



Sustainable Tourism and Environment Program

R²S

Recreation Research & Service

***Work Program for
Conducting a Needs Assessment/Capital
Improvements Survey: Edgewood, Iowa***

Survey Report



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Needs Assessment/Capital Improvements Survey: Edgewood, Iowa Survey Report – Executive Summary

- Park facilities and recreation programs are important to the respondents. Only a few respondents felt that park facilities and recreation programs were not important aspects in the quality of their lives.
- Most of the respondents felt the current overall supply of recreational resources in the community were sufficient. Respondents did indicate that of the four options (parks, facilities, trails, and programs) there could be more trails in Edgewood.
- Most respondents indicated they would engage in ice skating if winter activity programs and/or facilities were available in Edgewood. Respondents also indicated cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice hockey and sledding would be good alternatives as well.
- Most residents feel safe and comfortable recreating at the various facilities and areas offered in Edgewood.
- Respondents noted that if action steps are taken for potential recreation areas or facilities, they would most often use an interconnected walking/running/biking trail system, inclusive of the current sidewalks and trails. A good portion of the respondents also indicated they would use an indoor pool, an indoor exercise facility, as well as a splash park.
- For households that have children under the age of 18, most respondents indicated their children use the city park, Community Dreams Sports Complex, and the pool. Some households also spend a significant amount of time recreating outside of Edgewood.
- Over 85% of the respondents indicated they would be willing to pay additional tax revenue in order to develop new recreation areas and facilities in Edgewood.
- Respondents stated the most important action steps the Edgewood community can take regarding recreational opportunities were developing new walking/running/biking trails, inclusive of connecting the existing walking/running/biking trails, and upgrading the existing outdoor pool. The prioritization of these three choices is also inclusive of additional tax revenue, if needed.

Introduction

The Edgewood Business and Economic Development Board has developed a three-year plan as a part of their 20-year vision for a “Vibrant and Healthy Edgewood”. The three-year plan includes community feedback regarding specific needs and future growth within Edgewood. Therefore, the purpose of this project was to document what are identified as important factors for growth in order to meet the 20-year vision of the Edgewood community. This report summarizes recreation and leisure needs and preferences of the citizens of Edgewood, and provides recommendations for developing, maintaining, and improving existing and future services.

Method

Data was primarily collected using mail surveys, which is the most common needs assessment technique (DiGrino & Whitmore, 2005; Altschuld & Witkin, 1999). It is suitable for gathering large samples of responses (McKillip, 1987); identifying citizens’ both current and desired recreation opportunities (Altschuld & Witkin, 1999); and examining changing preferences of the members (DiGrino & Whitmore, 2005). A simple random sampling was selected to gain representative preferences and opinions of the members (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Mitla & Lankford, 1999; Salant & Dillman, 1994). Electronic surveys were also available for completion.

A list of Edgewood, Iowa households was provided by the Edgewood Chamber of Commerce. The sample consisted of 350 randomly selected Edgewood, Iowa households. Surveys were distributed during June 2015. The sample size of 350 is sufficient to represent the population in + 5% sampling error (Salant & Dillman, 1994; Yamane, 1967). The sample received an uncompleted questionnaire and a postage-paid envelope addressed to the University of Northern Iowa STEP/R2S. Due to the initial high response rate associated with the first mailing, there was not a need for a second mailing. Table 1 displays the response rate for the mail-out and the electronic surveys. The total sample size was 433; the response rate was 48% (n = 205).

Table 1. *Survey Distribution*

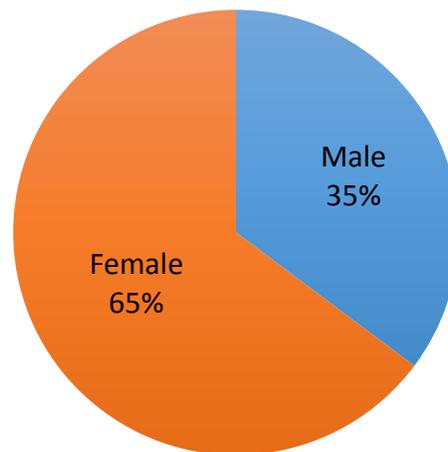
Sample size and Outcome	Number
Mail Survey Size	388
Electronic Survey Size	45
Outcome	
Mail Survey Returned	160
Electronic Survey Returned	45
Total Surveys Returned	205
Response Rate	48%

Demographics

Gender

Figure 2.1 displays the gender of respondents. Females comprised 65% of the respondents and 35% of the respondents was male. Age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 90 years old. The average age of the respondents was 52 years old.

