Arrow

Figure IV-7: Tennis Court Locations and Service Areas



Legend

- 5 Minute Drive to a Recreation Center
- Park Type
 - Mini Park
 - Neighborhood Park
 - Community Park
 - Open Space
 - Special Use Park
 - Private Park
 - County Park
 - School
 - Elyria Boundary

Parks and Recreation Master Plan
City of Elyria, Ohio
Recreation Center Service Areas

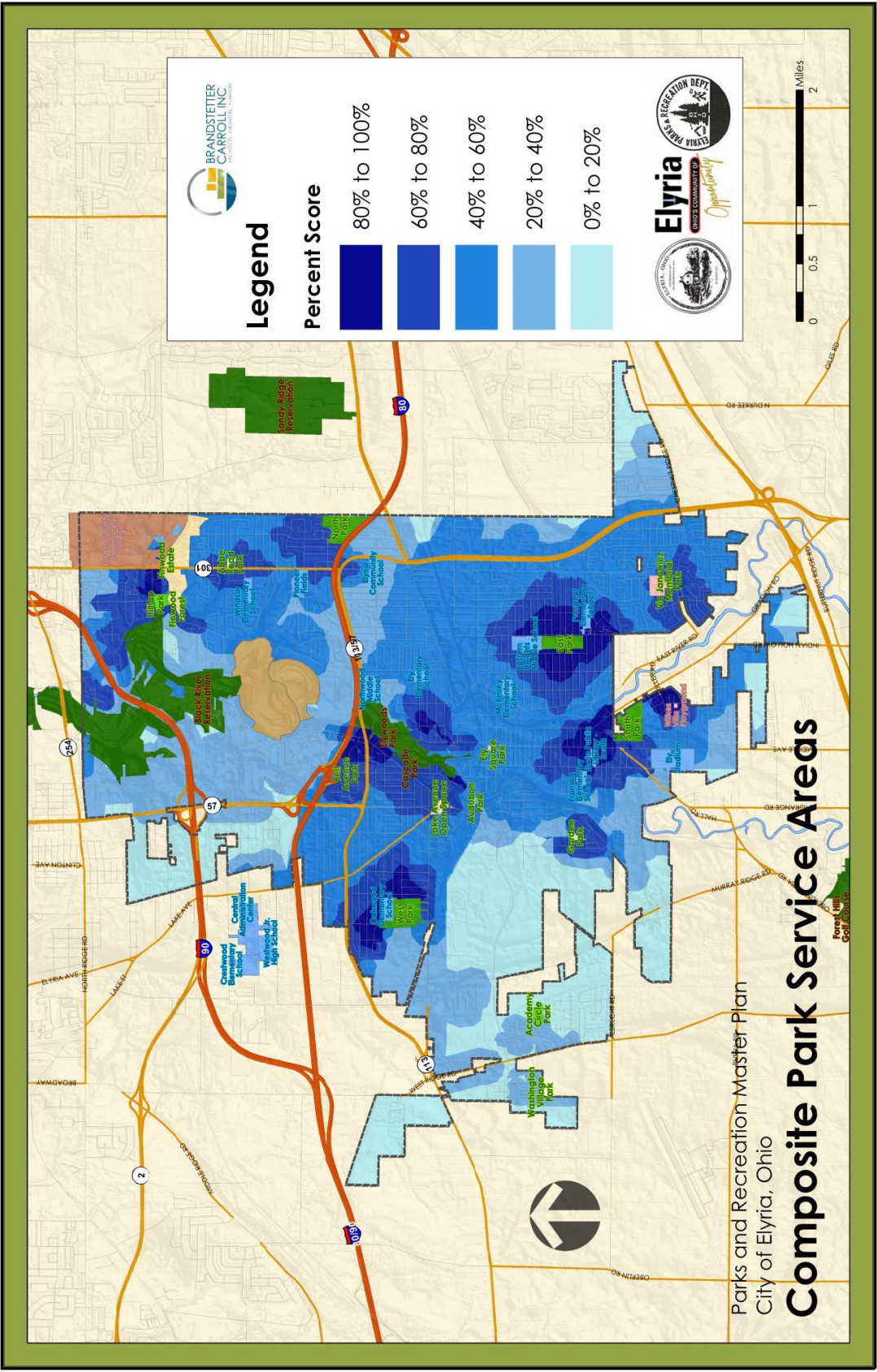
Elyria
 OPEN SPACE
 COMMUNITY
 RECREATION DEPT
 190 94 275

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

IV. NEEDS ANALYSIS



Figure IV-10: Composite Park Service Areas



FUTURE TRENDS ANALYSIS

The Aging Population

Throughout the United States, as in Elyria, the average age of the population is increasing. The number of persons in the age group 65 and over is growing rapidly. Census data indicates that the percentage of City of Elyria population age 65 and older was 13% in 2000 and is expected to increase to over 18% by 2020 (see Chapter II).

The relative health of these individuals is better than ever before and the activities they desire are more active than in the past. Senior citizens centers where seniors play cards and participate in more sedentary activities are being replaced and incorporated into larger, more active, community and recreation centers where individuals participate in fitness programs, walking, cardiovascular exercises, aerobics, and many other more active pursuits.



This trend encourages parks and recreation agencies to invest more in activities, programs, and facilities for the older population. This graying of America also generates demand for more paved walking trails, fishing areas, community gardens, cultural and nature education, as well as other activities that are in demand for multiple age groups.

This data points clearly to the growing need to provide quality facilities and programs for this growing population in the City of Elyria. The Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, as well as all forms of the public engagement process (see Chapter V), indicates support from the community for providing additional programs and facilities for seniors.

Indoor Recreation

The typical recreation centers that include gymnasium space, locker rooms, and a few other attractions are being replaced by much larger, multi-generational facilities. These newer facilities have a much stronger emphasis on fitness, with aerobics rooms, free weights, exercise machines, cardiovascular areas, walking tracks, indoor swimming pools for both family oriented and lap swimming, lounges, concessions, and climbing walls, along with the traditional basketball and volleyball gymnasiums. These facilities may also include multipurpose rooms, which are used for a wide variety of indoor programming, such as arts and crafts, dance classes, and other community education programs.



Elyria offers three recreation centers, but the public input did indicate some support for additional indoor facilities, particularly for seniors. The City may be able to meet these needs through use of the existing recreation centers. The City of Elyria should investigate opportunities for both a senior center and modern recreation center in the future.

Universal Access

Many park systems are developing unique facilities (especially playgrounds) that are designed to go well beyond the minimum requirement for the Americans with Disabilities Act. By creating an environment that is totally accessible to persons of all ages and abilities, park system administrators are setting the best example for other organizations to follow. In the case of playgrounds, accessibility results in facilities with several ground level activities, multiple ramps providing access to the decks, and the use of



poured-in-place rubber surfacing. The City of Elyria does not currently have any fully accessible playgrounds, although some playgrounds have accessible features.

While it may not be cost effective to develop this level of universal access at every playground facility, forward thinking recreation departments may desire some destination facilities with this level of access. Textured edging on trails can help to make the facilities more accessible to the visually impaired. Fragrant plants and sensory gardens, interactive displays that allow a hands-on approach to education have also been developed to promote a better experience for special populations. Universal access applies to much more than playgrounds; it also applies interpretive facilities, trails, access into buildings, and access to all programs and facilities offered by the community. Providing barrier-free parks can and should be part of the process for any park improvement.

Trails and Interconnectivity

The demand for increased availability of trails and trail linkages between parks and open spaces (and other popular destinations) has been growing in many communities, including Elyria. A high level of demand for these facilities is identified in nearly every community where surveys have been conducted. Even communities with extensive trail systems have a strong desire to continually connect and link the trails to neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, and other community facilities.



Communities with extensive, connected trail systems are very livable communities where residents report a high quality of life. The need for trails for both recreational and transportation use was conveyed very clearly and strongly in all forms of the public input process, receiving very high support in all forms of public input. Trails and trail improvements represented three of the top ten potential improvement to existing parks in the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey as well as the one of the top unmet needs in the community. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents indicated they were very or somewhat supportive of trail development.

Revenue Generation

With the tightened budgets throughout the country, facilities that generate revenue have become increasingly popular due to their ability to offset some of the operating costs. Most notably, the increased presence of concessions in parks and at other locations has improved the ability of the public sector to raise money. Multi-field complexes and other creative applications, have enhanced the community experience while lessening the tax burden by providing services for a fee. Recreational programs, including summer camps and before and after school programs, can be a source of income for departments. The City of Elyria should consider revenue generation as part of new facility development, especially indoor facilities, aquatic facilities, and picnic shelters.

Dog Parks

The dog parks represent an ongoing trend that has been increasing in popularity. The development of these fence enclosed areas where dogs can run leash free can be a positive addition to a community. Dog parks are good for improving the social interaction skills of dogs and are a very good social attraction for the dog owners. Quality dog parks need careful planning and a fairly extensive operating budget for maintenance and upkeep.



Optimally, a dog park will provide three areas of at least an acre each: one for large dogs, one for small dogs, and an area left unused to allow for regeneration of turf. Shade, sitting areas, water, and restrooms are typical amenities at these parks. Some communities have developed small dog parks in dense urban areas to supplement parks in larger parks.

The need for a dog park, while not a top priority in the public input, was a reoccurring theme throughout the process, and a contingency of dog owners would like to see the development of such a facility. Limited opportunities exist for a dog park at existing parks in Elyria, but South Park could provide an opportunity for this facility or it could be considered at a future site.

Disc Golf

Disc golf, formalized in the 1970s, is similar to traditional golf in many ways. The disc, or Frisbee, is thrown from a tee toward a hole which is most commonly in the form of a "Pole Hole." The player makes consecutive throws from the location of the landing of the previous throw until the disc lands in the basket or Pole Hole. Disc golf differs from traditional golf in some important ways: green fees are rarely required and only an inexpensive flying disc is needed to play. Disc golf appeals to a wide range of participants of all ages as well as those with disabilities, and the game can be played year-round. Courses also require much less land than traditional golf (as little as five acres for a nine-hole course).¹⁶ The sport continues to grow in popularity and courses are available at many parks around the country.

Elyria does not currently have a disc golf course, but one could be considered at South Park or possibly another park as this facility can be located along nearly any type of terrain. While the demand was modest through the public input, the capital cost for such a facility is relatively low and can be installed in areas not appropriate for other recreational uses.

Fitness and Wellness

A strong emphasis has been placed at the state and the federal levels to improve the fitness of individuals throughout the United States. Local parks and recreation departments are often building upon this message. These departments are in a good position to make an impact on the overall fitness of the community through programs, promotions, and facilities that are available to local residents. The Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey found that over 10,000 households had unmet needs for adult fitness and wellness programs.

Fitness facilities do not need to be confined to indoor spaces as modern equipment can now be provided in outdoor environments that are similar to those seen typically in fitness centers. Such facilities can serve as an alternative to the old fitness and par-course trails. East Park currently has some outdoor fitness equipment that is heavily used.

Ideal locations for these type of activities, in addition to East Park, could be Hilltop Park, West Park, and Academy Circle Park. Additionally, many communities partner with health providers to offer fitness facilities and programs.



Economic Impact of Sports Tournaments

Tournaments can be revenue generators by exacting entrance fees and promoting concession sales. Developing tournament level facilities is a trend aimed to attract better teams and better tournaments to the facilities. These high quality facilities are an asset to local leagues and activities when not being used for tournaments. A balance does need to exist between local league use and use for tournaments.

Facilities must be designed to accommodate tournaments which will require larger parking lots and an arrangement of fields in a cluster for easy accessibility, such as a wagon wheel configuration for baseball and softball fields. Quality restroom facilities are necessary, and concessions, shade, and other amenities should be



¹⁶ Professional Disc Golf Association, "A Guide to Disc Golf from the PDGA," <http://www.pdga.com>, (June 2, 2015).

available throughout the park that make it a desirable place to spend the day or a weekend. The diamond fields at North and West Parks and the rectangular fields at West Park could provide opportunities for tournaments if improved to a level consistent with the expectations for tournament use.

Environmental Education

The success of environmental education centers throughout the country and the strong desire for nature education demonstrated in both the Mail and Web Surveys suggest an interest by the public for better education regarding natural processes, resource management, and other nature education activities. These facilities work well in conjunction with school systems to supplement the science curriculum.

Environmental education cultivates understanding of the benefits of natural habitats and open spaces (including those owned and managed by municipalities). Many park departments and commissions take an outreach approach by providing environmental curriculum to schools in the form of nature center classes and activities. This tactic provides a method for promoting more use and appreciation of parks. These programs also provide an opportunity for county park systems and universities to work closely with municipal parks and recreation departments to provide a level of programming that the municipalities could not perform on their own.



The City previously offered a nature center at Cascade Park and could partner with Lorain County Metro Parks to offer nature programming. Additionally, the City could utilize nature trails, such as those at East Park and the Finwood Estate, for educational uses through guided hikes and interpretive signage.

Outdoor Family Oriented Aquatics

Older rectangle and L-shaped swimming pools have a limited appeal. The desire to have 3 ½ foot depths of water for flip turns, or competition swimming, dictated a deeper water depth of the pool, resulting in a lack of shallow water. As a result, younger children were relegated to a “baby” pool, which really only appeals to babies and toddlers. Inadequate amenities for 4 to 10 year olds limit the draw of these older pool facilities.

The newer family aquatic centers are geared toward the entire family with zero depth access, shallow water, interactive water spray activities, along with the traditional competition lanes and diving boards. Newer aquatic facilities are often incorporating lazy rivers, which are popular with people of all ages. The newer facilities also provide large water slides. These elements, along with shade structures, larger grass beach areas, and quality concessions, have resulted in a complete turnaround in the net operating costs to municipalities for aquatic facilities.



Where older pools were a drain on the budget, the newer facilities are often able to generate funds for the operations cost, and some have even shown a surplus, which can be used to pay off some of the debt service for the capital construction. Where older pools have been renovated to include the newer features, communities have seen as much as a 200% increase in attendance. This demand provides an opportunity for charging higher fees which may result in a greater

profit margin. Elyria aquatic needs are currently met by the City two outdoor pools; however, these facilities do not offer many of the modern amenities desired by families. The Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey indicated that needs for outdoor pools and aquatic centers were unmet by nearly 7,000 households, fifth most of any facility in the survey.

Another new concept that is sweeping the country is the development of splash pads or spraygrounds. These facilities have replaced wading pools at many aquatic facilities but can also be developed as standalone wet playgrounds in other park areas. Spraygrounds have several benefits. For instance, in most instances, they recirculate water, but because there is no standing water, lifeguards are not needed. Therefore, the operation costs for a sprayground are considerably lower than for a swimming facility. The City of Elyria currently has no spraygrounds, and spraygrounds ranked as one of the top five facilities for unmet needs (over 7,000 households) in the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey.

Trends in Sports and Fitness Participation

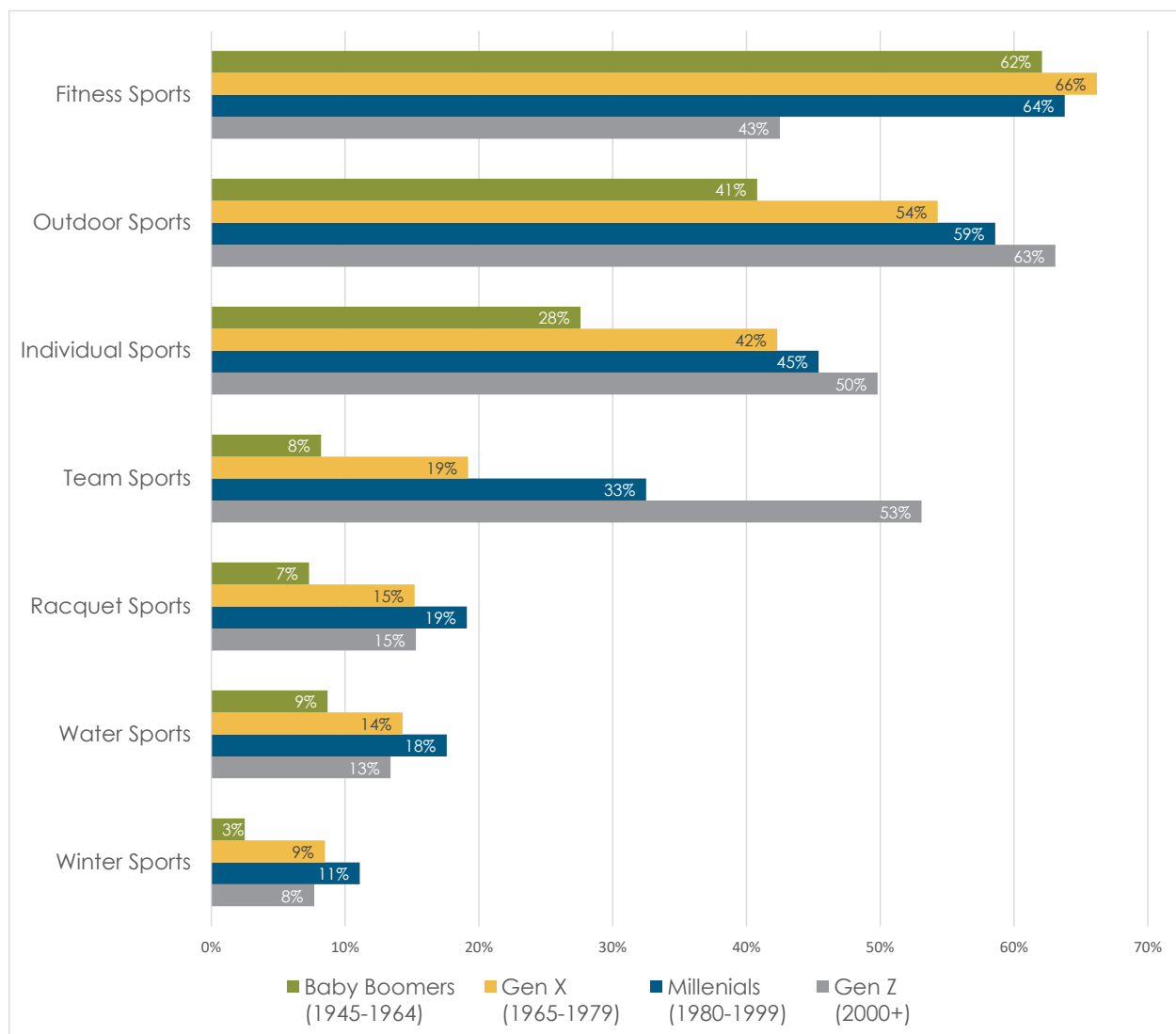
The Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) conducts an annual survey of individuals and households throughout the United States to determine participation in a variety of sports and fitness activities. The 2013 sample consisted of 42,356 online interviews (15,770 individuals and 26,593 households) intend to serve as representation of US population ages 6 and older. The following discussion uses data from the SFIA report.

Figure IV-11 shows the difference in participation rates between generations for seven types of sports. The youngest generation had the highest participation rates for Individual Sports, Team Sports, and Outdoor Sports. Participation rates dropped for these three types of sports with each older generation. The youngest group also had the lowest participation in Fitness Sports, while the other three generational groups had similar participation rates for this type of sport. The remaining three types of sports (racquet, winter, and water sports) have similar trends with Millennials representing the highest level of participation.

The high demand for fitness sports programs in the City of Elyria is consistent with these findings in Figure IV-11. With the high percentage of residents in the older two generations, this type of program is likely to increase in demand into the future. Despite decreasing in popularity with age, outdoor sports are still popular with all age groups. Individual and team sports are most popular with the youngest generation. The availability of these facilities and programs will be an important consideration for families with children when choosing to live in Elyria.

Table IV-5 displays the 5-year participation rates for 26 different sports and fitness activities. This table also shows the 5-year annual growth rate as well as rankings for these sports based on growth in participation (Growth Rate Rank) and absolute numbers (Participant Rank). Based on these figures, the fastest growing sport is lacrosse at 8.9% annually, although the overall number of users is still fairly low. Aerobics (high impact), trail running, ice hockey, and running/jogging are also growing at rates of nearly 5% or higher. Walking for fitness has the greatest number of participants by a large margin at well over 100 million participants, with running/jogging coming in second at over 50 million participants. Hand weights had the third most users, followed by bicycling and hiking. With four of the top five activities (based on Participant Rank) using trails, it is no surprise these facilities are in such high demand.

Figure IV-11: Participation Rates by Generation



Residents of Elyria have similarly expressed a strong interest in these type of trail-based activities, leading to a need for more of these facilities. Also, the city can prepare for the fastest growing sport, lacrosse, by making sure existing and new fields can accommodate the sport. Investment in trails and related programs in Elyria would help meet the needs for trail running, hiking, and walking for fitness. Additional indoor fitness programs could potentially be met at the three recreation centers as well as the ice rink and any future facilities, including a senior center.

Table IV-5: Nationwide Five-Year History of Selected Sports Participation

Sport/Fitness Activity	Participants (In Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth	Growth Rate Rank ²	Participant Rank ²
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012			
Aerobics (High impact)	11,287	11,780	12,771	14,567	15,755	16,178	7.5%	2	10
Aerobics (Low impact)	22,397	23,283	24,927	26,431	25,950	25,707	2.9%	8	6
Archery	5,950	6,180	6,368	6,323	6,471	7,173	3.9%	6	15
Baseball	16,058	15,539	14,429	14,198	13,561	12,976	-4.2%	21	11
Basketball	25,961	26,108	25,131	25,156	24,790	23,708	-1.8%	20	7
Bicycling (Road/paved surface)	38,940	38,527	39,127	39,730	39,834	39,790	0.1%	15	4
Cheerleading	3,279	3,192	3,070	3,134	3,049	3,244	-0.1%	16	24
Football (Tackle)	7,939	7,816	7,243	6,850	6,448	6,220	-4.7%	22	19
Free Weights (Hand Weights)	43,821	43,409	44,466	45,928	46,944	46,564	1.2%	12	3
Hiking (Day)	29,965	31,238	32,542	32,534	33,494	34,519	2.9%	9	5
Ice Hockey	1,840	1,871	2,018	2,140	2,131	2,363	5.2%	4	26
Ice Skating	11,430	11,215	10,964	11,477	11,626	11,214	-0.3%	17	13
Lacrosse	1,058	1,092	1,162	1,423	1,501	1,607	8.9%	1	27
Martial Arts	6,865	6,818	6,643	6,002	5,037	5,075	-5.6%	24	21
Roller Skating (Inline wheels)	10,814	10,211	8,942	8,128	7,451	6,647	-9.2%	26	16
Running/Jogging	41,064	41,097	42,511	46,650	50,061	51,450	4.7%	5	2
Skateboarding	8,429	8,118	7,580	7,080	6,318	6,227	-5.8%	25	18
Soccer (Indoor)	4,237	4,487	4,825	4,920	4,631	4,617	1.8%	11	22
Soccer (Outdoor)	13,708	13,966	13,957	13,883	13,667	12,944	-1.1%	18	12
Softball (Fast Pitch)	2,345	2,331	2,476	2,513	2,400	2,624	2.4%	10	25
Softball (Slow-Pitch)	9,485	9,660	9,180	8,477	7,809	7,411	-4.8%	23	14
Swimming for Fitness¹					21,517	23,216	N/A	N/A	8
Tennis	16,940	17,749	18,546	18,719	17,772	17,020	0.2%	14	9
Trail Running	4,216	4,537	4,845	4,985	5,373	5,806	6.6%	3	20
Volleyball (Beach/Sand)	3,878	4,025	4,324	4,752	4,451	4,505	3.2%	7	23
Volleyball (Court)	6,986	7,588	7,737	7,315	6,662	6,384	-1.6%	19	17
Walking for Fitness	108,740	110,204	110,882	112,082	112,715	114,029	1.0%	13	1

1. SFIA started collecting numbers for Swimming for Fitness in 2011.

2. Rank of these selected sports and fitness activities. Top 5 in Bold.

CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted throughout this chapter serves to provide an indication of need for parks and recreation services in Elyria. The analyses indicates that a variety of parks and facilities are located throughout the City; however, not all amenities exist in sufficient quantities and many are not evenly distributed throughout Elyria.

The level of service standards in the first part of this chapter, which were developed with consideration to public input from residents of Elyria, provide guidelines for the amount of additional parks, open space, and recreation facilities needed in the City. The geographic analysis of service areas identifies specific areas to target for future investment in additional recreation facilities. Finally, the trends discussion helps to ensure that parks improvements in Elyria are consistent with recreation needs of the future.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

INTRODUCTION

The Public Input chapter consists of the following elements:

1. A summary of the public workshops and stakeholder groups.
2. A summary of the pertinent portions of the ETC Institute 2015 City of Elyria, OH Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey Report with a comparison to the web-based survey promoted and distributed by the City.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Kick-Off Event – November 12, 2015

The kick-off event at the East Recreation Center in Elyria was a success with approximately 55 residents in attendance, and many of these attendees used play money to vote on their preferred park improvements in Elyria. Forty-three workshop participants voted on a vision for the future (each given three dots to place on flip charts next to their preferred suggestions). The following list indicates the top voted items (with votes):

- Pride in the Parks – City makes parks a priority with funds for maintenance (20)
- Ice rink – use the facility year round and improvements including locker rooms (20)
- Senior programming (16)
- Centralized community center with meeting rooms, pool, fitness, etc. (12)
- Updated security (11)
- Quality programs and facilities in Elyria (10)
- Levy for Parks (10)
- Indoor swimming facility (9)
- Volunteer program to assist Parks (8)

Second Public Workshop – February 23, 2016

The findings and results from all of the public input, including the statistically valid survey, the handout/web survey, the stakeholder group meetings, the dollar voting exercise, and the first public workshop, were presented to the public at this meeting. Maps showing parks and facility service areas were also presented at this workshop. Additionally, the findings of demographic analysis and benchmark comparisons were presented. Attendees of the workshop were also provided with an opportunity to react to the findings.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The Consultant, BCI, met with over 20 stakeholder groups in November and December of 2015. Complete summaries of the meeting with each of these groups can be found in Appendix A.

Officials and Boards

- City Council
- County Commission
- Parks and Recreation Board

Sports Groups

- First Class Youth Football
- Little League (East, North, and West)
- Panthers Ice Hockey
- Elite Youth Sports

- Elyria High School coaches (swim team, tennis, golf, soccer), Athletic Director, and Assistant Principal

Focus Groups

1. Public Groups

- Safety Services
- City Staff
- Elyria Public Library

2. Community Groups

- Audubon Society
- Invest Elyria
- Apple Festival
- Kiwanis
- NAACP
- YWCA
- Churches (Church of the Open Door, First Baptist Church)

COMMON THEMES FROM THE FIRST PUBLIC WORKSHOP AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS (NOT IN ORDER)

- Existing facility improvements
- Improved connectivity (walking and biking trails)
- Athletic facility improvements (ice rink, ballfields, soccer/football fields)
- Dog park
- Recreation center (indoor pool, senior center, expanded programming)
- Community gathering enhancements (multi-generational, daily use and programming)
- Spraygrounds/splash pads
- Partnerships/collaboration

DOLLAR VOTING

Participants at the kick-off public workshop and the stakeholder groups were given \$1,000 in play money to distribute how they felt Elyria should allocate funds for various aspects of parks, recreation, trails, and open space. The following table (Table V-1) shows the totals for the various categories. Participants could also purchase "Other" cards to request specific items not listed on one of the provided boxes. The combined results for the 81 participants at the events are listed below with the dollars for each park improvement option and the percentage of the total allocated for the improvement.

Table V-1: Dollar Voting Allocation

Park Improvement	Total	%
Improvements/maintenance of existing parks	\$17,500	22%
Improvements/construction of new athletic fields	\$11,300	14%
Development of a new outdoor family aquatic center	\$10,300	13%
Development of new walking and biking trails	\$9,800	12%
Development of new community centers	\$8,300	10%
Development of new outdoor parks and recreation facilities	\$7,000	9%
Development of additional gymnasium space/game courts	\$4,000	5%
Acquisition of land for open space/green space/future parkland	\$2,800	3%
Other	\$10,300	13%
Total	\$81,300	100%

Of the options provided, the largest allocation was given to improvements/maintenance of existing parks with 22% of the funding allocations or \$17,500. Improvements/construction of new athletic fields received the second largest allocation of these options (14%), followed by the development of a new aquatic center (13%). The development of "other" park improvements received a total allocation at \$10,300 or 13% of the allocated dollars (tied for third). The most popular "other" option was for improvements to North Park Ice Rink (\$4,000 or 39% of the other allocation). The development of a full recreation center with an indoor pool ranked second for other improvements (\$2,100 or 20% of the other allocation).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS

Statistically Valid Survey - Overview and Methodology

The Consultants subcontracted with ETC/Leisure Vision to conduct a Community Interest and Opinion Survey (Mail Survey) in the summer of 2015 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Elyria. The survey was administered by mail, web, and phone.

The Brandstetter Carroll Inc. project team and ETC Institute worked with Elyria officials on the development of the survey questionnaire. This collaboration allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future of the parks system.

The six page survey was mailed to a random sample of 4,000 households throughout Elyria. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed, each household that received a survey also received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed, ETC/Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone. Those who had indicated they had not returned the survey were then given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys. ETC Institute exceeded that goal with a total of 485 surveys completed. Based on this random sample of 485 households, this survey has a 95% level of confidence with a precision rate of at least +/- 4.4%.

Web Survey

In addition to the Mail Survey, the City of Elyria and Brandstetter Carroll Inc. prepared a handout and web-based survey (Web Survey), powered by Survey Monkey. A total of 530 local residents completed this survey. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the responses were from Elyria residents, 36% from outside of Elyria but within Lorain County, and 3% from outside of Lorain County. Many of the surveys were completed on handout versions, available at the public workshops and stakeholder meetings, which were manually entered into the survey database. In the tables on the following pages, the results of the Web Survey and the Mail Survey were combined into one figure (Mail Survey in blue, Web Survey in green) where possible for comparison of the results.

National Benchmarking

Since 1998, Leisure Vision (a division of ETC Institute) has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 400 communities in over 45 states across the country.

The results of these surveys have provided an unparalleled database of information to compare responses from household residents in client communities to "National Averages" and, therefore, provide a unique tool to "assist organizations in better decision making."¹⁷ The National

¹⁷ Reproduced directly from the 2015 *City of Elyria, OH Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey Findings Report*

Benchmarking summary is included in Appendix B. Select information is included on the charts in this section.

Survey Results

The following pages summarize the major survey findings. The results of both surveys are presented in this text for comparison. Because the Mail Survey results were collected using a statistically valid random sample, the results are intended to represent the residents of Elyria as a whole, both users and non-users. The Web Survey was available to be completed by any resident who chose to be involved in the process. As a result, the Web Survey responses reflected the motivated members of the community, including users of the facilities. The figures summarizing survey responses below were sorted based on the results of the Mail Survey.

1. Visitation to Parks in Elyria

Respondents to the surveys were asked about their visitation to parks in Elyria in the last 12 months. Figure V-1 shows the proportion of respondents that reported that a member of their household visited a park in the last 12 months. According to the statistically valid Mail Survey, eighty-two percent (82%) of households visited parks in Elyria over the past 12 months. The national average for park visitation is 79%. Accordingly, residents in Elyria were slightly more likely than residents of other communities to visit parks.

Respondents of the Web Survey were more likely to report visitation to parks with 97% of these respondents reporting that their households had visited parks in the past 12 months.

2. Frequency of Visits to Parks & Recreation Facilities in Elyria

Respondent households that visited parks and recreation facilities in Elyria during the last 12 months were asked to indicate how often they have visited those facilities during that time. The results are presented in Figure V-2.

According to the Mail Survey, Elyria households who visited parks or recreation facilities over the last 12 months were likely visited numerous times. Twenty-four percent (24%) reported visiting facilities 20 or more times over the last year. Results for the other visitation rates were: 1-5 times (37%), 6-10 times (27%), and 11-19 times (12%). Looking at the responses cumulatively, 36% of these households visited parks 11 or more times, and 63% visited parks six or more times.

Figure V-1: Visitation to Parks in Elyria

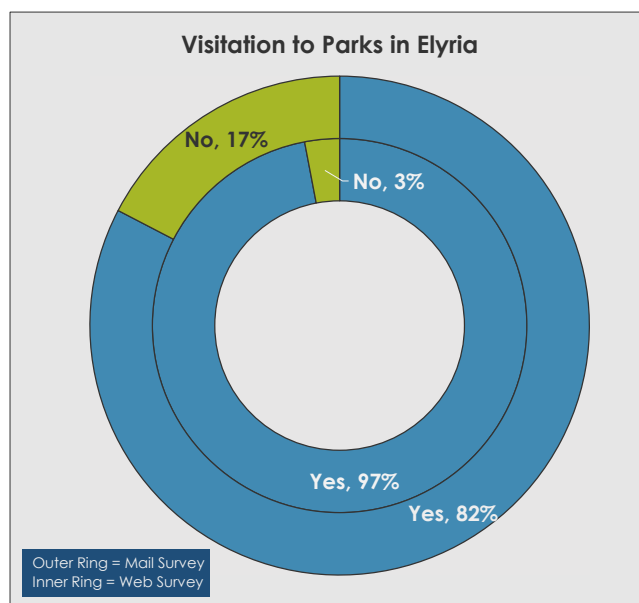
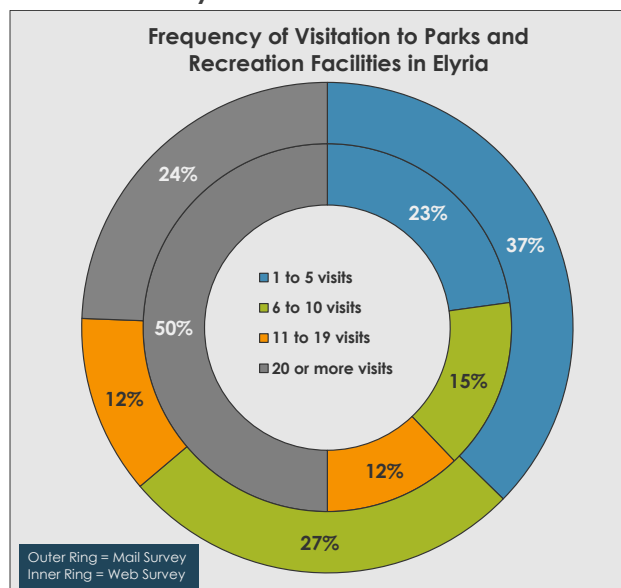


Figure V-2: Frequency of Visitation to Parks in Elyria



Web Survey respondents visited at even greater rates, with 50% of respondents reporting visiting parks 20 or more times.

