Valpo Parks
The Next Generation!

Valparaiso Parks and Recreation

Comprehensive Parks System Master Plan

pros consulting INC.

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Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department (VPRD) Comprehensive Master Plan provides the Department a roadmap for addressing community need for the next five years. This plan details the current state of the system while projecting focus areas based on a comprehensive assessment of community priorities. VPRD has done a tremendous job of addressing community need since its last master plan in 2010. In fact, the City of Valparaiso (Valpo) was named to the America Planning Association's (APA) 2016 Great Public Spaces. Central Park Plaza received the recognition and shared this prestigious honor with public spaces in Fairbanks, Alaska; Cincinnati, Ohio; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Needless to say, VPRD is not only a locally recognized park department; it is recognized as a nationally great department.

This Master Plan sought community input to identify their visions and expectations for the future of VPRD. Community input was received via focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, public forums, and survey instruments (statistically-valid community survey and an online open survey). The information gleaned from the community engagement process was combined with technical research to produce the final Master Plan.

This plan establishes recommendations for VPRD to achieve the vision the community has for the park and recreation system as well as to achieve greater financial sustainability without sacrificing the value of the park assets and amenities or reducing the level of experiences and services available to users. VPRD already oversees an impressive inventory of parkland, pathways, and amenities:

- 708.6 acres of parkland (including 153 undeveloped acres)
- 18.75 miles of pathways (18 miles are not within a park facility)
- 1 mile of hiking/nature trails
- 23 picnic shelters
- 9 soccer fields
- 6 baseball fields (youth and adult)
- 6 softball fields
- 5 basketball courts
- 1 tennis court
- 13 playgrounds
- 1 skate park
- 1 sprayground

1.2 MASTER PLAN GOALS

The goals of this Master Plan include:

- Conduct a robust public engagement process that involves leadership, stakeholders, and the community at-large (both current users and non-users) to identify department specific goals and objectives

- Complete technical research to establish planning context

- Understand the current organizational context while providing recommendations and priorities for future direction

- Review the department's readiness and feasibility to transition into a Center Township/City of Valparaiso Park District

- Incorporate succession planning parameters for division leads and director positions

- Identify and develop a 5-year action plan that outlines the short- and long-term goals in terms of funding and revenue, capital, operations, and organizational structure

1.3 MISSION, CORE VALUES, AND SERVICE PRIORITIES

1.3.1 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department is to be a leading partner in preserving, developing, and promoting Valparaiso's unique quality of life.

1.3.2 CORE VALUES

The Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department values being:

- Boldly proactive
- Creatively frugal
- Honestly accountable
- Respectfully compassionate
- Surprisingly responsive

1.3.3 SERVICE PRIORITIES

As a provider of services, the department places a priority on the following:

- Safety
- Courtesy
- Presentation
- Efficiency

1.3.4 DEPARTMENT COMPONENT VISION AND GOALS

The following components address the key vision, goals, and corresponding strategies for each major area of operation within the system. These components provide a clear understanding of what the Department is striving to achieve over the next five years. All statements, goals, and strategies were derived from the park and recreation needs assessment (as developed through this planning process) along with a comprehensive public engagement strategy.

PARK LAND AND TRAILS

Our vision for park lands and trails is to create a system of parks and trails that define the value of public parks and recreation space in Valparaiso. These parks and trails will be designed to inspire the community to want to use our parks of all types for recreation purposes while creating an integrated trail system that connects neighborhoods and promotes active life styles in health and wellness.

GOAL

Create great parks and trails that create a sense of place and establishes Valparaiso as a place to live and thrive.

STRATEGIES

- Create a network of parks, trails, and open spaces that protects the natural areas in Valparaiso, while connecting to population centers that will support the needs of all residents through well-designed parks and recreation amenities

- Continue to enhance and complete linkages throughout the City via pathways and greenways
- Develop soft surface trails that support the goal of .1 miles per 1,000 people
- Adopt the Design Principles for each type of park (neighborhood, community, regional, and special use) to guide landscape and design architects for new development and to guide operational staff when the amenity or park is developed
- Develop individual park master plans for signature parks throughout the system
- Establish a lifecycle asset management plan for the Department
- Expand Department jurisdiction to cover Center Township

FACILITIES

Our vision for recreation facilities is to make them as inviting as possible to maximize their use and productivity for people of all ages through effective programming.

GOAL

Create signature recreational facilities that support all ages and make living in Valparaiso the best place to live, work, and play.

STRATEGIES

- Update the system's neighborhood parks
- Work collaboratively with existing community organizations to provide new facilities
- Create recreation amenities desired by the community as it applies to the future approved level of service standards in the master plan
- Develop program themes for park and facility updates to maximize use and value
- Operate towards capacity utilization goals for each recreation amenity

RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Our vision for recreation programming is to broaden program services to appeal to a wider age segment of users by offering new experiences while increasing the value of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation to the community.

GOAL

Create a balanced program portfolio that meets community needs.

STRATEGIES

- Edit and enhance current core program areas
- Adopt program lifecycle analysis as an evaluation process
- Adopt age segment analysis as an evaluation process
- Align program funding, cost recovery, and pricing to match community expectations
- Continue to align program standards and performance management
- Develop a comprehensive approach to volunteer management
- Develop a comprehensive approach to partnership management
- Develop a comprehensive approach to marketing and communication

OPERATIONS AND STAFFING

Our vision for operations and staffing is to develop systems, policies, and procedures that make it easy for staff in the field to manage their respective functions to achieve the outcomes the community desires.

GOAL

Empower and prepare our team.

STRATEGIES

- Develop staffing requirements (FT, PT and Seasonal) based on set frequency maintenance standards for acres to be maintained as it applies to parks, golf, sports fields and trails
- Develop a maintenance management plan for the system
- Develop performance criteria for maintenance staff that demonstrates efficiency and productivity that leads to the right staffing mix
- Ensure the right equipment is used for the right job.
- Align and operate via an updated functional organizational

FINANCING

Our vision for financing is to be stewards of public monies by being transparent and fiscally responsible to community citizens.

GOAL

Operate in a sustainable fashion while maximizing public benefit derived from both public and private monies.

STRATEGIES

- Address system-wide issues through a prioritized project approach
- Leverage existing funding sources while diversifying and adding new funding sources to help sustain the system
- Review current financial government practices and adopt new practices

As with any quality comprehensive planning process, the community was involved throughout the development of the Master Plan through stakeholder and focus group meetings. Public forums were held in the city, and a citizen survey was offered that helped to prioritize and identify the issues that need to be addressed in the Plan and to support the key recommendations that need to be implemented over the next five years. The Master Plan is a living document with many moving components that must be achieved simultaneously.

1.4 PROJECT PROCESS

The Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update followed an iterative process of data collection, public input, on-the-ground study, assessment of existing conditions, market research, and open dialogue with local leadership and key stakeholders. The project process followed a logical planning path, as illustrated below:
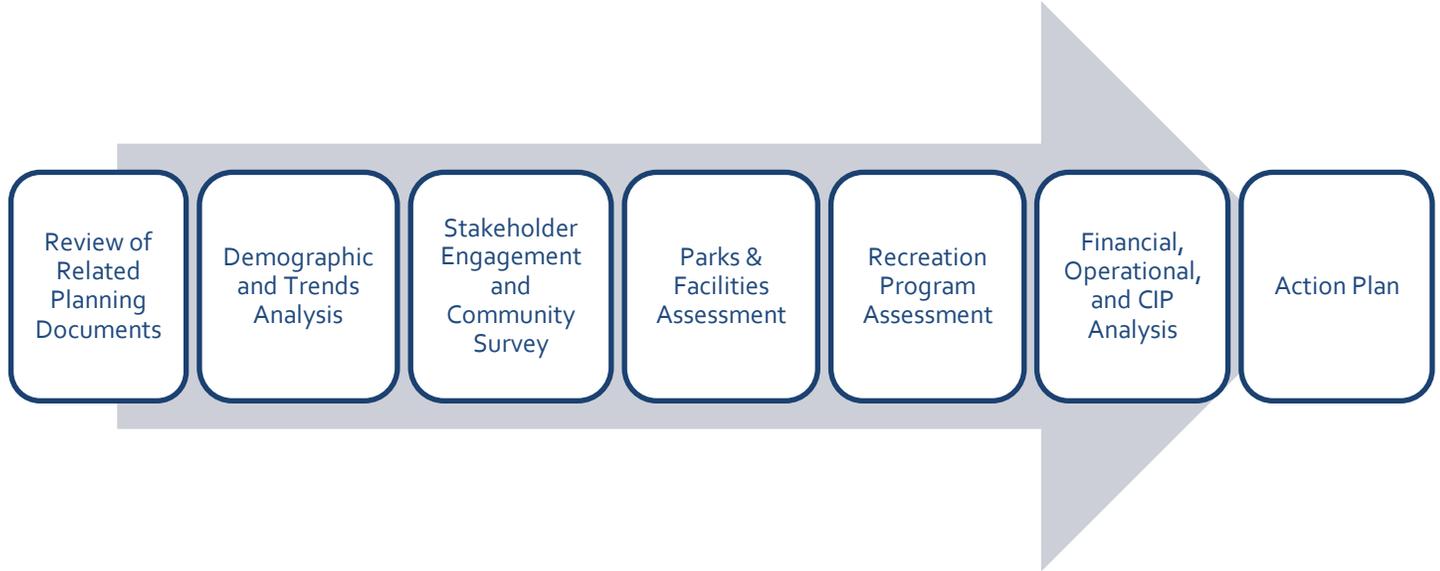
Figure 1-Master Plan Process

The Master Plan is not an end product in itself. The Plan is rather a means to guide the provision of parks and recreation and advance the overall mission and vision of VPRD. The goal is to a guide in the delivery of excellent parks, trails, public facilities, activities, programs, and services that will contribute to community prosperity and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to Valparaiso.

The purpose of the Plan is three fold:

- **First**, it puts into place a systematic and ongoing inventory, analysis, and assessment process that help the City now and in the future.

- **Second**, this effort will determine the context of recreation facilities and programs system-wide.

- **Third**, it will provide guidance in determining the effectiveness of programs and services, marketing strategies, and land management.

This, ultimately, will guide VPRD in an appropriate direction for current and future programs and services, and provide specific means to meet the vision and mission for the Department. This is essentially a process of answering, "*Where are we? Where do we want to go? And, how do we get there?*"

CHAPTER TWO – COMMUNITY PROFILE

2.1 LOCATION

Valparaiso is the county seat of Porter County, Indiana. Situated in the northwest corner of the state, Valparaiso is located within one of the 12 Indiana counties in the Central Time Zone. The City is approximately a little over an hour drive from the Chicago Loop; thus putting it at the fringe of the Chicago-Gary-Hammond Metropolitan Area and Calumet Industrial Region.

2.2 HISTORY OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO

In 1822, a French-Canadian, Joseph Bailey, established a fur trading post on the shore of Lake Michigan approximately 12 miles north of what is now Valparaiso. A purchase of land by the United States government in 1832 from the Potawatomi Indians included the site of the present City of Valparaiso. Moreover, the highway transportation network reflects the early Indian trails that existed long before settlement took place.

The Indiana Legislature officially formed Porter County in 1836 from an area that was part of LaPorte County. The Town of Portersville, originally platted in July of that year, was originally designated as the County Seat; however, Commodore David Porter of the U.S. Navy (for whom the county was named) fought a famous naval battle in the War of 1812 near Valparaiso, Chile, so that name was deemed more suitable for the County Seat. Consequently, the name of the town was changed to Valparaiso in in 1837 and Valparaiso was incorporated as a town in 1850 and received its charter as a city in 1865.

2.3 NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

2.3.1 DRAINAGE

Aside from the Calumet and Kankakee Rivers, all the principal drainage systems in Porter County have their sources at or near the crest of the Morainic Divide. In Porter County, the streams south of the Divide are Sandy Hook and Crooked Creeks, both of which are small and sluggish. North of the Divide are Salt Creek and Coffee Creek. Salt Creek, the larger and important, drains eastern portions of Union and Portage Townships, a part of northern Morgan Township, all of Center Township, and most of Liberty Township and empties into the Calumet River.

2.3.2 TOPOGRAPHY

Valparaiso is located on the Valparaiso Moraine. The Valparaiso Moraine is a terminal glacier which means it is formed at the edge of a glacier. That is, this location marks a glacier's maximum advancement. As a result, the surrounding area is highlighted by high, hilly terrain consisting of glacial till and sand. Interestingly, the Valparaiso Moraine was named after the City because it is much narrower and higher in this location than other areas. Other landscape features found in this location include kettle lakes, knobs, and kames (an irregularly shaped hill or mound composed of sand, gravel, and till). Glaciation is the foundation for Valparaiso's landscape characteristics.

2.3.3 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Valparaiso is a glacial moraine area, which accounts for a variation of soil types and textures, as well as extremes in topography. For the most part, this benefits the Parks and Recreation Department in the development of attractive park and recreational areas and facilities. The exceptions have been, and will be, that some sites are at least partially unsuitable for the location of major facilities.

2.3.4 CLIMATE

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Centers for Environmental Information, Valparaiso has an average daily temperature of 82.8° F in July and an average daily low temperature of 16.1° F in January. Valparaiso averages 40"of rain and 36" of snow, both above the average US city's precipitation. Additionally, there are approximately 131 days each year of measurable precipitation and 176 sunny days each year.

2.3.5 NATURAL RESOURCES

The City of Valparaiso has been carefully designing its forest cover for many years. As part of this effort, they have been identifying and cataloging invasive species within the area. Invasive species are non-native plants and animals that were introduced into the area either on purpose or accidentally. Regardless of how they were introduced, they out-compete native plants and animals for resources, thus changing the ecosystem. The following plants have been identified as the most prevalent within the planning area and are a focus of the Department:

- Tree of Heaven/Ailanthus
- Siberian elm
- Ornamental (Bradford) pear
- Norway maple
- White mulberry
- Exotic bush honeysuckle
- Autumn olive
- Burning bush
- Multiflora rose
- Oriental bittersweet

The City is also dealing with two invasive animal species:

- Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)
- Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB)

The EAB prefers ash trees and larvae hatch and eat the cambium layer of the tree which is used to transport water from the roots to the tree. Trees can be treated when affected by the EAB; however, it is proving to be more cost effective to remove ash trees altogether and re-plant new tree species. The ALB prefers maple, birch, willow, ash, elm, hackberry, horse chestnut, poplar, London planetree, mountain ash, golden raintree, mimosa, and katsura. There is currently no treatment for ALB so early detection and eradication is the only defense.

2.3.6 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City encourages residents to get involved with its tree program by joining the Shade Brigade. Residents can attend tree-related lectures and workshops, volunteer to help plant or mulch, or make a contribution to the Tree Fund. Additionally, residents are encouraged to attend Tree Steward training through the Indiana Department of Natural Resource's Community and Urban Forestry division.

Additionally, the Valpo Parks Tree Fund has raised over $25,000 since its establishment in 2010 for tree planting in parks and along city streets. Through this program, residents can contribute $1 or $5 each month which is added to their regular water bill. These contributions are then matched by sponsors 7 to 1, adding up to lots of green that will keep Valparaiso green for generations.

2.3.7 DEVELOPMENT

Knowing that urban development will continue to occur within the current City Limits and areas to the west and north, the Department is actively acquiring land-banked acreage and greenspace to be used for future park land. The idea behind this process is two-fold:

- Provide park land to continue meeting future population growth and community need
- Preserve greenspace that can serve as travel corridors for wildlife

Land-banked acreage can be developed into future neighborhood, community, or regional parks that will provide the community with additional park resources. Additionally, preserving greenspace and saving it from development will continue providing wildlife with travel corridors and much needed open space to live and thrive.

2.4 GOVERNMENT

The City of Valparaiso has the following government positions:

- Mayor

- City Administrator

- Clerk-Treasurer

- Seven-Member City Council

- Boards & Commissions

    - o Board of Public Works and Safety
    - o Board of Zoning Appeals
    - o Economic Development Commission
    - o Environmental Stewardship Council
    - o Ethics Commission
    - o Historic Preservation Commission
    - o Human Relations Council
    - o Initiatives for Substance Abuse Prevention
    - o Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability
    - o Park Board
    - o Plan Commission
    - o Redevelopment Commission
    - o Site Review
    - o Town/Gown Committee
    - o Traffic and Safety Committee
    - o Valparaiso City Utilities Board

2.4.1 CITY DEPARTMENTS

- Building

- Clerk-Treasurer

- Code Enforcement

- Engineering

- Economic Development

- Planning

- Fire

- Human Resources

- Parks & Recreation

- Police

- Project & Facility Management

- Public Works

- Transportation

- Utilities

2.5 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

2.5.1 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- High Schools (1)

- Middle Schools (2)

- Elementary Schools (9)

- Preschools (1)

2.5.2 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

- Alternative Education (8), representing Montessori, Classical Academy, and denominational

2.5.3 REGIONAL AND AREA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (WITHIN 50-MILES)

- Calumet College of St. Joseph (Whiting, IN)

- Kaplan College (Merrillville, IN)

- Indiana University Northwest (Calumet, IN)

- Indiana Vocational Technical College (Multiple Locations)

- Purdue University North Central (Westville, IN)

- Valparaiso University (Valparaiso, IN)

2.6 COMMUNITY INDUSTRY

Valparaiso is rich in industry with an estimated 14,773 individuals (at least 16 years old) within the community employed. The following represents the top five industries:

1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance (32.2%)
2) Manufacturing (15.9%)
3) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services (10.6%)
4) Retail trade (10.4%)
5) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (8.3%)

2.7 LOCAL MEDIA

2.7.1 NEWSPAPERS

- *The Times of Northwest Indiana* (or NWI Times), was founded in 1906 and is the second largest of Indiana's 76 daily newspapers.

- *The Post-Tribune of Northwest Indiana* was founded in 1907, serving the Northwest Indiana region.

2.7.2 MAGAZINES

- *Inspired Living* is a monthly magazine produced by the NWI Times

2.7.3 RADIO

- WLJE 105.5 FM (country music)

- WAKE 1500 AM (adult standards)

- WVLP 98.3 FM ("ValpoRadio" which is a community radio station)

2.8 PARKS & RECREATION

There are currently nineteen parks in the VPRD system, including two golf courses. Additionally, VPRD owns undeveloped acreage that can be used for future development based on community need. Currently, there are 32 full-time positions and 184 part-time positions that oversee all park and recreation operations. This equates to approximately 53 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Park and recreation services are also augmented each year by volunteers.

The park system is also overseen by a Park Board that convenes monthly. Overall policy and management direction of the Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department is provided by a four-member bipartisan board of park and recreation commissioners appointed by the mayor for staggered four-year terms (and the Park Director holds the Secretary position on the board). Following provisions of Indiana statutes, the board:

- Acquires and improves property
- Adopts new programs
- Approves budget revenues and expenditures
- Establishes management policy and regulations
- Passes bond issues
- Provides a public venue for community debate and input

2.8.1 PARKS AND PARK FACILITIES

200 EAST (2501 MCCORD ROAD)
200 East is a well-maintained neighborhood park with on-street parking. The park has a playground feature and is surrounded by open an open field.

BANTA PARK (605 BEECH STREET)
The Banta Center provides services to anyone aged 50 and older. The Center is an activity location that is programmed throughout the day. Users can participate in card games, dominoes, chess, backgammon, knitting, crocheting, exercise classes, retiree support groups and more. Additionally, Banta is a Northwest Indiana Community Action nutrition site that serves hot, nutritious lunches Monday through Friday.

BICENTENNIAL PARK (175 BURLINGTON BEACH ROAD)

Bicentennial Park is located in the northwest part of the city and offers amenities such as: open space, multi-purpose area with basketball backstop, updated playground equipment, and softball fields. Additionally, there is an open-air shelter (on three sides) that can accommodate up to 50 people and is available for rental.

CENTRAL PARK PLAZA (63 LAFAYETTE STREET)

Central Park Plaza is the system's newest park. The site is home to the Indiana Beverage Activity Center and the William E. Urschel Pavilion. Located in the heart of downtown, Central Park Plaza teems with activity as residents and non-residents alike frequent the area's businesses and restaurants.

CREEKSIDE GOLF COURSE (2355 CLIFFORD ROAD)

Creekside Golf Course is a hidden gem in the world of golf. This 12-hole golf course boasts a full-fledge training center, retail space, food service, and 4-hole footgolf course. This facility is a high-use golf course and it is one of the only driving ranges around.

DISCOVERY COTTAGE (1155 HARRISION BOULEVARD)

The Discovery Cottage is a youth enrichment center located near the Forest Park Golf Course. The site used to be the department's park office. Now, parents drop off their kids for a class or have the opportunity to use the cottage with their kids. Additionally, the cottage can be reserved and includes a functioning kitchen.

FOREST PARK GOLF COURSE (1155 SHEFFIELD DRIVE)

Forest Park Golf Course is an 18-hole course that averages approximately 22,000 rounds/year. There is league play several times each week along with tournaments throughout the year. The clubhouse is currently improving its food service capabilities by offering hot food items along with traditional candy bars and snacks. Additionally, the clubhouse has retail service.

FOREST PARK PICNIC AREA (851 HARRISON BOULEVARD)

The Forest Park Picnic Area boasts an open field, two picnic shelters, bathroom facilities, and a playground. Nestled off the road, the upper area has space for field sports. The lower area, close to the road, provides users with a picnic shelter and open, passive recreation space. Additionally, there is an informal walking path from the lower area that connects to Ogden Gardens.

FOUNDATION MEADOWS PARK (3210 N CAMPBELL STREET)

Foundation Meadows Park is home to the park offices and maintenance operations. Additionally, the park boats a playground, butterfly garden, walking trails, bathrooms, shelter, and open space.

GLENROSE PARK (1500 ROOSEVELT ROAD)

Glenrose Park is a sports facility which boasts two baseball fields. The fields are used by the high school and the school maintains the baselines during the season; however, the department's maintenance crew is responsibility for setting up the field for the season. The park also has a bathroom facility and playground area on-site.

JESSEE-PIFER PARK (400 ELMHURST AVENUE)

Jessee-Pifer Park is a true Neighborhood Park in every sense of the name. Tucked away behind a neighborhood and down in a holler-type setting, Jessee-Pifer Park provides residents a little respite from daily life by offering a picnic shelter, playground, and basketball hoop.

KIRCHHOFF PARK (400 N ROOSEVELT ROAD)

Kirchhoff Park is the city's first park. The park has many amenities including horseshoe pits, tennis courts, playground equipment, softball fields, and open space. The park also has several shelters that are available for public use and rental.

OGDEN GARDENS (451 HARRISON BOULEVARD)

Ogden Gardens Park contains a Japanese Garden that includes trails, streams, bridges, ponds, and a tea house. Additionally, the park has a gazebo that can be reserved for weddings, photo sessions, baptisms, and other special events.

OLD FAIRGROUNDS PARK (704 MCCORD ROAD)

Fairgrounds Park was once the location for the county fair. A holdover from the site's former use, the park is home to the 5,000 ft2 Butterfield Family Pavilion which can accommodate 50-250 people for events such as: weddings, conferences, open houses, or showers.

ROGERS-LAKEWOOD PARK (5320 N MERIDIAN ROAD)

Rogers-Lakewood Park is a unique facility that provides acres of hiking, fishing, and boating. Additionally, visitors can enjoy the disc golf course, skatepark, shelters, and special events. The 122.5-acre facility provides a great natural setting that provides something for every member of the family.

TOWER PARK (1000 N FRANKLIN STREET)

Named for its proximity to Valparaiso's water tower, Tower Park offers users a playground, tennis and basketball courts, a youth baseball field, and a large picnic shelter. Tower Park is currently slated to be updated with new features in the coming years.

VALPLAYSO PARK (1400 GLENDALE BOULEVARD)

ValPLAYso Park was designed and built in 1994; however, the park underwent a complete renovation in 2014 led by the Valparaiso Parks Foundation. The park rebuild was a community involved effort beginning with the funding and ending with the construction/build. The park now boasts an ADA accessible playground and signage that reflects the community effort involved with the rebuild.

WESTSIDE PARK (157 WESTSIDE PARK AVENUE)

Westside Park is home to the only public soccer fields in Valparaiso. The park offers many amenities and includes, eight soccer fields, two youth baseball fields, playground, bathroom facilities, and approximately 175 parking spots. There is also a natural area that runs alongside the parking lot area.

WILL PARK (354 S MORGAN BOULEVARD)

Will Park is a neighborhood park that has a playground, shelter, and basketball court. Recent updates to the park include an updated playground and shelter.

2.9 PARK LOCATION MAP

Figure 2-Park System Map

2.10 PATHWAYS & GREENWAYS SYSTEM

Pathways and greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation, and alternative transportation purposes. Greenways often follow natural land or water features and link nature reserves, parks, cultural features, and historic sites with each other and with populated areas. Valparaiso boosts an impressive pathways and greenways system and currently has 18.75 miles throughout the community as of the writing of this Master Plan. Valparaiso is proud of its pathways and greenways system and continues to add more mileage to the system each year. A separate companion document to this Master Plan is the 2016 Pathways & Greenways Master Plan document.

Figure 3-Pathways & Greenways System

2.11 MAN-MADE, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURE

Indian Dunes State Park – This state park offers a beach with swimming, hiking trails, playground, picnicking, reservable picnic shelters, a nature center, camping and cross country skiing. The park is comprised of 2,182 acres and is located approximately 15 miles north of Valparaiso on Lake Michigan.

Indian Dunes National Lakeshore – This facility is located in Chesterton, Indiana and is a widely accessible regional park that helps to preserve some of the sand dunes and related ecological resources of southern Lake Michigan. It provides educational experiences and passive recreation along the lake.

Cultural Facilities – The Valparaiso are offers a wide range of recreational and entertainment opportunities. In addition to an extensive City park program, Valparaiso hosts plays, classes and various organizations.

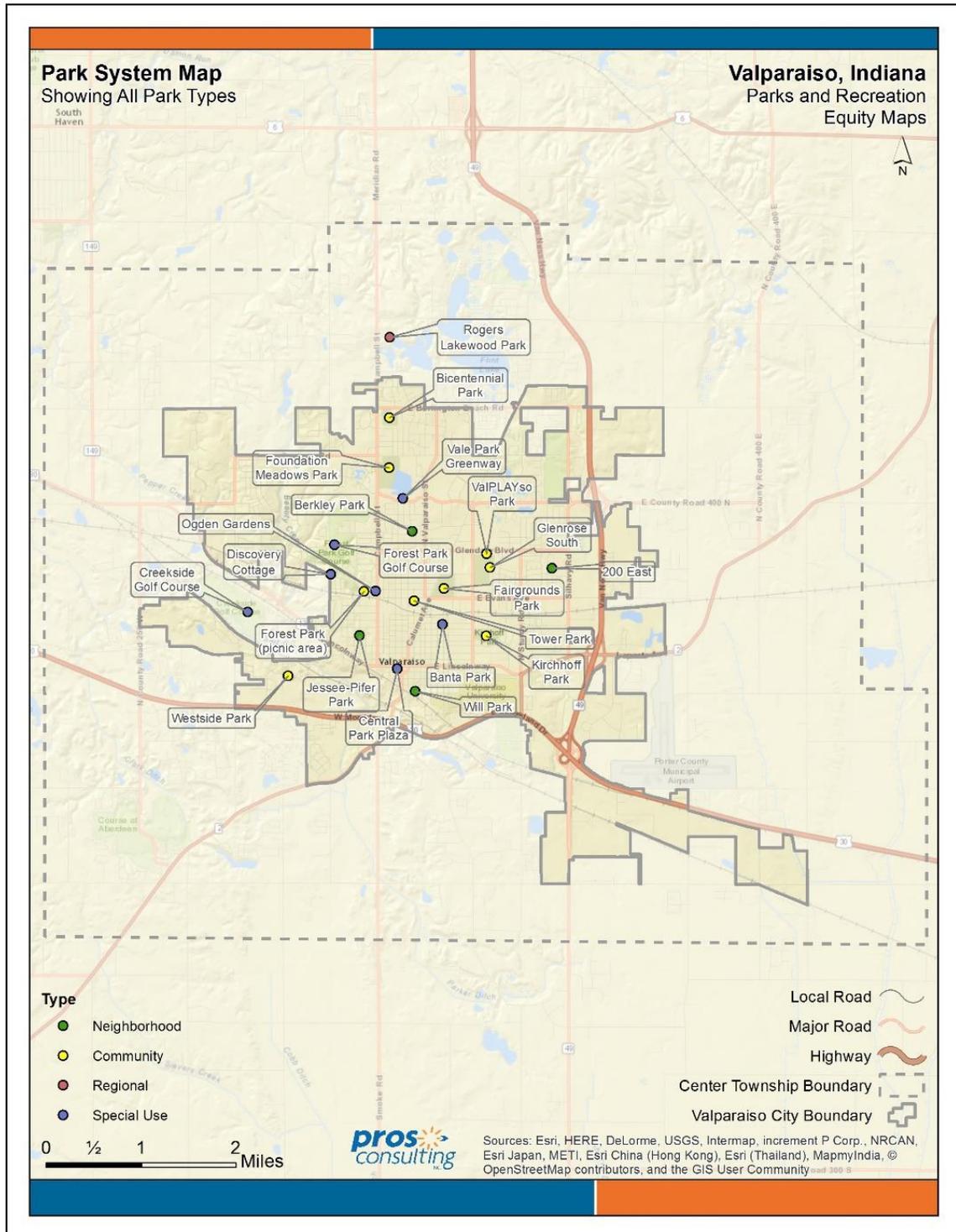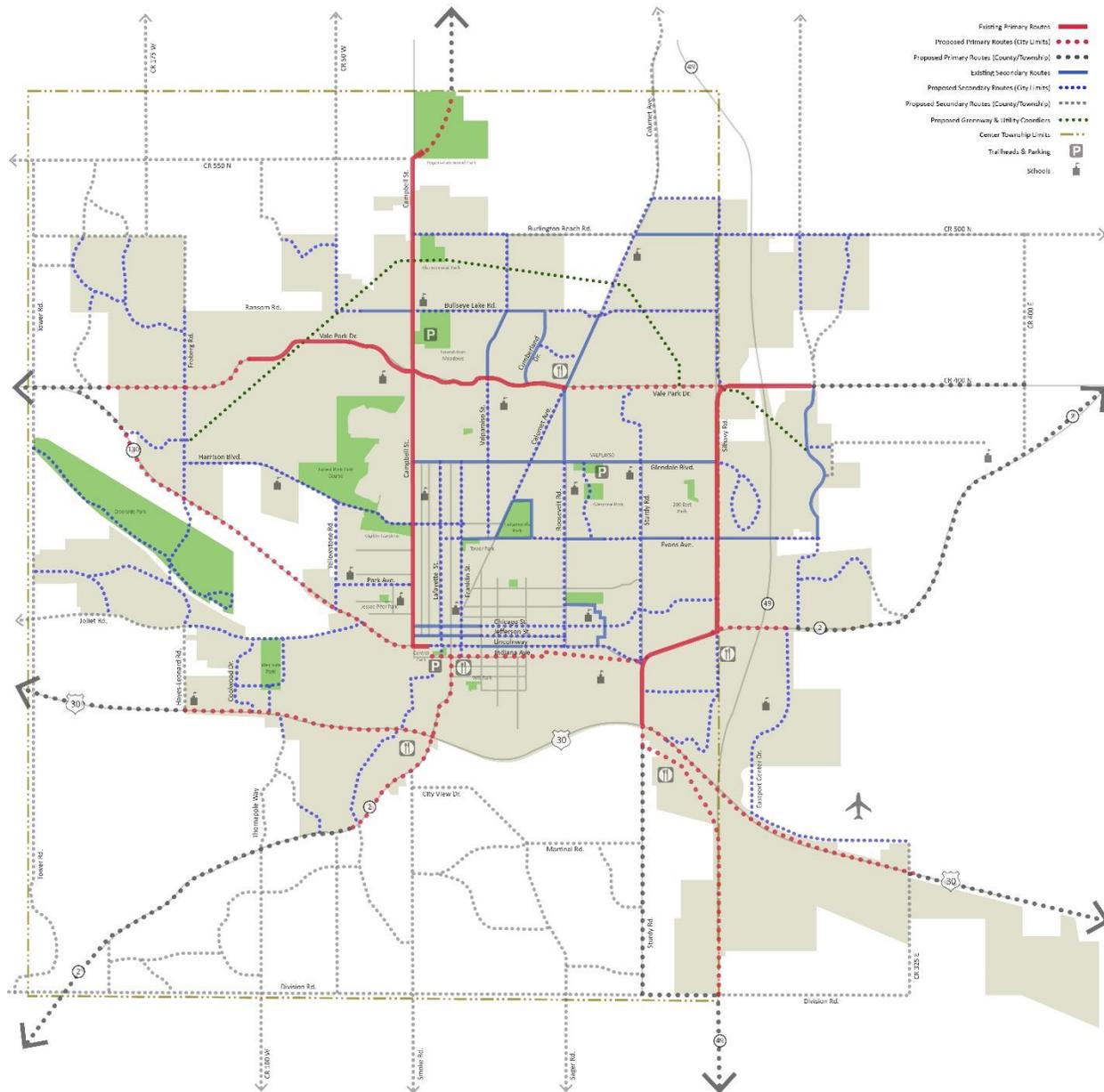### 2.11.1 PATHWAYS AND GREENWAYS SYSTEM

Pathways and greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation, and alternative transportation purposes. Greenways often follow natural land or water features, and link nature areas, parks, schools, cultural features, destination places and historic sites with each other and with populated areas in the City. Greenways can be publicly or privately owned and some are developed as a result of public/private partnerships.

Valparaiso is well served by a range of pathway options, including an extensive off-street multiuse trail and sidewalk network that is augmented by a range of on-street facilities. This network allows residents to connect with a vast majority of the community as pedestrians and/or cyclists and represents an effective investment in the broader sustainability of the City and region. By reducing auto dependency, the City is providing environmental benefits through the reduction of vehicle emissions and run-off into regional waterways. It is also providing economic return through increased spending associated with increased mobility as well as the extension of roads and auto-infrastructure lifespans that can free these funds for other uses. Finally, a healthier, more connected community achieves the goals of social sustainability.

Coinciding with this Master Plan, the Department is updating its Pathways & Greenways Master Plan. The main recommendations from the plan include:

- Complete missing pathway linkages
- Expand the pathways system
- Develop branding and design standards for wayfinding and trailheads
- Address repair and replacement needs for existing pathways
- Develop maintenance management plan for pathways system

The statistically-valid community survey reported the community holds the current pathways and greenways system in high regard while also indicating they want more. The Department must continue to evaluate current decision points and trail connectivity while also considering future system expansion. Currently, the Department is looking at connections to Center Township and especially areas south of US 31.

2.11.2 BUILDINGS AND DISTRICTS ON THE NRHP

Valparaiso is home to several buildings and districts on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):

- Clarence H. Martin House
- Conrad and Catherine Bloch House
- Haste-Crumpacker House
- Heritage Hall

- Immanuel Lutheran Church
- Dr. David J. Loring Residence and Clinic
- William McCallum House
- Charles S. and Mary McGill House
- Porter County Jail and Sheriff's House
- Porter County Memorial Opera Hall
- David Garland Rose House
- DeForest Skinner House
- Valparaiso Downtown Commercial District
- Washington Street Historic District
- The 502 – Hilltop Connect

2.11.3 CULTURE

Arts, culture, and special events play a big role in the fabric of the Valparaiso community. There are several local museums, arboretums, and gardens that cater to visitors and residents alike. Additionally, there are special events that help define the City. The City is home to the annual Popcorn Festival. Voted the "Best Festival of the Region" by *The Times* readers, the festival is highlighted by over 250 arts and culture booths, 30 food vendors, family games, five-mile Popcorn Panic (running race), two live music stages, the nation's first Popcorn Parade, and much more. Downtown Valparaiso also boosts the Central Park Plaza which hosts summer concerts and plays.

The Porter County Exposition Center, Valparaiso University and the Inn at Aberdeen are local convention and conference centers where exhibits, trade shows, executive and board retreats are regularly scheduled.

Other cultural and historical attractions that enhance the quality of life in Valparaiso are:

- Chicago Street Theatre
- Memorial Opera House
- Old Jail Museum
- Community Theatre Guild
- Art Barn
- The Artists' Den
- Brauer Museum of Art
- Lifestyles: The Gallery
- Anderson's Orchard and Winery

Special events are a vital component to the Department's program inventory and the community continues to express demand for special events as seen by the results of the statistically-valid community survey presented later in this Master Plan document. As such, the City is looking into creating a Cultural Arts District within Valparaiso. A Cultural Arts District is a well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use area of a community in which high concentrations of cultural assets serve as the anchor. Specifically, they support community life and economic vitality. If the City moves in this direction, it will be vital for the Department to continue investing in its cultural arts programming.

2.11.4 WATER SUPPLY

The City of Valparaiso relies on a groundwater system to supply potable water to its residents. The decision was made to rely on a groundwater system rather than utilizing Lake Michigan due to cost control. The City is able to set their own rates instead of relying on a private utility provider. The City's collective well fields are able to produce nearly 11 million gallons of water per day. Additionally, the City completed an $18 million upgrade of its current

water system in 2016. Eight new wells were drilled, 19,000 feet of new raw water transmission main were laid, and two new reservoirs were built (along with other necessary needed upgrades to the existing treatment plant facilities). Altogether, the upgrades drastically increased the City's ability to produce potable water.

The City of Valparaiso was the first community in Indiana to receive approval of their Phase I Wellhead Protection Plan in 1999. The Valparaiso Water Department manages the production of groundwater from 16 wells located within 3 wellfields. Consequently, they were also the first community required to submit a Phase II Wellhead Protection Plan in 2006.

2.12 ACCESSIBILTY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act requires that local governments with more than 50 employees designate at least one person to act as ADA compliance coordinator for the entire government unit. As a best management practice, the City of Valparaiso's designated ADA coordinator is the Assistant City Planner. This position is vacant as of the writing of this Master Plan. Any person or persons who require accommodations or have complaints, grievances, or comments related to accessibility may contact the City Planner's office at: (219) 462-1161. Valparaiso's public notice of ADA requirements can be found online at the City's website. See the **Appendix** for more information regarding accessibility, universal design, and specific grievance procedures for the City of Valparaiso.

2.12.1 CURRENT ACCESSIBILITY

The Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department conducted an American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment of their park system. A park by park analysis was completed that included documenting all ADA issues and corresponding corrective actions (i.e., structural barrier removal and/or alternatives to barrier removal). All parks are not currently ADA compliant but a concerted effort has been made to identify barriers and remove them via corrective actions.

COMMON ACCESSIBILITY CONCERNS WITHIN THE PARKS SYTEM

After reviewing the ADA assessment report, the following ADA concerns are prevalent throughout the system and include:

- Accessible routes and paths within parks and from parking lots/sidewalks
- Accessible signage
- Accessible parking lot spaces (having the adequate amount based on parking lot size)
- Accessible surfaces
- Door openings
- Door hardware selection

See the Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department's American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment report for more information.

CORRECTING ACCESSIBILITY CONCERNS

The City adopted an ADA Transition Plan in 2012 to help the City alleviate accessibility concerns. The transition plan focused on curb ramps, sidewalks, pathways, pedestrian signals, intersections, bus stops, and crosswalks. Given that many of the accessibility concerns listed above are within the park system and not necessarily covered by the funding called for in the transition plan, the Department has included accessibility projects in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) presented later in this Master Plan. It is the aim of this Master Plan to help alleviate accessibility concerns through dedicated capital projects to help bring the entire parks system into ADA compliance.

2.13 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis provides an understanding of the population within and surrounding Valparaiso, Indiana. This analysis is reflective of the total population, and its key characteristics such as population density, age distribution, households, gender, ethnicity, and household income.

It is important to note that future projections are all based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the projections could have a significant bearing on the validity of the final projections.

2.13.1 DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The total population of Valparaiso had an increase of approximately 4.1% from 2010 to 2016. The current estimated population for 2016 is 33,035, and it is projected to continue to grow to 34,069 in 2021, and 36,208 by 2031.

According to the U.S. Census reports, the total number of households in the service area has increased by approximately 4.1% as well, from 2010 to 2016. Valparaiso is estimated to have 13,123 households in 2016 and is expected to grow to 14,401 households by 2031 (an approximate 9.7% growth).

Based on 2016 estimates, Valparaiso's median household income ($51,172) is higher than Indiana's average but lower than the national average. Valparaiso's per capita income ($28,529) is above both the Indiana and national averages.

According to the 2010 Census results, the population of Valparaiso is younger (33.4 years) than the median age of the U.S. (37.2 years). Projections show that the target area will undergo an aging trend, with the 55+ group growing to represent 32.9% of the total population by 2031.

The majority of the estimated 2016 population is White Alone (87.61%), with Black Alone (4.16%) representing the largest minority population. Future projections through 2031 expect Valparaiso's racial composition to continue diversifying, as the White Alone population decreases 5.99% to 81.62%, while the Black Alone population increases 2.53% to 6.69%. The Hispanic/Latino Origin group is projected to represent 11.93% of the population by 2031.

2.13.2 METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in June 2016 and reflect actual numbers as reported in the 2010 Census, and estimates for 2016 and 2021 as obtained by ESRI. Straight line linear regression was utilized for projected 2026 and 2031 demographics. The geographic boundary of Valparaiso was utilized as the demographic analysis boundary (target area) shown in **Figure 4.**
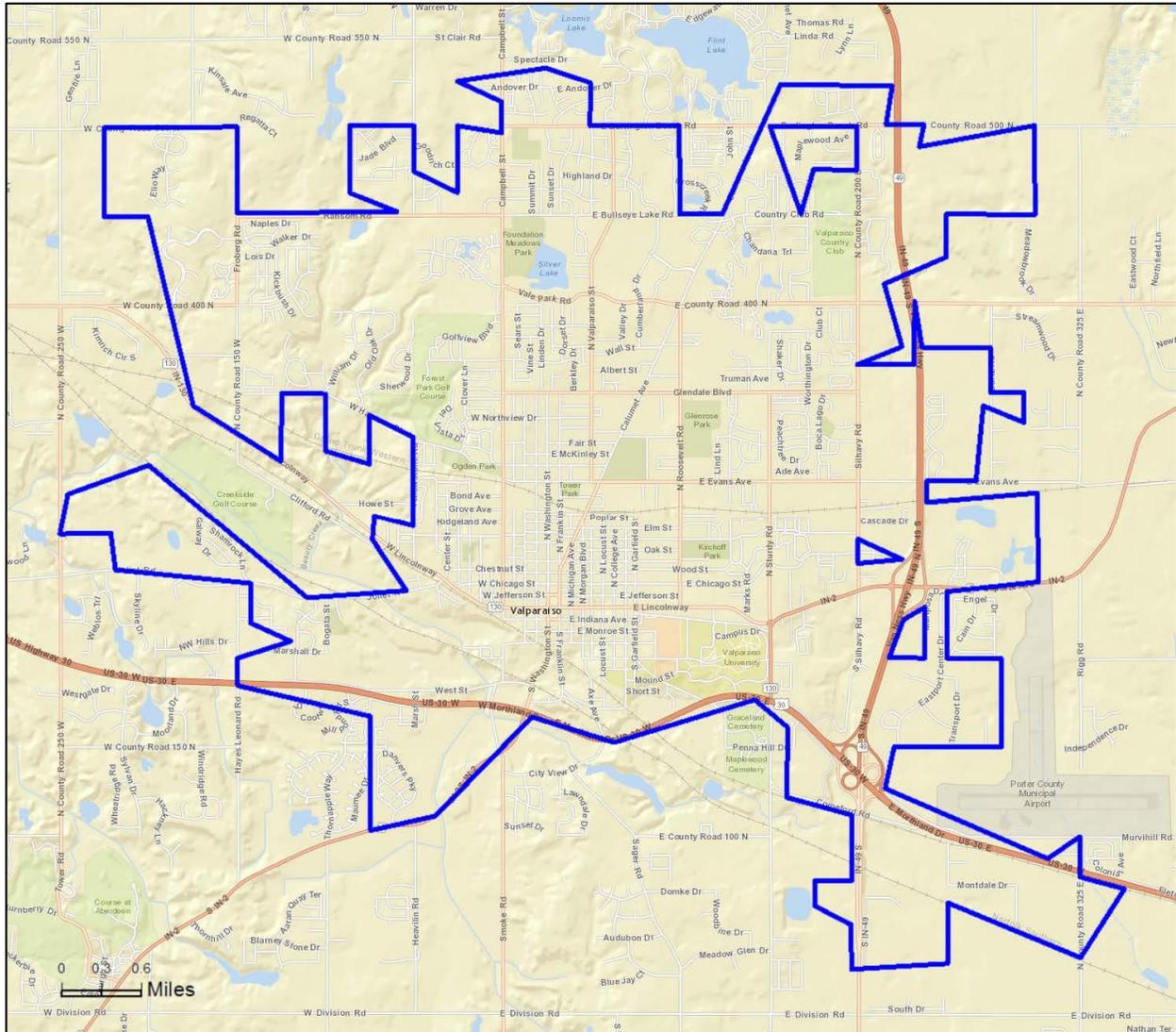
Figure 4-Target Area Boundaries

RACE AND ETHNICITY DEFINITIONS

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined as below. The Census 2010 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 2000 Census and earlier censuses; caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2010) definitions and nomenclature are used within this analysis.

- American Indian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment

- Asian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam

- Black – This includes a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa

- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands

- White – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa

- Hispanic or Latino – This is an ethnic distinction, a subset of a race as defined by the Federal Government; this includes a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race

2.13.3 VALPARAISO POPULACE

POPULATION

The target area has witnessed minimal change in recent years. From 2010 to 2016, the service area's total population underwent an increase of 4.1%, from 31,730 to 33,035. Projecting ahead, the total population of Valparaiso is expected to continue to increase over the next 15 years. Based on projections through 2031, the local population is anticipated to have approximately 36,208 residents living within 14,401 households. **See Figure 5.**

POPULATION

2010 CENSUS	2016 ESTIMATE	2021 PROJECTION	2026 PROJECTION	2031 PROJECTION
31,730	33,035	34,069	35,144	36,208
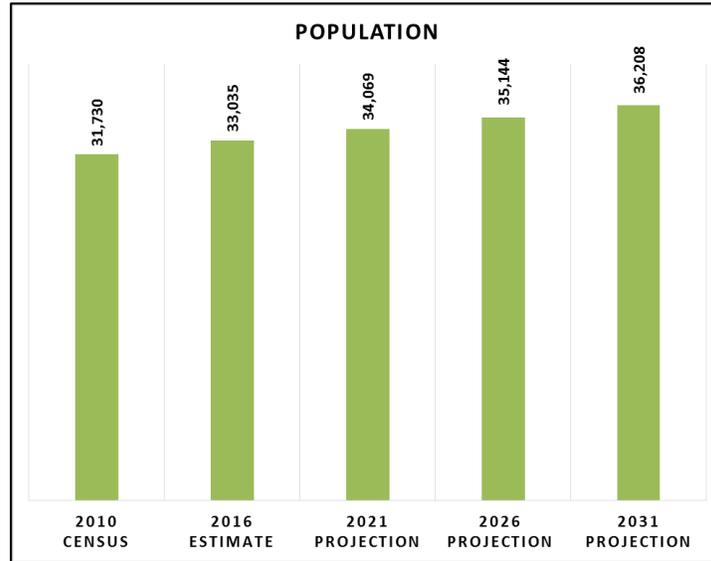
Figure 5-Total Population

AGE SEGMENTATION

Evaluating the distribution by age segments, the service area's largest age segment is the 18-34 group which represents 29.9% of the population. The second most populous age segment is the 55+ group with 27.2% of the population. The 55+ age population is expected to grow 5.7% from 2016-2031 and will be the only age segment projected to increase. **See Figure 6.**

POPULATION BY AGE SEGMENT

■ <18 ■ 18-34 ■ 35-54 ■ 55+

	2010 CENSUS	2016 ESTIMATE	2021 PROJECTION	2026 PROJECTION	2031 PROJECTION
55+	23.7%	27.2%	28.7%	31.0%	32.9%
35-54	24.2%	22.9%	22.8%	22.1%	21.6%
18-34	30.8%	29.9%	29.3%	28.8%	28.2%
<18	21.3%	19.9%	19.1%	18.1%	17.3%
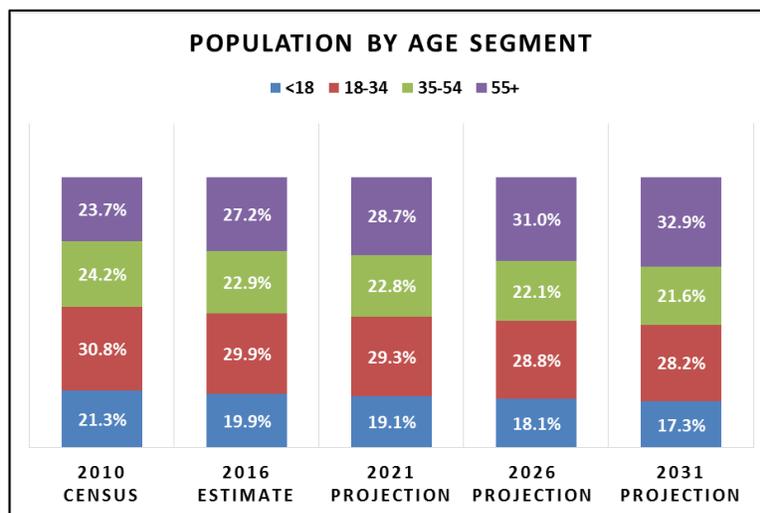
Figure 6-Population Age by Segments

GENDER

Females represent an estimated 51.4% of the 2016 population. The male population is expected to grow by 2031 and will represent approximately 49.0% while the female population will decrease to 51.0%. **See Figure 7.**

Gender Comparison

	2016 Estimate	2021 Projection	2026 Projection	2031 Projection
■ Male	16,061	16,643	17,181	17,731
■ Female	16,975	17,425	17,962	18,476
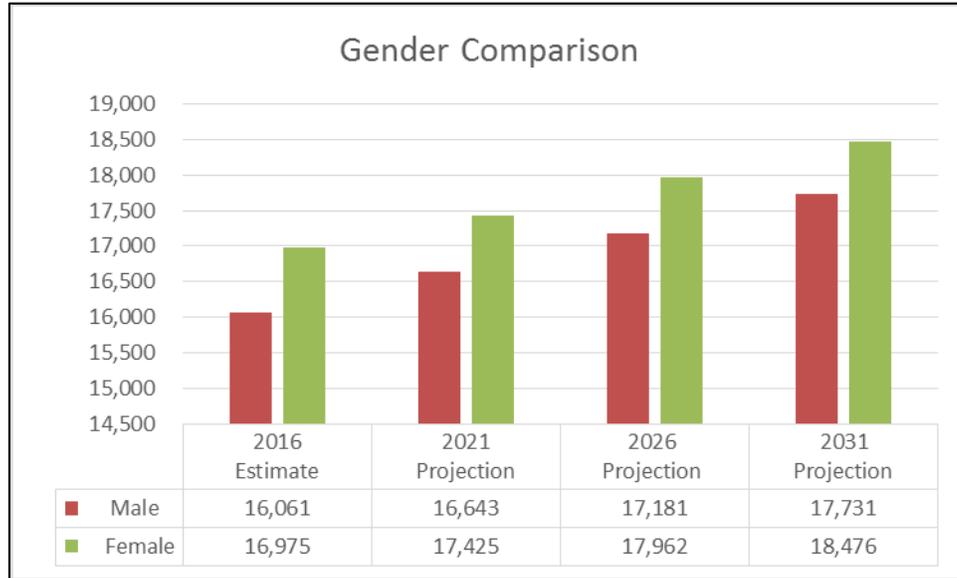
Figure 7-Population Gender

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In analyzing race and ethnicity, the selected area is diversifying. The 2016 estimate shows that 87.61% of the population falls into the White Alone category. Projections for 2031 expect the White Alone population to decrease to 81.62%. The Black Alone population is the largest minority group and is projected to represent 6.69% of the population by 2031. The Hispanic / Latino population represented 7.13% of the 2010 population, and is expected to reach 11.93% by 2031. **See Figures 8 and 9.**

POPULATION BY RACE

■ White Alone ■ Black Alone ■ American Indian ■ Asian
■ Pacific Islander ■ Some Other Race ■ Two or More Races

	2010 CENSUS	2016 ESTIMATE	2021 PROJECTION	2026 PROJECTION	2031 PROJECTION
Black Alone	3.27%	4.16%	5.22%	5.94%	6.69%
White Alone	89.86%	87.61%	85.19%	83.42%	81.62%
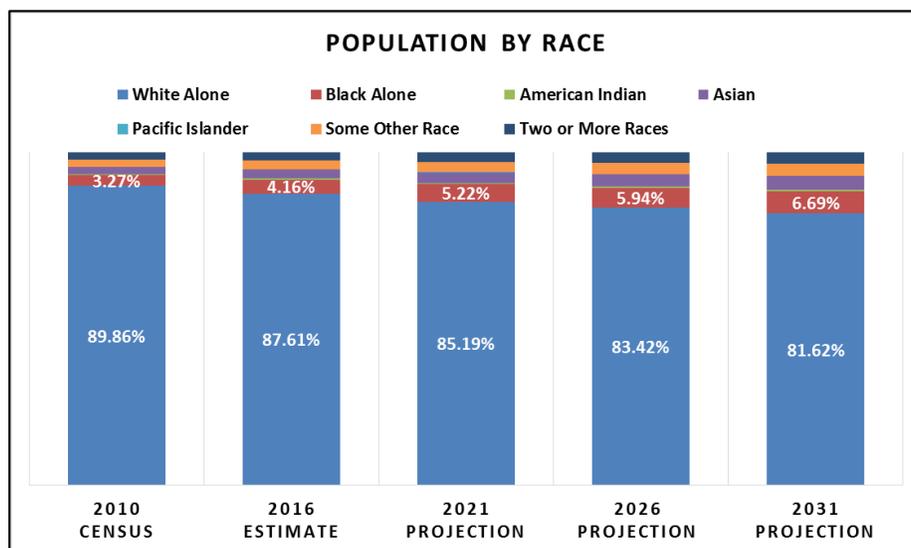
Figure 8-Population by Race

HISPANIC POPULATION

■ Hispanic / Latino Origin (any race)   ■ All Others

7.13%   11.93%

2010 CENSUS   **2031 PROJECTION**
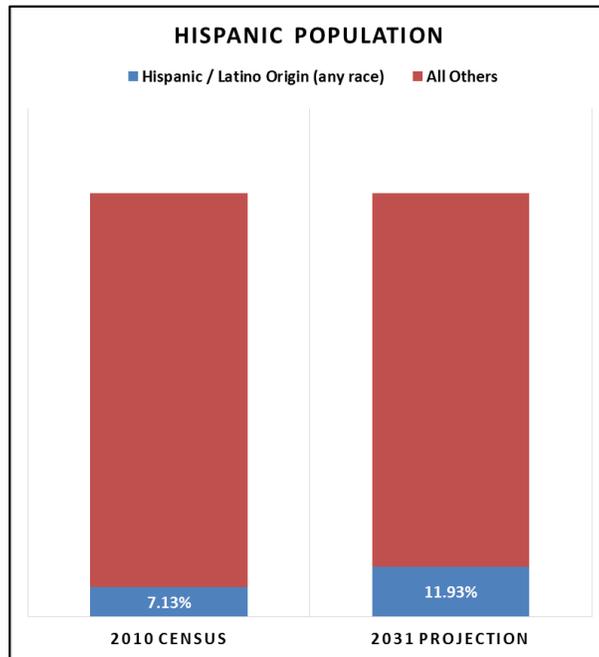
Figure 9-Hispanic/Latino Origin Population

HOUSEHOLDS, INCOME, POVERTY LEVEL, AND POPULATION WITH DISABILITIES

As seen in **Figure 10**, the target area's per capita income ($28,529) is above the state average ($24,635) and the national average ($28,051). Median household income ($51,172) is above the state average ($48,248) but below the national ($53,046) averages. Future predictions expect that both per capita income and median household income for the area will increase to $37,049 and $69,850, respectively, by 2031. Additionally, the Porter County poverty level (15.6%) for all people is slightly higher than the poverty level for the State of Indiana (15.4%).