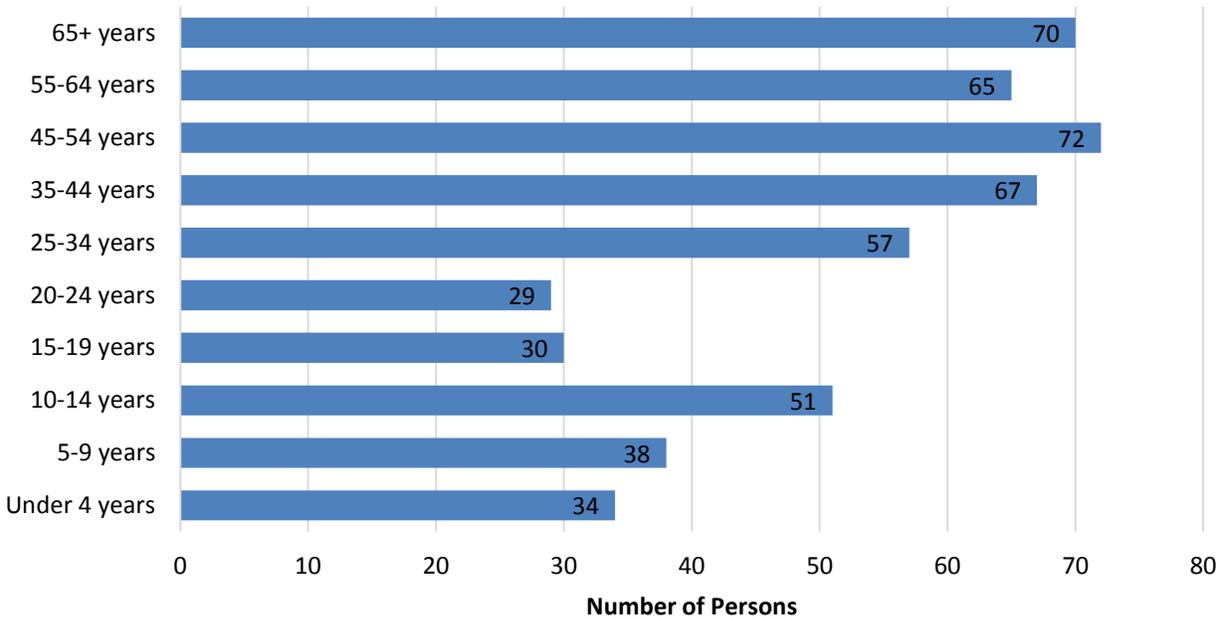
Figure 2.1. Gender of Respondents



Characteristics of the Sample Household

Figure 2.2 displays the age distribution of the sample's households. The sample household was mainly comprised of ages 45-54 years (N = 72), followed by 35-44 years old (N = 67), and 65+ years old (N = 70). Table 2.2 summarizes the comparison of the characteristics of the sample households.

Figure 2.2. Total Number of Persons in the Sample Household



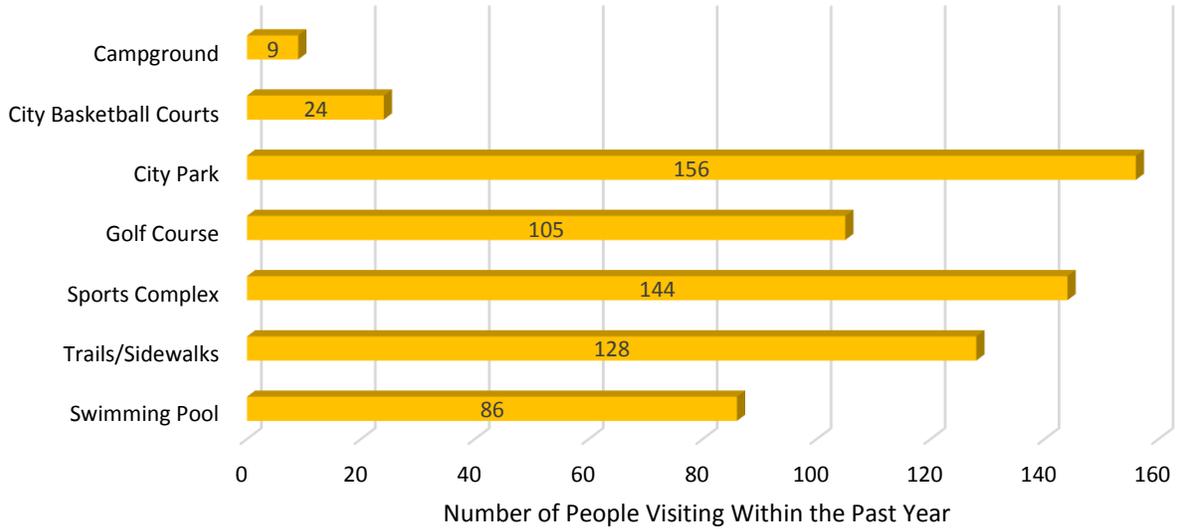
Current levels of Use

This section summarizes the current use of programs and facilities in Edgewood, Iowa. The first section explores the usage of current facilities or areas within Edgewood, as well as which facilities or areas have been used most often within the past year. The second section illustrates the importance of park facilities and recreation programs to the quality of life in Edgewood. It is followed by sections that gauge sufficient supply of programs and recreational opportunities in Edgewood. The third section examines possible usage levels of winter recreational programs. Lastly, the section identifies safety/comfort levels at specific recreation areas/facilities in Edgewood.

Current usage of recreational facilities and areas

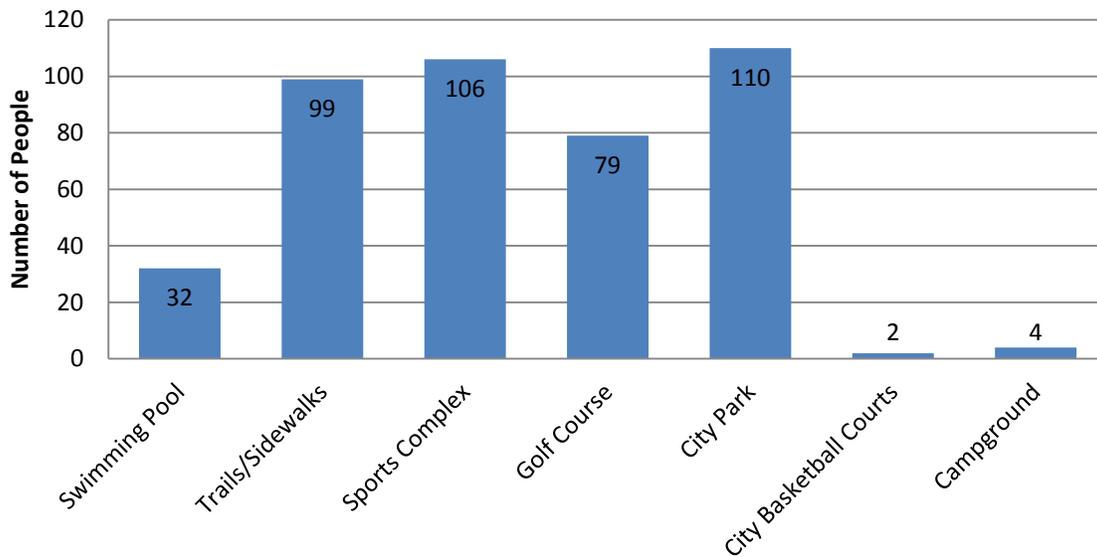
All of the facilities and areas listed were visited by someone in the respondents' households at least once within the past year. The facilities or areas visited the most were the Edgewood city park (85%), the Community Dreams Sports Complex (74%), and the walking/running/biking trails and sidewalks (67%). The total results are displayed in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Usage of Recreational Areas/Facilities



