

REPORT FOR INCORPORATED
VILLAGE OF GARDEN CITY
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND
PARKS COMMUNITY WIDE NEEDS
ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Garden City, NY

Prepared by

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INCORPORATED
VILLAGE OF GARDEN CITY

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READING/INTERPRETING THE REPORT

This report is the final outcome of the Needs Assessment Study (henceforth referred to as “study”) that was commissioned by the Village of Garden City Recreation Department (henceforth referred to as “GCRD”) in 2013. In reading/interpreting this report, it is important to note that the results are presented in several ways. First, there is a narrative description of the findings, which then are supported by tables of data. **Key findings and summaries are underlined in the body of the report.** Recommendations are made across the entire body of the report and are always supported by data. *All recommendations are presented in italics in the body of the report.*

The tables and numbers in the report should be considered carefully. Since there were several questions that addressed similar issues, these items were distributed in different parts of the questionnaire. When combined, these pieces of information together make up the entire report and results. *In many cases, the importance attached to a particular piece of numeric data must be interpreted along with other similar questions in the instrument.* Moreover, before drawing specific conclusions, it is important to recognize that a universal yardstick cannot be used to interpret the results. For example, the results from one section of the questionnaire may suggest that a particular facility, considered by 40% of the respondents to be needed in Garden City, is in fact a significant necessity because most of the other facilities listed in that section received far less endorsement. On the other hand, a particular activity that is considered necessary by 40% of the respondents may be very insignificant in a particular section if there were other activities that received far more support. It is the ranking, as presented in the tables that is most important. Consequently, it is impossible to try to find one percentage as the cut-off point for all the questions. Each question needs to be considered separately and as a part of the section to which it belongs.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The study was designed to elicit interest, behavior, demographic, and attitude information from the citizens served by the GCRD concerning recreation and leisure. It is important to note that the study was intended to obtain information from the entire community and not any specific user group. The objective of the study was to obtain the relevant information that will help the GCRD do its job more effectively by enabling it to be more responsive to the recreation needs of the residents of Garden City. Additionally, the information can also be used to better organize the internal workings of the GCRD to stay in tune with the current and future needs of the community. This also implies that the GCRD will benefit by learning about the residents' awareness of the recreation activities within Garden City. In summary, this study was not a user's survey, but a more comprehensive assessment of the recreation needs, attitudes and opinions of the residents of the entire community. Thus, it should be noted that the primary goal of the study was to obtain information about recreation in Garden City.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Determination of the Sample

There was no sampling involved in this study. Every address in Garden City received a questionnaire mailed to them and a total of 973 responses were received at the end of the study period.

Development of the Questionnaire

Numerous people were invited to meet with the research staff resulting in several focus group meetings that helped to identify issues relating to parks and recreation in Garden City. The meetings were moderated by MLL staff. Overall, the meetings were well attended.

All of the background information gathered in these meetings was used to produce the preliminary drafts of the instrument, which contained questions and items specific to the community. These early drafts were then reviewed by the consulting team, as well as by the members of the GCRD. After a thorough review, a final draft of the questionnaire was approved by the GCRD.

Questionnaire Contents

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to elicit respondent interest in various recreation categories such as “aquatics,” “gardening,” “indoor fitness,” etc. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of interest in each of the categories. Examples of activities within each category were listed so respondents would know what each category meant. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they had participated in any of the recreation activities within the past 12 months.

The next section, labeled, “Attendance,” dealt with the level of use of parks, and attendance at the recreation facilities/programs by the respondents. Different types of recreation facilities/programs were listed and the respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they had visited each in the past twelve months. Next,

there was a section designed to elicit reasons for not using or attending recreation facilities and programs. A list of possible barriers was provided and respondents were asked to indicate if each applied to them and the members of their family. The choices included items such as “lack of information,” “lack of cleanliness,” etc.

Respondents then were asked about the best ways of keeping informed about public recreation opportunities. They were provided with a list that included items such as e-mail, seasonal brochures and word of mouth, and respondents were asked to evaluate them as either “effective” or “not effective.”

The next section of the questionnaire dealt with personal opinions of the respondents. There was a series of statements for which they could indicate their level of agreement on a four-point scale that ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” with a fifth “don’t know” option. There were several general areas of personal opinion.

The items dealt with issues such as:

- Respondents’ personal knowledge and feelings about the GCRD and its offerings,
- Specific improvements that the GCRD could make in its services,
- General recreation and leisure issues related to the GCRD,
- Opinions about the effectiveness of marketing and publicity efforts of the GCRD, and
- General questions about the quality of life in Garden City.