COMPARATIVE INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

■ Per Capita Income   ■ Median Household Income

$51,172 $48,248 $53,046

$28,529 $24,635 $28,051

VALPARAISO   **INDIANA**   **U.S.A.**
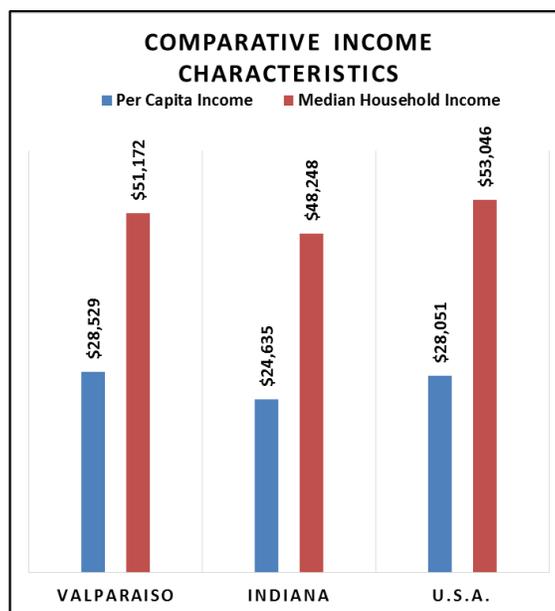
Figure 10-Comparative Income Characteristics

As seen in **Figure 11**, Valparaiso's largest household size is 1-person with 34.5% of the market. The average household size was 2.28 in 2010 and increased slightly to 2.30 in 2015. Average household size is projected to also remain the same for 2020. **Figure 12** represents disability status by age segment from 2012-2015.
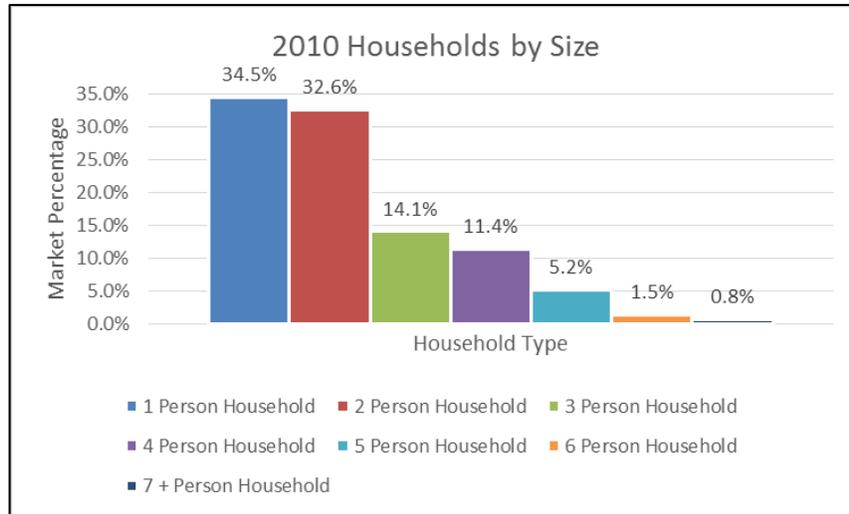
Figure 11-2010 Households by Size
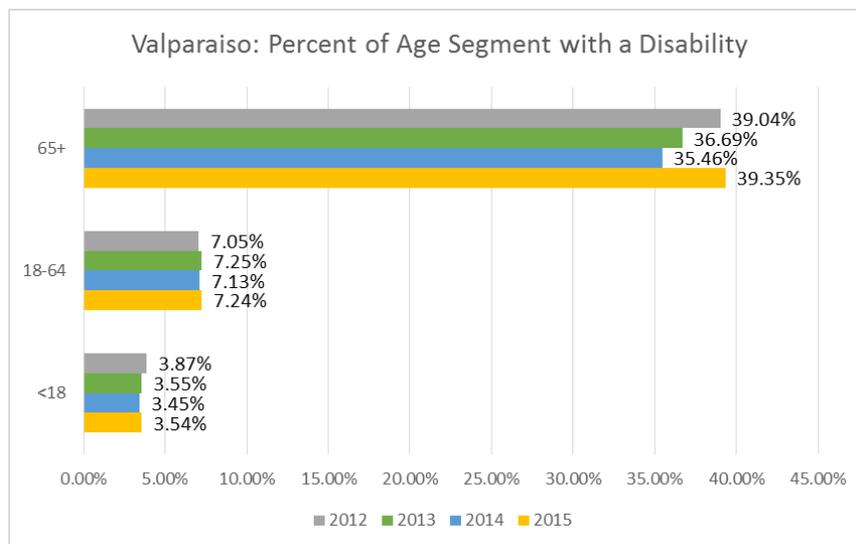
Figure 12-Age Segments with Disabilities

2.13.4 VALPARAISO IMPLICATIONS

The following implications are derived from the analyses provided above. Each implication is organized by the outlined demographic information sections.

POPULATION

The population is increasing and is projected to experience 9.60% population growth over the next 15 years. The number of households is projected to experience a 9.74% growth rate over the same timeframe. What this means is that the population will grow and recreation services must grow commensurate to the population. Additionally,

development will continue over the next 15 years and the parks and recreation system will need to strategically invest, develop, and maintain facilities in relation to housing development areas. As more development occurs, the parks and recreation department should have a "seat at the table" to discuss the size, type, and specifications of any gained greenspace due to development.

AGE SEGMENTATION

The service area's aging trend is significant because programs and facilities focused on an actively adult (55+ population) will assume an even greater importance as the population changes in the years to come. Age segments have different proclivities towards activities. For example, older adults may enjoy passive recreation activities more so than active. However, multi-generational facilities and services will be crucial to Valparaiso because the 18-34 age segment will still represent 28.2% of the total population in 2031. Therefore, an emphasis on the millennial generation will be important over the next 15 years.

GENDER

More than half of the population is female. However, the male population is projected to close the gap (albeit marginally) by 2031. National trends show that men typically participate in outdoor recreation and sports activities more than women. However, women participate more in group activities such as fitness. It will be important for Valparaiso to keep up to date with both gender and population recreational trends.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

A more diverse population will require continued foresight and planning on Valparaiso's behalf. Traditional programming and service offerings may not be appropriate for a population comprised of a large minority population. For example, the Hispanic/Latino population may use passive recreation differently than other user groups and for different durations. Picnic shelters for large (typically multi-generational) families is important to the Hispanic/Latino population whereas it may not be as high significance to the White Alone population. Additionally, the Black Alone population has traditionally been under-represented in outdoor recreation activities. This means that Valparaiso can either 1) make more of a concerted effort to address this under-representation or 2) identify other recreation amenities and services that would better cater to this group's recreational needs. Research also shows that barriers to recreation program/service participation are different based upon race. For example, Hispanic/Latino and Black Alone populations report lack of connectivity via sidewalks and transportation are big barriers to recreation participation.

HOUSEHOLDS, INCOME, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Valparaiso's median household income is projected to increase 36.50% by 2031. Additionally, Valparaiso's average household income is projected to be $89,765 by 2031. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is projected to increase 1.98% annually from 2016 to 2031; whereas Valparaiso's average household income is projected to have a 1.80% increase annually. The CPI measures changes in the purchasing power of a currency and the rate of inflation so Valparaiso households may have less purchasing power over the next 15 years. Current national trends focus on health, wellness, and lifestyle activities. As the population continues to age, increased attention will be made towards utilization of parks and recreation services and improving quality of life. Additionally, as the population with disabilities continues to age, more inclusive and adaptive services will be warranted. Valparaiso has an opportunity to position its department to prepare for 2031 by identifying programs and services that will be the most salient to age segments and ethnicities while achieving alignment with willingness to pay.

2.13.5 EXPANDED ANALYSIS (OUTSIDE OF THE CITY LIMITS)

As part of the demographic and trends analysis, an expanded area was examined (gray area in **Figure 13**). This expanded area, or "study area" as it will be referred to in this document, represents areas outside of the city limits that is still within the jurisdiction of the department's programs and services. The geographical boundary, as shown in the 2014 Recreation Impact Fee study, was used for the regional analysis. All data on the area was retrieved from ESRI. The combined study area and City limits serves as the planning area for this Master Plan and it represents approximately 29 mi².
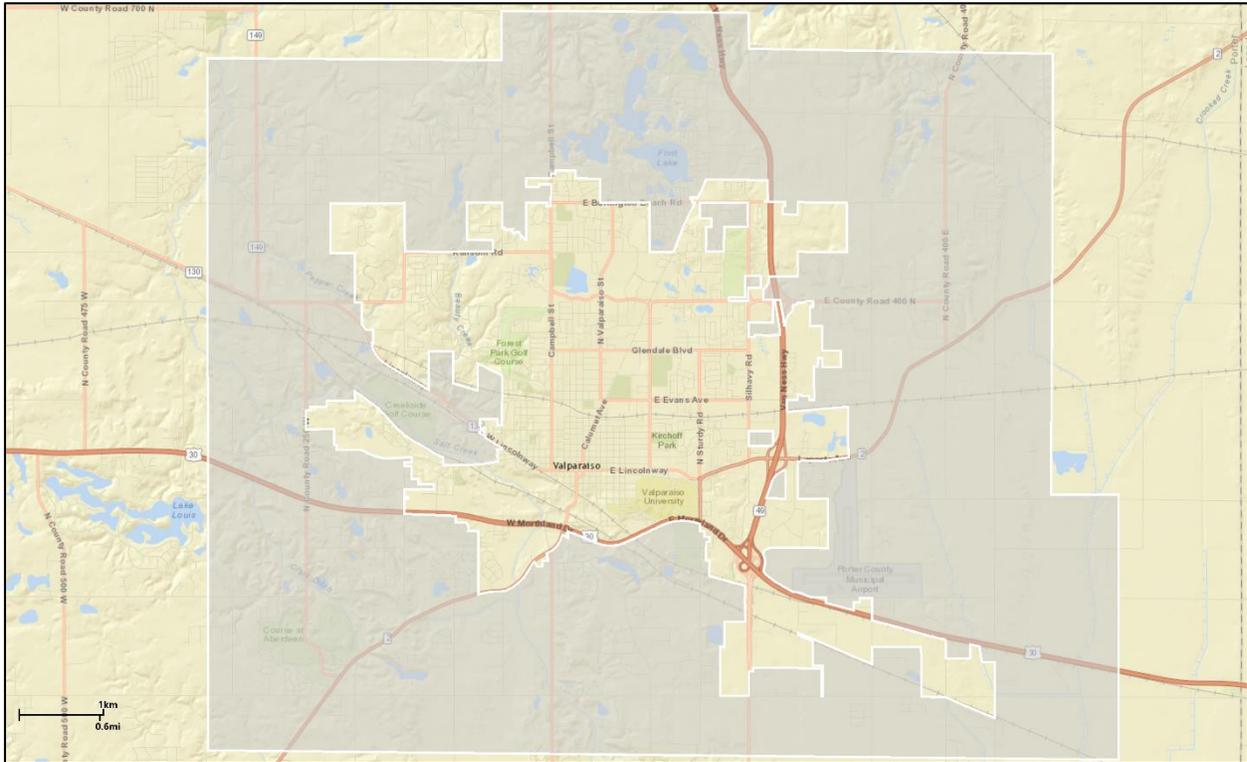
Figure 13-Study Area Boundaries (Gray Area)

POPULATION BY AGE SEGMENT COMPARISON

Valparaiso and the study area are vastly different for population age segment aging trends. The study area's 55+ age segment is projected to be 38.9% of the total 2031 population whereas Valparaiso's 55+ age segment is projected to be 32.9%. Additionally, there is a projected 9.5% difference within the 18-34 population with the study area's representing 19.7% compared to Valparaiso's 28.2%. The trend line shows a growing distance between the percentages of the 55+ population, the study area is projected to increase more than Valparaiso by 2031. The age segment with the widest percentage gap is the 18-34 group. **See Figures 14-17.**
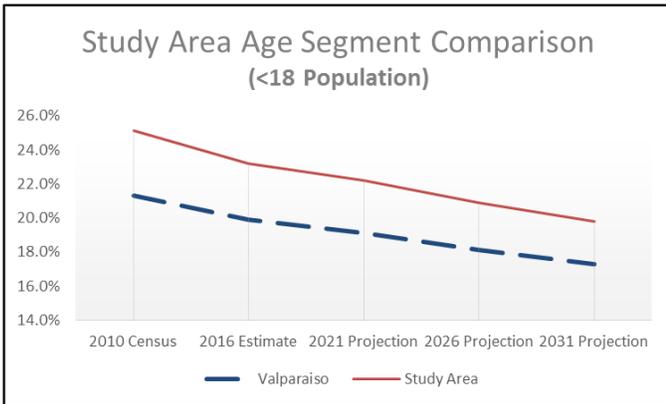
Figure 14-Population Comparative Analysis (<18)
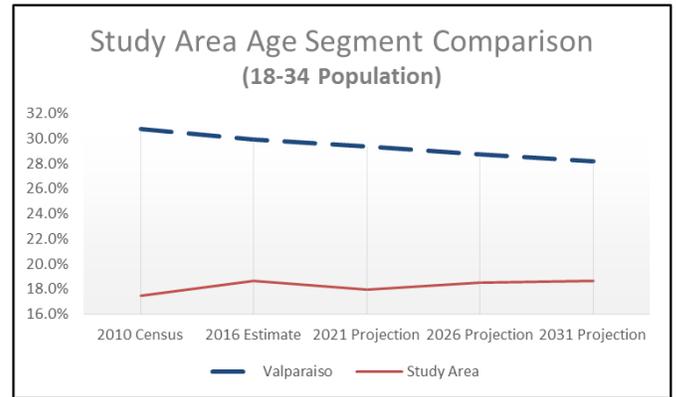
Figure 15-Population Comparative Analysis (18-34)
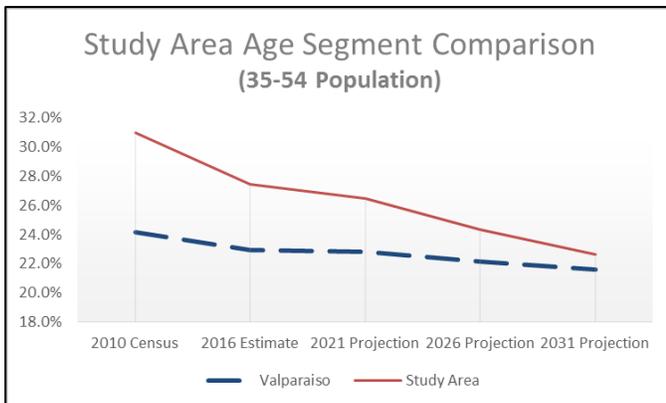
Figure 16-Population Comparative Analysis (35-54)
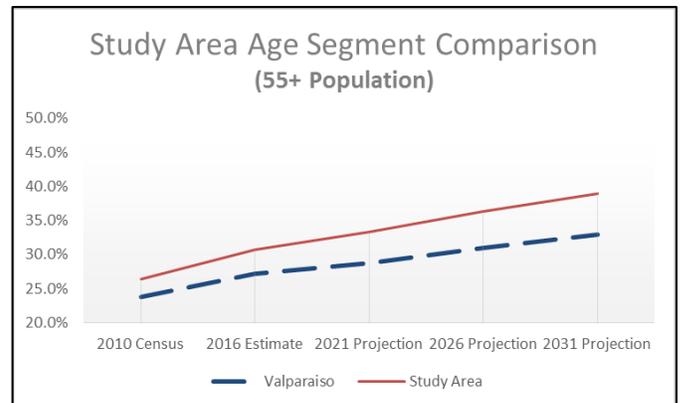
Figure 17-Population Comparative Analysis (55+)

RACE AND ETHNICITY COMPARISON

Valparaiso and the study area are becoming more diverse. The "White Alone" population percentage is expected to fall by 5.9% and 3.7% in Valparaiso and the study area respectively by 2031. Even though the study area is projected to continue diversifying by 2031, Valparaiso is projected to diversify at a higher rate. Also, Valparaiso has a higher population percentage of all minority populations included in this analysis. **See Figures 18-23.**
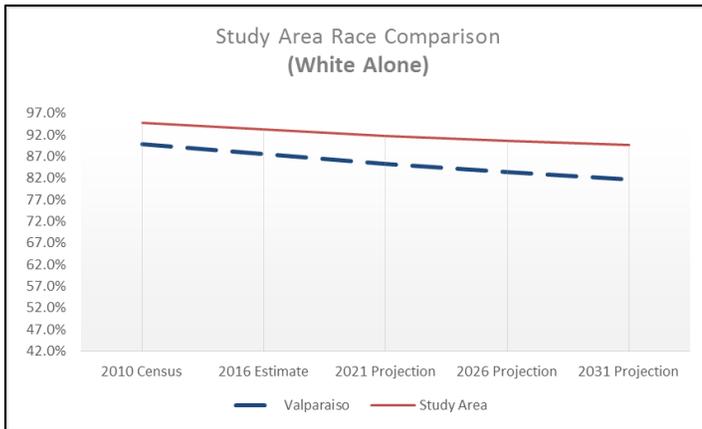
Figure 18-White Alone Comparison
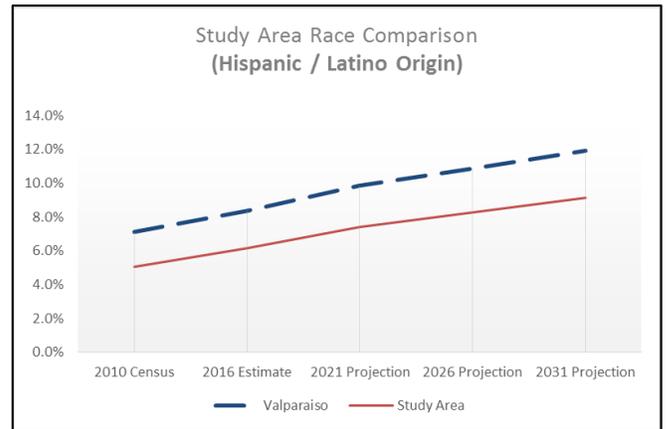
Figure 19-Hispanic/Latino Origin Comparison
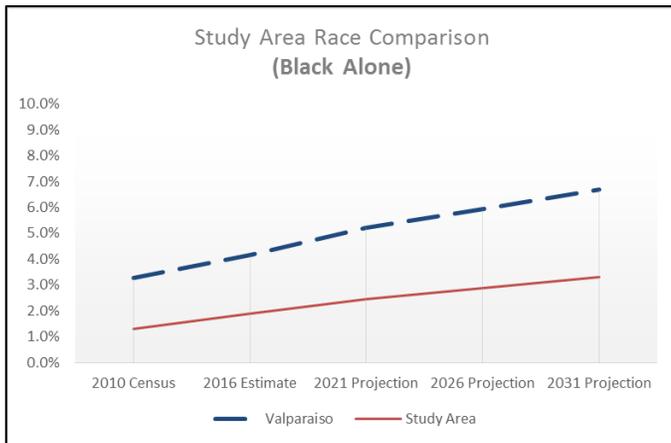
Figure 20-Black Alone Comparison
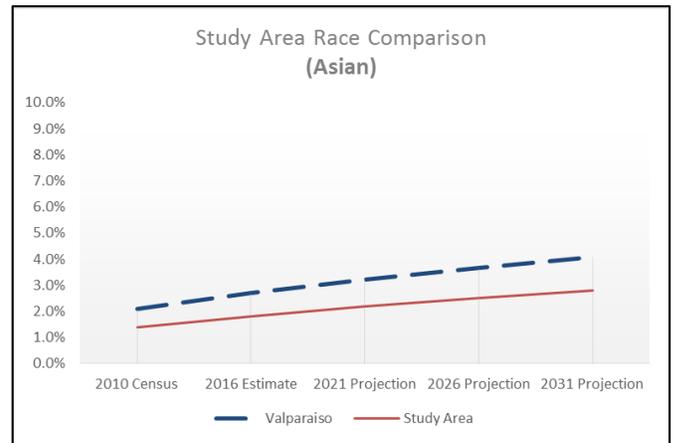
Figure 21-Asian Comparison
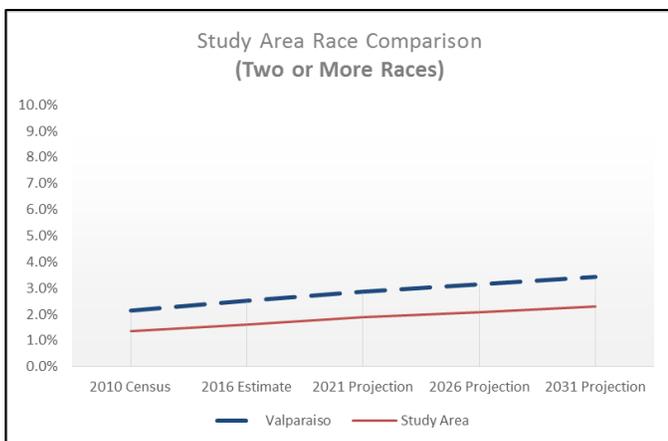
Figure 22-Two or More Races Comparison
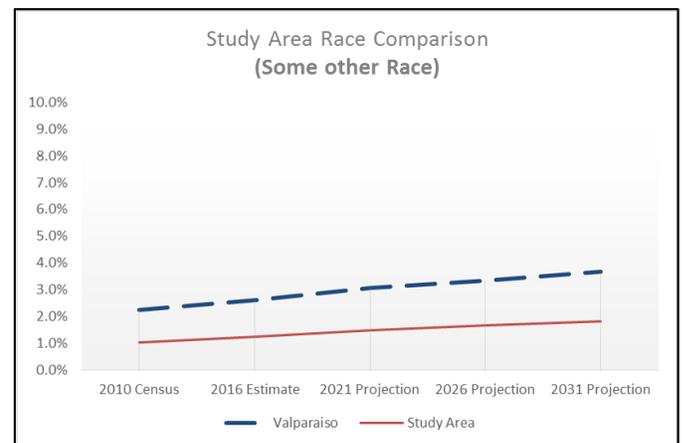
Figure 23-Some Other Race Comparison

HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOME

The study area has a median household income of $81,104, which is almost $30,000 higher than Valparaiso. The study area also has a higher per capita income at $36,602 whereas Valparaiso's is $28,529. Valparaiso has a much larger market percentage (14.5% more) of 1-person houses while the study area has a larger percentage of 2+ person households. **See Figures 24 and 25.**
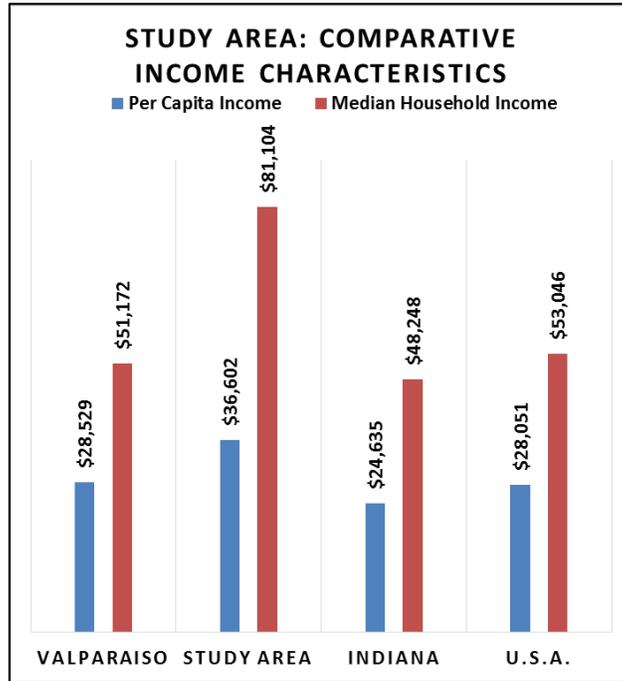
Figure 24-Comparative Income Characteristics Analysis
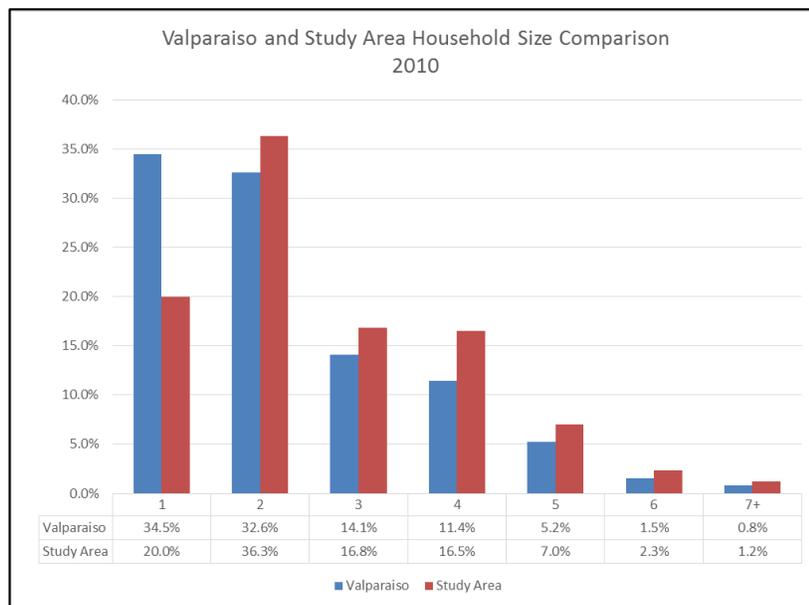
Figure 25-Valparaiso and Study Area Household Size Comparative Analysis

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following key takeaways were derived from the study area analysis:

- Study area is projected to grow by approximately 10.76% over the next 15 years (projected population will be 22,522)
- Study area and Valparaiso follow similar trend lines in terms of age segments; however, the percentages are vastly different for the 18-34 age segment
- Study area and Valparaiso follow similar trend lines in terms of race and ethnicity but two categories have large percentage differences: Black Alone and Hispanic/Latino Origin
- Study area has a higher median household income and per capita income than Valparaiso, Indiana, and the USA
- Valparaiso has a larger percentage of 1-person households whereas the study area has a larger percentage of 2-person and larger households

2.13.6 IMPLICATIONS

There are noticeable differences between the study area and the Valparaiso populace, and the differences are important for VPRD to understand. As individuals age, their recreational preferences tend to lean towards more passive recreation and spaces for walking, sitting, and spending time with younger family members. Additionally, there may be more willingness to pay for recreation services as you move away from Valparaiso meaning programs and services that attract individuals from further out could possibly be offered at a higher rate than other service areas. Household size increases as you move further out meaning recreation programs and services need to be more family-oriented rather than individualistic.

2.14 MARKET PROFILE (VALPARAISO)

2.14.1 LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The following chart depicts the education level of adults 25 years and older within Valparaiso, Indiana. Approximately 93.3% of residents have at least a high school diploma, and approximately 37.4% have a Bachelor's degree or better. **See Figure 26.**
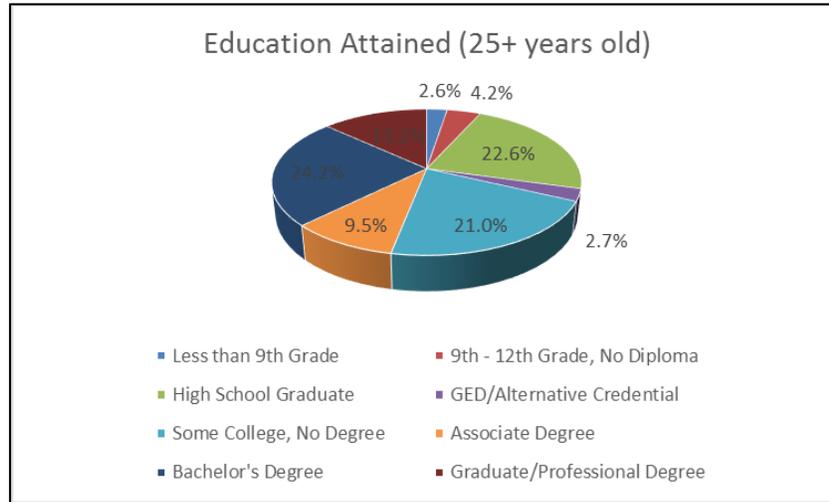
Figure 26-Valparaiso Education Attained

2.14.2 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

As seen below, 3.8% of residents within Valparaiso were unemployed in 2016. This is lower than the current national unemployment rate (4.7%) and that of Indiana (5.0%) as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in May 2016. **See Figure 27.**
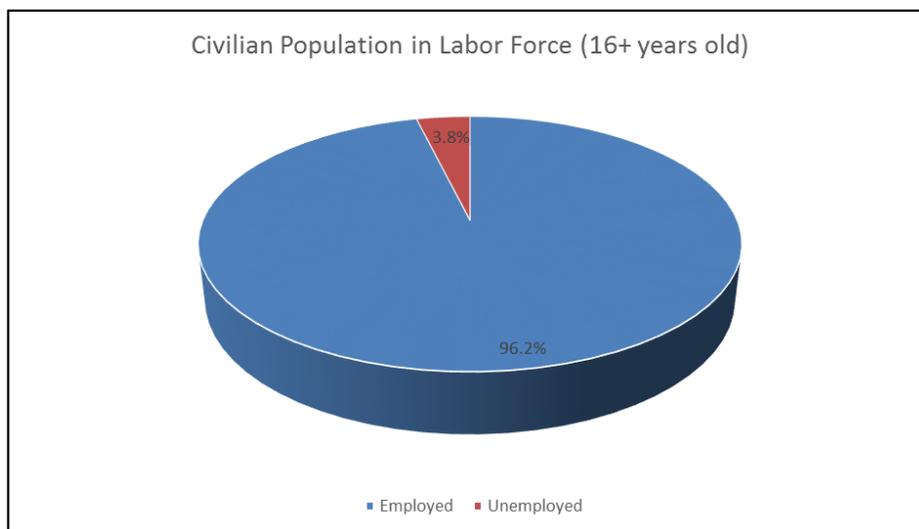
Figure 27-Valparaiso Labor Force Statistics

2.14.3 CONSUMER SPENDING

The graph below shows the total consumer dollars spent among Valparaiso residents in 2015. Entertainment/recreation ranks sixth out of the 14 categories reported, totaling $36,715,480 spent. Additionally, $2,831.67 per resident (on average) was spent on entertainment/recreation. **See Figures 28 and 29.**

2016 Consumer Spending (Total Dollars Spent)

Category	Amount
Shelter	$186,952,633
Health Care	$61,629,991
Food at Home	$60,003,013
Food Away from Home	$37,192,576
Entertainment/Recreation	$34,215,058
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind	$27,203,245
Apparel & Services	$24,020,715
Travel	$21,122,283
HH Furnishings & Equipment	$20,849,198
Education	$17,557,990
Personal Care Products & Services	$8,600,111

Figure 28-Valparaiso Consumer Spending (Total Dollars)

2016 Consumer Spending (Average Dollars Spent)

Category	Amount
Shelter	$14,246.18
Health Care	$4,696.33
Food at Home	$4,572.35
Food Away from Home	$2,834.15
Entertainment/Recreation	$2,607.26
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind	$2,072.94
Apparel & Services	$1,830.43
Travel	$1,609.56
HH Furnishings & Equipment	$1,588.75
Education	$1,337.96
Personal Care Products & Services	$655.35
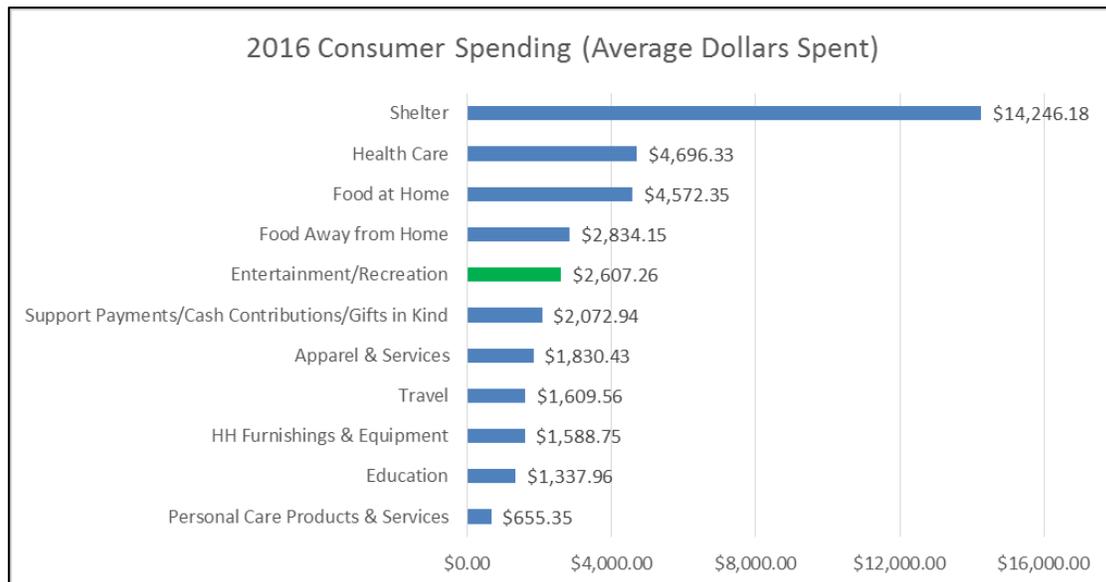
Figure 29-Valparaiso Consumer Spending (Average Dollars)

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2.15 TRENDS ANALYSIS

Information released by Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2016 Study of Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report reveals that the most popular sport and recreational activities include: fitness walking, treadmill, running/jogging, free weights, and road bicycling. Most of these activities appeal to both young and old alike, can be done in most environments, are enjoyed regardless of level of skill, and have minimal economic barriers to entry. These popular activities also have appeal because of their social application. For example, although fitness activities are mainly self-directed, people enjoy walking and biking with other individuals because it can offer a degree of camaraderie.

Fitness walking has remained the past decade's most popular activity by a large margin (in terms of total participants). Fitness walking participation last year was reported to be nearly 110 million Americans. Although fitness walking has the highest level of participation, it did report a 2.4% decrease in participation from 2014 to 2015. This recent decline in fitness walking participation paired with upward trends in a wide variety of other activities, especially in fitness and sports, suggests that active individuals are finding new ways to exercise and diversifying their recreational interests. In addition, the popularity of many outdoor adventure and water-based activities has experienced positive growth based on the most recent findings; however, many of these activities' rapid increase in participation is likely a product of their relatively low user base, which may indicate that these sharp upward trends may not be sustained long into the future.

From a traditional team sport standpoint, basketball ranks highest among all sports, with approximately 23.4 million people reportedly participating in 2015. In general, nearly every sport with available data experienced an increase in participation, which is a reversal from the five-year trend of declining participation in sports. Sports that have experienced significant participation growth are squash, boxing, lacrosse, rugby, roller hockey, and field hockey – all of which have experienced growth in excess of 30% over the last five years. More recently, roller hockey, racquetball, indoor soccer, boxing, and flag football were the activities with the most rapid growth during the last year.

According to the Physical Activity Council, an "inactive" is defined as an individual that doesn't take part in any physical activity. Over the last five years, the number of inactive individuals has increased 7.4% from 76 million in 2010 to 81.6 million in 2015. However, looking at just the past year, from 2014 to 2015, the US saw a slight decrease of 0.6% from 82.7 to 81.6 million individuals. Although this recent shift is very promising, inactivity remains a dominant force in society, evidenced by the fact that 27.7% of the population falls into this category.

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) Sports, Fitness & Recreational Activities Topline Participation Report 2016 was utilized to evaluate national sport and fitness participatory trends. The study is based survey findings by the Physical Activity Council from a total of 32,658 online interviews carried out in 2015. The purpose of the report is to establish levels of activity and identify key participatory trends in recreation across the US.

2.15.1 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL SPORTS

Golf (24.1 million) and basketball (23.4 million) were the top two sports (in terms of participation) in 2015 with participation figures well in excess of all other sport activities included in the general sports category. The popularity of golf and basketball can be attributed to the ability to compete with relatively small number of participants. Golf also benefits from its wide age segment appeal, and is considered a life-long sport. Basketball's success can be attributed to the limited amount of equipment needed to participate and the limited space requirements necessary, which make basketball the only traditional sport that can be played at the majority of American dwellings as a drive-way pickup game.

Since 2010, squash and other niche sports, like boxing, lacrosse and rugby, have seen strong growth. Squash has emerged as the overall fastest growing sport, as it has seen participation levels rise by 66% over the last five years. Based on the five-year trend, boxing (59%), rugby (44%), lacrosse (47%), roller hockey (39%), and field hockey (32%) have also experienced significant growth. In the most recent year, the fastest growing sports were roller hockey (10%), racquetball (8%), squash (7%), indoor soccer (6%), and boxing (6%). During the last five years, the sports that are most rapidly declining include touch football (-25%), wrestling (-22%), slow pitch softball (-16%), and racquetball (24.9% decrease).

Overall, activities in the general sports categories show very promising growth in the most recent year. Only three activities experienced a dip in participation, but none of these declined by more than 3%. In general, the strong recent growth in sports is a reversal of the five-year trends, as nearly every activity declining in the long run has tipped the scale to show positive growth in the past year.

National Participatory Trends - General Sports				
Activity	**Participation Levels**		**% Change**	
	2010	**2014**	**2015**	**10-15**	**14-15**
Golf	26,122	24,700	24,120	-7.7%	-2.3%
Basketball	25,156	23,067	23,410	-6.9%	1.5%
Tennis	18,719	17,904	17,963	-4.0%	0.3%
Baseball	14,198	13,152	13,711	-3.4%	4.3%
Soccer (Outdoor)	13,883	12,592	12,646	-8.9%	0.4%
Badminton	7,645	7,176	7,198	-5.8%	0.3%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	8,477	7,077	7,114	-16.1%	0.5%
Football, Touch	8,663	6,586	6,487	-25.1%	-1.5%
Volleyball (Court)	7,315	6,304	6,423	-12.2%	1.9%
Football, Tackle	6,850	5,978	6,222	-9.2%	4.1%
Football, Flag	6,660	5,508	5,829	-12.5%	5.8%
Soccer (Indoor)	4,920	4,530	4,813	-2.2%	6.2%
Volleyball (Sand/Beach)	4,752	4,651	4,785	0.7%	2.9%
Gymnastics	4,418	4,621	4,679	5.9%	1.3%
Ultimate Frisbee	4,571	4,530	4,409	-3.5%	-2.7%
Track and Field	4,383	4,105	4,222	-3.7%	2.9%
Racquetball	4,603	3,594	3,883	-15.6%	8.0%
Cheerleading	3,134	3,456	3,608	15.1%	4.4%
Ice Hockey	2,140	2,421	2,546	19.0%	5.2%
Pickleball	N/A	2,462	2,506	N/A	1.8%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	2,513	2,424	2,460	-2.1%	1.5%
Lacrosse	1,423	2,011	2,094	47.2%	4.1%
Wrestling	2,536	1,891	1,978	-22.0%	4.6%
Roller Hockey	1,374	1,736	1,907	38.8%	9.9%
Squash	1,031	1,596	1,710	65.9%	7.1%
Field Hockey	1,182	1,557	1,565	32.4%	0.5%
Boxing for Competition	855	1,278	1,355	58.5%	6.0%
Rugby	940	1,276	1,349	43.5%	5.7%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

Figure 30-National Trends (General Sports)

2.15.2 NATIONAL TRENDS IN AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Swimming is unquestionably a lifetime sport, and all aquatic activities have experienced participation growth among the American population. In 2015, fitness swimming is the absolute leader in overall participation (26 million) for aquatic activities, due in large part to its broad, multigenerational appeal. In the most recent year, competition swimming reported the strongest growth (7%) among aquatic activities, followed by fitness swimming (4%) and aquatic exercise (1%). It should be noted, in 2011, recreational swimming was broken into competition and fitness categories in order to better identify key trends.

Aquatic Exercise also has a strong participation base, and has experienced steady growth since 2010. Aquatic exercise has paved the way as a less stressful form of physical activity, while allowing similar benefits as land based exercises, including aerobic fitness, resistance training, flexibility, and better balance. Doctors are now recommending aquatic exercise for injury rehabilitation, mature patients, and patients with bone or joint problems, due to the significant reduction of stress placed on weight-bearing joints, bones, and muscles, and also the effect of the water in reducing swelling from injuries.

National Participatory Trends - Aquatics					
Activity	**Participation Levels**			**% Change**	
	2010	**2014**	**2015**	**10-15**	**14-15**
Swimming (Fitness)	N/A	25,304	26,319	N/A	4.0%
Aquatic Exercise	8,947	9,122	9,226	3.1%	1.1%
Swimming (Competition)	N/A	2,710	2,892	N/A	6.7%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

Figure 31-National Trends (Aquatics)

2.15.3 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL FITNESS

Overall, national participatory trends in fitness have experienced strong growth in recent years. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest among people to improve their health by engaging in an active lifestyle. These activities also have very few barriers to entry, which provides a variety of options that are relatively inexpensive to participate in and can be performed by nearly anyone with no time restrictions.

The most popular fitness activity by far is fitness walking, which had nearly 110 million participants in 2015, which represents a 2.4% decrease from the previous year. Other leading fitness activities based on total number of participants include treadmill (50 million), running/jogging (48 million), hand weights (43 million), stretching (36 million), and stationary cycling (36 million).

Over the last five years, the activities growing most rapidly are non-traditional / off-road triathlons (119%), trail running (63%), traditional road triathlons (57%), high impact aerobics (41%), and yoga (20%). In the last year, activities with the largest gains in participation included non-traditional / off-road triathlons (24%), traditional / road triathlons (13%), barre (12%), and trail running (8%). It should be noted that many of the activities growing most rapidly have a relatively low user base, which allows for more drastic shifts in terms of percentage. The recent decline in the extremely popular activities of fitness walking and running / jogging paired with widespread growth in activities with lower participation levels, may suggest that those engaging in fitness activities are actively looking for new forms of exercise.

National Participatory Trends - General Fitness					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2010	2014	2015	10-15	14-15
Fitness Walking	112,082	112,583	109,829	-2.0%	-2.4%
Treadmill	52,275	50,241	50,398	-3.6%	0.3%
Running/Jogging	46,650	51,127	48,496	4.0%	-5.1%
Free Weights (Hand Weights) under 15 lbs	N/A	41,670	42,799	N/A	2.7%
Stretching	35,720	35,624	35,776	0.2%	0.4%
Stationary Cycling (Recumbent/Upright)	36,036	35,693	35,553	-1.3%	-0.4%
Weight/Resistant Machines	39,185	35,841	35,310	-9.9%	-1.5%
Free Weights (Dumbells) over 15 lbs	N/A	30,767	31,409	N/A	2.1%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	27,319	28,025	27,981	2.4%	-0.2%
Free Weights (Barbells)	27,194	25,623	25,381	-6.7%	-0.9%
Yoga	20,998	25,262	25,289	20.4%	0.1%
Calisthenics/Bodyweight Exercise	N/A	22,390	22,146	N/A	-1.1%
Choreographed Exercise	N/A	21,455	21,487	N/A	0.1%
Aerobics (High Impact)	14,567	19,746	20,464	40.5%	3.6%
Stair Climbing Machine	13,269	13,216	13,234	-0.3%	0.1%
Cross-Training Style Workout	N/A	11,265	11,710	N/A	4.0%
Stationary Cycling (Group)	7,854	8,449	8,677	10.5%	2.7%
Pilates Training	8,404	8,504	8,594	2.3%	1.1%
Trail Running	4,985	7,531	8,139	63.3%	8.1%
Cardio Cross Trainer	N/A	7,484	7,982	N/A	6.7%
Boot Camp Style Cross-Training	N/A	6,774	6,722	N/A	-0.8%
Cardio Kickboxing	6,287	6,747	6,708	6.7%	-0.6%
Martial Arts	6,002	5,364	5,507	-8.2%	2.7%
Boxing for Fitness	4,788	5,113	5,419	N/A	6.0%
Tai Chi	3,193	3,446	3,651	14.3%	5.9%
Barre	N/A	3,200	3,583	N/A	12.0%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	1,593	2,203	2,498	56.8%	13.4%
Triathlon (Non-Traditional/Off Road)	798	1,411	1,744	118.5%	23.6%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

Figure 32-National Trends (General Fitness)

2.15.4 NATIONAL TRENDS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

Results from the Participation Report demonstrate a dichotomy of growth and attrition among outdoor / adventure recreation activities. Much like the general fitness activities, these activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually or with a group, and are not limited by time restraints. In 2015, the most popular outdoor / adventure activities (in terms of total participants) include road bicycling (38 million), freshwater fishing (38 million), day hiking (37 million), and camping within ¼ mile of vehicle/home (28 million).

From 2010-2015, outdoor / adventure recreation activities that have undergone the largest increases were adventure racing (136%), archery (33%), BMX bicycling (29%), traditional climbing (28%), and backpacking overnight (26%). Over the same time frame, activities declining most rapidly were in-line roller skating (-26%), camping within ¼ mile of home/vehicle (-15%), and recreational vehicle camping (-12%). More recently, activities growing most rapidly in the last year were adventure racing (21%), BMX bicycling (15%), traditional climbing (5%), and fly fishing (4%).

National Participatory Trends - Outdoor / Adventure Recreation					
Activity	**Participation Levels**			**% Change**	
	2010	**2014**	**2015**	**10-15**	**14-15**
Bicycling (Road)	39,730	39,725	38,280	-3.6%	-3.6%
Fishing (Freshwater)	39,911	37,821	37,682	-5.6%	-0.4%
Hiking (Day)	32,534	36,222	37,232	14.4%	2.8%
Camping (< 1/4 Mile of Vehicle/Home)	32,667	28,660	27,742	-15.1%	-3.2%
Wildlife Viewing (>1/4 Mile of Home/Vehicle)	21,158	21,110	20,718	-2.1%	-1.9%
Camping (Recreational Vehicle)	16,651	14,633	14,699	-11.7%	0.5%
Birdwatching (>1/4 mile of Vehicle/Home)	13,317	13,179	13,093	-1.7%	-0.7%
Fishing (Saltwater)	12,056	11,817	11,975	-0.7%	1.3%
Backpacking Overnight	7,998	10,101	10,100	26.3%	0.0%
Archery	6,323	8,435	8,378	32.5%	-0.7%
Bicycling (Mountain)	7,152	8,044	8,316	16.3%	3.4%
Skateboarding	7,080	6,582	6,436	-9.1%	-2.2%
Fishing (Fly)	5,523	5,842	6,089	10.2%	4.2%
Roller Skating, In-Line	8,128	6,061	6,024	-25.9%	-0.6%
Climbing (Sport/Indoor/Boulder)	4,542	4,536	4,684	3.1%	3.3%
Adventure Racing	1,214	2,368	2,864	135.9%	20.9%
Bicycling (BMX)	2,090	2,350	2,690	28.7%	14.5%
Climbing (Traditional/Ice/Mountaineering)	2,017	2,457	2,571	27.5%	4.6%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

Figure 33-National Trends (Outdoor Recreation)

2.15.5 NATIONAL TRENDS IN WATER SPORTS / ACTIVITIES

The most popular water sports / activities based on total participants in 2015 were canoeing (10 million), recreational kayaking (9 million), and snorkeling (9 million). Water-based activities are demonstrating strong growth, especially over the most recent year, as only three activities underwent a minimal decline in participation from 2014-2015. Similar to participation trends from other recreational categories, water sports / activities in the most recent year reflect a positive shift from the five-year trends.