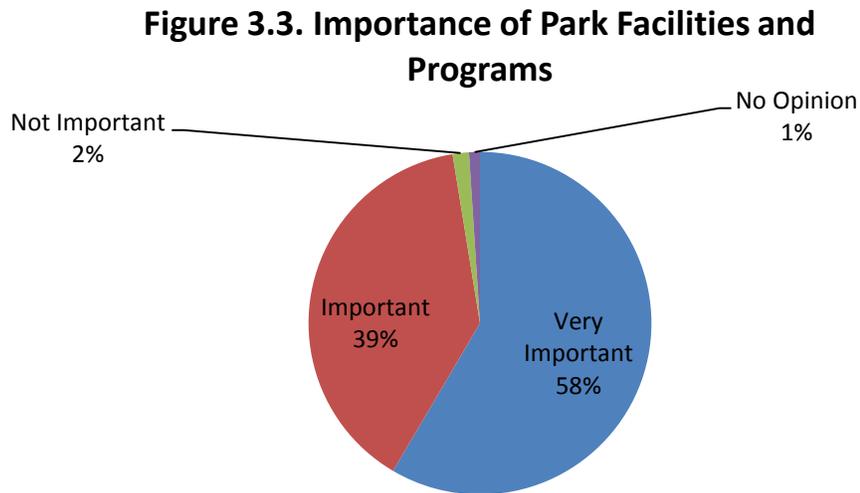
Respondents also indicated that of the facilities and areas visited within the past year, the Edgewood city park (61%), the Community Dreams Sports Complex (59%), and the walking/running/biking trails and sidewalks (55%) were used most often. The total results are displayed in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2. Frequency of Visitation - Past Year



Importance of facilities and programs

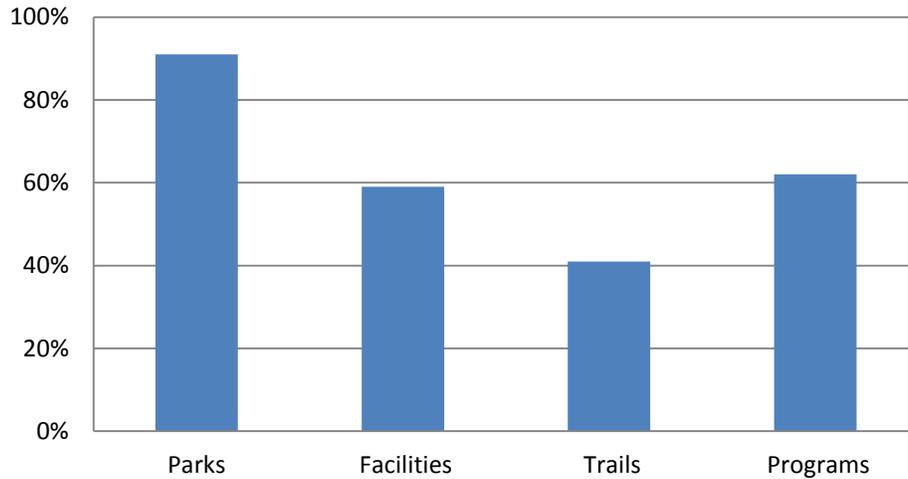
Figure 3.3 illustrates the importance of park facilities and recreation programs to the quality of life in Edgewood. Respondents who said that park facilities and recreation programs are important or very important exceeds 97% (very important = 58%; important = 39%). Only 2% of respondents felt that park facilities and recreation programs were not important aspects in the quality of their lives.



Availability of recreation resources

The majority of respondents said that the current supply of recreational resources in Edgewood is sufficient. Figure 3.4 displays whether or not residents felt there were sufficient supplies of recreation resources (parks, facilities, trails, and programs) in Edgewood. The results show that 91% felt there were enough parks in Edgewood, 59% felt there were enough facilities in Edgewood, 41% felt there were enough trails in Edgewood, and 62% felt there were enough parks in Edgewood.