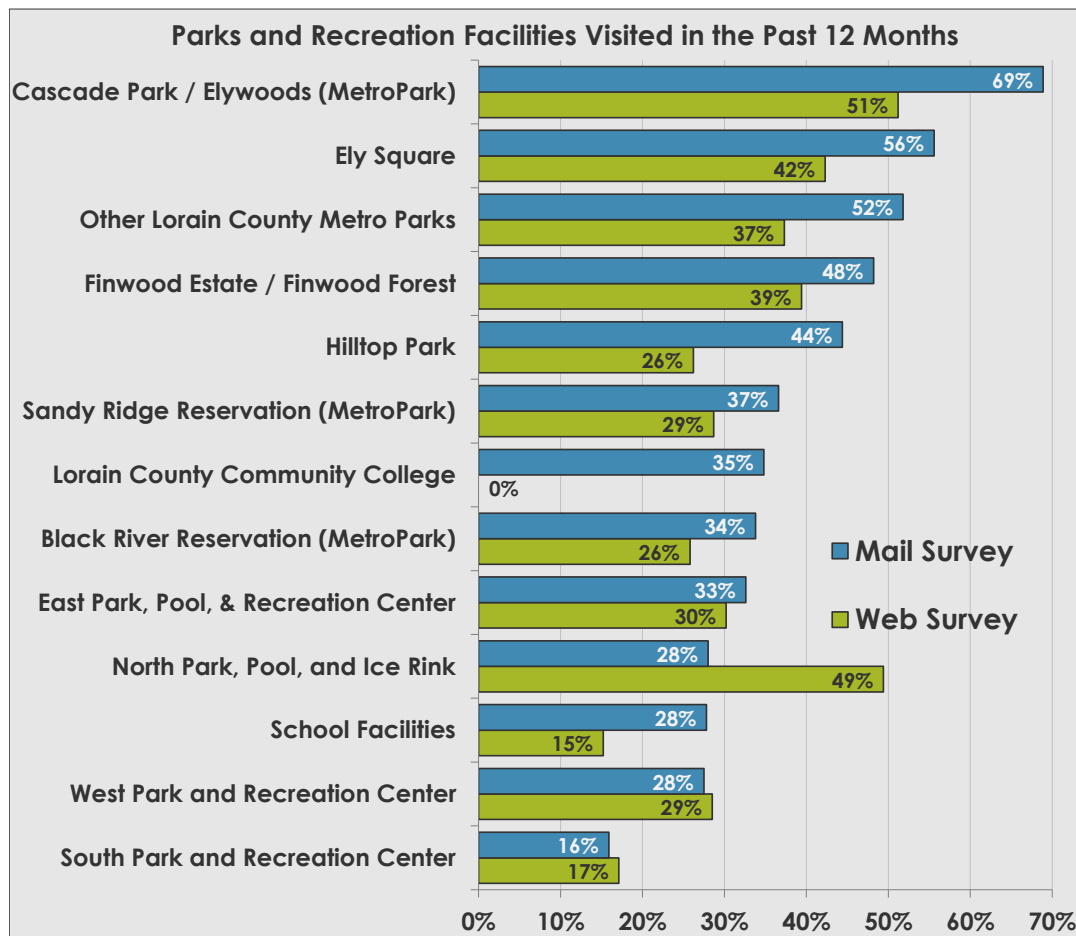
3. Parks and Recreation Facilities Visited in the Past 12 Months

Survey respondents were asked to indicate all of the parks and recreation facilities their households had visited over the past 12 months. The list included the parks and facilities offered by the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department, Lorain County Metro Parks, and others. Figure V-3 shows the percentage of respondents whose households used each facility in the past 12 months.

According to the Mail Survey, the greatest percentage of Elyria households used Cascade/Elywoods Park (69%) over the past 12 months. Ely Square ranked second at 56% of respondents. The third most visited of the listed facilities was Finwood Estate/Finwood Forest at 48%, followed by Hilltop Park (44%). Fifty-two percent (52%) of households reported visiting other Lorain County Metro Parks. In fact, when asked what organizations households used for parks and programs, 72% reported using Lorain County Metro Parks, compared to 60% for Elyria Parks and Recreation.

Respondents of the Web Survey generally visited parks at lower rates with the notable exception of North Park, Pool, and Ice Rink with 49% reporting visiting this facility, compared to 28% for the Mail Survey.

Figure V-3: Most Visited Parks



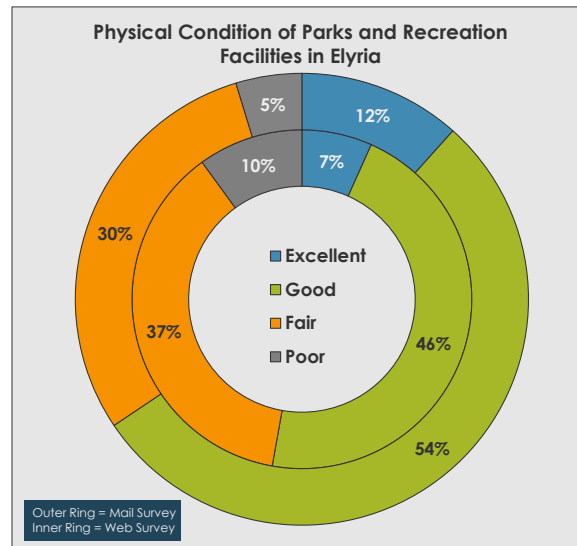
4. Physical Condition of Facilities Offered in Elyria

Respondent households that visited facilities in Elyria during the past 12 months were asked to rate the physical condition of those facilities. Figure V-4 shows respondents' ratings of the condition of these facilities.

According to the Mail Survey, 54% of households who visited these facilities over the past 12 months rated the condition of those facilities as good, 12% rated the condition of the facilities as excellent, and 30% rated the condition as fair. Only five percent (5%) rated the facilities as poor.

Web Survey respondents were more likely to rate facilities as fair or poor and less likely to rate facilities as good or excellent than Mail Survey respondents.

Figure V-4: Physical Condition of Facilities



5. Participation in Programs Offered by Elyria in the Past 12 Months

Respondents were asked if any members of their household participated in programs offered by the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department over the past 12 months. These results can be seen in Figure V-5. According to the Mail Survey, approximately one fifth (21%) of Elyria households participated in programs offered by the City over the past 12 months, and 79% did not. In contrast, 54% of Web Survey respondents reported participating in programs.

6. Quality of Programs

Respondents who participated in programs offered by Elyria over the past 12 months were asked to rate the quality of those programs. Figure V-6 shows the results for household ratings of these programs. According to the survey, 58% of households who participated in programs over the past 12 months rated those programs as good. Twenty-five percent (25%) rated programs as excellent, 13% rated programs as fair, and 5% rated the programs as poor. Web Survey respondents were more likely to rate programs as excellent (34%) and slightly more likely to rate programs as fair (18%).

Figure V-5: Participation in Programs Elyria

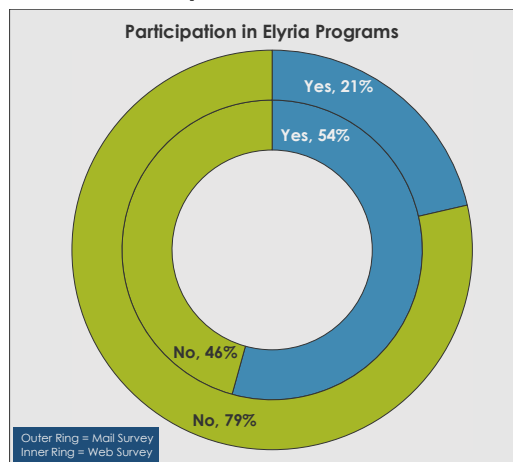
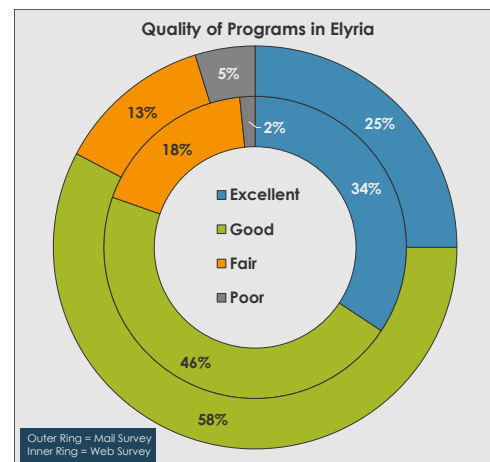


Figure V-6: Quality of Programs Offered by Elyria



7. Improvements to Existing Parks

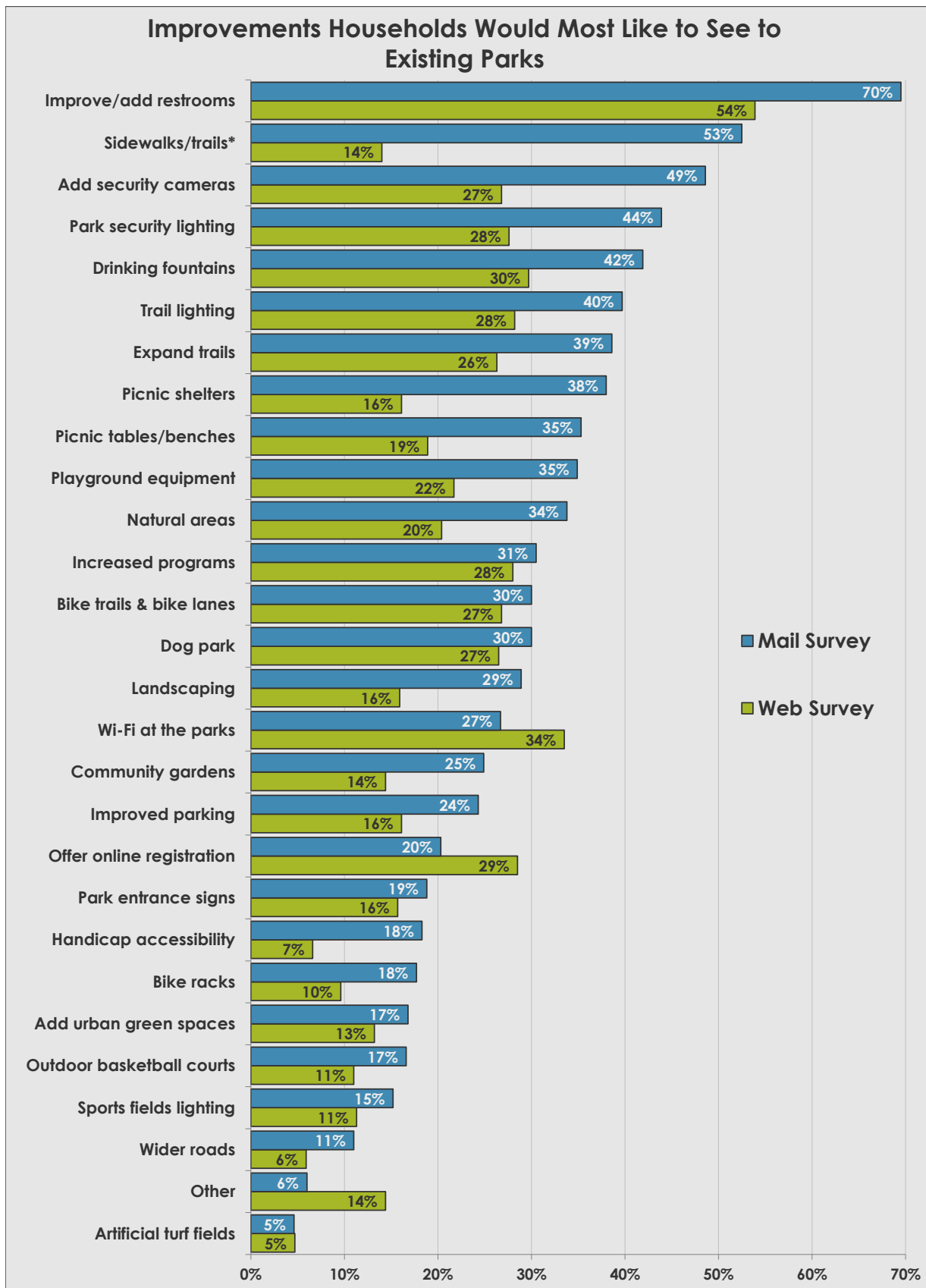
Respondents to both surveys were asked to identify all of the improvements their households would like to see to existing parks, and the responses from both surveys can be seen in Figure V-7. The top response in both surveys was *improve/add restrooms* (70% in Mail survey, 64% in Web Survey).

Sidewalks/trails was the second highest ranked response for the Mail Survey at 53% of residents, but ranked much lower in the Web Survey, in part, because Web Survey respondents had the option to choose “sidewalks” rather than “sidewalks/trails.” *Add security cameras* (49%) ranked third in the Mail Survey and *park security lighting* ranked fourth (44%), indicating a concern for safety at the parks.

Web Survey respondents were more supportive of *Wi-Fi at the parks* and *offer online registration* than Mail Survey respondents, although Mail Survey respondents were generally more interesting in improvements overall.

Respondents to both surveys were given the option to choose “Other” improvements not listed in the survey. The most frequent “Other” responses to the Web Survey were for improvements to the ice rink (including enclosing the facility and improving the locker rooms). “Other” responses in the Mail Survey were more focused on improved maintenance and security.

Figure V-5: Improvements Households Would Most Like to See to Existing Parks



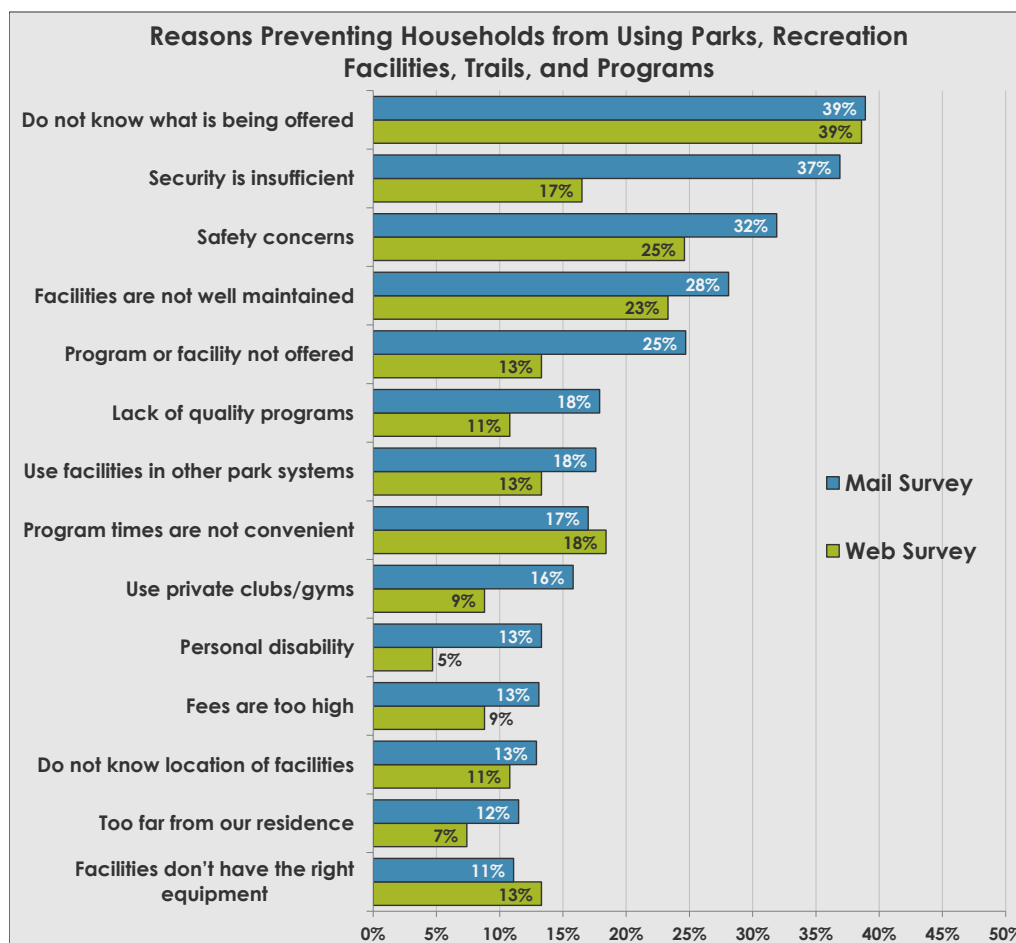
8. Reasons Preventing Use of Parks, Recreation Facilities, Trails, and Programs More Often

Respondents of both surveys were asked to select all barriers to their households' use of parks and recreation facilities and programs from a list of 22 options. Figure V-8 shows these results (not all options shown). The number one reason for not using these facilities in both surveys was that households *do not know what is being offered*. Based on the results of the Mail Survey, 39% of Elyria residents did not use parks or attended programs because they did not know what was available. According to the National Benchmarking,¹⁸ this reason is often at the top of the list; however, Elyria's response rate to this option of 39% was much higher than the national average of 22%.

The next most common reason Mail Survey respondents provided for not using parks and programs was *security is insufficient* (37%), and the fourth ranked reason was *safety concerns* (32%). The national average for *security is insufficient* is 7%, indicating that Elyria households are far more concerned about security than what is experienced in other communities. *Facilities are not well maintained* ranked fourth at 28% which is also much higher than the national average of 6%.

For Web Survey respondents, *safety concerns* ranked second at 25%, and facilities are not well maintained ranked third (23%). Mail Survey respondents were more likely to cite reasons for not participating than Web Survey respondents, perhaps because they were less likely to use parks and programs overall.

Figure V-6: Support for Parks and Recreation Improvements

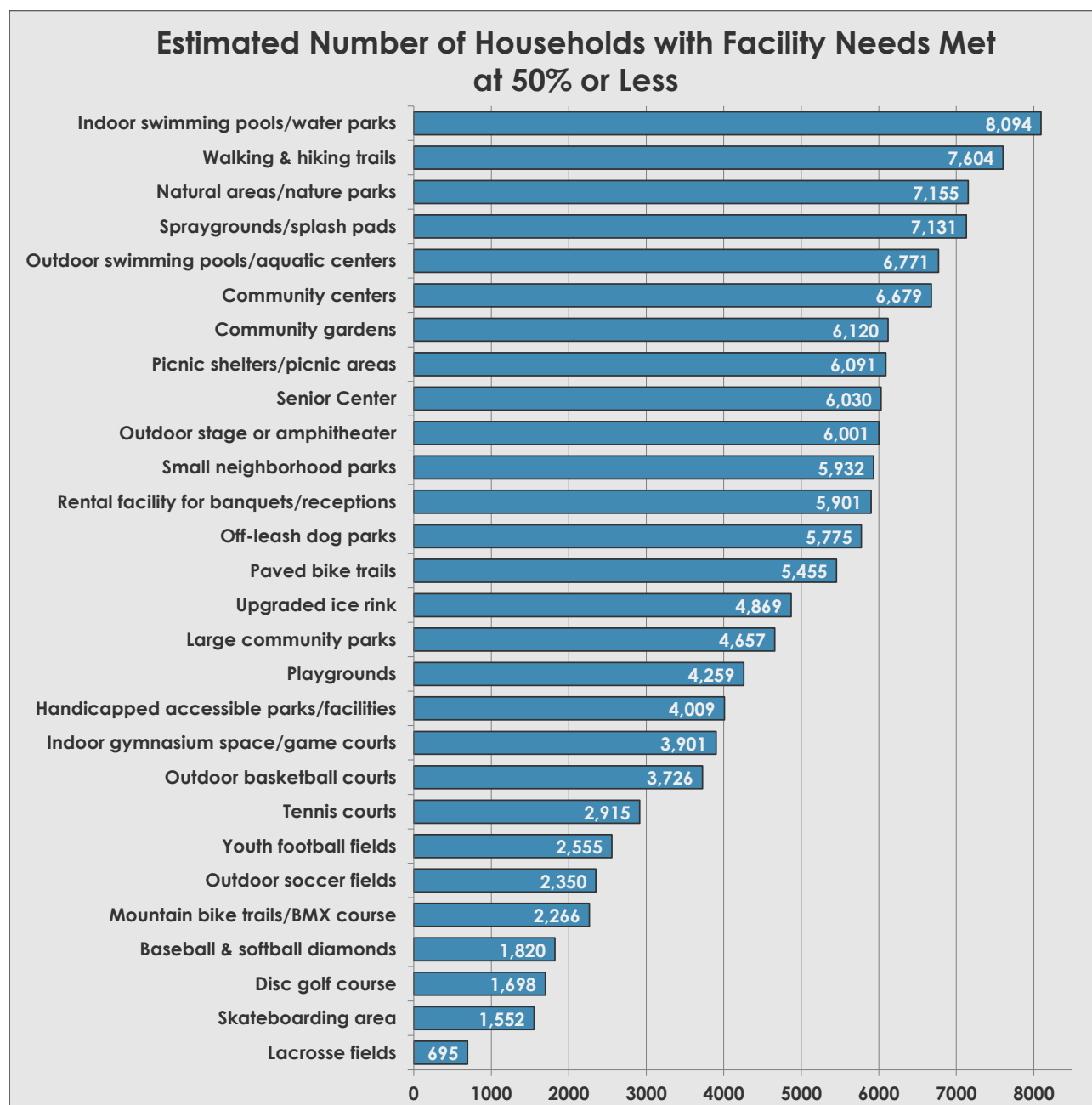


¹⁸ Provided by Leisure Vision (see Appendix B).

9. Need For Parks and Recreation Facilities

From a list of 28 parks and recreation facilities, respondents (Mail Survey only) were asked to indicate the facilities for which they or members of their household had a need and how well that need was met (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100%). Figure V-9 shows the estimated number of households with needs met at 50% or less for these facilities.

Figure V-7: Households with Facility Needs Met by 50% or Less (Mail Survey)

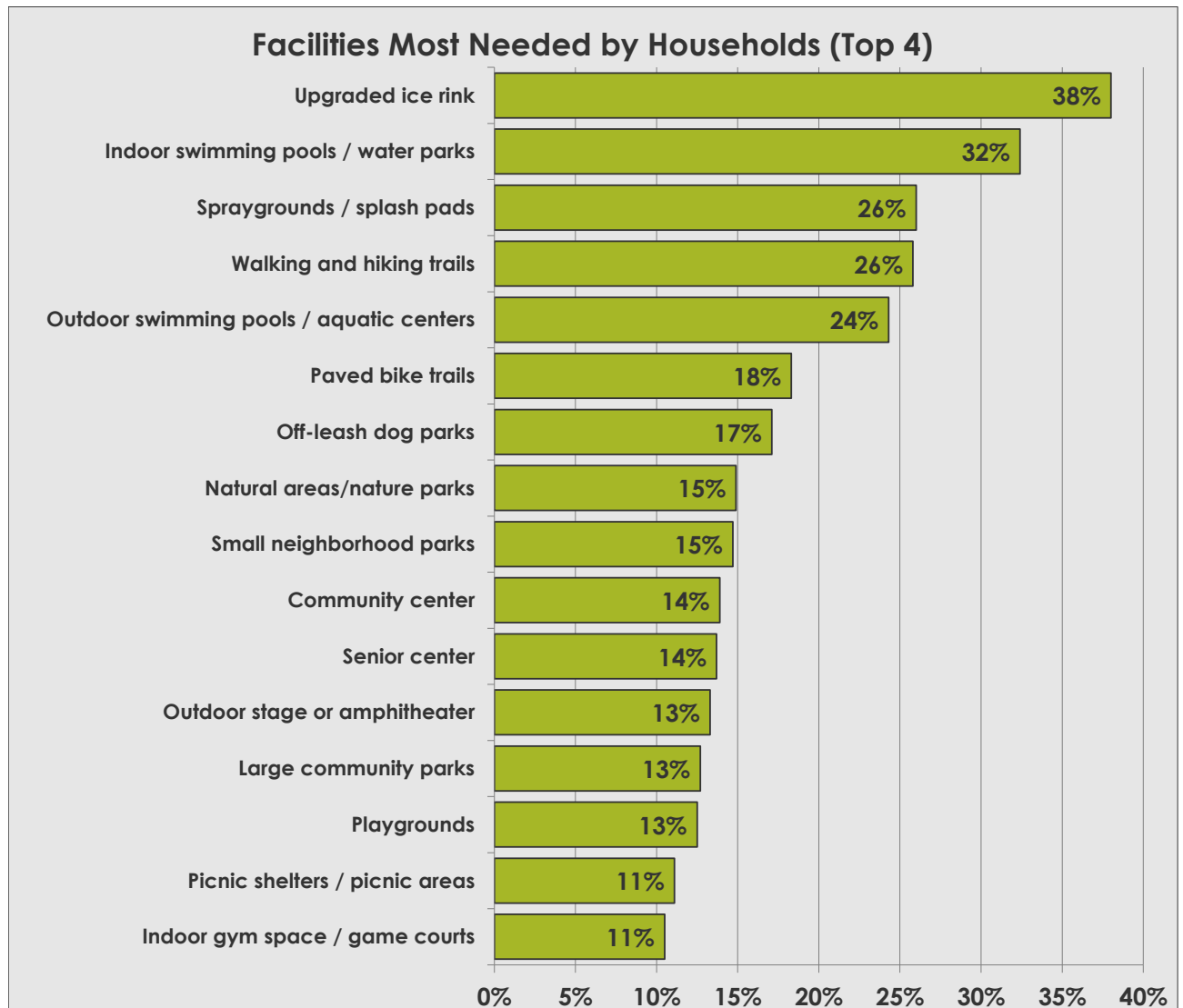


According to Figure V-9, the largest number of households in Elyria have unmet needs for *indoor swimming pools/water parks* (over 8,000 households). Additionally, over 7,000 households have unmet needs for *walking and hiking trails*, *natural areas/nature parks*, and *spraygrounds/splash pads*. A large number of households (over 6,000) also have unmet needs for *outdoor swimming pools/aquatic centers*, *community centers*, *community gardens*, *picnic shelters/picnic areas*, a

senior center, and an outdoor stage or amphitheater. Respondents were also asked to select the most important facilities to their households, and the top four results were: walking and hiking trails, natural areas/nature parks, small neighborhood parks, and paved bike trails.

Web Survey respondents were asked a slightly different question regarding their need for facilities. These respondents were asked to select up to four facilities that were not currently meeting their needs. The results of this question can be seen in Figure V-10. The top option, *upgraded ice rink* at 38%, shows a much higher priority than indicated in the Mail Survey. However, *indoor swimming pools/water parks, spraygrounds/splash pads, and walking and hiking trails* were in the top five in Figure V-9 as well.

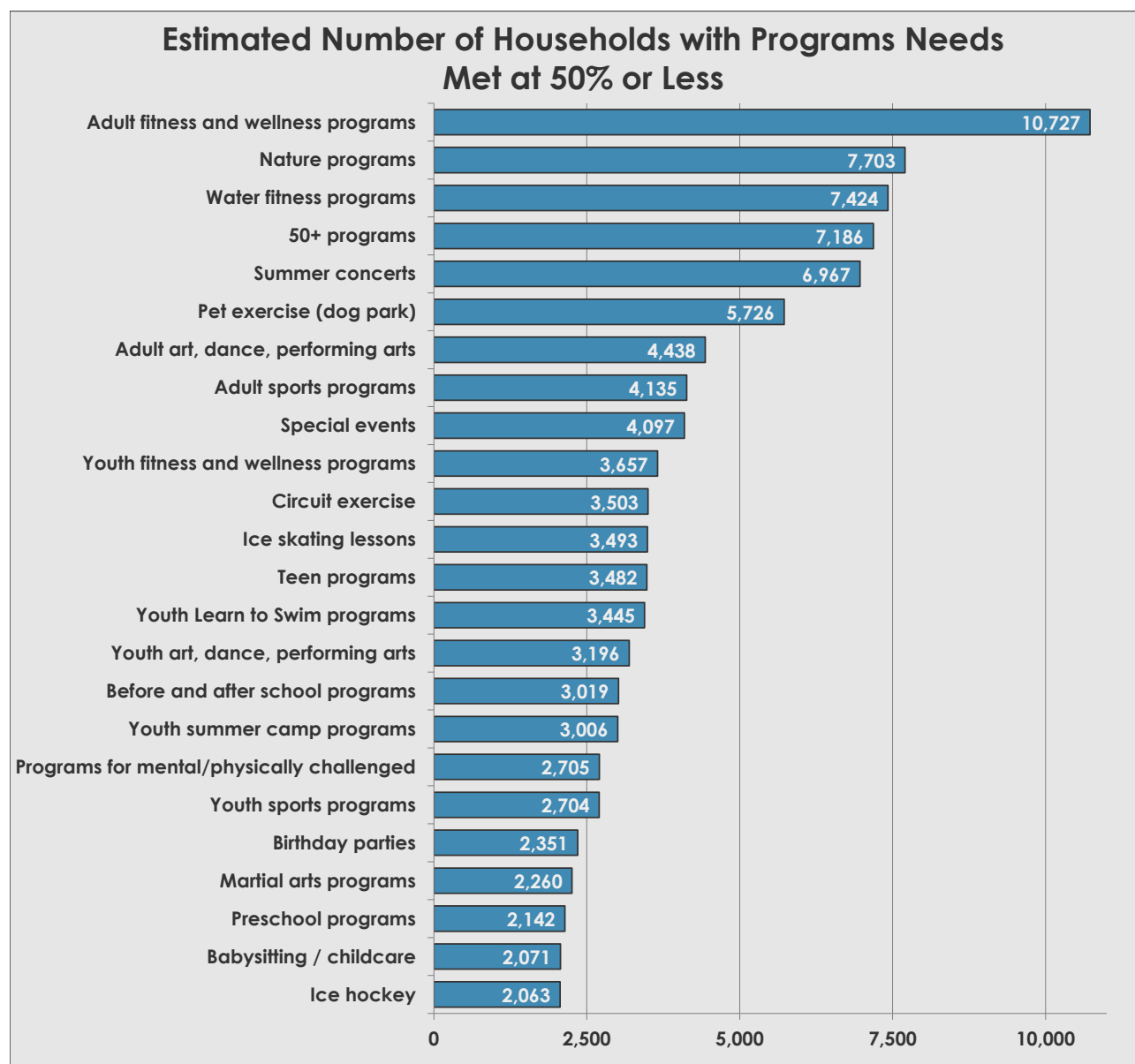
Figure V-8: Facilities Most Needed by Households (Web Survey)



10. Need For Recreation Programs

From a list of 24 recreation programs, respondents (Mail Survey only) were asked to indicate the programs for which they or members of their household had a need and how well that need was met (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100%). Figure V-11 shows the estimated number of households in Elyria with needs met at 50% or less for these programs.

Figure V-9: Households with Program Needs Met by 50% or Less (Mail Survey)

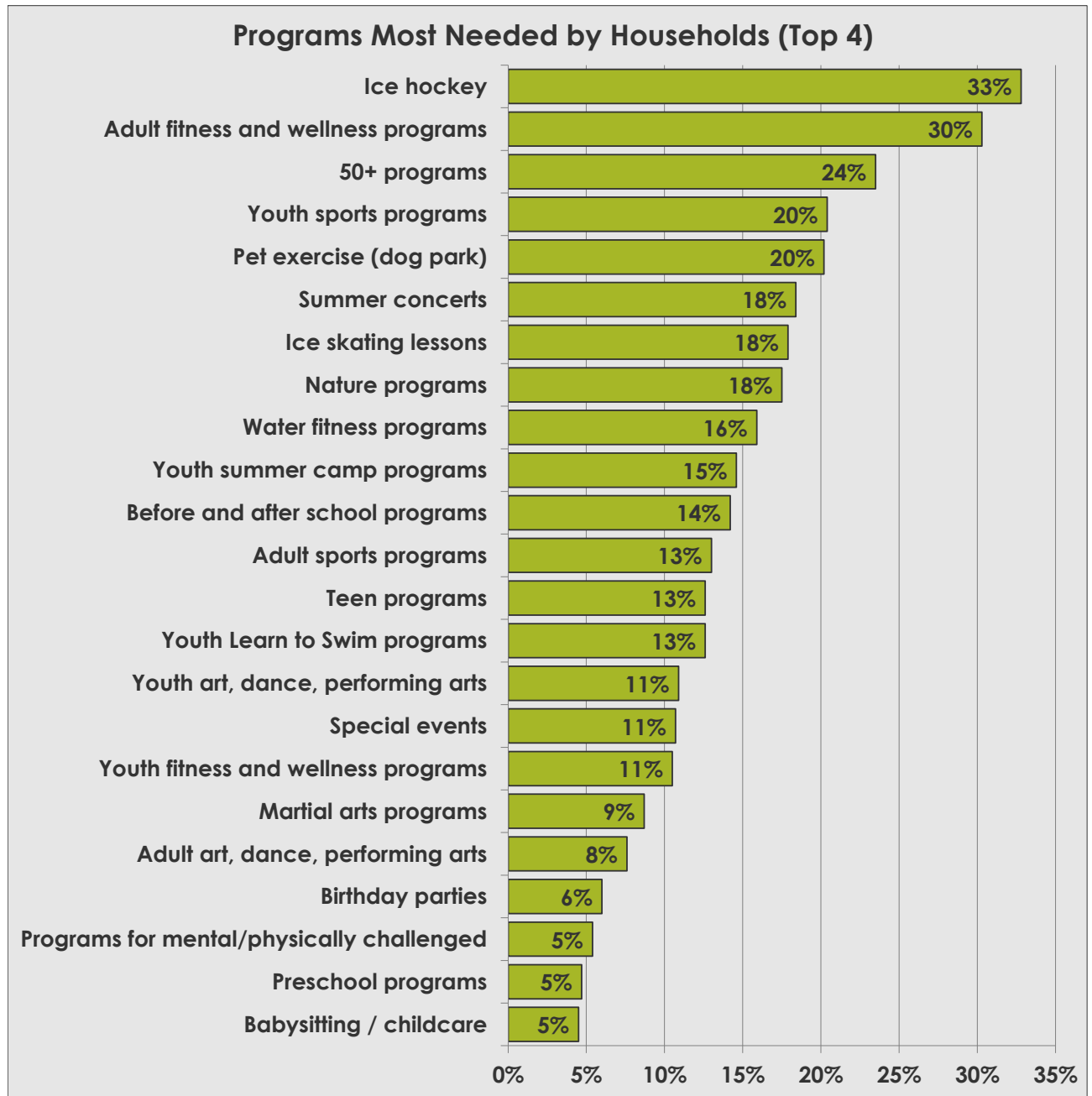


The results in Figure V-11 indicate that the largest number of households in Elyria have unmet needs for *adult fitness and wellness programs* (nearly 11,000 households). Over 7,000 households have unmet needs for *nature programs*, *water fitness programs*, and *50+ programs*. Additionally, nearly 6,000 households have unmet needs for *summer concerts*, and nearly 6,000 households have unmet needs for *pet exercise* programs.