Over the last five years, stand-up paddling (up 188%) was by far the fastest growing water activity, followed by sea / touring kayaking (57%), white water kayaking (57%), recreational kayaking (50%), and boardsailing / windsurfing (29%). From 2010-2015, activities declining most rapidly were jet skiing (-19%), water skiing (-19%), and rafting (-12%). In the most recent year, activities experiencing the greatest increase in participation included boardsailing / windsurfing (13%), stand-up paddling (10%), and recreational kayaking (7%).

National Participatory Trends - Water Sports / Activities					
Activity	**Participation Levels**			**% Change**	
	2010	**2014**	**2015**	**10-15**	**14-15**
Canoeing	10,306	10,044	10,236	-0.7%	1.9%
Kayaking (Recreational)	6,339	8,855	9,499	49.9%	7.3%
Snorkeling	9,332	8,752	8,874	-4.9%	1.4%
Jet Skiing	7,739	6,355	6,263	-19.1%	-1.4%
Sailing	4,106	3,924	4,099	-0.2%	4.5%
Water Skiing	4,849	4,007	3,948	-18.6%	-1.5%
Rafting	4,389	3,781	3,883	-11.5%	2.7%
Scuba Diving	2,938	3,145	3,274	11.4%	4.1%
Wakeboarding	3,611	3,125	3,226	-10.7%	3.2%
Kayaking (Sea/Touring)	1,958	2,912	3,079	57.3%	5.7%
Stand-Up Paddling	1,050	2,751	3,020	187.6%	9.8%
Surfing	2,585	2,721	2,701	4.5%	-0.7%
Kayaking (White Water)	1,606	2,351	2,518	56.8%	7.1%
Boardsailing/Windsurfing	1,373	1,562	1,766	28.6%	13.1%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

Figure 34-National Trends (Water Sports)

2.15.6 NATIONAL TRENDS IN WINTER SPORTS

Assessing participation in snow sports, there is strong growth in the most recent year, as nearly every activity in this category increased from 2014-2015. The most popular winter sports in 2015 were ice skating (10 million), alpine / downhill skiing (9 million), sledding / snow tubing (9 million), and snowboarding (8 million).

Analyzing the five year trends, activities experiencing rapid growth were telemarking (73%) and freestyle skiing (51%). Conversely, alpine / downhill skiing (-14%), ice skating (-9%), and cross-country skiing (-0.3%) were the only winter activities reporting declining participation over the last five years. More recently, telemarking (up 26.3%), snowshoeing (up 16.2%), and freestyle skiing (up 13.9%) reported the strongest participation growth over the last year.

National Participatory Trends - Winter Sports					
Activity	**Participation Levels**			**% Change**	
	2010	**2014**	**2015**	**10-15**	**14-15**
Ice Skating	11,477	10,649	10,485	-8.6%	-1.5%
Skiing (Alpine/Downhill)	10,919	9,004	9,378	-14.1%	4.2%
Sledding / Snow Tubing	N/A	8,560	8,811	N/A	2.9%
Snowboarding	7,421	7,399	7,676	3.4%	3.7%
Skiing (Freestyle)	2,950	4,061	4,465	51.4%	9.9%
Skiing (Cross-Country)	4,157	4,291	4,146	-0.3%	-3.4%
Snowshoeing	3,431	3,603	3,885	13.2%	7.8%
Telemarking (Downhill)	1,482	2,503	2,569	73.3%	2.6%
Ice Hockey	2,140	2,421	2,546	19.0%	5.2%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

Figure 35-National Trends (Winter Sports)

2.15.7 LOCAL SPORT AND MARKET POTENTIAL

The following charts show sport and leisure market potential data from ESRI. A Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service in Valparaiso, Indiana. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident of the target area will participate in certain activities when compared to the US National average. The National average is 100, therefore numbers below 100 would represent a lower than average participation rate, and numbers above 100 would represent higher than average participation rate.

ESRI's MPI for a product or service for an area is calculated by the ratio of the local consumption rate for a product or service for the area to the US consumption rate for the product or service, multiplied by 100. MPIs are derived from the information integration from four consumer surveys. Each survey respondent is associated with a "Tapestry" segment and can therefore produce an expected number of consumers.

The target area is compared to the national average in four (4) categories – general sports, fitness, outdoor activity, and money spent on miscellaneous recreation. **Overall, residents of Valparaiso demonstrate participation trends that have above average potential index numbers in all categories. Of particular interest given the estimated number of participants and MPIs are:**

- **Participation in sports, such as golf, basketball, and football**

- **Fitness related programming in walking for exercise, swimming, jogging/running, and weight lifting**

- **Outdoor Activities, including fishing, biking (road), and hiking**

- **Money spent on attending sports events, visiting zoos, and overnight camping**

It is recommended that Valparaiso Parks and Recreation examines the MPIs below to gain a sense of local consumption behavior based upon market research. The MPIs should be one component of an overall demand analysis including participation rates, market competition, community survey, and other community input information. The MPIs that equal or are above 100, are identified as being popular consumption activities; however, programming should not solely center on high MPI activities because service providers often need to provide niche activities. Higher MPI activities can relate to Valparaiso core services but may not be synonymous.

As seen in the tables below (**Figures 36-43**), the following sport and leisure trends are most prevalent for residents within Valparaiso and the study area. All tables are sorted by the estimated number of participants in descending order.

Local Participatory Trends - General Sports			
Activity	**Estimated Participants**	**% of Population**	**MPI**
		Valparaiso	**USA**	
Golf	2,812	10.6%	9.1%	**116**
Basketball	2,525	9.5%	8.3%	**115**
Football	1,617	6.1%	4.7%	**130**
Baseball	1,403	5.3%	4.6%	**115**
Soccer	1,271	4.8%	3.8%	**126**
Softball	1,098	4.1%	3.4%	**121**
Volleyball	1,005	3.8%	3.2%	**117**
Tennis	983	3.7%	3.9%	**94**

Figure 36-Valparaiso MPI (General Sports)

Local Participatory Trends - General Sports			
Activity	**Estimated Participants**	**% of Population**	**MPI**
		Study Area	**USA**	
Golf	2,068	13.2%	9.1%	**145**
Basketball	1,285	8.2%	8.2%	**100**
Baseball	773	4.9%	4.5%	**108**
Football	675	4.3%	4.7%	**92**
Tennis	674	4.3%	3.9%	**109**
Soccer	567	3.6%	3.8%	**95**
Softball	562	3.6%	3.4%	**105**
Volleyball	457	2.9%	3.2%	**90**

Figure 37-Study Area MPI (General Sports)

Local Participatory Trends - Fitness

Activity	Estimated Participants	% of Population		MPI
		Valparaiso	USA	
Walking for exercise	7,029	26.6%	26.9%	**99**
Swimming	4,397	16.6%	15.5%	**107**
Jogging/running	4,266	16.1%	13.2%	**122**
Weight lifting	2,936	11.1%	9.9%	**112**
Aerobics	2,477	9.4%	8.5%	**111**
Yoga	2,131	8.1%	7.1%	**114**
Pilates	843	3.2%	2.8%	**116**

Figure 38-Valparaiso MPI (Fitness)

Local Participatory Trends - Fitness

Activity	Estimated Participants	% of Population		MPI
		Study Area	USA	
Walking for exercise	4,965	31.8%	26.7%	**119**
Swimming	2,814	18.0%	15.5%	**116**
Jogging/running	2,268	14.5%	13.2%	**110**
Weight lifting	1,716	11.0%	9.9%	**111**
Aerobics	1,514	9.7%	8.5%	**114**
Yoga	1,093	7.0%	7.1%	**99**
Pilates	477	3.1%	2.8%	**111**

Figure 39-Study Area MPI (Fitness)

Local Participatory Trends - Outdoor Activity

Activity	Estimated Participants	% of Population		MPI
		Valparaiso	USA	
Fishing (fresh water)	3,378	12.8%	12.4%	**103**
Bicycling (road)	2,868	10.8%	9.9%	**109**
Hiking	2,862	10.8%	9.9%	**109**
Canoeing/kayaking	1,790	6.8%	5.6%	**121**
Boating (power)	1,527	5.8%	5.4%	**108**
Bicycling (mountain)	1,154	4.4%	3.9%	**112**
Backpacking	1,121	4.2%	3.0%	**138**
Fishing (salt water)	1,035	3.9%	3.9%	**99**
Horseback riding	731	2.8%	2.5%	**112**

Figure 40-Valparaiso MPI (Outdoor Activity)

Local Participatory Trends - Outdoor Activity

Activity	Estimated Participants	% of Population		MPI
		Study Area	USA	
Fishing (fresh water)	2,375	15.2%	12.4%	**123**
Hiking	1,918	12.3%	9.9%	**124**
Bicycling (road)	1,896	12.1%	9.9%	**122**
Canoeing/kayaking	1,338	8.6%	5.6%	**154**
Boating (power)	1,111	7.1%	5.3%	**134**
Bicycling (mountain)	680	4.4%	3.9%	**112**
Fishing (salt water)	611	3.9%	3.9%	**99**
Backpacking	599	3.8%	3.0%	**125**
Horseback riding	395	2.5%	2.5%	**102**

Figure 41-Study Area MPI (Outdoor Activity)

Local Participatory Trends - Money Spent on Recreation

Activity	Estimated Participants	% of Population		MPI
		Valparaiso	USA	
Attended sports event	6,610	25.0%	22.9%	**109**
Visited a theme park	4,530	17.1%	17.6%	**97**
Went overnight camping	4,028	15.2%	11.9%	**128**
Visited a zoo	3,555	13.4%	11.2%	**120**
Attended baseball game - MLB reg seas	2,254	8.5%	9.1%	**93**
Spent $250+ on sports/rec equip	1,958	7.4%	7.3%	**102**
Spent $100-249 on sports/rec equip	1,837	6.9%	6.1%	**113**
Attended football game (college)	1,823	6.9%	5.7%	**121**
Spent $1-99 on sports/rec equip	1,652	6.2%	5.7%	**109**
Attended high school sports	1,558	5.9%	4.8%	**123**
Attended football game - NFL weekend	1,181	5.9%	4.8%	**123**
Attended basketball game (college)	976	3.7%	2.9%	**128**
Attended basketball game - NBA reg seas	749	2.8%	2.9%	**96**
Visited indoor water park	675	2.6%	3.1%	**85**
Attended football game - NFL Mon/Thurs	653	2.5%	2.7%	**91**

Figure 42-Valparaiso MPI (Money Spent on Recreation)

Local Participatory Trends -Money Spent on Recreation

Activity	Estimated Participants	% of Population		MPI
		Study Area	USA	
Attended sports event	4,518	28.9%	22.9%	**126**
Visited a theme park	2,995	19.2%	17.6%	**109**
Went overnight camping	2,423	15.5%	11.9%	**130**
Visited a zoo	2,142	13.7%	11.1%	**123**
Attended baseball game - MLB reg seas	1,918	12.3%	9.2%	**134**
Spent $250+ on sports/rec equip	1,656	10.6%	7.3%	**146**
Attended football game (college)	1,223	7.8%	5.7%	**137**
Spent $1-99 on sports/rec equip	1,017	6.5%	5.8%	**113**
Spent $100-249 on sports/rec equip	1,009	6.5%	6.2%	**105**
Attended high school sports	974	6.2%	4.7%	**131**
Attended football game - NFL weekend	922	5.9%	4.6%	**128**
Attended basketball game (college)	554	3.5%	2.8%	**123**
Visited indoor water park	532	3.4%	3.0%	**114**
Attended basketball game - NBA reg seas	435	2.8%	3.0%	**94**
Attended football game - NFL Mon/Thurs	432	2.8%	2.8%	**101**

Figure 43-Study Area MPI (Money Spent on Recreation)

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2.15.8 LOCAL SPORT AND MARKET POTENTIAL ANALYSIS

The number one general sport activity for Valparaiso is golf. This is measured in terms of estimated number of participants. Other popular sport activities include basketball, football, baseball, and soccer. All general sports categories exceed the average USA participation rates in terms of MPI except for tennis. Interestingly, the study area has a higher than average MPI for tennis. Fitness activities have high MPIs with jogging/running, Pilates, Yoga, and weight lifting being the top four. All outdoor activities except for fishing (salt water) have an above average MPI. Interestingly, the study area has a very high MPI for canoeing/kayaking and most other outdoor activities. The most popular money spent on recreation activity is attending sporting events. Camping and attending a college basketball game have the highest MPI scores for Valparaiso whereas attending a MLB baseball game and college football game have the highest MPI scores for the study area. Of note, Valparaiso residents are more apt to spend a medium amount (between $100 and $249) on recreation equipment whereas the study area is more apt to spend more than $250.

2.16 TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

ESRI's Tapestry Segmentation is a geodemographic system that classifies U.S. neighborhoods based on their socioeconomic and demographic compositions. This market segmentation system integrates consumer traits with residential characteristics to identify individual markets within a specified area. The Tapestry provides a classification model with 67 distinct, behavioral market segments that depict consumers' lifestyles and lifestages, and detail the diversity of the American population. These individual market segments are then arranged into 14 LifeMode groups that have similar characteristics and market profiles. A brief summary of the 14 LifeMode groups is provided in the table below.

LifeMode Summary Groups	
Group Name	Brief Description
Affluent Estates	Established wealth- educated, well-traveled married couples
Upscale Avenues	Prosperous, married couples in higher density neighborhoods
Uptown Individuals	Younger, urban singles on the move
Family Landscapes	Successful younger families in newer housing
GenXurban	Gen X in middle age; families with fewer kids and a mortgage
Cozy Country Living	Empty nesters in bucolic settings
Ethnic Enclaves	Established diversity- young, Hispanic homeowners with families
Middle Ground	Lifestyles of thirtysomethings
Senior Styles	Senior lifestyles reveal the effects of saving for retirement
Rustic Outposts	Country life with older families, older homes
Midtown Singles	Millenials on the move; single, diverse, and urban
Hometown	Growing up and staying close to home; single householders
Next Wave	Urban denizens; young, diverse, hardworking families
Scholars and Patriots	College campuses and military neighborhoods

Figure 44-ESRI Tapestry Segmentation LifeMode Summary Groups

The ESRI Tapestry Segmentation provides an understanding of consumers' lifestyle choices, what they buy, and how they spend their free time for a specified service area. This information is useful in identifying target markets, as

well as highlighting segments that are being underserved, to ensure that the County's offerings are in line with the unique characteristics and preferences of its users. Analyzing the individual market segments allows informed decision making in providing services based on the specific socioeconomic and demographic composition of the service area. This section will reveal the top Tapestry segments that comprise Valparaiso.

2.16.1 CITY OF VALPARAISO TAPESTRY SEGMENT CHARACTERISTICS

The following describes the demographic and socioeconomic traits for Valparaiso's three most prominent tapestry segments:

1) Midlife Constants (GenXurban LifeMode)

2) College Towns (Scholars and Patriots LifeMode)

3) Set to Impress (Midtown Singles LifeMode)

MIDLIFE CONSTANTS

- **Older, single-family homes** found in the suburban periphery of smaller metropolitan markets with a median age 45.9 and median household income of **$48,000**

- **Primarily married couples** living in **settled neighborhoods with slow rates of change** and **radio and newspaper** are the media of choice (after television)

- **Attentive to price,** but not at the expense of quality, they prefer to buy American and natural products

- **Traditional**, not trendy; opt for convenience and comfort, **not cutting-edge** – technology has its uses, but the **bells and whistles are a bother**

- **Activities** include Do It Yourself (DIY) projects, gardening, scrapbooking, movies at home, reading, fishing, and golf

COLLEGE TOWNS

- **Nonfamily households** that are largely renter occupied with a median age of 24.3 and a median household income of **$28,000**

- **About half the residents are enrolled in college**, while the rest work for a college or the services that support it

- **Their limited incomes result in thrifty purchases**; they are heavily **influenced by celebrity endorsements and trends in magazines**; and they prefer **environmentally friendly products**

- They are a **digitally engaged group** and use computers and cell phones for all aspects of life including shopping, school work, news, social media, and entertainment; they are all about **new experiences** and residents seek out **variety and adventure in their lives**

- **Activities** include backpacking, Pilates, Frisbee, going to movies, and going out for drinks

SET TO IMPRESS

- **Single-person households** make up over 40% of all households and found most in urban areas but also in suburbs

- **Unemployment is higher,** although most are still in college, and live in areas where it is easy to walk or bike to work

- Nearly one in three **residents are 20-34 years old** and live in apartment complexes that are multiple multiunit structures

- With a median household income of **$29,000**; they are always looking for a good deal and will stock up when the price is right

- **Activities** include going to rock concerts, night clubs, and the zoo and are very **comfortable with the latest technology**

2.16.2 STUDY AREA TAPESTRY SEGMENT CHARACTERISTICS

The following describes the demographic and socioeconomic traits for the expanded Study Area's three most prominent tapestry segments:

1) Green Acres (Cozy Country Living LifeMode)
2) Soccer Moms (Family Landscapes LifeMode)
3) In Style (GenXurban LifeMode)

Green Acres

- An older market (median age 43.0) who are **married couples and most with no children.**
- Sixty percent (60%) of residents are college educated with a median household income of $72,000 and are **avid do-it yourselfers**.
- Residents **enjoy outdoor activities** such as hunting and fishing, motorcycling, hiking, camping, and golf.
- Use technology as a tool more than a trend such as online banking or paying bills online, they are also **cautious consumers** focused on quality and durability.
- Residents are **active in their communities and participate in a variety of social organizations** from fraternal orders to veterans' club.

Soccer Moms

- Are **affluent, family-oriented** market who prefer living in the suburban areas over living in the city.
- Most households are married couples with children, with median age of **36.6** and median household income of **$84,000**.
- Most households have at least 2 vehicles with **longer commutes into the city** for work and a high labor for participation rate.
- **Outdoor activities and sports** are characteristic of life in the suburban, such as bicycling, jogging, golfing, boating, and target shooting.
- Carry a **high level of debt**, including first and second mortgages and auto loans.

In Style

- Interested in the arts, travel, and extensive reading.
- Mostly married couples with **no children** or single households; average **household size is 2.33.**
- The population is **slightly older, with a median age of 41.1** and median household income of $66,000.
- Residents are college educated or have some college education – **very connected and knowledgeable with technology.**
- They are aware of pricing, use coupons – **especially mobile coupons**.

2.16.3 TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

The tapestry segmentation results support the demographic information presented earlier in the report. Valparaiso will experience an aging population trend and the "Midlife Constants" group is indicative of this future trend. Valparaiso also has a young population and this population mixture explains why the median household income is higher than the state average but lower than the national average. By understanding the different tapestry segments, Valparaiso can position itself to provide programs, services, and amenities that align with Valparaiso residents' values and consumption behavior. It is evident that technology is a major component of a segment of Valparaiso residents but may be less integrated in other population segments therefore recreational marketing, amenities, and activities should utilize connectivity (Internet) and mobility (cell phone and computer) to help encourage participation but should also still rely on traditional methods (TV, newspaper, and radio). Additionally, the Study Area is indicative of an older demographic and many include families with children. Although, two of the tapestry segments indicate usually having no children, they still represent larger household sizes. The activities listed for each tapestry segment are example popular activities and should be examined along with MPI data, local trends, and national participation data to help guide Valparaiso's programmatic and service provision schedule.

2.17 BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT

The consulting team, in collaboration with Valparaiso Parks and Recreation, identified operating metrics to benchmark against comparable park and recreation systems. The benchmark agencies selected for analysis included jurisdictions with geographic and demographic characteristics similar to the City of Valparaiso, as well as departments that have achieved CAPRA accreditation and/or won the NRPA Gold Medal Award recently. This analysis aims to provide a direct comparison of peer agencies through a methodology of statistics and ratios to deliver objective information that is relevant and accurate.

2.17.1 METHODOLOGY

Information for benchmark agencies was sourced internally from each department. The information sought was a combination of operating metrics derived from demographic characteristics, budget figures, staffing levels, and inventories. In some instances, the information was not tracked or not available. The attributes considered for selection of comparable agencies included: regional location, population size and density, and CAPRA accreditation. It must be noted that the benchmark analysis is only an indicator based on the information provided.

In order to provide a more effective analysis, this report also reveals the median values for certain key performance indicators from the National Recreation and Parks Association's PRORAGIS database. This database collects and analyzes information from parks and recreation agencies nationwide and can be utilized as a tool for comparing parks, facilities, and operations. Throughout this benchmark report, the analysis is supplemented with key performance metrics from PRORAGIS for agencies serving 20,000 to 49,999 residents, as the population of Valparaiso fits into this range. The table below reveals the selected benchmark agencies and arranges them by the population density of each jurisdiction served.

Agency	State	Population	Jurisdiction Size (Sq. Mi.)	Population per Sq. Mi.	NRPA Gold Medal Winner	CAPRA Accredited (Year)
Bloomington	IN	84,067	23.16	3,630	2007	Yes (2001)
Westerville	OH	38,384	12.47	3,078	2013 / 2007 / 2001	Yes (2005)
Valparaiso	IN	32,626	15.53	2,101		No
Carmel Clay	IN	88,713	47.46	1,869	2014	Yes (2014)
Franklin	TN	72,639	41.23	1,762		No
Columbus	IN	46,690	27.50	1,698	1995	No

Figure 45-General Benchmark Comparison

Due to difference in how each system collects, maintains and reports data, variances exist. These variations have an impact on the per capita and percentage allocations within the budget, and the overall comparison must be viewed with this in mind. The benchmark data collection for all systems was complete as of September 2016. While it is possible that there may have been changes or updates to the data provided, in order to ensure consistency in data collection, the original figures obtained at that time were utilized for this benchmark analysis.

The goal was to evaluate how Valparaiso Parks and Recreation is positioned among peer agencies as it applies to efficiency and effectiveness practices. The benchmark assessment is organized into specific categories in order to obtain data that offers an encompassing view of each system's operating metrics in comparison to Valparaiso.

2.17.2 COMPARISONS

SYSTEM ACREAGE

This section provides a general overview of park acreage for each benchmark agency. The table below details the total acreage for each system then assesses the acreage per 1,000 residents for each.

Park acreages among benchmark agencies span a wide range, from 553 to 2,343 acres. Bloomington is a clear outlier in terms of managed acreage, as all other benchmark agencies manage around 550-700 total acres. Comparing the total acreage to each jurisdiction's population, Valparaiso ranks second highest among peer agencies, with 21.72 acres per 1,000 residents. According to the NRPA's PRORAGIS database, Valparaiso's level of service is well above the national median for similar sized agencies, which is 9.67 park acres per 1,000 residents.

Agency	Population	Total Acres Owned or Managed	Total Developed Acres	Percentage of Developed Acres	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents
Bloomington	84,067	2,343	2,052	88%	27.88
Valparaiso	32,626	709	556	78%	21.72
Westerville	38,384	596	390	65%	15.53
Columbus	46,690	559	478	86%	11.96
Franklin	72,639	707	704	100%	9.73
Carmel Clay	88,713	553	178	32%	6.23
PRORAGIS Median - Agencies Serving 20,000-49,999 Residents					*9.67*

Figure 46-System Acreage Comparison

TRAIL MILES

This section compares the total trail miles managed by each agency. These totals are further dissected to identify the current level of service for trail miles per 1,000 residents.

Agencies participating in the benchmark study offer an average of 25 total trail miles, while Westerville serves as an outlier with over 45 miles of trails available for its residents. Valparaiso ranks last in the benchmark study in total trail miles but towards the top in terms of trail miles per 1,000 residents. Collectively, the benchmark agencies are reporting adequate levels of service for trails, as best practice agencies nationwide usually offer somewhere between 0.25 – 0.5 miles of trail per 1,000 residents.

Agency	Population	Total Trail Miles	Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents
Westerville	38,384	47.8	1.25
Columbus	46,690	21.0	0.45
Valparaiso	32,626	13.5	0.41
Bloomington	84,067	30.7	0.37
Carmel Clay	88,713	21.7	0.24
Franklin	72,639	16.0	0.22
Best Practice Agencies			*0.4*

Figure 47-Trail Mileage Comparison

BUDGET ANALYSIS

This section provides a general overview of the key budget items, and analyzes operational expenditures, earned income, cost recovery levels, and capital spending for each agency. Non-tax revenues, operating expenses, and capital funding are compared to the population of each jurisdiction to determine the per capita amounts. Dividing total non-tax revenue by total operating expense arrives at the operational cost recovery. Cost recovery is a critical performance indicator that measures how well each department's revenue generation covers the total cost of operations.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The table below lists agencies in descending order based on operating expenditures and provides an overview of operational expenses, earned revenues, capital dollars, and marketing budgets for each. Expense and income figures represent actual totals from fiscal year 2015, while capital figures reflect each agency's 3-year average capital budget. It should be noted, that Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department has received a series of major capital gifts which elevates the capital expenditures to be closer with the benchmark agencies. The annual capital campaign contributions were isolated from the traditional capital budget due to the fact that these funds are tied to specific capital projects. The marketing budgets reflect the most recent year for each agency.

While Valparaiso's earned income and operational expenditures rank near the bottom of the study, the department does report strong capital funding, due largely in part to its heightened capital campaign contributions. When combining the average capital budget and the annual campaign contribution, Valparaiso is receiving capital dollars comparable to two recent recipients of the NRPA's Gold Medal Award (Carmel Clay and Westerville). This level of capital funding is promising, as a strong investment in the future of the department should allow the opportunity to expand the operational budget and enhance revenue generation; however, it will be imperative to compliment any future expansion of the system with adequate resources and staffing levels. Currently, Valparaiso's marketing efforts are on the lower end of its peers, which may suggest that the Department could be more effective in communicating offerings if additional resources can be dedicated to marketing. From a marketing standpoint, there is a correlation between the top three budgets in the benchmark and these agencies being recipients of the NRPA Gold Medal Award within the last 10 years.

Agency	Total Operating Expense	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Average Capital Budget (3 years)	Marketing Budget
Carmel Clay	$ 11,377,030	$ 9,652,979	$ 2,984,777	$ 441,130
Westerville	$ 10,879,160	$ 4,015,000	$ 3,216,000	$ 155,000
Bloomington	$ 8,399,342	$ 2,135,168	$ -	$ 149,550
Columbus	$ 6,749,734	$ 2,941,453	$ 433,333	$ 93,514
Valparaiso	$ 4,161,541	$ 1,791,568	$ 187,000	$ 75,000
Franklin	$ 3,239,260	$ -	$ 26,000	$ 75,815

Figure 48-Financial Comparison

OPERATIONAL EXPENSE PER CAPITA

In comparing the total annual expenditures to each jurisdiction's population, it can be determined how much each department is spending on a per resident basis. Valparaiso represents the benchmark median, as it spends approximately $128 per resident on operations. Compared to the NRPA database, Valparaiso spends above the national median of $86 per resident for similar sized agencies.

Agency	Population	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Resident
Westerville	38,384	$ 10,879,160	$ 283
Columbus	46,690	$ 6,749,734	$ 145
Carmel Clay	88,713	$ 11,377,030	$ 128
Valparaiso	32,626	$ 4,161,541	$ 128
Bloomington	84,067	$ 8,399,342	$ 100
Franklin	72,639	$ 3,239,260	$ 45
PRORAGIS Median - Agencies Serving 20,000-49,999 Residents			$ 86

Figure 49-Operating Expense per Resident Comparison

REVENUE PER CAPITA

The table below illustrates a strong contrast in non-tax revenue generation among benchmark agencies, as revenue per capita figures range from $0-$109. Valparaiso falls just below the benchmark median for both revenue per capita, with approximately $55 in revenue generation per resident. However, according to the NRPA database, Valparaiso is more than double the median revenue per capita nationwide for similar sized jurisdictions.

Agency	Population	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Revenue per Resident
Carmel Clay	88,713	$ 9,652,979	$ 109
Westerville	38,384	$ 4,015,000	$ 105
Columbus	46,690	$ 2,941,453	$ 63
Valparaiso	32,626	$ 1,791,568	$ 55
Bloomington	84,067	$ 2,135,168	$ 25
Franklin	72,639	$ -	$ -
PRORAGIS Median - Agencies Serving 20,000-49,999 Residents			$ 21

Figure 50-Revenue per Resident Comparison

OPERATIONAL COST RECOVERY

As mentioned previously, operational cost recovery is a key performance indicator for parks and recreation agencies that measures how well revenue generation supports everyday operations. In theory, the higher the percentage of cost recovery, the more sustainable the agency, due to less reliance on tax dollars for support. Carmel Clay, a recent winner of the Gold Medal Award from the NRPA, is leading all benchmark agencies with 85% cost recovery, which can be attributed to the profitability of its Monon Community Center and Extended School Enrichment Program. Valparaiso is currently recovering around 43% of its operational costs from non-tax revenues, which ranks toward the top of the study. In addition, Valparaiso is also well above the NRPA median for similar sized agencies, which is reports a 30% cost recovery rate.

Agency	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Total Operating Expense	Operational Cost Recovery
Carmel Clay	$ 9,652,979	$ 11,377,030	85%
Columbus	$ 2,941,453	$ 6,749,734	44%
Valparaiso	$ 1,791,568	$ 4,161,541	43%
Westerville	$ 4,015,000	$ 10,879,160	37%
Bloomington	$ 2,135,168	$ 8,399,342	25%
Franklin	$ -	$ 3,239,260	0%
PRORAGIS Median - Agencies Serving 20,000-49,999 Residents			*30%*

Figure 51-Operational Cost Recovery Comparison

OPERATING COST PER ACRE

This category assesses the cost to maintain each park system, on a per acre basis. This key performance indicator is obtained by taking the operational budget and dividing it by the amount of total acres for each agency. When comparing the operating cost per acre, Valparaiso is below the benchmark median, spending $5,873 to operate each acre, annually. Valparaiso is also well below the median for similar sized agencies reporting to the NRPA database, which is $7,441 of operating expense per acre.

Agency	Total Acres	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Acre
Carmel Clay	553	$ 11,377,030	$ 20,580
Westerville	596	$ 10,879,160	$ 18,254
Columbus	559	$ 6,749,734	$ 12,084
Valparaiso	709	$ 4,161,541	$ 5,873
Franklin	707	$ 3,239,260	$ 4,584
Bloomington	2,343	$ 8,399,342	$ 3,584
PRORAGIS Median - Agencies Serving 20,000-49,999 Residents			*$ 7,441*

Figure 52-Operating Expense per Acre Comparison

2.17.3 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS

This section compares staffing levels for each system by comparing full-time equivalents (FTEs) to total population. Total FTEs is calculated by summing all the hours worked by departmental staff and dividing total hours worked by 2,080, which is the equivalent to the annual hours one full-time employee is paid for. As a key metric, FTEs per 10,000 residents provides an understanding of how well each agency is equipped, from a human resources standpoint, to provide its services. Valparaiso is above the benchmark median, with 16.35 FTEs per 10,000 residents. This level of staffing is more than double the national median of 8.1 FTEs per 10,000 residents for similar sized agencies.

Agency	Population	Total FTEs	FTEs per 10,000 Residents
Westerville	38,384	107	27.88
Carmel Clay	88,713	169	19.08
Valparaiso	32,626	53	16.35
Columbus	46,690	57	12.21
Bloomington	84,067	52	6.19
Franklin	72,639	40	5.51
PRORAGIS Median - Agencies Serving 20,000-49,999 Residents			*8.1*

Figure 53-Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Comparison

2.17.4 PROGRAM PARTICIPATION PER CAPITA

By comparing the total program participations to each jurisdiction's population, we can measure how effective each agency is in engaging residents in program offerings. As evidenced in the table below, there is a stark contrast between the top and bottom half of the study for participations per resident. At a rate of 6.48 participations per resident, Valparaiso represents one of the more active user bases among benchmark communities.

Agency	Population	Total Program Participations	Participations per Resident
Carmel Clay	88,713	677,571	7.64
Bloomington	84,067	554,011	6.59
Valparaiso	32,626	211,308	6.48
Westerville	38,384	13,276	0.35
Franklin	72,639	18,281	0.25
Columbus	46,690	8,694	0.19

Figure 54-Program Participations Comparison

2.17.5 LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR BALLFIELDS AND COURTS

This portion of the benchmark study establishes and compares the level of service for key amenities within each benchmark community. The total count for each amenity is compared to the population for each jurisdiction to arrive at the current level of service, in terms of total residents served per field or court. Analyzing level of service for amenities has an inverse effect, in that the lower the number for population served per site, the better the level of service provided to the user.

DIAMOND BALLFIELDS

The table below describes the total number of youth and adult baseball/softball diamonds, then calculates the total number of residents served by each field. Valparaiso's level of service for ballfields ranks second among peer agencies, with 2,330 residents served per field.

	Population	Total Diamond Fields	Population Served per Diamond
Westerville	38,384	27	1,422
Valparaiso	32,626	14	2,330
Columbus	46,690	19	2,457
Franklin	72,639	19	3,823
Bloomington	84,067	16	5,254
Carmel Clay	88,713	0	-

Figure 55-Diamond Fields Comparison

BASKETBALL COURTS

Based on the data below, Valparaiso is currently providing the second best level of service for basketball courts, with each court serving 5,438 residents. Valparaiso's elevated level of service for basketball courts is only outpaced Bloomington, which is expected considering it is a university town that is very focused on basketball.

	Population	Basketball Courts	Population Served per Court
Bloomington	84,067	20	4,203
Valparaiso	32,626	5	6,525
Westerville	38,384	1	38,384
Carmel Clay	88,713	2	44,357
Franklin	72,639	1	72,639
Columbus	46,690	0	-

Figure 56-Baketball Courts Comparison

RECTANGLE FIELDS

Analyzing level of service for rectangular fields for each agency reveals Valparaiso is in the top half of the study, with 3,625 residents served by each field. Rectangular field inventories included full-size and practice fields for soccer, football, rugby, lacrosse, and multi-purpose use.

	Population	Rectangle Fields	Population Served per Field
Columbus	46,690	40	1,167
Westerville	38,384	25	1,535
Valparaiso	32,626	9	3,625
Bloomington	84,067	14	6,005
Franklin	72,639	6	12,107
Carmel Clay	88,713	2	44,357

Figure 57-Rectangle Fields Comparison

TENNIS COURTS

Valparaiso is one of only three benchmark agencies that currently offer tennis courts; however, among those providing courts, Valparaiso has the lowest level of service, with 32,626 people served per tennis court. It will be important for Valparaiso to gauge the community interest for tennis courts and identify how well it is meeting the demand for tennis courts.

	Population	Tennis Courts	Population Served per Court
Bloomington	84,067	16	5,254
Franklin	72,639	8	9,080
Valparaiso	32,626	1	32,626
Carmel Clay	88,713	0	-
Westerville	38,384	0	-
Columbus	46,690	0	-

Figure 58-Tennis Courts Comparison

CHAPTER THREE – COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

3.1 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The consultant team conducted stakeholder focus groups and interviews over a two day period in April 2016. Stakeholder focus groups and interviews provide a foundation for identifying department issues and key themes along with understanding question topics that would be beneficial for the statistically-valid community survey. The consultant team developed a facilitation guide that included a series of questions that spurred conversation. Follow up questions were asked as appropriate. Invited stakeholders included:

- Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department staff
- Community business leaders
- Area recreation program and service providers
- Valparaiso Parks Board and Foundation members
- Valparaiso students
- City officials

Approximately 160 people were involved during the interview and focus group process. The following key takeaways emerged from the various interest groups spoken to during the consultant visit.

3.1.1 KEY TAKEAWAYS

IDENTIFIED SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS
1) Need to update neighborhood parks
2) Parking and connectivity may be hindrances to park use
3) Need for dedicated funding/support for operations and maintenance
4) How to manage public expectations with the creation of the Central Park Plaza and how the department will be managing the current park inventory
5) Need for equipment replacement schedule
6) Increased access to school facilities/amenities

POPULATION SEGMENTS THAT COULD BE BETTER SERVED
7) More activities for middle school to high school age group
8) More integration with different senior segments (active vs. non-active)

INCREASING DEPARTMENT AWARENESS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY
9) Increase visibility and communication with local school system and Valparaiso University
10) Centralized events calendar
11) Managing public expectations regarding new facilities and updating existing infrastructure

WAYS TO IMPROVE/INCREASE VALPARAISO'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
12) Diverse mixture of activities in terms of pricing structure and seasonality
13) Update facility infrastructure
14) Seek national partnerships in addition to local

MISSING FACILITIES AND AMENITIES WITHIN VALPARAISO
15) Outdoor pool
16) Multi-generational center
17) Skate park

18) Sports facilities/fields
19) Multi-use fields
20) Additional ice
21) Trail system expansion

MISSING PROGRAMS/SERVICES WITHIN VALPARAISO
22) More sport activities
23) Adventure/outdoor recreation

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES/CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPARTMENT
24) Ensuring Valparaiso has 4-season activities
25) More operations and maintenance focus including dedicated funding
26) Maximizing connectivity throughout the system
27) Establishing short- and long-term department priorities
28) Catering to a changing demographic
29) Preparing for the future department in terms of leadership, staff, and partnerships

MOST IMPORTANT ACTIONS TO ACCOMPLISH OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS
30) Sustained, dedicated funding source
31) Emphasis on meeting the community's needs
32) Multi-generational center and pool space
33) Revitalization plan for existing infrastructure
34) Future, smart growth into areas that are currently underserved in terms of park space and pathways/greenways
35) Expansion into the Township
36) Increased park access including parking
37) Multi-use and functional programmable spaces to meet future trend demands
38) Formalized partnership agreements

PRIORITY FOR SENIOR SERVICES
39) Moving away from the "Senior Center" model towards a multi-generational center
40) Transitioning from the Banta building
41) Addressing the different senior age segments with commensurate programming spaces and activities (there is a wide range of "senior" ages and abilities)

POTENTIAL REVENUE SOURCES
42) Seek a Food & Beverage tax as a potential dedicated funding source
43) Explore a potential Township model such as Carmel-Clay but streamline management/oversight
44) Re-examine user fees and program pricing structure
45) Explore national sponsorships and donations as well as local

FINAL THOUGHTS
46) The department needs to continue striving to meet community needs and balance that with new and upcoming trends
47) The department needs to understand what the community is willing to pay and what mechanism(s) they are willing to support
48) Ensuring technology and business practices are staying up-to-date

The following key takeaways are from age-specific focus groups with Valparaiso University students along with 8th grade students. The key takeaways represent these two groups' emerging themes.

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

49) VU students lack awareness of the parks system
50) There is a desire for activities more so than amenities (i.e., outdoor recreation, special events)
51) There is an opportunity to engage with Greek Life for programming and volunteering opportunities

8TH GRADE STUDENTS

52) Students expressed an interest in active activities more so than passive
53) Video gaming was not viewed as an activity of interest
54) Students are encouraged to seek volunteer opportunities which could benefit the park system
55) Students prefer face-to-face communication over technology/social media due to the quantity they are exposed to each day

3.2 FIRST PUBLIC FORUM

The Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department held an open forum on Wednesday, June 1st at Central Park Plaza. The forum began with a brief presentation from the consultant team inside the Indiana Beverage Activity Center. Following the presentation, participants were encouraged to participate in round table discussions and answer questions in the William E. Urschel Pavilion. Approximately 15 members of the public attended the first public forum.

The following notes were captured during the public forum. Three questions were asked of each participant:

1) What are the four most important park or facility features?

2) What are the four most important programs and services?

3) What are the top four unmet needs and/or amenities not currently provided by the department?

3.2.1 WHAT ARE THE FOUR MOST IMPORTANT PARK OR FACILITY FEATURES?

- Turf field for multi-sports
    - Soccer
    - Flag football
    - Lacrosse
- Central Park Plaza and having the splashpad
- Love the Urschel Pavilion for having the events
- Swimming
- Pathways connecting to services
- The number of parks is a great strength
- Pathways and sidewalks
- Pathways
- Bike racks in fun shapes (such as a bike, a vehicle, a coffee cup)
- Sidewalk/safe bike paths to various parks/attractions

3.2.2 WHAT ARE THE FOUR MOST IMPORTANT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES?

- Summer programs for kids
    - Accessible
    - Cost effective
- Keeping a variety of sports and activities available
- Bringing a variety of generations together…young/elderly
- Bike safety and pathways
- More organized youth sports
    - Flag football
    - Hockey
    - Volleyball
- Work with other services
    - YMCA
    - Boys & Girls Club
    - Housing opportunities
    - Opportunity Enterprise
- Provide local businesses with folding maps and wall maps of the parks
- Use the front lit signs on the V-line buses to show the park(s) the route goes to
- Mall directory at Central Park showing shops and restaurants to do business at
- Students all levels of economics having a reason to belong – a place to go
- What about parks to the south of 30? We now have a new super school – where could these kids go? Do not think there are economic means for kids to go anywhere. Many homeless or "abandoned" – left at home kids are well-to-do.
- Recreation

3.2.3 WHAT ARE THE TOP FOUR UNMET NEEDS AND/OR AMENITIES NOT CURRENTLY PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT?

- There are still areas that do not have sidewalks, are heavily residential, so there is a great need for trails, bike paths, and sidewalks.
- Pathways
- Full sheet of ice for hockey
- Fun social bike rides
    - Ice cream
    - cafes

- Cross town

- Picnic at parks

- A daycare facility that is along the lines of the field station – there is such a long waiting list for the field station

- Swimming facility

- Primitive or natural area walking trails – long or even short paths off sidewalks

- To my knowledge, there are no off-leash dog parks; I think this is an important community park for many community members

- Better tennis courts and lessons for kids and adults

- Park facility south of 30

- Better baseball/softball facilities

- Connect a multi-use path on Vale Calumet east to Silhavy

- Better city tennis courts

    o   Not enough for city residents when VU and VHS are in use

    o   We've lost several courts to removal for other use

- Summer mentoring program for kids like college mentors for kids

- Safety in biking our town is lacking; we aren't acclimated toward bikers like some cities

- Updating of neighborhood parks

- Some of our older parks need to be upgraded (Kirchhoff)

- Bette tennis courts and lessons for kids and adults

- Outdoor/indoor arts & crafts program (creativity)

- Activities such as BMX racing, wall climbing, zip-line

- Kids need a place to feel they belong

- Being able to get to the parks because not everyone has bikes so location can be important

- The "community" has become the baby-sitter

- Programs for middle schoolers

- Progressive and expanded services for senior citizens (Banta is not enough)

- Need to consider what we're going to do with senior citizen programming

- Have the city and parks work together on the V-line bus routes

- Community pool

- Cross country ski trails and equipment rental

- Lack of understanding about bus system and connectivity to parks; routes unclear

- Outdoor swimming pool and possibly pool tables indoors

- Purchase Pines Peak Ski Area for additional development and/or ski and sledding programs

- Lakewood is a huge asset that is underutilized and needs attention

- Transportation to events and activities (parents working)

- Weekly/monthly community bike ride

- Community pool

- Senior center

- Mountain biking

    o Trails

    o Jumps

    o Pump track

- Climbing wall (outdoor and indoor near downtown)

- Indoor water park/pool

- Mountain bike course (single track)

- Skate park/scooter park/BMX park

3.2.4 COMMENT CARD

- Need more natural areas (undeveloped) conserved as wildlife habitat without pathways, asphalt, recreational use, etc.

3.2.5 THEMES

1) Pathways/greenways and connectivity

2) Updating neighborhood parks

3) Multi-generational programmatic experiences

4) Outdoor recreation opportunities such as mountain biking, zip-lining, skateboarding, and winter sports (including an additional ice sheet)

5) Aquatic facility

6) Wayfinding throughout the system

    a. Bus route awareness

    b. Signage and kiosks for residents/non-residents to navigate business district and park system

7) Sports facilities

    a. Tennis

    b. Diamond fields

3.3 SECOND PUBLIC FORUM

The Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department held a second public forum on Tuesday, November 15th at the Forest Park Golf Course. The forum served as a penultimate event before creating the initial Master Plan draft document. The consultant team walked through a presentation that outlined the overall Master Plan direction along with the appropriate supporting research. During and after the presentation, the public was invited to ask questions and have a dialogue with the consultant team and staff. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the second public forum.

The following comments were captured during the public forum:

1) Ensure we don't raise fees to price out people at the "tipping point"
2) There is a huge need for outdoor aquatic areas for middle schools
3) The pathway on the West side is great and we can now bike into the City
4) We have to have an outdoor facility for people to move into the City and there will have to be fees involved to make it happen
5) We need to be mindful of risk management issues with bringing new facilities online
6) Outdoor recreation should include hunting as it would also help curb the deer population
7) The parks should do something with the property across from Ogden Gardens
8) Foundation Meadows would be a good area for an amphitheater
9) Kirchhoff would be a great place to develop for the school system and utilize the partnership
10) The Banta neighborhood would be a resource to use volunteers for the school park development
11) We need to ensure we have a sustainable system supported by tax payers, grant support, and collaborating with existing agencies
12) Ensure the Department knows what every other entity is doing in the community to focus priorities to avoid duplication and identify support areas
13) We should look at more mobility options within the City such as golf cart use, shuttle system, etc.
14) We are in an urban deer reduction zone and this is a serious problem if we do not address it; it will upset the ecologic balance within the parks ultimately
15) Our City heritage is great and we need to continue to preserve it; the City is doing a good job at it
16) We need Ultimate Frisbee opportunities

3.4 PUBLIC FORUM RESULTS INTEGRATION

The first public forum was used to gather information that helped support the statistically-valid community survey development that occurred during the summer. Additionally, the second public forum notes were utilized to "ground-truth" the overall direction of the Master Plan while also collecting any additional comments that could influence strategic recommendations for the final plan document.

3.5 FINAL PUBLIC FORUM

The final plan was presented at a public Park Board Meeting on February 28, 2017. The Meeting was the first meeting with a combined Valparaiso/Center Township Joint Park Board. No members of the public were present but there were 25 people who attended the meeting including the Mayor, City Administrator, media, staff, consultants, and park board members.

3.6 ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the community input process, PROS Consulting conducted an online survey for a better understanding of the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of the City of Valparaiso residents in relation to parks, facilities and recreation activities. The survey was administered online powered by SurveyMonkey and available to

the public. The survey went live on July 18th, 2016 and received a total of 111 responses through September 12th of 2016.

3.6.1 PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS USED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LISTED BELOW.

The following chart demonstrates the percentage of respondents who use the following facilities. Top park or facility used most by respondents is Central Park Plaza, Old Fairgrounds Park, Rogers-Lakewood Park, ValPLAYso, and Ogden Gardens. Least used park or facility is the Banta Senior Center, 200 East Park, Glenrose Park, and Berkley Park.
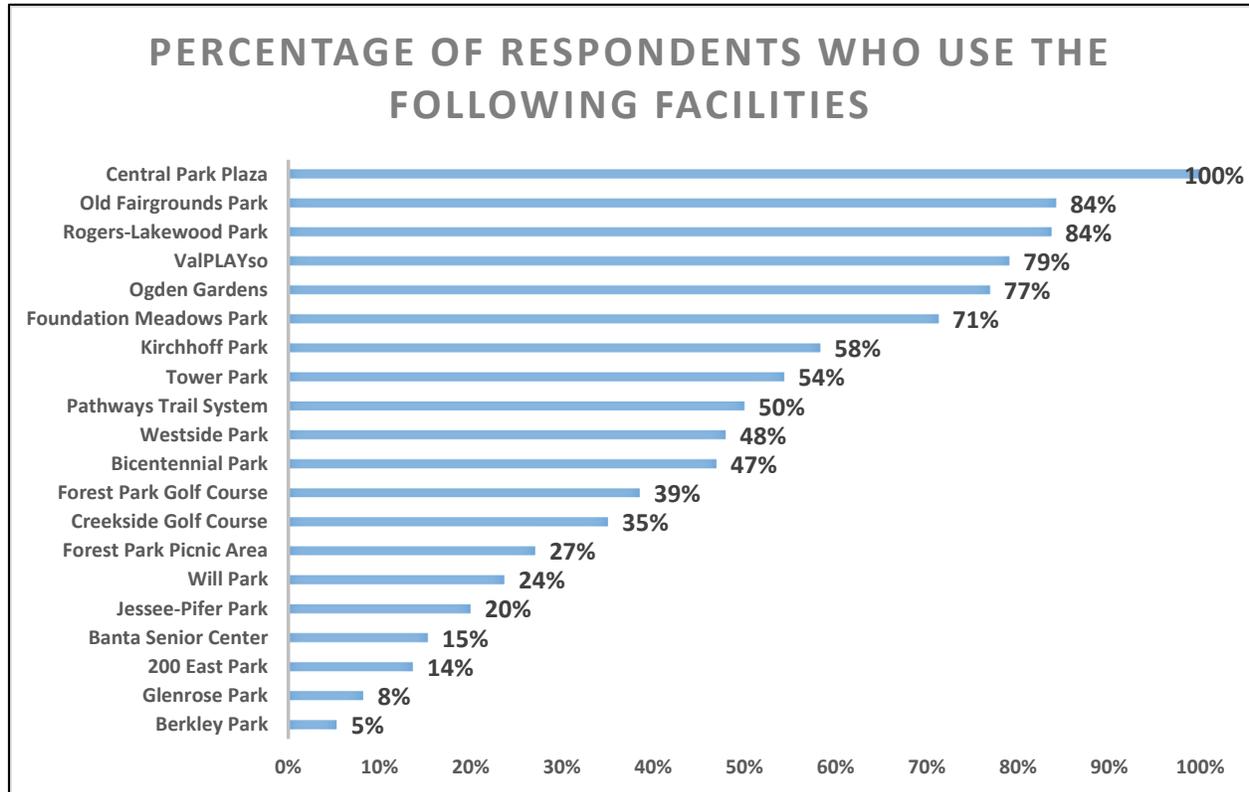
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO USE THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES

Facility	Percentage
Central Park Plaza	100%
Old Fairgrounds Park	84%
Rogers-Lakewood Park	84%
ValPLAYso	79%
Ogden Gardens	77%
Foundation Meadows Park	71%
Kirchhoff Park	58%
Tower Park	54%
Pathways Trail System	50%
Westside Park	48%
Bicentennial Park	47%
Forest Park Golf Course	39%
Creekside Golf Course	35%
Forest Park Picnic Area	27%
Will Park	24%
Jessee-Pifer Park	20%
Banta Senior Center	15%
200 East Park	14%
Glenrose Park	8%
Berkley Park	5%

Figure 59-Facility Usage

3.6.2 IF YES, PLEASE INDICATE HOW YOU WOULD RATE THE CONDITION OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY (EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR, OR POOR)

Respondents who indicated YES for a facility or park were asked to rate the condition of the facility or park. Over half of the facilities and parks had a 75% or better excellent or good rating. A few parks and facilities that may need improvements or maintenance presently are Tower Park, Will Park, Forest Park Picnic Area, Banta Senior Center, and Berkley Park.
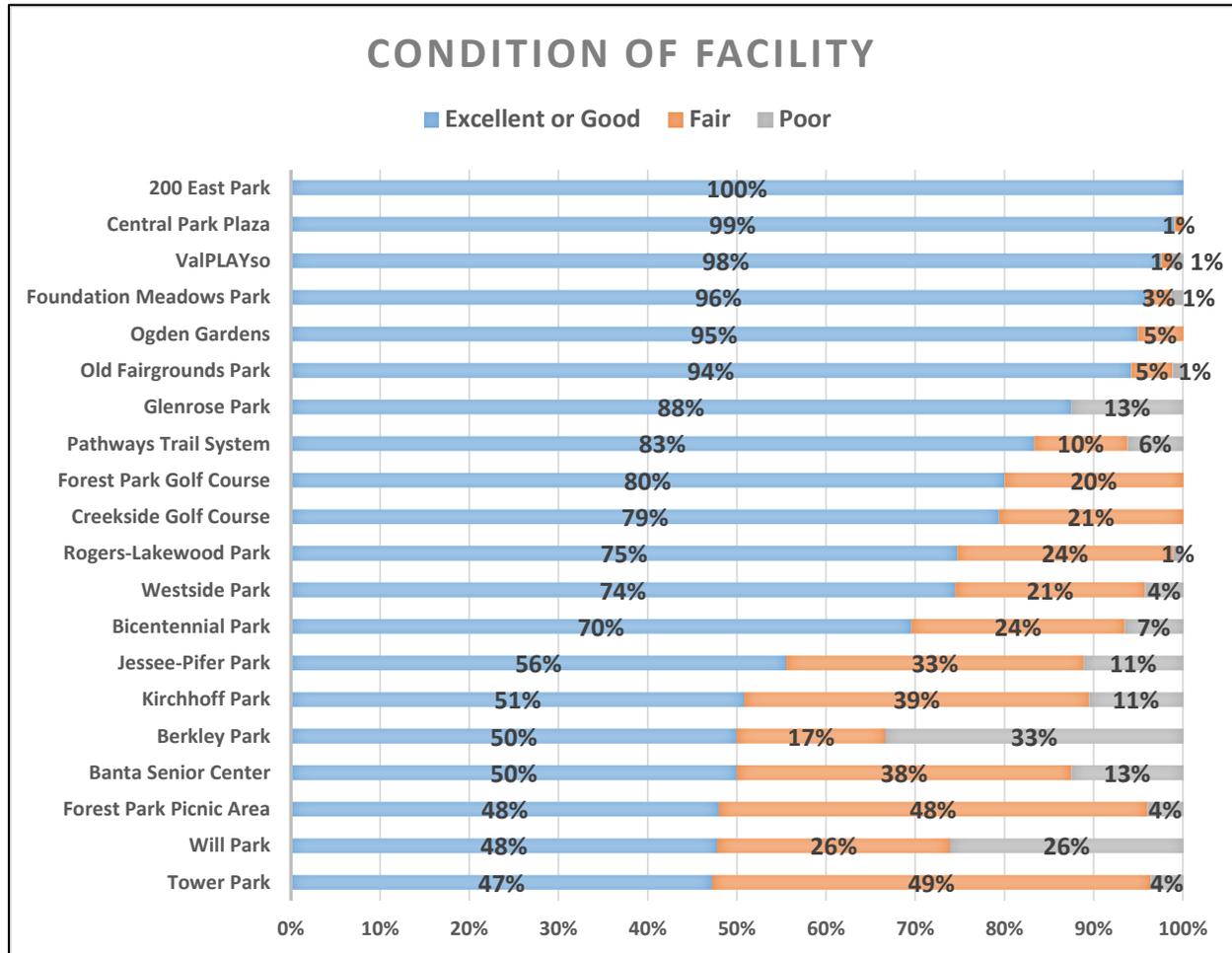
CONDITION OF FACILITY

Legend: ■ Excellent or Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Facility	Excellent or Good	Fair	Poor
200 East Park	100%		
Central Park Plaza	99%		1%
ValPLAYso	98%	1%	1%
Foundation Meadows Park	96%	3%	1%
Ogden Gardens	95%	5%	
Old Fairgrounds Park	94%	5%	1%
Glenrose Park	88%		13%
Pathways Trail System	83%	10%	6%
Forest Park Golf Course	80%	20%	
Creekside Golf Course	79%	21%	
Rogers-Lakewood Park	75%	24%	1%
Westside Park	74%	21%	4%
Bicentennial Park	70%	24%	7%
Jessee-Pifer Park	56%	33%	11%
Kirchhoff Park	51%	39%	11%
Berkley Park	50%	17%	33%
Banta Senior Center	50%	38%	13%
Forest Park Picnic Area	48%	48%	4%
Will Park	48%	26%	26%
Tower Park	47%	49%	4%

Figure 60-Facility Condition

3.6.3 WHICH THREE OF THE FACILITIES FROM THE LIST IN QUESTION #2 HAVE YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD USED THE MOST DURING THE PAST YEAR?