Respondents were then provided a section that solicited opinions about funding recreation in Garden City. Several funding options like “federal, state and other grants,” and “property taxes” were offered and the respondents were asked to indicate their support for each method on a four-point scale that ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” with a fifth “don’t know” option.

The next section, labeled, “Areas of Emphasis” listed items that were indicated as needs in the various meetings. These included both programmatic and facility additions. The respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance of each item.

The last section of the questionnaire included general demographic questions concerning gender, age, marital status, household composition, length of residence in Garden City, and where generally the respondent lives in the community.

Procedures for Administering and Analyzing the Questionnaires

A mixed-mode data collection was conducted and recipients of the questionnaire were able to either return the paper questionnaire in a pre-paid envelope or complete the questionnaire on the Web.

Data analysis consisted primarily of frequency distributions for each response category on each questionnaire item, in order to determine the percentage of respondents who selected each answer option. This was done for the sample as a whole.

It is important to note that the analysis reported here, as well as the recommendations presented, is primarily based on the aggregate information and data. Furthermore, it should be noted that the data presented in this report are based only on the responses obtained in the community-wide study and the descriptive and narrative information collected in the focus group meetings. There are no presumptions about the actual performance of the GCRD; only the perceptions of the community are reported. It is quite possible that many of the perceptions do not match the actual activities of the GCRD. However, the purpose of this report is to present the perception, accurate or inaccurate, to demonstrate how the community feels about the GCRD.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY: DEMOGRAPHICS

Description of the Population

A set of questions was designed to elicit demographic information such as age, marital status, gender, etc. These questions can provide information about a community's makeup and therefore its possible recreation needs. It is useful to note that the percentages reported and tabulated sometimes add up to 101% or 99% due to the effects of rounding off decimals.

Gender

The sample was made up of 45% male and 55% female respondents which is an acceptable gender distribution given that the Census reports a distribution of 47% males and 53% females (see, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Garden-City-New-York.html>).

Age

The questionnaire provided different age categories and the percentages are reported below. This places the median age in the 55-64 age groups which is marginally different from the Census information. This suggests that there was a slight bias towards the older members of the community.

Age Category	
18-24	1%
25-34	2%
35-44	13%
45-54	21%
55-64	24%
65-69	12%
70-74	12%
Over 75	16%

Income and Employment

The household income distribution varied from under \$25,000 to over \$150,000 per year, with the median income being in \$150,000 and over range with nearly half the respondents reporting this level of income. This coincides with the Census report of a median income of \$140,000 (based on the most recent 2011 data).

Household composition

The results show that 77% of the households have two adults in the home. Furthermore, nearly half the respondents indicated that they have at least one child under 18 in their home. The respondents indicated that 81% were married. The respondents also indicated that they have lived in Garden City for an average of nearly 28 years.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY: GENERAL FINDINGS

The following sections of this report describe the findings about the various recreational needs of Garden City residents. The questionnaire was used to explore recreation and leisure interests as well as what residents believe should be areas of emphasis for additional facilities and programs in Garden City. Moreover, information was gathered concerning opinions about various recreation-related issues, including factors that limit the use of facilities and how recreation programs should be funded. Personal opinions about recreation and health-related issues were also collected. Unless otherwise specified, numbers in parentheses refer to the percentage responding positively to a question. Furthermore, it should be noted that the percentages are estimates and can vary between plus or minus three to five percentage points.

Recreation Interests

The first section of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate the level of interest they have for each of fifteen different categories of recreational activities. Examples of specific activities pertaining to each general category were provided. The scale included the options, “interested,” and “not interested.” The results are described in terms of the percentages of respondents who showed interest in a particular recreational activity by selecting the “great interest” or “some interest” option. The respondents were also asked to indicate if they had participated in any of the recreation activities listed under each category. The results presented in Table 1 are arranged in descending order to highlight the most widely shared leisure interests at the top of the table.

Fitness-related activities appeared highest in the ranking. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents report that they have an interest in fitness activities that can be done indoors like aerobics, and nearly the same portion of respondents showed an interest in fitness activities that can be done outdoors like running, walking and biking. The emphasis on fitness is also underscored in the fact that nearly 60% of the respondents indicated that “fitness programs” was an area of emphasis for them

and nearly half the respondents felt that a “health and fitness center” was also a focus for them. Given the strong interest in fitness, *the GCRD should consider offering more fitness-related activities and facilities for their residents.*

Special events appears second most important area in the ranking, with nearly 62% of the respondents indicating an interest in one- or two-day events, festivals, shows and fairs. This is also supported by the fact that nearly 54% the respondents indicated that “special events and festivals” was an important area of emphasis for them and nearly 20% of the respondents indicated that they have participated in special events. Therefore, *the GCRD should ensure that it provides opportunities and spaces for their residents to participate in special events.*