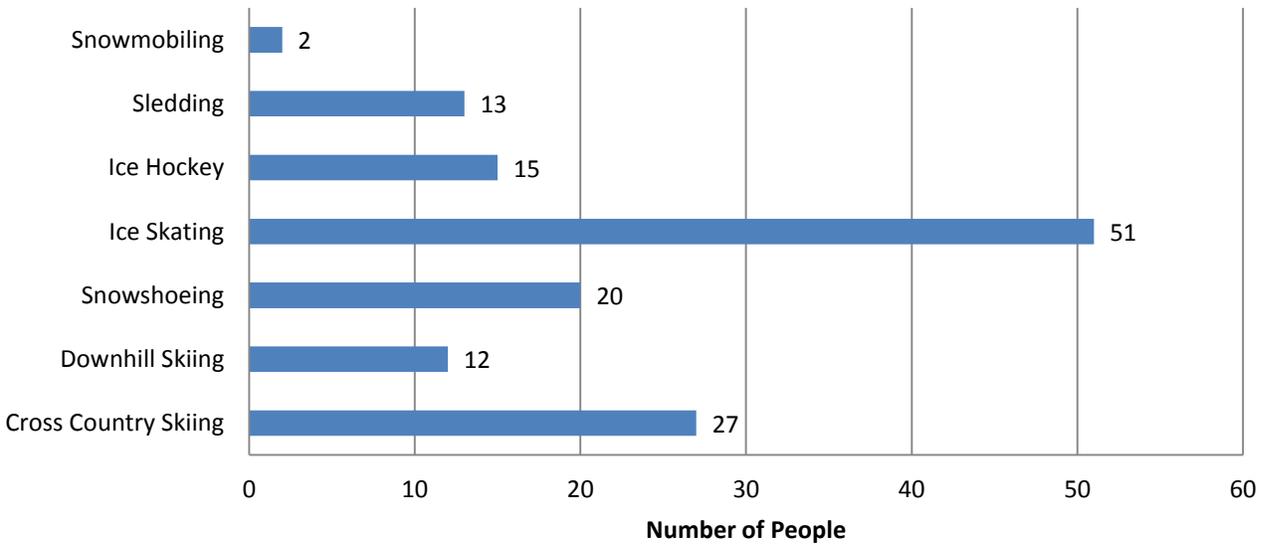
Figure 3.4. Sufficient Supply of Recreation Resources



Winter Activity Usage

Of the total number of respondents, 77 households indicated winter activity programs that would be used if offered in Edgewood. The results show that 66% of the respondents would participate in ice skating, 35% would participate in cross country skiing, 26% would participate in snowshoeing, and 20% would participate in ice hockey. It should be noted the most common write-in response was sledding (17%). The total results are displayed in Figure 3.5.

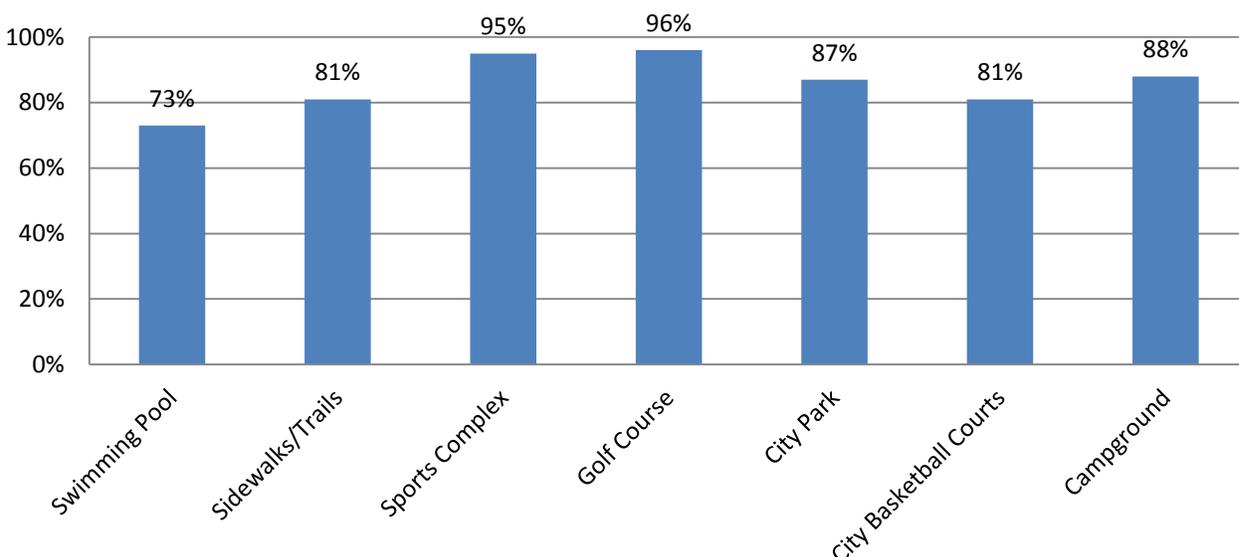
Figure 3.5. Winter Activity Usage



Safe/Comfortable recreation locations

Edgewood residents were surveyed regarding whether they feel safe/comfortable recreating at a number of locations in the community, such as Community Dreams Sports Complex, Edgewood City Park, and Sweet Dream Campground. The results show that at a minimum, 73% of residents feel safe and comfortable at all recreation locations. The total results are displayed in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6. Percentage of people who feel safe/comfortable at recreation locations