Top three selections for 1st choice for respondents were Central Park Plaza (33%), Rogers-Lakewood Park (9%) and ValPLAYso (9%).

Facility or Park Used Most	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Central Park Plaza	**32.43%**	**20.72%**	11.11%
Rogers-Lakewood Park	**9.01%**	**11.71%**	11.11%
ValPLAYso	**9.01%**	9.91%	**15.74%**
Old Fairgrounds Park	8.11%	**10.81%**	**12.04%**
Pathways Trail System	8.11%	6.31%	2.78%
Westside Park	6.31%	7.21%	4.63%
Foundation Meadows Park	4.50%	6.31%	8.33%
Forest Park Golf Course	3.60%	0.90%	0.93%
Creekside Golf Course	3.60%	4.50%	0.93%
Ogden Gardens	2.70%	6.31%	**12.96%**
Tower Park	2.70%	2.70%	5.56%
Banta Senior Center	1.80%	1.80%	0.93%
Kirchhoff Park	1.80%	2.70%	1.85%
Will Park	1.80%	0.00%	0.93%
Jessee-Pifer Park	1.80%	1.80%	0.93%
Bicentennial Park	0.90%	2.70%	5.56%
Forest Park Picnic Area	0.90%	1.80%	0.00%
200 East Park	0.90%	1.80%	0.93%
Glenrose Park	0.00%	0.90%	1.85%
Berkley Park	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%

Figure 61-Facilities Used the Most

3.6.4 HAVE YOU OR OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATED IN ANY RECREATION OR SPORTS PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents have participated in recreation programs provided by the Department.
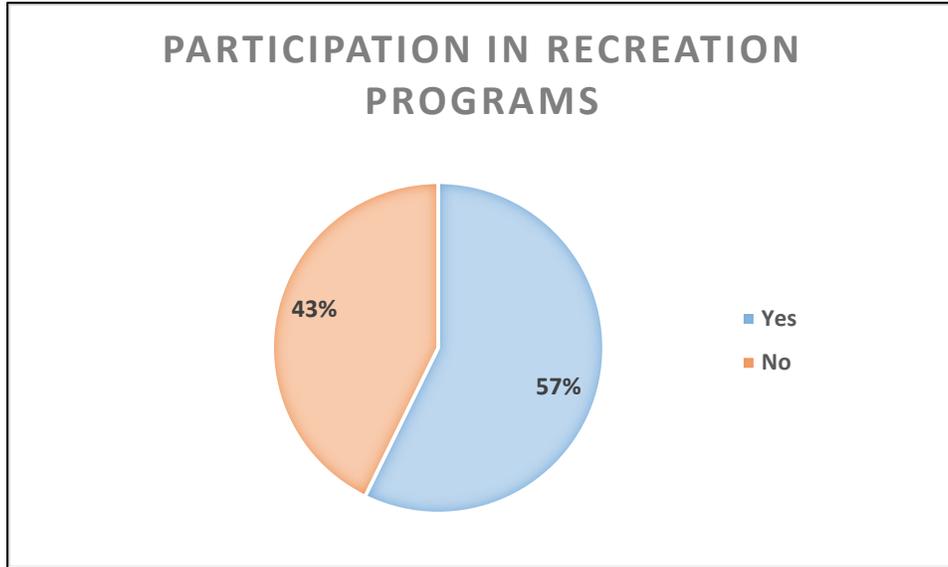

Figure 62-Percentage of Residents That Participate in a Recreation Program

3.6.5 APPROXIMATELY, HOW MANY DIFFERENT RECREATION OR SPORTS PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT HAVE YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATED IN OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents have participated in 1 to 3 programs. Twenty-two percent (22%) have participated in 4 to 6 programs and 5% have participated in 7 or more programs.
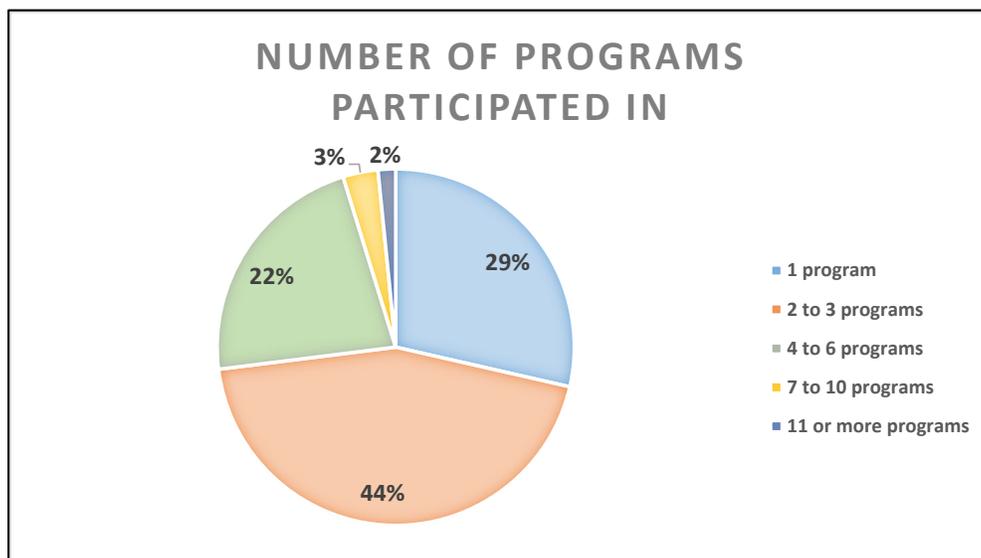
Figure 63-Number of Programs Participated in by Residents

3.6.6 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RECREATION OR SPORTS PROGRAMS THAT YOU AND MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE PARTICIPATED IN?

Ninety-seven percent (97%) have respondents rated the quality of recreation programs as either excellent or good. Only 3% of respondents rates the quality as fair.
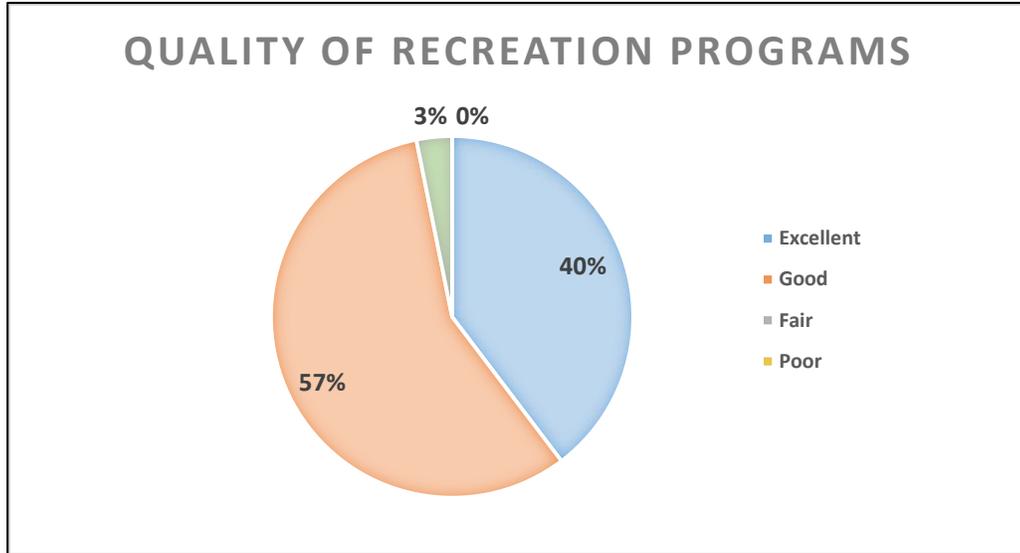

Figure 64-Recreation Program Quality

3.6.7 PLEASE SELECT ALL THE REASONS THAT PREVENT YOU OR OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD FROM USING PARKS, RECREATION AND SPORTS FACILITIES, OR PROGRAMS OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT MORE OFTEN.

None is the top reason from participants for not using programs (30%) followed by I do not know what is being offered (18%), program times are not convenient (17%) and other (17%). Other comments included:

- Too busy
- Few programs for children under 4
- Rundown shelters
- Facility hours are not convenient

Reason for not using facilities or programs	
None	30.10%
I do not know what is being offered	18.45%
Program times are not convenient	17.48%
Other (please specify)	17.48%
Facilities lack the right equipment	13.59%
Too far from our residence	13.59%
Program or facility not offered	11.65%
Use services of other agencies	10.68%
Facilities are not well maintained	8.74%
Fees are too high	8.74%
Lack of parking at facilities/parks	6.80%
Lack of quality programs	5.83%
Use facilities in other cities	2.91%
I do not know locations of facilities	2.91%
Poor customer service by staff	1.94%
Not accessible for people with disabilities	1.94%
Registration for programs is difficult	1.94%
Security is insufficient	0.97%
Class full	0.97%
Facility operating hours not convenient	0.97%

Figure 65-Reasons for Not Using Facilities or Programs

3.6.8 FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST, PLEASE SELECT ALL THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE USED FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS.

Top three organizations used for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities are City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department (65%), YMCA (59%), and School District facilities (43%).

Organizations Used	
City of Valparaiso Parks & Recreation Department	**64.71%**
YMCA	**58.82%**
School District facilities	**43.14%**
Porter County Parks	42.16%
Churches	33.33%
Valparaiso University facilities	29.41%
Private youth sports leagues	19.61%
Private clubs (tennis, health, fitness, golf)	16.67%
Boys and Girls Club	13.73%
Other cities' Sportplexes	12.75%
Homeowners associations/apartment complex	8.82%
None. Do not use any organizations.	3.92%
Other (please specify)	3.92%

Figure 66-Other Service Providers Used Within the Community

3.6.9 FOR EACH OF THE AGE GROUPS SHOWN BELOW, PLEASE INDICATE WHICH TWO ORGANIZATIONS LISTED IN QUESTION #6 YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD USE THE MOST FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

The City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department and YMCA were to top agencies used most across the board for each age group. Top three agencies are bolded in each category.

Agencies	Agency Used Most		Agency Used 2nd Most	
	Ages 17 and Under	Ages 18 and Older	Ages 17 and Under	Ages 18 and Older
School District facilities	7.79%	1.19%	14.29%	4.44%
Churches	5.19%	4.76%	7.14%	8.89%
Private youth sports leagues	**11.69%**	0.00%	0.00%	2.22%
YMCA	**22.08%**	**39.29%**	**19.05%**	**15.56%**
Valparaiso University facilities	0.00%	4.76%	2.38%	4.44%
Porter County parks	2.60%	2.38%	2.38%	**13.33%**
Other cities' Sportsplexes	1.30%	1.19%	4.76%	2.22%
Private clubs (tennis health, fitness, golf)	0.00%	3.57%	4.76%	6.67%
Boys and Girls Club	5.19%	1.19%	4.76%	0.00%
City of Valparaiso Parks & Recreation Department	**29.87%**	**28.57%**	**19.05%**	**22.22%**
Homeowners associations/apartment complex	0.00%	1.19%	0.00%	2.22%
None. Do not use any organizations	12.99%	**8.33%**	16.67%	**13.33%**
Other	1.30%	3.57%	4.76%	4.44%

Figure 67-Other Service Providers Used the Most

3.6.10 PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS A NEED FOR EACH OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LISTED BELOW.

Top five facility/amenity that respondents have a need for are connected walking and biking trails (88%), nature centers and trails (78%), greenspace and natural areas (77%), outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center (72%) and large community parks (71%). Top five responses that respondents do not have a need for are youth football fields (89%), skateboarding park (85%), adult softball fields (83%), senior center (82%), and indoor ice arena (76%).

Do you have a need for this facility	Yes	No
Connected walking and biking trails	⬆88.24%	⬇11.76%
Nature centers and trails	⬆78.05%	⬇21.95%
Greenspace and natural areas	⬆76.83%	⬇23.17%
Outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center	⬆71.60%	⬇28.40%
Large community parks	⬆70.89%	⬇29.11%
Indoor running/walking track	⬆70.13%	⬇29.87%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	⬆69.23%	⬇30.77%
Playground equipment	⬆63.41%	⬇36.59%
Small neighborhood parks	⬆63.29%	⬇36.71%
Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	➡60.76%	➡39.24%
Outdoor ice arena	➡56.79%	➡43.21%
Youth Soccer Fields	➡48.81%	➡51.19%
Indoor sports fields (baseball, soccer, etc.)	➡46.75%	➡53.25%
Outdoor tennis courts	➡42.50%	➡57.50%
Indoor lap lanes for exercise swimming	➡41.03%	➡58.97%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	➡38.16%	➡61.84%
Multi-generational community center	⬇35.06%	⬆64.94%
Youth baseball and softball fields	⬇34.57%	⬆65.43%
Outdoor basketball courts	⬇33.33%	⬆66.67%
Off-leash dog park	⬇30.77%	⬆69.23%
Spraygrounds	⬇30.67%	⬆69.33%
Disc golf	⬇24.68%	⬆75.32%
Indoor ice arena	⬇24.05%	⬆75.95%
Senior center	⬇17.95%	⬆82.05%
Adult softball fields	⬇16.67%	⬆83.33%
Skateboarding park	⬇15.38%	⬆84.62%
Youth football fields	⬇11.25%	⬆88.75%

Figure 68-Facility Need

3.6.11 IF YES, PLEASE RATE ALL THE FOLLOWING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES OF THIS TYPE IN VALPARAISO (INCLUDING FACILITIES NOT OFFERED BY VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION) ON A SCALE OF 5 TO 1, WHERE 5 MEANS "100% MEETS NEEDS" AND 1 MEANS "DOES NOT MEET NEEDS" OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD. 100% MET (FULLY MET) 75% MET 50% MET 25% MET 0% MET (NOT MET AT ALL).

For parks and recreation facilities that respondents indicated "yes" for, off-leash dog parks, outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center, indoor sports fields (baseball, soccer, etc.), and multi-generational community center had the highest unmet need (25% or less being met currently).
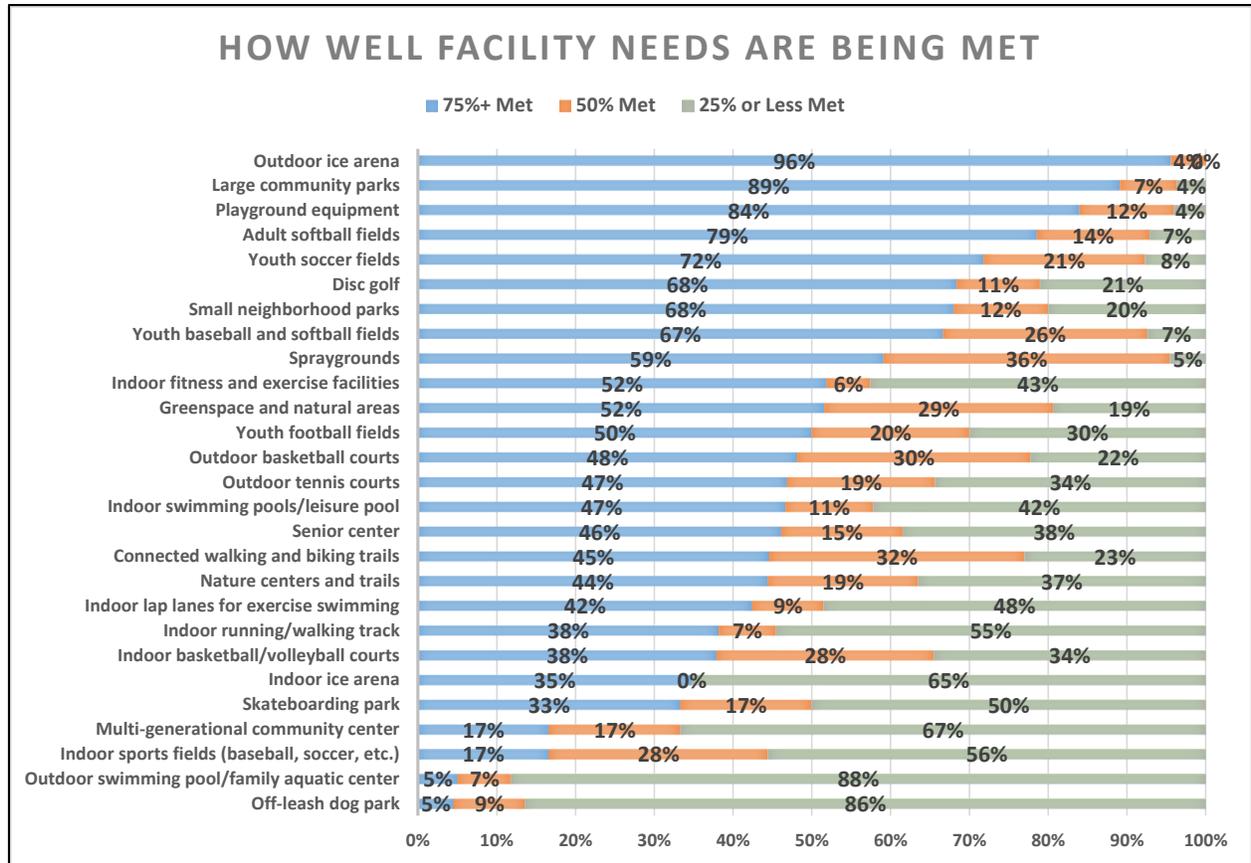
Figure 69-Degree Facility Needs Are Being Met Currently

3.6.12 WHICH FOUR FACILITIES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

Top three most important facilities and amenities for 1st choice selections are connected walking & biking trails (19%), outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center (17%) and greenspace/natural areas (8%).

Facility Importance	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Connected walking and biking trails	**19.10%**	**11.63%**	**9.64%**	6.49%
Outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center	**16.85%**	6.98%	8.43%	**11.69%**
Greenspace and natural areas	**7.87%**	1.16%	6.02%	5.19%
Youth baseball and softball fields	6.74%	2.33%	1.20%	1.30%
Youth soccer fields	5.62%	4.65%	2.41%	5.19%
Nature center and trails	5.62%	9.30%	**9.64%**	**12.99%**
Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	4.49%	**11.63%**	4.82%	3.90%
Small neighborhood parks	4.49%	4.65%	7.23%	**10.39%**
Indoor ice arena	3.37%	0.00%	2.41%	1.30%
Senior center	3.37%	3.49%	2.41%	0.00%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	3.37%	2.33%	8.43%	3.90%
Large community parks	3.37%	3.49%	2.41%	5.19%
Outdoor tennis courts	2.25%	2.33%	1.20%	3.90%
Adult softball fields	2.25%	0.00%	0.00%	1.30%
Playground equipment	2.25%	**11.63%**	8.43%	5.19%
Outdoor basketball courts	2.25%	2.33%	4.82%	1.30%
Indoor sports fields (baseball, soccer, etc.)	2.25%	2.33%	1.20%	3.90%
Off-leash dog park	1.12%	4.65%	3.61%	2.60%
Disc golf	1.12%	2.33%	0.00%	0.00%
Skateboarding park	1.12%	0.00%	0.00%	1.30%
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	1.12%	1.16%	1.20%	2.60%
Youth football fields	0.00%	1.16%	0.00%	0.00%
Outdoor ice arena	0.00%	0.00%	4.82%	1.30%
Indoor lap lanes for exercise swimming	0.00%	3.49%	2.41%	2.60%
Indoor running/walking track	0.00%	4.65%	2.41%	2.60%
Spraygrounds	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.60%
Multi-generational community center	0. 00%	2.33%	4.82%	1.30%

Figure 70-Facility Importance

3.6.13 PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS A NEED FOR EACH OF THE SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS LISTED BELOW.

Top five recreation programs that respondents have a need for are special events (43%), outdoor recreation/adventure programs (40%), adult fitness and wellness programs (39%), nature programs/environmental education (33%) and family programs (33%). Top five programs that respondents do not have a need for are programs for people with disabilities (84%), before and after school programs (58%), programs with your pets (53%), preschool programs (55%), and programs for teens (55%).

Do you have a need for this program?	Yes	No
Special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.)	43.33%	8.33%
Outdoor recreation/adventure programs	40.38%	15.38%
Adult fitness and wellness programs	38.18%	16.36%
Nature programs/environmental education	33.33%	23.53%
Family programs	32.65%	26.53%
Youth fitness and wellness programs	32.43%	45.95%
Youth sports programs	31.25%	29.17%
Adult enrichment programs	30.61%	32.65%
Reservations for special occasions	29.73%	45.95%
Golf lessons and leagues	27.78%	52.78%
Youth and adult sports tournaments	26.32%	50.00%
Senior programs	26.32%	52.63%
Youth art, dance, performing arts	26.19%	47.62%
City Fit Program	25.53%	40.43%
Tennis lessons and leagues	25.00%	55.56%
Adult sports programs	23.68%	52.63%
Youth summer camp programs	20.93%	48.84%
Adult art, dance, performing arts	18.60%	53.49%
Programs for teens	18.42%	55.26%
Preschool programs	17.50%	55.00%
Programs with your pets	17.50%	52.50%
Before and after school programs	15.00%	57.50%
Programs for people with disabilities	9.38%	84.38%

Figure 71-Program Need

3.6.14 WHICH FOUR PROGRAMS FROM THE LIST IN QUESTION #10 ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

Top three most important programs for 1st choice selections are before and after preschool programs (13%), youth sports programs (11%) and City Fit Program (10%).

Program Importance	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Preschool programs	12.50%	0.00%	1.56%	0.00%
Youth sports programs	11.11%	10.29%	4.69%	3.28%
City Fit Program	9.72%	1.47%	1.56%	3.28%
Before and after school programs	8.33%	4.41%	3.13%	1.64%
Youth summer camp programs	8.33%	5.88%	3.13%	1.64%
Special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.)	8.33%	7.35%	15.63%	18.03%
Adult fitness and wellness programs	6.94%	8.82%	10.94%	8.20%
Senior programs	6.94%	4.41%	3.13%	3.28%
Nature programs/environmental education	5.56%	4.41%	12.50%	6.56%
Outdoor recreation/adventure programs	5.56%	5.88%	6.25%	11.48%
Programs for teens	4.17%	8.82%	4.69%	0.00%
Tennis lessons and leagues	2.78%	5.88%	4.69%	1.64%
Golf lessons and leagues	2.78%	1.47%	1.56%	1.64%
Family programs	2.78%	5.88%	6.25%	8.20%
Youth and adult sports tournaments	1.39%	1.47%	1.56%	1.64%
Adult sports programs	1.39%	1.47%	0.00%	0.00%
Programs for people with disabilities	1.39%	1.47%	0.00%	0.00%
Youth fitness and wellness programs	0.00%	0.00%	3.13%	4.92%
Youth art, dance, performing arts	0.00%	7.35%	1.56%	3.28%
Adult art, dance, performing arts	0.00%	2.94%	6.25%	1.64%
Reservations for special occasions	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.64%
Adult enrichment programs	0.00%	10.29%	4.69%	8.20%
Programs with your pets	0.00%	0.00%	3.13%	9.84%

Figure 72-Program Importance

3.6.15 WHICH FOUR OF THE PROGRAMS FROM THE LIST IN QUESTION #10 DO YOU CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN MOST OFTEN AT CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FACILITIES?

Top three programs participants currently participate in most often are special events (24%), youth sports programs (19%) and youth summer camp programs (12%).

Programs Most Often Participated	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.)	23.53%	18.87%	24.39%	25.81%
Youth sports programs	19.12%	15.09%	4.88%	0.00%
Youth summer camp programs	11.76%	3.77%	0.00%	0.00%
City Fit Program	5.88%	3.77%	7.32%	0.00%
Adult fitness and wellness programs	5.88%	9.43%	0.00%	3.23%
Golf lessons and leagues	5.88%	3.77%	4.88%	3.23%
Adult enrichment programs	4.41%	3.77%	7.32%	3.23%
Outdoor recreation/adventure programs	4.41%	5.66%	9.76%	12.90%
Tennis lessons and leagues	2.94%	1.89%	7.32%	3.23%
Adult sports programs	2.94%	3.77%	4.88%	0.00%
Senior programs	2.94%	3.77%	0.00%	3.23%
Nature programs/environmental education	2.94%	3.77%	4.88%	16.13%
Family programs	2.94%	7.55%	7.32%	0.00%
Preschool programs	1.47%	3.77%	2.44%	3.23%
Youth and adult sports tournaments	1.47%	1.89%	2.44%	0.00%
Programs for people with disabilities	1.47%	0.00%	0.00%	3.23%
Before and after school programs	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.23%
Youth fitness and wellness programs	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.23%
Programs for teens	0.00%	0.00%	2.44%	3.23%
Youth art, dance, performing arts	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.23%
Adult art, dance, performing arts	0.00%	3.77%	4.88%	3.23%
Reservations for special occasions	0.00%	3.77%	4.88%	6.45%
Programs with your pets	0.00%	1.89%	0.00%	0.00%

Figure 73-Programs Most Participated In

3.6.16 AS PART OF THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS, THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT IS EXPLORING FUTURE PARK LAND ACQUISITION AND PATHWAYS/GREENWAYS DEVELOPMENT. WHAT AREAS OUTSIDE THE CITY LIMITS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERSERVED IN TERMS OF CURRENT PARK LAND AND/OR PATHWAYS/GREENWAYS AND COULD CONNECT TO THE REGIONAL SYSTEM? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Respondents were asked to select all areas that are underserved outside the City limits. Top two underserved areas outside City limits are South (south of US 30) and West (west of Froberg Road).
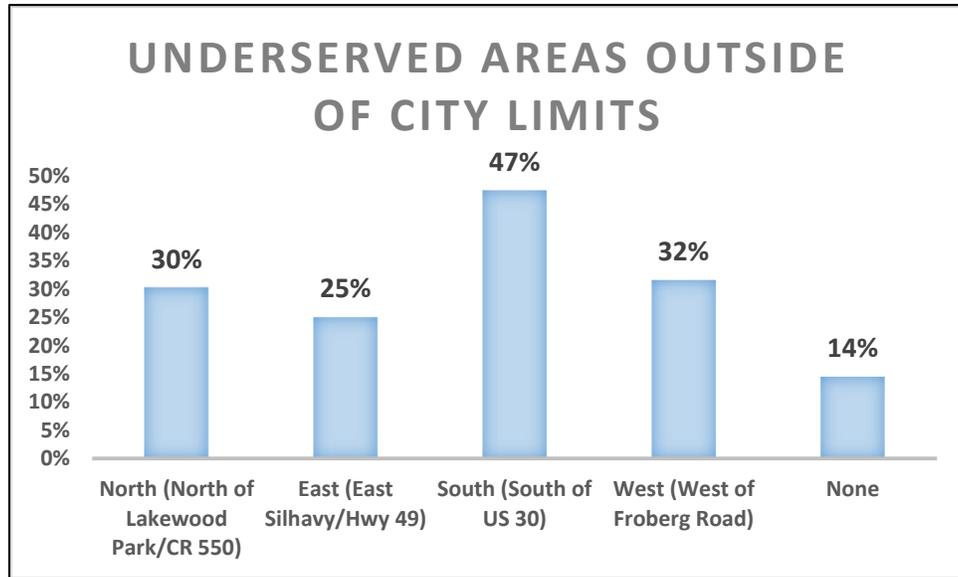
Figure 74-Areas Outside of City Limits Most Underserved

3.6.17 WHAT AREAS WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS ARE CURRENT UNDERSERVED IN TERMS OF CURRENT PARK LAND AND/OR PATHWAYS/GREENWAYS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Respondents were asked to select all areas that are underserved within the City limits. Top two underserved areas within City limits are South (40%) and West (26%).
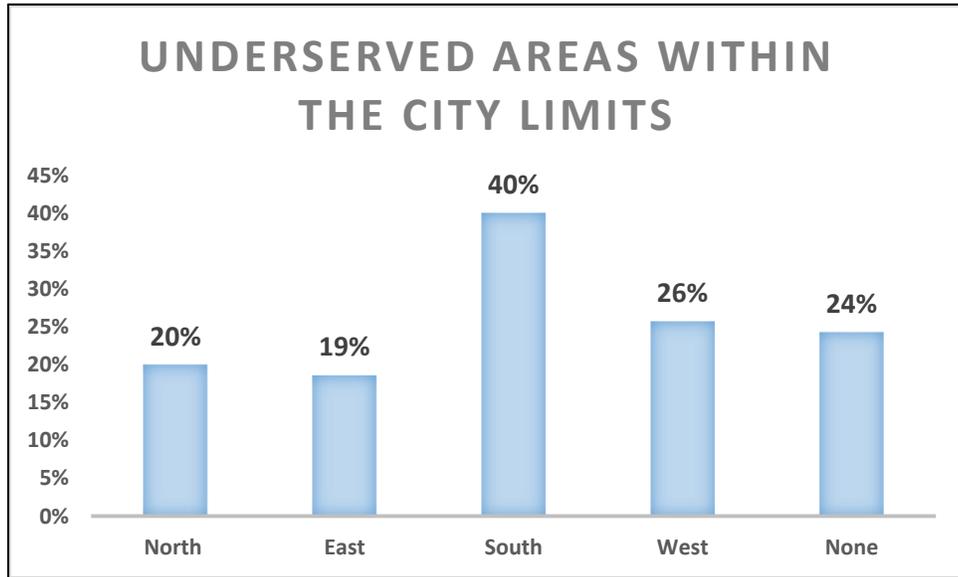
Figure 75-Areas within City Limits Most Underserved

3.6.18 THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT IS STUDYING THE POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING NEW PROGRAMMABLE SPACES. FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST, PLEASE SELECT ALL THE POTENTIAL PROGRAMMING SPACES YOU AND MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD WOULD USE THAT IS CURRENTLY NOT BEING FULFILLED BY THE CITY OR OTHERS IN VALPARAISO.

Top programming sources selected by respondents are outdoor pool (62%), walking and jogging track (50%), indoor pool (45%), and rock climbing/bouldering wall (41%).

Potential Programming Spaces	
Outdoor pool	62%
Walking and jogging track	50%
Indoor pool	45%
Rock climbing/bouldering wall	41%
Zip-line course	39%
Indoor workout areas	38%
Space for meetings, parties, banquets	33%
Sledding areas	32%
Exercise facility for adults 50 years/older	32%
Dog exercise area	28%
Space for teens	26%
Multi-court gymnasium/fieldhouse	26%
Outdoor multi-use fields	25%
Racquetball/handball/Pickleball courts	22%
Multi-generational community center	22%
Additional ice skating areas	20%
Child care area	16%
Other	16%
Skateboarding areas	12%
Diamond fields (baseball and softball)	12%
Preschool program space	8%

Figure 76-Most Desired Recreation Program Spaces

3.6.19 WHICH FOUR OF THE INDOOR/OUTDOOR SPACES FROM THE LIST IN QUESTION #15 WOULD YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD USE THE MOST OFTEN?

Top three indoor/outdoor spaces participants would use most often is an outdoor pool, walking and jogging track, and exercise facility.

Indoor/Outdoor Spaces Most Often Used	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Outdoor pool	**26.47%**	**15.15%**	5.08%	**10.00%**
Walking and jogging track	**23.53%**	9.09%	6.78%	2.00%
Exercise facility for adults 50 years/older	**7.35%**	**12.12%**	3.39%	6.00%
Indoor workout areas	5.88%	10.61%	6.78%	0.00%
Indoor pool	5.88%	**16.67%**	**8.47%**	6.00%
Rock climbing/bouldering wall	4.41%	4.55%	**11.86%**	4.00%
Diamond fields (baseball and softball)	4.41%	0.00%	1.69%	0.00%
Multi-generational community center	4.41%	0.00%	5.08%	4.00%
Additional ice skating area	2.94%	1.52%	1.69%	2.00%
Dog exercise area	2.94%	3.03%	3.39%	6.00%
Preschool program space	2.94%	1.52%	3.39%	2.00%
Racquetball/handball/Pickleball courts	2.94%	1.52%	3.39%	6.00%
Space for teens	1.47%	7.58%	3.39%	**10.00%**
Child care area	1.47%	0.00%	1.69%	4.00%
Multi-court gymnasium/field house	1.47%	4.55%	3.39%	**10.00%**
Space for meetings, parties, banquets	1.47%	3.03%	5.08%	8.00%
Skateboarding areas	0.00%	0.00%	1.69%	4.00%
Sledding areas	0.00%	3.03%	5.08%	4.00%
Outdoor multi-use fields	0.00%	1.52%	3.39%	6.00%
Zip-line course	0.00%	4.55%	**15.25%**	6.00%

Figure 77-Most Used Desired Program Spaces (Anticipated)

3.6.20 PLEASE SELECT ALL THE WAYS YOU LEARN ABOUT CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.

Majority of the respondents obtain their information by using the Parks and Recreation Website (74%), followed by the program guide (73%). Least effective information sources is television (0%), newspaper advertisements (4%) and radio (8%).

Information Sources	
Parks and Recreation Website	73.97%
Parks and Recreation program guide	72.60%
From friends and neighbors	43.84%
Parks Department e-mail bulletins	41.10%
Newspaper articles	35.62%
Flyers/posters at Parks/Rec. facilities	28.77%
Parks Department newsletters	27.40%
Conversations with Parks/Rec. staff	13.70%
Flyers distributed at school	10.96%
Radio	8.22%
Newspaper advertisements	4.11%
Cable access television	0.00%

Figure 78-Current Ways to Learn About the Department

3.6.21 HOW WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE $100 (BREAKOUT) FOR CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS, TRAILS, SPORTS, AND RECREATION FACILITIES? PLEASE SHOW HOW WOULD YOU ALLOCATE THE FUNDS AMONG THE CATEGORIES OF FUNDING LISTED BELOW IN SPECIFIC DOLLAR AMOUNTS? [PLEASE BE SURE YOUR TOTAL ADDS UP TO $100.]

Respondents were asked to allocate $100 for different projects. By averaging the numbers for all of the respondents, development of new facilities was the top choice followed by improvements/maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities and acquisition and development of pathways and greenways.

	Average Number
Development of new facilities (indoor/outdoor pool, multi-generation center, gyms, etc.)	$37
Improvements/maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities	$33
Acquisition and development of pathways and greenways (walking and biking trails)	$29
Acquisition of new park land and open space	$17
Construction of new sports fields (softball, soccer, baseball, etc.)	$13

Figure 79-Prioritization of $100

3.6.22 CITIES IN INDIANA ARE FUNDING PARKS WITH A DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCE SUCH AS SALES TAX, FOOD AND BEVERAGE TAX, DEVELOPER FEES, OR OTHER SPECIAL FEES. WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO SUPPORT THE CITY EXPLORING A DEDICATED FEE TO FUND PARKS FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS?

Respondents seem to be very willing or somewhat willing to support a dedicated fee to fund parks facilities and programs. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents were unsure and only 11% were not willing.
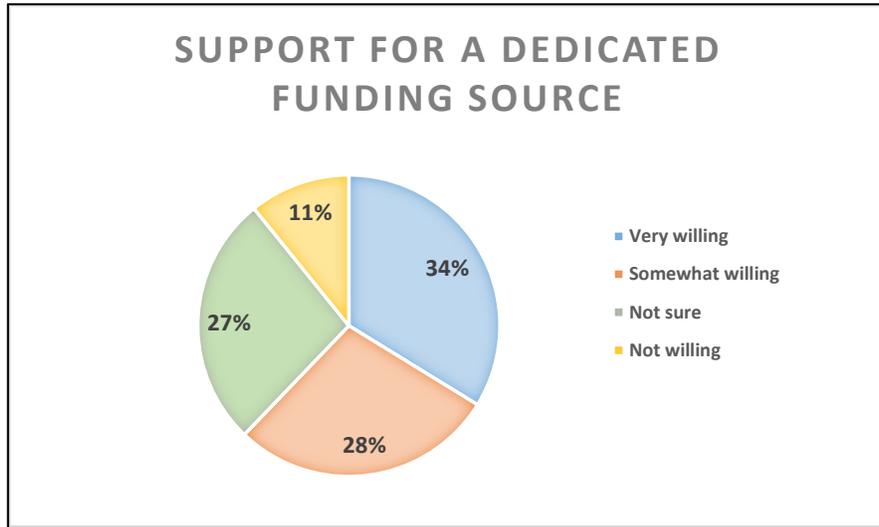
Figure 80-General Support for a Dedicated Funding Source

3.6.23 PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WHERE 5 MEANS "VERY SATISFIED" AND 1 MEANS "VERY DISSATISFIED", WITH THE OVERALL VALUE YOUR HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES FROM THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents are either very or somewhat satisfied with the overall value their households receives from the City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department. Only eight percent of respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied with the overall value.
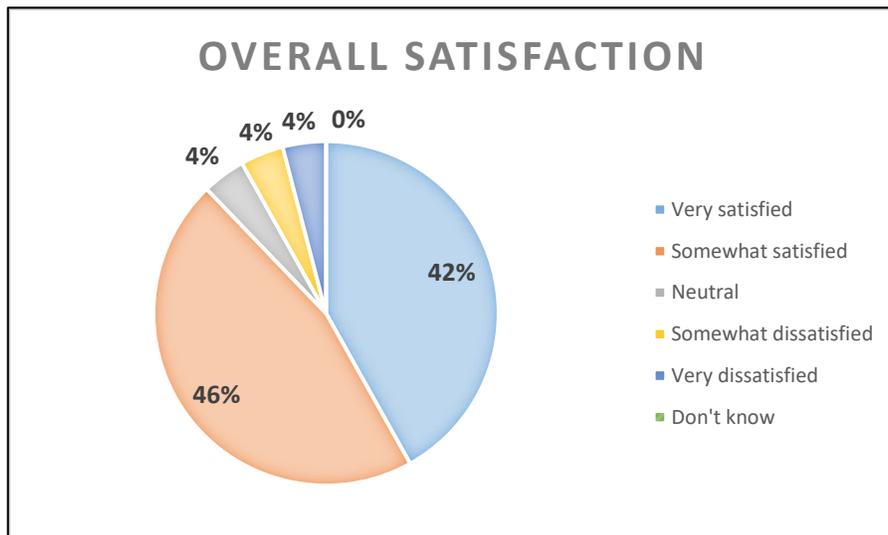
Figure 81-Overall Satisfaction with the Department

3.6.24 COUNTING YOURSELF, HOW MANY PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD ARE IN EACH AGE SEGMENT? IF AN AGE SEGMENT IS NOT APPLICABLE, PLEASE LEAVE BLANK.

Age Segment	1	2	3	4	5	6
Under Age 5	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 5-9	68.18%	22.73%	9.09%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 10-14	68.42%	31.58%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 15-19	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 20-24	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 25-34	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 35-44	27.59%	72.41%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 45-54	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 55-64	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 65-74	53.33%	46.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ages 75+	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Figure 82-Number of People within Household by Age Segment

3.6.25 WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?
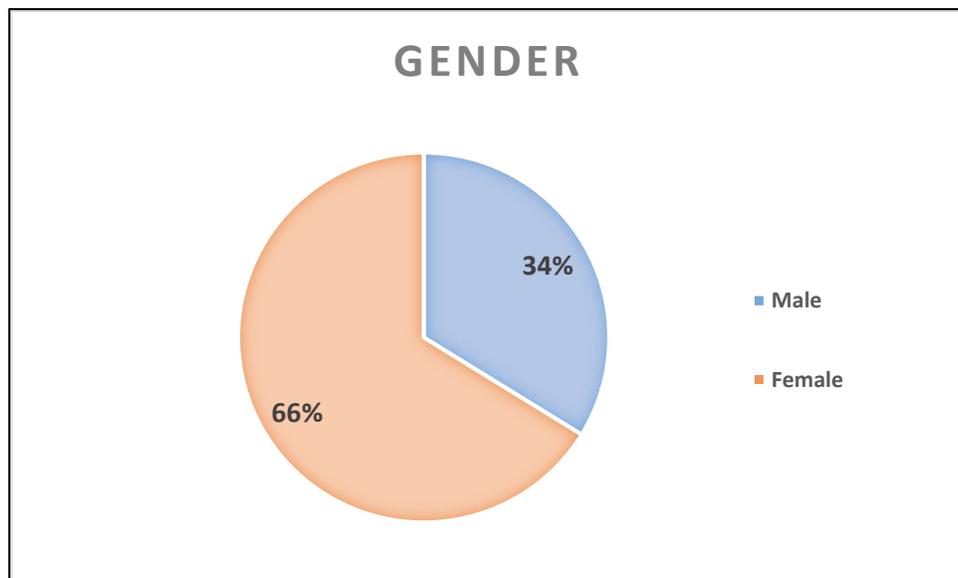
Figure 83-Survey Respondent Gender

3.6.26 DO YOU LIVE WITHIN THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT BOUNDARIES? (IF YOU OWN PROPERTY IN THE CITY OF VALPARAISO AND PAY CITY PROPERTY TAXES YOU ARE A RESIDENT.)
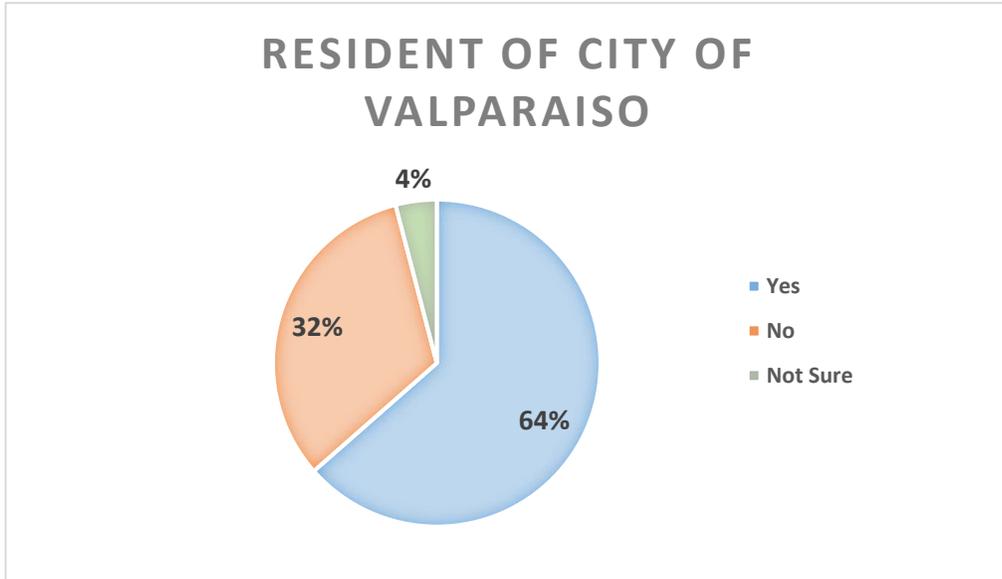
Figure 84-Survey Respondent Residency

3.6.27 ARE YOU A FULL-TIME STUDENT AT VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY?
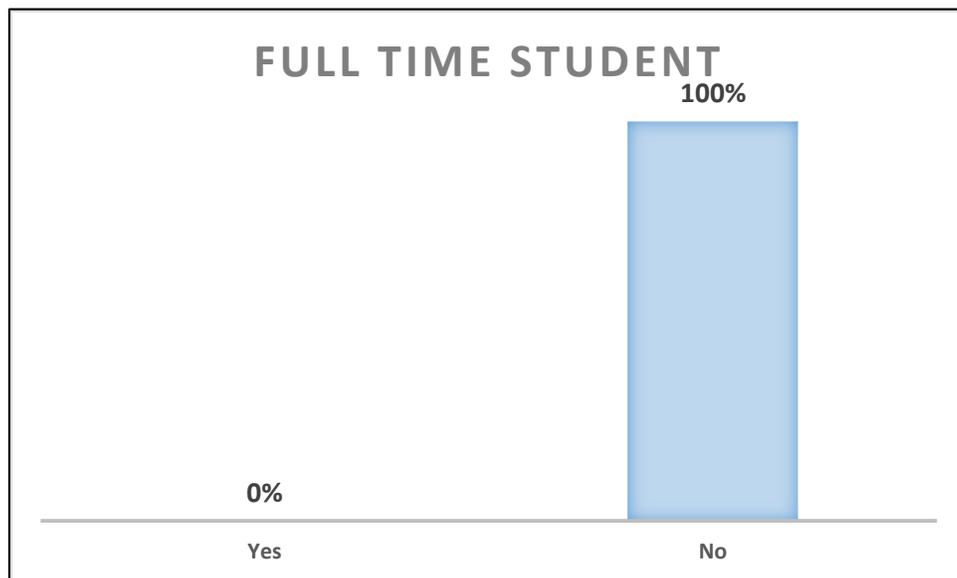
Figure 85-Survey Respondent Collegiate Status

3.6.28 WHAT IS YOUR HOUSEHOLD INCOME?
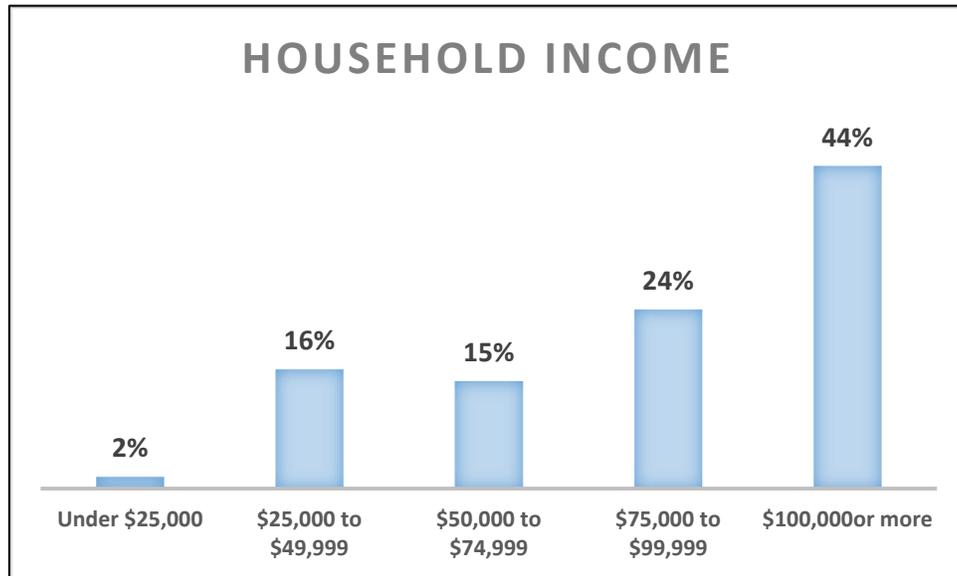
Figure 86-Survey Respondent Annual Household Income

3.6.29 PLEASE SHARE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS THAT COULD ASSIST THE CITY OF VALPARAISO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT IN IMPROVING PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE, OR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

- "More soccer facilities are needed

- improvement of parking at soccer facilities is needed

- An outdoor pool would be amazing"

- "Need park tennis courts!

- If possible, new pathways for bicycling should be separate from roadways. Riding bicycles on sidewalks (even the oversized ones) with frequent intersections with roads and driveways is very dangerous as turning motorists do not expect the cyclist on the sidewalk."