The Web Survey, which asked respondents to choose their top four unmet program needs, provided different results (Figure V-12) from those presented in Figure V-11. The greatest unmet

program need according to this survey was *ice hockey* programs at 33% of respondents, despite ranking last (of all 24 options) for unmet needs in the Mail Survey, indicating that Web Survey respondents were likely heavily represented by hockey participants. *Youth sports programs* also ranked much higher than in the Mail Survey. However, *adult fitness and wellness*, *50+ programs*, and *pet exercise* ranked highly in both surveys, indicating a likely need for these programs.

Figure V-10: Programs Most Needed by Households (Web Survey)



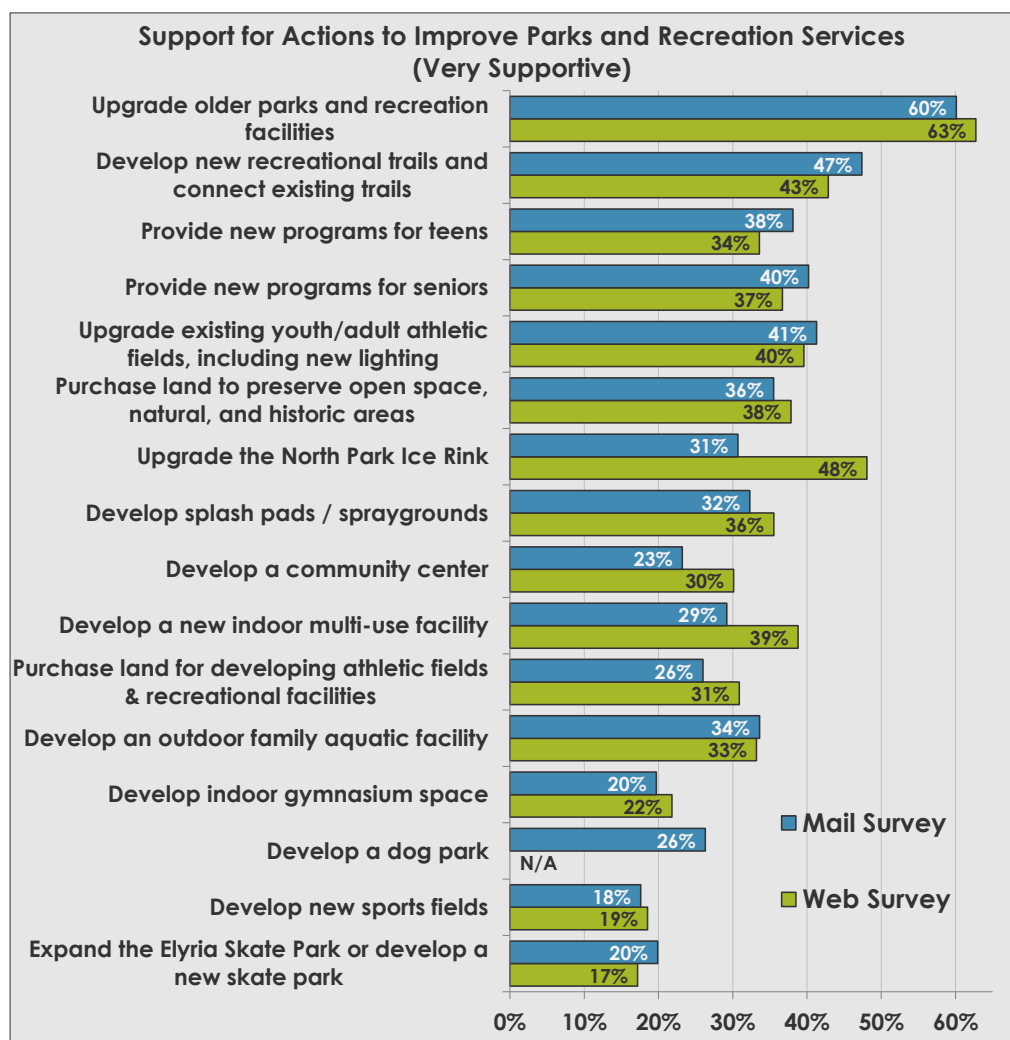
11. Support for Actions to Improve Parks and Recreation Services

Respondents to both surveys were asked to indicate whether they were *very supportive*, *somewhat supportive*, *not supportive*, or *not sure* to 16 actions (15 in Web Survey) Elyria could take to improve parks and recreation services. Figure V-13 shows the percentage of respondents indicating that they were *very supportive* of each action.

The highest level of support was given, in both surveys, to *upgrade older parks and recreation facilities* with 60% of Mail Survey respondents and 63% of Web Survey respondents indicating that they were *very supportive* of this action. *Develop new recreational trails and connect existing trails* ranked second in the Mail Surveys with 47% of Mail Survey respondents very supportive of this action and ranked third in the Web Survey with 43%. *Upgrade the North Park Ice Rink* ranked second in the Web Survey with 48% of respondents indicating that they were very supportive of this improvement, compared to only 31% in the Mail Survey (ranked 7th).

If both *very supportive* and *somewhat supportive* responses are considered, a majority of Mail Survey respondents were supportive of every option provided other than *expand the Elyria Skate Park or develop a new skate park*. With both very supportive and somewhat supportive responses, a majority of Web Survey respondents were supportive of every option provided other than *expand the Elyria Skate Park or develop a new skate park* and *develop new sports fields*.

Figure V-11: Support for Actions to Improve Parks and Recreation Services (Percent Very Supportive)

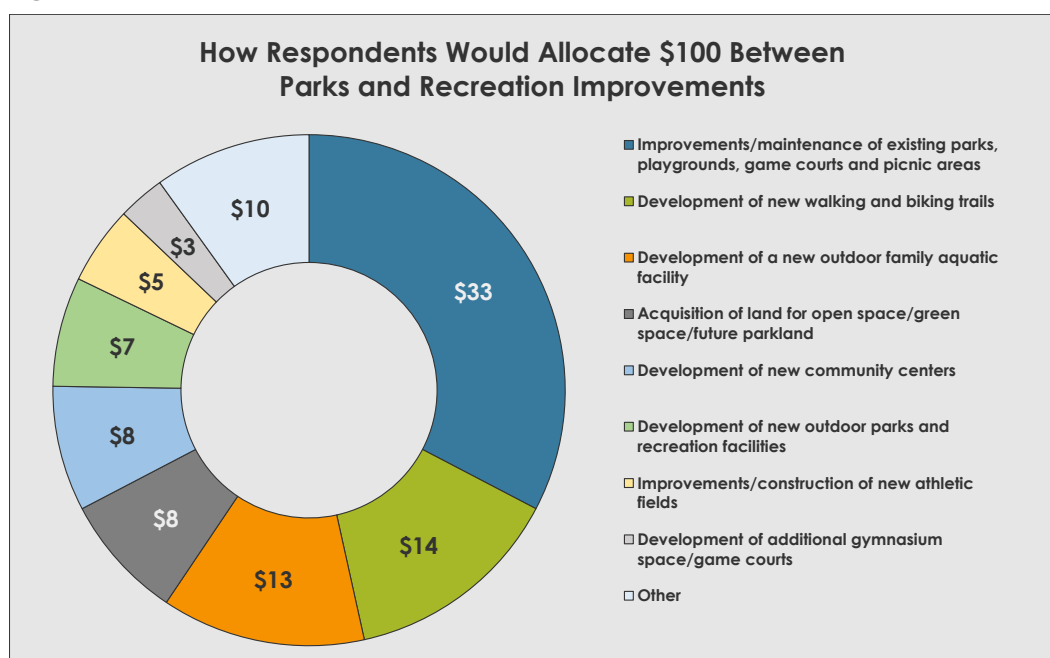


12. Allocation of \$100 Between Parks and Recreation Improvements

Mail Survey respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 between eight different types of parks and recreation facility improvements in the City of Elyria. According to these results, residents would allocate \$33, the largest allotment of funds, toward *improvements/maintenance of existing parks, playgrounds, game courts and picnic areas*, \$14 toward *development of new walking and biking trails*, and \$13 for the *development of a new outdoor family aquatic facility*.

Acquisition of land for open space/green space/future parkland ranked fourth with \$8, and *development of new community centers* was fifth, also with \$8. An “other” allocation was also included as an option, and the most frequent allocations were for a dog park, indoor pool, and ice rink improvements. Overall, the results were consistent with previous findings showing a preference for improvements to existing facilities and trails.

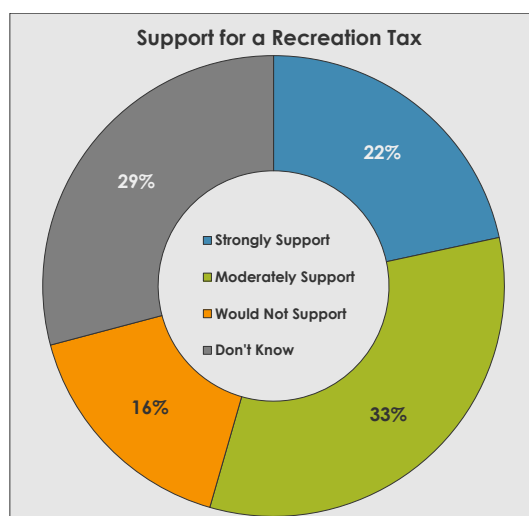
Figure V-12: \$100 Allocation for Park Improvements



13. Support for a Recreation tax

Mail Survey respondents were asked whether they would support a recreation tax to fund the development and operations of the types of facilities and activities that are most important to their households. Respondents were asked to choose if they *strongly support*, *moderately support*, *would not support*, or *don't know*. Twenty-two percent of respondents indicated that they would strongly support and 33% indicated they would moderately support such a tax for a total of 55%. Only 16% indicated they would not support a recreation tax.

Figure V-13: Support for a Recreation Tax

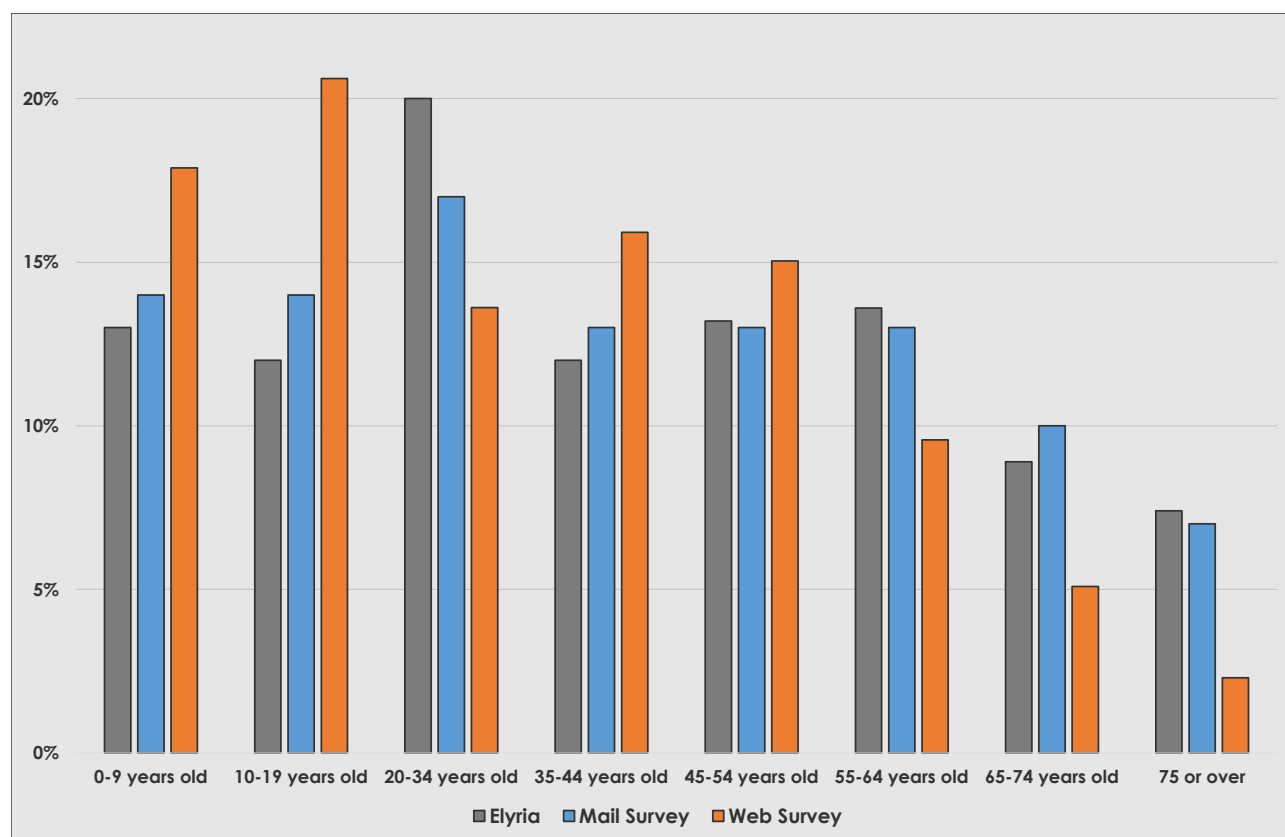


14. Survey Household Demographics

In an effort to compare the demographic representation of the survey responses with that of the population of the City of Elyria, the distribution of age groups of respondent households was compared to the most recent population estimates.¹⁹ Figure V-16 shows the representation by age group of survey respondent households as well as the Elyria population of each group.

Based on this comparison, the respondents of the Mail Survey fairly closely aligned with the age demographics of the Elyria population. The 0-19 age ranges were overrepresented and the 55 and over age ranges were underrepresented in the Web Survey. The 20-34 age range was underrepresented in both surveys.

Figure V-14: Survey Household Demographics



15. Distribution of Returned Surveys

ETC Institute provided data for the location of returned surveys (to nearest block). The results, which were also divided into three regions, can be seen in Figure V-17.

¹⁹ Esri forecasts for 2015

V. PUBLIC INPUT

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN – ELYRIA, OHIO



VI. STRATEGIC PLAN, GOALS, OBSERVATIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This Master Plan represents the collective vision for parks and recreation for the City of Elyria. This cohesive vision for continually improving parks and recreation opportunities represents a culmination of the public engagement process. The vision (with guiding principles) and the mission statement outlined below will guide implementation of this Master Plan and the future of parks and recreation in the City of Elyria. The vision and mission statement lead directly to a series of goals and objectives intended to help realize this vision. Finally, a series of observations and Recommendations are described as possible methods to achieve these goals.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision for the City of Elyria is to provide a modernized system of clean, safe, attractive, fun, and user-friendly parks, recreation, and fitness opportunities for residents of all ages and ability levels. Residents of all ages, from children to seniors, will be engaged in programming with activities for active and passive pursuits and nature education. An appropriate number of professionally trained staff will lead the opportunities. The community will be interconnected with a series of trails for walking, biking, and fitness. The Department will partner with other organizations to maximize efficiency and community support.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide and direct priorities, actions, and investments. These principles will help City leadership and the Parks and Recreation Board work in concert with other City departments and other partners to ensure that Elyria accomplishes its vision and maintains the qualities that make it a desirable place to live and visit. Residents and visitors will encounter the following characteristics in the City of Elyria facilities, programs, and interactions with staff.

1. **Modernized and Improved Parks System: Parks and Facilities that are Modern, Safe, Clean, User-Friendly, Attractive, and Fun**

The City will modernize the parks and recreation system to improve the quality of its facilities, accessibility, and the user experience. All park and program users should feel welcome, safe, and valued. The City will invest in the future of parks for its residents and will maintain continued enthusiasm through the implementation of this plan. Elyria will investigate creative funding mechanisms to ensure continuous improvements to parks and recreation service delivery. The City will pursue the development of unique facilities and programs that take advantage of the City's location and draw people to the community. These opportunities will set Elyria apart from other jurisdictions while respecting the City's history and honoring its founders.

2. **Connectivity: Building an Engaged and Connected Community**

The City of Elyria will deliver parks and programs to encourage community connectivity, both socially and spatially. The City will promote community cohesion and a sense of togetherness through the provision of places to gather and interact that are both accessible and welcoming to users of all ages and ability levels. The City will promote connectivity both within the parks and in the community as a whole through the development of a system of trails and sidewalks for pedestrians and cyclists with ample signage and wayfinding. The City will utilize these trails to provide opportunities for health and fitness and to connect parks, schools, businesses, service/social organizations, neighborhoods, and other gathering places. Parks will include linking paths between features and to adjacent neighborhoods to promote accessibility and a walkable environment. Finally, the City will connect residents through the programming of events which will be publicized electronically and accessible online.

The City of Elyria will seek partnerships with other public agencies and private organizations to maximize parks and recreation services and facility offerings to residents and visitors to the community. Potential partners for both capital improvements and operations will include: Elyria City Schools, local businesses or sponsors, LCCC, Lorain County Metro Parks, neighborhood associations, non-profits, adjacent communities, community/civic organizations (scouts, foundations, clubs), and conservation agencies. These efforts will extend to improving awareness of all activities in Elyria, including those offered by these other agencies or organizations, through strategies such as cross promotion of events and programs.

3. Programs for All: Providing Opportunities for Entertainment, Education, and Recreation (Active and Passive)

Elyria parks will provide a fun and educational environment with a variety of activities that promote social interaction, relaxation, entertainment, and education for families and individuals of all ages and ability levels. These opportunities, including events and programs, will have the flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of the community, including demographics changes, in order to prepare for the future. Additionally, programs and facilities will promote fitness and healthy lifestyles.

Parks in Elyria will be utilized to promote environmental stewardship and to allow residents to connect with nature. Facilities and programs will make efforts to utilize the character of the natural environment for educational and passive uses, while ensuring that adjacent elements are complementary.

4. Excellence: Providing Outstanding Customer Service

Elyria will strive for excellence in all aspects of parks and recreation. High standards will be expected for facilities, programs, and services. These expectations will extend to staff, coaches, and volunteers and will require ongoing training. This excellence will allow Elyria to serve as a model for parks and recreation delivery. Program registration will be convenient for the user by providing flexibility in methods at the program site, at the office, or online.

An adequate number of well-trained staff will be required to operate and maintain the outstanding parks and recreation system. Furthermore, Elyria will ensure a safe and inviting park environment through uniformity of facility and program presentation, proactive maintenance of facilities, regulatory compliance, and implementation of ample security systems and practices, including sufficient supervision to assure safety of users and security of facilities.

MISSION STATEMENT

Current Mission Statement for Parks and Recreation

The mission of the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department is to provide all persons, of all ages, affordable programs and services of high quality in safe, accessible and well-maintained facilities. Premier customer service is a priority. We are endeavoring to provide parks that promote the natural beauty of the environment and a wide range of leisure time opportunities. We offer popular programs for every age resident from pre-schoolers to senior citizens.

Proposed Mission Statement for Parks and Recreation

The Mission for the Elyria Parks and Recreation Department is to ensure the availability of modern, safe, equitable, well-maintained, and affordable recreational opportunities that improve fitness and enhance quality of life for residents of all ages and ability levels, while promoting community cohesion and protecting the natural beauty of the environment.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Four goals represent areas of strategic priority for action over the next five to ten years and, potentially, beyond. Objectives further describe specific areas of emphasis for each goal area, to which the City of Elyria will invest time, energy, and resources over this time period. Strategies

represent the concrete, specific actions the City will take to accomplish each of these objectives. These actions follow directly from the vision, in accordance with the mission statement for parks and recreation, and represent a culmination of all previous steps of the master planning process.

The following section outlines the four goals and 23 objectives included in this Master Plan. A detailed, consolidated table of these goals and objectives plus 130 strategies with corresponding timelines, funding sources, and responsible parties is located in Section VIII, Action Plan.

Goal 1: Provide and Modernized and Improved Parks and Recreation System

Modernize the parks and recreation system to improve the quality of facilities, accessibility, and user experiences. All park and program users should feel welcome, safe, and valued. The City will invest in the future of parks for its residents.

Objectives:

- 1.1. Maintain continued enthusiasm for parks and recreation improvements through the implementation of this plan.
- 1.2. Upgrade existing facilities to modern standards to ensure that they continue to serve citizens into the future, including meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines.
- 1.3. Investigate creative funding mechanisms to ensure continuous improvements to parks and recreation service delivery.
- 1.4. Pursue the development of unique facilities and programs that take advantage of the City's location and draw people to the community.
- 1.5. Develop a more effective Park and Recreation Board through education, orientation, recruitment and training.

Goal 2: Utilize Connectivity to Promote Linkages between the Community and Gathering Places

Improve connectivity and engagement to promote community cohesion and a sense a togetherness.

Objectives:

- 2.1. Employ parks and programs to encourage community connectivity and identity through shared experiences.
- 2.2. Provide places to gather and interact that are accessible and welcoming to users of all ages and ability levels.
- 2.3. Promote connectivity both within the parks and in the community as a whole for all modes of transportation using a combination of trails, sidewalks, and signage.
- 2.4. Utilize these trails to provide opportunities for health and fitness and to connect parks, schools, neighborhoods, and other gathering places.
- 2.5. Connect residents through the programming of events which are publicized electronically and accessible online.
- 2.6. Pursue partnerships to maximize efficiency, build community support, and to cross-promote facilities and programs.
- 2.7. Encourage community connectivity by increasing awareness of available parks, programs, and events (existing and new as available) through online publication, promotion, and registration.

Goal 3: Provide Opportunities for Entertainment, Education, and Recreation

Provide a fun and educational environment with a variety of activities to promote social interaction, relaxation, entertainment, and education for persons of all ages and ability levels.

Objectives:

- 3.1. Provide a wide variety of activities for families and individuals of all ages and ability levels.

-
- 3.2. Ensure that facility and program offerings are adaptable to the changing needs of the community in order to prepare for the future, while meeting the needs of the present.
 - 3.3. Utilize parks to promote environmental stewardship and to allow residents to connect with nature.
 - 3.4. Ensure that adjacent park elements are complementary and that the individual aspects flow together.
 - 3.5. Seek opportunities for wildlife management and the preservation of open space to ensure the availability of educational opportunities and to promote the enjoyment of the outdoors.

Goal 4: Provide Outstanding Customer Service

Strive for excellence in all aspects of parks and recreation with an emphasis on outstanding customer service.

Objectives:

- 4.1. Utilize ongoing training to ensure highly proficient and passionate staff, coaches, and volunteers, consistent with the community expectation of excellence for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- 4.2. Maintain appropriate staff levels to program and maintain the land, facilities, and programs desired by residents.
- 4.3. Provide staff with the tools, facilities, and materials required to efficiently maintain quality facilities and provide quality programs.
- 4.4. Encourage volunteerism to help build community interest and to ensure the continuation of quality parks and programs.
- 4.5. Ensure a safe and inviting park environment through uniformity of facility and program presentation, proactive maintenance of facilities, regulatory compliance, and implementation of ample security systems and practices.
- 4.6. Instill and maintain a perception of safety and security through design that is well planned and engineered and by ensuring sufficient supervision at parks and facilities.

OBSERVATIONS, ANALYSES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following text provides a series of observations, findings, and information gained from the focus groups, workshops, and surveys, along with the Consultant's analyses. Throughout the planning process, Recommendations are identified which later become the recommendations after discussions with the Steering Committee and City staff.

Existing Park Improvements

1. Observations and Analysis

- The highest level of support was given to *upgrading older parks and recreation facilities* with 28% of Mail Survey respondents supportive of this action, which was over double the second ranked item. Similarly, *upgrading older parks and recreation facilities* ranked highest when respondents were asked to choose the single most important action for Elyria to pursue (in the Mail Survey).
- According to the Mail Survey, 82% (97% in Web Survey) of Elyria residents visited parks in the City over the past year, and of those residents, 36% visited 11 times or more.
- According to the Mail Survey, residents would allocate \$33 (of \$100), the largest allotment of funds, toward improvements/maintenance of existing parks.
- The improvement or addition of restrooms was the number one potential improvement to existing parks at 70% of respondents in the Mail Survey (highest at 54% in the Web Survey).
- When asked to rate the physical condition of the parks, 66% indicated excellent or good in

the mail survey, which is much lower than the national benchmark from over 500 similar community surveys at 85%. Only 53% of the web survey respondents rated the parks as excellent or good.

- The City of Elyria does not currently have any fully accessible playgrounds. Additionally, some playgrounds are in need of renovation. Playground equipment ranked in the top 10 improvements households would like to see to existing parks.
- According to the Mail Survey, the highest ranked reason for not using parks, facilities, or programs was because households do not know what is being offered (39% of respondents in both the mail and web survey). Insufficient security, safety concerns, and facilities are not well maintained were the next three selections.
- According to the stakeholder groups, additional security is needed at the parks to protect City investments and to reduce vandalism. Security cameras and lighting ranked third and fourth in the improvements households would like to see to existing parks (Mail Survey).
- The top ranked item in the dollar voting exercise at the public workshops and stakeholder meetings was improvements and maintenance of existing parks (22%).
- The Americans with Disabilities Act established new requirements as of March 2012 which require an assessment of the accessibility of all facilities, programs, and communications. Accessibility of facilities and seating/spectator areas is limited at many parks.
- Stakeholder groups were consistently supportive of park improvements.
- The *2015 Elyria Plan* recommended development and implementation of a unified design theme throughout the park system.

2. Recommendations

- Initial focus should be directed toward improvements to existing, key facilities such as needed improvements at the recreation centers, upgrading North Park Ice Rink, trails, playgrounds, game courts, picnic shelters, and athletic fields.
- The addition of needed support facilities, including trails, restrooms, signage, and drinking fountains should be part of any park improvement.
- Assure that all playgrounds meet current guidelines, especially as they pertain to safety issues, such as fall zones.
- The East Park Pool should be redeveloped as a family aquatic center, including a new pool house.
- Picnic shelters at Hilltop Park need to be replaced.
- The North Park Ice Rink needs to have additional locker rooms installed and new ice compressor equipment installed. The concession area and restrooms also need to be improved.
- The closed pools at West Park and South Park have been used for spare parts. They have become eyesores and should be demolished and the pool areas filled.
- Several parking lots are in very poor condition and need replaced, including at East, South, West, and Hilltop Parks.
- The tennis courts at South and Hilltop Parks need to be resurfaced, and new fences installed.
- Opportunities for additional picnic shelters should be considered at existing parks.
- Provide a paved, accessible route to all playgrounds, picnic shelters, athletic fields and spectator areas.
- Most playgrounds in the city are old and need to be replaced.

- Install security cameras (and additional lighting as needed) to all community and neighborhood parks to encourage a safe atmosphere and to prevent damage to park property.
- Ballfield lights need to be replaced at West Park.
- Drainage improvements are needed on the West Park soccer fields. In addition, a restroom building is needed in this area, which would also serve the baseball fields in this part of the park.
- Perform an ADA Accessibility Assessment of all facilities, programs, and communications. This assessment could be accomplished by trained staff or an outside consultant.
- Establish an implementation committee to monitor timelines, measure progress, update priorities, and ensure continued enthusiasm for Master Plan goals and recommendations.

Trails

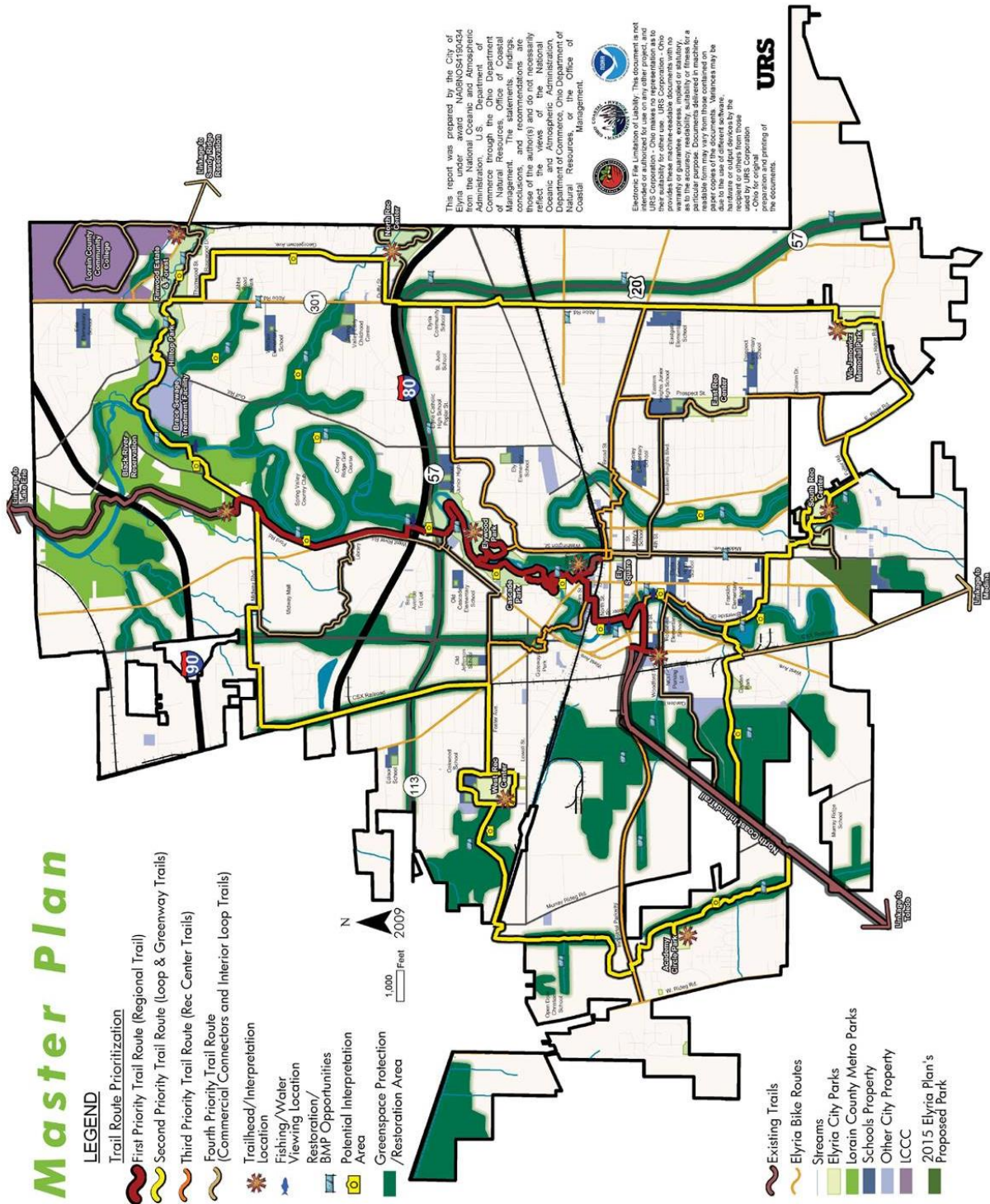
1. Observations and Analyses

- Based on input from the public workshop and stakeholder groups, residents want more trails with better connectivity in the community and to reduce the need to travel by automobile.
- Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents to the Mail Survey indicated they were very or somewhat supportive of recreational trail development (80% of Web Survey respondents).
- The trail in East Park has deteriorated and is non-existent in some areas.
- Residents would allocate \$14 (of \$100), the second highest allotment, toward development of new walking and biking trails (Mail Survey).
- Trails were a reoccurring topic at all stages of public engagement and were the fourth highest choice in the dollar voting exercise at the public workshop and stakeholder groups.
- Trails were consistently the most requested facility and should be part of any park improvement project. Trails and sidewalks represented two of the top ten improvements requested for existing parks.
- According to the Mail Survey, *walking and hiking trails* were the most needed facilities (73% reported a need) in Elyria, and *paved bike trails* were also in the top 10 most needed facilities. *Walking and hiking trails* were also the second greatest unmet need for facilities (needs met at 50% or less), with nearly 7,600 households indicating this unmet need. Web Survey respondents also rated *walking trails* and *paved bike trails* as two of the top six highest unmet need.
- *The City of Elyria: Greenway and Trail Master Plan* (URS Consultants, 2009) provided a long range Master Plan for trail development and connectivity within the community and extending from Elyria. The plan identified four priority levels of trail linkages, with recommended trailhead and interpretation locations.
- The *2015 Elyria Plan* recommended connection of the Downtown area to Cascade Park and Two Falls.

2. Recommendations

- Implement the recommendations of the 2009 *Greenway and Trail Master Plan*, with first priority to connect the Black River Trails to the North Coast Inland Trail, second priority to loop and greenway trails, third priority to connect recreation centers and parks, and fourth priority for commercial connectors and interior loop trails within the City (see Figure VI-1).
- Coordinate with neighboring communities as part of long-term trail planning.
- Increase the availability of bicycle parking at all parks.