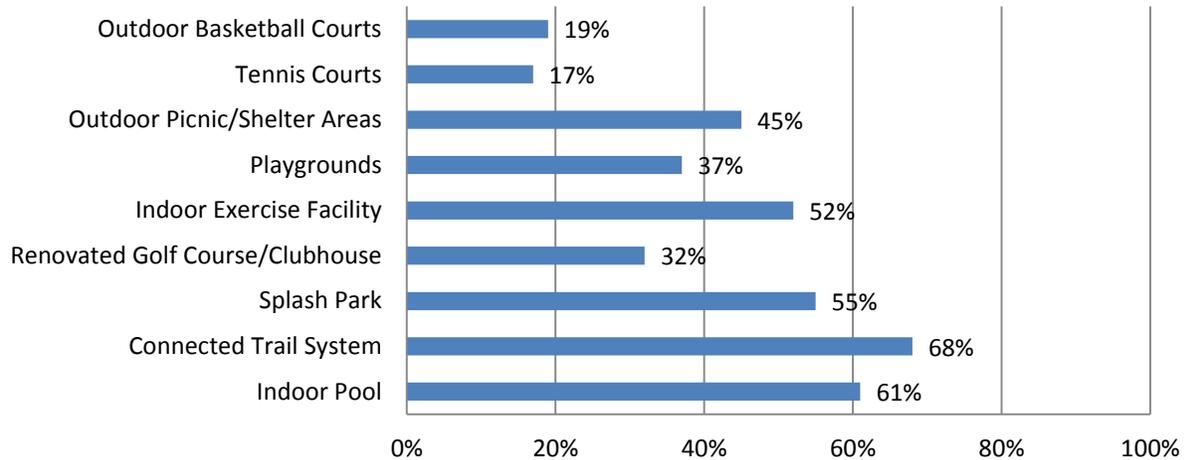
Recreational Activity Preferences and Suggestions

This section evaluates citizen's preferences and suggestions of what they would like to see in the community. The first part of this section summarizes respondents' choices for potential facilities. Second, the section delineates what potential recreational options citizens would use most often. This discussion also includes where members of households that are under the age of 18 play or hang out most often in Edgewood. The third section outlines what, if any, tax adjustments citizens would be willing to make for potential development and operation of recreational opportunities. Fourth, the section encapsulates the perceptions of importance regarding actions steps associated with current recreational areas and facilities. Lastly, the section closes with a discussion of which current action steps citizens would be willing to fund with tax dollars.

Potential Facilities

Respondents were asked about their preferences for usage of potential facilities in Edgewood. Of the respondents' choices, 68% would use an interconnected walking/running trail system, 61% would use an indoor pool, and 55% would use a splash park. The total results are displayed in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1. Potential Facilities



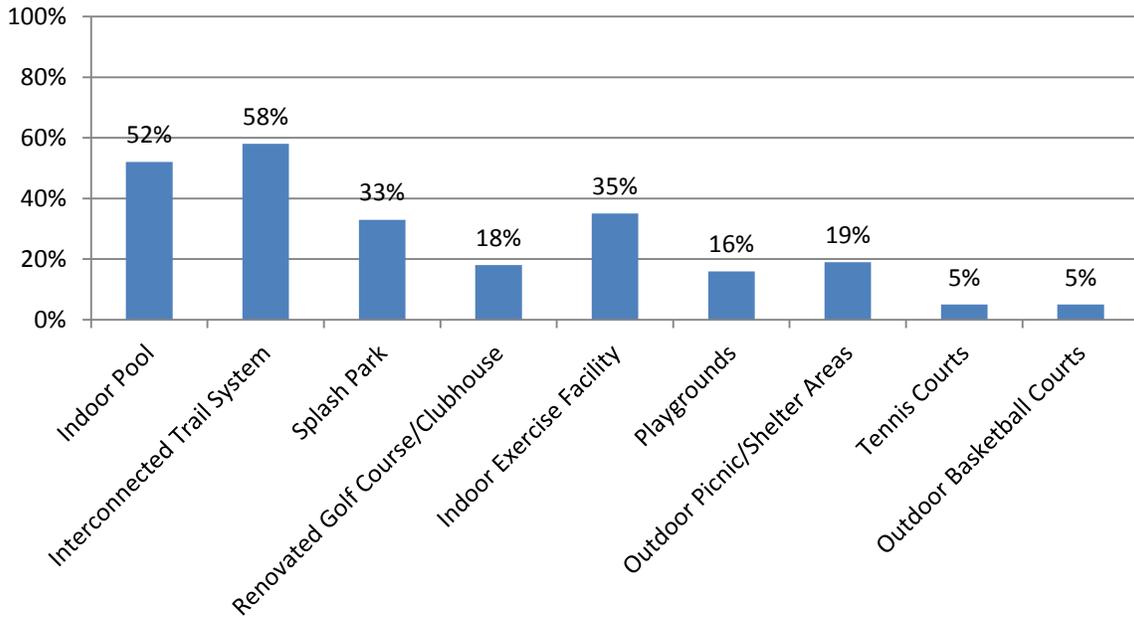
Frequency of Usage

Respondents indicated they would use an interconnected walking/running trail system (58%), followed by an indoor pool (52%), an indoor exercise facility (35%), and a splash park (30%). The total results are displayed in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.2.

Table 4.1. Frequency of Potential Usage (Number of Respondents)

Potential Facility	Number of Respondents
Indoor Leisure Pool	92
Interconnected Walking/Running/Biking Trail System	103
Splash Park	58
Renovated Golf Course/Clubhouse	32
Indoor Exercise Facility	62
Playgrounds	28
Outdoor Picnic/Shelter Areas	34
Tennis Courts	9
Outdoor Basketball Courts	9