- Would be great to see some type of synergy between the YMCA and Golf.

- Add parking at Ogden Gardens.

- We need walking/bike paths on the south side of 30 that will connect us to downtown and the new schools.

- I think there should be a small neighborhood park in the central neighborhood. Currently kids have to cross the tracks to go to Tower Park. Downtown is great but there's no play equipment for all of the kids that live downtown.

- The Parks Department and its facilities and programs have the most potential for future development and improvement and will add the greatest value to the quality of life in Valparaiso more than any other financial investment would.

- Need a place to play racquetball in this area. YMCA was built way to small. Ice rink downtown is great as well as the coming dog park. Like to see you fix current sidewalks instead of connecting vale park trail. The

current state of neighborhood sidewalks are terrible. Adding things like GaGa ball courts at local elementary schools is cheap and gives kids another thing to do.

- Having a community pool in Valparaiso would be a top priority in my mind. I think that this would truly add to the vibrancy of Valparaiso. I also believe that a multi-generational community center would not only aid Parks programming, but also provide a location for non-profits to have a location to continue serving Valparaiso residents uniquely.

- Connecting to the Prairie Duneland Greenway would open up miles of safe trails for bikers and keep them off the streets.

- An outdoor pool would be excellent!

- "We use parks when grandchildren visit, but we also use parks near where we live nd Central Park. Even though we no

- I her have teenagers still feel there needs to be more for that age group. Hopefully in the next year or two after retirement we will take even more advantage of all the parks. Thanks for all you do!"

- I would like to see a public, outdoor aquatic center with an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Also, access to racquetball/handball/Pickleball courts, more biking and hiking trails, and improvements to neighborhood parks in the south areas of Valparaiso.

- Overall doing a good job. Desperate for more soccer fields

- Berkley Park need playground equipment for the growing number of young children in that neighborhood.

- I feel like the newer communities in Valparaiso south of thirty are under served by the parks department. We are lacking trails connecting us to the rest of the Valparaiso community and we have few options for parks within walking distance unless you are part of a sub division that has a playground of their own.

- Please do not acquire anymore farmland, wildlife areas

- We love Central Park in the summer. We travel to Chesterton to use the outdoor pool, so it would be nice to have an outdoor pool in Valpo. Additional ice skating areas would be good. It's hard to bike Valpo.

- Bike lanes end at intersections

- Valparaiso needs a swimming facility now.

- I am so grateful for all that the Parks offers. Discovery Camp is fantastic and my son loves it. Overall, I wish that Parks hours would better align with business hours, to assist working families (for instance, camp ends at 3pm). I have also noticed lately that there has been some disorganization within youth sports. What I wish was available is an alternative to the over-crowded and expensive YMCA. I love the idea of greenways with bike/walk paths that connect the city (supported by bike racks throughout town). Check out a town called Davis, CA. They have adopted a city-wide dedication to biking and the entire town is connected by bike paths. Also, while Central Park Plaza is nice, it would be appreciated to have activities at other areas around town. The north side of town, in particular. Another frustration is that the parks are often fully booked. My son and I often ride our bikes to go practice baseball on the fields or play basketball and cannot find anyplace that is not used. Overall, the basketball courts are in bad shape and there is a need for a more competitive and focused youth basketball league. We would definitely sign up. And finally, it would be nice for youth baseball to start sooner and not have the final tournament the 3rd weekend of July every year. Overall, we love Valpo Parks and would support growth. (Except for ValPlayso - that was a miss.)

- Try to get better coaches for the youth programs. Ones that are more organized, show up, and are willing to hold practices even though the kids are young (3-5years old). Maybe seek out another photography company and is also more organized, is polite, and takes better photos.

- The City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation does a wonderful job. We are blessed to live in such a wonderful city.

- All these ideas people have come up with seem a little overboard. The real focus should be on what we already have. I think Valpo has a good amount of things going on. We have some these things already in Valpo, just not through the city itself. It's too much for the city to handle it all. The real improvement should be in pathways. The bike lanes on roads are never repainted, many existing sidewalks are so poor, there isn't sidewalks where there should be. It should have a connected feel. We should be able to travel in a manner without automobiles. The bike path on Vale Parkway should just be a wide paved street with a painted bike path, problem solved, much cheaper. What about the neighborhoods that are disconnected from the city off Harrison Blvd. along the forest park golf course? We have to travel on busy roads in order to get to anything in the city. Are we not important enough? Our numbers should be just as great as beauty creek. My household pays city taxes. I would like my children to grow up in a city that's safe and connected. Hey kids, let's go for a bike ride/walk. Oh wait, we might get hit by a car. It's sad because we're so close, it would be a well worth the improvement. But who's going to fight for us? Around here it seems to be the most traveled areas gets the priority. Campbell Street looks great. Wouldn't it be nice if everyone had that?

- We need a pool facility. Nice communities have one.

- Would love a park with trails like Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve!

- We greatly enjoy the bus tours, such as the July 17 trip to the Cubs game at Wrigley Field.

- More bike trails protected from traffic would be fantastic

- I would love to see a community pool.

- Would love to see more biking trails and events geared towards family biking events. Have done night ride with our grandsons and we all loved it.

- It's appalling we don't have a pool. A splash pad is only for the very young. An indoor tennis facility is essential for our family; the Courts on 49 has very limited hours. We travel to MC to play our family sport.

- "I have heard about a possible mountain bike trail at Rogers Lakewood. I would be more than willing to volunteer my time to help in any way I can. -Matt Lewis (matthew.i.lewis@gmail.com)"

- "Mountain bicycle trails , more bicycle parking down town ,

- More pedestrian traffic marketing. "

- The Banta Center is a senior unfriendly building. It's also dark and depressing. I stopped going a year ago due to lack of space (card games in the hallways!), unusable computers, and too few programs. Also the city needs a teen center for teens only. The Boys & Girls Club is hit or miss. Some of the adults are rude, lack training and have no idea as how to deal with kids with disabilities.

- It is very important to me to have a public outdoor pool in the summer, a much newer and better senior center and a teen center for our 13 year old.

- Stop spending money on big shiny projects and please maintain and improve what we already have.

3.7 STATISTICALLY-VALID COMMUNITY SURVEY

ETC Institute conducted a Community Interest and Opinion Survey for the City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department to establish priorities for the future improvement of parks, recreation facilities, programs and services within the community. The survey was mailed to a random sample of households in the City of Valparaiso. An option to complete the survey online was also available to residents who had that preference. Once the surveys were mailed, resident households who received the survey were contacted by phone. Those who indicated that they had not returned the survey by mail were given the option of completing it by phone.

3.7.1 METHODOLOGY

A goal was set to obtain a minimum of 400 completed surveys within the City of Valparaiso. ETC Institute exceeded the goal and obtained a total of 415 completed surveys. The results for the sample of 415 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision rate of at least +/- 4.8%. The following pages summarize major survey findings.

3.7.2 USE OF AND CONDITION OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

USE OF FACILITIES

Respondents were asked to indicate which facilities they had used. The facilities respondents selected the most were Central Park Plaza (74%), Old Fairgrounds Park (63%), Rogers-Lakewood Park (63%), and Ogden Gardens (62%). ETC Institute estimated the number of households who used these facilities. Based on 13,080 households in the City of Valparaiso, 9,705 used Central Park Plaza, 8,293 used Old Fairgrounds Park, 8,227 used Rogers-Lakewood Park, and 8,097 used Rogers-Lakewood Park.
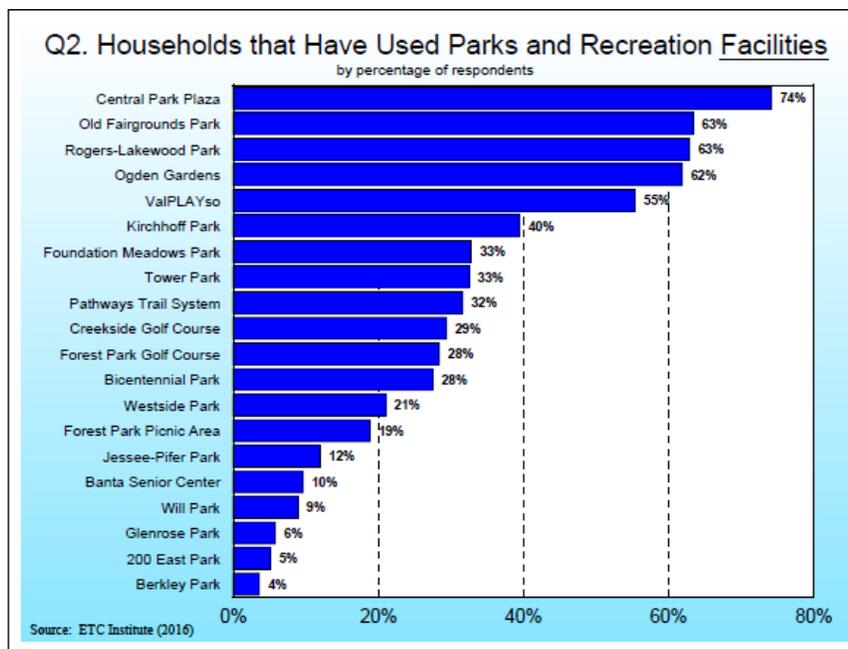
Figure 87-Households that Have Used Parks and Recreation Facilities

CONDITION OF FACILITIES

Respondents were next asked to rate the condition of the parks and recreation facilities they had used on a four point scale where four is excellent and one is poor. Of households who had visited Central Park Plaza, 99% rated the facility as either "excellent" (90%) or "good" (9%). Ninety-eight percent (98%) of respondents rated ValPLAY so as

either "excellent" (82%) or "good" (16%), and 97% of respondents rated Ogden Gardens as either "excellent" (69%) or "good" (28%).
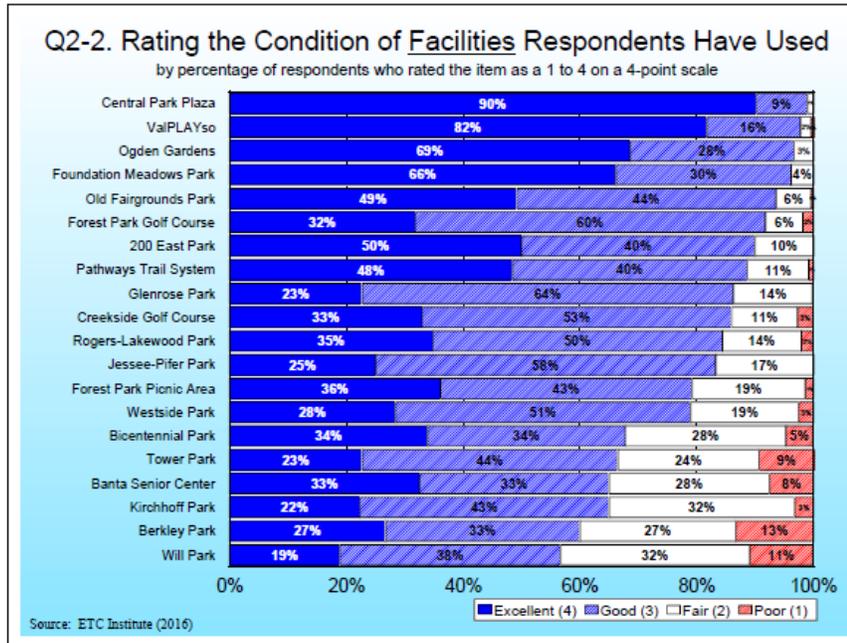

Figure 88-Condition of Facilities Used

MOST USED FACILITIES

Respondents were asked to select the three facilities they had used the most during the past year, the Central Park Plaza (57%), Old Fairgrounds Park (31%) and Rogers-Lakewood Park (30%) were the three facilities most selected.
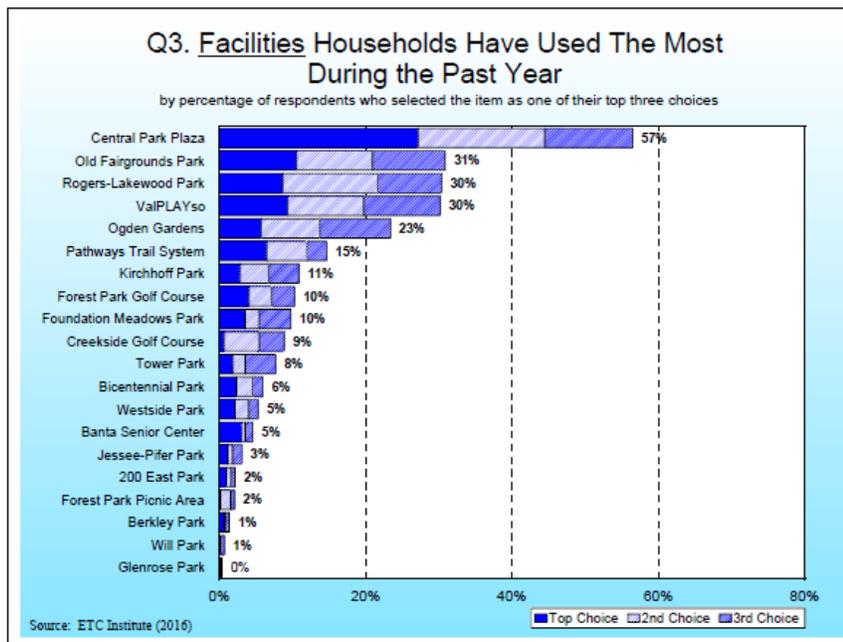

Figure 89-Facilities Households Use the Most

ADULTS (AGES 18 AND OVER)

Based on the sum of the respondent's top two choices, the three organizations which adults use most often are the YMCA (29%), City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department (28%) and Porter County parks (15%).
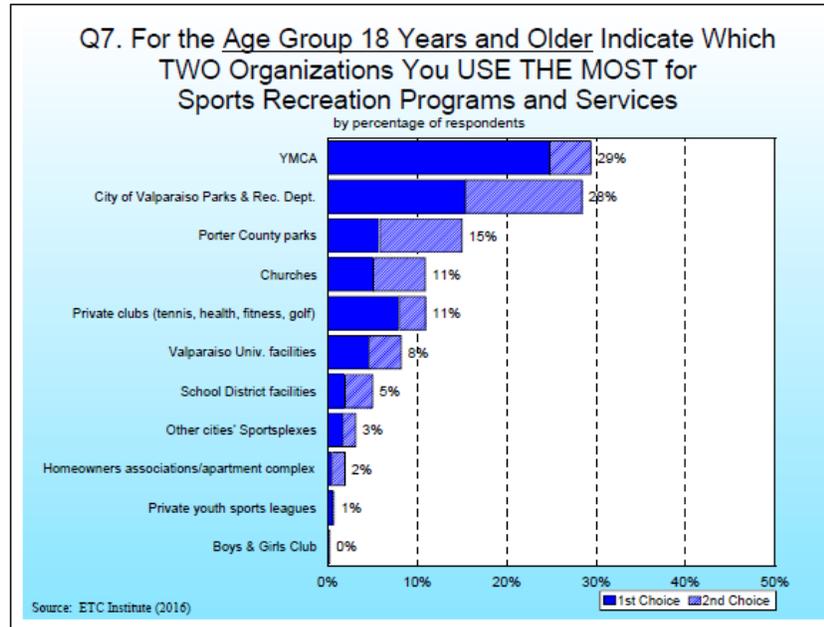
Figure 90-Most Used Sports Recreation Organizations for 18+ Years Old

YOUTH (AGES 17 AND UNDER)

Based on the sum of the respondent's top two choices, the three organizations which youth use most often are the YMCA (15%), City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department (14%), and school district facilities (13%).
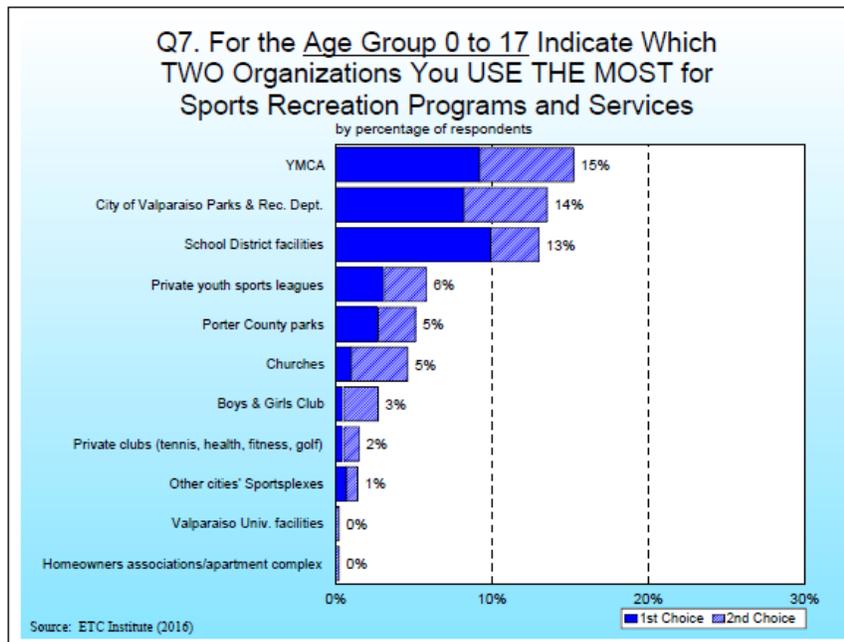
Figure 91- Most Used Sports Recreation Organizations for Under 18 Years Old

3.7.3 PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND RATINGS

OVERALL PARTICIPATION

Twenty-six percent (26%) of households surveyed indicated that they had participated in the City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department programs during the past 12 months. Of those respondents who participated in City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department programs, 29% participated in one program, 57% participated in two to three programs, 12% participated in four to six programs, and 2% participated in seven to 10 programs.
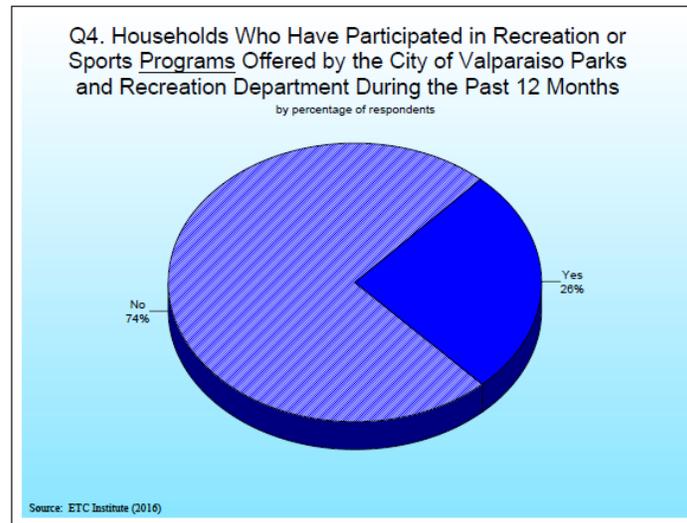
Figure 92- Households that Have Participated in VPRD Sports Programs in Last Year
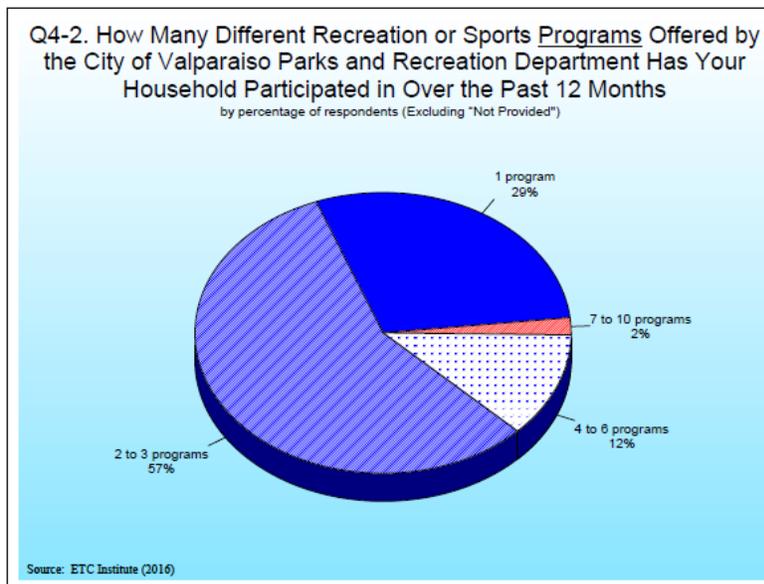
Figure 93- Number of VPRD Programs Participated in by Household

RATINGS

Of households who had participated in programs, 86% rated the programs as either "excellent" (34%) or "good" (52%). Only 11% rated the programs as "fair" and 3% rated the programs as "poor".
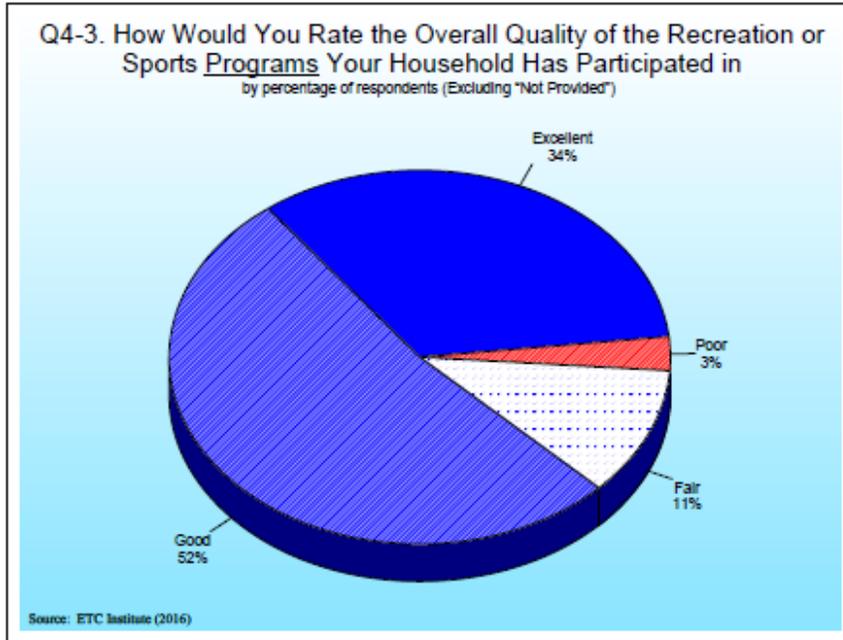
Figure 94- Quality of Recreation Programs Participated in

3.7.4 INFORMATION SOURCES

Respondents were asked to list all the ways they learn about City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department programs and activities from a list of 12 sources. The Parks and Recreation program guide (66%), Parks Department newsletters (47%), and from friends and neighbors (42%) were the most common.
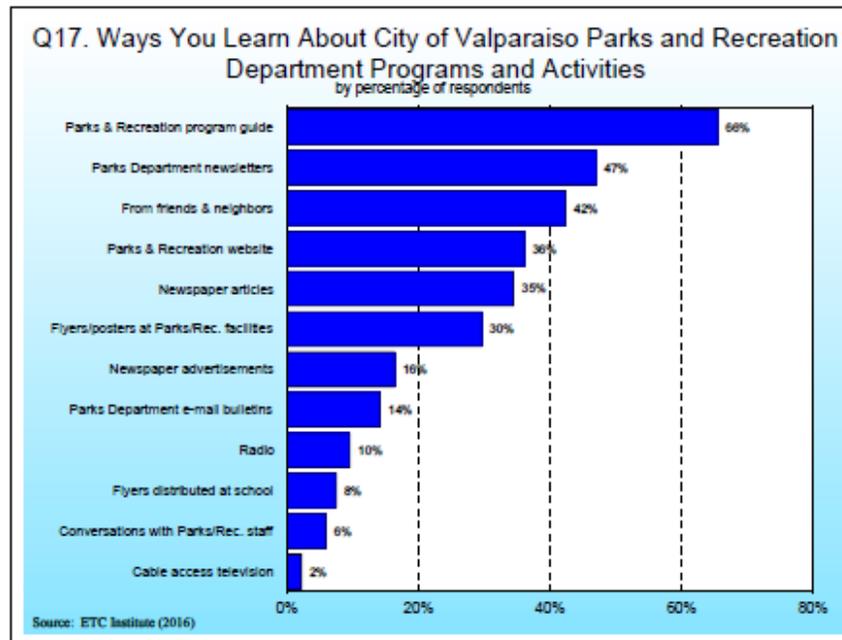

Figure 95- Ways in Which Respondents Learn about VPRD

3.7.5 SATISFACTION WITH OVERALL VALUE

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with the value their household receives from the City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department. Seventy percent (70%) of respondents indicated they were "very satisfied" (33%) or "somewhat satisfied" (37%). Only 22% of respondents were "neutral", 6% were "somewhat dissatisfied", and 2% were "very dissatisfied".
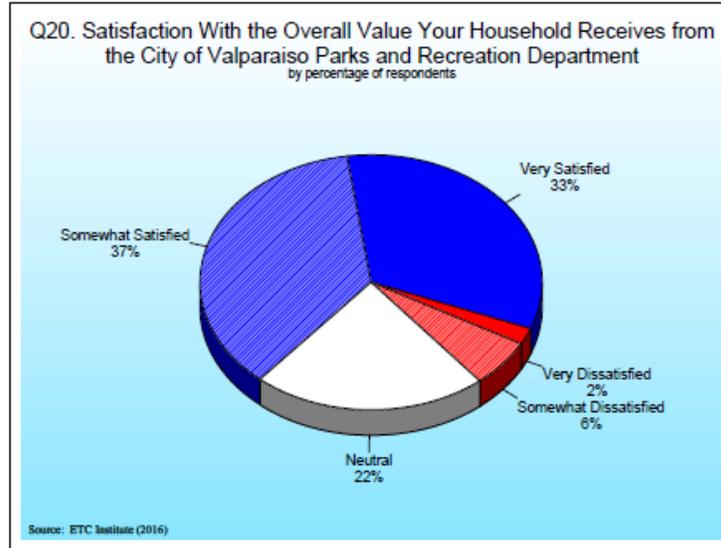

Figure 96- Satisfaction with Overall Value Received from VPRD

3.7.6 FACILITY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

FACILITY NEEDS

Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 27 recreation facilities and rate how well their needs for each facility were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest "unmet" need for various facilities.

The three recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that indicated a need for the facility were: connected walking and biking trails (68%), nature center and trails (59%), and greenspace and natural areas (57%).
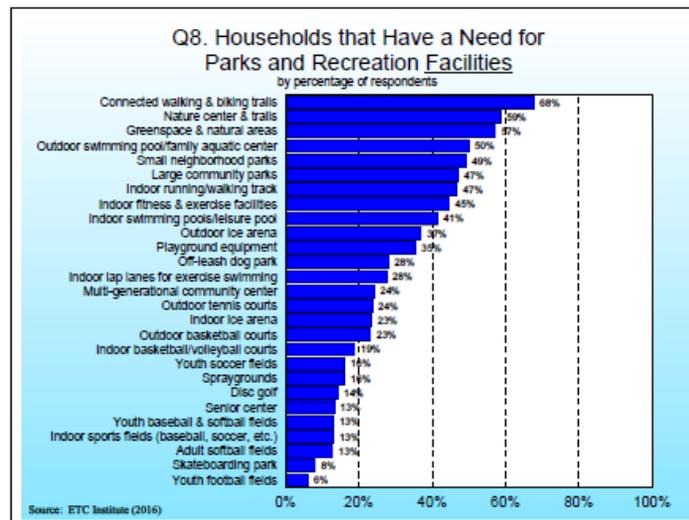

Figure 97- Facility Needs

When ETC Institute analyzed the needs in the community, only one facility, small neighborhood parks, had a need that affected more than 5,000 households. ETC Institute estimates a total of 5,979 households in the City of Valparaiso have unmet needs for outdoor swimming pool and family aquatic center. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 27 facilities that were assessed is shown in the table below.
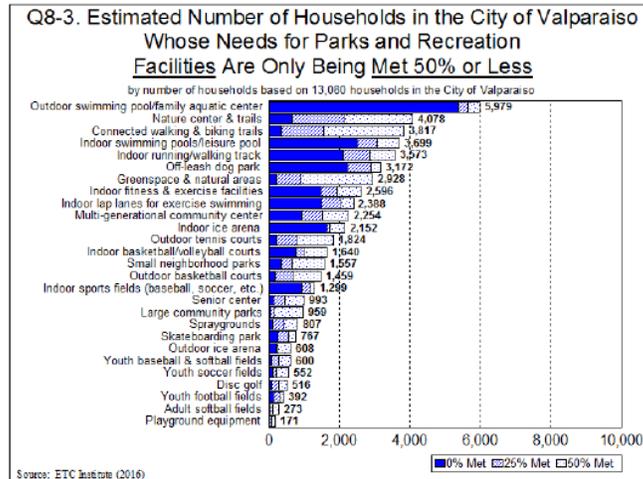

Figure 98- Number of Households with a Facility Need of More Than 50%

FACILITY IMPORTANCE

In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each facility. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the three most important facilities to residents were: connected walking and biking trails (40%), outdoor swimming pool and family aquatic center (27%), and nature center and trails (27%). The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top four choices is shown in the table on the following page.
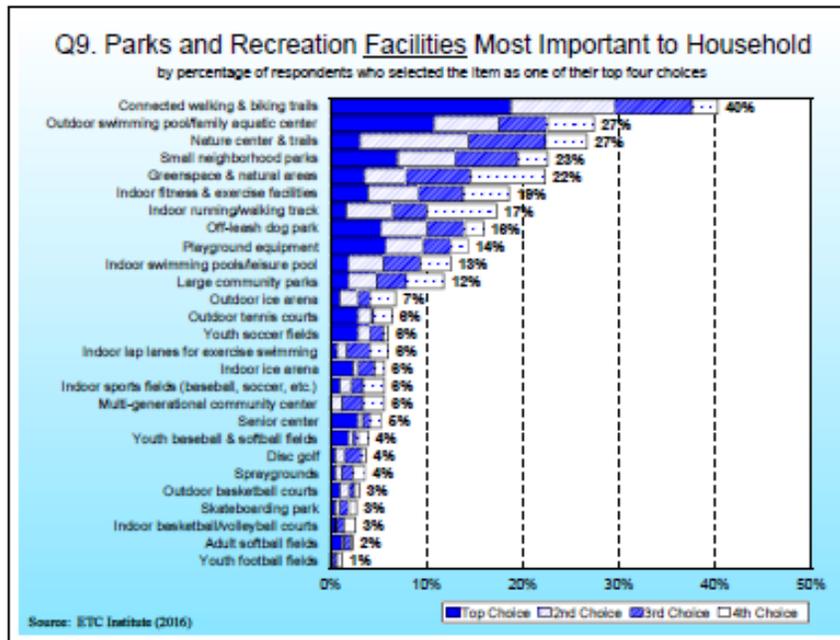

Figure 99- Facility Importance

3.7.7 PRIORITIES FOR FACILITY INVESTMENTS

The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks and recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 2 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following five facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Outdoor swimming pool and family aquatic center (PIR=168)

- Connected walking and biking trails (PIR=164)

- Nature center and trails (PIR=134)

- Greenspace and natural areas (PIR=104)

- Indoor running and walking track (PIR=103)

The chart on the following page shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 27 facilities/amenities that were assessed on the survey.
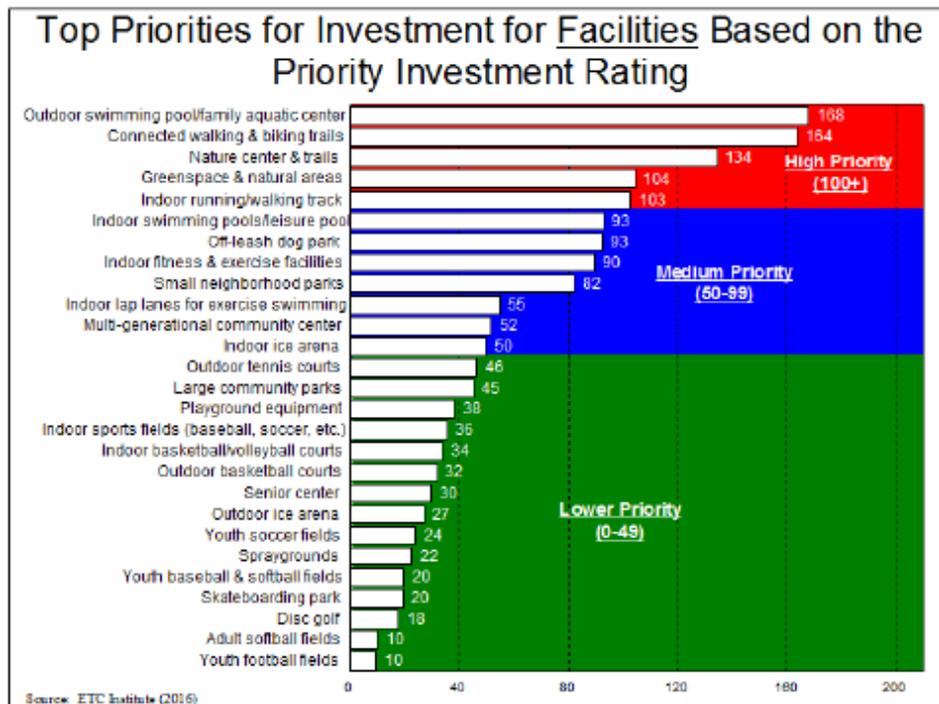

Figure 100- Top Facility Priorities

3.7.8 PROGRAMMING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

PROGRAMMING NEEDS

Respondents were also asked to identify if their household had a need for 23 recreational programs and rate how well their needs for each program were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had "unmet" needs for each program.

The three programs with the highest percentage of households that had needs were: special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.) (57%), adult fitness and wellness programs (46%), and outdoor recreation and adventure programs (38%).
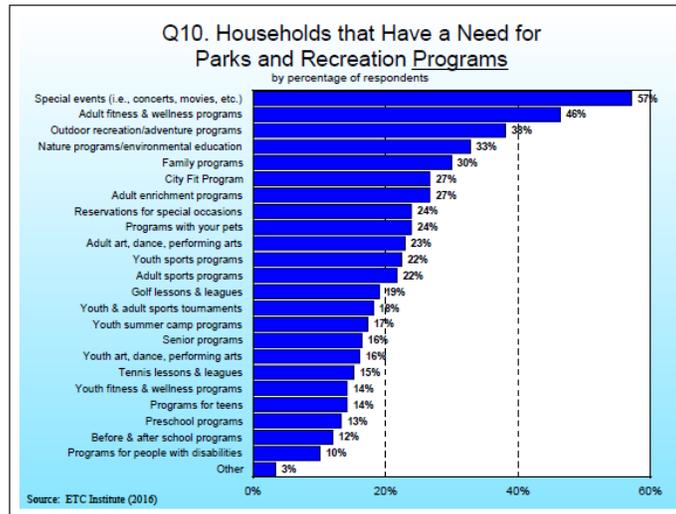

Figure 101- Program Need

In addition to having the highest total need, two of these programs also have the highest unmet need among the 23 programming-related areas that were assessed. ETC Institute estimates a total of 3,397 households have unmet needs for adult fitness and wellness programs, 3,174 have unmet needs for outdoor recreation and adventure programs, and 2,716 have unmet needs for nature programs and environmental education. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 23 programs that were assessed is shown in the chart below.

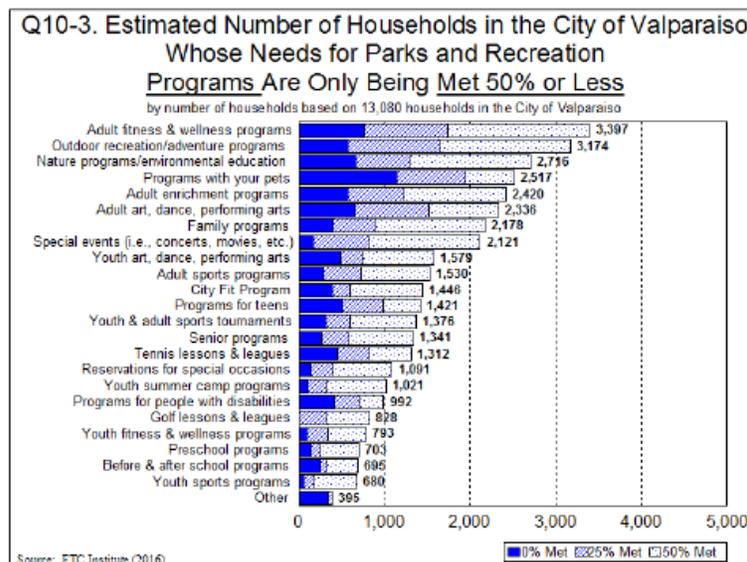Figure 102- Number of Households with a Program Need of More Than 50%

PROGRAM IMPORTANCE

In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents place on each program. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the three most important programs to residents were: special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.) (38%), adult fitness and wellness programs (29%), and

outdoor recreation and adventure programs (17%). The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top four choices is shown in the table below.
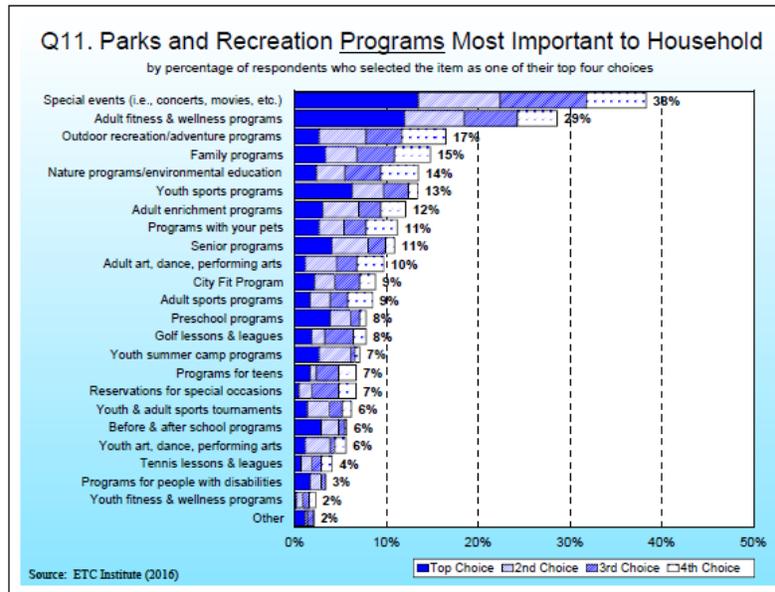
Figure 103- Program Importance

3.7.9 PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAMMING INVESTMENTS

Based the priority investment rating (PIR), which was described briefly on page iv of the Executive Summary and is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report, the following seven programs were rated as "high priorities" for investment:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=175)

- Special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.) (PIR=162)

- Outdoor recreation and adventure programs (PIR=137)

- Nature programs and environmental education (PIR=115)

- Programs with your pets (PIR=103)

- Adult enrichment programs (PIR=103)

- Family programs (PIR=103)

The chart on the following page shows the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the 23 programs that were rated.
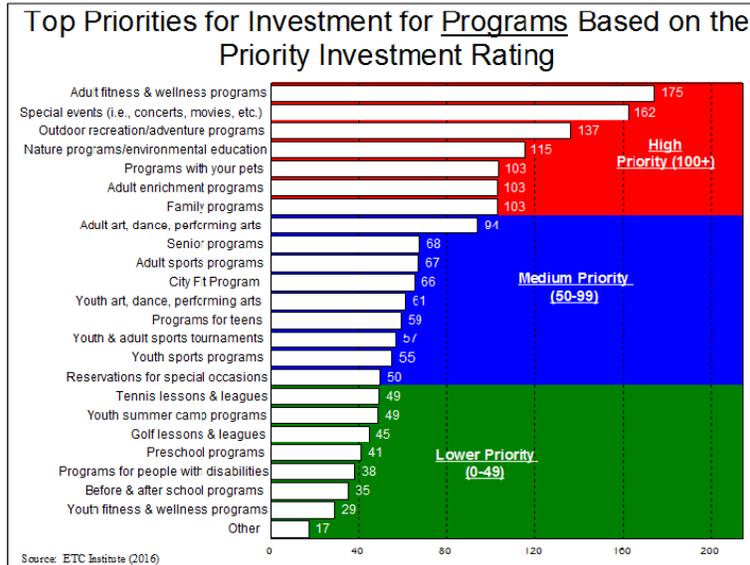
Figure 104- Top Program Priorities

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

ETC Institute also assessed the current participation levels of residents in each program. Based on the sum of the respondent's top four choices, the three programs which residents currently participate most in are special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.) (38%), outdoor recreation adventure programs (11%), and youth sports programs (11%).
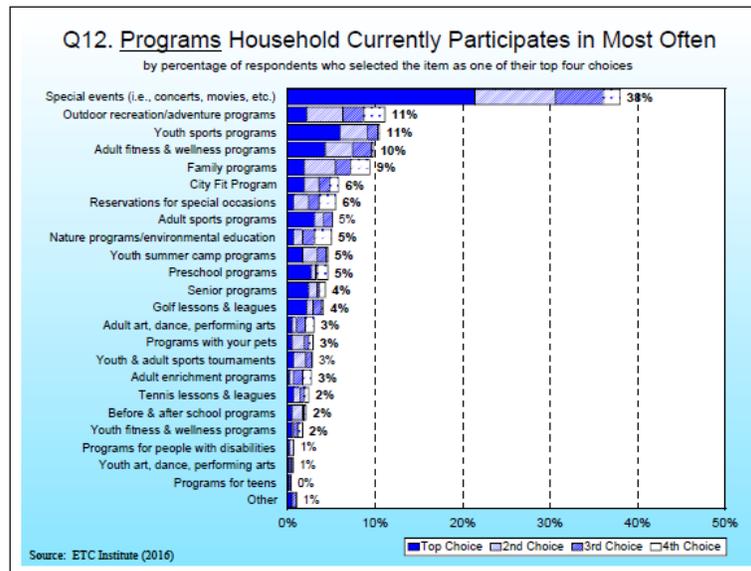
Figure 105- Most Participated in Programs

POTENTIAL PROGRAMMING SPACES

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the possibility of developing new programming spaces. They were asked which spaces they would use that are not currently being fulfilled by the city or others in Valparaiso.

Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents indicated they would use an outdoor pool, 43% indicated they would use a walking and jogging track, and 35% indicated they would use an indoor pool.
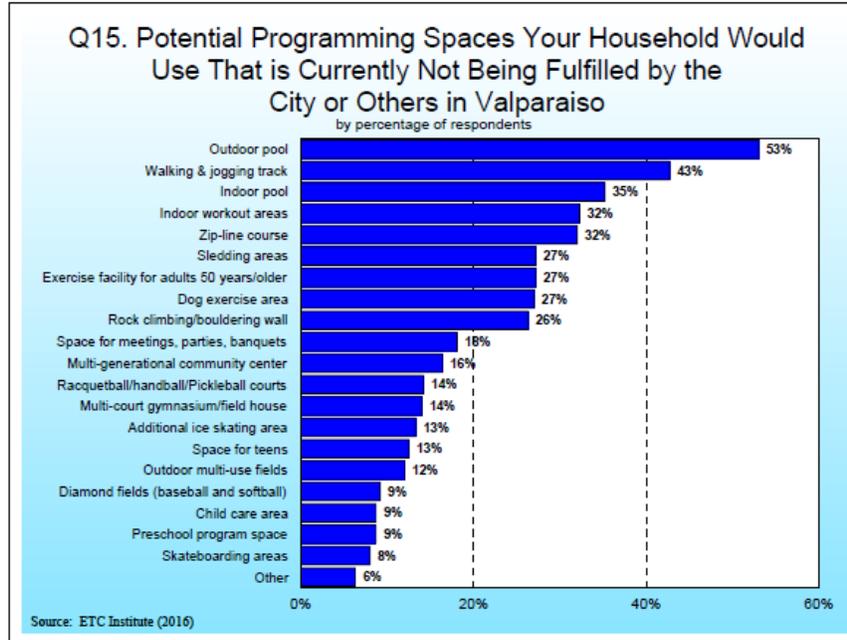
Figure 106- Most Desired Program Spaces Not Currently Offered

Respondents were then asked to indicate which four spaces their household would use most often. Outdoor pool (43%), walking and jogging track (37%), and indoor pool (23%) were the most selected.
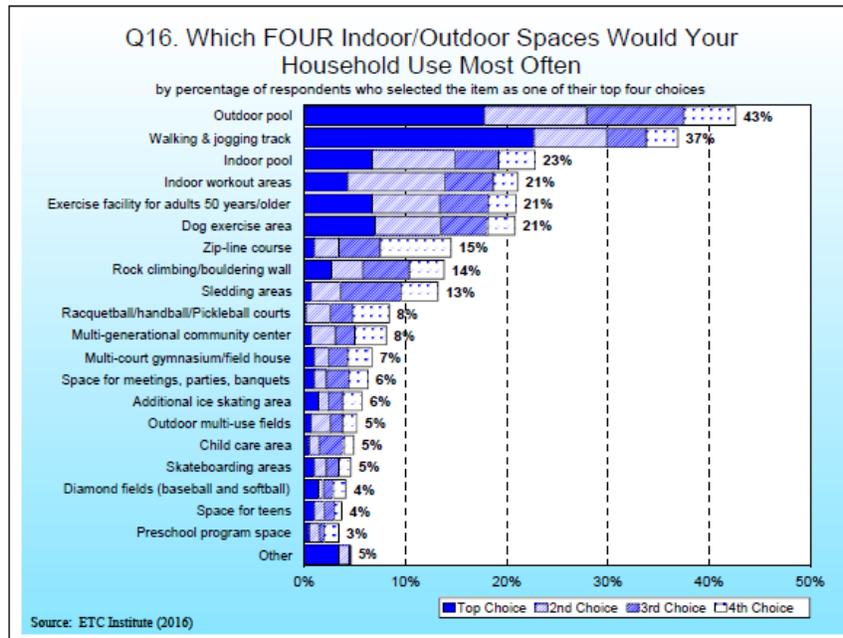
Figure 107- Program Spaces Used Most Often (Anticipated)

3.7.10 BARRIERS TO PARK, FACILITY AND PROGRAM USAGE

Respondents were asked from a list of 18 potential reasons to identify the reasons that prevent them from using parks and recreation facilities and programs of the City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department more often. The top four reasons selected were: I do not know what is being offered (29%), fees are too high (16%), program times are not convenient (14%), and I do not know the locations of facilities (13%).
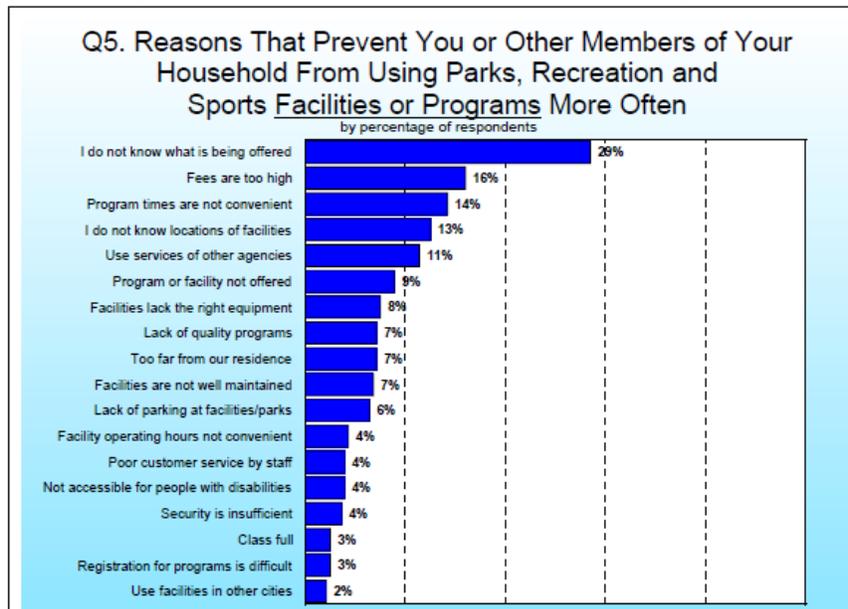
Figure 108- Barriers to Using Facilities and Programs

Over half (55%) of respondents indicated they have used City of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department for outdoor recreation and sports activities during the past 12 months. Fifty percent (50%) of respondents indicated they use the YMCA and 43% indicated they use Porter County Parks.

Figure 109- Other Organizations Used for Recreation in Last Year

3.7.11 CONCLUSIONS

When analyzing respondent choices in potential programming spaces the same three programming spaces are currently not being fulfilled and would be used the most. Focusing on these programs and facilities would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents in the City of Valparaiso. The three programming spaces are: an outdoor pool, a walking and jogging track, and an indoor pool. Connected walking and biking trails and nature center and trails were top priority facilities, both of these facilities were in the top three for h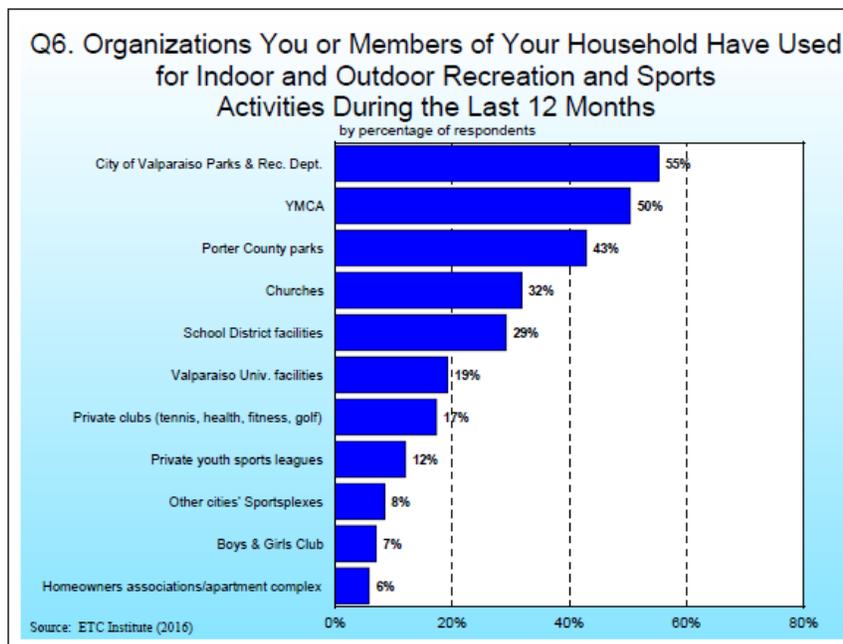ousehold need and unmet need. Adult fitness and wellness programs and outdoor recreation and adventure programs were top priority programs, both of these programs were in the top three for household need and unmet need. Continued emphasis on these facilities and programs would help the city provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of households in the City of Valparaiso. In order to ensure that the City of Valparaiso continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, ETC Institute recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department sustain and/or improve the performance in areas that were identified as "high priorities" by the Priority Investment Rating (PIR). The facilities and programs with the highest PIR ratings are listed below.

FACILITY PRIORITIES

- Outdoor swimming pool and family aquatic center (PIR=168)

- Connected walking and biking trails (PIR=164)

- Nature center and trails (PIR=134)

- Greenspace and natural areas (PIR=104)

- Indoor running and walking track (PIR=103)

PROGRAMMING PRIORITIES

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=175)

- Special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.) (PIR=162)

- Outdoor recreation and adventure programs (PIR=137)

- Nature programs and environmental education (PIR=115)

- Programs with your pets (PIR=103)

- Adult enrichment programs (PIR=103)

- Family programs (PIR=103)

CHAPTER FOUR – PARKS, FACILITY, & PROGRAM ANALYSIS

4.1 PARK AND FACILITY INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

The consultant team conducted in-person site assessments over a two-day period in May 2016. This assessment establishes a base-line understanding and "snapshot" of the system's existing conditions and amenities. This assessment will be utilized with other technical research reports to assist with the final Park and Recreation Master Plan update including recommendations and action strategies.