Figure VI-1: Greenway and Trail Master Plan



- Add walking trails at parks currently lacking those facilities (particularly trail loops) and improve connectivity within parks through added walkways and connecting paths. Walking trails should be developed as loop trails at all major parks, including East Park, South Park, and West Park. For maximum accessibility, these should be asphalt paved.
- Include trails as part of the development of all new parks. These offerings should include both paved and unpaved trails and should provide connections to the adjacent communities.
- Partner with Elyria City Schools to develop loop trails at their sites which are adjacent to City Parks, such as at Eastern Heights School and East Park, West Park and Oakwood School, etc.

New Park and Facilities Development

1. Observations and Analyses

- The City of Elyria has a deficiency of Community Park acreage (91 acres) and Neighborhood Parks (65 acres). These deficits will increase by 2020, unless new parks are developed. Some of the overall deficit of City Parks is made up by the location of Metro Parks within the City limits and the large amount of school acreage available for mini-park usage.
- The population of Elyria is expected to remain steady into the future. The number (and percentage) of children is decreasing, and the number of seniors is increasing. These trends are expected to continue in the future.
- Playground equipment, picnic shelters, and trails ranked in the top 10 improvements households would like to see to existing parks. Stakeholder groups also indicated a need for an amphitheater, spraygrounds, recreation center, and a dog park.
- The City of Elyria currently has deficiencies in picnic shelters, playgrounds, paved and unpaved trails, an outdoor theater, rectangular fields, outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, and an indoor pool.
- Some residential areas in Elyria are more than a five-minute drive from a park or key park facilities, including basketball courts.
- The potential consolidation of schools could lead to the loss of playgrounds and playfields in some neighborhoods.
- For Mail Survey respondents, the fifth most cited reason for not participating more in parks and recreation activities was that their desired program or facility was not offered.
- The top unmet facility need in the Mail Survey was for indoor swimming pool/water park and senior center ranked ninth. The top unmet program need was for adult fitness and wellness programs, with water fitness and 50+ programs also in the top five.
- Many of the needed facilities for existing parks could be incorporated into new parks, including trails, playgrounds, courts, fields, indoor facilities, and picnic pavilions.
- The City of Elyria currently has no dedicated event space or amphitheater/band shell. A substantial number of residents have an unmet need for this facility for summer concerts and other events. Summer concerts ranked as the second most needed and fifth highest unmet need for programs in the Mail Survey. Special events also ranked in the top 10 for both needs and unmet needs in the Mail Survey.
- Senior groups indicated a desire for a senior center dedicated to their activities and programs.
- All rectangular fields are located in the western portion of the City, except for fields at Eastern Heights and Windsor Schools. Plus there is a deficit of rectangular fields serving the City.

- Recreation centers are located in the west, south and east portions of the city. The North Park Ice Rink provides indoor activities in the north, and therefore, provides equity in indoor facilities.
- The Playground, Basketball Court, and Tennis Court Service Area maps indicate several areas of the City lacking convenient access to these facilities.
- Development of a new outdoor aquatic facility ranked third, with \$13 of \$100, for how respondents would allocate funds among park improvements in the Mail Survey.
- The Composite Park Service Levels map indicates the lowest level of service for residential areas in the west side of Elyria and a low level of service to the west of Abbe Road, both south and north of the Route 57 Bypass.

2. Recommendations

- Include playgrounds and rentable picnic shelters whenever possible as part of new park development.
- Consider the need for a variety of facilities, particularly those preferred by the local community as part of new park development.
- Opportunities for new parks should be investigated in key areas outside of the service areas of key facilities, including playgrounds and basketball courts.
- Outdoor fitness equipment should be installed at select parks to provide an opportunity for improved fitness for residents, including seniors. Good opportunities exist at West, South, Hilltop, and Academy Court to install these facilities.



- Partner with Elyria City Schools to develop park facilities adjacent to any new schools they may develop.
- Replace the East Park Pool with a family aquatic center and develop spraygrounds at the old pool locations in South, North, and West Parks.
- Allocate space and study the feasibility of development of a full service Recreation and Senior Center with indoor pools, walking track, gymnasium, fitness/cardio rooms, meeting rooms, and more (long term). Investigate potential partnerships to share in the development and operations costs of such a facility.
- Consider unmet facility needs as part of any new park development.
- Develop a park with rectangular fields in the east and north portions of the City.
- Playgrounds and basketball courts are needed in the Academy Court area, the extreme southeast area (near Vic Janowicz Park), and an area bordered by the Bypass on the east, Broad Street to the south, to just north of Cleveland Street.

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- Pickleball has become extremely popular, especially among seniors. Develop courts at locations throughout the City and mainly in conjunction with the recreation centers which host the Active People programs at East and West Parks.



- Develop a dog park at an existing or new park.
- Develop a disc golf course at South Park, in the wooded area (after it is thinned out) at East Park, or another site. This low impact and low cost activity is very popular.
- Monitor any potential changes to be made by Elyria City Schools and any service voids which may result from any school closures, especially for playgrounds and outdoor basketball courts.

Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education

1. Observations and Analyses

- *Purchasing land to preserve as open space, natural, and historic areas* ranked second in the most important actions the City could take to improve parks and recreation.
- The Black River Audubon Park property is currently unimproved. Much of the site is steep hillside leading down to the Black River.
- Nature programs were the third most needed program and the second highest unmet need for programs, according to the Mail Survey.
- *Nature Parks* were in the second most needed and third highest unmet need for facilities, according to the Mail Survey.
- Stakeholder groups indicated that they would like to see nature programs and a nature center.

2. Recommendations

- Partnership opportunities should be explored with the Lorain County Metro Parks, LCCC, and Elyria City Schools for nature programs at one of the Elyria parks. These programs could be held at Cascade/Elywoods Parks in conjunction with Metro Parks. Also, Hilltop, Finwood Estate and Forest offer possibilities for nature programs.
- Continue to examine opportunities for the acquisition of open space, giving priority to land that is contiguous to existing open space or parks, needed for trail connections, or in portions of the City currently underserved by parks and open space.
- Develop a shelter and restroom in Finwood Estate to provide a venue for summer camps, weddings, nature programs, etc.

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- Improve the Audubon Park site to provide additional access and use of this site.
 - Efforts should be made to maximize the utility of natural resources for recreational opportunities and enhancement of quality of life in Elyria.
 - Employ parks as models for sustainable practices. Parks should be utilized to exemplify Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater runoff, recycling, etc.

Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts

1. Observations and Analyses

- Support for *new athletic fields* was second lowest action the City could take to improve parks and ranked low in the facilities for which residents had a need in the Mail Survey.
- Lacrosse programs are not currently offered in Elyria for either girls or boys, and if a program for this fast growing sport is developed, it would place additional stress on the City's existing rectangular fields.
- The soccer fields at West Park were installed without adequate drainage infrastructure.
- The High School may lose their soccer fields if a new school is developed on the site, therefore, they are reluctant to invest in the property.
- The fields at North Park and on the City-owned portion of Vic Janowicz Complex are leased to the leagues, but the fields at West Park are not.

2. Recommendations

- The West Park Soccer Fields should have drainage improvements.
- A restroom building should be developed near the West Park Soccer fields and baseball fields. Sewer lines will need to be constructed to the site.
- The East Park Baseball fields should be improved.
- The tennis courts at South and Hilltop Parks should be improved.
- The fields at West Park should be leased to Little League West to encourage their investment of the fields.
- The Elyria Schools should find a new location for their soccer complex.
- Replace the lights on the West Park softball fields and on designated Little League Fields. Newer lights are much more energy efficient, less costly to maintain, and have less light shining into adjacent neighborhoods.
- As suggested by the Little Leagues, consider combining into a single charter to consolidate efforts.

Indoor Recreation

1. Observations and Analyses

- A consistent item requested in all of the public engagement was for a comprehensive indoor recreation center which would have fitness facilities, walking track, gym, an indoor pool. In addition, Elyria needs a senior center to serve the growing senior population.
- In the dollar voting exercise at the public workshops and stakeholder meetings, *new community center* ranked fifth (10%) and a *new full recreation center* ranked tenth with 3% of the vote.
- An *indoor swimming pool* was the highest unmet need in the Mail Survey, with *community centers* ranking sixth. When voting with dollars in the Mail Survey, an *indoor facility* ranked fifth with \$8 of \$100.

- Among the Web Survey responses, an *upgraded ice rink* was the highest ranked need by far (31%), followed by an indoor pool/water park (9%).
- In the Mail Survey, the highest unmet program need was for *adult fitness and wellness*, with *water fitness* ranking third. Among the Web Survey, *ice hockey* ranked highest with adult fitness second.
- Elyria currently has limited programming and facilities for healthy seniors. However, the need for senior (50+) programs is substantial and increasing. Many of these programs are held indoors.
- The ice rink operates at a surplus and, therefore, is one of the few revenue generating facilities in the system. It is aging and needs major improvements to the compressor system to continue in operation. In addition, the growth of the hockey program and the many schools hosting practices and games at the facility requires additional locker rooms. Currently, the general public must enter the locker room to access restrooms. The hockey programs have also asked to investigate the potential to enclose the building to provide better spectator comfort and to attract more games and tournaments to the facility.

2. Recommendations

- Collaborate with the Elyria City Schools to maximize use of existing indoor facilities.
- Pursue partnerships to develop a full service recreation center with indoor pool. This facility should also include a senior component to maximize space utilization and meet this growing need. The recreation center portion should include a walking track, gym, aerobics/dance rooms, cardio and weight rooms, meeting rooms, as well as a pool for lap and fitness swimming. The senior component would include a library, kitchen, meeting/program space, fitness room, computer lab, game (billiard) room, craft room, and potentially more.
- Until such time as a recreation/senior center can be funded and developed, an interim facility could be developed for senior programming utilizing a vacant storefront or building. This would allow the senior program to become more established before making a more substantial investment.
- Partner with existing and potential private recreation providers to expand the availability of opportunities in the City.
- Upgrade the Charles R. Hoagland Recreation Center at West Park with new entry area, improved roof/ceiling, updated HVAC system, and other needed improvements.
- Upgrade the HVAC system and interior surfaces at the Charles Hyman East Recreation Center.
- Develop new restrooms at the Ice Rink that are separate from the locker rooms and develop at least two new locker rooms. Upgrade the concession and lobby area.
- Study the feasibility and cost to enclose the rink.

Outdoor Aquatics

1. Observations and Analyses

- The current pools at East and North Park are outdated and lack the modern amenities which attract families and maximize utilization and income.
- The closed pools at South and West Parks have been scavenged for spare parts for East and North. They have become eyesores and pose a safety hazard.
- The swimming pools currently operate at a deficit of approximately \$65,000 per year.

- Sixty-one percent (61%) of residents support *developing an outdoor family aquatic center*, according to the Mail Survey, making it one of the lower supported actions; however, this action ranked as the seventh most important for Elyria to pursue, when respondents were asked to select their top choice. Additionally, 81% of Web Survey respondents supported this action which ranked as the third most important facility to households (Web Survey).
- *Outdoor swimming pools or aquatic centers* ranked as the seventh most important facility to households in the Mail Survey.
- *Spraygrounds* ranked as fourth highest unmet need of all facilities for how well household needs are currently being met and *outdoor pools* ranked fifth.
- In the Web Survey, *spraygrounds* ranked as the third highest needed facility and *outdoor pool* was fifth.

2. Recommendations

- The East Park Pool should be redeveloped as a family aquatic center, including a new pool house.
- Develop spraygrounds (splash pads) at South, North, and West Parks where the pools were located.



Programming

1. Observations and Analyses

- Elyria residents would like to see more programs and events (according to the stakeholder groups).
- The most needed programs (and the number one unmet need for programs) were *adult fitness and wellness programs*, according to the Mail Survey. These programs also ranked as the number two most needed programs in the Web Survey.
- The second highest ranked program need in the Mail Surveys was for *summer concerts*. Based on the Mail Survey, these programs were the second most important to households in Elyria.
- Residents (according to the Mail Survey) were also in need of *nature programs* (#3 needed program and #2 unmet need).
- According to the Mail Survey, the fifth highest ranked reason for not using parks, facilities, or programs was because the *preferred program or facility is not offered* (25% of respondents).
- Over 14% of the Elyria population was age 65 and older according to the 2010 US Census. This percentage is estimated to currently be over 16% and is expected to increase to over 18% by 2020, but Elyria has few recreational facilities and programs for these residents.
- Programs for those age 50 or older were the fifth most needed programs (third most important) and represented the fourth most households with unmet needs (need met at 50% or less).

- A substantial number of households had unmet program needs for:
 - Adult fitness and wellness (10,727 households)
 - Nature programs (7,703)
 - Water fitness programs (7,424)
 - 50+ programs (7,186)
 - Summer concerts (6,927)
 - Pet exercise (5,726)
 - Adult art, dance, and performing arts (4,135)
 - Special events (4,097)
 - Youth fitness and wellness programs (3,657)
- One primary reason limiting program offerings is the number of staff.

2. Recommendations

- Provide online registration of all programs for user convenience.
- Expand the availability of programs for seniors, particularly healthy seniors. A Silver Sneakers program would offer a series of fitness programs for seniors in the City.
- Nature programs were discussed previously.
- Opportunities for multigenerational and intergenerational programming could also be considered to provide opportunities for all ages. Intergenerational programming could include nature-based activities outdoors (fishing, gardening, bird watching) and arts and crafts activities indoors (music, painting, cooking).
- If an amphitheater and event space is developed at Cascade Park or other venue, the City should utilize the facilities for a series of events, including concerts, throughout the year.



- Programs should be developed to maximize utilization of existing facilities and any future facilities.
- The City should seek partnerships to provide programs that require facilities not offered by the City of Elyria.
- Program satisfaction levels, attendance, and trends should be continuously monitored to ensure program offerings match the needs of the community.
- Hire additional staff dedicated to programming to allow more than one Active Adult program location at a time and allow seniors to participate daily closer to home.

Operations and Maintenance

1. Observations and Analyses

- The City has had very limited funds for maintenance and capital improvements for several years, resulting in some facilities which are in need of upgrades.

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- The tennis courts at South and Hilltop Parks need resurfaced and new fences.
 - The picnic shelters at Hilltop Park need to be replaced.
 - Improved drainage is needed for the soccer fields at West Park.
 - The City is losing its Parks Maintenance Garage at Cascade Park and must relocate.
 - Other communities have established adopt-a-trail programs to keep the trails free of litter.
 - Additional maintenance vehicles and equipment is needed to properly maintain parks.
 - The *2015 Elyria Plan* recommended hiring of additional maintenance personnel for parks, recreation, and cemetery maintenance.

2. Recommendations

- Establish a new Parks and Recreation Maintenance Headquarters, either at a new location, in conjunction with other City functions, or as a last resort, in West Park. West Park is not preferred because it is not centrally located and the maintenance facility would be in the center of the park, detracting from the park atmosphere.
- Improvements should be made as needed to athletic field surfaces to provide for optimal playing experiences and to maintain safety for users.
- Needed improvements at existing parks should be given priority over new parks and facilities.
- The maintenance staff should be expanded as additional parks and facilities are developed to maximize their longevity, safety, and appearance.
- Establish a program to recruit and organize volunteers to adopt sections of trails in Elyria (and new trails as they are developed), including paved trails and unpaved trails, to keep the trails free of litter.
- Prioritize short-term maintenance of existing parks and facilities over long-term capital improvements.
- Create a volunteer coordinator position to make use of trained volunteers. This position could be part-time, or the responsibilities could be filled by existing staff.

Partnerships and Sponsorships

1. Observations and Analyses

- Partnerships and sponsorships can provide opportunities to reduce upfront capital costs as well as operating costs.
- The need for collaboration and partnerships (both between agencies and with private organizations) was a reoccurring theme throughout the public input process.
- Elyria currently partners with several local sports providers for the operation of sports leagues.
- Sponsorships and donations are key to funding some programs, such as the Holiday Lights and Fourth of July Fireworks.
- Parks and Recreation currently partners with several organizations on programs and facilities, such as the YWCA, NAACP, Kiwanis, Rotary, Elyria Public Library, sports groups, and others.
- Lorain County Metro Parks took over operation of Cascade and Elywoods Parks in January 2016, with the understanding that the City could continue to provide programs in this unique, beloved, and centrally located park.
- The Elyria City Schools have some athletic field deficiencies.

2. Recommendations

- Seek opportunities for collaboration with other organizations to improve the number and variety of program offerings and to help fill program deficiencies. Work with these other agencies and organizations to improve awareness of programming opportunities and to coordinate offerings to avoid duplication of services. A partnership with the schools and county park systems should be considered as part of the development of nature programs.
- Establish partnerships for both the securement of funding for capital improvements and for the operation of new facilities, particularly for high cost projects. Partnerships should require detailed documentation of funding sources and operating strategies (pro-forma).
- Collaborate with law enforcement to increase presence in the parks and an improved perception of safety for park users.
- Maintain existing relationships with organizations that manage the youth sports leagues, and seek new partners for the management of new sports leagues as interest grows.
- Maintain and expand existing relationships with private recreation providers and develop relationships with any future providers.
- Establish a position of Volunteer and Sponsor Coordinator and promote the use of volunteers, especially as the nature oriented facilities and trails are developed.

Communications

1. Observations and Analyses

- In both surveys, 39% of residents reported that the top reason for not using facilities and participating in programs is because they do not know what is being offered.
- According to both surveys, the top ways residents learn about facilities and programs is through *newspapers, word of mouth and brochures/flyers*.

2. Recommendations

- Cooperate with other agencies and organizations toward the creation and promotion of a common calendar for activities and events in Elyria, including opportunities for recreation, education, and tourism. Cross promotion of events should also be part of such an agreement.
- A conveniently located community bulletin board for the promotion of events and programs would help to improve awareness of programming opportunities.
- Elyria should continuously solicit feedback from park and program users to ensure new and changing needs are met.
- Actively promote park improvements and new program offerings as they become available.
- Develop, promote, and regularly update a mobile application (smart phone/tablet app) to communicate program offerings and improve park experiences (event information, park/trail maps). This app could be utilized to encourage fitness in the community and to connect park users interested in gathering for exercise. This app could also connect to a master schedule for athletic events.
- Provide Wi-Fi in all Neighborhood and Community Parks with initial focus on the most used parks (East, West, South, North, Ely Square, and Hilltop Parks) and partner with Lorain County Metro Parks to provide Wi-Fi in Cascade Park.
- Utilize social media to promote programs and events to residents and visitors.

Budget

1. Observations and Analyses

- The City of Elyria currently recovers approximately 23% of its parks and recreation operating costs through fees, which is lower than the median of the benchmark communities at 35%. Though it does gain 9.6% from foundations and trusts and another 4% from donations, which are both significantly higher than the benchmark communities. (0.1% and 0.7% respectively).
- Approximately 63% of the Department's operations funds are from the City General Fund, which is comparable to the benchmark communities' median of 65%.
- The City of Elyria devotes a very small amount of its overall General Fund budget to parks and recreation. Parks and recreation represents less than 1.6% of Elyria's budget, compared to 6.2% for the median of communities in the benchmarking comparison.
- The Benchmarking Survey also indicated that the operating expenditure per capita at \$35.39 is significantly less than the median of the benchmarked communities at \$89.02.
- The percentages of the budget allocated to personnel, operations, capital, and other are close to the medians of the benchmarked communities.
- The swimming pools currently operate at a deficit of approximately \$65,000 per year. In contrast, the North Park Ice Rink operates at a surplus of an average of \$35,000 over the past three years, although this amount has decreased over this period due to increasing costs of repairs as the facility ages.
- The Spring 2016 City Levy will allow for an additional \$1 million in funds for capital improvements and operations for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- The 2015 *Elyria Plan* recommended:
 - Targeting CDBG Funds for Cascade and South Parks.
 - Creation of a marketing campaign for the Cascade Park Endowment Fund.
 - Building of revenue generating facilities within the park system.

1. Recommendations

- Investigate new and inventive funding sources for parks and recreation improvements, possibly including a parks levy.
- Encourage the creation of a Friends of Elyria Parks foundation to recruit and organize volunteers, to raise funds and apply for grants, and to work toward the implementation of improvements outlined in this Master Plan.
- Pursue grants for development and operation of parks and recreation facilities and programs.
- Programs offered should include a level of cost recovery as most classes and programs will require fees for registration.
- Develop an adopt-a-trail program to assist in the maintenance and funding for trail improvements and maintenance.
- Consolidate the swimming pools to a more user-friendly and attractive family aquatic center at East Park and change the old West and South Park Pools to spraygrounds. A modern family aquatic center with zero depth entry, water slides, lap lanes, shade, modern pool house and other amenities will attract more users and could potentially break even. The spraygrounds will fill part of the void left due to the previous closure of West and South Park Pools and provide an aquatic experience in those locations. The pool at North Park would be removed because its location does not allow for expansion and it is not an ideal location for a sprayground.

-
- The City should reinvest in the aging North Park Ice Rink to meet the current and growing demands for improved restrooms and locker rooms and to insure its long term operation as a community-wide attraction on the north side of Elyria.
 - Develop high quality sports field complexes to support multiple sports which would increase the opportunities for tournaments and draw visitors (and economic activity) to Elyria. The improvements to the diamonds at West Park, for example, would increase the opportunities for hosting tournaments.
 - Consider selling naming rights to facilities to help mitigate capital and operating costs. Rights could be sold to whole facilities (community center or aquatic center) or to areas within a facility (meeting rooms, fields, courts).
 - A scholarship program for program and facility fees could be established for those that cannot afford to pay.
 - The City should allocate a higher percentage of its budget for parks and recreation.
 - The City could place a levy on the ballot specifically for implementation of the recommendations of this Master Plan.

VII. INDIVIDUAL PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter details recommendations for improvements to the existing parks and proposed new facilities. A site concept plan is included in this section for East Park to illustrate possible configurations of proposed facilities. These recommendations and concepts should be used as a starting point for further discussions with the community, users, and neighbors in the design of the parks. Further investigation of these parks is required to determine their capability to support the desired facilities and to identify the precise arrangement of facilities.

Improvements including bike racks, drinking fountains, security cameras, and Wi-Fi hotspots are recommended at all neighborhood and community parks and at some other parks. Additionally, landscape improvements are recommended for most parks and should be considered as part of any improvement.

The total costs associated with support facilities (bike racks, drinking fountains, security cameras, and Wi-Fi hotspots), as seen in the cost estimates later in this text, reflect the number of locations needed for each of these improvements and are largely dependent on the size of the park. In general, these facilities should be located at or adjacent to shelters, playgrounds, and athletic fields. Recommendations for these support facilities can be found in the cost estimates for each park (Table VII-1), located at end of this section.

COMMUNITY PARKS

East Park

East Park is one of the Community Parks with each serving a quadrant of the City. The East Pool has continuously outperformed the other pools, which is the reason it and North Park Pool have been kept in operation. The goal of this park is to improve the current facilities and add needed amenities to serve the eastern portion of Elyria. Because this pool performs better than the others and because there is room for expansion, this is the preferred location of a replacement pool. The improvements to this park, which can be seen in the concept plan (Figure VII-1), are intended to enhance the ability for the park to serve the East. Some improvements are not shown in concept plans due to the small physical sizes of the facilities.

1. Perimeter Trail

Trails were the most important amenities park users reported they would like to see in Elyria parks. The development of an all-purpose perimeter trail would help to tie the facilities together and would provide an important opportunity for many residents who do not currently use the park. The trail, as outlined in the concept plan, would be approximately 1.1 miles long. This perimeter trail should also connect to the Eastern Heights Middle School property and connect the park to the adjacent neighborhoods.

2. Basketball Courts

The basketball court is heavily used and is currently being upgraded. The concept plan indicates the development of a second court.

3. Playground

The current playground location is not easily accessible from a parking lot, and it is on the location of the pool expansion area. Therefore, it is proposed to relocate the playground to the south side of the Recreation Center so that it will be closer to a parking lot and to the Recreation Center where programs can take better advantage of the playground. The playground should be large and provide more than the minimum required handicapped access so as to provide a play environment for persons of all ability levels.

4. Aquatic Center

It is recommended to replace the existing outdated pool complex with a modern family aquatic center. The facility would feature zero-depth access, a shallow water activity pool, tall water slide, lap lanes, diving well with climbing wall, concession area, shade structures, and a splash pad which can be used for an extended season if desired. The bathhouse will be replaced so that it better relates to the parking lot. The parking lot will be expanded to fill the area between the aquatic center and Recreation Center to serve both facilities.

5. Outdoor Fitness Equipment

The outdoor fitness equipment will be relocated near the new parking lot at the aquatic facility and the trail so that the new playground may be located in its current location. Outdoor fitness equipment will provide an opportunity for residents to exercise and improve their health.

6. Parking Improvements

The parking at this park is currently insufficient for the volume experienced during use of the ballfields, recreation center and pool, and the recommended improvements will likely increase the demand for parking.

7. Walkway Enhancements

Connecting sidewalks between the facilities and parking will make this area accessible and ADA compliant. These walkways will provide better access for spectators at the existing ball fields, and will allow all community members to take advantage of these great park facilities.

8. Shelter/Restroom Structure

The plan indicates a new shelter and restroom to be located on the southern end of the park to serve the ballfields, playground and basketball courts.

9. Other Improvements

- Improvements to the HVAC system and other improvements are necessary to the Recreation Center.
- A thorough evaluation needs to be performed of the trees with several needing to be removed.
- This park is one potential area for a disc golf course.

North Park

North Park also has several recommended improvements, including the following:

1. Ice Rink Improvements

The primary improvements at North Park revolve around the ice rink. The building facility is aging and does not function well. The attempt to serve both the pool and ice rink caused some compromises that will be corrected. Initially the compressor replacement is a very high priority to keep the facility operational. Secondly, new locker rooms should be developed, and the hockey league has prepared plans for this work. Then the entry area, concession area, existing restrooms and locker rooms should be upgraded. In addition, the removal of the pool facility will allow room to develop an appropriately sized party room, instead of the current converted storage room that has little space and no windows.

Long term, and of lower priority to the Steering Committee, was the total enclosure of the rink area. An additional study is needed to determine the feasibility and cost to perform this improvement.

2. Pool Demolition and Splash Pad

Because there is limited space to improve the pool to a proper family oriented facility at this location, a new family aquatic center is recommended at East Park to serve all of Elyria. Therefore, the North Pool should be demolished and a splash pad should be located there. The proposed party room for the ice rink could also serve as a party room for the splash pad.

3. Other Improvements

- The parking lots will need replaced in the long-term.
- Dugouts need improved on the large baseball field.
- Accessible walks should be developed to the playground.
- Little League North should pave the floor of the shelter and provide an accessible walk to meet ADA guidelines. Private organizations such as Little League are not exempt from the ADA Guidelines.

South Park

South Park also has several recommended improvements including the following:

1. Splash Pad and Pool Demolition

The current closed pool is an eyesore and safety hazard. The pool and bathhouse should be demolished and replaced with a modern splash pad and new restroom to serve it. This current location is well-served by the parking lot and highly visible.

2. Tennis Courts

The tennis courts need replacement of the surface, fences, and lights. Also, the walkways leading to them need to be widened and improved.

3. Perimeter Trail

A paved perimeter trail would provide opportunities for exercise. Walkers currently use the road. A trail around this park could be as long as one mile.

4. Other Improvements

- The playgrounds need upgraded and replaced with new edging and safety surface.
- All parking lots need replaced. The west lot is currently gravel.
- Add a new picnic shelter and restrooms in the west portion of the park. This area is a beautiful area with shade trees along the perimeter.
- This park is also a very good potential site for a disc golf course. This will provide low cost and low impact use of the open space in the park.

West Park

West Park will also be significantly improved as a result of this plan. The following are the recommended improvements.

1. Soccer Fields

The fields should have walkways for spectator accessibility. A new restroom is recommended to serve this area and the Little League West area. Drainage also needs to be improved in this area.

2. Charles Hoagland Recreation Center

The Recreation Center needs renovation of the roof/ceiling, entry area, and gym perimeter floor area.

3. Splash Pad

The old pool should be demolished and replaced with a splash pad and restroom facility. Shade structures should be incorporated into the design of the splash pad.

4. Parking Improvements

The parking lots need to be repaved.

5. Walkway Enhancements

The walkways leading to the fields, restrooms, shelters, and playgrounds must all be ADA accessible and must be a minimum of four feet wide, preferably 6 feet wide or more. In addition, a paved perimeter trail is proposed to provide a loop trail for exercise. A loop trail around this park would also provide access to other facilities and could be a 1.2 mile loop.

6. Ballfield Improvements

The softball field lights should be replaced. The newer technology is much more energy efficient and has significantly less spill light shining into the neighbors' homes. Little League West has requested lights on their fields, but this ranked at the bottom of the Steering Committee Capital Projects Priority Ranking process, likely because it was felt that the League should fund these improvements. A lease should be developed between the City and Little League West to allow the League to make improvements to their fields, similar to the Little League North agreement.

7. Other Improvements

- Develop 2 to 4 pickleball courts adjacent to the Recreation Center.
- Develop a picnic shelter between the splash pad and skate park.
- Potential to add outdoor fitness equipment near the Recreation Center.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Academy Court Park

Academy Court Park also has several recommended improvements including the following:

- Enter into a lease with the youth football league to allow them to make improvements to the property.
- Improve the youth football field with spectator areas, bleachers, restroom/concession building.
- In addition to youth football, improve the park to serve as a Neighborhood Park with a playground, walking trails, picnic shelter, basketball court, and other improvements.
- Develop a paved parking lot to serve the football field and park area.
- This site also is a good location for outdoor fitness equipment along the trail.
- Install an entry sign.

Hilltop Park

Hilltop Park also has several recommended improvements including the following:

- The tennis courts and fencing should be replaced.
- Replace the aging picnic shelters and restrooms and add electric outlets and drinking fountains with hose bibs at the shelters.
- Repave the parking lots.
- Replace the playground.
- Upgrade the basketball court.

SPECIAL USE PARKS

Finwood Estate and Finwood Forest

The recommendations for this property should follow the recommendations of the 2001 Master Plan for Finwood Estate and Finwood Forest, including the following:

1. Finwood Estate

- Upgrade the home HVAC system
- Develop a new pavilion with restrooms that can be used for summer camps, weddings, nature education, and other activities.
- Develop a trail and boardwalk to traverse the wet areas and to provide safer access to the scenic stream.
- Develop a scenic overlook of the stream area located north of the home.
- Develop trails and a trailhead with signage, a parking lot, and a picnic shelter on Burns Road.

2. Finwood Forest

- The previous plan recommended a shelter renovation, but the shelter has since been removed following flood damage. A new shelter should be installed.
- Replace the footbridge across the stream.
- Improve trail access to Hilltop Park. Steps and railings may be needed in some areas to traverse steep slopes.

Ely Square

The recommended improvements include the following:

- Replace the fountain with one which uses modern LED lighting, sequencing, and fountain technology. The 1981 fountain has several issues. A new fountain may require a pump house which should be carefully located and screened to reduce its visual impact on the park.
- Expand the irrigation in the park to include all lawn and planting beds.

MINI PARKS

Abbe Road Park

Abbe Road Park has several recommended improvements including the following:

- Replace the basketball court and goals.
- Replace the playground.
- Improve the parking lot.
- Provide a paved path between the parking lot to the playground, basketball court, and extending to the sidewalk on Abbe Road.

Bell Avenue Tot Lot

The Bell Avenue Tot Lot should have the playground replaced with new edging and a walkway leading to the playground. New signage is also needed.

Washington Village Park

Washington Village Park recommended improvements include the following:

- Replace the basketball court and goals.
- Replace the playground with expanded fall zones.
- Install walkways to the playground and basketball court.
- Install a picnic shelter with accessible walkway.
- Pave the driveway and parking lot.

Westway Garden Park

Due to the constant vandalism of any facilities the City has attempted to install at this park, it is recommended to remove all improvements and allow this area to reestablish as a nature area.

OPEN SPACE/NATURE PARKS

The City of Elyria currently has three park properties that lack any recreational facilities. These include the Lake Ave Open Space, Finwood Forest, and Audubon Park. Finwood Forest is discussed with the Finwood Estate. The Lake Avenue Open Space has no proposed improvements. Audubon Park is discussed below.

Audubon Park

Audubon Park along the Black River is a natural area. It would benefit from the development of a boardwalk/overlook of the river, cleanup of the river bank, and possibly the addition of a gazebo as a focal point to draw attention to the park. Native species could be planted in the open area. A volunteer base should be expanded to adopt this park.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Some recommendations are more general or are planning related and are not included in the list of capital improvements for each facility. These items are included at the bottom in the cost estimate table. For example, master plans are desired to involve the communities in improvements to South, East, and West Parks. The City of Elyria should conduct an ADA Accessibility Assessment of all facilities, programs, and communications. This assessment could be conducted by trained staff or an outside consultant and could extend beyond parks and recreation. Additionally, signage with wayfinding should be installed at all parks. Finally, the City should implement the recommendations of the 2009 *City of Elyria: Greenway and Trail Master Plan*.

TOTAL PARK IMPROVEMENT COSTS

The total cost for all improvements will depend on which of the recommendations are ultimately implemented. However, the total cost for the projects described above comes to approximately \$22.7 million. Grant opportunities exist and should be explored for many of these improvements, helping to reduce the required contributions by the City of Elyria. Some grants can cover substantial portions of the total project cost. Additionally, partnerships, including fundraising by interest groups or the sale of naming rights, should be considered as part of any improvement, particularly those with substantial capital costs. The City of Elyria may need to consider other funding mechanisms in order to finance all of the capital costs for these proposed improvements.

ORDER OF MAGNITUDE CAPITAL PROJECT ESTIMATES

The following project costs (Table VII-1) are order-of-magnitude cost estimates for the improvements described previously in this section of the Master Plan. The estimated project costs below are presented in order of descending cost. For a full list project priorities, see the Action Plan in Section VIII. The cost estimates provided below were determined using actual cost from previous projects, in conjunction with *RSMeans Site Work & Landscape Cost Data*.²⁰ All costs are estimated in 2016 dollars.

²⁰ *RSMeans Site Work and Landscape Cost Data*. 34th Annual ed. Norwell, MA: RSMeans, 2014. Print.