Figure 4.2. Frequency of Usage



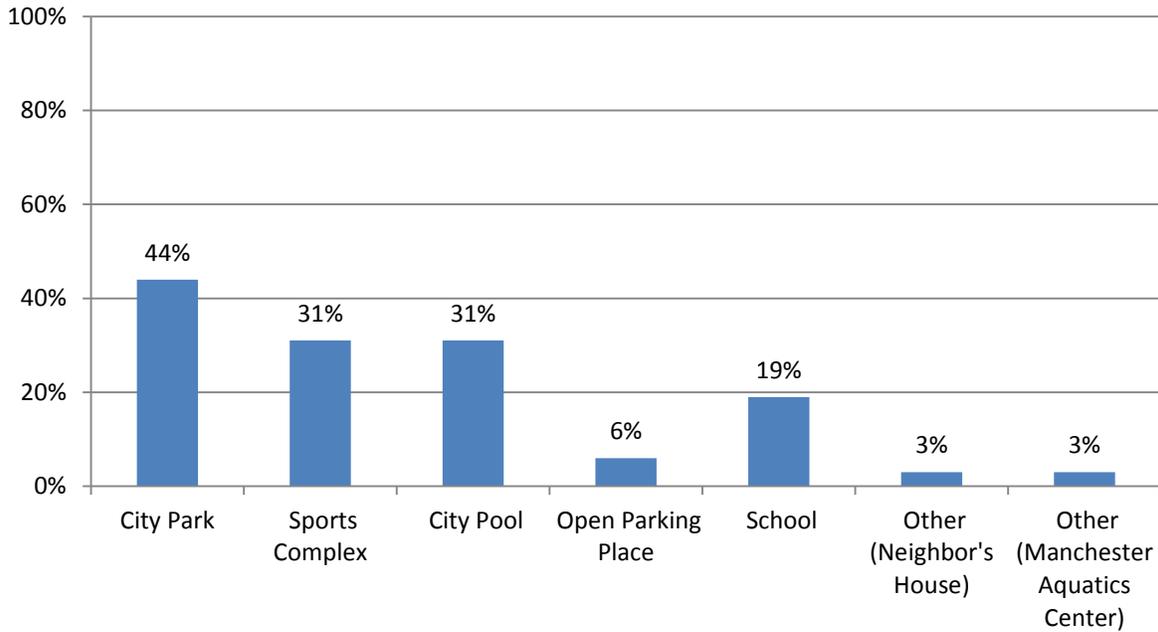
Recreation Opportunities for Minors

For those households that have children under the age of 18, the results showed that they played or hung out most often at the City Park (44%), the Community Dreams Sports Complex (31%), and the Community Pool (31%). It should be noted that a few households indicated they take their children to the Manchester Aquatic Center. The total results are displayed in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.2. Recreation Opportunities for Minors

Recreation Facility/Location	Number of Respondents
City Park	30
Community Dreams Sports Complex	21
Community Pool	21
School	13
Open Parking Place	4
Other (Neighbor's House)	2
Other (Manchester Aquatics Center)	2

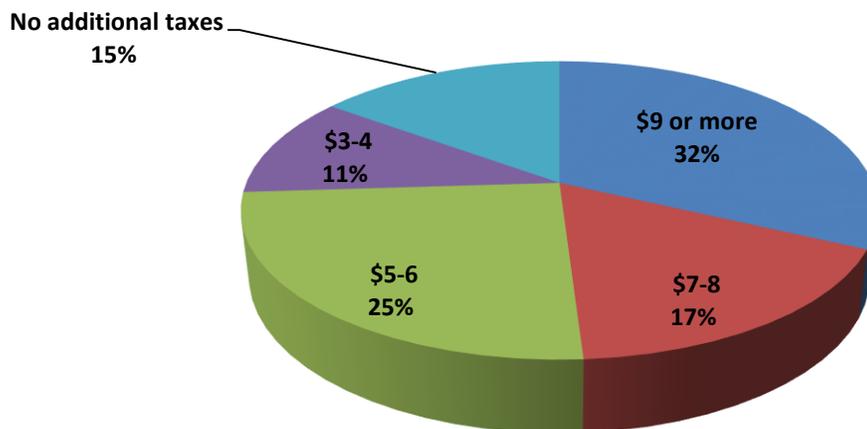
Figure 4.3. Recreation Facilities/Locations for Minors



Tax Revenues

Respondents were asked if new recreation facilities and areas were developed in Edgewood, would they be willing to pay any additional tax revenue. The results indicated that 32% of the residents would be willing to pay \$9 or more per month of increased taxes, 17% would be willing to pay \$7-8 per month, 25% would be willing to pay \$5-6 per month, 11% would be willing to pay \$3-4 per month, and 15% did not want to see an increase in taxes. Sixteen (16) respondents did not indicate a preference. Total results are displayed in Figure 4.4.