4.1.1 METHODOLOGY

The consultant team used a site assessment form to document each park visited. The form includes:

- General site description

- Current vs. recommended maintenance level

- Signage types

- Strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities

- Any identified corrective actions needed

- Overall site condition

Park conditions were rated using a differential scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor. The table below provides the condition descriptions utilized in this analysis.

Scale of Conditions	
Assessment Finding	**General Description**
Excellent	Facilities/amenities are in excellent condition and feature little or no maintenance problems noted. Facilities do not feature any major design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance.
Good	Facilities/amenities are in good condition and feature only minor maintenance problems. Generally, most maintenance issues with these facilities appear to be the result of age and/or heavy use. Facilities may only feature minor design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e. drainage, structural, utilities, etc.).
Fair	Facilities/amenities are in fair condition and indicate ongoing maintenance problems. Generally, most maintenance issues with these facilities appear to be the result of age and heavy use. Some maintenance issues may be compounding over time due to being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may only feature minor design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e. drainage, structural, utilities, etc.).
Poor	Facilities/amenities are in poor condition and clearly show ongoing maintenance problems that ultimately may result in suspended use for repair/replacement. Maintenance issues with these facilities are the result of age and heavy use, and generally are compounding over time due to being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may feature major design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e. drainage, structural, utilities, etc.).

Figure 110- Condition Assessment Grading Scale

The PROS team visited the following nineteen (19) sites during the two-day review period:

- 200 East Park
- Banta Senior Center
- Bicentennial Park
- Central Park Plaza
- Creekside Golf Course
- Discovery Cottage
- Fairgrounds Park
- Foundation Meadows Park
- Forest Park Golf Course
- Forest Park Picnic Area

- Glenrose Park
- Jessee-Pifer Park
- Kirchhoff Park
- Ogden Gardens
- Rogers-Lakewood Park
- Tower Park
- ValPLAYso
- Westside Park
- Will Park

4.1.2 SYSTEM SUMMARY

STRENGTHS

- There is a good park distribution within the city limits
- Parks are well-maintained in terms of mowing, cleaning, trash removal, and restroom cleaning
- The park system has several signature park spaces that include:
  - Golf courses
  - Central Park Plaza
  - Foundation Meadows
  - ValPLAYso
  - Ogden Gardens
- The park system has efficient and productive equipment
- The maintenance staff is dedicated and well-trained in park maintenance
- Alternative funding sources are employed across the system, especially naming rights
- Updated playgrounds are dispersed across the system
- The main maintenance shop at Foundations Meadow is an excellent space and is organized well
- Outdoor exercise areas are excellent and include trail connectivity

WEAKNESSES

- There are many amenities that need updating that include:
  - Shelter houses
  - Restrooms
  - Tennis courts

  - o Ball fields

  - o Skatepark

  - o Parking lots

  - o Community gardens and surrounding spaces

  - o Buildings

- The department does not have a true community center to provide programs to people of all ages

- The park system does not have an outdoor aquatics facility

- A connected trail system is lacking to link the neighborhood parks

- Despite a well-distributed park system, there are areas in the northwest that lack park access

- Park signage needs updated and improved across the system

- There is not a dedicated funding source to support amenity updates at many parks

- The golf course and landscape management staff operate in an outdated and inefficient facility

- With the public's heavy use of rectangular fields and little to none field rest time, the system is in need of more multi-functional sports fields

- Tennis facilities seem to be lacking in quality and quantity throughout the system

- There is a homeless population issue Ogden Botanical Gardens and Forest Park Picnic Area

- There is a lack of security lighting throughout the system

- Many trees are candidates for removal and should be addressed

- There is a lack of drinking fountains throughout the park system

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand the park system to the south of Hwy 30 and in the northwest area of the community

- Continue to connect the trail system to link parks

- Establish a dedicated funding source; examples include:

  - o Wheel tax for parking lots and trails

  - o Food and beverage tax for developing and maintaining existing park sites

- Develop a written partnership agreement with the school system for gym and field usage

- Address infrastructure issues including:

  - o Administration building interior and basement water issue

  - o Banta senior center

- Additional splashpads and/or spraygrounds would help curb the community's appetite for an outdoor aquatics space; specifically, the following parks would be good candidates for such an amenity:

  - o Bicentennial Park

o   Foundation Meadows Park

o   Tower Park

o   Will Park

o   ValPLAYso

- Develop a replacement schedule/plan for restrooms and shelter houses similar to that of playground equipment

- Improve walking decks, security lighting, parking, and restrooms in Ogden Gardens due to its high use

- Develop a quality tennis and Pickleball facility within the community

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards need to be incorporated into the existing parks

- Enhance current maintenance standards for parking lots

- Develop an updated site master plan for Rogers-Lakewood Park

- Reduce impaired intersection sightlines at park entrance/exit points

- Consider the need for synthetic fields to increase field durability in lieu of little to no field rest time

- Enhance signage and wayfinding in and around Central Park Plaza that informs users/visitors of the area businesses

- Provide signage and other informational handouts that highlight the bus routes that travel to parks

4.2 RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the master planning process, the consulting team performed a Program Assessment of the programs and services offered by the Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department (VPRD). The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of program and service offerings and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities regarding programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues, and areas of improvement and determines future programs and services for residents.

The consulting team based these program findings and comments from a review of information provided by the Department including program descriptions, participation statistics, financial data, website content, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and discussions with staff. This report addresses the program offerings from a systems perspective for the entire portfolio of programs, as well as individual program information.

4.2.2 PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW

VPRD provides a variety of programs and services to Valparaiso residents. There are programs for a wide variety of age segments ranging from preschool to senior citizens. In fact, VPRD is part of a senior services initiative called Elder Style in which community entities come together to provide various services for senior community members. Additionally, the Department oversees the Banta Center, an enrichment center for those 50 and older.

All functions within the Department combine to provide over 60 programs across eight core program areas:

1) Adult Enrichment
2) Adult Sports
3) Central Park
4) Day Camp
5) Golf
6) Special Events
7) Youth Enrichment
8) Youth Sports

The Department's park system consists of a variety of neighborhood and community parks. System renovations began a couple years ago with a revamp of ValPLAYso Park and improvements are scheduled for Tower Park in the near future. Recently, VPRD finished construction on a public downtown space, Central Park. Central Park is home to the Indiana Beverage Activity Center which includes indoor space and an outdoor pavilion. The outdoor pavilion is used for a variety of community events and serves as an ice rink during the winter months. The summer of 2016 marks the first full year of operation for this location. The Department also operates two golf courses, a foot-golf course, an ever-expanding network of pathways and greenways, a skateboard park, community gardens, and more.

In addition to the provision of services provided directly by VPRD, partnerships with other organizations are utilized throughout the service area. Through formal and informal cooperative relationships, partners assist with delivering select programs, training of staff, and providing support to programs with supplies and materials.

4.2.3 PRIORITIES AND CORE PROGRAMS

To help achieve the Department's mission and adhere to its values and service priorities, it is important to identify Core Program Areas based on current and future needs to create a sense of focus around specific program areas of greatest importance to the community. Public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people, especially in a community such as Valparaiso. The philosophy of the Core Program Area assists staff, policy makers, and the public focus on what is most important. Program areas are considered as Core if they meet a majority of the following categories:

- The program area has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years) and/or is expected by the community.

- The program area consumes a relatively large portion (5% or more) of the agency's overall budget.

- The program area is offered 3-4 seasons per year.

- The program area has wide demographic appeal.

- There is a tiered level of skill development available within the programs area's offerings.

- There is full-time staff responsible for the program area.

- There are facilities designed specifically to support the program area.

- The agency controls a significant percentage (20% or more) of the local market.

4.2.4 OVERVIEW OF VPRD CORE PROGRAM AREAS

In consultation with Department staff, the planning team identified the following Core Program Areas currently being offered by VPRD:

ADULT ENRICHMENT

Adult enrichment programs focus on providing opportunities for adults to participate in the arts, health and wellness programs, and hobby activities. Goals of these programs are to enhance health and wellness across the lifespan by providing opportunities for social interaction while positively affecting health. Adult Enrichment programs are held throughout the City including park properties (such as Ogden Gardens, Forest Park, Banta Neighborhood Center, Rogers-Lakewood Park) and properties not owned by the park system (such as Fred Astaire Dance Studio and United Dance Arts).

Examples of Adult Enrichment programs include:

- Tai Chi for Health
- Yoga in the Park
- Dance
- Ballet, Tap, and Hip-Hop
- Coin and Currency Collecting
- Beginners Photography Workshop
- Day trips

ADULT SPORTS

The purpose of adult sports is to provide healthy recreational programs for adults and seniors. Goals of these programs are to teach sports fundamentals and sportsmanship, provide fun, enjoyment, and game competition, and build and maintain mind and body through teamwork and vigorous exercise. Programs in this area include both league play and lessons. All Adult Sports programs are held at Fairgrounds Park or Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

Examples of Adult & Youth Sports programs include:

- Adult Summer Softball
- Adult Coed Soccer
- Lacrosse
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Spring Swing Pre Season Softball Tourney

CENTRAL PARK PLAZA

Central Park Plaza is VPRD's newest programmable park space. Current programming focuses on special events and providing opportunities for public gathering spaces.

Examples of Central Park Plaza programs include:

- Roller skating
- Ice skating
- Wellness Wednesday
- Fit Friday

DAY CAMP

Day camp is located at one of Valparaiso's most popular parks, Rogers-Lakewood Park. Each week features a different camp theme. Day camp provides the opportunities for kids to make new friends while experiencing different activities such as field trips, fishing, inflatables, boating, nature hikes, arts and crafts, water games, slip n' slides, and sports.

Examples of Day Camp programs include:

- Discovery Adventure Camp
- Ranger Camp
- Discover Day Camp

GOLF

VPRD manages two golf courses, Forest Park Golf Course and Creekside Golf Course. Besides playing a traditional 18-hole round of golf, people can participate in league play and take advantage of private lessons. Programming at the golf courses focuses on skill development while also providing the opportunity for social interactions through league and group play.

Examples of Golf programs include:

- First Tee
- League Play (Jr. and Ladies)
- Private Lessons
- Adult Classes
- Foot Golf

SPECIAL EVENTS

Community involvement in parks and recreation is enhanced by providing special events unique to Valparaiso. These programs are often held in conjunction with a partner to leverage community resources and often enjoy a loyal following of community members. The goal of special events is to bring residents together to socialize, enjoy park amenities, and celebrate living in Valparaiso. Special events are held at various places throughout the community including Rogers-Lakewood Park, Foundation Meadows Park, Downtown Valparaiso, and the City's pathways and greenways system.

Examples of programs within Special Events include:

- Ice Fishing Derby
- Popcorn Panic
- Lit'l Kernal Puff
- 4th of July Blast
- Night Ride

YOUTH ENRICHMENT

Youth Enrichment programs are geared for children aged 1-12. These programs are designed to give participants a hands-on learning experience that will allow them to use their imagination. Children will participate in a wide variety of activities that include playing games, performing experiments, and creating crafts. All Youth Enrichment programs are held at the Discovery Cottage.

Examples of Youth Enrichment programs include:

- Play Pals
- Busy Bees
- Cooking at the Cottage
- Science Seekers

- Preschool Dance
- Musical Movers

YOUTH SPORTS

The purpose of youth sports is to provide healthy recreational programs for those 16 years old and younger. Goals of these programs are to instill a proper winning philosophy through role modeling and caring instruction by coaches and staff. In addition to the life skills gained through these programs, participants will also learn fundamentals and will build friendships through the team experience. Programs in this area include both league play and lessons. Youth Sports programs are held at several locations throughout the City including Westside Park, Tower Park, ValPLAYso Park, Kirchhoff Park, and Valparaiso High School Fieldhouse.

Examples of Youth Sports programs include:

- Soccer
- Valparaiso Coed T-Ball League
- Summer Minor Baseball League
- Youth Track & Field
- Winter Softball Clinic
- Girls Fast Pitch Softball League

4.2.5 PARTICIPATION BY CORE PROGRAM AREA

Core Program Area	2015-16 Participants
Adult Enrichment	302
Adult Sports	2,671
Central Park Plaza	200,000
Day Camp	1,688
Golf	20,034*
Special Events	3,110
Youth Enrichment	549
Youth Sports	2,988

*Number denotes rounds of golf

Figure 111- Core Program Area Participation

4.2.6 CORE PROGRAM PORTFOLIO OBSERVATIONS

These existing Core Program Areas serve the community well with its diverse programmatic offerings. Any additions or modifications to core programs areas should be based on input from stakeholders and should be a strategic decision. Based upon input from community members, stakeholders, staff, and the observations of the planning team, as well as demographic and recreation trends and available resources, VPRD should consider the following adjustments to their portfolio of Core Program Areas over the next five years:

- Ensure that you are providing opportunities for Adaptive Programming within your current offerings, as an objective and priority across all Core Program Areas to promote inclusion throughout all VPRD offerings.

- Based on current and future demographics, consider breaking out Senior Programs from Adult Enrichment as a separate offering for community members. This will allow you to provide additional offerings in this area.
- Youth and Adult Sports leagues should have the option for an individual registration in addition to a team registration. Individual registrations are usually placed on a "farm" or "house" team.
- All Core Program areas should have a Mini Business Plan that identifies unique descriptions, goals, and desired outcomes for each Core Program Area and lists the programs or services offered within each. The Plans should also identify participation statistics, major competitors / other service providers, key staff responsible for program development and evaluation, and performance measures to assess the effectiveness of the Core Program Area.

4.2.7 AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

The table below depicts the degree to which each age segment is served by VPRD. The degree in which these age segments are targeted are noted with a Primary (indicated with a 'P') or Secondary (indicated with an 'S') designation.

Age Segment	Adult Enrich.	Adult Sports	Central Park	Day Camp	Golf	Special Events	Youth Enrich.	Youth Sports
Preschool			S	P	P		P	P
Elem. School (Grade K-5)			S	P	P		S	P
Middle School (Grades 6-8)			P (winter)	P	S			S
High School (Grades 9-12)			P (winter)	S	S	S		
Young Adult (Age 18-24)	S	S	P (summer)		S	P		
Adults (25-44)	P	P	P (summer)		P	P		
Middle-age Adults (Age 45-64)	S	P	S		P	P		
Senior Adults (Ages 65+)					S	P		
Families			P			P		

Figure 112- Age Segment Analysis

VPRD provides events or programs for all ages, but senior adults and families are the least targeted groups. Additionally, the high school population is reported to have the least number of Primary programming focus by being only a partial focus for Central Park during the winter months. Findings from the analysis show that the Department provides a basic balance of programs across age segments based on the demographics of the city and event and program offerings. In the future, VPRD should conduct this assessment of age segments by Core Program Area; this will enable them to better see underserved populations within the city. It is also imperative for the Department to have dedicated program spaces for each Core Program Area.

While Special Events provides offerings to all ages, VPRD should make sure it is providing enough offerings to youth from preschool through high school ages. Based on the demographics, Valparaiso has a growing senior population; therefore, VPRD should ensure that it continues to provide adequate senior program and event opportunities other than through golf and special events.

VPRD should update this Age Segment Analysis every year to note changes in Core Program Areas or to refine age segment categories. Given the growing population trend for residents ages 55 and over, and the growing demand for services in this age bracket, it is also recommended that the Department further segment this group into 55-70 and 71 and over. These two sub-segments will have increasingly different needs and expectations for programming in coming years, and program planning will be needed to provide differing requirements.

Age Segment Analyses should ideally be done for every program offered by the Department, not just for each Core Program Area. Program coordinators/managers should include this information when creating or updating program plans for individual programs. An Age Segment Analysis can also be incorporated into Mini Business Plans for comprehensive program planning.

4.2.8 PROGRAM LIFECYCLE ANALYSIS

A Program Lifecycle Analysis involves reviewing every program identified by VPRD staff members to determine the stage of growth or decline for each. This provides a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall mix of programs managed by the agency to ensure that an appropriate number of programs are "fresh" and that relatively few programs, if any, need to be discontinued. This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data but, rather, is based on staff members' knowledge of their program areas. The table below shows the Department's program lifecycle distribution percentage. These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of programs in each individual Core Area with the total number of programs listed by staff members.

Lifecycle Stage	Description	Actual Program Distribution		Recommended Distribution
Introduction	New program; modest participation	18%		
Take-Off	Rapid participation growth	6%	50%	50-60%
Growth	Moderate, but consistent participation growth	26%		
Mature	Slow participation growth	27%	27%	40%
Saturation	Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition	11%		
Decline	Declining participation	12%	23%	0-10%

Figure 113- Condition Assessment Grading Scale

Overall, the Program Lifecycle Analysis results indicate a close resemblance to the recommended distribution for early program stages (Introduction, Take-Off, and Growth); however, there is an imbalance in the mature and late stages. A combined total of 50% of programs fall into the Introduction, Take-Off, and Growth stages. These are the newest within the Department's portfolio of programs and are characterized by growing popularity and participation. VPRD is doing a good job of keeping the overall mix of Department programs novel, relevant, and attractive to participants, the consulting team recommends maintaining this total be between 50-60%.

However, it is also important to have a stable core segment of programs that are in the Mature stage. Currently, the Department has approximately 27% of their programs in this category. The consulting team recommends this be about 40% so as to provide stability to the overall program portfolio, but without dominating the portfolio with programs that are advancing to the later stages of the lifecycle. Programs in the Mature stage should be tracked for signs entering the Saturation or Decline stages.

Approximately 23% of programs are in the Saturation or Decline stages. This is a high number and the distribution of early and late programs without a solid base of stable programs in the Mature stages suggest VPRD might want to re-evaluate program offerings. Programs in the Decline stage must be closely reviewed to evaluate repositioning or eliminating them. The consulting team's recommendation is to modify these programs to begin a new lifecycle with the Introduction stage as well as to elevate early stage programs to the Mature stage.

The consulting team suggests a thorough check of all programs to ensure VPRD is getting the full picture of their program lifecycle. Staff should complete a Program Lifecycle Analysis on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance. Furthermore, VPRD could include annual

performance measures for each Core Program Area to track participation growth, customer retention, and percentage of new programs offered as an incentive for additional innovation and alignment with community trends.

4.2.9 PROGRAM FUNDING, COST RECOVERY, AND PRICING

Finding ways to sustain cost recovery and improve service pricing strategies while providing key programs to the community is a priority for the Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department. To that end, the consulting team assessed program cost recovery and pricing strategies based on information provided by staff members.

COST RECOVERY STRATEGIES

According to information provided to the consulting team, cost recovery performance is currently tracked well for each Core Program Area. VPRD should be commended for diligent cost, revenue, and participation tracking in this way. Currently, VPRD's cost recovery goals are at least 100% for each Core Program Area with the exception of Adult Sports (90%). Actual cost recovery for each Core Program Area is calculated by using direct program costs and a 40% indirect calculation. Actual cost recovery rates are very close to the target percentage:

- Adult Enrichment 97%
- Adult Sports   96%
- Central Park   93%
- Day Camp   95%
- Golf   120%
- Special Events   99%
- Youth Enrichment   89%
- Youth Sports   109%

It should be noted that the Department also has a goal to increase the cost recovery percentage from the previous year. This is an important concept to include in this analysis because even if the Core Program Area does not meet the 100% cost recovery goal, it will still reflect positively on the area if it meets or exceeds last year's percentage. This allows staff to understand financial expectations and plan programs within each Core Area with a greater understanding of performance targets. The consulting team recommends tracking cost recovery rates for specific programs or events in addition to Core Area.

Determining cost recovery performance and using it to inform pricing decisions involves a three-step process:

1. Classify all programs and services based on the public or private benefit they provide.
2. Conduct a Cost of Service Analysis to calculate the full cost of each program.
3. Establish a cost recovery percentage, through Department policy, for each program or program type based on the outcomes of the previous two steps, and adjust program prices accordingly.

The following three sections provide further detail on this process.

4.2.10 CLASSIFICATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Conducting a classification of services informs how each program serves the overall organization mission, the goals and objectives of each Core Program Area, and how the program should to be funded with regard to tax dollars and/or user fees and charges. How a program is classified can help determine the most appropriate management, funding, and marketing strategies.

Program classifications are based on the degree to which the program provides a public benefit versus a private benefit. Public benefit can be described as everyone receiving the same level of benefit with equal access, whereas private benefit can be described as the user receiving exclusive benefit above what a general taxpayer receives for their personal benefit.

The three classifications used in this Recreation Program Assessment analysis are Essential, Important, and Value-Added. A program or service's classification depends upon alignment with the organizational mission, how the public perceives it, legal mandates, financial sustainability, personal benefit, competition in the marketplace, and access by participants. The table below describes each of the three classifications in these terms.

	ESSENTIAL *Programs*	*IMPORTANT* *Programs*	*VALUE-ADDED* *Programs*
Public interest; *Legal Mandate;* *Mission Alignment*	• *High public expectation*	• *High public expectation*	• *High individual and interest group expectation*
Financial Sustainability	• *Free, nominal or fee tailored to public needs* • *Requires public funding*	• *Fees cover some direct costs* • *Requires a balance of public funding and a cost recovery target*	• *Fees cover most direct and indirect costs* • *Some public funding as appropriate*
Benefits (i.e., health, safety, protection of assets).	• *Substantial public benefit (negative consequence if not provided)*	• *Public and individual benefit*	• *Primarily individual benefit*
Competition in the Market	• *Limited or no alternative providers*	• *Alternative providers unable to meet demand or need*	• *Alternative providers readily available*
Access	• *Open access by all*	• *Open access* • *Limited access to specific users*	• *Limited access to specific users*

Figure 114- Classification of Services Category Definitions

With assistance from Department staff, a classification of services (presented below and on the following pages) was conducted for the recreation programs offered by VPRD. *This may not be representative of all program offerings at Valparaiso and staff should check and complete with full program offerings.*

Core Program Area	ESSENTIAL Programs	Consultant Recommendation
Adult Enrichment	• N/A	• Senior Programming
Adult Sports	• N/A	• N/A
Central Park	• Ice Skating Lessons • Open Ice Skating • Splashpad • Facility Rentals	• Open Ice Skating • Splashpad • Fit Friday • Wellness Wednesday • Roller Skating
Day Camp	• Discovery Adventure Camp • Discovery Day Camp	• N/A
Golf	• First Tee • Jr. League	• N/A
Special Events	• N/A	• 4th of July Blast • Take a Kid Fishing • Ice Fishing Derby • Touch-A-Truck
Youth Enrichment	• N/A	• Earth Day

Youth Sports	• Coed Spring Soccer • Back to School Soccer League • Coed T-Ball League • Youth Track & Field • Youth Tennis • Coed Volleyball League	• N/A

Figure 115- Essential Programs

Core Program Area	IMPORTANT Programs	Consultant Recommendation
Adult Enrichment	• Tai Chi for Health • Yoga • Dance • Scarecrow Building • Stamping Workshops • Fairy Gardens • Coin/Currency Collecting • Butterfly Gardens • Photography	• Tai Chi for Health • Scarecrow Building
Adult Sports	• Men's Softball • Women's Softball • Coed Softball • Coed Soccer • Women's Volleyball • Coed Volleyball	• N/A
Central Park	• Concerts	• Concerts
Day Camp	• N/A	• N/A
Golf	• Private Lessons • Adult Classes • Ladies League	• Ladies League
Special Events	• Popcorn Panic • Potato to Panic Running Club	• Popcorn Panic • Bikin' & Eggs – Family Bike Ride
Youth Enrichment	• Play Pals • Busy Bees • Little Sprouts • Cooking at the Cottage • Kinder-Ready! • Science Seekers • Creation Station • Little Lunchers	• Play Pals • Busy Bees • Little Sprouts
Youth Sports	• Girls Fast Pitch Softball League • Summer Minor League Baseball • Cal Ripken Major League Baseball • Fall Rookie Baseball League • Fall Minors and Majors Baseball League • Fall Softball League • Winter Sports Skills Clinics • Rookie Baseball League	• N/A

Figure 116- Important Programs

Core Program Area	VALUE-ADDED Programs	Consultant Recommendation
Adult Enrichment	• Banta Center	• Yoga • Dance • Stamping Workshops

		• Fairy Gardens • Coin/Currency Collecting • Butterfly Gardens • Photography
Adult Sports	• Ultimate Frisbee • Flag Football	• Men's Softball • Women's Softball • Coed Softball • Coed Soccer • Women's Volleyball • Coed Volleyball • Ultimate Frisbee • Flag Football
Central Park	• Fit Friday • Wellness Wednesday • Roller Skating	• Ice Skating Lessons • Facility Rentals
Day Camp	• N/A	• Discovery Adventure Camp • Discovery Day Camp
Golf	• N/A	• First Tee • Jr. League • Private Lessons • Adult Classes
Special Events	• Triathlon • Ice Fishing Derby • Take a Kid Fishing	• Triathlon • "Potato" to Panic Running Club • Valpo Night Ride • Lit'l Kernel Puff
Youth Enrichment	• Friday Night Science • Preschool Dance • Musical Movers • Earth Day	• Cooking at the Cottage • Kinder-Ready! • Science Seekers • Creation Station • Little Lunchers • Friday Night Science • Preschool Dance • Musical Movers
Youth Sports	• Babe Ruth Baseball League • Instructional Day Baseball Camp • Softball Pitching Camp • Coed 3-on-3 Soccer Tournament • Youth Cross Country • Kickstart Soccer Camp • Youth Kickball League	• Coed Spring Soccer • Back to School Soccer League • Coed T-Ball League • Youth Track & Field • Youth Tennis • Coed Volleyball League • Girls Fast Pitch Softball League • Summer Minor League Baseball • Cal Ripken Major League Baseball • Fall Rookie Baseball League • Fall Minors and Majors Baseball League • Fall Softball League • Winter Sports Skills Clinics • Rookie Baseball League

Figure 117- Value-Added Programs

Based on the consultant recommendation, there are many programs that fall within the Value-Added classification. It should be noted that these programs should not be considered superfluous to the department's recreation program slate; instead, this classification process is used to reinforce pricing structures and how programs are going to be operated. By understanding how programs are classified, VPRD will be able to reinforce its programmatic philosophy to staff and to the public.

4.2.11 UNDERSTANDING THE FULL COST OF SERVICE

To properly fund all programs, either through tax subsidies or user fees, and to establish the right cost recovery targets, a Cost of Service Analysis should be conducted on each program, or program type, that accurately calculates direct (i.e., program-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs. Completing a Cost of Service Analysis not only helps determine the true and full cost of offering a program, but provides information that can be used to price programs based upon accurate delivery costs. The figure below illustrates the common types of costs that must be accounted for in a Cost of Service Analysis.
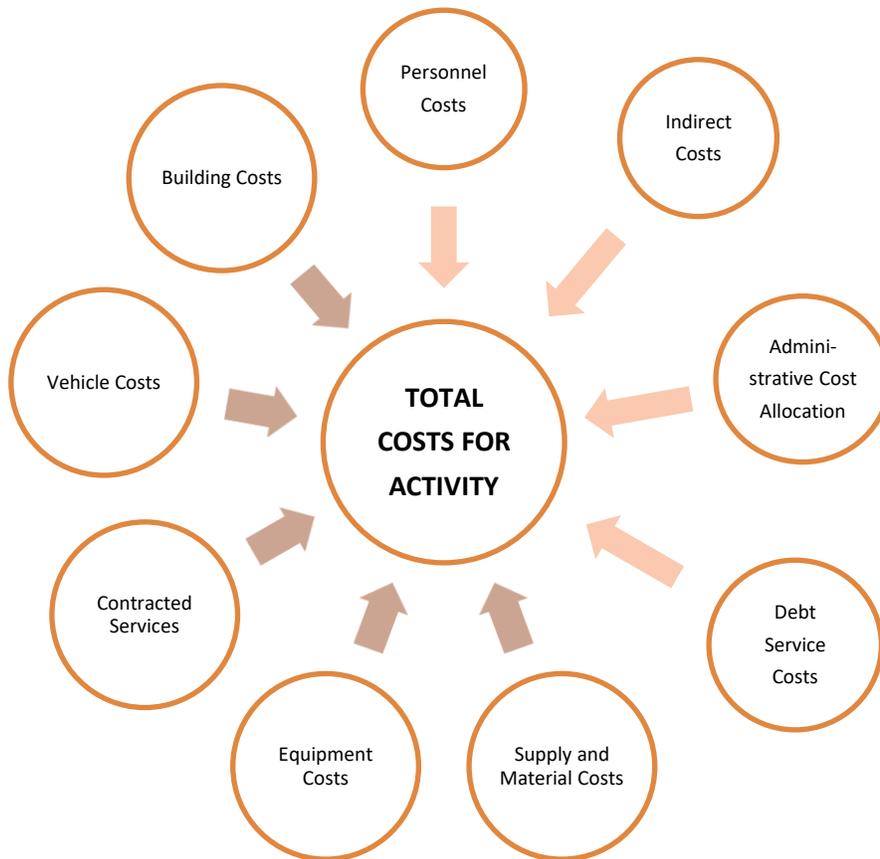
Figure 118- Cost of Service Model

The methodology for determining the total Cost of Service involves calculating the total cost for the activity, program, or service, then calculating the total revenue earned for that activity. Costs (and revenue) can also be derived on a per unit basis. Program or activity units may include:

- Number of participants
- Number of tasks performed
- Number of consumable units
- Number of service calls
- Number of events
- Required time for offering program/service

Agencies use Cost of Service Analyses to determine what financial resources are required to provide specific programs at specific levels of service. Results are used to determine and track cost recovery as well as to benchmark different programs provided by VPRD between one another. Cost recovery goals are established once Cost of Service totals have been calculated. Department staff should be trained on the process of conducting a Cost of Service Analysis and the process undertaken on a regular basis.

4.2.12 COST RECOVERY POLICY AND PRICING STRATEGIES

Cost recovery targets should reflect the degree to which a program provides a public versus private good. Programs providing public benefits (i.e. Essential programs) should be subsidized more by the Department; programs providing private benefits (i.e., Value-Added programs) should seek to recover costs and/or generate revenue for other services. To help plan and implement cost recovery policies, the consulting team has developed the following definitions to help classify specific programs within program areas.

	ESSENTIAL Programs	IMPORTANT Programs	VALUE-ADDED Programs
Description	• Part of the organizational mission • Serves a majority of the community • "We must offer this program"	• Important to the community • Serves large portions of the community • "We should offer this program"	• Enhanced community offerings • Serves niche groups • "It is nice to offer this program"
Desired Cost Recovery	• None to Moderate	• Moderate	• High to Complete
Desired Subsidy	• High to Complete	• Moderate	• Little to None

Figure 119- Suggested Cost Recovery Targets

Programs in the Essential category are critical to achieving the Departmental mission and providing community-wide benefits and, therefore, generally receive priority for tax-dollar subsidization. Programs falling into the Important or Value-Added classifications generally represent programs that receive lower priority for subsidization. Important programs contribute to the organizational mission but are not essential to it; therefore, cost recovery for these programs should be high (i.e., at least 80% overall). Value-Added programs are not critical to the mission and should be prevented from drawing upon limited public funding, so overall cost recovery for these programs should be near or in excess of 100%.

The pricing of programs should be established based on the Cost of Service Analysis, overlaid onto programs areas or specific events, and strategically adjusted according to market factors and/or policy goals. According to VPRD staff, the Department currently uses several pricing strategies.

Pricing Tactic	Adult Enrich.	Adult Sports	Central Park	Day Camp	Golf	Special Events	Youth Enrich.	Youth Sports
Age Segment			✔	✔				✔
Family/Household Status	✔			✔				
Residency	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔
Weekday/Weekend			✔		✔			
Prime/Non-Prime Time			✔		✔	✔		
Group Discounts	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔		
By Location								
By Competition (Market Rate)	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
By Cost Recovery Goals	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
By Customer's Ability to Pay	✔		✔					

Figure 120- Pricing Tactics Used

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Currently, VPRD uses every pricing strategy examined except for Location. The strategy used most often is a tie between Competition (Market Rate) and Cost Recovery Goals. The least used pricing strategy is a three-way tie among Family/Household Status, Weekday/Weekday, and Customer's Ability to Pay.

Overall, the degree in which pricing strategies are used is currently good but could be stronger with the adoption of additional strategies that meet with community needs and ability to pay. Pricing based on service or value to the community should also be considered. For example, as mentioned above, cost recovery for Essential programs should be lower than that for Value-Added programs. Staff should continue to monitor the effectiveness of the various pricing strategies they employ and make adjustments as necessary within the policy frameworks that guide the overall pricing philosophies of the Department. It is also important for yearly competitor and other service providers to be benchmarked, shopped, and evaluated, in order to monitor changes and track how those other providers compare with the Department's programs.

Furthermore, and as mentioned previously in this chapter, the planning team recommends that Mini Business Plans (2-3 pages) for each Core Program Area be created on a yearly basis. These plans should evaluate the Core Program Area based on meeting the outcomes desired for participants, cost recovery, percentage of the market and business controls, Cost of Service, pricing strategy for the next year, and marketing strategies that are to be implemented. If developed regularly and consistently, they can be effective tools for budget construction and justification processes.

4.2.13 PROGRAM STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The relationship between meeting the needs of the community, achieving the agency mission, and executing service delivery is of critical importance. With an understanding of this important dynamic, the following section provides an analysis of the service system and includes building on the service foundation that already exists within the agency. As observed from the discussions with and data from the staff, the community seems to be generally satisfied with the offerings provided by VPRD. Based on the consulting team's observations, the Department's operations and program offerings can be somewhat limited due to facility space. For example, Westside Park is home to the only public soccer fields in Valparaiso. Due to the heavy use, the fields do not have the luxury of being rested during the season and any bad weather will affect the soccer programs and leagues.

With this in mind, the actual program mix the Department provides is received well. Public feedback has brought forth the concept of integrating more outdoor recreation programming opportunities into the Department's program plan (see figure to the right).

Enhancements to performance management practices would yield overall improvements to the services provided to the community. This section is intended to provide resources and insight to move VPRD to a higher standard in diversity of program offerings and sophistication in quality management to move it into the realm of national best practices.

PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL STANDARDS

The practice of using program standards is essential for agencies desiring to perform at high levels and that aspire to be community and industry leaders. One of the most significant issues in managing a recreation program system includes the challenges associated with all the service transactions (in-person and online) handled by multiple staff members at a variety of facilities. It is easy for agencies to get bogged down in the minutia of implementing recreation programs and not pay attention to performance metrics that will help guide programming into the future. VPRD does a good job tracking program metrics. Current measures in place include:

- Total participants

- Participant to staff ratio

Additionally, VPRD makes it a priority to focus on cost recovery and how well each area is performing financially. Being fiscally responsible is an admirable trait of public agencies and the Department is taking the appropriate steps to ensure public funds are used wisely. Current measures in place include:

- Cost recovery goals
- Revenue to expense ratios
- Revenue increase percentages (from the previous year)

Some select performance measures may be used across all Core Program Areas, while others are used only for particular program types. This is acceptable, and even desirable, as long as the universal measures are reflective of core performance outcomes applicable across all Departmental programming, and that specific/specialized measures are used to track critical attributes unique to certain programs. According to the planning team's observations of other agencies, however, there is a danger of using performance measurement in excess, creating a situation wherein staff are hampered by the bureaucratic process of tracking performance rather than benefiting from it. Again, this issue can be mitigated by identifying critical program outcomes, developing a limited yet comprehensive set of performance metrics, and deploying them across the agency with an emphasis on efficient measurement by staff.

Additional performance metrics for VPRD staff to consider, if they align with desired organizational or programmatic area outcomes, include the following:

- Program cancelation rates
- Customer satisfaction levels
- Customer retention rates
- Cost per experience
- Service cost per resident
- Program or facility availability by geography
- Program availability distribution by age group

QUALITY MANAGEMENT METHODS

Public input and customer feedback is currently underutilized as a quality management strategy, and these efforts should be increased. Evaluations through public input should be strengthened at the Core Program Area level. This can help staff evaluate the lifecycle stage of the program and relevance to the community. For example, a pre- and post-program evaluation can be a critical tool for programmers to understand programming effectiveness, quality, and appropriateness. Current public input and feedback strategies used widely by the Department are limited to:

- Online survey
- Website and social media feedback

Given the organizational goals of the Department, trends in the park and recreation profession, and the level of performance reflected by VPRD staff in the area of programming, the consulting team recommends the following methods and best practices in order to maintain a culture of quality management in program delivery. These overall approaches reflect some of the observations presented previously and also include additional considerations based upon best practices and the organizational goals of the Department. Some practices are already periodically undertaken by VPRD in conjunction with other organizational processes and are re-emphasized here due to their criticality. Others represent new practices to be implemented.

- Annual Review Process: Staff present their yearly goals for program areas to senior leadership and/or an advisory board. This would include policy reviews, financial and registration performance, customer issues, and plans for the future. This process helps to ensure good communication and cooperation for supporting Departments, such as parks, administration and technology as well.

- Documented Program Development Process: This is required in order to reduce service variation and assist in training new staff. A common approach is to use a process map that provides guidance to staff for consistently developing new programs. It can help to diminish the learning curve for new staff and reinforce program development as a core competency. This is created in a flow chart format showing the steps in the process for program development including writing class descriptions, process steps, hiring staff, using contractual employees, and the list of standards.
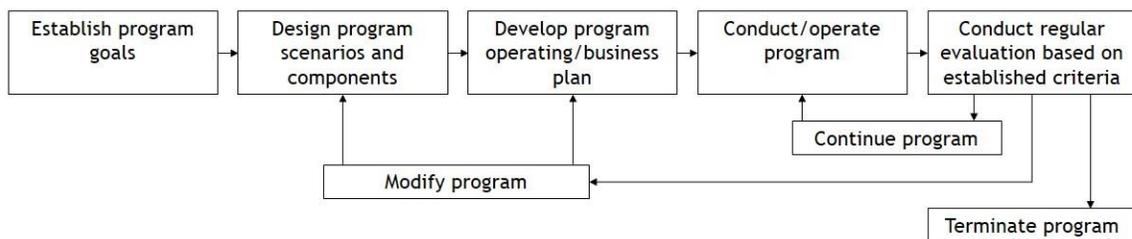
Figure 121- Program Development Process Model

- Instructor/Contractor Tool Kit: Kits need to be created by the staff that outline information about the Department, including mission, vision, values, goals, organizational structure, roster of users, program guides, program standards, evaluation forms, registration forms, important phone numbers, name tags, thank you cards, and program learning objectives.

- On-going Connections with Part-time and Seasonal Staff: There should be on-going processes and events to connect part-time and seasonal programming staff, as well as some contractors, with full-time personnel through meetings, email, newsletters, staff recognition, and random visits by management. This also assists with determining and managing job satisfaction of these employees.

- Ongoing Identification of Customer Requirements: Staff identify customer requirements for Core Program Areas on an ongoing basis. This is important to emphasize with staff that directly interface with customers. Requirements relate to those service attributes that are most important to a customer, and requirements should be developed with customer input. Each Core Program Area should include a listing of approximately five key customer requirements. For example, in a sports skills program, key requirements could include: overall safety of the program, instructional quality, convenience and ease of registration, cost of the program, and skill development.

- Ongoing Environmental Scan of Best Practices: Staff identify key competitors or similar providers, both locally and nationally, of Core Program Areas. Every year staff should develop a matrix of information to compare services in areas that have the greatest importance to customers. Benchmarking against other nationally recognized agencies can also provide a process to continuously improve programming.

- Staff Training & Development: Ensure that staff are provided basic life safety training in CPR and First Aid, and specialty staff (especially part time or contractors) have applicable enhanced life safety training for their role (ex., lifeguards). Customer service training will also enhance the quality of services VPRD can provide to the public within resource constraints. A regular quality check of part time and contracted instructors will also help ensure high customer satisfaction marks.

4.2.14 VOLUNTEER AND PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

Today's economic climate and political realities require most public park and recreation Departments to seek productive and meaningful partnerships with both community organizations and individuals to deliver quality and seamless services to their residents. These relationships should be mutually beneficial to each party to better meet overall community needs and expand the positive impact of the agency's mission.

VPRD currently utilizes volunteers for:

- Special Events: 10-20% for each event
- Youth Sports: 1-2 per team
- Golf: 3-5% for First Tee Program

Having effective partnerships and meaningful volunteerism will be key strategy areas for VPRD to meet community needs in the years to come. VPRD has good volunteer support currently, and those individuals should continue to be maintained and cultivated; however, there is an opportunity for the Department to increase volunteerism across the remaining Core Program Areas. Many park Departments create system "champions" by developing a strong volunteer base and cultivating relationships over the years

VOLUNTEERS

When managed with respect and used strategically, volunteers can serve as the primary advocates for VPRD and its offerings. Best practices that the Department should be aware of in managing volunteers include:

- Involve volunteers in cross-training to expose them to various Departmental functions and increase their skill. This can also increase their utility, allowing for more flexibility in making work assignments, and can increase their appreciation and understanding of the Department.
- Ensure a staff person has responsibility as the designated Volunteer Coordinator, who should stay fully informed about the strategic direction of the agency overall, including strategic initiatives for all divisions. Periodically identify, evaluate, or revise specific tactics the volunteer services program should undertake to support the larger organizational mission.
- A key part of maintaining volunteerism desirability within the agency is to develop a good reward and recognition system. The consultant team recommends using tactics similar to those found in frequent flier programs, wherein volunteers can use their volunteer hours to obtain early registration at programs, or discounted pricing at certain programs, rentals or events, or any other Department function. Identify and summarize volunteer recognition policies in a Volunteer Policy document.
- Regularly update volunteer position descriptions. Include an overview of the volunteer position lifecycle in the Volunteer Policy, including the procedure for creating a new position.
- Ensure end-of-lifecycle process steps are included in the Volunteer Policy to ensure that there is formal documentation of resignation or termination of volunteers. Also, include ways to monitor and track reasons for resignation/termination and perform exit interviews with outgoing volunteers when able.
- Categorize and track volunteerism by type and extent of work, such as:
  o Regular volunteers: Those volunteers whose work is considered to be continuous, provided their work performance is satisfactory and there is a continuing need for their services.
  o Special event volunteers: Volunteers who help out with a particular event with no expectation that they will return after the event is complete.
  o Episodic volunteers: Volunteers who help out with a particular project type on a recurring or irregular basis with no expectation that they will return for other duties.

- - Volunteer interns: Volunteers who have committed to work for the agency to fulfill a specific higher-level educational learning requirement.
  - Community service volunteers: Volunteers who are volunteering over a specified period of time to fulfill a community service requirement
- Encourage employees to volunteer themselves in the community. Exposure of VPRD staff to the community in different roles (including those not related to parks and recreation) will raise awareness of the agency and its volunteer program. It also helps staff understand the role and expectations of a volunteer if they can experience it for themselves.

PARTNERSHIPS

VPRD has a strong partnership network that is essential for the success of the organization. Current partners include the United Arts Dance Studio, Fred Astaire Dance Studio, Chesterton Feed and Garden, Valparaiso Community Schools, Valparaiso University, YMCA, Porter Health, Pump Fitness, Trufit, PNC Bank, and many individual contractors. Many of these partnerships are formal and include written agreements; however, there are several partnerships that are currently informal. The Department runs the risk of losing some of these informal partnerships should circumstances change without formal agreements. In order to expand upon existing relationships within the community, it is important to have an overall partnership philosophy that is supported by a policy framework for managing these relationships.

In many instances, partnerships are inequitable to the public agency and do not produce reasonable shared benefits between parties. The recommended policies will promote fairness and equity within the existing and future partnerships while helping staff to manage against potential internal and external conflicts. Certain partnership principles must be adopted by the Department for existing and future partnerships to work effectively. These partnership principles are as follows:

- All partnerships require a working agreement with measurable outcomes and will be evaluated on a regular basis. This should include reports to the agency on the performance and outcomes of the partnership.
- All partnerships should track costs associated with the partnership investment to demonstrate the shared level of equity.
- All partnerships should maintain a culture that focuses on collaborative planning on a regular basis, regular communications, and annual reporting on performance and outcomes.

Partnerships can be pursued and developed with other public entities such as neighboring cities; state or federal agencies; nonprofit organizations; as well as with private, for-profit organizations. Specifically, the Department can benefit from a formalized partnership with the Valparaiso School System for space agreement and with local sports organizations. There are recommended standard policies and practices that will apply to any partnership, and those that are unique to relationships with private, for-profit entities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL PARTNERSHIPS

All partnerships developed and maintained by VPRD should adhere to common policy requirements. These include:

- Each partner will meet with or report to Department staff on a regular basis to plan and share activity-based costs and equity invested.
- Partners will establish measurable outcomes and work through key issues to focus on for the coming year to meet the desired outcomes.
- Each partner will focus on meeting a balance of equity agreed to and track investment costs accordingly.

- Measurable outcomes will be reviewed quarterly and shared with each partner, with adjustments made as needed.
- A working partnership agreement will be developed and monitored together on a quarterly or as-needed basis.
- Each partner will assign a liaison to serve each partnership agency for communication and planning purposes.
- If conflicts arise between partners, the VPRD Director, along with the other partner's highest ranking officer assigned to the agreement, will meet to resolve the issue(s) in a timely manner. Any exchange of money or traded resources will be made based on the terms of the partnership agreement.
- Each partner will meet with the other partner's respective board or managing representatives annually, to share updates and outcomes of the partnership agreement.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The recommended policies and practices for public/private partnerships that may include businesses, private groups, private associations, or individuals who desire to make a profit from use of VPRD facilities or programs are detailed below. These can also apply to partnerships where a private party wishes to develop a facility on park property, to provide a service on publically-owned property, or who has a contract with the agency to provide a task or service on the agency's behalf at public facilities. These unique partnership principles are as follows:

- Upon entering into an agreement with a private business, group, association or individual, VPRD staff and political leadership must recognize that they must allow the private entity to meet their financial objectives within reasonable parameters that protect the mission, goals and integrity of the Department.
- As an outcome of the partnership, VPRD must receive a designated fee that may include a percentage of gross revenue dollars less sales tax on a regular basis, as outlined in the contract agreement.
- The working agreement of the partnership must establish a set of measurable outcomes to be achieved, as well as the tracking method of how those outcomes will be monitored by the agency. The outcomes will include standards of quality, financial reports, customer satisfaction, payments to the agency, and overall coordination with the Department for the services rendered.
- Depending on the level of investment made by the private contractor, the partnership agreement can be limited to months, a year or multiple years.
- If applicable, the private contractor will provide a working management plan annually they will follow to ensure the outcomes desired by VPRD. The management plan can and will be negotiated, if necessary. Monitoring of the management plan will be the responsibility of both partners. The agency must allow the contractor to operate freely in their best interest, as long as the outcomes are achieved and the terms of the partnership agreement are adhered to.
- The private contractor cannot lobby agency advisory or governing boards for renewal of a contract. Any such action will be cause for termination. All negotiations must be with the VPRD Director or their designee.
- The agency has the right to advertise for private contracted partnership services, or negotiate on an individual basis with a bid process based on the professional level of the service to be provided.
- If conflicts arise between both partners, the highest-ranking officers from both sides will try to resolve the issue before going to each partner's legal counsels. If none can be achieved, the partnership shall be dissolved.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

These recommendations are an overview of existing partnership opportunities available to VPRD, as well as a suggested approach to organizing partnership pursuits. This is not an exhaustive list of all potential partnerships that can be developed, but can be used as a tool of reference for the agency to develop its own priorities in partnership development. The following five areas of focus are recommended:

1. Operational Partners: Other entities and organizations that can support the efforts of VPRD to maintain facilities and assets, promote amenities and park usage, support site needs, provide programs and events, and/or maintain the integrity of natural/cultural resources through in-kind labor, equipment, or materials.
2. Vendor Partners: Service providers and/or contractors that can gain brand association and notoriety as a preferred vendor or supporter of VPRD in exchange for reduced rates, services, or some other agreed upon benefit.
3. Service Partners: Nonprofit organizations and/or friends groups that support the efforts of the agency to provide programs and events, and/or serve specific constituents in the community collaboratively.
4. Co-Branding Partners: Private, for-profit organizations that can gain brand association and notoriety as a supporter of VPRD in exchange for sponsorship or co-branded programs, events, marketing and promotional campaigns, and/or advertising opportunities.
5. Resource Development Partners: A private, nonprofit organization with the primary purpose to leverage private sector resources, grants, other public funding opportunities, and resources from individuals and groups within the community to support the goals and objectives of the agency on mutually agreed strategic initiatives.

4.2.15 MARKETING AND PROMOTION ASSESSMENT

VPRD staff are engaged in marketing and promotion to varying degrees. The Department produces one Activity Guide that contains the year's programs, an online guide, flyers, brochures, marquees, and use direct mail. They also utilize in-facility promotions and signage where appropriate. Use of Social Media and Word of Mouth is done particularly well, with Facebook serving as a main interface with the community.

The Parks and Recreation Department lacks a designated marketing coordinator position so current marketing efforts depend upon support from other staff and other strategic partners to play a role in marketing and public communication. This can be a marketing challenge because of the reliance on others.

Despite these challenges, VPRD has continued to update its website and communication methods. However, some community residents would like to see the Department increase event communication by offering an event calendar by facility. The Department's most recent website upgrade integrated this feature and residents can now subscribe to calendar updates to receive ongoing notifications.

Effective communication strategies require striking an appropriate balance between messaging content and volume while utilizing the "right" methods of delivery. The Department has multiple subjects and areas of focus that need to be addressed in communications. There needs to be a reliance upon multiple types of media to deliver those messages. Similarly, the community must perceive the interconnectedness of the whole messaging process so that it is not received as fragmented and overwhelming.

A Department-wide strategic marketing plan is recommended that addresses the following:

- Target audiences/markets identification

- Key messages for each target market

- Communication channels/media for each target market

- Graphic identity and use protocols

- Style handbook for all marketing material

- Social media strategies and tactics

- Communication schedule

- Marketing roles and responsibilities

- Staffing requirements

An effective marketing plan must build upon and integrate with supporting plans, such as the master plan, and directly coordinate with organization priorities. The plan will also provide specific guidance as to how the Department's identity and brand needs to be consistently portrayed across the multiple methods and deliverables used for communication. Other recommendations for marketing and promotion include:

- Develop a comprehensive Department Marketing Plan to assess needs, skills, and funding. Tie performance metrics to job evaluations, including revenue generation to offset the cost of the position.

- Create a dedicated budget for marketing for events, facilities, programs, and general awareness of the VPRD system. Use the Department Marketing Plan to inform what messages are delivered to what segments of the community using the most appropriate delivery methods.

- Establish priority segments to target in terms of new program/service development and communication tactics.

- Build volunteerism to serve marketing and communication efforts. Recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows.

- Establish and review regularly performance measures for marketing.

- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion.

4.2.16 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAM PORTFOLIO

- Consider incorporating Adaptive Programming into program offerings as an objective and priority across all other Core Program Areas to promote inclusion throughout all VPRD offerings.
- Consider separating Senior Programs from Adult Enrichment.
- Consider individual registrations in addition to team registrations for Youth and Adult Sports leagues.
- Develop a Mini Business Plan for every Core Program Area that identifies unique descriptions, goals, and desired outcomes for each Core Program Area and lists the programs or services offered within each.
- Consider adding additional Core Program Areas based on service gaps and community interests including:
  - Family Programs
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Aquatics
  - Fitness and Wellness

AGE SEGMENTS

- Analyze Age Segments by Core Program Area to ensure full coverage based on demographics; especially for senior adults and families.
- Given the growing population trend for residents ages 55 and over, and the growing demand for services in this age bracket, segment senior programming into sub-segments such as 55-70 and 71 and over.
- Conduct an Age Segment Analysis for every program on an annual basis.