Figure VII-1: East Park Concept

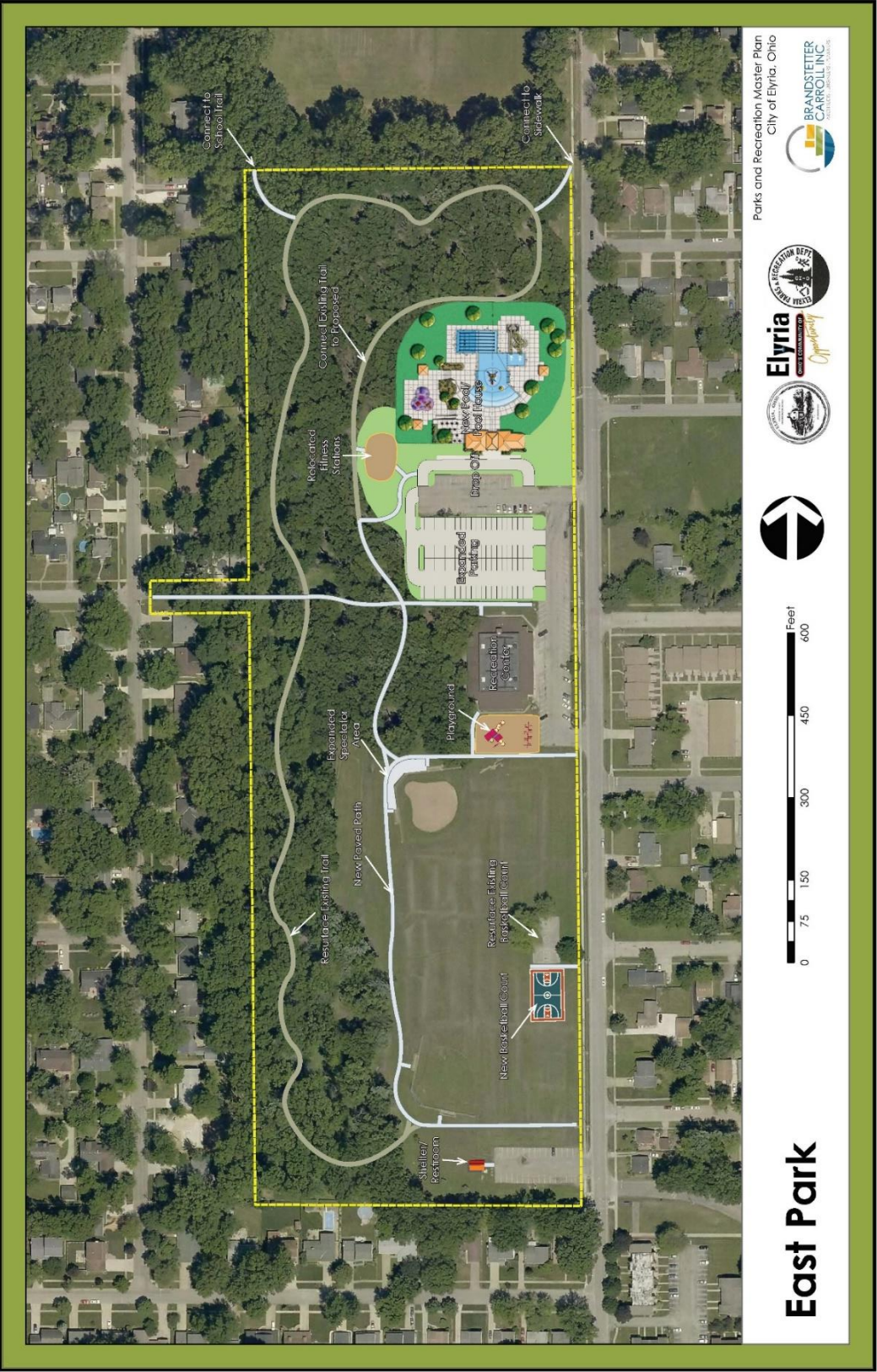


Table VII-1: Capital Project Estimates

Park Type/ Park Name	Timeframe (Years)			Total
	0-2	3-5	6-10	
Community Parks				
East Park				
1 New Family Aquatic Center with Splash Pad		\$5,000,000		\$5,000,000
2 Recreation Center renovation/HVAC	\$475,000			\$475,000
3 Recreation Center finishes			\$285,000	\$285,000
4 Paved Walkways (all access)		\$185,000		\$185,000
5 New playground		\$150,000		\$150,000
6 Restroom/shelter building		\$125,000		\$125,000
7 Recreation Center Electric Upgrade			\$95,000	\$95,000
8 New Parking		\$90,000		\$90,000
9 Resurfaced Parking	\$67,000			\$67,000
10 Pool demolition		\$60,000		\$60,000
11 Landscaping		\$50,000		\$50,000
12 New basketball court		\$30,000		\$30,000
13 Relocate outdoor fitness equipment		\$20,000		\$20,000
14 Electric service		\$13,500		\$13,500
15 Security cameras	\$12,000			\$12,000
16 Water service		\$11,000		\$11,000
17 Drinking fountains with spigots		\$9,000		\$9,000
18 Sewer service		\$6,000		\$6,000
19 Wi-Fi hotspots		\$5,000		\$5,000
20 Bike racks		\$2,400		\$2,400
Subtotal for Construction	\$554,000	\$5,757,000	\$380,000	\$6,691,000
Contingency (10%)	\$55,400	\$575,700	\$38,000	\$669,100
Construction Total	\$609,000	\$6,333,000	\$418,000	\$7,360,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$73,080	\$759,960	\$50,160	\$883,200
Project Total	\$682,000	\$7,093,000	\$468,000	\$8,243,000
North Park				
1 Enclose the ice rink (walls, HVAC, Insulation)			\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000
2 Resurfaced Parking			\$400,000	\$400,000
3 Sprayground		\$400,000		\$400,000
4 Ice rink building improvements	\$360,000			\$360,000
5 Ice rink compressor	\$350,000			\$350,000
6 Ice rink new locker rooms	\$100,000			\$100,000
7 New playground (long term)			\$75,000	\$75,000
8 Pool demolition		\$60,000		\$60,000
9 Landscaping		\$25,000		\$25,000
10 Security cameras	\$12,000			\$12,000
11 Wi-Fi hotspots		\$10,000		\$10,000
12 Drinking fountains with spigots	\$6,000			\$6,000
13 Bike racks	\$5,000			\$5,000
14 Walkways (all access)	\$3,000			\$3,000
Subtotal for Construction	\$836,000	\$495,000	\$1,875,000	\$3,206,000
Contingency (10%)	\$83,600	\$49,500	\$187,500	\$320,600
Construction Total	\$920,000	\$545,000	\$2,063,000	\$3,527,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$110,400	\$65,400	\$247,560	\$423,240
Project Total	\$1,030,000	\$610,000	\$2,311,000	\$3,950,000

Park Type/ Park Name	Timeframe (Years)			Total
	0-2	3-5	6-10	
South Park				
1 New Splash Pad	\$400,000			\$400,000
2 Replace Playgrounds			\$150,000	\$150,000
3 Restroom/shelter building (at sprayground)	\$125,000			\$125,000
4 Restroom/shelter building (in west area)			\$125,000	\$125,000
5 Upgrade tennis court and fencing	\$120,000			\$120,000
6 Parking repaving		\$98,000		\$98,000
7 Perimeter trail (all-purpose) - 1.0 miles			\$94,000	\$94,000
8 Replace tennis lighting	\$80,000			\$80,000
9 Outdoor fitness equipment			\$60,000	\$60,000
10 Pool demolition	\$60,000			\$60,000
11 Upgrade west parking to paved		\$25,000		\$25,000
12 Landscaping		\$25,000		\$25,000
13 Sewer service to new restroom/shelter			\$25,000	\$25,000
14 Electric service to new shelter			\$22,500	\$23,000
15 Water service to new shelter/restroom			\$20,000	\$20,000
16 Security cameras	\$12,000			\$12,000
17 Drinking fountains with spigots	\$12,000			\$12,000
18 Walkways (all access)	\$9,000			\$9,000
19 Sewer Manholes			\$8,000	\$8,000
20 Wi-Fi hotspots		\$5,000		\$5,000
21 Bike racks	\$2,400			\$2,400
Subtotal for Construction	\$820,000	\$153,000	\$505,000	\$1,478,000
Contingency (10%)	\$82,000	\$15,300	\$50,500	\$147,800
Construction Total	\$902,000	\$168,000	\$556,000	\$1,626,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$108,240	\$20,160	\$66,720	\$195,120
Project Total	\$1,010,000	\$188,000	\$623,000	\$1,821,000
West Park				
1 Softball fields lighting replacement		\$800,000		\$800,000
2 New splash pad	\$400,000			\$400,000
3 Recreation Center renovations - floor, ceiling, roof, entry	\$350,000			\$350,000
4 New playground			\$300,000	\$300,000
5 Repave north parking	\$210,000			\$210,000
6 Restroom/shelter building (at sprayground)	\$125,000			\$125,000
7 Restroom at soccer/Little League area		\$120,000		\$120,000
8 Perimeter trail (all-purpose) - 1.2 miles	\$113,000			\$113,000
9 Pave spectator areas at ball fields	\$104,000			\$104,000
10 Repave south parking	\$103,000			\$103,000
11 Soccer Field Drainage Improvements	\$80,000			\$80,000
12 Pool demolition	\$60,000			\$60,000
13 Outdoor fitness equipment			\$60,000	\$60,000
14 New shelter between skate park and splash pad	\$60,000			\$60,000
15 Landscaping		\$50,000		\$50,000
16 Walkways (all access)	\$45,000			\$45,000
17 Four new pickleball courts			\$40,000	\$40,000
18 Electric service			\$15,000	\$15,000
19 Wi-Fi hotspots		\$15,000		\$15,000
20 Sewer service to new restroom		\$13,000		\$13,000
21 Security cameras		\$12,000		\$12,000
22 Drinking fountains with spigots	\$12,000			\$12,000

Park Type/ Park Name	Timeframe (Years)			Total
	0-2	3-5	6-10	
23 Water service to new restroom		\$10,500		\$11,000
24 Bike racks	\$2,400			\$2,400
Subtotal for Construction	\$1,664,000	\$1,021,000	\$415,000	\$3,100,000
Contingency (10%)	\$166,400	\$102,100	\$41,500	\$310,000
Construction Total	\$1,830,000	\$1,123,000	\$457,000	\$3,410,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$219,600	\$134,760	\$54,840	\$409,200
Project Total	\$2,050,000	\$1,258,000	\$512,000	\$3,819,000

Neighborhood Parks

Academy Court Park

1 Concession/Restroom Building			\$120,000	\$120,000
2 New playground			\$100,000	\$100,000
3 Parking	\$100,000			\$100,000
4 Shelter			\$60,000	\$60,000
5 Landscaping			\$50,000	\$50,000
6 Perimeter trail (all-purpose) - 0.45 miles			\$41,000	\$41,000
7 New basketball court			\$30,000	\$30,000
8 Electric service			\$15,000	\$15,000
9 Walkways (all access)			\$15,000	\$15,000
10 Sewer service			\$13,000	\$13,000
11 Security cameras			\$12,000	\$12,000
12 Drinking fountains with spigots			\$12,000	\$12,000
13 Water service			\$10,500	\$10,500
14 Wi-Fi hotspots			\$5,000	\$5,000
15 Bike racks			\$1,200	\$1,200
Subtotal for Construction	\$100,000	\$0	\$485,000	\$585,000
Contingency (10%)	\$10,000	\$0	\$48,500	\$58,500
Construction Total	\$110,000	\$0	\$534,000	\$644,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$13,200	\$0	\$64,080	\$77,280
Project Total	\$123,000	\$0	\$598,000	\$721,000

Hilltop Park

1 New playground			\$150,000	\$150,000
2 water fountain		\$120,000		\$120,000
3 Replace restroom building		\$100,000		\$100,000
4 Resurfaced parking	\$86,000			\$86,000
5 Upgrade tennis courts - fencing and surfacing	\$50,000			\$50,000
6 Landscaping			\$50,000	\$50,000
7 New basketball court			\$30,000	\$30,000
8 Electric service		\$13,500		\$13,500
9 tennis courts)	\$9,000			\$9,000
10 Water service		\$8,000		\$8,000
11 Security cameras		\$6,000		\$6,000
12 Drinking fountains with spigots	\$6,000			\$6,000
13 Wi-Fi hotspots		\$5,000		\$5,000
14 Bike racks	\$1,200			\$1,200
Subtotal for Construction	\$152,000	\$253,000	\$230,000	\$635,000
Contingency (10%)	\$15,200	\$25,300	\$23,000	\$63,500
Construction Total	\$167,000	\$278,000	\$253,000	\$699,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$20,040	\$33,360	\$30,360	\$83,880
Project Total	\$187,000	\$311,000	\$283,000	\$783,000

Park Type/ Park Name	Timeframe (Years)			Total
	0-2	3-5	6-10	
Mini Parks				
Abbe Road Park				
1 New playground		\$75,000		\$75,000
2 New basketball court		\$30,000		\$30,000
3 Walkways (all access)	\$21,000			\$21,000
4 Parking improvements			\$2,000	\$2,000
5 Landscaping			\$5,000	\$5,000
6 Water service		\$4,600		\$5,000
7 Drinking fountains with spigots		\$3,000		\$3,000
8 Bike racks		\$1,200		\$1,200
Subtotal for Construction	\$21,000	\$114,000	\$7,000	\$142,000
Contingency (10%)	\$2,100	\$11,400	\$700	\$14,200
Construction Total	\$23,000	\$125,000	\$8,000	\$156,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$2,760	\$15,000	\$960	\$18,720
Project Total	\$26,000	\$140,000	\$9,000	\$175,000
Bell Avenue Tot Lot				
1 New playground			\$75,000	\$75,000
2 Landscaping			\$10,000	\$10,000
3 Walkways (all access)	\$6,000			\$6,000
Subtotal for Construction	\$6,000	\$0	\$85,000	\$91,000
Contingency (10%)	\$600	\$0	\$8,500	\$9,100
Construction Total	\$7,000	\$0	\$94,000	\$100,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$840	\$0	\$11,280	\$12,000
Project Total	\$8,000	\$0	\$105,000	\$112,000
Washington Village Park				
1 New playground			\$75,000	\$75,000
2 Replace basketball court			\$30,000	\$30,000
3 Landscaping			\$10,000	\$10,000
4 Walkways (all access)	\$8,000			\$8,000
5 Paved parking			\$5,000	\$5,000
Subtotal for Construction	\$8,000	\$0	\$120,000	\$128,000
Contingency (10%)	\$800	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,800
Construction Total	\$8,800	\$0	\$132,000	\$141,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$1,056	\$0	\$15,840	\$16,920
Project Total	\$10,000	\$0	\$148,000	\$158,000
Westway Garden Park				
1 Demolish existing playground, shelter, benches		\$6,000		\$6,000
2 Reestablish natural area.		\$6,000		\$6,000
Subtotal for Construction	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
Contingency (10%)	\$0	\$1,200	\$0	\$1,200
Construction Total	\$0	\$13,000	\$0	\$13,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$0	\$1,560	\$0	\$1,560
Project Total	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000

Park Type/ Park Name	Timeframe (Years)			Total
	0-2	3-5	6-10	
Special Use Parks				
Ely Square				
1 New fountain	\$750,000			\$750,000
2 Plaza improvements	\$150,000			\$150,000
3 Irrigation expansion	\$50,000			\$50,000
Subtotal for Construction	\$950,000	\$0	\$0	\$950,000
Contingency (10%)	\$95,000	\$0	\$0	\$95,000
Construction Total	\$1,045,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,045,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$125,400	\$0	\$0	\$125,400
Project Total	\$1,170,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,170,000
Finwood Estate				
1 Restroom/shelter building with utilities		\$150,000		\$150,000
2 Boardwalk at wetland			\$150,000	\$150,000
3 Perimeter trail (all-purpose) - 1.1 miles			\$22,000	\$22,000
4 Upgrade home HVAC	\$20,000			\$20,000
5 Widen the entry road			\$15,000	\$15,000
6 Overlook			\$10,000	\$10,000
Burns Road Area				
1 Picnic shelter with utilities			\$50,000	\$50,000
2 Paved Trail (6' wide)			\$24,000	\$24,000
3 Mulch trail			\$18,000	\$18,000
4 Overlook			\$10,000	\$10,000
5 Parking			\$6,000	\$6,000
6 Steps			\$4,000	\$4,000
7 Signage			\$1,500	\$1,500
Subtotal for Construction	\$20,000	\$150,000	\$311,000	\$481,000
Contingency (10%)	\$2,000	\$15,000	\$31,100	\$48,100
Construction Total	\$22,000	\$165,000	\$342,000	\$529,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$2,640	\$19,800	\$41,040	\$63,480
Project Total	\$25,000	\$185,000	\$383,000	\$592,000
Nature Parks/Open Space				
Black River Audubon Park				
Alternative 1				
1 Two diamond fields with lighting and restroom				\$1,000,000
2 Parking lot				\$225,000
3 Perimeter trail (two loops) - 1.1 miles				\$160,000
4 Playground				\$150,000
5 Shelter/restroom building (south of parking)				\$150,000
6 Picnic shelter (at playground)				\$80,000
7 Entrance road				\$60,000
8 Three large rectangular fields				\$60,000
9 Sewer service				\$40,000
10 Landscaping				\$35,000
11 Water service				\$30,000
12 Walkways (all-access)				\$25,000
13 Electric service				\$25,000
14 Nature trail				\$15,000
15 Security cameras				\$15,000
16 Drinking fountains with spigots				\$12,000

Park Type/ Park Name	Timeframe (Years)			Total
	0-2	3-5	6-10	
17 Wi-Fi hotspots				\$10,000
18 Bike racks				\$4,000
Subtotal for Construction				\$2,096,000
Contingency (10%)				\$209,600
Construction Total				\$2,305,600
Design/survey/bidding (12%)				\$276,672
Project Total				\$2,582,272
Alternative 2				
1 Gazebo			\$25,000	\$25,000
2 Overlook			\$20,000	\$20,000
3 Selective clearing			\$5,000	\$5,000
4 Signage			\$1,500	\$1,500
5 Native Landscaping			\$10,000	\$10,000
Subtotal for Construction	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
Contingency (10%)	\$0	\$0	\$6,200	\$6,200
Construction Total	\$0	\$0	\$68,000	\$68,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)	\$0	\$0	\$8,160	\$8,160
Project Total	\$0	\$0	\$76,000	\$76,000
Finwood Forest				
1 New bridge			\$60,000	\$60,000
2 New bridge at Hilltop			\$60,000	\$60,000
3 Paved trail and grading			\$30,000	\$30,000
4 Steps			\$3,000	\$3,000
5 Ramp to Bowl amphitheater area			\$14,000	\$14,000
6 Rustic amphitheater with grading			\$20,000	\$20,000
7 Small footbridge			\$8,000	\$8,000
Subtotal for Construction			\$195,000	\$195,000
Contingency (10%)			\$19,500	\$19,500
Construction Total			\$215,000	\$215,000
Design/survey/bidding (12%)			\$25,800	\$25,800
Project Total			\$241,000	\$241,000
Other Improvements				
Parks and Recreation Department				
1 ADA Accessibility Assessment	\$20,000			\$20,000
2 New Parks & Rec Maintenance Complex (Unknown location and cost)	\$250,000			\$250,000
3 Signage for wayfinding at all parks	\$30,000			\$30,000
4 Master Plan for East Park	\$20,000			\$20,000
5 Master Plan for South Park	\$20,000			\$20,000
6 East Park Tree Analysis	\$10,000			\$10,000
7 Master Plan for West Park	\$15,000			\$15,000
8 Master Plan for North Park Ice rink	\$25,000			\$25,000
9 \$50,000)	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
Project Totals	\$490,000	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$890,000
Total (All Projects)	\$6,811,000	\$9,950,000	\$6,007,000	\$22,768,000

VIII. ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

The table (Table VIII-1, Action Plan) on the following pages details the recommendations of this Master Plan and should serve as direction for the Elyria City Council and Parks and Recreation Board regarding the implementation of this Plan. A total of four goals, 23 objectives, and 130 strategies are outlined in this Action Plan. The legend at the top of the table identifies the abbreviations used throughout the table in columns for "Responsibility" and "Funding Source."

The table identifies each goal, followed by a series of objectives to meet those goals. Strategies further describe how to meet each objective and represent specific actions for the City of Elyria to make. Check marks indicate the timeframe for the completion of each strategy 0-2 years, 3-5 years, or 6-10 years. Some strategies are indicated as "Ongoing" as they apply to all time frames or represent more general actions that should always be considered. A total for strategies by timeframe can be found at the end of the table.

The three columns at the right of the table provide information regarding the implementation of each strategy. "Responsibility" indicates the organization or agency that is should lead implementation of the recommendation. "Category" describes the type of action within the following five options: capital (capital improvements), policy (guidelines for Parks and Recreation, and City Council, possibly including legislation), planning (long-term parks outlook, could include conduction of a study), or operations (Parks and Recreation actions). "Funding Source" indicates how the strategy should be funded or the type of funds used. For example, CIP indicates that funds come from a source related to Capital Improvement Project Funds, including existing or future revenue sources.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RANKING

The Master Plan Steering Committee and community leaders reviewed the potential solutions and recommendations of the Master Plan and then participated in an exercise to help establish capital priorities for the Action Plan. Committee members were asked to rank each of the potential improvement projects with a High Priority (3), Medium Priority (2), Low Priority (1), or Not Needed (0).

The priority ranking was used to indicate the importance of the improvements and not necessarily the order in which they would be developed. Table VIII-2, located after the Action Plan, identifies the capital improvement ranking based on the average of the ranking for each item. These rankings were used as part of the process for recommending priorities, along with public input and analyses completed throughout this master planning process.

Table VIII-1: Action Plan

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations							
Parks = Elyria Parks and Recreation Department	County = Lorain County Metro Parks						
City = City Council, Other City Departments (Building, Police, Engineering, etc.)	CIP = Capital Project Funds						
OP = City Operating Budget	Schools = Elyria City Schools						
Partners = Other organizations (businesses, civic associations, state/federal grants, etc.)							
Goal 1: Provide a Modernized and Improved Park and Recreation System							
Modernize the parks and recreation system to improve the quality of facilities, accessibility, and user experiences. All park and program users should feel welcome, safe, and valued. The City will invest in the future of parks for its residents.							
Objective 1.1. Maintain continued enthusiasm for parks and recreation system improvements through the implementation of this plan.							
Strategy 1.1.1: Formally recognize this Master Plan as the guiding document for parks and recreation improvements following presentations to the Steering Committee and City Council.	✓				Policy	City	
Strategy 1.1.2: Establish an implementation committee to monitor timelines and ensure continued enthusiasm for Master Plan goals and recommendations.	✓				Planning	Parks, City	
Strategy 1.1.3: Update this Plan at intervals not exceeding five years to review progress made and any changes in priorities.			✓	✓	Policy, Planning	Parks, City	CIP, OP
Strategy 1.1.4: Reference this Master Plan in future updates to the City Comprehensive Plan.		Ongoing			Planning	City	CIP, OP
Objective 1.2. Upgrade existing facilities to modern standards to ensure that they continue to serve citizens into the future, including meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines.							
Strategy 1.2.1: Prepare more detailed Development Plans for East, North, South, and West Parks to ensure that the improvements meet the long-term needs of Elyria residents.	✓				Planning	Parks, City	CIP, OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 1.2.2: Focus initial focus toward improvements to existing, key facilities such as the recreation centers, ice rink, trails, playgrounds, game courts, picnic shelters, and athletic fields.	✓				Capital, Policy	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure that the addition of needed support facilities, including walkways, restrooms, signage, and drinking fountains, are included as part of any park improvement project.		Ongoing			Policy	Parks, City	OP, CIP
Strategy 1.2.4: Perform an ADA Accessibility Assessment of all facilities, programs, and communications (accomplished by trained staff or an outside consultant).	✓				Planning	Parks, City	CIP, OP
Strategy 1.2.5: Repave the parking lots and driveways at all parks, initially at East, Hilltop, and South Parks, then West and North, followed by the Neighborhood Parks.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.7: Add drinking fountains as needed at all existing parks.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.8: Provide an accessible route to all athletic fields, spectator areas, playgrounds, picnic shelters, etc.	✓				Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.9: Develop a restroom to serve the West Park soccer and Little League fields.		✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.10: Upgrade all playgrounds to have adequate safety fall zones and install concrete borders between the safety surface and the adjacent lawn to maintain a quality appearance over a long period.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.11: Replace the aging picnic shelters at Hilltop Park.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP

ACTION PLAN								
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies								
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source	
Strategy 1.2.12: Add new locker rooms to North Park Ice Rink, refurbish the lobby, concession, locker and restrooms, add a more inviting and functional party room once the pool is removed.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP	
Strategy 1.2.13: Resurface the courts and replace the fencing and lighting at the tennis courts at Hilltop and South Parks.	✓				Capital	Parks, City	CIP	
Strategy 1.2.14: Establish a schedule to replace all playgrounds at existing parks.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP	
Strategy 1.2.15: Upgrade the Academy Court site to a Neighborhood Park with walking trails, playground, picnic shelter, and a quality football field. (The football fields could be partially developed by the football league if land is leased to them with the Neighborhood Park representing the rest of the site.)			✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP	
Strategy 1.2.16: Make the needed improvements at the East and West Recreation Centers to improve the HVAC systems, interior surfaces, roofs, etc. to allow these facilities to continue serving Elyria into the future.	✓				Capital	Parks, City	CIP	
Strategy 1.2.17: Upgrade the basketball courts at Hilltop, Washington Village, Abbe Road, and West Parks and add a second court at East Park (Existing court being upgraded currently).	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP	
Strategy 1.2.18: Improve the drainage at West Park soccer fields.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP	

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Objective 1.3. Investigate creative funding mechanisms to ensure continuous improvements to parks and recreation service delivery.							
Strategy 1.3.1: Allocate a higher percentage of the City budget (currently approximately 1.6% of General Fund) for parks and recreation.		Ongoing			Policy	City	OP
Strategy 1.3.2: Pursue grants (state, federal, local, and non-profit sources) for development and operation of parks and recreation facilities and programs.		Ongoing			Policy	Parks, City, Partner	OP
Strategy 1.3.3: Encourage the creation of a Friends of Elyria Parks foundation to recruit and organize volunteers, to raise funds and apply for grants, and to work toward the implementation of improvements outlined in this Master Plan.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks, Partner	OP
Strategy 1.3.4: Consider selling naming rights to facilities to help mitigate capital and operating costs, including rights to whole facilities or to areas within a facility (shelters, fields, courts, etc.).		Ongoing			Policy	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 1.3.5: Utilize fees to provide a level of cost recovery for classes and programs as they are established.		Ongoing			Policy	Parks	OP
Strategy 1.3.6: Consider whether to place a levy on the ballot to establish a revenue source for the proposed improvements		Ongoing			Policy	City	OP
Strategy 1.3.7: Recruit sponsors for larger programs and events to offset costs.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Objective 1.4. Pursue the development of unique facilities and programs that take advantage of the City's location and draw people to the community.							
Strategy 1.4.1: Emphasize high quality sports field complexes to support multiple sports and increase the opportunities for tournaments and draw visitors (and economic activity) to Elyria.					Policy	Parks, City	CIP, OP
Strategy 1.4.2: Upgrade the lighting at the West Park Softball Fields.		✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 1.4.3: Redevelop East Park to include a modern Family Aquatic Center.		✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 1.4.4: Develop splash pads at West, South, and North Parks.	✓				Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 1.4.5: Pursue the development of a full-service recreation and senior center (most likely with partners), once the existing parks are all brought up to modern standards.				✓	Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 1.4.6: Develop a large, all-access, destination playground in one of the parks, or in conjunction with Metro Parks at Cascade Park.		✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 1.4.7: Develop a quality football complex at the Academy Court Park site with bleachers, concession/restroom building, and ample parking.			✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 1.4.8: Develop a dog park to serve the City. (Potential sites would include South Park or a new site.)			✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 1.4.9: Develop a disc golf course at an existing park, possibly once the wooded area is thinned at East Park or at South Park. (Consider this option in the Master Plan phase for each park).			✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Objective 1.5. Develop a more effective Park and Recreation Board through education, orientation, recruitment and training.							
Strategy 1.5.1: Develop a clear identification of the Park and Recreation Board members' roles and responsibilities, including committee assignments, charters, and expectations.		Ongoing			Policy	City	OP
Strategy 1.5.2: Provide opportunities for continued Park and Recreation Board member training through OPRA, in-house orientations, or programs of other organizations.		Ongoing			Policy	City	OP
Strategy 1.5.3: Establish advisory groups and Board sub-committees for various parks and programs, including some non-Board participants, to guide and promote specific projects or initiatives (such as for the individual park master plans).		Ongoing			Policy	City	OP
Goal 2: Utilize Connectivity to Promote Linkages between the Community and Gathering Places							
Improve connectivity and engagement to promote community cohesion and a sense of togetherness.							
Objective 2.1. Employ parks and programs to encourage community connectivity and identity through shared experiences.							
Strategy 2.1.1: Encourage the use of community bulletin boards at parks for the promotion of events and programs to improve awareness of programming opportunities.	✓				Capital, Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 2.1.2: Consider developing outdoor facilities for senior programs (such as pickleball and bocce courts) at East and/or West Parks to support the senior programs.			✓		Planning, Capital	Parks, City	OP, CIP
Strategy 2.1.3: Develop an amphitheater in a central location, potentially in conjunction with Metro Parks in Cascade Park, to host concerts to bring the community together.		✓			Planning, Capital	Parks, City	OP, CIP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 2.1.4: Develop senior programs in a vacant building or storefront until a future time when an indoor full-service recreation and senior center can be developed. (Facility areas should include a game (billiard) room, kitchen, fitness equipment room, library, craft room, computer room, and open indoor meeting and program space.)		✓			Planning, Capital	Parks, City	OP, CIP
Objective 2.2: Provide places to gather and interact that are accessible and welcoming to users of all ages and ability levels.							
Strategy 2.2.1: Provide additional landscaping within parks to improve their appearance and to provide additional shade for park users.	✓	✓			Operations	Parks	OP, CIP
Strategy 2.2.2: Redevelop the fountain in Ely Square to allow for additional community event use and ensure that the proposed design allows for use of the space when the fountain is off.	✓				Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partners
Strategy 2.2.3: Develop an amphitheater with an event lawn for large events in Cascade Park and partner with Lorain County Metro Parks on the scheduling of the facility.		✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP, County
Strategy 2.2.4: Utilize the amphitheater and event space, if developed, for a series of events, including concerts, throughout the year.		✓			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 2.2.5: Develop additional picnic shelters at existing parks (East, South, West, & Hilltop Parks)	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 2.2.6: Ensure that all trailheads are lighted and include signage with wayfinding that displays color coding of routes, difficulty levels, trail lengths, and type of surface (paved or unpaved).	✓	✓	✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 2.2.7: Provide maps that identify the routes with difficulty levels at all trailheads.	✓	✓			Operations	Parks	OP
Objective 2.3. Promote connectivity both within the parks and in the community as a whole for all modes of transportation using a combination of trails, sidewalks, and signage.							
Strategy 2.3.1: Revisit the 2009 Greenway and Trails Master Plan to determine the alignment (and prioritization) for major routes, shorter connecting trails, sidewalk improvements, and on-road elements.	✓				Planning	City	OP
Strategy 2.3.2: Investigate opportunities to complete the segment of the North Coast Inland Trail to the Black River Trail through the City of Elyria.	✓	✓	✓		Policy	City, Partner	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.3.3: Include trails as part of the development of all new parks.		Ongoing			Capital, Planning	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 2.3.4: Improve connectivity within parks through added walkways and connecting paths between park facilities and trails.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 2.3.5: Ensure that trail developments at parks include both paved and unpaved trails to meet the wide variety of trail needs in the community.		Ongoing			Policy, Planning	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 2.3.6: Incorporate paved trails at Elyria parks into the citywide trails system whenever possible to provide better connectivity in the community and to reduce trail development costs.		Ongoing			Capital, Planning	Parks, City	CIP, Partners
Strategy 2.3.7: Continuously monitor trends and make accommodations for new modes of transportation within parks and throughout the City.		Ongoing			Planning	Parks, City	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Objective 2.4. Utilize these trails to provide opportunities for health and fitness and to connect parks, schools, neighborhoods, and other gathering places.							
Strategy 2.4.1: Develop connections between parks, schools, neighborhoods, and other gathering places.		Ongoing			Policy, Planning	City, Parks, Schools	OP, CIP
Strategy 2.4.2: Identify and develop trail connections between parks and disconnected but adjacent streets to improve both access to parks and neighborhood connectivity.	✓	✓			Capital, Planning	City, Parks	CIP, OP
Strategy 2.4.3: Coordinate with neighboring communities as part of long-term trail planning.		Ongoing			Planning	City, Partners	OP
Strategy 2.4.4: Develop all-purpose, paved perimeter loop trails at East, South, West, and Academy Court Parks.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Objective 2.5. Connect residents through the programming of events which are publicized electronically and accessible online.							
Strategy 2.5.1: Encourage the use of community bulletin boards at parks for the promotion of events and programs to improve awareness of programming opportunities.		Ongoing			Capital, Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 2.5.2: Provide Wi-Fi hotspots in all Neighborhood and Community Parks with initial focus on the most used parks (East, West, South, and North Parks and Ely Square).	✓	✓	✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 2.5.3: Develop, promote, and regularly update a mobile application (smart phone/tablet app) to communicate program offerings and improve park experiences (event information, park/trail maps).		✓			Capital, Operations	Parks, City	CIP, OP
Strategy 2.5.4: Utilize this app to encourage fitness in the community, to connect park users interested in gathering for exercise, and to connect to a master schedule for athletic events (including those rescheduled because of rain).		✓			Operations	Parks	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 2.5.5: Actively promote park improvements and new program offerings as they become available.	Ongoing				Operations	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 2.5.6: Institute online registration procedures for citizen convenience.	Ongoing				Operations	Parks, City	OP
Objective 2.6. Pursue partnerships to maximize efficiency, build community support, and to cross-promote facilities and programs.							
Strategy 2.6.1: Seek partnerships to provide programs that require facilities not offered by the City of Elyria.	Ongoing				Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 2.6.2: Establish partnerships for both the procurement of funding for capital improvements and for the operation of new facilities, particularly for high cost projects.	Ongoing				Planning	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 2.6.3: Explore partnership opportunities with the Lorain County Metro Parks, schools, and/or LCCC for nature programs at one of the City Parks or possibility in Cascade Park.	✓	✓			Operations	Parks, County, Schools	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.6.4: Explore expanded partnerships with Elyria City Schools for the use of gymnasium space and other school facilities.	Ongoing				Capital	Parks, City, Schools	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.6.5: Seek opportunities to team up with community groups (such as the Boy and Girl Scouts) to accomplish goals in this Master Plan, particularly passive recreation improvements.	Ongoing				Capital	Parks, City	CIP, Partner
Strategy 2.6.6: Seek opportunities for collaboration with other organizations to improve the number and variety of program offerings and to help fill program deficiencies	Ongoing				Operations	Parks	OP, Partner