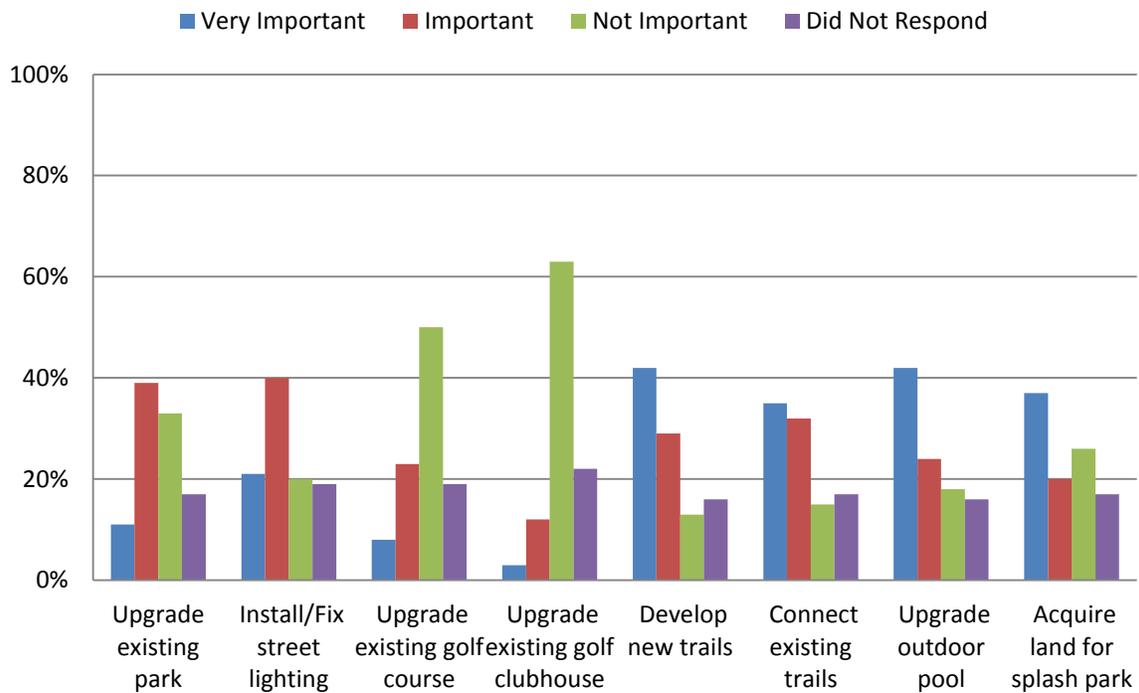
Figure 4.4. Additional Tax Revenue



Importance of Recreational Opportunities

Respondents were asked to indicate importance levels for a number of potential action steps that the Edgewood community can take associated with recreational facilities and areas. The results show the action steps viewed as very important by the respondents included developing new walking/biking trails (49%), upgrading the one existing outdoor pool (49%), and acquiring land for an aquatics splash park (45%). The results show the action steps viewed as important by the respondents included upgrading the existing parks (51%), install/fix the lighting to streets (48%), and connecting existing walking/biking trails (40%). The total results are displayed in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5. Important Action Steps



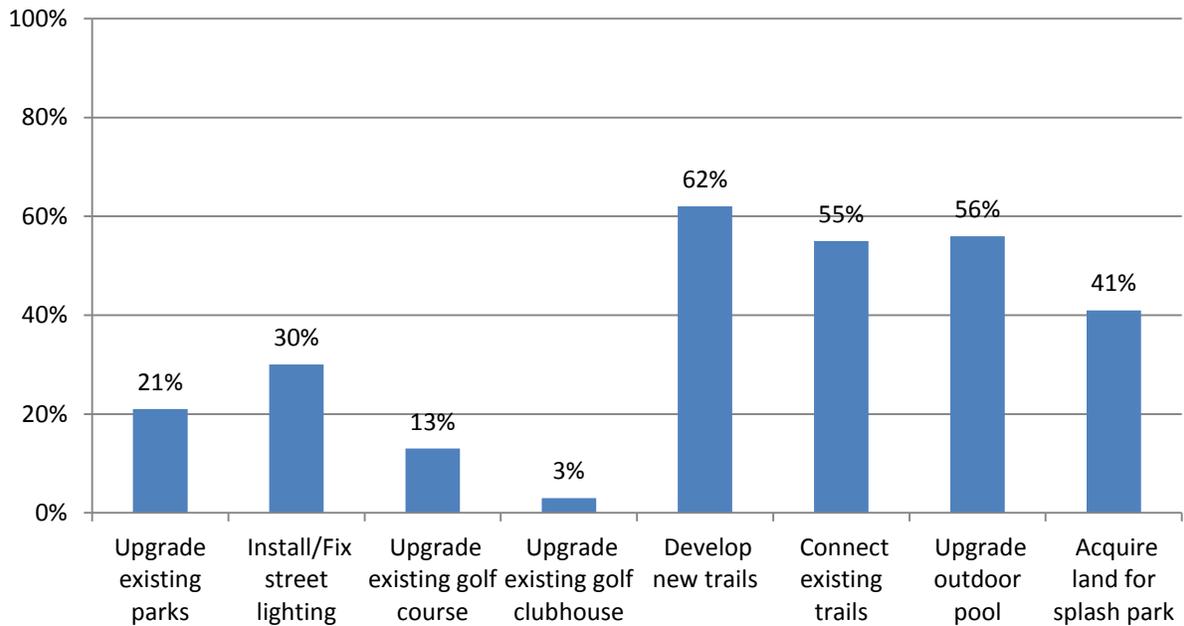
Tax Funding Preferences

Respondents were asked which three action steps they would be willing to fund with their tax dollars. The results indicated that 62% of respondents would be willing to fund the development of new walking/biking trails, 56% would be willing to fund the upgrade of the one existing outdoor pool, and 55% would be willing fund the connection of existing walking/biking trails. The total results are displayed in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.6.

Table 4.3. Tax Funding Preferences

Action Step	Number of Respondents
Develop new trails	98
Upgrade outdoor pool	88
Connect existing trails	87
Acquire land for a splash park	64
Install/Fix street lighting	48
Upgrade existing parks	33
Upgrade existing golf course	21
Upgrade existing golf clubhouse	4

Figure 4.6. Tax Funding Preferences



Additional Citizen Comments

This section outlines written feedback from survey respondents associated with their impressions of general operation and development in Edgewood.

Additional recreational facilities/areas within Edgewood

Several respondents commented that Edgewood needed to either update or invest in a new outdoor pool. Options to include are zero depth entry, accessibility for all

populations, heating, and adequate depth for a diving/swimming team. A splash park was suggested by some respondents; others pointed out that a splash park was not needed, due to three other communities within 25 miles having splash parks. One respondent pointed out that a model for a smaller community looking to redo their pool was in Rockwell, Iowa.

Multiple respondents pointed out that new walking/running/biking trails should be established, inclusive of connecting existing trails and sidewalks in Edgewood. Respondents stated that this trail system would be safer, and provide more access to various other recreational areas in Edgewood, such as Woods Edge Golf Course and Community Dreams Sports Complex. A side note in association with an interconnected walking/running/biking trail system was to put bicycle racks in downtown Edgewood; this would encourage healthy activity, as well as localized shopping.