PROGRAM LIFECYCLE

- Continue to keep about 50-60% of all programs in the Introductory, Take-Off, or Growth lifecycle stages in order to align with trends and help meet the evolving needs of the community.
- Evaluate programs categorized in Saturation and Decline stages for program sunset and reallocation of resources. Conversely, these programs could also be reprogrammed to bring them back to the Mature stage.
- Complete a Program Lifecycle Analysis on an annual basis to ensure that the percentage distribution aligns with Department goals and best practices.

PROGRAM FUNDING, COST RECOVERY, AND PRICING

- On an annual basis, review the classification of programs as Essential, Important, and Value-Added and apply true cost of service pricing to each program area before updating cost recovery goals.
- Use the spectrum of public-to-private benefit to inform cost recovery targets and pricing strategies. Programs providing public benefits should be subsidized more by the agency.
- Value-Added programs, which are less critical to for further away from the agency mission, should aim to yield a higher cost recovery rate to sustain themselves, leaving the limited tax-based appropriations to fund Essential and Important programs.
- Consider expanding the use of pricing strategies, particularly by customer's ability to pay and by family/household status.
- Mini Business Plans should be developed for each Core Program Area. Additional planning regarding cost controls and pricing is recommended. Mini Business Plans will help monitor the success of achieving outcomes, help control cost recovery, guide operational adjustments, and serve as budget development tools.

PROGRAM STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Expand public input methods including pre- and post-program evaluations to solicit feedback from customers.
- Develop and implement consistent Department-wide program management and quality standards.
- Continue to conduct an annual review process so that staff and leadership can review policies, operations, issues, and plans for the future.
- Conduct regular *summative* and *formative* program evaluations and tie to marketing efforts.
- Begin documenting the program development process to formalize and coordinate program lifecycles in a strategic way.
- Develop an instructor/contractor tool kit or resource package with critical information and information on strategic frameworks.
- Create on-going connections with part-time and seasonal staff to integrate them to the Department and to help manage satisfaction and performance.

- Identify customer requirements for Core Program Areas (at least) and use them for performance management.
- Conduct an environmental scan of best practices every few years to inspire innovation and help make corrections to program operations.
- Develop and implement quality control mechanisms for instructors and contractors to ensure effectiveness and build credibility.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

- Involve volunteers in cross-training to expose them to various Departmental functions and increase their skill.
- Standardize volunteer recognitions tactics. Identify and summarize volunteer recognition policies in a Volunteer Policy document.
- Regularly update volunteer position descriptions. Include an overview of the volunteer position lifecycle in the Volunteer Policy, including the procedure for creating a new position.
- Add end-of-lifecycle process steps to the Volunteer Policy to ensure that there is formal documentation of resignation or termination of volunteers. Also, include ways to monitor and track reasons for resignation/termination and perform exit interviews with outgoing volunteers when able.
- Categorize and track volunteerism by type and extent of work, such as regular volunteers, special event volunteers, episodic volunteers, volunteer interns, and community service volunteers.
- Encourage employees to volunteer in the community.

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Formalize and continually maintain an overall partnership philosophy supported by a policy framework.
- Require all partnerships to have a working agreement with measureable outcomes evaluated on a regular basis.
- Require all partnerships to track costs to demonstrate the shared level of equity and investment.
- Maintain a culture of collaborative planning for all partnerships, focusing on regular communications and annual reporting.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Develop a comprehensive Department Marketing Plan that addresses target markets, messages for each target, communication channels, staff roles and responsibilities, and staffing requirements.
- Tie the marketing plan directly to the Department mission and vision, as well as other critical planning tools.
- Create a dedicated budget for marketing for events, facilities, programs, and general awareness of the VPRD system.
- While it is important to serve all members of the community, establish priority segments to target in terms of new program/service development and communication tactics to reach them.
- Use community and participant input to inform marketing efforts.
- Build volunteerism in the marketing and communication efforts, and recruit new volunteers with new skills as the marketing program grows.
- Establish performance measures for marketing efforts and review them regularly.
- Enhance relationships with partners that can leverage marketing efforts through cross-promotion.

4.3 LEVEL OF SERVICE

4.3.1 LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS OVERVIEW

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

The consulting team evaluated park facility standards using a combination of resources. These resources included market trends, demographic data, recreation activity participation rates, community and stakeholder input, NRPA PRORAGIS data, the statistically valid community survey, and general observations. This information allowed standards to be customized to VPRD.

It is important to note that these LOS standards should be viewed as a guide. The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the particular situation and needs of the community. By applying these standards to the population of Valparaiso, gaps or surpluses in park and facility types are revealed. Additionally, standards were calculated with the addition of the Center Township population. At the time of this document's development, the City of Valparaiso is approved to create a joint park board with the Township to unify park and recreation resources and services.

According to the LOS, there are multiple needs to be met in Valparaiso to properly serve the community today and in the future (especially with the addition of the Center Township population). The existing level of service meets and exceeds best practices and recommended service levels for many items; however, there are several areas that do not meet recommended standards. Although VPRD meets the standards for total park acres, there is a deficit for neighborhood park, community park, and regional park acreage. The Department does have a lot of undeveloped acreage which, when developed, could alleviate the park acreage deficit.

For outdoor amenities, VPRD shows a shortage of multi-purpose fields, baseball fields (both adult and youth), basketball courts, dog parks, sand volleyball courts, unpaved hiking trails, and outdoor pools. It should be noted, however, that as of the writing of this document, the Department has plans to construct a dog park within the system. In terms of indoor space, VPRD has a shortage of approximately 45,000 ft.[2] of indoor recreation space.

With the addition of the Center Township population, the current and projected Level of Service for VPRD decreases drastically. All acres and amenities are below recommended standards except for picnic shelters, paved multi-use trails, and spraygrounds. To keep up with the projected population growth of the City and the addition of the Center Township population, the City will need to develop additional park acres and add many different types of amenities.

The standards that follow are based upon population figures for 2015 and 2020, the latest estimates available at the time of analysis.

Valparaiso Parks Level of Service Standards - City Limits

PARKS: Park Type	Valpo Parks	Schools	Valpo YMCA	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population	Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area	2015 Meet Standard/ Need Exists	2015 Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	2020 Meet Standard/ Need Exists	2020 Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed
Neighborhood Parks	15.50			15.50	0.48 acres per 1,000	2.00 acres per 1,000	Need Exists	49 Acre(s)	Need Exists	51 Acre(s)
Community Parks	147.50			147.50	4.55 acres per 1,000	5.00 acres per 1,000	Need Exists	15 Acre(s)	Need Exists	18 Acre(s)
Regional Parks	122.50			122.50	3.78 acres per 1,000	5.50 acres per 1,000	Need Exists	56 Acre(s)	Need Exists	60 Acre(s)
Special Use Park	270.10			270.10	8.33 acres per 1,000	8.00 acres per 1,000	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)
Undeveloped Acres	153.00			153.00	4.72 acres per 1,000	0.00 acres per 1,000	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)
Total Park Acres	**708.60**	**-**	**-**	**708.60**	21.84 acres per 1,000	20.50 acres per 1,000	**Meets Standard**	**- Acre(s)**	**Meets Standard**	**- Acre(s)**
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:										
Picnic Shelters	23.00	-	1.00	24.00	1.00 site per 1,352	1.00 site per 2,500	Meets Standard	- Sites(s)	Meets Standard	- Sites(s)
Soccer Fields	9.00	0.30	-	9.30	1.00 field per 3,488	1.00 field per 4,000	Meets Standard	1 Field(s)	Meets Standard	- Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Fields (Football, Cricket, Lacrosse, Rugby)	-	4.00	-	4.00	1.00 field per 8,111	1.00 field per 6,000	Need Exists	1 Field(s)	Need Exists	2 Field(s)
Adult Baseball Fields	2.00	-	-	2.00	1.00 field per 16,222	1.00 field per 6,000	Need Exists	3 Field(s)	Need Exists	4 Field(s)
Youth Baseball Fields	4.00	-	-	4.00	1.00 field per 8,111	1.00 field per 5,000	Need Exists	2 Field(s)	Need Exists	3 Field(s)
Softball Fields	6.00	-	-	6.00	1.00 field per 5,407	1.00 field per 6,000	Meets Standard	- Field(s)	Meets Standard	- Field(s)
Basketball Courts	5.00	-	-	5.00	1.00 court per 6,489	1.00 court per 4,000	Need Exists	3 Court(s)	Need Exists	3 Court(s)
Tennis Courts	1.00	7.00	-	8.00	1.00 court per 4,055	1.00 court per 5,000	Meets Standard	- Court(s)	Meets Standard	- Court(s)
Playgrounds	13.00	1.60	1.00	15.60	1.00 site per 2,080	1.00 site per 2,500	Meets Standard	- Site(s)	Meets Standard	- Site(s)
Dog Parks	-	-	-	-	1.00 site per #DIV/0!	1.00 site per 40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Meets Standard	- Site(s)
Skate Park	1.00	-	-	1.00	1.00 site per 32,443	1.00 site per 40,000	Meets Standard	- Site(s)	Meets Standard	- Site(s)
Sand Volleyball	-	-	-	-	1.00 site per #DIV/0!	1.00 site per 15,000	Need Exists	2 Site(s)	Need Exists	2 Site(s)
Paved Multi-Use Trails	18.75	-	-	18.75	0.58 miles per 1,000	0.40 miles per 1,000	Meets Standard	- Mile(s)	Meets Standard	- Mile(s)
Unpaved Trails/ Hiking Trails	1.00	-	-	1.00	0.03 miles per 1,000	0.10 miles per 1,000	Need Exists	2 Mile(s)	Need Exists	2 Mile(s)
Spraygrounds	1.00	-	-	1.00	1.00 site per 32,443	1.00 site per 50,000	Meets Standard	- Site(s)	Meets Standard	- Site(s)
Outdoor Pools	-	-	-	-	1.00 site per #DIV/0!	1.00 site per 50,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)
INDOOR AMENITIES:										
Recreation/Gymnasium (Square Feet)	-	12,000.00	7,800.00	19,800.00	0.61 SF per person	2.00 SF per person	Need Exists	45,086 Square Feet	Need Exists	46,532 Square Feet

2015 Estimated Population: 32,443
2020 Estimated Population: 33,166

Notes:
School Inventory is reduced due to public access availability for several amenities.
Central Park Plaza acres is included under Special Use acres.

Figure 122- Level of Service for City Limits

Valparaiso Parks Level of Service Standards - With Jurisdiction Area Population

PARKS:	2015 Inventory - Developed Facilities					Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area	2015 Facility Standards		2020 Facility Standards	
Park Type	Valpo Parks	Schools	Valpo YMCA	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed
Neighborhood Parks	15.50			15.50	0.34 acres per 1,000	2.00 acres per 1,000	Need Exists	75 Acre(s)	Need Exists	77 Acre(s)
Community Parks	147.50			147.50	3.28 acres per 1,000	5.00 acres per 1,000	Need Exists	78 Acre(s)	Need Exists	85 Acre(s)
Regional Parks	122.50			122.50	2.72 acres per 1,000	5.50 acres per 1,000	Need Exists	125 Acre(s)	Need Exists	133 Acre(s)
Special Use Park	270.10			270.10	6.00 acres per 1,000	8.00 acres per 1,000	Need Exists	90 Acre(s)	Need Exists	101 Acre(s)
Undeveloped Acres	-			-	- acres per 1,000	0.00 acres per 1,000	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)	Meets Standard	- Acre(s)
Total Park Acres	**555.60**	**-**	**-**	**555.60**	**12.34 acres per 1,000**	**20.50 acres per 1,000**	**Need Exists**	**367 Acre(s)**	**Need Exists**	**396 Acre(s)**
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:										
Picnic Shelters	23.00	-	1.00	24.00	1.00 site per 1,875	1.00 site per 2,500	Meets Standard	- Site(s)	Meets Standard	- Site(s)
Soccer Fields	9.00	0.30	-	9.30	1.00 field per 4,839	1.00 field per 4,000	Need Exists	2 Field(s)	Need Exists	2 Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Fields (Football, Cricket, Lacrosse, Rugby)	-	4.00	-	4.00	1.00 field per 11,252	1.00 field per 6,000	Need Exists	4 Field(s)	Need Exists	4 Field(s)
Adult Baseball Fields	2.00	-	-	2.00	1.00 field per 22,504	1.00 field per 6,000	Need Exists	6 Field(s)	Need Exists	6 Field(s)
Youth Baseball Fields	4.00	-	-	4.00	1.00 field per 11,252	1.00 field per 5,000	Need Exists	5 Field(s)	Need Exists	5 Field(s)
Softball Fields	6.00	-	-	6.00	1.00 field per 7,501	1.00 field per 6,000	Need Exists	2 Field(s)	Need Exists	2 Field(s)
Basketball Courts	5.00	-	-	5.00	1.00 court per 9,001	1.00 court per 4,000	Need Exists	6 Court(s)	Need Exists	7 Court(s)
Tennis Courts	1.00	7.00	-	8.00	1.00 court per 5,626	1.00 court per 5,000	Need Exists	1 Court(s)	Need Exists	1 Court(s)
Playgrounds	13.00	1.60	1.00	15.60	1.00 site per 2,885	1.00 site per 2,500	Need Exists	2 Site(s)	Need Exists	3 Site(s)
Dog Parks	-	-	-	-	1.00 site per #DIV/0!	1.00 site per 40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	0 Site(s)
Skate Park	1.00	-	-	1.00	1.00 site per 45,007	1.00 site per 40,000	Need Exists	0 Site(s)	Meets Standard	- Site(s)
Sand Volleyball	-	-	-	-	1.00 site per #DIV/0!	1.00 site per 15,000	Need Exists	3 Site(s)	Need Exists	3 Site(s)
Paved Multi-Use Trails	18.75	-	-	18.75	0.42 miles per 1,000	0.40 miles per 1,000	Meets Standard	- Mile(s)	Meets Standard	- Mile(s)
Unpaved Trails/ Hiking Trails	1.00	-	-	1.00	0.02 miles per 45,007	0.10 miles per 1,000	Need Exists	4 Mile(s)	Need Exists	4 Mile(s)
Spraygrounds	1.00	-	-	1.00	1.00 site per #DIV/0!	1.00 site per 50,000	Meets Standard	- Site(s)	Meets Standard	- Site(s)
Outdoor Pools	-	-	-	-	1.00 site per 50,000	1.00 site per 50,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)
INDOOR AMENITIES:										
Recreation/Gymnasium (Square Feet)	-	12,000.00	7,800.00	19,800.00	0.44 SF per person	2.00 SF per person	Need Exists	70,214 Square Feet	Need Exists	73,052 Square Feet

2015 Estimated Population - Center Township	45,007
2020 Estimated Population - Center Township	46,426

Notes:
School Inventory is reduced due to public access availability for several amenities.
Central Park Plaza acres is included under Special Use acres.

Figure 123- Level of Service for City Limits and Jurisdiction Area

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4.4 SERVICE AREA ANALYSIS/EQUITY MAPPING

Service area maps and standards assist management staff and key leadership in assessing where services are offered, how equitable the service distribution and delivery is across the Valparaiso service area and how effective the service is as it compares to the demographic densities. In addition, looking at guidelines with reference to population enables the City to assess gaps in services, where facilities are needed, or where an area is over saturated. This allows the City management to make appropriate capital improvement decisions based upon need for a system as a whole and the ramifications that may have on a specific area.

Figures 124-133 show the service area maps that were developed for each of the following major assets:

- Adult Baseball Fields
- Basketball Courts
- Picnic Shelters
- Playgrounds
- Skate Parks
- Soccer Fields
- Softball Fields
- Spraygrounds/Splash Pads
- Tennis Courts
- Youth Baseball Fields

The source for the population used for standard development is the estimated 2016 population and projected 2021 populations as reported by Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). The shaded areas in the Equity Maps indicate the service level (i.e., the population being served by that park type/amenity) as outlined in the previous section.

City meets the recommended current and projected standards. Currently there is no need for additional service in the City.

4.4.1 ADULT BASEBALL FIELDS
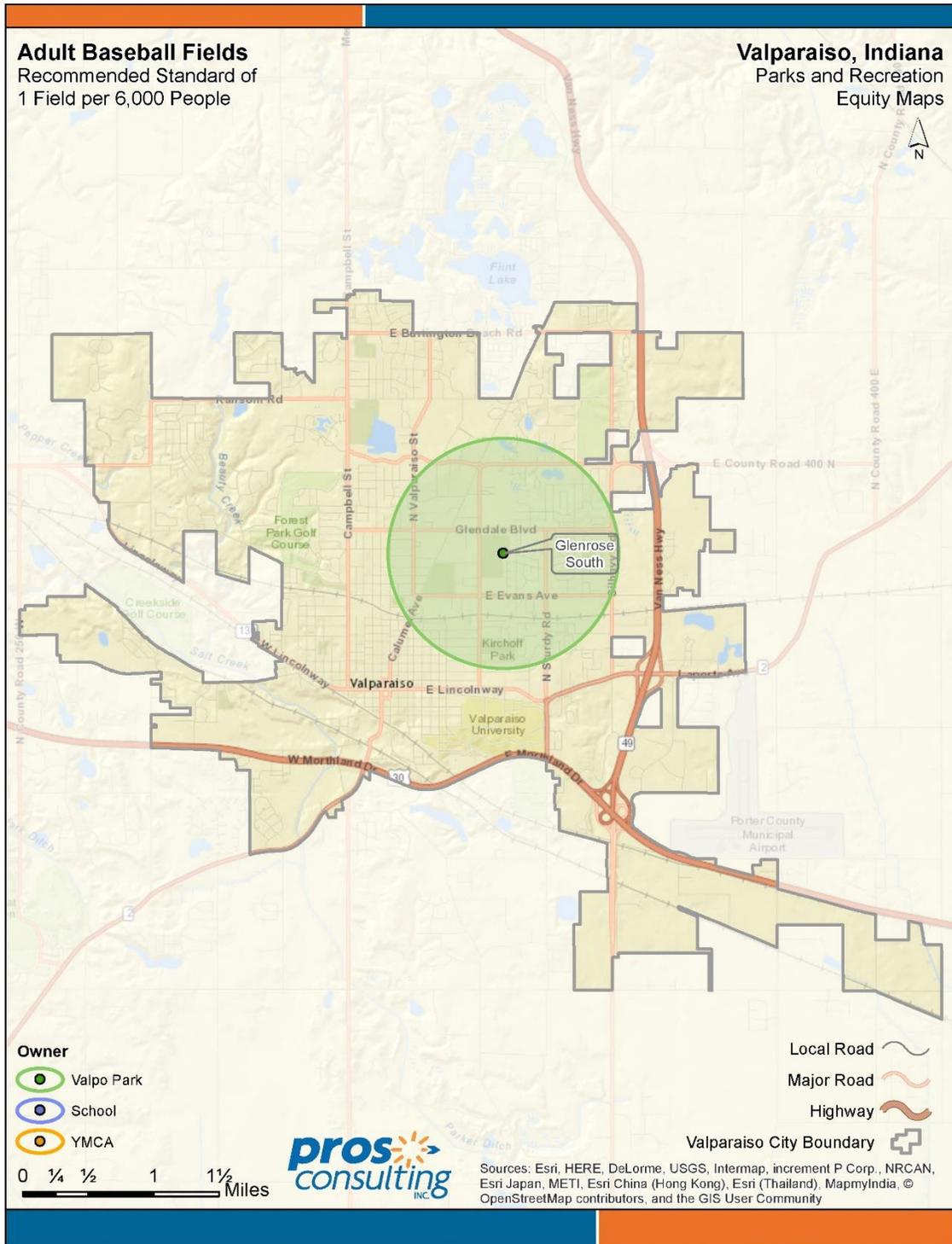
Figure 124- Adult Baseball Fields Equity Map

4.4.2 BASKETBALL COURTS
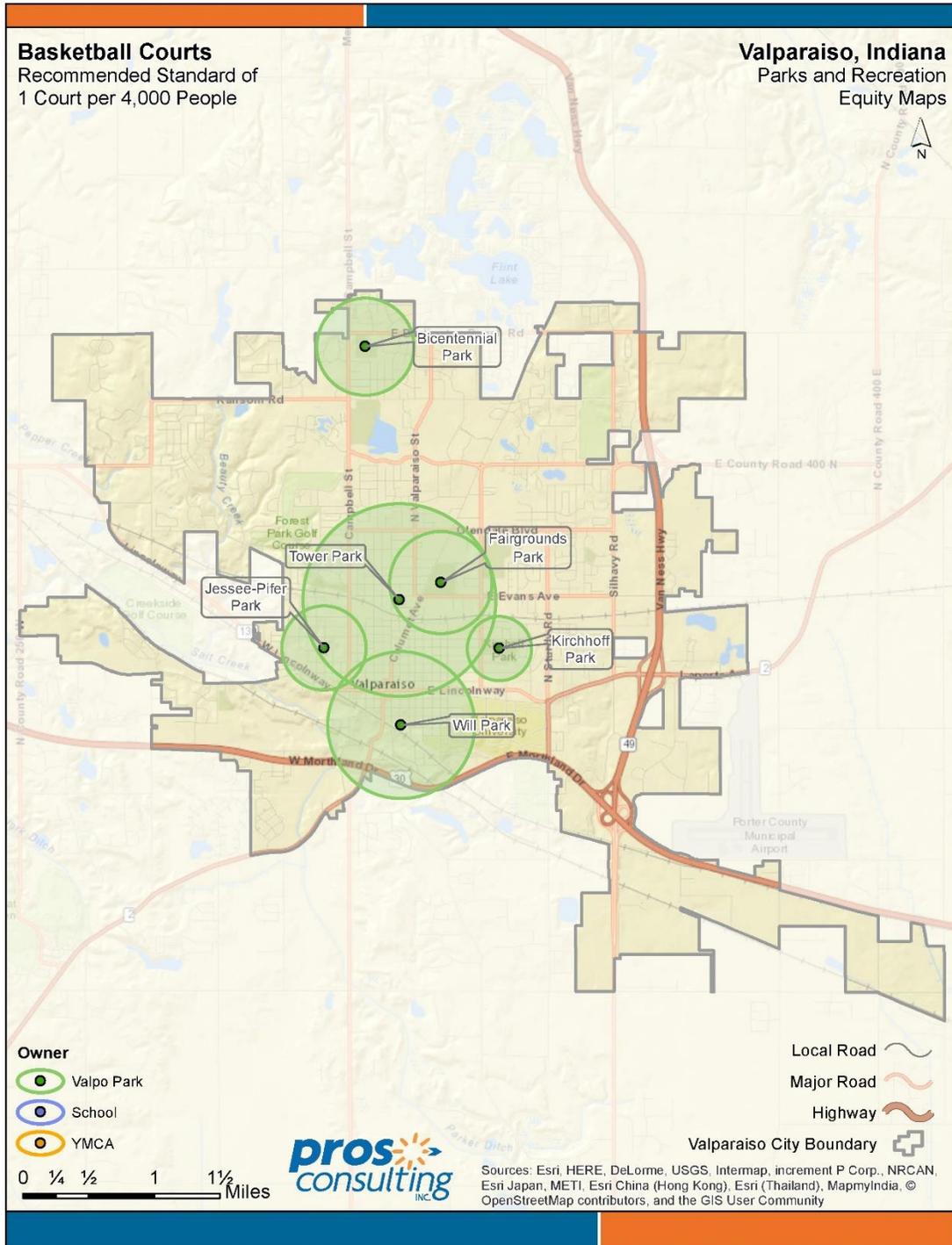
Figure 125- Basketball Courts Equity Map

4.4.3 PICNIC SHELTERS
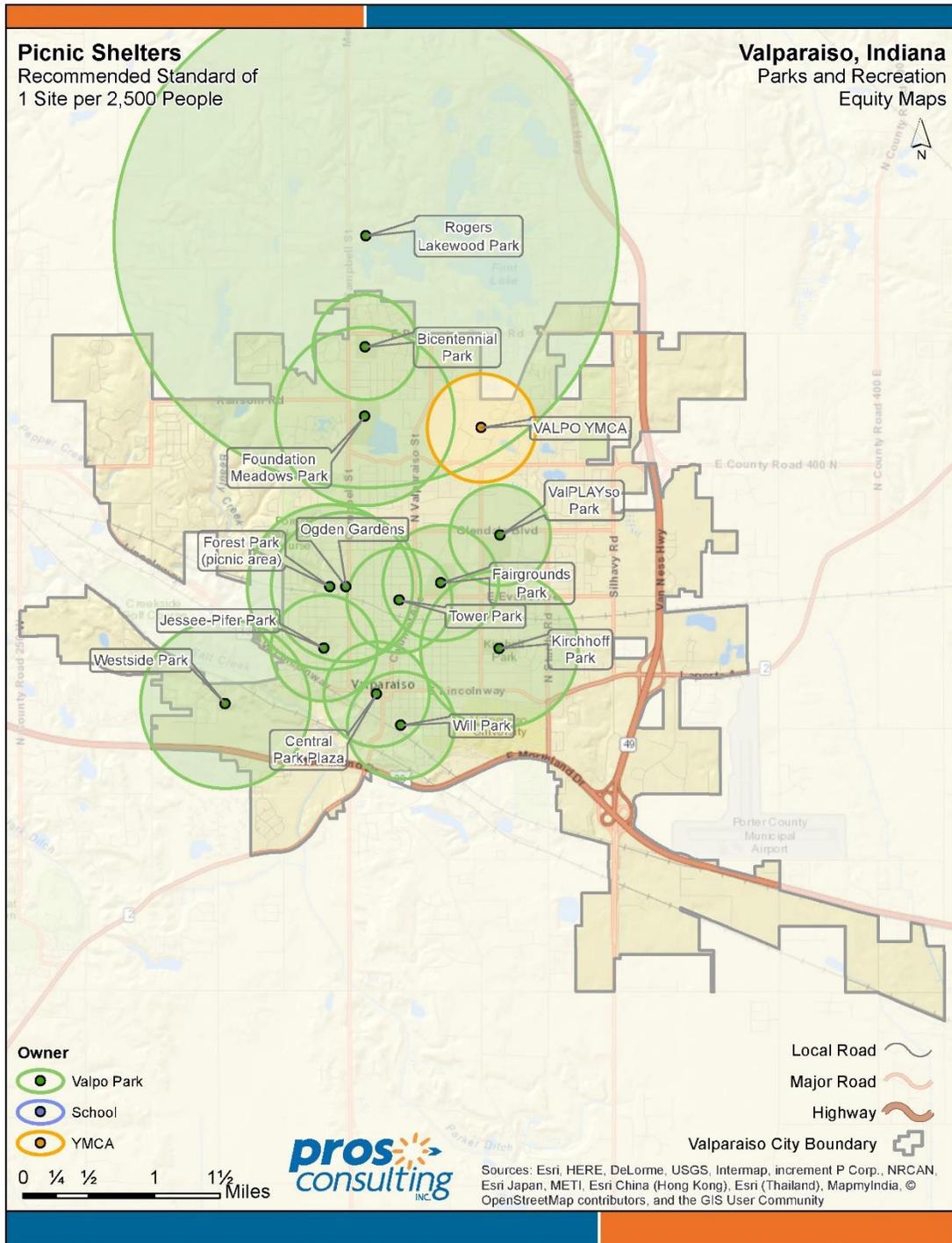
Figure 126- Picnic Shelters Equity Map

4.4.4 PLAYGROUNDS
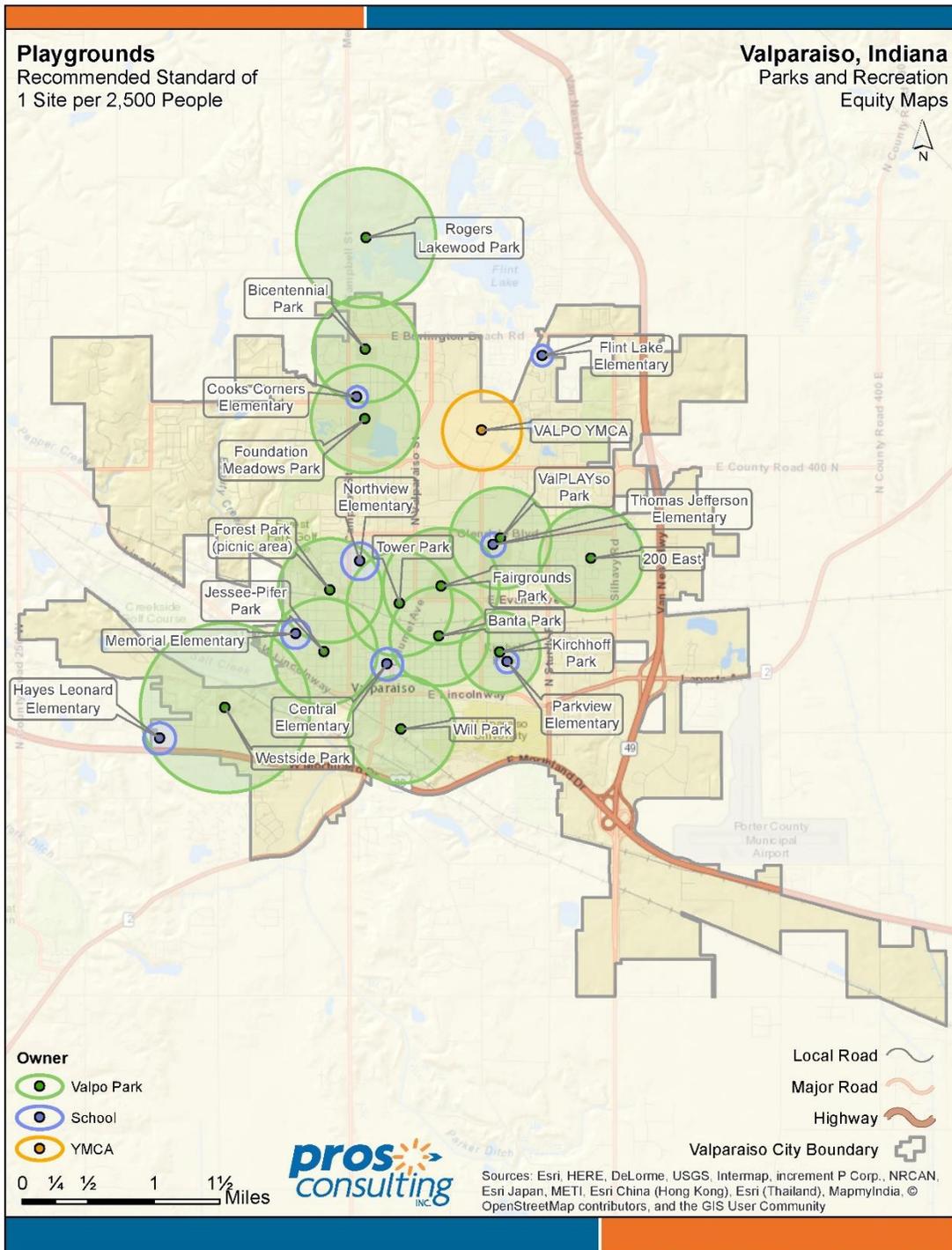
Figure 127- Playgrounds Equity Map

4.4.5 SKATE PARKS
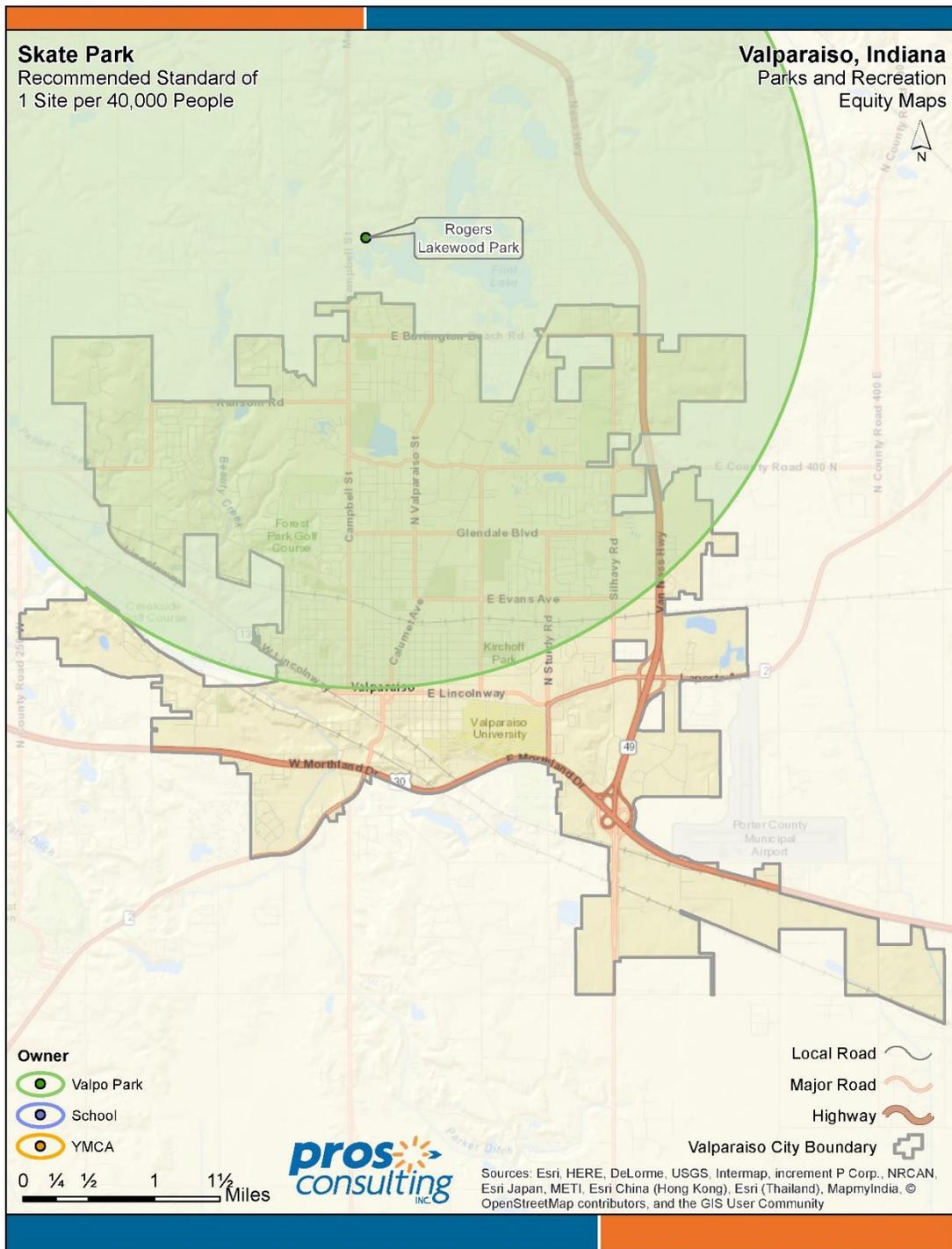
Figure 128- Skate Park Equity Map

4.4.6 SOCCER FIELDS
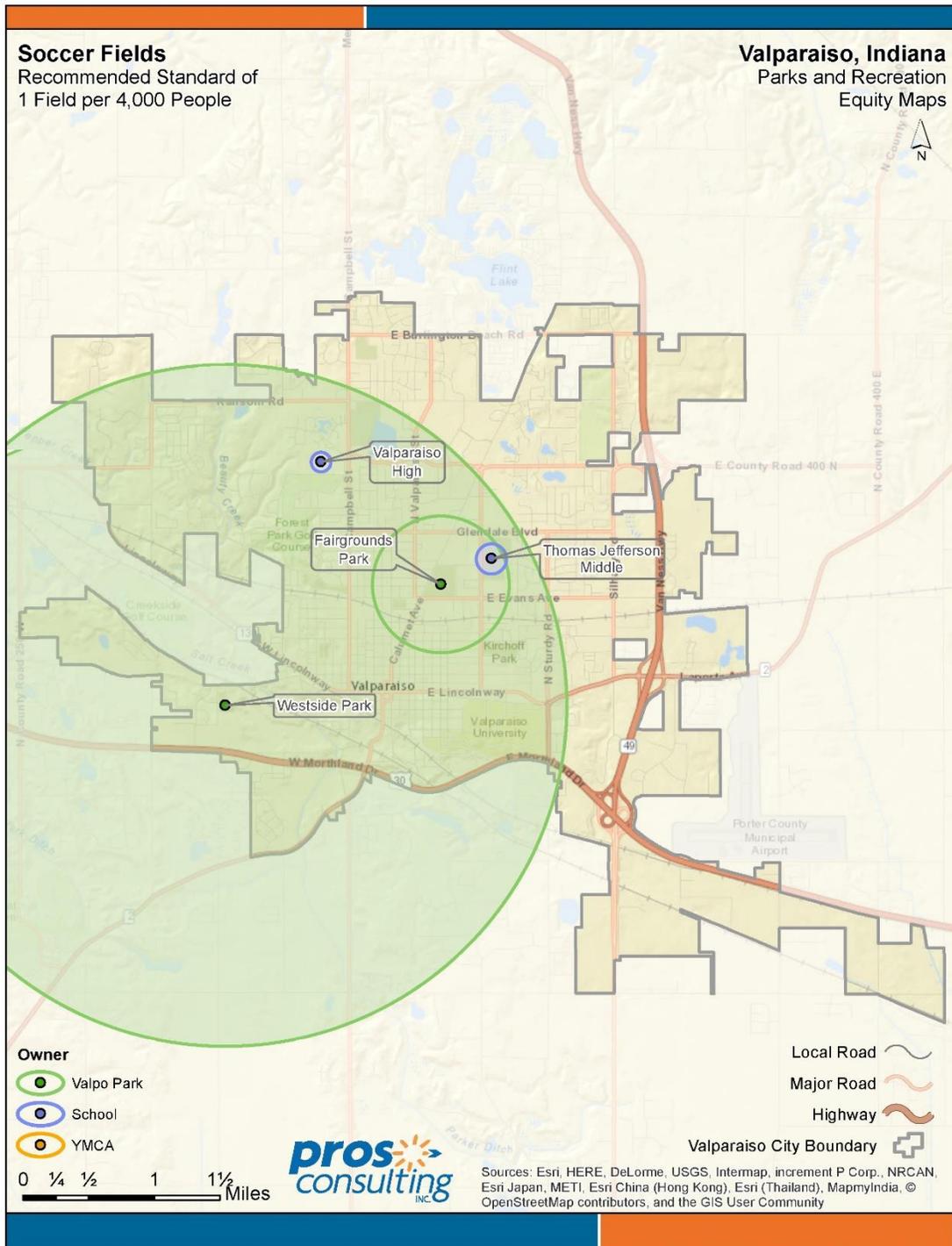
Figure 129- Soccer Fields Equity Map

4.4.7 SOFTBALL FIELDS
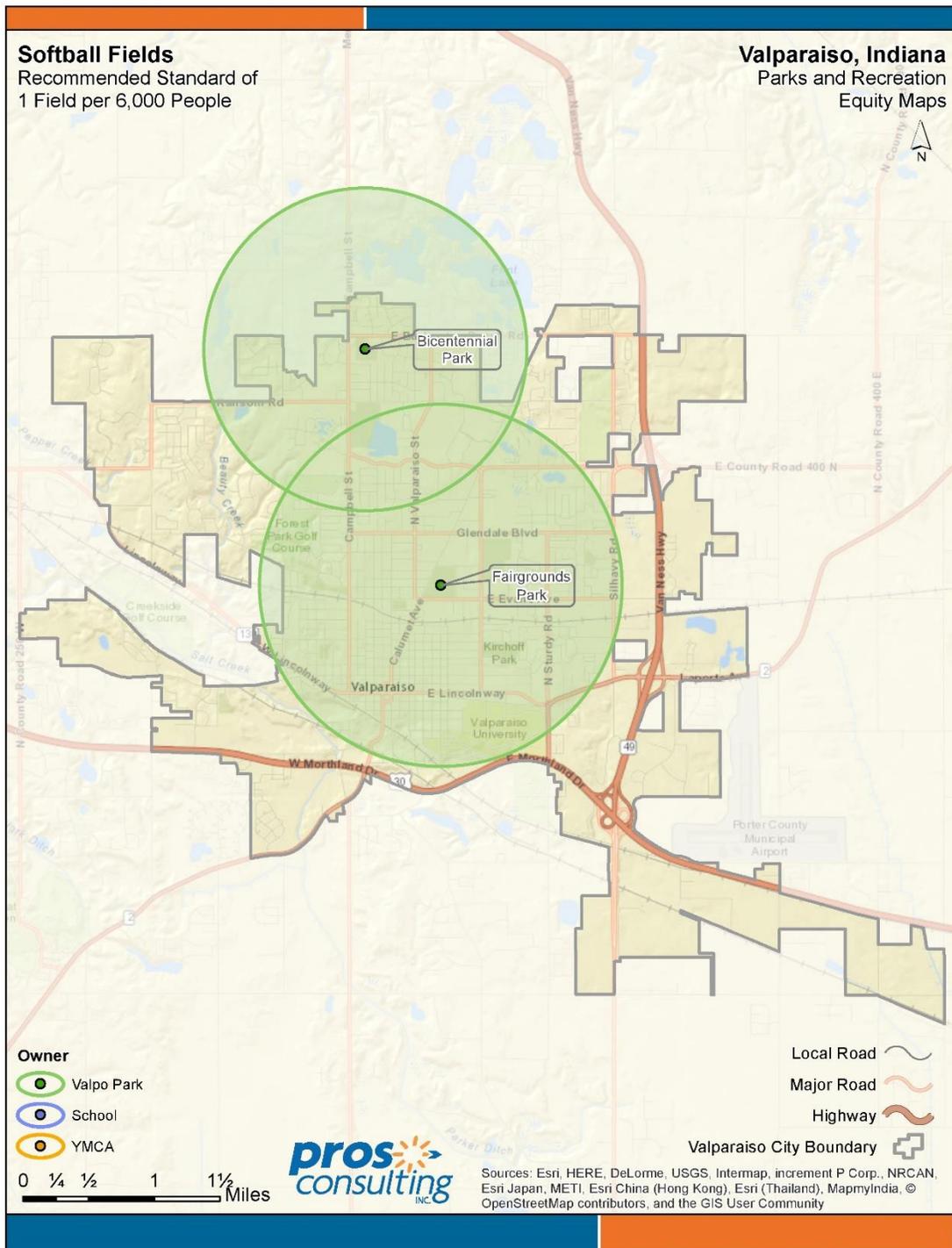
Figure 130- Softball Fields Equity Map

4.4.8 SPRAYGROUNDS/ SPLASH PADS
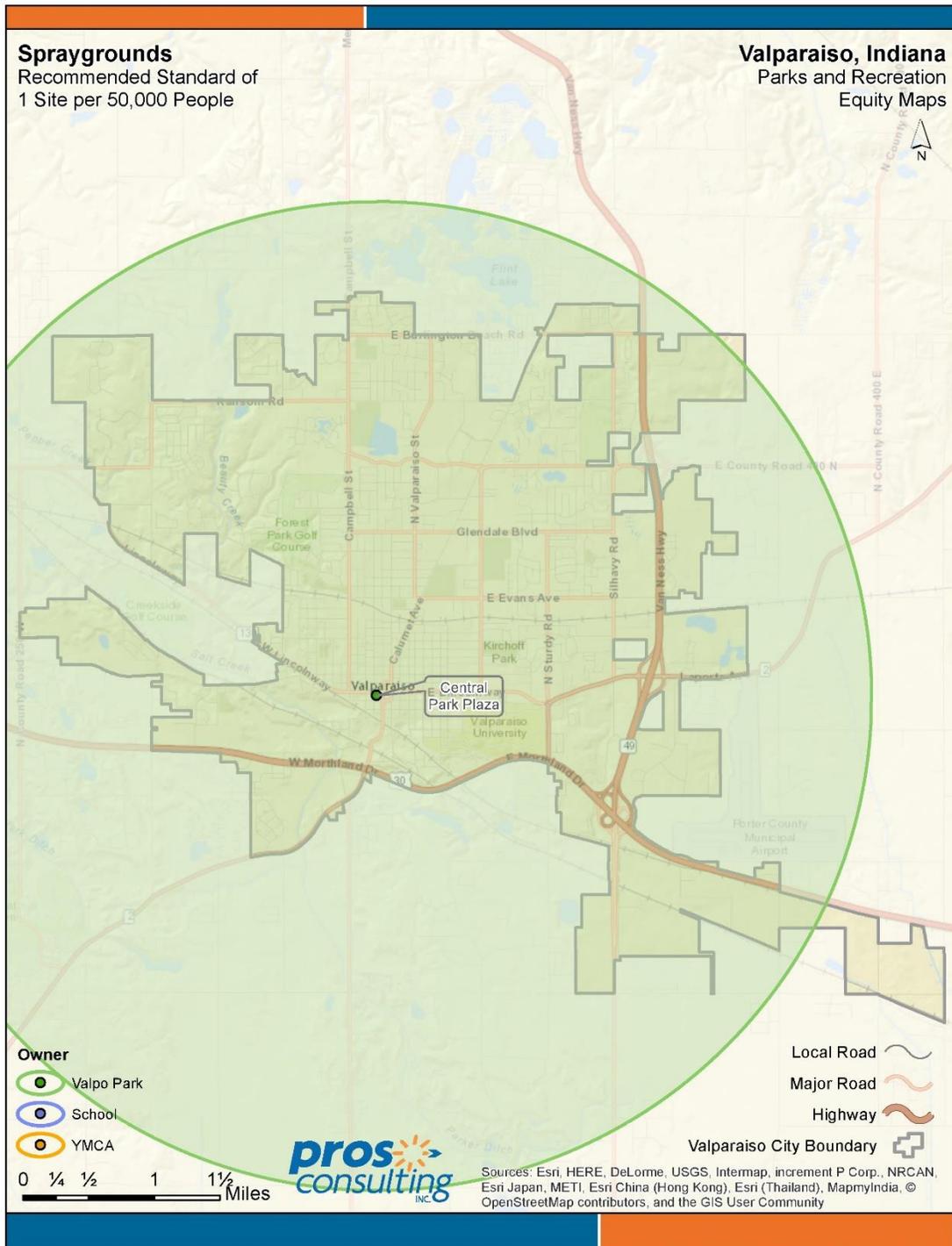
Figure 131- Spraygrounds Equity Map

4.4.9 TENNIS COURTS
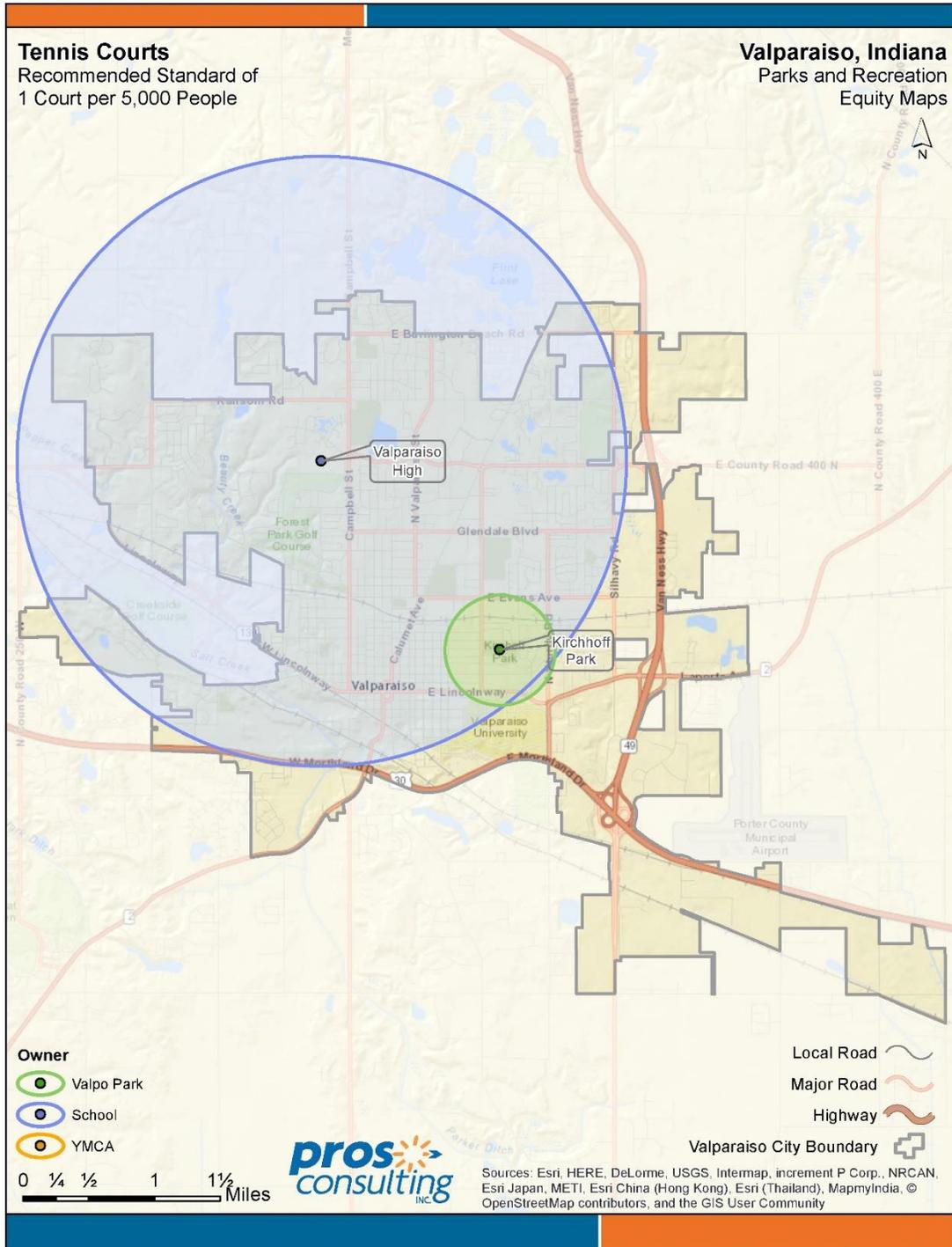
Figure 132- Tennis Courts Equity Map

4.4.10 YOUTH BASEBALL FIELDS
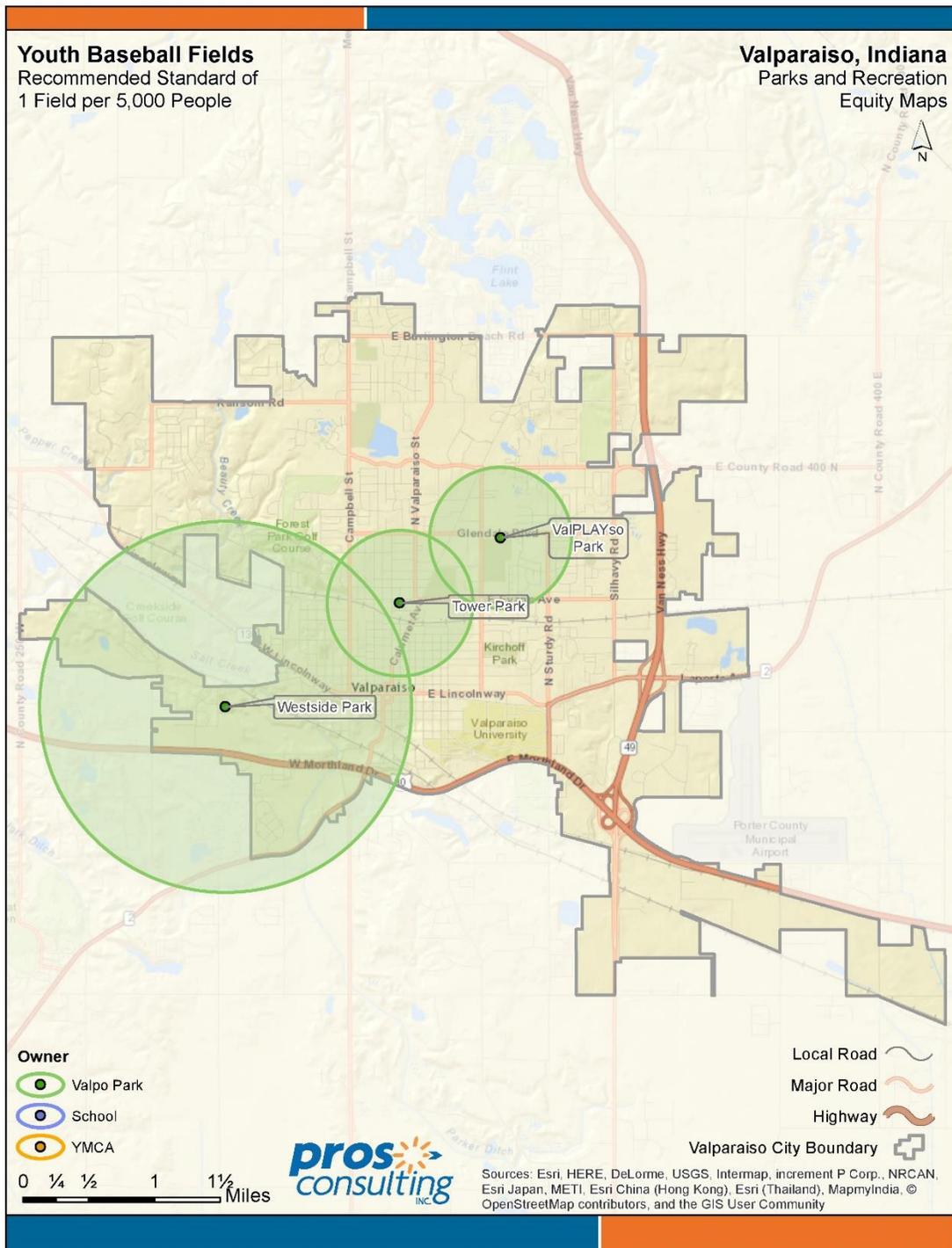
Figure 133- Youth Baseball Fields Equity Map

4.5 COMMUNITY NEED AND PRIORITY RANKINGS

As part of the community engagement process, the consultant team implemented a statistically-valid community survey that solicited feedback on a variety of issues related to parks and recreation within the City of Valparaiso. Respondents were asked to identify if they have needs for specific facilities and programs. Of note, survey respondents were asked if they have a need for a program and to what degree their need is currently being met. The results allowed the consultant team to synthesize programmatic needs and importance to understand community service provision.