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 2.6.7: Maintain and expand existing relationships with private recreation providers and develop relationships with any future providers to expand the availability of opportunities in the City.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.6.8: Maintain existing relationships with organizations that manage the youth sports leagues, and seek new partners for the management of new sports leagues as interest grows.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.6.9: Continuously attempt to identify potential partners in the development and operations of a full service recreation and senior center.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.6.10: Require detailed documentation of funding sources and operating strategies (pro-forma) as part of any partnership for facility operation.		Ongoing			Operations, Policy	Parks	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.6.11: Seek partnerships with healthcare providers to increase availability of programs related to health and wellness for all ages.		Ongoing			Policy	Parks, Partners	OP
Strategy 2.6.12: Continue to coordinate with the Lorain County Metro Parks as part of long-term park and trail planning.		Ongoing			Policy	City, County	OP, County
Objective 2.7: Encourage community connectivity by increasing awareness of available parks, programs, and events (existing and new as available) through online publication, promotion, and registration.							
Strategy 2.7.1: Utilize social media to promote programs and events to residents and visitors.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 2.7.2: Work with other agencies and organizations to improve awareness of programming opportunities and to coordinate offerings to avoid duplication of services.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks, Partner	OP, Partner

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 2.7.3: Cooperate with other agencies and organizations toward the creation and promotion of a common calendar for activities and events in Elyria.	✓				Operations	Parks, Partner	OP, Partner
Strategy 2.7.4: Utilize this common calendar for the cross promotion of events, including opportunities for recreation, education, and tourism, offered by all agencies in Elyria.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks, Partner	OP, Partner
Goal 3: Provide Opportunities for Entertainment, Education, and Recreation							
Provide a fun and educational environment with a variety of activities to promote social interaction, relaxation, entertainment, and education for persons of all ages and ability levels.							
Objective 3.1. Provide a wide variety of activities for families and individuals of all ages and ability levels.							
Strategy 3.1.1: Add program and administrative staff as needed to support and assist with the development, scheduling, and facilitation of programs and events.		✓			Policy, Operations	City, Parks	OP
Strategy 3.1.2: Develop a wider variety of programs, including fitness, nature, 50+ and senior programs, adult sports programs, and special events, currently not available to Elyria residents.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 3.1.3: Place initial focus on the utilization of existing recreational facilities with new programs added at new facilities as developed.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 3.1.4: Seek opportunities for multigenerational and intergenerational programming, including nature-based outdoor activities (fishing, gardening, bird watching) and indoor arts and programs activities (music, painting, cooking).		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 3.1.5: Ensure that programs provide opportunities for community members of all ages and skill levels, including those with disabilities.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 3.1.6: Develop a scholarship program for program and facility fees to assist those who cannot afford to pay.		Ongoing			Policy	Parks, City	OP, Partner
Strategy 3.1.7: Consider the need for a wide variety of facilities, particularly those preferred by the local community, as part of any park improvement process.		Ongoing			Policy	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 3.1.8: Provide a variety of options at all parks to meet the needs of users with different needs and preferences, including both active and passive recreation.		Ongoing			Policy	Parks, City	CIP
Objective 3.2. Ensure that facility and program offerings are adaptable to the changing needs of the community in order to prepare for the future, while meeting the needs of the present.							
Strategy 3.2.1: Establish a program for internal benchmarking of program offerings and facility maintenance.	✓				Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 3.2.2: Continuously monitor satisfaction levels, attendance, and trends to ensure program offerings match the needs of the community.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 3.2.3 Consider the needs of a variety of user groups and potential future users as part of any park improvement or new facility development.		Ongoing			Planning	Parks, City	
Strategy 3.2.4: Install outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to provide an opportunity for improved fitness for residents, including seniors.		✓	✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 3.2.5: Develop programs to take advantage of outdoor fitness equipment and to provide additional fitness and wellness programming.		✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 3.2.6: Review unmet facility needs as part of any new park development.		Ongoing			Planning	Parks	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 3.2.7: Engage underserved populations, including low income, minority, and disabled residents, to improve awareness of recreation opportunities (and to increase participation rates) through collaboration with community leaders and organizations.	Ongoing				Operations	Parks, Partners	OP, Partners
Objective 3.3. Utilize parks to promote environmental stewardship and to allow residents to connect with nature.							
Strategy 3.3.1: Establish programs to utilize the development of amenities and natural features at Finwood Estate and Forest.		✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 3.3.2: Carefully balance the passive recreation uses at Finwood Estate and Forest with the requirement to preserve much of the property in its natural state for wildlife habitat, storm water management, and other benefits of open space.		✓	✓		Planning	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 3.3.3: Incorporate wildflowers into open areas of parks to improve their appearance, provide educational opportunities, and reduce the maintenance costs associated with mowing.	Ongoing				Capital, Operations	Parks, City	CIP, OP
Strategy 3.3.4: Strive to use eco-friendly materials and practices, whenever possible, during park and facility development and as part of park and program operations and procedures.	Ongoing				Capital, Operations	Parks, City	CIP, OP
Strategy 3.3.5: Utilize parks as examples of Best Management Practices (BMP) for storm water detention, recycling, etc.	Ongoing				Policy	City, Parks	CIP, OP
Strategy 3.3.6 Establish programs and events to increase awareness of sensitive resources and to provide educational opportunities for Elvria residents	✓	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 3.3.7: Improve nature trails, boardwalks, and overlooks to take advantage of existing natural resources at the Finwood Estate, Finwood Forest, and Black River Audubon properties and future properties as conditions allow.		✓	✓		Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 3.3.8: Provide interpretive signage at locations of natural resources at parks and along trails.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Objective 3.4. Ensure that adjacent park elements are complementary and that the individual aspects flow together.							
Strategy 3.4.1: Emphasize thorough planning of park improvements, including the placement of facilities, to ensure that adjacent park features and uses are complementary.		Ongoing			Planning	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 3.4.2: Increase availability of bicycle parking at all parks, especially where trails encounter other park facilities, focusing first on those with existing bicycle access.	✓				Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Objective 3.5. Seek opportunities for wildlife management and the preservation of open space to ensure the availability of educational opportunities and to promote the enjoyment of the outdoors.							
Strategy 3.5.1: Continue to examine opportunities for the acquisition of open space, giving priority to land that is contiguous to existing open space or parks, needed for trail connections, or in portions of the City currently underserved by parks and open space.		Ongoing			Planning, Policy	City	CIP, OP
Strategy 3.5.2: Utilize Finwood Estate and Forest for a variety of nature based programs, such as guided hikes, birdwatching, and nature education programs, if sufficient public interest exists for these programs and partner with Metro Parks for similar programs at Cascade Park.		✓	✓		Operations, Policy	Parks, County	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Goal 4: Provide Outstanding Customer Service							
Strive for excellence in all aspects of parks and recreation with an emphasis on outstanding customer service.							
Objective 4.1: Utilize ongoing training to ensure highly proficient and passionate staff, coaches, and volunteers, consistent with the community expectation of excellence for the Parks and Recreation Department.							
Strategy 4.2.1: Train leadership staff to become experts in their respective fields.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.2: Create and implement professional and career development plans for all staff.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.3: Encourage management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations.		Ongoing			Operations, Policy	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 4.2.4: Continuously train staff and emphasize customer service.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.5: Establish a program for internal benchmarking of program offerings and facility maintenance.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.6: Annually review the results of the internal benchmarking in conjunction with feedback from user groups.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Objective 4.2: Maintain appropriate staff levels to program and maintain the land, facilities, and programs desired by residents.							
Strategy 4.2.1: Expand maintenance staff as additional parks and facilities are developed to maximize their longevity, safety, and appearance.		Ongoing			Operations	City	OP
Strategy 4.2.2: Expand programming staff to provide additional programming in the recreation centers and for programs other than sports.		Ongoing			Operations	City	OP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Objective 4.3. Provide staff with the tools, facilities, and materials required to efficiently maintain quality facilities and provide quality programs.							
Strategy 4.3.1: Establish a new Maintenance Facility Headquarters for the Parks and Recreation Department to replace for the loss of the Cascade property.	✓				Operations	City	OP
Strategy 4.3.2: Prepare and implement a program for vehicle and maintenance equipment replacement.		Ongoing			Operations	City	OP
Objective 4.4. Encourage volunteerism to help build community interest and to ensure the continuation of quality parks and programs.							
Strategy 4.4.1: Create a volunteer coordinator position to make use of trained volunteers (part-time or filled by existing staff).		Ongoing			Operations	Parks, City	OP
Strategy 4.4.2: Utilize the volunteer coordinator to promote the use of volunteers with special emphasis on the utilization and maintenance of nature oriented facilities and programs.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.4.3: Establish a program to recruit and organize volunteers to adopt sections of trails in Elyria (and new trails as they are developed), including both paved trails and unpaved trails, to keep the trails free of litter.		Ongoing			Operations	Parks, Partner	OP
Strategy 4.4.4: Develop a system of trail ambassadors to patrol trails and trailhead areas.	✓	✓			Operations, Policy	Parks	OP, Partners
Objective 4.5. Ensure a safe and inviting park environment through uniformity of facility and program presentation, proactive maintenance of facilities, regulatory compliance, and implementation of ample security systems and practices.							
Strategy 4.5.1: Provide wayfinding signage with maps to identify the location of park amenities and trails at all Neighborhood and Community Parks.	✓	✓			Capital	Parks, City	OP, CIP

ACTION PLAN							
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies							
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	10+ Years	Category	Agency Responsible	Funding Source
Strategy 4.5.2: Install security cameras (and additional lighting as needed) to all community and neighborhood parks to encourage a safe atmosphere and to prevent damage to park property.		✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Strategy 4.5.3: Utilize trail markers (color coding and mileage) for reporting to emergency services and for security purposes.		✓			Operations, Policy	City	OP
Strategy 4.5.4: Install additional lighting at all parks as needed to improve safety and security, starting with the most used parks or those perceived as most in need of such improvements.		✓			Capital	Parks, City	CIP
Objective 4.6. Instill and maintain a perception of safety and security through design that is well planned and engineered and by ensuring sufficient supervision at parks and facilities.							
Strategy 4.6.1: Collaborate with law enforcement to increase presence in the parks and an improved perception of safety for park users.		Ongoing			Policy, Operations	Parks, City	OP
Totals by Timeframe							
Ongoing = 65	38	42	16	2			
Total Number of Strategies = 130							

Table VIII-2: Capital Improvements Ranking by Steering Committee

Capital Projects Rank - High (3), Medium (2), Low (1), or Not Needed (0).		
Priority Rank	Capital Improvement	Average Rank
1	West Park - Demolish pool and add new sprayground and restrooms	3.00
2	North Park - Locker rooms, restrooms, concession improvements, entry improvements, and add a meeting/party room	2.91
3 tie	North Park - New compressor	2.82
3 tie	All parks - Paved, accessible walkways to playgrounds, shelters, game courts, and fields.	2.82
5	East Park - Repave parking lot	2.73
6 tie	East Park - Add a shelter/restroom on south end of park	2.64
6 tie	West Park - C.R. Hoagland Center improvement (roof/ceiling, entry, outer floor)	2.64
6 tie	South Park - Demolish pool, develop new sprayground and restrooms	2.64
6 tie	South Park - Upgrade tennis courts and fencing	2.64
6 tie	Hilltop Park - Upgrade tennis courts and fencing	2.64
6 tie	Ely Square - Replace fountain	2.64
12 tie	East Park - Recreation Center renovation and HVAC improvements	2.60
12 tie	West Park - Repave parking lots	2.60
14 tie	East Park - New family aquatic center, pool house, parking expansion, and playground relocation	2.55
14 tie	East Park - Upgrade trail system	2.55
16	West Park - Softball field lighting replacement	2.45
17	Finwood Estate - Upgrade HVAC system	2.44
18	South Park - Pave west and repave all parking lots	2.40
19 tie	West Park - Soccer drainage improvements	2.36
19 tie	Hilltop Park - New picnic shelters and upgrade restroom	2.36
19 tie	Hilltop Park - Repave parking lots	2.36
19 tie	West Park - New perimeter trail	2.36
23 tie	Finwood Estate - New pavilion and restroom structure	2.18
23 tie	Finwood Estate - Trailhead, picnic shelter and parking at Burns Road (northeast corner of property)	2.18
23 tie	City-wide - Implementation of the Greenway and Trail Master Plan	2.18
26	Abbe Road Park - Replace basketball courts	2.11

Capital Projects Rank - High (3), Medium (2), Low (1), or Not Needed (0).		
Priority Rank	Capital Improvement	Average Rank
27 tie	South Park - Additional picnic shelters with restrooms in west portion	2.09
27 tie	Hilltop Park - Replace playground	2.09
27 tie	Academy Court Park - Develop a paved parking lot for the park and football	2.09
27 tie	City-wide - New full service recreation and senior center with walking track, gym, fitness areas, indoor pool, meeting rooms, dance/aerobics studios, etc.	2.09
27 tie	East Park - Second basketball court and drinking fountain	2.09
27 tie	Hilltop Park - Upgrade basketball court	2.09
27 tie	Finwood Estate - Develop trail system with boardwalk in wet areas	2.09
34	South Park - Perimeter trail	2.00
35 tie	Finwood Forest - Trails and bridges to shelter area and to Hilltop Park	1.91
35 tie	Academy Court Park - Restroom and concession building for football	1.91
35 tie	West Park - Restroom near soccer and LL West fields	1.91
35 tie	North Park - Demolish pool	1.91
35 tie	Academy Court Park - Upgrade to a Neighborhood Park with an entry sign, perimeter trail, playground, picnic shelter, basketball court.	1.91
40	West Park - Replace playground adjacent to Recreation Center	1.82
41 tie	Abbe Road Park - Replace playground	1.73
41 tie	Washington Village Park - Pave parking lot	1.73
41 tie	Washington Village Park - Upgrade basketball court with new posts, goals, and resurfacing	1.73
44	Ely Square - Expand irrigation system	1.70
45	Washington Village Park - Replace playground with expanded fall zones	1.64
46 tie	Bell Ave. Tot Lot - Replace playground	1.55
46 tie	Abbe Road Park - Upgrade parking lot	1.55
46 tie	Garden Park - Removed damaged equipment and convert to an open space	1.55
49	Audubon Park - Gazebo, benches and overlook - native species planting.	1.45
50	North Park - Enclose the rink	1.36
51	West Park - Little League Field lighting	0.91

APPENDIX A – PUBLIC INPUT MEETING SUMMARIES

CONFERENCE MEMORANDUM PUBLIC WORKSHOP SUMMARY ELYRIA PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN ELYRIA, OHIO PROJECT NO. 14091

BY: Patrick D. Hoagland, ASLA, Brandstetter Carroll Inc.



November 12, 2015

A public meeting was held on this date and approximately 55 people were in attendance. The participants were asked four main questions, listed below.

1. Where do you currently go for parks and recreation, and what do you do?
 - Mill Hollow for yearly car shows
 - Hilltop for picnics
 - Lorain County MetroParks – Sandy Ridge, Carlisle Reservation for bird watching
 - West Park for the skate park
 - North Park
 - East Park
 - Cascade park
 - East Park for swimming and trails
 - East for the par course
 - East to walk dogs
 - East for basketball
 - Little League fields
 - East and West Recreation Centers for Senior programs
 - East and West Parks for softball
 - Cascade for hiking and play area
 - Ice rink
 - Bike trail to Oberlin
 - Swim programs
 - South Central Park in North Ridgeville
 - Amherst Beaver Creek
 - Cascade for sledding
 - Burr Oak for walking
 - Wellington Reservation
 - Lakeview Park Trails
2. What do you like about Parks and Recreation opportunities in Elyria?
 - Convenient locations – close to home
 - Nature – Parks are jewels/Scenery
 - Ice rink – never lose it
 - Program offerings – wide range and affordable
 - Senior programs
 - Playgrounds at Hilltop
 - Show your kids how you grew up. Family orientation
 - Abbey Wood Trail
 - Access to meeting rooms – affordable
 - Safe parks – good staff support
 - Holidays at Finwood and rentals at Finwood
 - Special events

-
3. What don't you like or what is missing from Elyria Parks and Recreation
- Undesirable users, concerns for safety
 - Mailing from Parks is hard to read. Add notes to water bill
 - West pool is closed
 - Ice rink needs upgrades – locker rooms, heat, etc.
 - The two remaining pools are antiquated
 - Hilltop Park – Top entrance should be eliminated or corrected – at a blind spot on Gulf Road. Guardrails are black and not visible at night
 - Better parking lot lighting
 - Staff parking at ice rink is dark
 - Ice rink – use year round
 - Restrooms available to users outside buildings
 - Better communication re: Parks
 - Want open recreation hours at East Rec in evenings for families
 - Want City and Little Leagues to work together – Collaborate
 - Black River Audubon Park needs improved
 - Concern for health of trees. 80% of trees at East Rec are poor.
 - Missing a full recreation center with a pool
 - Need better communications between the city and community organizations – open discussions needed
 - Mission a vision for the future maintenance – Need continuous budget for upkeep
 - Burr Oak (MetroPark) pavilions need upgrades and maintenance. Elyria Parks need shelter upgrades also.
 - Losing tennis courts in the City
4. The participants were asked to pretend that it is 10 years in the future and they are very pleased with the progress the City has made resulting from the Master Plan. What has happened to cause the success of the Master Plan and what is the reason the people want to live, work, and play in Elyria?

Each person was given three dots to place on the list where they chose, and the number in parenthesis behind each item are the number of votes.

- Pride in the Parks – City makes parks a priority with funds for maintenance (20)
- Ice rink – use the facility year round and improvements including locker rooms (20)
- Senior programming (16)
- Centralized community center with meeting rooms, pool, fitness, etc. (12)
- Updated security (11)
- Quality programs and facilities in Elyria (10)
- Levy for Parks (10)
- Indoor swimming facility (9)
- Volunteer program to assist Parks (8)
- Attract new families (5)
- More open use of facilities (3)
- Specialized activities to draw people to individual parks. Each park with its own identity (3)
- Integrate “STEM” and “STEAM” programs for youth (1)
- Diverse park board members – representative of the community (1)

Other Items that were listed, but received no votes included:

- Online registration
- Wi-Fi in each facility

Each person that attended the workshop and the stakeholder meetings was given \$1,000 in play money to distribute into various boxes. The following are the results of the dollar voting.

Improvements/maintenance of existing parks	\$17,500
Improvements/construction of new athletic fields	\$11,300
Development of a new outdoor family aquatic center	\$10,300
Development of new walking and biking trails	\$9,800
Development of new community centers	\$8,300
Development of new outdoor parks and recreation facilities	\$7,000
Development of additional gymnasium space/game courts	\$4,000
Acquisition of land for open space/green space/future parkland	\$2,800
Other	
Improve North Park Ice Rink	\$4,000
Full Recreation Center with Pool	\$2,100
Indoor Pool	\$1,100
Improved and expanded senior programs	\$700
Black River Audubon Park Improvements	\$600
Warm water therapy pool	\$500
Walking track	\$300
Networking	\$300
Disc Golf	\$250
Dog Park	\$250
Exercise equipment	\$200

If you should disagree with any information contained herein, please kindly notify our office in writing within 10 days of receipt of this memorandum.



Patrick D. Hoagland, ASLA

PDH/meg

cc: Lisa Bowman, KER

**CONFERENCE MEMORANDUM
STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS
ELYRIA PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN
ELYRIA, OHIO
PROJECT NO. 14091**

BY: Patrick Hoagland, ASLA, Brandstetter Carroll Inc.



November 11-13 & December 8, 2015

AUDUBON SOCIETY - November 11, 2015

In attendance: – Martin Ackerman, Audubon Society

General Information

The Black River Audubon Society has about 600 members of which about 100 are from Elyria. Most of their volunteer work is in Lorain County. Their chapter of the organization was started by Jack Smith in the 1950's. The organization supports conservation efforts, clean-up efforts, etc.

Vision for the Future

1. Black River Audubon Park has a pavilion, benches, and overlook, the area is cleaned up, and the park serves as a neighborhood oasis.
2. Native species only are planted at Audubon Park.

INVEST ELYRIA

In attendance: – Mary Bryan, Invest Elyria.

General Information

Invest Elyria started in 2009 and has about 2,900 members. About 75 are the primary active members. They recently became a 501 c-3 organization. They perform a wide range of volunteer activities for people of all ages.

Description from their web site: "Invest Elyria is a non-profit group staffed entirely by volunteers. We are a group with a genuine desire to promote Elyria's community as a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Invest Elyria is focused on the arts, food and commerce. We believe in keeping Elyria businesses thriving, and improving the morale of our community. IE also develops initiatives to encourage good citizenship and bring neighbors together. We also support and are actively involved in keeping our streets and parks safe and clean."

Vision for the Future

1. A splash pad is developed in Elyria
2. Public art by local artists
3. Facilities are developed for bocce, shuffleboard, disc golf, dog park.
4. Residents are seen using parks
5. Tourism attractions are developed
6. Improved quality of life

SPORTS – November 11, 2015

Met with Amy Klotz, First Class Youth Football; Mike Ellis, Elyria Little League East; Jeff Chenoweth, Elyria North Little League; Lee Frank, Elyria Panthers Ice Hockey; Phil Seguin, Elyria Little League West; Justin Godbolt, Sr., Elyria Elite Youth Sports

General Information

First Class Youth Football has used Academy Circle Park for their home football field for the past seven years. They have approximately over 100 kids in their 12U program. They had a flag football league and will try to restart this program. Since the meeting, First Class Football has joined with the Elyria Patriots, Stone Sports Mustangs, and Lorain County Little Nightmares from North Ridgeville to form a team called the Elyria Mini-Pioneers. They have coordinated with EHS coaches. Academy Court will still be their home.

Elite Football has 65 youth in their program. They serve a feeder program for the High School. They practice at East Park and their games are at Northwood Middle School. Their teams play in the North Coast Youth Football Conference.

Little League East uses the fields at Vic Janowicz Memorial Park, which they constructed. They have about 320 children in their leagues. At one time their numbers were up to 500, but their participation numbers are steady lately. They host all of the girls' softball programs in Elyria. Ages of participants are 5-17. The older players use the large field at North Park, West Park, and at the East location. The high school age team competes against teams from Rocky River, West

Little League North is located at North Park on facilities they developed on land they lease from the City. They have about 115 boys in their program ages 4-14. They use all of their four fields with 60' base paths.

Little League West serves the west and south sides of Elyria. They have about 123 youth in the program, which has declined from a high of 190. They use 5 fields at West Park.

Greater Elyria Soccer Association (GESA) (not present). Information from their web site:

Greater Elyria Soccer Association (G.E.S.A.) is a non-profit youth soccer organization established in 1976. We provide a competitive soccer program for players between the soccer ages of 6 and 14. Our organizational focus is on FUN, the personal development of soccer skills, and the positive sportsmanship of every player while in a competitive atmosphere.

We offer both recreational and competitive travel leagues in order to provide opportunities for as many children as possible. For children that are newer to the game, or for families who wish to not travel outside of Lorain County, we have teams that compete in the Lorain County Soccer League (LCSL). This is considered a "recreational" league. Every player on an LCSL team MUST play half of the game and there are no "cuts" by coaches. Travel is limited to inside Lorain County. We also offer "competitive" leagues. The boys/coeds compete in AASL (American Amateur Soccer League), and the girls compete in the NOGSL (Northern Ohio Girls Soccer League). In "competitive" leagues, coaches can hold tryouts, choose their players, and there is no required amount of playing time per player. These teams travel outside of Lorain County into more of Northern Ohio.

Vision for the Future

1. LL West would have a lease with the City
2. LL West serves Elyria Township also,
3. LL West has restrooms closer to the fields- There would be a large expense to bring sewers to the area.

-
4. Lights on LL West fields
 5. Baseball reorganized to one charter. Currently the maximum population per charter is 20,000, but this is not practical for Elyria.
 6. LL East has batting cages and equipment storage area.
 7. Hockey rink has heat over the rink. Building is enclosed.
 8. Ice rink has at least four locker rooms with two having showers.
 9. Ice rink has an office for Hockey. Equipment storage is provided.
 10. Academy Court has a real concession stand, bleachers, paved parking, restrooms.
 11. Elite Football has a home field with fieldhouse, concessions, storage. This could possibly be located at South Park where two fields can fit. The City could lease land to their organization.
 12. Elite Football hosts camps and tournaments.
 13. Hockey attracts more kids to participate, including both boys and girls.
 14. Hockey has the ability to host tournaments with a premier facility.
 15. The City develops a multi-purpose indoor facility.

CITY ADMINISTRATION – November 12, 2015

Met with Mary Siwierka, Safety Services Director

Vision for the Future

1. Focus on children's' programs
2. The four parks in the regions of the City are kept, including the pools.
3. More senior activities are provided.
4. The Master Plan provides a road map for the future
5. Parking provided near the West Falls of Cascade Park.
6. Good partnership with MetroParks on Cascade Park.

SENIORS TAP PROGRAM – November 12, 2015

Met with: Mabel Gilliam, Patricia Wright, Dorothy Dietsche-Wade, Lois Alhert, Bonnie Rice, Coletta Walters, Linda Crouser, Joyce McDonald, Joal Orndorf, Barbara Trehler.

General Information

The Active Adults program uses East and West Recreation Centers for activities. Previously the also used South Recreation Center. Programs include yoga, fitness, pickleball, walking, shuffleboard, and lap swimming at East Pool in summer.

They are experiencing some conflicts between the fitness/yoga classes and pickleball at the same time.

Their programs are free and funded by CDBG.

Vision for the Future

1. Pickleball moved to South Rec with a divider.
2. Welcoming staff.
3. Better advertising for programs, more convenient times.
4. More trips.
5. Exercise equipment and a walking track are provided for seniors.
6. Provide a lunch out program
7. Dog park
8. More socializing and companionship opportunities.
9. Provide a widow/widower group.
10. Provide a point person to cross promote programs of several agencies.
11. Younger seniors participate.

CHURCH OF THE OPEN DOOR – November 12, 2015

Met with Joshua Smith and Don Denver

General Information

Their athletic programs use some City fields. They have a senior program for about 100 seniors.

Vision for the Future

1. An amphitheater for 400-500 people is developed.
2. Wi-Fi provided in parks.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Met with Linda Brown, Apple Festival; Matt Lundy, County Commissioner; Jack Baird, City Council; and Park and Recreation Board Members Rick Stoffer, Sam Battle, and John Hammond.

General Discussion

The Apple Festival is in its 36th year. They attract 50,000-60,000 people over 3 days if the weather is good. No alcohol is served. They use Ely Square, County parking lots and Downtown. They are not a money making organization. Their goal is to keep Elyria viable. They have a \$52,000 budget, of which \$22,000 is for City Staff working extra time.

There is confusion within the area as to what is a city or county park.

Vision for the Future

1. Indoor recreation center is developed with walking track, fitness equipment, indoor pool and more. Like Splash Zone.
2. All children know how to swim.
3. Collaboration with University Hospitals, City Schools, YWCA, Wesleyan Village, and others to develop and operate the facility.
4. Senior center with a pool is developed. This creates a reason for people to come to and stay in Elyria.
5. Infrastructure is repaired.
6. People use the parks.
7. A separate levy for parks to provide a consistent budget.
8. Parks and Recreation Department toots its own horn showing participation and value to the community.
9. Apple Festival is a community gathering place. Youth participate in the planning and activities at the Apple Festival.
10. Needs of an aging population are met.
11. Movies are shown in Ely Park.
12. Main Street (Broad Street) comes back to life.
13. More seniors and clubs use recreation facilities.
14. County Courthouse is upgraded.
15. Millennials participate in programs and events.
16. Ely Square fountain is replaced.

CITY STAFF - November 12, 2015

Met with Rodney Eye, Sanitation; Duane Whitely, Police; Kathy McPhillips, Engineering; Ashley Scott, Community Development; Kathy Boylan, City Health District; and from the Parks and Recreation Department – Ron Rader, Jay Horwedel, Bob Perkins, Mark Meecha.

General Information

CDBG Funds have been used for senior programs, baseball field in South Park, and signage.

The city hosts about 70,000 to 100,000 people at holiday Lights.

A main goal is to bring people together.

Vision for the Future

1. Restrooms needed for West Soccer fields.
2. More trails developed, possibly at East and South Parks.
3. Indoor facilities are renovated and upgraded.
4. Shelters replaced
5. More exercise programs offered.
6. Equipment provided for cardio and fitness.
7. Generations interact to learn from each other.
8. Businesses participate in sponsoring programs and facilities.
9. A large central recreation center is developed with an indoor pool.
10. More transportation available to programs.
11. More trails developed.
12. More restrooms provided.
13. Splash pads at South and West.
14. More shade.
15. Water fountains with bottle fillers at West Soccer fields.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH – November 12, 2015

Met with Tim Spickler

General Information

First Baptist has a 33 acre campus on LaGrange Road. They are in their 40th year as a school, serving grades K-12. Enrollment was up to 300, but is now at 84. The school offers soccer, volleyball, and basketball. They have field trips to Cascade Park, with emphasis on the history of Elyria. They are looking to start a tennis team and possibly use South Park.

The schools is chartered by the state and they do receive some state funds. Some home school groups use their gym.

Vision for the Future

1. Improve Washington Village Park
2. They could possibly use the ice rink for a family night.

ELYRIA SWIM TEAM– November 12, 2015

Met with Dan Maddock, Elyria Swim Coach

General Information

They currently use the pool at Oberlin College and must bus participants there five days per week. The students are gone from 5:45 to 9:15 which makes it difficult to juggle school work. They go to Cleveland State University when the Oberlin College pool is closed for two weeks.

There are currently 31 students in the program and there is no fee to participate. Most schools in the area charge.

Vision for the Future

1. A home pool in Elyria with 6 to 8 lanes by 25 yards and a diving well.
2. Summer swim camp.

-
3. More mountain biking and climbing opportunities available.
 4. A better skate park.
 5. Host USA Swimming program "Make a Splash". Grants are available.

KIWANIS– November 12, 2015

Met with Stan Wojdyla and Bob Sears

General Information

Kiwanis is involved with Safety Town, the Easter Egg Hunt, Summer Camp, Halloween Parade, Pops Festival, and fund part of play equipment. They repaved the Safety Town. Previously they were involved in funding for the old Cascade Pool.

They have 52 members currently and membership is declining.

Their fundraising is through the Strawberry Festival and a candy sale.

Kiwanis International goal is to reduce child and infant death from tetanus.

They meet weekly at Wesleyan Village.

Kiwanis funded the splash pad in Grafton.

Vision for the Future

1. A separate levy for parks and recreation
2. Expand the basketball court at East to two courts. Smooth out the ball diamond fields.
3. They are currently looking for a community project.

ELYRIA PUBLIC LIBRARY– November 13, 2015

Met with Lyn Crouse, Director

General Information

The Elyria Library is 145 year old with five locations and a bookmobile. They have their facility on Washington Ave. and a satellite at the old Hamilton School on 13th Street, as well as a branch in LaGrange, West River Road, and at LCCC. They serve a population of 63,620 people and have 40,000 card holders. Programming includes a summer camp program, their theme of health and fitness this year. They offer Tai Chi, Zumba, and yoga on West River. These programs attract about 35 each. They are having difficulty finding yoga instructors.

Vision for the Future

1. Develop hike and bike trails to the Libraries and possibly a bridge to Cascade.
2. Develop a story walk location.
3. Walkable, bike friendly City.
4. An indoor pool with warm water therapy pool.

NAACP– November 13, 2015

Met with Dee Tolbert, President

General Information

The NAACP has about 150 members, of which about 25 are active. They have had a summer program for four years.

Noted that the City had a problem with fights at the men's basketball program, and subsequently has stopped the program.

People learn about NAACP through parks and recreation programs.

Vision for the Future

1. Bring back late night basketball.
2. More outdoor program space.
3. More coordination among agencies and not compete.
4. Develop a facility like Splash Zone in Elyria.

YWCA – November 13, 2015

Met with Jeanine Donaldson

General Information

The YWCA has served Elyria since 1913. The Greater Cleveland Y operates programs. Their focus is on “elimination of racism and empowerment of women” and to build confidence in girls. Services include fitness, social skills, help for homeless, youth development, dance, and more. They have a well-attended dance program for 3-18 year olds. They rent a theater for recitals. This program is very well known for its quality.

The Y partners with Parks and Recreation for a week long summer program called the “Smart Girls” program. Parks and Recreation improves girls’ image of themselves.

Vision for the Future

1. Mission is the “Elimination of racism and empowerment of women”.
2. Parks and Recreation programs enhance social skills and education.
3. Staffing to maintain and improve programs.
4. Equity among areas of town and populations.

ELYRIA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES – December 8, 2015

Met with Heather Beck, Athletic Director; Matt Brinda, Tennis Coach; Jim Kistler, Golf Coach; Brett Heighberger, Soccer Coach and Assistant Principal.

General Information

Tennis uses Hilltop courts which are the best in the City. The ones at South need repaired. The ones at Ely Stadium are poor. LCCC has 6-7 courts also. EC does not have a team in the last 4 years. Ideally they need 5 courts in one location for matches.

Golf used Forest Hills (MetroParks). They need an indoor practice facility.