Other recreational facilities or areas that were discussed included (a) new bleachers/stands at the ball fields, (b) new tennis courts, (c) signage for locating Community Dreams, (d) opening up the school weight room as an exercise facility, possibly charging a fee for usage as a revenue generator, (e) enlarging the rodeo grounds to accommodate other recreational events, such as tractor pulls and concerts, (f) an all-season multiuse indoor facility, and (g) an indoor playground for children.

Infrastructure

Respondents commented that fixing the streets and the sidewalks are of major importance to Edgewood. Respondents also stated that Edgewood needed its own police force, and to enforce closing hours at the park and other community centers. Lastly, multiple comments included making more facilities and areas accessible to all populations.

Future Population Growth

Multiple respondents commented that whatever decisions are made regarding potential recreational facilities and areas, that two population groups should be kept in mind – children under 18 years of age and new residents to the community. “The kids should be kept in mind” and “youth are important to the town’s growth” indicate that prioritizing youth in Edgewood should be a focus of development. A few respondents pointed out that recreational facilities, programs, and areas that are for teens will benefit Edgewood. Finally, if tax revenue is going to be spent, respondents indicated the money should be spent on education and the school.

As decisions are made regarding recreational facilities and areas, a focus should also be on attracting new families to Edgewood to sustain the community’s growth. A strategic plan for community development was suggested, taking into account current and future residents’ needs.

Appendix A

Vibrant and Healthy Edgewood Survey



Vibrant and Healthy Edgewood Survey

The Edgewood Business and Economic Development Board has developed a three-year plan as a part of their 20-year vision for a “Vibrant and Healthy Edgewood”. The three-year plan includes community feedback regarding specific recreational needs and future growth within Edgewood. Please assist us by taking a few moments to fill out this questionnaire.

1. Including yourself, how many people live in your household? _____
2. Please check the appropriate box if someone in your household has visited any of the following facilities in Edgewood during the past 12 months.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | City of Edgewood Swimming Pool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Trails/Sidewalks – Walking/Biking/Running |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Community Dreams Sports Complex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Woods Edge Golf Course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Edgewood City Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Edgewood City Basketball Court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Sweet Dreams Campground |

If you answered “Yes” to any of the facilities in question 2, please answer Question 2a. If you answered “No” to all of the facilities in question 2, please go to question 3.

- 2a. How would you rate the overall condition of ALL Edgewood facilities you have visited?

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

3. Which THREE facilities or parks listed in Question 2 have you or members of your household used the most during the past year?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

4. How important are park facilities and recreation programs to the quality of life in Edgewood?
 Very Important Important Not Important No opinion

5. Is there a sufficient supply of the following recreation resources in the Edgewood area?
Parks Yes No If "No", what improvements can be made?

Facilities Yes No If "No", what improvements can be made?

Trails Yes No If "No", what improvements can be made?

Programs Yes No If "No", what improvements can be made?

6. Please check the winter activities you and your family would participate in if they are offered.

Cross Country Skiing

Downhill Skiing

Snowshoeing

Ice Skating

Ice Hockey

Other _____

7. Using the list below, please check "Yes" or "No" regarding whether you feel safe/comfortable recreating at each location.

City of Edgewood Swimming Pool	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Sidewalks/Trails – Walking/Biking/Running	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Community Dreams Sports Complex	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Woods Edge Golf Course	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Edgewood City Park	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Edgewood City Basketball Court	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Sweet Dreams Campground	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

8. The City of Edgewood is studying the potential of developing new recreation facilities for the community. From the following list, please check ALL the potential facilities you and members of your household would use.

- Indoor Leisure pool (slides, sprays)
- Walking/running connected trail system
- Splash Park (water slides, sprays, dump buckets, picnic area, showers/restrooms)
- Renovated Golf Course/Clubhouse
- Indoor exercise facility
- Playgrounds
- Outdoor picnic areas/shelters
- Tennis courts
- Outdoor Basketball Courts

9. From the list of potential facilities in Question 8, which three options would you or members of your household use most often?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

10. Costs to develop and operate new recreation facilities and areas would need to be paid through tax revenues and user fees. The higher the amount of revenue from taxes and fees, the greater the quantity and quality of recreational facilities. Knowing that, what is the maximum amount of additional tax revenue you would be willing to pay to develop and operate the types of recreation facilities and areas most important to your household?

- \$9 or more per month
- \$7-8 per month
- \$5-6 per month
- \$3-4 per month
- No additional tax revenue per month

11. Following is a list of potential action steps that Edgewood can take associated with current recreational facilities and areas. For each potential action step, please indicate how important you believe it would be for Edgewood by checking the appropriate box.

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Upgrade existing parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Install/fix lighting to streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upgrade the existing Golf Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upgrade the existing Golf Clubhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop new walking/biking trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connect existing walking/biking trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upgrade the one existing outdoor pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acquire land for an aquatics splash park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Which THREE actions from the list in question 11 would you be most willing to fund with your tax dollars?

13. How many males and females are in your household? _____ females _____ males

14. How many individuals in your household (including yourself) are in the following age categories?

_____ under 4 years _____ 5-9 years old _____ 10-14 years old _____ 15-19 years old

_____ 20-24 years old _____ 25-34 years old _____ 35-44 years old _____ 45-54 years old

_____ 55-64 years old _____ 65+ years old

15. If a member of your household is under the age of 18, where do they play or hang out most often (select one option from the following list)?

- City Park
- Community Dreams
- Community Pool
- Open parking place
- School
- Other: _____

16. You are: Male Female; and _____ years old.

17. Do you have any other comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding current facilities and or future development for the City of Edgewood?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS SURVEY!

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