PROGRAMS

An unmet need consists of respondents who reported their needs are being met 50% or less for a particular program. As shown in the statistically-valid survey, adult fitness & wellness and outdoor recreation/adventure programs are estimated to have over 3,000 households within City Limits that do not have their needs being met currently. Additionally, these programs are rated as highly important programs. The degree of program unmet need varied based on household demographics. For example, households with young children (younger than 10 years old) reported the highest unmet needs for youth art, dance, and performing arts programs; whereas, households with individuals older than 55 years old with no children reported the highest unmet need for adult art, dance, and performing arts programs and adult sports. The following table provides the full breakdown based on all programs listed in the community survey. The percentages in red text represent the population that reported the having the highest unmet need.

Program Unmet Need (50% Met and Below)

Program	Households with Kids (<10 yrs old)	Households with Kids (10-19 yrs old)	Households Ages 20-54 (No Kids)	Households Ages 55+ (No Kids)
Adult Art, Dance, Performing Arts	73.4%	77.0%	78.3%	83.3%
Adult Enrichment	48.0%	75.0%	84.6%	70.8%
Adult Fitness & Wellness	43.6%	59.4%	64.8%	53.9%
Adult Sports	45.8%	58.8%	54.9%	66.7%
Before & After School	45.1%	71.5%	0.0%	0.0%
City Fit Program	37.5%	42.1%	43.9%	40.0%
Family Programs	54.3%	67.9%	38.5%	50.0%
Golf Lessons & Leagues*	23.8%	23.8%	61.1%	22.2%
Nature Programs/Environmental Education	57.1%	78.2%	59.3%	65.2%
Outdoor Recreation/Adventure	58.0%	83.4%	61.9%	50.1%
Preschool	41.4%	100.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Programs for People with Disabilities	87.5%	87.5%	60.0%	66.7%
Programs for Teens	76.5%	88.8%	0.0%	50.0%
Programs with Your Pets	84.0%	84.2%	81.3%	63.7%
Reservations for Special Occasions	30.0%	36.9%	40.0%	33.4%
Senior Programs	66.7%	100.0%	62.5%	57.5%
Special Events	30.7%	37.7%	25.4%	16.7%
Tennis Lessons & Leagues	60.0%	69.3%	80.0%	40.0%
Youth & Adult Sports Tournaments	50.0%	75.0%	56.3%	33.3%
Youth Art, Dance, Performing Arts	77.0%	72.8%	75.0%	50.0%
Youth Fitness & Wellness	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Youth Sports	19.3%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Youth Summer Camp	44.2%	57.1%	25.0%	0.0%

Figure 134- Program Unmet Need by Household Composition

Priority Rankings provide a hierarchal representation of community desire that VPRD can use as a foundation in future programmatic decisions. Priority Rankings combine community need and importance (as learned from the survey) with information gleaned from other public engagement processes and technical research.

As denoted by the Priority Rankings below, relative to one another included in the list, the top tier program priorities (or focus areas) include:

- Adult fitness & wellness programs
- Outdoor recreation/adventure programs
- Special events
- Nature programs/environmental education
- Senior programs
- Family programs
- Youth sports programs
- Adult enrichment programs

Program	Overall Rank
Adult fitness & wellness programs	1
Outdoor recreation/adventure programs	2
Special events (i.e., concerts, movies, etc.)	3
Nature programs/environmental education	4
Senior programs	5
Family programs	6
Youth sports programs	7
Adult enrichment programs	8
Programs with your pets	9
Golf lessons & leagues	10
Programs for teens	11
Adult art, dance, and performing arts	12
Youth summer camp programs	13
Youth & adult sports tournaments	14
Adult sports programs	15
Tennis lessons & leagues	16
Youth art, dance, and performing arts	17
Programs for people with disabilities	18
City Fit Program	19
Preschool programs	20
Youth fitness & wellness programs	21
Before & after school programs	22
Reservations for special occasions	23

Figure 135- Program Priority Rankings

It is recommended that the Department consider the addition of new Core Program Areas such as:

1) Fitness & Wellness
2) Outdoor Recreation
3) Nature/Environmental Education

FACILITIES

As shown in the statistically-valid community survey, the top unmet needs include an outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center and nature center & trails. Additionally, these facilities are rated as highly important facilities.

The degree of facility unmet need varied based on household demographics. For example, households with individuals older than 55 years old with no children reported the highest unmet need for indoor fitness & exercise facilities along with indoor running/walking tracks; whereas, households with no kids and younger adults reported the highest unmet need for an indoor swimming/leisure pool. The following table provides the full breakdown based on all facilities listed in the community survey. The percentages in red text represent the population that reported the having the highest unmet need.

Facility Unmet Need (50% Met and Below)

Program	Households with Kids (<10 yrs old)	Households with Kids (10-19 yrs old)	Households Ages 20-54 (No Kids)	Households Ages 55+ (No Kids)
Adult Softball Fields	25.1%	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%
Connected Walking & Biking Trails	39.2%	59.6%	41.7%	35.2%
Disc Golf	28.5%	37.5%	20.0%	0.0%
Greenspace & Natural Areas	32.3%	53.3%	35.0%	39.2%
Indoor Basketball/Volleyball Courts	55.5%	85.8%	66.7%	33.3%
Indoor Fitness & Exercise Facilities	42.0%	39.4%	45.8%	51.5%
Indoor Ice Arena	77.2%	80.0%	66.6%	33.3%
Indoor Lap Lanes for Exercise Swimming	57.2%	72.0%	71.9%	60.0%
Indoor Running/Walking Track	45.9%	62.0%	63.3%	64.6%
Indoor Sports Fields	75.0%	93.3%	63.7%	0.0%
Indoor Swimming Pools/Leisure Pool	59.4%	68.9%	78.0%	70.0%
Large Community Parks	5.0%	30.6%	18.9%	12.9%
Multi-Generational Community Center	56.5%	89.5%	78.5%	57.2%
Nature Center & Trails	50.7%	65.9%	53.5%	41.5%
Off-Leash Dog Park	84.0%	86.0%	87.1%	73.3%
Outdoor Basketball Courts	39.9%	60.7%	46.1%	33.3%
Outdoor Ice Arena	14.0%	12.5%	14.3%	5.3%
Outdoor Swimming Pool/Family Aquatic Center	94.0%	97.6%	83.6%	92.6%
Outdoor Tennis Courts	60.9%	72.8%	50.1%	54.5%
Playground Equipment*	2.6%	4.8%	4.2%	7.1%
Senior Center	50.0%	66.7%	55.5%	56.0%
Skateboarding Park	90.0%	88.9%	50.0%	0.0%
Small Neighborhood Parks	21.7%	35.5%	16.7%	29.0%
Spraygrounds	38.9%	71.5%	23.1%	25.0%
Youth Baseball & Softball Fields	30.8%	46.6%	33.3%	25.0%
Youth Football Fields	40.0%	62.5%	60.0%	0.0%
Youth Soccer Fields	23.5%	35.0%	25.0%	0.0%

*Only facility to not have "0% Unmet Need" selected as an answer.

Figure 136- Facility Unmet Need by Household Composition

As denoted by the Priority Rankings below, relative to one another included in the list, the top tier facility priorities (or focus areas) include:

- Outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center
- Connected walking & biking trails
- Nature center & trails
- Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool
- Small neighborhood parks
- Off-leash dog park
- Indoor ice arena
- Multi-generational community center
- Senior center

Facility	Overall Rank
Outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center	1
Connected walking & biking trails	2
Nature center & trails	3
Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	4
Small neighborhood parks	5
Off-leash dog park	6
Indoor ice arena	7
Multi-generational community center	8
Senior center	9
Indoor running/walking track	10
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	11
Youth soccer fields	12
Greenspace & natural areas	13
Outdoor ice arena	14
Outdoor tennis courts	15
Indoor lap lanes for exercise swimming	16
Youth baseball & softball fields	17
Skateboarding park	18
Playground equipment	19
Adult softball fields	20
Outdoor basketball courts	21
Indoor sports fields (baseball, soccer, etc.)	22
Large community parks	23
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	24
Disc golf	25
Spraygrounds	26
Youth football fields	27

Figure 137- Facility Priority Rankings

It is recommended that the Department consider the addition of new facility space that can have appropriate programming attributed to it to meet both programmatic and facility community needs.

CHAPTER FIVE – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This section of the plan reflects the capital improvement recommendations that are necessary to fulfill the facility needs of the community. In order to plan and prioritize capital investments, the consulting team recommends that the parks and recreation department applies specific guiding principles that balances the maintenance of current assets over the development of new facilities. The departmental CIP framework is also utilized to determine and plan CIP projects and make budget decisions that are sustainable over time. These criteria (e.g., safety compliance, commitment, efficiency, revenue) and priorities are also focused on maintaining the integrity of the current infrastructure and facilities before expanding and/or enhancing programs and facilities.

The community, through this planning process, has indicated strong support for this concept of prioritization. Even with the indications of a modest economic turnaround, funding is not sufficient to take care of all existing assets and build new facilities.

The result is the recommendation to develop a three-tier plan that acknowledges a stark fiscal reality, leading to the continuous rebalancing of priorities and their associated expenditures. Each tier reflects different assumptions about available resources.

- **The Critical Alternative** has plans for prioritized spending within existing budget targets. The intention of this alternative is to refocus and make the most of existing resources with the primary goal being for the department to maintain services. The actions associated with these projects address deferred maintenance, accessibility issues, and other critical needs at existing facilities and is funded through existing tax dollars. These projects are typically prioritized for years 1-2; however, they are spread out over years 1-5 due to the expense (see figure on next page). The subtotal for the Critical Alternative is $6,180,000.
- The **Sustainable Alternative** describes the extra services or capital improvement that should be undertaken when additional funding is available. This includes strategically enhancing existing programs, beginning new alternative programs, adding new positions, or making other strategic changes that would require additional operational or capital funding. In coordination with the City Manager's Office and City Council, the Parks and Recreation Department would evaluate and analyze potential sources of additional revenue, including but not limited to capital bond funding, partnerships, program income, grants, and existing or new taxes. These projects are typically prioritized for years 3-5. The subtotal for Sustainable Alternative is $10,610,000.
- The **Visionary Alternative** represents the complete set of services and facilities desired by the community. It is fiscally unconstrained but can help provide policy guidance by illustrating the ultimate goals of the community, and by providing a long-range look to address future needs and deficiencies. In this Master Plan, the Vision Alternative addresses aging facilities to make improvements in operational effectiveness and the overall sustainability of the park and recreation system. Funding for vision projects would be derived from partnerships, private investments, and new tax dollars. These projects are typically prioritized for year 5 and beyond. The subtotal for Visionary Alternative is $24,300,000.

The following pages detail the recommended capital improvement projects – developed in conjunction with staff - for the three-tier spending plan. It should be noted that the Department should have leeway for addressing Sustainable or Visionary projects before completing Critical projects if project funding becomes suddenly available. The intent of the prioritized CIP is to provide a guide for the Department, but they should also retain the latitude to be flexible as project dollars become available.

5.1 CRITICAL PROJECTS

CRITICAL PROJECTS (Repair Existing)			5-Year Allocation				
Asset	Project Type	Estimated Total Project Cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
200 East Park	Repair	$30,000		Accessibility - $10,000		Equipment - $20,000	
Banta Center	Repair	$500,000	HVAC - $30,000	HVAC, Tuckpointing, Floors - $150,000	Roof, Lighting, Interiors - $150,000	Furnishings, Technology, Interiors - $100,000	Finishes, Furnishings - $70,000
Berkley Park	Upgrade	$50,000		New Playground - $50,000			
Bicentennial Park	Repair	$400,000		Shelter, Restrooms - $150,000		Hardsurface, Paving - $150,000	Lighting, Paving - $100,000
Central Park Plaza	Repair	$50,000	Stain Wood Finishes - $10,000	Upgrade Sound Systems - $25,000	Landscaping - $15,000		
Creekside Golf Course	Repair	$100,000	Upgrade Sandtraps - $10,000	Rebuild Covered Tee Range - $90,000			
Discovery Cottage	Repair	$25,000		Upgrade Interior & Signage - $20,000	Upgrade Interiors - $5,000		
Fairgrounds Park	Repair	$500,000	Upgrade Scoreboards - $5,000	Repair Parking Lots - $50,000	Repair Parking Lots, Upgrade Dugouts & Bleachers - $200,000	Upgrade Pavilion Kitchen & Restrooms - $150,000	Upgrade Concession Stand & Restrooms, Soccer Field - $95,000
Forest Park Golf Course	Repair	$900,000	Clubhouse Interiors - $2,000	Cart Path Paving - $100,000	Cart Path Paving, Clubhouse Repair - $200,000	Course Irrigation Upgrades - $500,000	Greens & Trap Enhancements - $98,000
Forest Park Maintenance Facility	Repair	$300,000		Sewer & Drainage Upgrades - $30,000	Structural Renovation - $200,000	Technology & Furnishings - $70,000	
Horticulture Maintenance Facility	Upgrade	$315,000	Completion Now - $315,000				
Forest Park Picnic Area	Repair	$250,000		Replace Retaining Wall - $10,000	Replace restrooms, shelter upgrade - $150,000	Paving Upgrade - $40,000	Playground Replacement - $50,000
Foundation Meadows Park	Repair	$200,000		Parking Lot Paving - $40,000	Parking Lot Paving, $60,000	Playground Upgrades - $50,000	Building Updgrades - $50,000
Glenrose Park	Repair	$250,000		Shelter/Restroom Upgrade/Replacement - $150,000		Ballfield Upgrades - $50,000	Playground Replacement - $50,000
Jessee-Pifer Park	Repair	$130,000	Accessibility Upgrades - $30,000	Hardsurface Upgrades - $30,000		Playground Replacement - $70,000	
Kirchhoff Park	Repair	$500,000	Master Plan - $15,000	Playground Replacement - $100,000	Shelter & Restroom Replacement - $150,000	Hardsurface and Parking Lot Paving $100,000	Shelter & Restroom Landscaping - $135,000
Ogden Gardens	Repair	$80,000	Lighting & Signage - $20,000		Gazebo Replacement - $50,000	Additional Landscaping and Accessibility - $10,000	
Rogers-Lakewood Park	Repair	$500,000		Park Master Plan, Boat Ramp Replacement - $100,000	Derby Downs Building Replacement, Paving - $300,000	Paving - $100,000	
Tower Park	Repair	$700,000	Court & Field Renovation Completed - $500,000	Shelter & Restroom Replacement - $100,000	Playground Replacement - $80,000	Sidewalk & Landscape Upgrades - $10,000	Sidewalk & Landscape Upgrades - $10,000
ValPLAYso Park	Repair	$20,000	Security Cameras - $5,000	Signage & Lighting - $5,000	Landscaping Upgrades - $10,000		
Westside Park	Repair	$180,000		Parking Upgrades - $50,000	Shelter & Restroom Upgrades - $100,000	Field & Bleacher Upgrades - $30,000	
Will Park	Repair	$200,000		Playground Replacement - $80,000	Lighting & Landscape - $20,000	Shelter & Restroom Upgrades - $100,000	
Sub Total		**$6,180,000**	**$942,000**	**$1,340,000**	**$1,690,000**	**$1,550,000**	**$658,000**

Figure 138- Critical CIP Projects

FLEET				
Asset	Acquisition Year	Historical Cost	Asset Life	Accumulated Depreciation
Chevy C3500 1 ton-1GBHC34K3LE172851	1990	$21,948	8	$21,948
Chevy C3500 1 ton-1GBHC34K3LE172851	1990	$21,948	8	$21,948
Chevy C1500-1GCDC14Z5NZ219739	1992	$17,000	5	$17,000
Chevy C1500-1GCDC14Z5NZ219739	1992	$17,000	5	$17,000
Chevy C3500 1 ton-1GBJC34KXNE171927	1992	$21,948	8	$21,948
Chevy K1500 4x4-1GCEK14K2PZ170576	1993	$19,144	5	$19,144
Chevy K1500 4x4-1GCEK1429SZ132641	1995	$19,144	5	$19,144
Chevy C3500 1 ton-1GBJC34L7SE114127	1995	$21,948	8	$21,948
Chevy S-10-1GCCS14X5TK188009	1996	$15,520	5	$15,520
Chevy C1500-1GCEC14WXT2156631	1996	$17,000	5	$17,000
Jeep Cherokee-1J4FJ68S4VL528849	1997	$16,000	5	$16,000
Chevy 2500 4x4 -1GCGK24R1WZ187845	1998	$19,144	8	$19,144
Chevy S-19 ext. cab-1GCCS19X8X8168932	1999	$15,520	5	$15,520
Chevy C3500 1 ton-1GBJC34R078859	1999	$21,948	8	$21,948
Chevy C3500 1 ton-1GBJC34R9YF453200	2000	$21,948	8	$21,948
Chevy C2500 HD-1GCHC24U63Z256212	2003	$17,000	8	$17,000
Chevy S1500 Crew cab-1GCDS136148207120	2004	$18,880	8	$18,880
Chevy S1500 Ext. cab-1GCCS196148206522	2004	$15,520	8	$15,520
Chevy 1500 ext. cab 4x4-1GCEK19T34Z328226	2004	$22,117	8	$22,117
Chevy 2500 4x4-1GCHK24U34E368624	2004	$19,142	8	$19,142
Chevy C 3500 Dump truck-1GBJC34U64E384566	2004	$21,948	8	$21,948
Ford Freestar Van	2005	$3,000	5	$3,000
Ford Freestar Van	2005	$3,000	5	$3,000
Chevy C3500 1 ton-1GBJC34U76E215661	2006	$25,271	8	$25,271
Chevy Silverado	2010	$23,000	8	$20,125
Chevy Silverado	2010	$23,000	8	$20,125
Chevy White truck (Arnell)	2010	$24,212	8	$21,186
Ford Escape	2011	$21,850	5	$21,850
Ford Escape	2011	$21,850	5	$21,850
2012 GMC C3500HD	2011	$29,574	8	$22,181
GMC 2500 Sierra 1GTO1ZCG2DF145926	2012	$20,900	8	$13,063
GMC Pickup (Paul Sur)	2013	$20,861	8	$10,431
Sub Total				$583,847

Figure 139- Critical Fleet Replacement

EQUIPMENT				
Asset	Acquisition Year	Historical Cost	Asset Life	Accumulated Depreciation
John Deere 1050 4x4 tractor-1050S002643	1980	$25,000	5	$25,000
Cushman trukster 530-1814	1984	$15,000	5	$15,000
Yanmar Y187D tractor-187040499	1986	$8,149	5	$8,149
Smithco sandrake-3668	1988	$8,000	5	$8,000
John Deere AMT-4766	1988	$8,000	5	$8,000
Jacobson 5 gang mower	1988	$9,000	5	$9,000
John Deere 1050 Tractor-CH1050S020624	1988	$25,000	5	$25,000
John Deere 2355 Tractor-CD4239D824254	1989	$30,000	5	$30,000
Toro Sand Pro 14-08880-10167	1991	$14,000	5	$14,000
Ingersoll Rand Compressor trailer-184234	1991	$12,000	5	$12,000
Case 580 super K backhoe-JJ60161800	1992	$35,000	5	$35,000
Toro GM 3100-435330944	1993	$18,000	5	$18,000
John Deere Triplex-M02653D040037	1995	$23,000	5	$23,000
Toro Workman 4x4 truckster-721550152	1995	$17,000	5	$17,000
Telephone system	1995	$37,000	5	$37,000
Mowbark Wood Chipper-1553	1995	$10,000	5	$10,000
Economy Powerking tractor-2003185	1996	$8,500	5	$8,500
Case Skidsteer-JAF0197233	1996	$30,000	5	$30,000
Toro Workman truckster-70236	1996	$14,000	5	$14,000
Loftness 60" snow blower-120DH79	1996	$5,000	5	$5,000
Butler Trailer-1BUD14201T1006209	1996	$6,000	5	$6,000
2 vertical irrigation pumps 40hp-C06/980-954-89-GT	1998	$20,000	5	$20,000
Toro electric valve sprinkler heads	1998	$550,000	5	$550,000
burglary & fire alarm system	1998	$9,000	5	$9,000
Buffalo Turbine Blower-5297-5297	1998	$6,000	5	$6,000
Toro Workman truckster-200000101	2000	$14,000	5	$14,000
Toro Sidewinder 3100-200000276	2000	$25,000	5	$25,000
Clubcar Ball Cart-917503	2000	$5,700	5	$5,700
Toro Workman truckster-200000132	2000	$14,000	5	$14,000
Jacobson LF4675-1708	2002	$63,000	5	$63,000
Clubcar Carryall-329973	2003	$5,700	5	$5,700
Clubcar Carryall-329974	2003	$5,700	5	$5,700
Jacobson HR9016 Turbo-70525-1865	2003	$57,000	5	$57,000
Featherlite stage Trailer-1075-8653	2004	$250,000	5	$250,000
John Deere Aerator md/1500-TC1500X035005	2004	$12,000	5	$12,000
Clubcar Carryall-453992	2004	$5,700	5	$5,700
Clubcar Carryall-453993	2004	$5,700	5	$5,700
Telephone system w/ Phone Tree 2500	2005	$7,643	5	$7,643

NY0018 Neary Grinder Ser. #360	2005	$16,592	5	$16,592
NY0018 Neary Grinder Ser. #103	2005	$9,403	5	$9,403
Kubota Trcukster RTV 900W6H-53624	2006	$11,588	5	$11,588
Johnson Deere F1420/deck-TC4206040100	2006	$12,295	5	$12,295
Full Swing Golf Simulator-156913D651979F2E14	2007	$50,000	5	$50,000
Full Swing Golf Simulator-973D75502454BZFO56	2007	$50,000	5	$50,000
Dell Power edge 2940 web server-UT008MIDT2940	2007	$10,000	5	$10,000
ODB LTC 600 Leaf vac 0607-4776	2007	$16,850	5	$16,850
John Deere F1420 TC1420G070060	2007	$12,105	5	$12,105
John Deere 2500E Gr Mower TC25EG010106	2007	$24,408	5	$24,408
John Deere 3225C Fairway Mower TC3235C0404061	2007	$36,255	5	$36,255
Manitowoc CLT-8000 lift F52A60H0901	2008	$6,028	5	$6,028
Smithco Spray Star 3182	2009	$34,549	5	$34,549
Smithco Typhoon Pump J104-501	2010	$1,848	5	$1,848
Jacobsen Gplex III Grrens mower reels rollers FH001143	2010	$30,383	5	$30,383
Salsco S00374 power roller-trailer 091207000090652869	2010	$6,136	5	$6,136
Smithco 42-001D Sandrake 13327	2010	$6,190	5	$6,190
Jacobsen Gplex III Tee mower & reels FH001145	2010	$26,169	5	$26,169
Jacobsen Gplex III Tee mower & reels FH001169	2010	$26,169	5	$26,169
Salsco S00374 power roller-trailer 091207000090652870	2010	$6,136	5	$6,136
Planetair PR0449 Aerator 5031990	2010	$23,124	5	$23,124
Turfco T00166 Top Dresser M00379	2010	$14,461	5	$14,461
John Deere Fairway Mower 7500 TC7500X030018	2010	$40,000	5	$40,000
Smithco 42-001D Sandrake 13389	2010	$6,190	5	$6,190
Electronic Marquee	2012	$35,000	5	$35,000
Electronic Marquee	2012	$35,000	5	$35,000
Kubota F3080 Tractor and mower deck #11311 n& #11560	2012	$17,700	5	$17,700
Jacobsen AR-522 mower	2012	$46,000	5	$46,000
UV Filtartion System	2014	$26,000	5	$15,600
UV Filtration System	2014	$26,000	5	$15,600
Aerovator - Burris Equipment	2014	$10,800	5	$6,480
Lift gate for Maintenance Pickup Truck	2014	$5,200	5	$3,120
Club Car golf cart fleet-45 carts total	2014	$138,725	5	$83,235
Xerox Color C60-LEASE-waiting on value	2015	$38,680	5	$15,472
Zamboni Ice Resurfacer	2015	$51,000	5	$20,400
5600 Bobcat Toolcat AHG811960	2015	$64,439	5	$25,776
John Deere 7997R Commercial Mower #1	2015	$26,503	5	$10,601
John Deere 7997R Commercial Mower #2	2015	$26,503	5	$10,601
Smithco Typhoon Pump J105-501	2015	$26,289	5	$10,516
Kubota Tractor B3350	2015	$14,500	5	$5,800
Sub Total				**$2,247,571**

Figure 140- Critical Equipment Replacement

5.2 SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS

SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS (Improving What We Have)				
Priority Rank	**Asset**	**Project Type**	**Description**	**Estimated Total Project Cost**
1	Horticulture Maintenance Facility	Upgrade	***See Critical Projects**	$315,000
2	Banta Center	Upgrade	Engage community through Master Planning process on best solution for seeking current & future possibilities. If new site is the answer, design with collaboration and execute within 2 years. Find suitable use for current Banta site.	$2,000,000
3	Pathways & Greenways	Upgrade	Continue to connect at least one mile of additional pathway per year.	$250,000
4	Kirchhoff Park	Upgrade	Major park reconfiguration & redesign for effectivness & efficiency.	$1,000,000
5	Rogers-Lakewood Park	Upgrade	Major redesign for environmental improvements on land and water as well as new infusion of outdoor adventure elements and infrastructure replacement.	$2,000,000
6	Bicentennial Park	Upgrade	Create walking loops, and orientation of fields. Best configuration use of fields.	$200,000
7	Fairgrounds Park	Upgrade	Review customer benefit of all weather turf for soccer field as well as at least two softball fields for heighest & substantial use.	$1,500,000
8	Forest Park Maintenance Facility	Upgrade	Look at moving facility to front nine on property, adjust number seven green & eight tee for efficiency & environmental protection.	$500,000
9	Forest Park Golf Course	Upgrade	***See Critical Projects**	$500,000
10	Creekside Golf Course	Upgrade	***See Critical Projects**	$200,000
11	Tower Park	Upgrade	***See Critical Projects**	$100,000
12	Westside Park	Upgrade	Explore upgrading two fields to all weather turf.	$70,000
Similar Priority	200 East Park	Upgrade	Add walking trails, landscaping, and shelter	$100,000
	Berkley Park		***See Critical Projects**	
	Central Park Plaza	Upgrade	Continue to invest in cutting edge technology and customer-centric amenities to keep facilities robust & vibrant.	$200,000
	Discovery Cottage	Upgrade	***See Critical Projects**	$75,000
	Forest Park Picnic Area	Upgrade	***See Critical Projects**	$25,000
	Foundation Meadows Park	Upgrade	Office & maintenance facility expansion & major renovation.	$500,000
	Glenrose Park	Upgrade	Major ballfield renovation	$500,000
	Jessee-Pifer Park	-	***See Critical Projects**	$0
	Ogden Gardens	Upgrade	Additional parking & restrooms balanced with environment.	$200,000
	ValPLAYso Park	Upgrade	Add splashpad	$200,000
	Will Park	Upgrade	***See Critical Projects**	$175,000
Total				**$10,610,000**

Figure 141- Sustainable CIP Projects

5.3 VISIONARY PROJECTS

VISIONARY PROJECTS (Developing New Opportunities)			
Asset	**Project Type**	**Description**	**Estimated Total Project Cost**
Land Acquisition and Park Development	NEW	Community Park - 40 acres	$4,000,000
Land Acquisition	NEW	Regional Park - 40 acres	$400,000
Land Acquisition and Park Development	NEW	6 miles Pathway Development - 2.5 miles Type A (Primary) & 3.5 miles Type B (Secondary)	$4,100,000
Facility Development	NEW	Dog Park	$300,000
Facility Development	NEW	Outdoor Pool Facility	$4,000,000
Facility Development	NEW	Multi-Generation Community Center / Cultural Center	$10,000,000
Creekside Park	NEW	Accesibility and Development	$1,000,000
Skate Park	NEW	Land Acquisition and Development	$500,000
Total			**$24,300,000**

Figure 142- Visionary CIP Projects

5.4 LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGIES

The following definitions were used to rank and prioritize potential land acquisitions for VPRD. The process reviewed generic sites in select geographic areas in order to expand the service coverage for the entire Parks system. The following criteria were used to evaluate the site's potential for development. These criteria were all scored between 1-10 (1 being the most restrictive and 10 being the least) and weighted by the project design team and City staff to prioritize land acquisitions.

- **Adequate Size.** Property were evaluated for their size to accommodate park uses
- **Availability of Utilities.** Project team reviewed the proximity of existing City utilities to the sites (i.e. water, sanitary and storm sewer).
- **Cost/Availability of Acquisitions.** All properties were scored equally through this exercise, as exact properties and negotiations have not occurred.
- **Impacts (soils, earthwork, etc.).** Project team reviewed GIS information on soils, topography, drainage and wetlands that may impact park development.
- **Major Arterial Access.** Each location was ranked based on its general proximity to major arterial roadways in Valparaiso.
- **Pedestrian/Bike Access.** Each location was ranked based on its general proximity to existing and proposed pathways in Valparaiso.
- **Population (5, 10, 15 minute drive time).** Each location was ranked based on its general proximity to existing population densities of the City. All areas considered with this exercise were outside of the urban area of the City, in order to provide additional services and coverage for more rural areas.

The following matrix represents the full scoring based on potential land acquisition and/or park land development.

Criteria	Priority/ Weight Factor	East Site	NW Site	West Site	Far West Site	North Central Site1	North Central Site2	Far South Site
Adequate Site Size	4.9	10	10	10	10	10	7	9
Availability of Utilities	4.4	9	4	8	8	10	10	10
Cost/Availability of Acquisition	4.2	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Known Construction Cost Impacts (soils, earthwork, etc.)	4.2	8	10	6	8	7	10	10
Major Arterial Access	3.9	10	7	7	7	8	8	9
Pedestrian/ Bicycle Access	3.9	10	6	10	6	10	10	6
Central to Service Area Population (5, 10, 15 minute drive time)	3.8	6	6	6	6	8	8	6
Weighted Totals		256.60	215.70	232.10	224.90	256.60	254.50	245.00

Figure 143- Land Acquisition/Development Scoring Matrix

5.5 FUNDING AND REVENUE STRATEGIES

The following financial options outline opportunities for VPRD to consider in supporting the capital improvements outlined in this Master Plan as well as operational costs associated with managing the system for the future. Some of these funding sources may not be currently allowed by the City, or have never been used, but should be pursued through legislative means should VPRD agree with the value in pursuing these funding sources.

General Obligation Bond: A general obligation bond is a municipal bond secured by a taxing authority to improve public assets that benefits the municipal agency involved that oversee some of the parks and recreation facilities in the city. General Obligation Bonds are a tool used by local governments to borrow money. The bonds are guaranteed by the governing body's full faith and credit and backed by property tax revenues. The City can use revenue generated from the sale of general obligation bonds to fund a park project and repay the bonds and interest with future property tax revenue.

General Obligation Bonds should be considered for park and recreation facility projects; such as an update to Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks, trails, a new recreation centers, aquatic center, or a sports complexes. Improvements to parks should also be covered by these funding sources because there are very little operational revenues associated with these parks to draw from and some of the city parks improvements are in need of upgrades and renovations limiting the uses of other revenue sources. These parks help frame the City's image and benefit to a wide age segment of users and updating these parks will benefit the community as a whole and stabilize neighborhoods and other areas of the city. This has to be viewed as an economic impact improvement to stabilize neighborhoods an invite people to live in these neighborhoods because of the quality of parks in their neighborhood.

If the parks are maintained to a higher level than the neighborhood it raises the value of property. If parks are maintained below the level of existing homes in the neighborhood it will bring the property values down.

EDIT Funds: These funds are used to support economic impact projects in parks in many cities.

Levy on Property Tax: Public agencies around the country receive funding through property tax revenues. State laws vary on how these funds can be used- rather applied to operating cost or capital investments.

Special Purpose Levies: Public agencies, including parks can receive funding through a tax levy designated to a specific purpose and generally for a limited period of time. This could be a one time, special purpose levy implemented for a limited time period.

Recreation and Park Impact Fees: The City could implement a recreation impact fees if the City wanted to pursue these funds from developers. The current deficiencies in neighborhood park lands could be alleviated in certain parts of the city that are short of park land and trails. Impact fees generally provide some capital funds but rarely are they sufficient to provide full funding of large projects. The City of Carmel Parks and Recreation and Brownsburg Parks and Recreation have Impact Fee Ordinances in place to help acquire and develop parks in the city. Copies of their ordinances have been sent to the Department to consider as part of the master plan process.

Internal Park Improvement Fund: This funding source is created from a percentage of the overall park admissions or fees to use the attractions such as sport complexes, golf courses, or special events in a park and would allow a percentage usually in the 3-5% of gross revenues to be dedicate to the park or recreation facility for existing and future capital improvements. This type of user fee does not require voter approval but is set up in a dedicated fund to support the existing park for future capital, maintenance and improvements.

Tax Increment Finance District: Commonly used for financing redevelopment projects. A Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) involves the issuance of tax-exempt bonds to pay front-end infrastructure and eligible development costs in partnership with private developers that are considered Quality of Life improvements that capture increases in property tax revenue within a designated geographic area and allocates it for a specific public purpose. TIF revenue has been used towards park acquisition, maintenance, and improvements in certain cities. As redevelopment occurs in the City, the "tax increment" resulting from redevelopment projects is used to retire the debt issued to fund the eligible redevelopment costs. The public portion of the redevelopment project funds itself using the additional taxes generated by the project. TIFs can be used to fund park improvements and development as an essential infrastructure cost.

Developer Cash-in-Lieu of meeting the Open Space Requirement: Ordinances requiring the dedication of open space within developments to meet the park and recreation needs of the new residents often have provisions allowing cash contribution to substitute for the land requirement.

Park Land Dedication Fee: A park land dedication fee requires that a portion of any housing or commercial/industrial development be dedicated to public use, in the form of parks, recreation facilities, playgrounds, etc. Alternatively, the development may pay cash in lieu of a land dedication, which would be put in a special fund and used for future park acquisition.

Business Improvement District: The public private partnership collects additional taxes from business within a designated area. The fees are used for public projects, based on the notion that a well maintained public space will increase commerce for local businesses. Generally used in downtown areas, a Business Improvement District is a useful strategy for pooling revenue to support a common goal. BID funding is managed by a nonprofit corporation created through the city. This BID district can help support downtown parks as well.

Impact Development Fees: Impact Development Fees are one time fees assessed on residential or commercial development based on the theory that growth pays for growth. Revenue generated from impact fees are allocated towards public infrastructure, including parks. This is a major source of funding for many fast developing communities.

Facility Authority: A Facility Authority is sometimes used by park and recreation agencies to improve a specific park or develop a specific improvement such as a stadium, large recreation center, large aquatic center, or sports venue for competitive events. Repayment of bonds to fund the project usually comes from a sales tax in the form of food and beverage. A facility Authority could oversee improvements for the large facilities; such as an aquatic center, community center and sports field complex. The City could seek out a private developer to design build a field house facility for Parks and Recreation with the City paying back these costs over a 20-year period through the facility authority. The Facility Authority could include representation from the schools, the City and private developers.

Utility Lease Fee: Utility lease fees have been used to support parks in the form of utility companies supporting a park from utility easements, storm water runoff and paying for development rights below the ground. This funding source is derived from fees on property own by the City based on measures such as the amount of impervious surfacing as well as fees from utility companies having access through the park. It is used by many cities to acquire and develop greenways and other open space resources that provide improvements in the park or development of trails. Improvements can include trails, drainage areas, and retention ponds that serve multiple purposes such as recreation, environmental protection, and storm water management. This could be a source for the utilities to make a contribution to support the parks and trails in the future.

Transient Occupancy Tax: This funding source is used by many cities and counties to fund improvements to parks from hotels that benefit from the parks in the form of sporting events or entertainment where participants stay in hotels when they use city or county owned sports complexes or competitive facilities. The Transient Occupancy Taxes are typically set at 3-5% on the value of a hotel room a 1% sales tax that can be dedicated for park and recreation improvement purposes as well. Because of the value that parks could provide in the way of events, sports, entertainment and cultural events, hotels in the area that benefit could be set up with a portion of their occupancy funds going to support park and recreation related improvements. This funding source has been implemented progressively by other communities as the City increases the number of events it sponsors or develops. Tracking the economic value back to the hotels is important to build trust with the hotel business community.

Food and Beverage Tax: A 1% sales tax on food and beverage is currently used by other cities on fast food and restaurants only. These dollars can come from the local community as well as visitors to the city to help pay for a bond to finance future park and recreation related improvements. Food and Beverage Taxes are very well accepted in most communities. Many park and recreation agencies have a 1% food and beverage tax to support land acquisition across the country. Given the 2016 Food & Beverage sales in the City of Valparaiso, a 1% sales tax could generate approximately $900,000 annually.

Capital Improvement Fee: A capital improvement fee can be added to an admission fee to a recreation facility or park attraction to help pay back the cost of developing or updating the facility or attraction. This fee is usually applied to golf courses, aquatic facilities, recreation centers, amphitheaters, and special use facilities such as sports complexes. The funds generated can be used either to pay back the cost of the capital improvement on a revenue bond that was used to develop or redevelop the facility. Capital improvement fees normally are $5 per person for playing on the improved site or can be collected as a parking fee or admission fee.

Capitalizing Maintenance Costs: Levies and bonds for new projects do not always account for the ongoing maintenance and operations funding that will need to needed by those projects. By capitalizing maintenance costs, cities include those anticipated costs into the specific levy or bond proposal and then set the funding aside in an endowment to cover the future costs.

Lease Back: Lease backs are a source of capital funding in which a private sector entity such as a development company buys the park land site or leases the park land and develops a facility such as a park, recreation attraction, recreation center, pool, or sports complex; and leases the facility back to the municipality to pay off the capital costs over a 20 to 30-year period. This approach takes advantage of the efficiencies of private sector development while relieving the burden on the municipality to raise upfront capital funds. This funding source is typically used for recreation and aquatic type facilities, civic buildings, and fire stations.

Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Fund: Fees, donations, and revenue from vending machines established. Fees may be established and collected by the Park and Recreation Board for particular special events held on park property as the Board may deem necessary for that specific event. Private organizations who hold their event on park property and who charge admission for the event shall donate a portion of those charges to The Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Fund. Revenue from all vending machines placed on park property and accessible to the public shall be placed in the fund.

Partnerships: VPRD has many partnerships in place. Most do not have equitable agreements for how the partnership is financed. Establishing policies for public/public partnerships, public/not-for-private partnerships and public private partnerships needs to be established with measureable outcomes for each partner involved. Valpo Parks and Recreation can gain a lot of operational monies back to the department if they can manage their partnerships in a more equitable manner.

Land Leases/Concessions: Land leases and concessions are public/private partnerships in which the municipality provides land or space for private commercial operations that will enhance the park and recreational experience in exchange for payments to help reduce operating costs. They can range from food service restaurant operations to retail operations on city owned property. Leases usually pay back to the city a percentage of the value of the land each year in the 15% category and a percentage of gross from the restaurant or retail attraction. They also pay sales tax and employee income taxes to the city which supports the overall government system in the city.

Admission to the Park: VPRD currently charges a vehicle entrance fee to their regional park that can be used to help support operational costs. This fee should continue.

Parking Fee: Many parks that do not charge an admission fee will charge a parking fee. Parking rates range from $3 to $4 dollars a day. This funding source could work for helping to support special events, festivals and tournaments.

User Fees: User fees are fees paid by a user of recreational facilities or programs to offset the costs of services provided by Valpo Parks and Recreation in operating a park, a recreation facility or in delivering programs and services. A perception of "value" has to be instilled in the community by Valpo Parks and Recreation staff for what benefits the system is providing to the user. As the Department continues to develop new programs, all future fees should be charged based on cost recovery goals developed in a future Pricing Policy. The fees for the parks and/or core recreation services are based on the level of exclusivity the user receives compared to the general taxpayer. It is recommended that user fees for programs be charged at market rate for services to create value and operational revenue for Valpo Parks and Recreation. For services where the City feels that they cannot move forward on adequate user fees to obtain the required cost recovery, consideration of contracting with a not-for-profit and/or private company to help offset service costs should be pursued. This would save the system dollars in their

operational budgets while still ensuring the community receives the service to keep the quality of life at a high standard.

Corporate Naming Rights: Valpo Parks and Recreation has done a good job in this funding source and it should continue. In this arrangement, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a park in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a ten-year period. The cost of the naming right is based on the impression points the facility or event will receive from the newspapers, TV, websites, and visitors or users to the park. Naming rights for park and recreation facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic facilities, and events. Naming rights are a good use of outside revenue for parks, recreation facilities or special attractions in the City.

Corporate Sponsorships: Corporations can also underwrite a portion or all of the cost of an event, program, or activity based on their name being associated with the service. Sponsorships typically are title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors. Many agencies seek corporate support for these types of activities.

Advertising Sales: Typical amenities and facilities that lend well to advertising sales include sports complexes, scoreboards, gym floors, trash cans, playgrounds, locker rooms, dog parks, along trails, flower pots, and as part of special events held in the City. Advertising sales help support operational costs and have been an acceptable practice in parks and recreation systems for many years.

Maintenance Endowment Fund: This is a fund dedicated exclusively for a park's maintenance, funded by a percentage of user fees from programs, events, and rentals and is dedicated to protect the asset where the activity is occurring.

Park and Recreation Revenue Revolving Fund: This is a dedicated fund to be used for park purposes only that is replenished on an ongoing basis from various funding sources such as grants, sponsorships, advertising, program user fees and rental fees within the park system. VPRD could establish a revolving fund supported by all of the funding sources identified in this section and kept separate from the tax general fund.

Permit Fees: This fee is incorporated for exclusive reservations for picnic shelters, sports fields, and special events that are provided by VPRD and for competitive tournaments held in the City by other organizations (that utilize VPRD-owned facilities). Permit fees include a base fee for all direct and indirect costs for the Department to provide the space on an exclusive basis in addition to a percentage of the gross for major special events and tournaments held on park-owned permitted facilities. Alcohol permits should be explored and if determined worthwhile, added to these permits which would generate more income for VPRD for these special use areas. This money could be applied to a Recreation and Park Revolving Fund to help support park improvements and operations in the future.

Land Leases: Many communities across the United States have allowed land leases for commercial retail operations along trails as a source of funding. The communities that have used land leases look for retail operations that support the needs of recreation users of the trails. This includes coffee shops, grill and food concessions, small restaurants, ice cream shops, bicycle shops, farmer's markets and small local business. The land leases provide revenue to maintain the trails and/or to be used for in-kind matching. The City of Indianapolis has many concession leases along the 100+ miles of trails to support the operational costs of trails.

Sale of Development Rights below the Ground: Some public agencies have sold their development rights next to greenways below the ground for fiber optic lines and utility lines for gas and electric on a lineal foot basis.

5.5.1 KEY FUNDING AND REVENUE STRATEGIES

After reviewing the funding and revenue strategies above, the Department and consulting team have identified the following funding and revenue strategies as key elements of implementing the recommendations in this Master Plan:

- Fees and Non-Reverting Fund
- Naming Rights & Sponsorships
- Redevelopment Commission Collaborations
- Facility Collaborations and Partnerships
- Grants
- EDIT Funds
- Impact Fees
- Center Township Collaboration
- Lease Back
- Food and Beverage Tax
- General Obligation Bond

CHAPTER SIX – STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The Action Plan (**see Appendix**) provides a summary of the key action items recommended throughout the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Items are organized into five major sections:

- Parkland and Trails

- Facilities

- Recreation Programs

- Operations and Staffing

- Financing

The **Departmental Vision and Mission Statements** are included at the beginning of the Implementation Plan to provide a framework and filter for all of the items contained within. If it becomes necessary to make trade-off decisions about when to implement certain tactics given limited resources, items that most support the vision and mission statements should be prioritized. **Vision Statements** specific to Parkland and Trails, Facilities, Recreation Programs, Operations and Staffing, and Financing are also provided to assist with prioritization and decision-making.

Within each section, key **Strategies** for implementation are listed. These strategies represent the major ideas or philosophies recommended by the consulting team that are required by the Department to implement the Master Plan. To help achieve each Strategy, Tactics are identified along with recommendations for the **Group Responsible, Start Date** (i.e., when to initiate the tactic, not necessarily complete it), and **Performance Measures**.

The Implementation Plan is intended to serve as a dynamic document, reviewed on a regular basis by Department staff and the Parks Board, to plan work tasks and support decision-making in order to carry out the Master Plan. By reviewing the Implementation Plan quarterly or annually, accomplishments can be noted, adjustments can be made, and new items can be added.

6.1 MISSION, CORE VALUES, AND SERVICE PRIORITIES

6.1.1 MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of the Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department is to be a leading partner in preserving, developing, and promoting Valparaiso's unique quality of life

6.1.2 CORE VALUES
The Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department values being:

- Boldly proactive
- Creatively frugal
- Honestly accountable
- Respectfully compassionate
- Surprisingly responsive

6.1.3 SERVICE PRIORITIES
As a provider of services, the department places a priority on the following:

- Safety

- Courtesy
- Presentation
- Efficiency

6.1.4 DEPARTMENT COMPONENT VISION AND GOALS

The following components address the key vision, goals, and corresponding strategies for each major area of operation within the system. These components provide a clear understanding of what the Department is striving to achieve over the next five years. All statements, goals, and strategies were derived from the park and recreation needs assessment (as developed through this planning process) along with a comprehensive public engagement strategy.

PARK LAND AND TRAILS

Our vision for park lands and trails is to create a system of parks and trails that define the value of public parks and recreation space in Valparaiso. These parks and trails will be designed to inspire the community to want to use our parks of all types for recreation purposes while creating an integrated trail system that connects neighborhoods and promotes active life styles in health and wellness.

GOAL

Create great parks and trails that create a sense of place and establishes Valparaiso as a place to live and thrive.

STRATEGIES

- Create a network of parks, trails, and open spaces that protects the natural areas in Valparaiso, while connecting to population centers that will support the needs of all residents through well-designed parks and recreation amenities
- Continue to enhance and complete linkages throughout the City via pathways and greenways
- Develop soft surface trails that support the goal of .1 miles per 1,000 people
- Adopt the Design Principles for each type of park (neighborhood, community, regional, and special use) to guide landscape and design architects for new development and to guide operational staff when the amenity or park is developed
- Develop individual park master plans for signature parks throughout the system
- Establish a lifecycle asset management plan for the Department
- Expand Department jurisdiction to cover Center Township

FACILITIES

Our vision for recreation facilities is to make them as inviting as possible to maximize their use and productivity for people of all ages through effective programming.

GOAL

Create signature recreational facilities that support all ages and make living in Valparaiso the best place to live, work, and play.

STRATEGIES

- Update the system's neighborhood parks
- Work collaboratively with existing community organizations to provide new facilities

- Create recreation amenities desired by the community as it applies to the future approved level of service standards in the master plan
- Develop program themes for park and facility updates to maximize use and value
- Operate towards capacity utilization goals for each recreation amenity

RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Our vision for recreation programming is to broaden program services to appeal to a wider age segment of users by offering new experiences while increasing the value of Valparaiso Parks and Recreation to the community.

GOAL

Create a balanced program portfolio that meets community needs.

STRATEGIES

- Edit and enhance current core program areas
- Adopt program lifecycle analysis as an evaluation process
- Adopt age segment analysis as an evaluation process
- Align program funding, cost recovery, and pricing to match community expectations
- Continue to align program standards and performance management
- Develop a comprehensive approach to volunteer management
- Develop a comprehensive approach to partnership management
- Develop a comprehensive approach to marketing and communication

OPERATIONS AND STAFFING

Our vision for operations and staffing is to develop systems, policies, and procedures that make it easy for staff in the field to manage their respective functions to achieve the outcomes the community desires.

GOAL

Empower and prepare our team.

STRATEGIES

- Develop staffing requirements (FT, PT and Seasonal) based on set frequency maintenance standards for acres to be maintained as it applies to parks, golf, sports fields and trails
- Develop a maintenance management plan for the system
- Develop performance criteria for maintenance staff that demonstrates efficiency and productivity that leads to the right staffing mix
- Ensure the right equipment is used for the right job.
- Align and operate via an updated functional organizational

FINANCING

Our vision for financing is to be stewards of public monies by being transparent and fiscally responsible to community citizens.

GOAL

Operate in a sustainable fashion while maximizing public benefit derived from both public and private monies.

- Address system-wide issues through a prioritized project approach
- Leverage existing funding sources while diversifying and adding new funding sources to help sustain the system
- Review current financial government practices and adopt new practices