Swimming needs an indoor pool for lessons for elementary and middle school students. Also need a feeder swim team program and place to practice the high school team. They go to Oberlin now, which takes away from students’ study time. They also use Cleveland State for 2 weeks when Oberlin is closed.

Boys Soccer uses their Pioneer Fields on Abbe road, across town from the high school. These fields need lots of work. This land could also be used for a future school, therefore, they are hesitant to invest in the property. Students must find their own way to travel to practice.

GESA program is down some in attendance. Their fields are okay. The High School would like to see more kids in the soccer program as a feeder for high school.

Soccer plays about 5 games per year on artificial turf.

Softball plays at the Administration Building, which sometimes conflicts with the Pre-K School traffic.

Vision for the Future

1. More youth feeder programs to improve the overall performance and abilities of athletes once they reach high school.
2. More and improved Middle School leagues.
3. Indoor artificial turf
4. Partnership with City on summer sports camps and clinics.
5. Baseball needs a facility for indoor practice.
6. Every child in town participates in activities.
7. Host swimming District Meet at an indoor pool in Elyria.



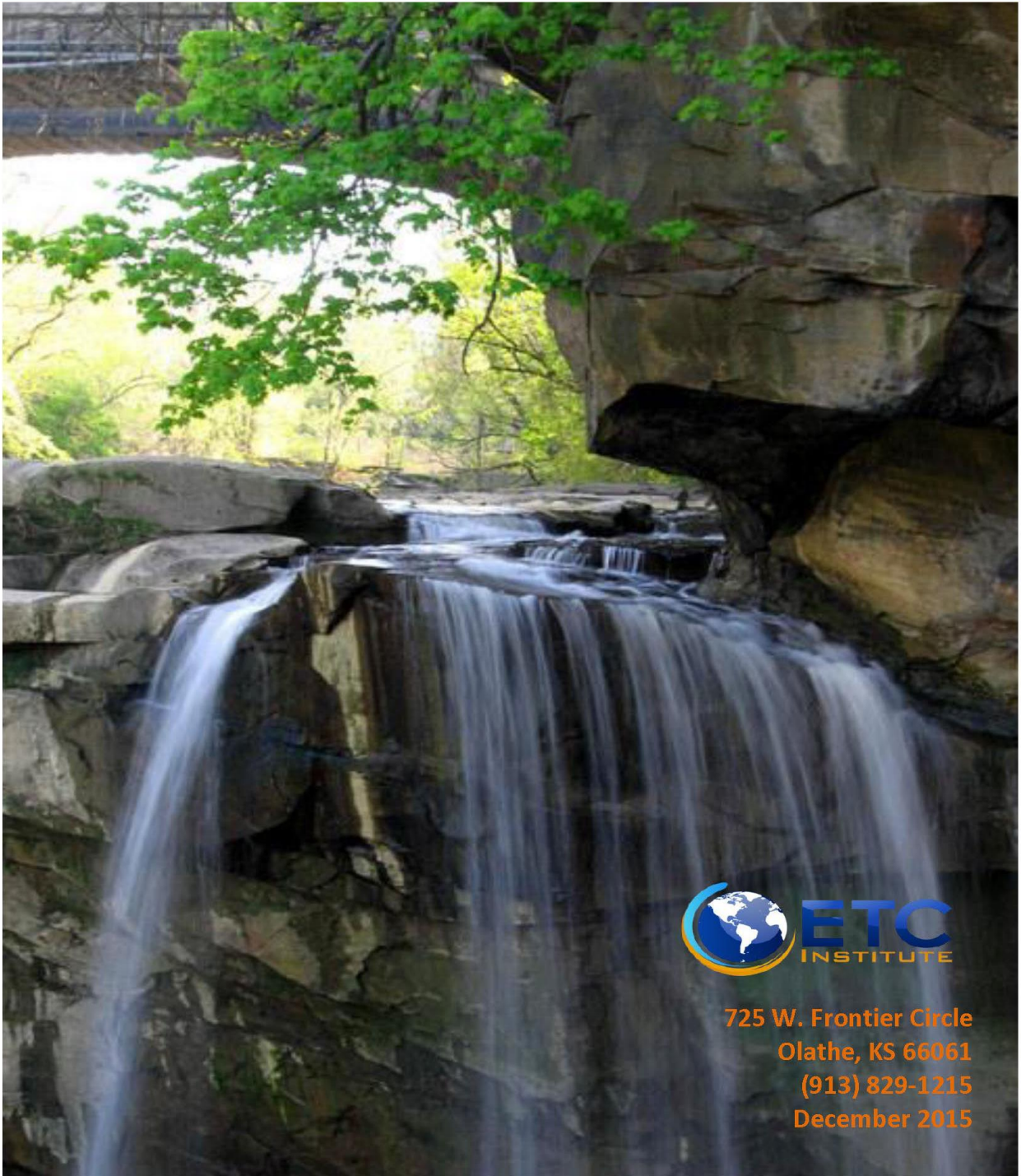
Patrick D. Hoagland

Date

PDH/meg

cc: Lisa Bowman
Keith Rodenhauser
File

2015 City of Elyria, OH Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey Findings Report





- **The Greatest Percentage of Households Have Visited Cascade Park/Elywoods:** Sixty-eight percent (68%) of households have visited Cascade Park/Elywoods and 47% have visited the park the most often. Other parks and facilities the greatest percentages of households utilize include: Ely Square Park (55%), other Lorain County MetroParks (51%), Finwood Estate-Finwood Forest (48%), and Hilltop Park (44%).

CURRENT PROGRAM USAGE AND RATINGS

- **Participation in Programs is Lower Than the National Average:** Twenty-one percent (21%) of households indicated that they had participated in program offered by the City of Elyria during the past 12 months. Participation rates are lower than the national average.
- **Ratings of Parks and Programs:** Based on the percentage of households who have participated in programs over the past 12 months, 83% rate the quality of programs as either “excellent” or “good”. Only 5% rate the quality of programs as poor.

ORGANIZATIONS USED FOR P&R PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

- **The Greatest Percentage of Households Use Lorain County Metro Parks for their Program and Facility Needs:** Seventy-two percent (72%) of households indicated that they use Lorain County Metro Parks and 60% indicate they use Elyria Parks and Recreation. This is significantly above the national average of 48% who use their city or county parks and recreation department for recreation program and facility needs.

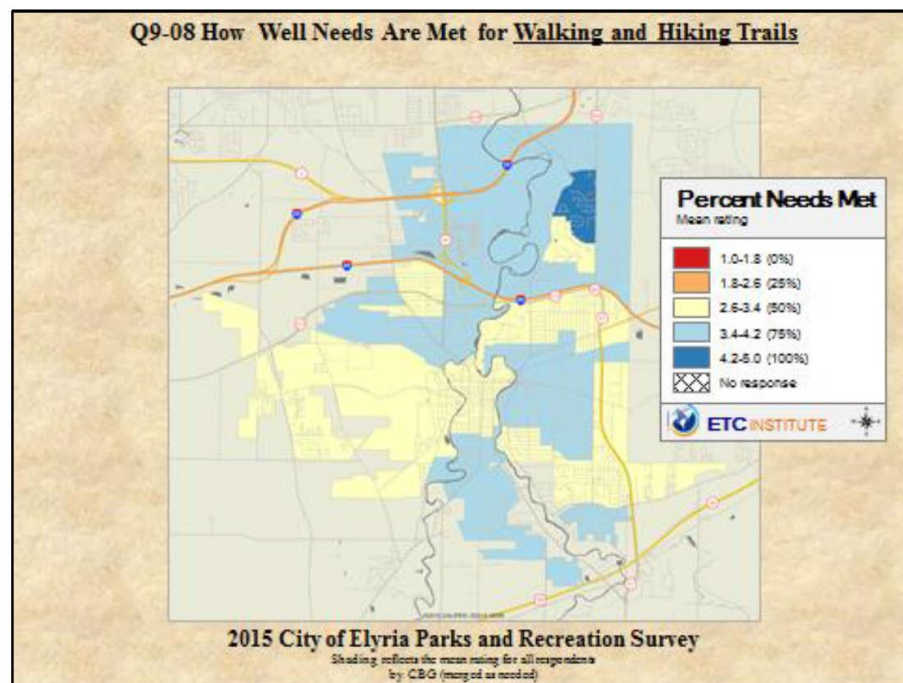
	National	City of Elyria 2015
City/County Parks & Recreation Department	48%	60% 

***Households with children ages 10-19 followed by households with children ages 10 and under are the highest percentage of City of Elyria Parks and Recreation Department Users.** (Please see Appendix B: Cross-tab on households types for further information).

- **Most Used Organizations:** Based on the percentage of households who selected the item as their top two most used organizations, households indicated they use Lorain County Metro Parks (48%) and Elyria Parks and Recreation (36%) the most often.
- **Almost One-Third of Households Are Willing to Bike or Walk 10-15 Minutes to Attend a Program or Facility:** Thirty percent (30%) of households indicated that they would be willing to walk or bike 10-15 to attend programs or use parks and recreation facilities. Other time amounts include: 15-30 minutes (23%), 5-10 minutes (19%), 30+ minutes (16%), and 0-5 minutes (13%).

FACILITY NEEDS

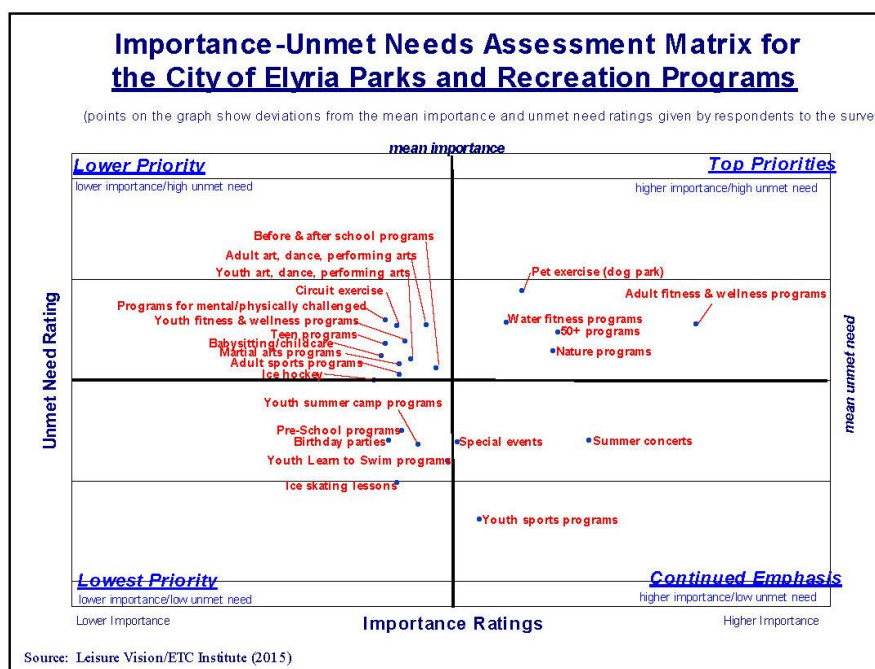
- Walking and Hiking Trails Are the Most Needed Facilities:** Seventy-three percent (73%) or 16,352 households indicated that they have a need for walking and biking trails. Other most needed facilities include: natural areas/nature parks (70% or 15,658 households) or picnic shelters and picnic areas (58% or 13,104 households). Of households who indicated a need for these facility types, 7,604 households who have a need for walking and biking trails (see chart below for geographical representation of need) and 7,155 households who have a need for natural areas and nature parks needs are only being 50% met or less.



- Walking and Hiking Trails Are the Most Important to Households:** Forty percent (40%) of households indicated walking and biking trails were the most important. Other most important facilities include: natural areas/nature parks (27%) and small neighborhood parks (20%).

PROGRAM NEEDS

- **Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs Are the Most Needed:** Fifty-five percent (55%) or 12,387 households indicated a need for adult fitness & wellness programs. Other most needed facilities include: summer concerts (49% or 10,954 households), nature programs (42% or 9,475 households), water fitness programs (38% or 8,534 households), and 50+ programs (38% or 8,445 households). Of households who indicated a need for adult fitness and wellness programs 76% of those needs are only being met 50% or less, with the majority, 30%, having none of their needs met.



***Primary emphasis should be placed on (1) adult fitness and wellness programs, (2) 50+ programs, and (3) nature programs.**

- **Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs Are the Most Important to Households:** Based on the percentage of households who indicated the program as one of their top four choices, 37% indicated adult fitness and wellness programs was the most important to their household. Other most important programs include: summer concerts (25%), 50+ programs (22%), and nature programs (22%).
- **Households Participate in Summer Concerts the Most Frequently:** Based on the percentage of households who selected the item as one of their top four choices, 18% indicated that they participate in summer concerts the most often. Other most participated in programs include: adult fitness and wellness programs (14%), nature programs (13%), and special events (12%).



SUPPORT FOR PARK AND RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

- **Upgrading Older Parks and Facilities is the Most Supported Action:** Based on the percentage of households who were either “very supportive” or “somewhat supportive”, 90% support the City to upgrade older parks & recreation facilities. Support for this action is substantive compared to other potential action items and should be given first priority. Based on the percentage of households who indicated the most important function for the City of Elyria to provide, 45% indicated to upgrade older parks & recreation facilities and 27% indicated to develop new recreation trails and connect existing trails.

Highest Priority Actions: 80% or More Support

Upgrade older parks & recreation facilities	90
Develop new rec trails & connect existing	80

Secondary Priority Actions: 51% - 79% Support

Provide new programs for teens	79
Provide new programs for seniors	78
Upgrade existing youth/adult athletic fields	77
Purchase land to preserve open space, natural, & historic areas	71
Upgrade North Park Ice Rink	66
Develop splash pads/spraygrounds	65
Develop additional community centers	65
Develop a new indoor multi-use facility	62
Purchase land to develop athletic fields & rec fac	60
Develop an outdoor family aquatic facility	60
Develop additional indoor gymnasium space	57

Lowest Priority Actions: 50% or Less Support

Develop a dog park	50
Develop new sports fields	48
Expand the Elyria Skate Park or develop new skate park	46



EXISTING PARK IMPROVEMENTS

- **The Greatest Percentage of Households Would Like to See Improvements and Development of Restrooms:** Sixty-five percent (65%) of households indicated they would like to have restroom improvements and additions to existing parks. This percentage is substantially above any other item, and improvements and additions in this area should be a priority for the parks and recreation department. Other potential improvements include: sidewalks and trails (49%), addition of security cameras (45%), and park security lighting (41%). A substantial reason that households are prevented from utilizing programs or facilities more often is because security is insufficient, which is significantly greater than the national average. Improvements to park lighting and utilizing security cameras would help to encourage higher participation rates.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND TAX FUND

- **Resource Allocation to Parks and Recreation Items:** Households were given a hypothetical \$100 to spend towards various categories of parks and recreation items. Households indicated that they would spend one-third of their money (\$33.00) toward the improvement and maintenance of existing parks, playgrounds, game courts, & picnic areas. Other areas households would allocate funds toward include: development of new walking and biking trails (\$14.00) and develop a new outdoor family aquatic facility (\$13.00).
- **Support for a Recreation Tax to Fund Development and Operations of Parks and Recreation Facilities and Activities:** Fifty-four percent (54%) of households either strongly support (21%) or moderately support (33%) a recreation tax to fund parks and recreation facilities and activities. Only 16% of households indicated that they would not support the recreation tax and 29% are not sure one way or the other.

OTHER FINDINGS

- **The Greatest Percentage of Households Learn About Recreation or Activities Through the Newspaper:** Sixty-two percent (62%) of households learn about the recreation or activities through the newspaper which is significantly above the national average of 39%. Other most utilized resources include: word of mouth (57%, 15% above the national average of (42%) and brochures and flyers (50%).
- **Reasons that Prevent Households from Using City of Elvria Parks and Recreation Department Facilities, Trails, and Programs More Often:** Thirty-three percent (33%) of households indicated that the reason they are the most prevented from utilizing parks, recreation facilities, trails, and programs more often is because they do not know what is being offered. This is significantly above the national average of 22% who do not know what is being offered. The second top reasons that is preventing use is because security is insufficient (34%) which is significantly above the national benchmark.

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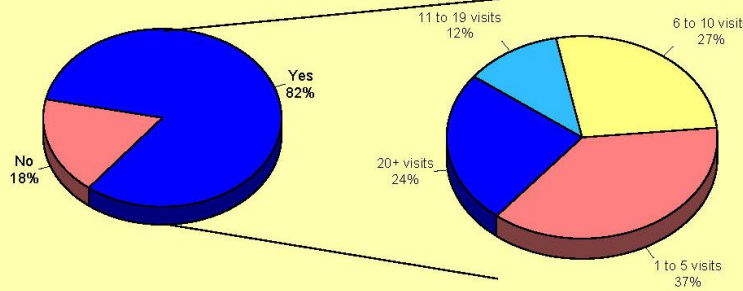
Section 1

Charts and Graphs

Q1. Have you or any members of your household visited any of the parks and/or recreation facilities in the City of Elyria during the past 12 months?

by percentage of respondents

Q1a. Approximately how often did you or members of your household visit those facilities in the City of Elyria during the past year? (excluding don't know)

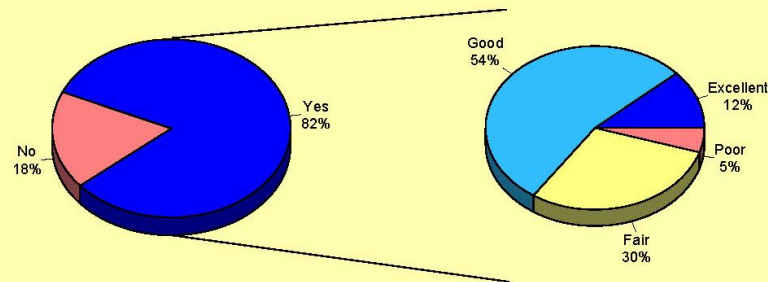


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q1. Have you or any members of your household visited any of the parks and/or recreation facilities in the City of Elyria during the past 12 months?

by percentage of respondents

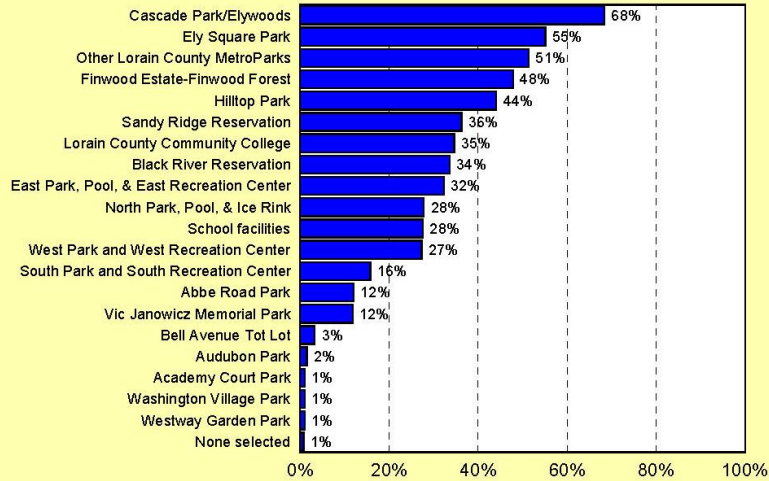
Q1b. Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of the facilities you have visited? (excluding "don't know")



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

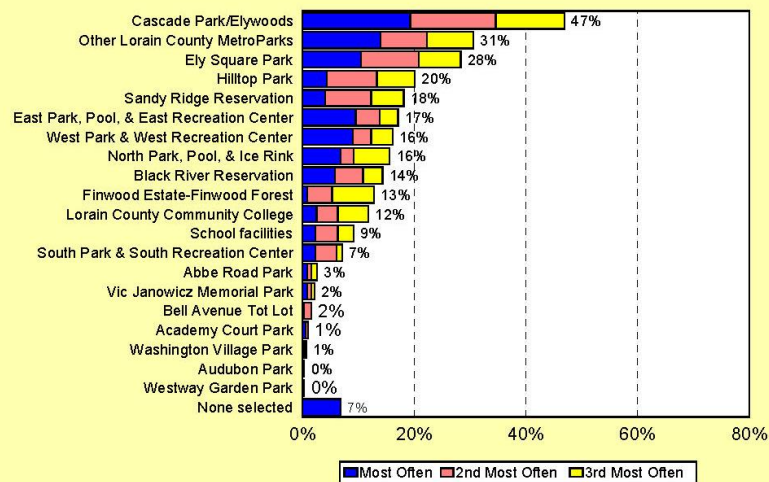
Q2. ALL Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have Visited in the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents who have visited parks and recreation facilities (multiple choices could be made)



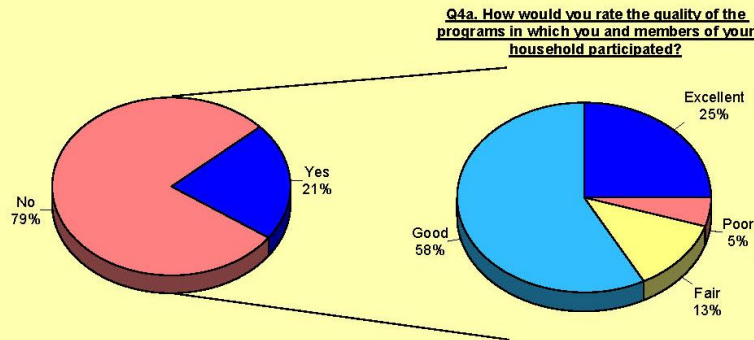
Q3. Facilities Households Visited Most Often in the Last 12 Months

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Q4. Have you or members of your household participated in any recreational programs offered by the City of Elyria over the past 12 months?

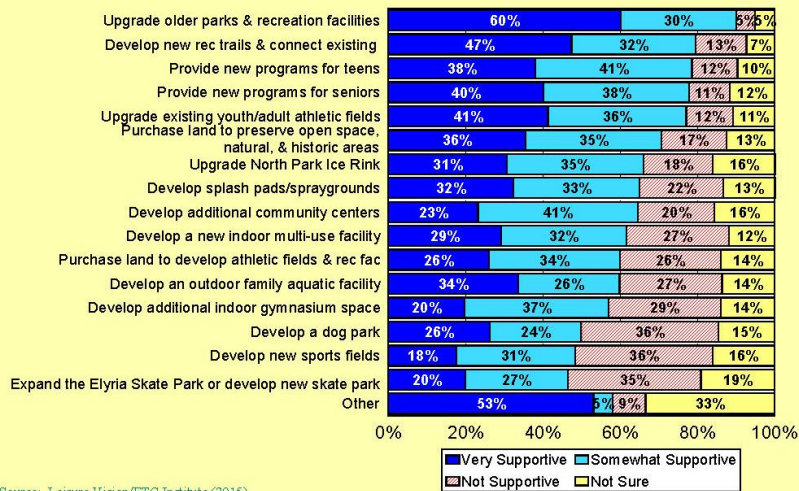
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q5. Support for Actions That the City of Elyria Could Take to Improve Parks and Recreation Services

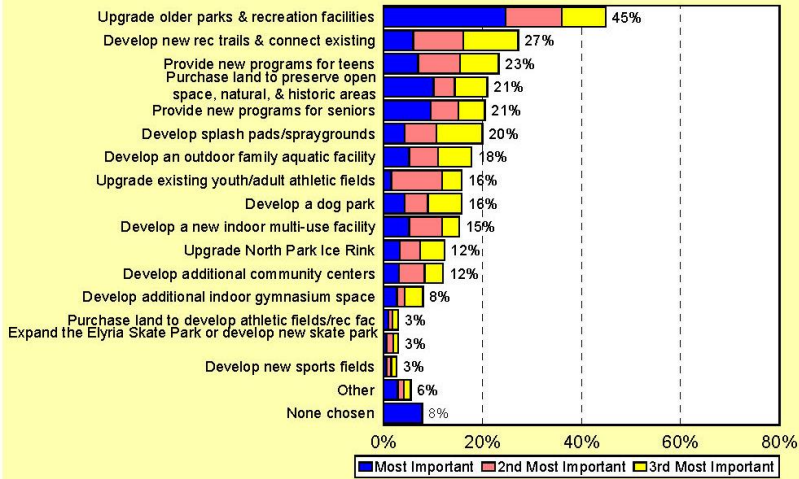
by percentage of all respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

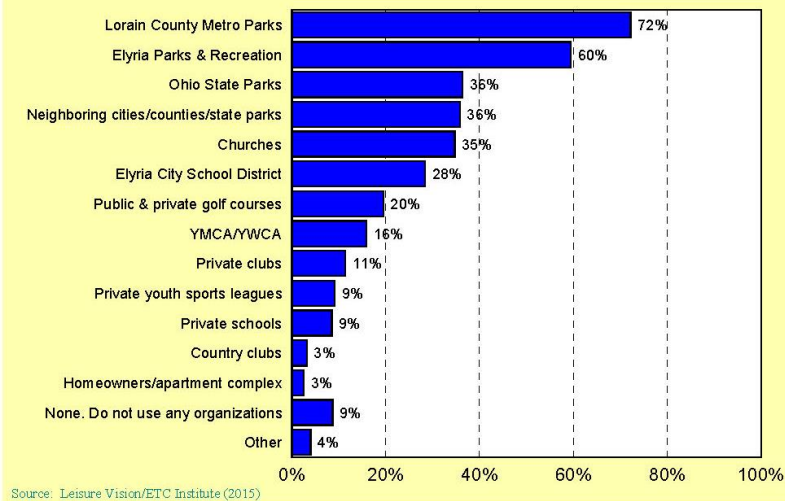
Q6. THREE Functions That Are Most Important for the City of Elyria to Provide

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



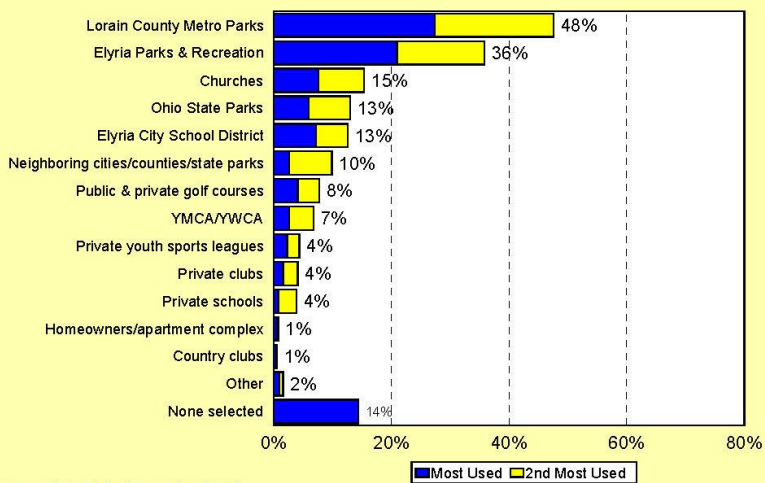
Q7. ALL Organizations That Households Have Used for Parks and Recreation Programs/Facilities in Any Location

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



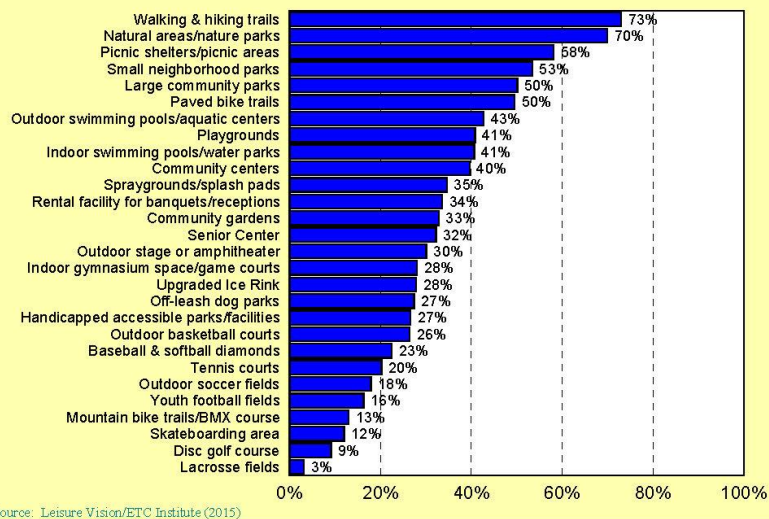
Q8. TWO Organizations That Households Use the Most for Recreation and Parks Programs and Facilities

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



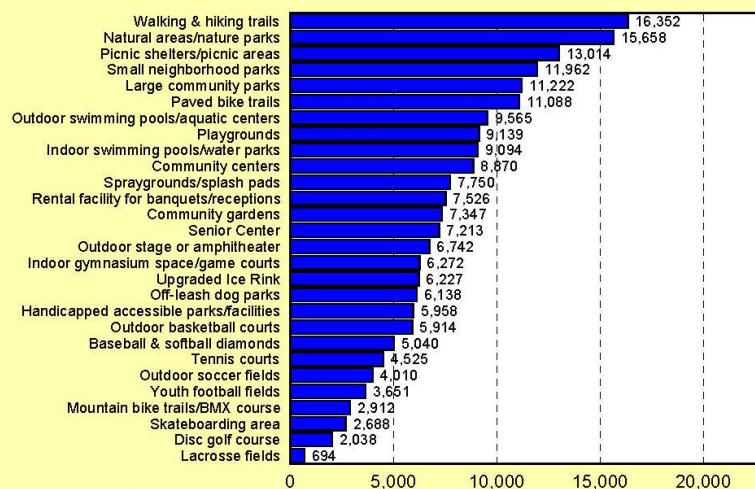
Q9. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have a Need For

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Q9. Estimated Number of Households in Elyria That Have a Need for Various Parks and Recreation Facilities

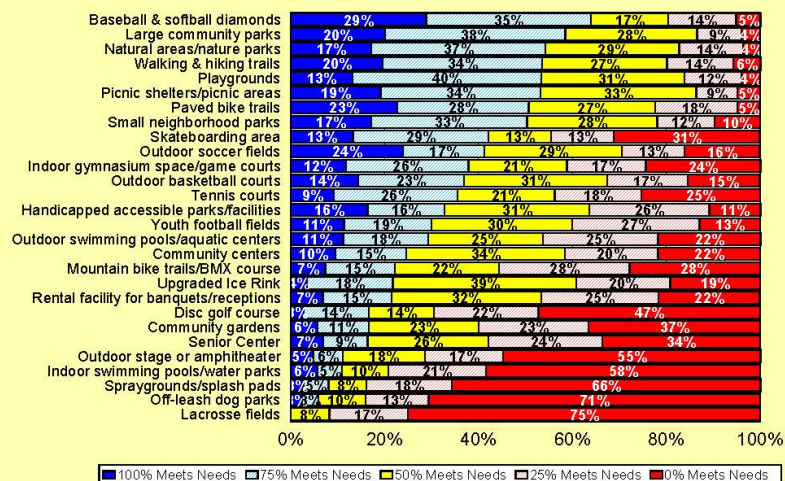
by number of households based on 22,400 households in Elyria



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q9. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities in Elyria Meet the Needs of Households

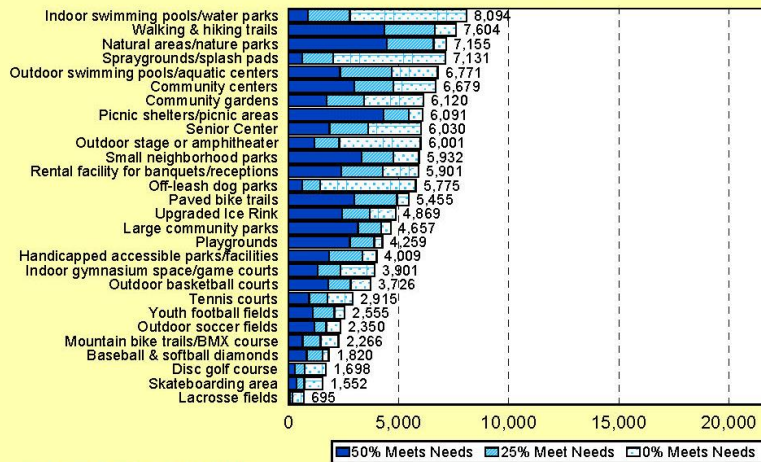
by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

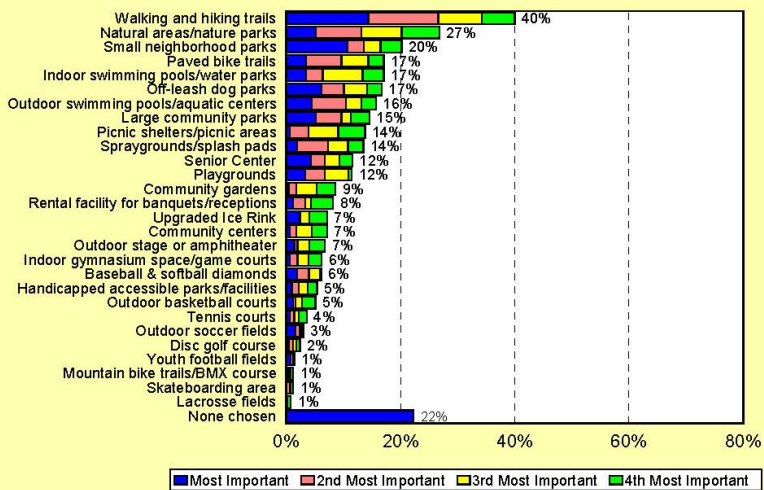
Q9. Estimated Number of Households in Elyria Whose Needs for Parks and Recreation Facilities Are Only Being 50% Met or Less

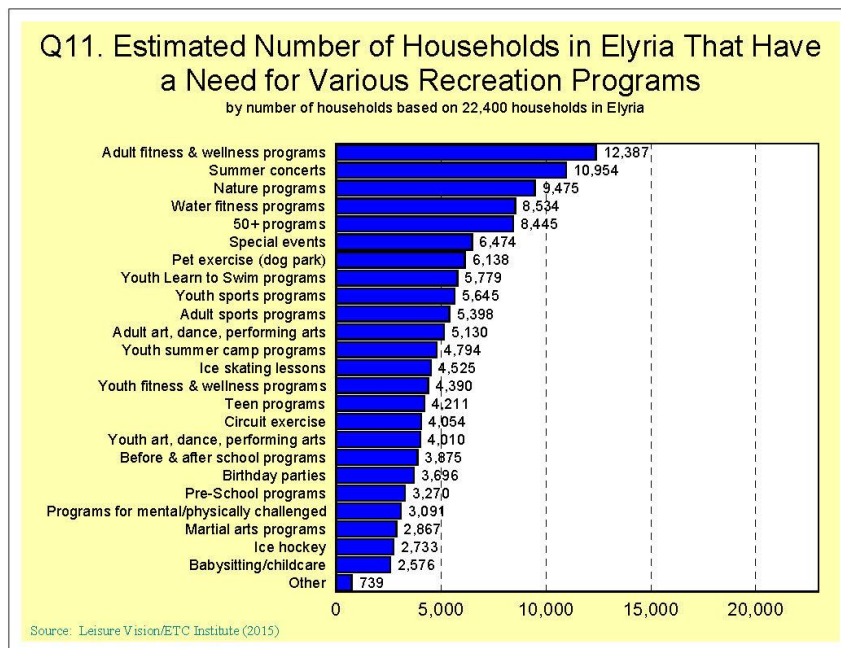
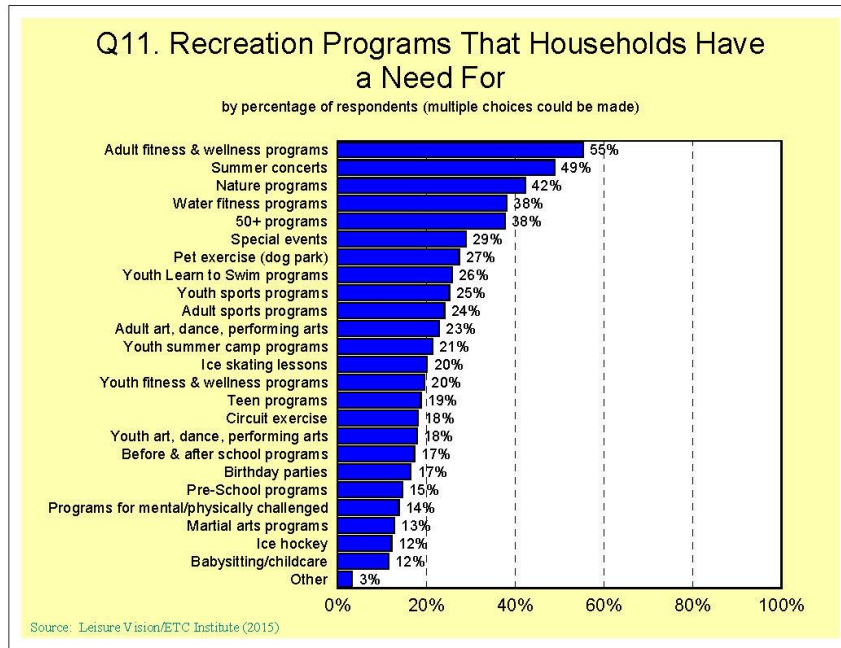
by number of households based on 22,400 households in Elyria



Q10. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Households

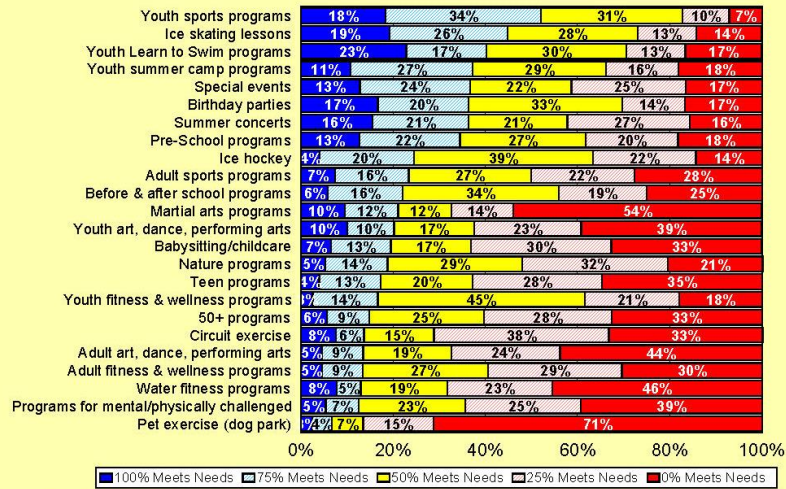
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices





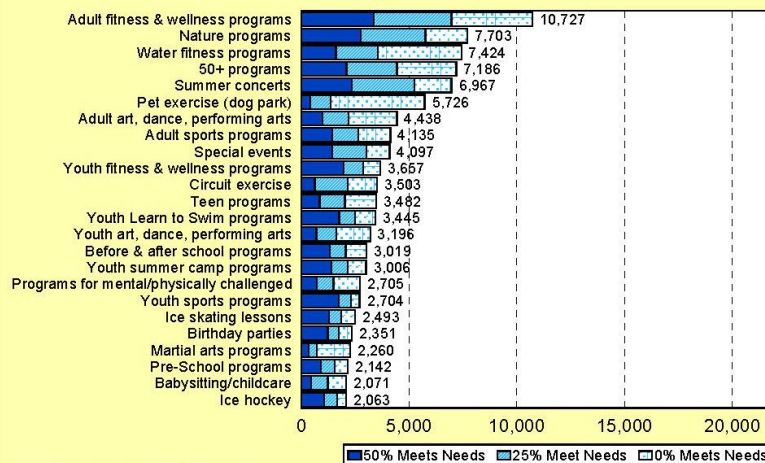
Q11. How Well Recreation Programs in Elyria Meet the Needs of Households

by percentage of respondents with a need for programs



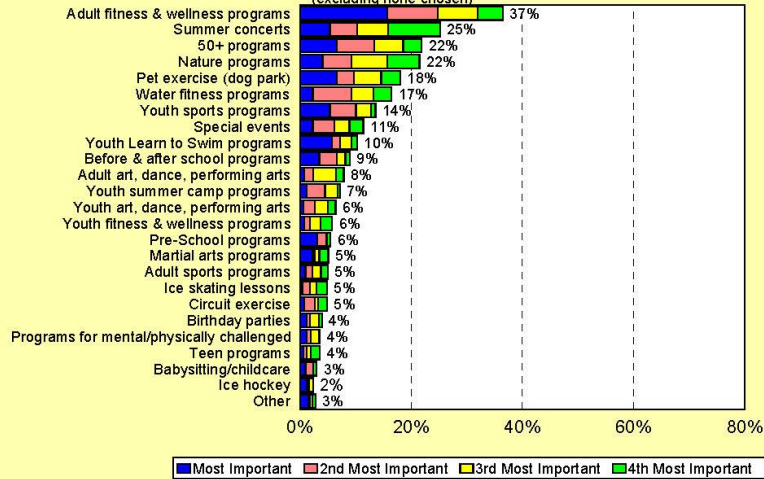
Q11. Estimated Number of Households in Elyria Whose Needs for Recreation Programs Are Only Being 50% Met or Less

by number of households based on 22,400 households in Elyria



Q12. Recreation Programs That Are Most Important to Households

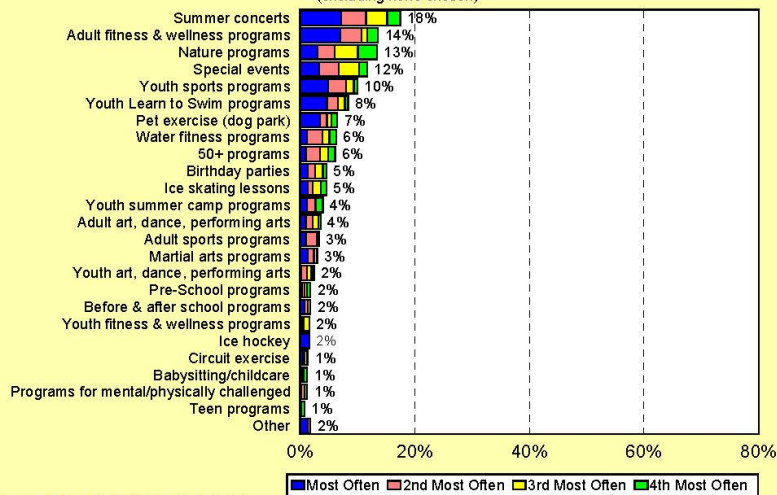
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices
(excluding none chosen)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q13. Recreation Programs That Households Currently Participate in Most Often

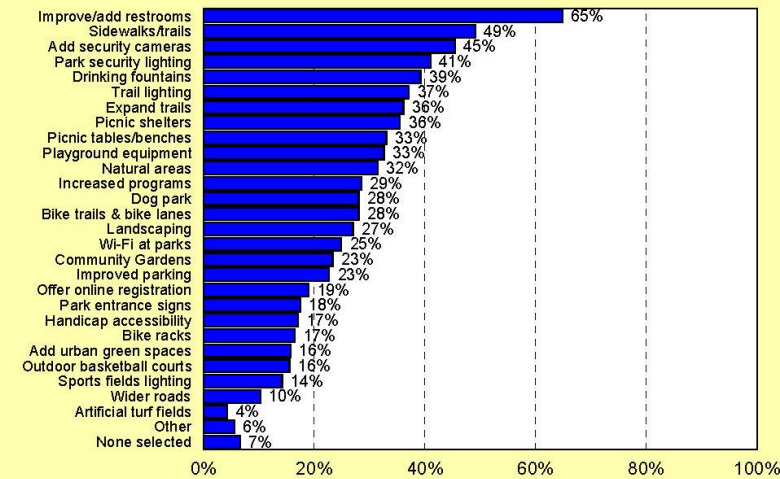
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices
(excluding none chosen)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q14. Potential Improvements That Households Would Like to Have Made to Existing Parks in the City of Elyria

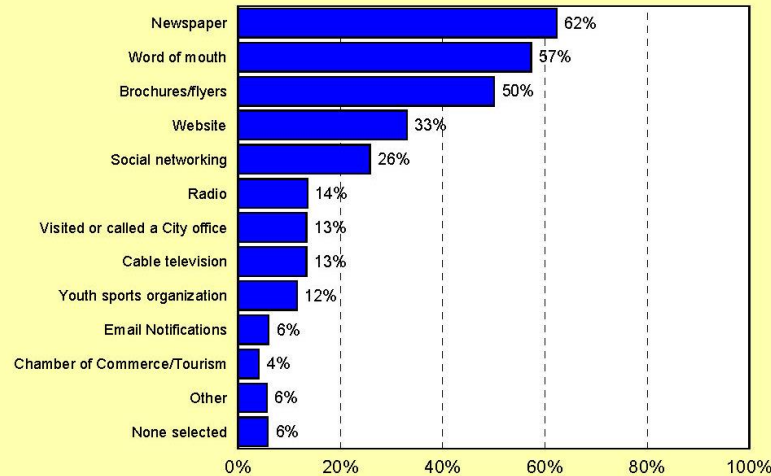
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q15. ALL of the Ways Households Learn About Recreations or Activities

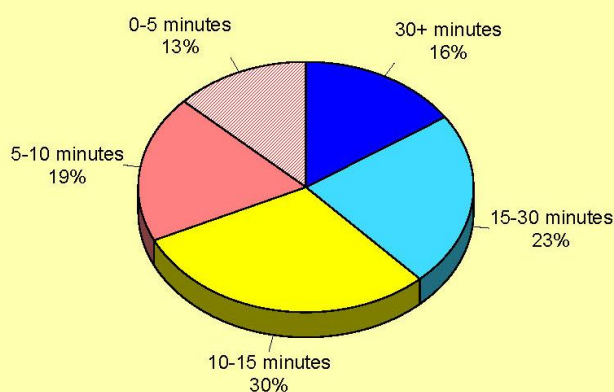
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q16. How Long Respondents Are Willing to Walk or Bike to Attend Programs or Use Park and Recreation Facilities

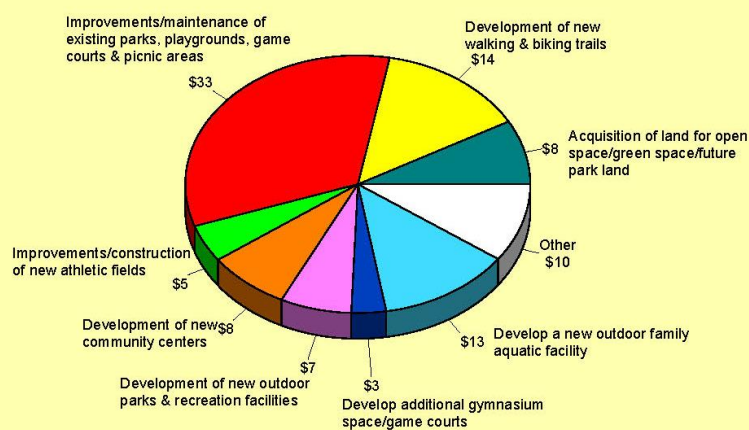
by percentage of respondents (excluding not provided)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q17. How Respondents Would Allocate \$100 Among Various Categories of Funding

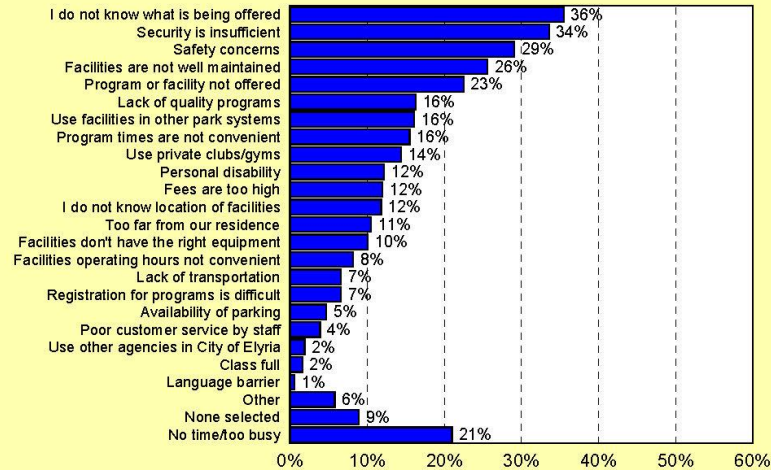
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q18. Reasons That Prevent Households From Using City of Elyria Parks, Recreation Facilities, Trails and Programs More Often

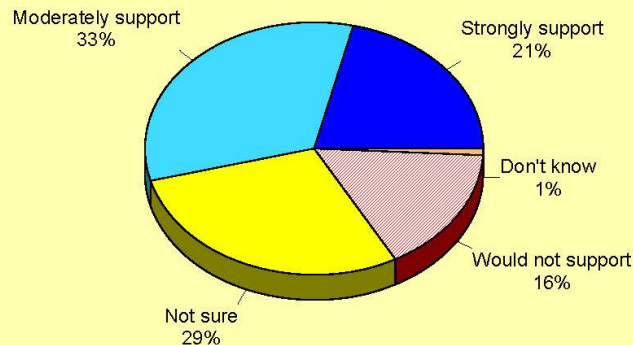
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q19. Support for a Recreation Tax to Fund the Development and Operations of the Types of Facilities and Activities That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

Q20. Demographics: Counting yourself, how many people live in your household?

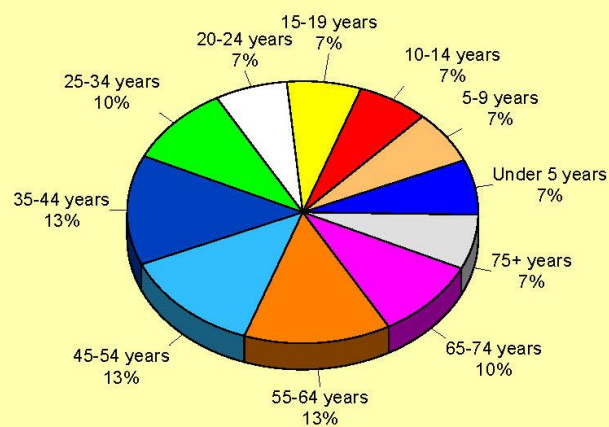
by percentage of respondents (excluding not provided)



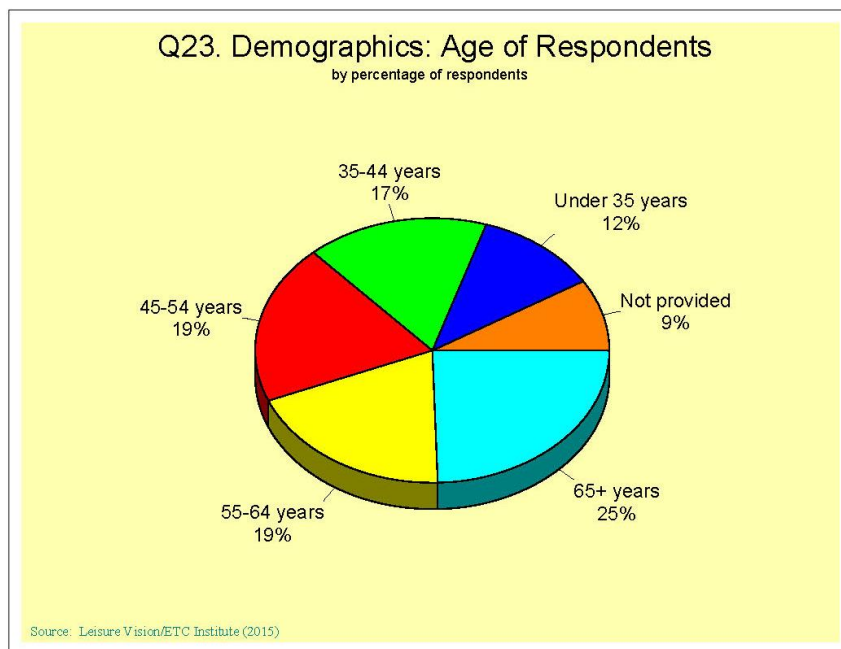
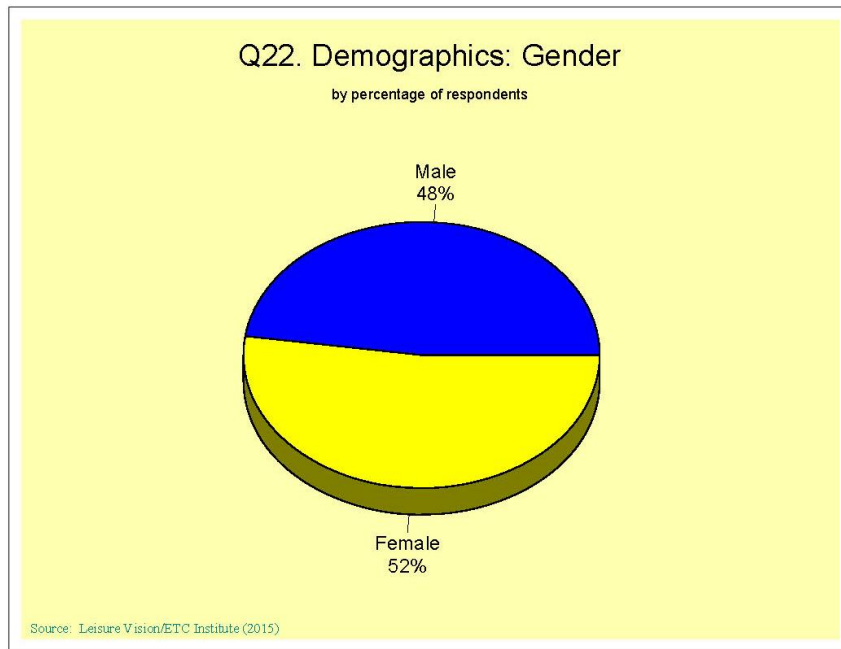
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)

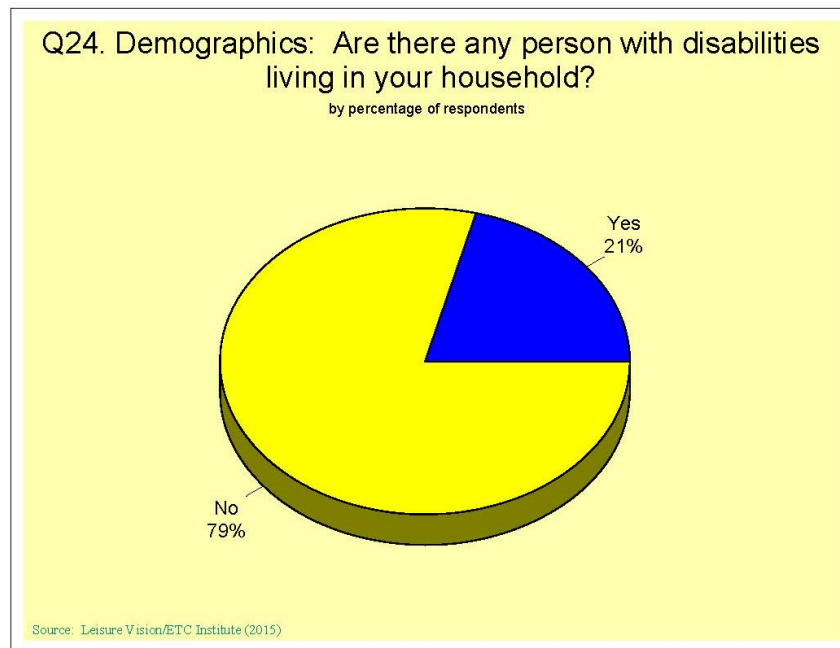
Q21. Demographics: Ages of People in Household

by percentage of household occupants



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (2015)





Section 2

Matrices

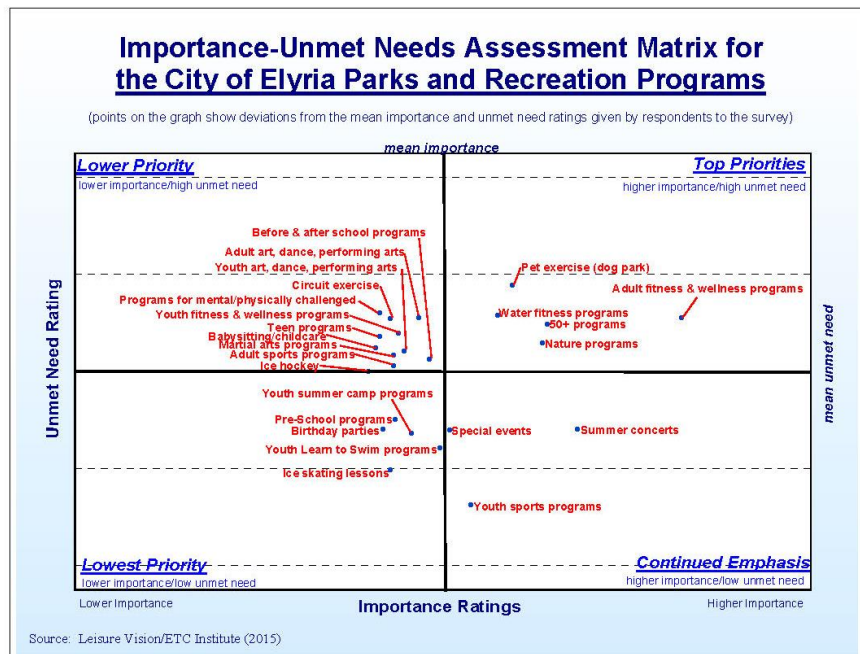
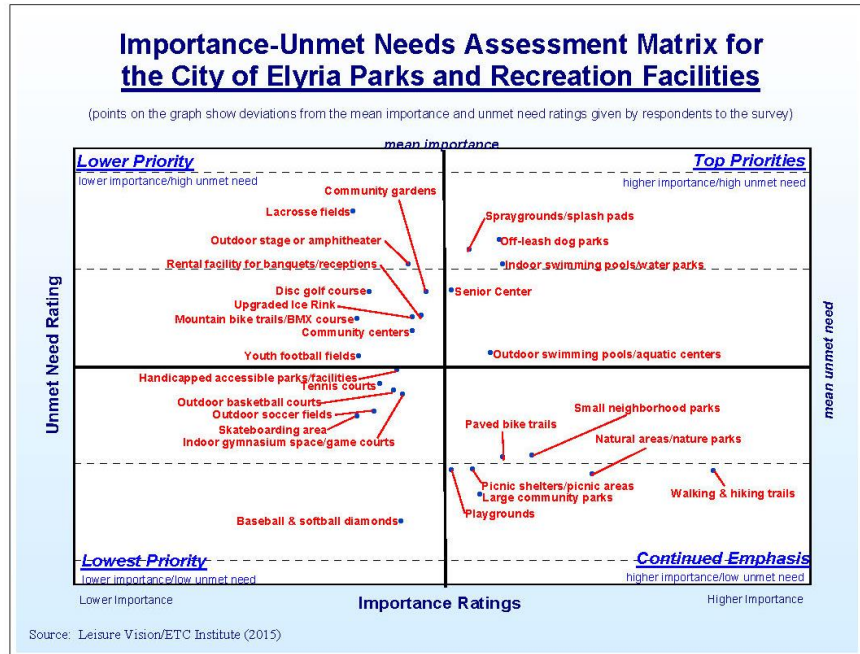
City of Elyria, OH

Importance-Unmet Needs Matrix

The Importance-Unmet Needs Matrix is a tool for assessing the priority that should be placed on parks and recreation facilities and recreation programs in the City of Elyria. Importance-Unmet Needs Assessment were completed for the City of Elyria. Each of the facilities and programs that were assessed on the survey were placed in one of the following four quadrants:

- **Top Priorities** (higher importance and high unmet need). Items in this quadrant should be given the highest priority for improvement. Respondents placed a high level of importance on these items, and the unmet need rating is high. Improvements to items in this quadrant will have positive benefits for the highest number of Elyria residents.
- **Continued Emphasis** (higher importance and low unmet need). Items in this quadrant should be given secondary priority for improvement. Respondents placed a high level of importance on these items, but the unmet need rating is relatively low.
- **Lower Priority** (lower importance and high unmet need). This quadrant shows where improvements may be needed to serve the needs of specialized populations. Respondents placed a lower level of importance on these items, but the unmet need rating is relatively high.
- **Lowest Priority** (lower importance and low unmet need). Items in this quadrant should receive the lowest priority for improvement. Respondents placed a lower level of importance on these items, and the unmet need rating is relatively low.

The following pages contain the Importance-Unmet Needs Matrices for all parks and recreation facilities and recreation programs that were assessed on the survey.



Section 3

Benchmarks

National Benchmarking

Since 1998, Leisure Vision (a division of ETC Institute) has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 400 communities in over 45 states across the country.

The results of these surveys has provided an unparalleled data base of information to compare responses from household residents in client communities to “National Averages” and therefore provide a unique tool to “assist organizations in better decision making.”

Communities within the data base include a full-range of municipal and county governments from 20,000 in population through over 1 million in population. They include communities in warm weather climates and cold weather climates, mature communities and some of the fastest growing cities and counties in the country.

“National Averages” have been developed for numerous strategically important parks and recreation planning and management issues including: customer satisfaction and usage of parks and programs; methods for receiving marketing information; reasons that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often; priority recreation programs, parks, facilities and trails to improve or develop; priority programming spaces to have in planned community centers and aquatic facilities; potential attendance for planned indoor community centers and outdoor aquatic centers; etc.

Results from household responses for the City of Elyria were compared to National Benchmarks to gain further strategic information. A summary of all tabular comparisons are shown on the following pages.

Note: The benchmarking data contained in this report is protected intellectual property. Any reproduction of the benchmarking information in this report by persons or organizations not directly affiliated with the City of Elyria is not authorized without written consent from Leisure Vision/ETC Institute.

Benchmarking for Elyria Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Surveys				
		National Average	City of Elyria 2015	
Has your household visited any parks or facilities during the past year?				
Yes		79%	82%	
No		21%	18%	
How would you rate the quality of all the parks/facilities you've visited?				
Excellent		31%	12%	
Good		54%	54%	
Fair		12%	30%	
Poor		2%	5%	
Has your household participated in City/County/Park District recreation programs during the past year?				
Yes		34%	21%	
No		66%	79%	
How would you rate the quality of all the recreation programs you've participated in?				
Excellent		35%	25%	
Good		53%	58%	
Fair		10%	13%	
Poor		2%	5%	

Benchmarking for Elyria Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	City of Elyria 2015
Ways respondents learn about recreation programs and activities			
Departmental Brochure (Seasonal program guide)		54%	50%
E-mail bulletins/notification (Email)		8%	6%
Newspaper		39%	62%
Radio		11%	14%
TV/Cable Access		10%	13%
Visited or called a parks/recreation office		16%	13%
Website		21%	33%
Word of Mouth/Friends/Coworkers		42%	57%
Social media - Facebook/Twitter		7%	26%
Organizations used for parks and recreation programs and facilities			
Churches		30%	35%
City/County Parks & Recreation Department		48%	60%
County/State Parks		36%	54%
Homeowners Associations/Similar		12%	3%
Other Cities/Park Districts		24%	36%
Private Clubs		22%	11%
Private schools		9%	9%
Private sports clubs		13%	3%
School District		28%	28%
YMCA		16%	16%
Youth Sports Leagues		16%	9%

*took avg. of
County/State

Benchmarking for Elyria Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	City of Elyria 2015
Recreation programs that respondent households have a need for			
Adult arts, dance, performing arts	21%	23%	
Adult fitness and wellness programs	48%	55%	
Adult sports programs	23%	25%	
Before and after school programs	15%	17%	
Birthday parties	17%	17%	
Martial arts programs	15%	13%	
Nature programs/environmental education	32%	42%	
Preschool programs	15%	15%	
Programs for people with disabilities	12%	14%	
Adult programs for 50 years and older	24%	38%	
Special events	40%	29%	
Teen programs	16%	19%	
Water fitness programs	30%	38%	
Youth art, dance, performing arts	18%	18%	
Youth fitness and wellness programs	19%	20%	
Youth Learn to Swim programs	25%	26%	
Youth summer camp programs	20%	21%	
Recreation programs that are the most important to respondent households			
Adult arts, dance, performing arts	9%	8%	
Adult fitness and wellness programs	30%	37%	
Adult sports programs	10%	5%	
Before and after school programs	7%	9%	
Birthday parties	4%	4%	
Martial arts programs	4%	5%	
Nature programs/environmental education	13%	22%	
Preschool programs	7%	6%	
Programs for people with special needs/disabled	4%	4%	
Adult programs for 50 years and older	14%	22%	
Special events	20%	11%	
Teen programs	7%	4%	
Water fitness programs	14%	17%	
Youth art, dance, performing arts	6%	6%	
Youth fitness and wellness programs	7%	6%	
Youth Learn to Swim programs	14%	10%	
Youth sports programs	15%	14%	
Youth summer camp programs	9%	7%	

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Benchmarking for Elyria Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Surveys			
	National Average	City of Elyria 2015	
Parks and recreation facilities that respondent households have a need for			
BMX Bicycle Course	11%	13%	
Community Gardens	33%	33%	
Community/Recreation Centers	44%	40%	
Football Fields	14%	16%	
Indoor Gyms/Multi-Purpose Rec Center	27%	28%	
Indoor Ice-Skating Rinks	26%	28%	
Indoor Swimming Pools/Aquatic Center	43%	41%	
Large Multi Use Community Parks	55%	50%	
Mountain bike trails	22%	13%	
Natural areas/wildlife habitats (Greenspace and natural areas)	50%	70%	
Off-leash dog parks	27%	27%	
Outdoor Amphitheater	34%	30%	
Outdoor basketball/multi-use courts	24%	26%	
Outdoor Swimming Pools/Aquatic Center	44%	43%	
Picnic Areas and Shelters	53%	58%	
Playground Equipment for Children	43%	41%	
Senior Centers (Senior activity space)	22%	32%	
Skateboarding Park/Area	13%	12%	
Small neighborhood parks	60%	53%	
Soccer fields	22%	18%	
Splash park/pad	25%	35%	
Tennis Courts (outdoor)	26%	20%	
Walking & Biking Trails	69%	73%	
Baseball and softball diamonds	23%	23%	
Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities to Respondent Households			
BMX Bicycle Course	2%	1%	
Community Gardens	8%	9%	
Community/Recreation Centers	13%	7%	
Football fields	3%	1%	
Indoor Gyms/Multi-Purpose Rec Centers	7%	6%	
Indoor Ice-Skating Rinks	7%	7%	
Indoor Swimming Pools/Aquatic Facilities	17%	17%	
Large Community Parks	19%	15%	
Mountain bike trails	6%	1%	
Natural areas/wildlife habitats (Greenspace and natural areas)	17%	27%	
Off-Leash Dog Park	12%	17%	
Outdoor Amphitheater	8%	7%	
Outdoor Basketball Courts	5%	5%	
Outdoor Swimming Pools/Aquatic Facilities	18%	16%	
Picnic Areas and Shelters	17%	14%	
Playground Equipment for Children	19%	12%	
Senior Centers (Senior activity space)	9%	12%	
Skateboarding Area	3%	1%	
Small Neighborhood Parks	28%	20%	
Soccer fields	8%	3%	
Splash park/pad	7%	14%	
Tennis Courts (outdoor)	7%	4%	
Walking and Biking Trails	42%	40%	
Baseball and softball diamonds	9%	6%	

Benchmarking for Elyria Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	City of Elyria 2015
Reasons that Prevent Respondent Households From Using Programs or Facilities More Often			
Facilities do not have right equipment		7%	10%
Facilities are not well maintained		6%	26%
Facility operating hours are not convenient		7%	8%
Fees are too expensive		13%	12%
I do not know location of facilities		12%	12%
I do not know what is being offered		22%	36%
Lack of parking		5%	5%
Lack of quality programs		8%	16%
Lack of transportation		3%	7%
Poor customer service by staff		3%	4%
Program times are not convenient		16%	16%
Programs I am interested in are not offered		14%	23%
Registration for programs is difficult		3%	7%
Security is insufficient		7%	34%
Too far from residence		12%	11%
Use facilities in other Cities/Park Districts		9%	16%
Use facilities/programs of other organizations		15%	14%
Use services of other agencies		8%	2%
Waiting list/programs were full		5%	2%
We are too busy		34%	21%