More than half the respondents (54% to 57%) also showed an interest in active recreation including aquatics, water-based recreation and sports and athletics. Residents indicated an interest in activities like baseball, soccer, swim lessons, open swim, boating and beach activities. These are considered the more traditional recreation activities and the respondents indicated that between 30% and 40% had participated in these activities over the past year. This is supported by the fact that 58% of the respondents felt that “athletic courts” should be an area of emphasis for Garden City. Therefore, *the GCRD should consider providing opportunities for its residents to enjoy the active recreation that would include traditional sports activities.*

More than 50% of the respondents were interested in personal development programs such as hobbies and gardening. These are activities that allow people to go out and do things that they feel add to their quality of life without getting into highly active and organized events. *The GCRD should consider providing various activities that can lead personal development.*

Activities that relate to nature are also significantly popular, with about 44% of the respondents showing an interest in environmental recreational activities like nature walks and the related interest in gardening mentioned above. The need for parks is consistent with this interest and the need is particularly critical because less than a third of the respondents indicated that they have participated in such activities. Therefore, *the GCRD should consider offering more activities and facilities related to environmental recreation.*

About 40% to 50% of the respondents also indicated an interest in arts and crafts and performing arts. This is reflected in the fact that 52% of the respondents

also indicated that “arts and crafts programs” should be an area of emphasis. With this interest level, *the GCRD should consider providing opportunities for its residents to enjoy the range of activities that fall in the general area of arts, crafts and performance.*

The remaining recreation activities are of interest to less than half of the respondents and should remain lower in priority. This does not mean that these kinds of activities, such as family activities, opportunities for the special needs population and extreme sports should be ignored, but they should only be supported once the more popular interests have been accommodated and/or if there is sufficient interest among a small, dedicated group of residents to support such activities. *The GCRD should first focus on those activities in which most residents are interested. Subsequently, those interests that are supported by a smaller subgroup of residents should be accommodated.*

The results from these items are presented in the following table. Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each response option for each activity type.

Table 1: Recreation Interests

Category	Percent Interested	Percent Participated
Outdoor Fitness	65%	25%
Indoor Fitness	64%	28%
Special Events	62%	19%
Aquatics	57%	30%
Water-based recreation	55%	25%
Sports and Athletics	54%	40%
Hobbies	50%	9%
Gardening	49%	6%
Passive recreation	48%	17%
Arts & Crafts	46%	19%
Family Programs	44%	22%
Environmental	44%	8%
Performing Arts	43%	14%

Personal Opinions

This section of the questionnaire contained several opinion statements with which respondents could agree or disagree. A four-point scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” was provided, along with a fifth “don’t know” option in case the respondents did not have enough experience with a particular issue to form an opinion about it. For the sake of simplicity of presentation, the results have been collapsed into the categories “agree,” “disagree” and “don’t know,” but GCRD can use the Web-based tool if more detail is needed to discriminate between levels of agreement or disagreement. These opinion items were generated in part on the basis of the focus group meetings with staff and residents, and they reflect some of the larger issues surrounding the operation of GCRD facilities and programs. Although the items were arranged somewhat

randomly in the questionnaire, the results are presented here around major topic areas.

Opinions about recreation facilities

Eight of the items in the opinions section of the questionnaire address the facilities maintained by the GCRD. More specifically, the items tap into the residents' opinions about parks and recreation facilities in Garden City and considered alongside the facility-related ideas for new parks and recreation they will help the staff further understand what preferences and needs there may be.

Almost all residents considered that well-maintained parks add to the quality of life in Garden City. Nearly than 96 % felt that maintenance was an important part of the work done by GCRD and they felt that this work needs to be continued well to add to the quality of life. At the time of conducting the study, the level of satisfaction is very high, with 93% of the respondents agreeing with the statement: "I am satisfied with the quality of maintenance of the public gardens, trees, bushes;" and 79% agreeing with the statement: "I am satisfied with the level of maintenance of the recreation facilities." These findings suggest that maintenance is important, and that GCRD is doing a good job of maintain the facilities and keeping them in a pleasing condition, since 89% of the respondents also agreed that they were satisfied with the "aesthetic quality of Village parks." *The GCRD should thus strive to offer a high level of maintenance.*

While the level of maintenance was considered good, nearly half the respondents agreed that recreation facilities were getting old and needed to be updated. There was some degree of ambivalence related to the age of the facilities. Nearly equal number of respondents agreed (43%) and disagreed (40%) with the statement: "recreation facilities are getting old and need to be updated." There was a good degree of discussion on this matter in the focus group meetings as well. Based on this data, the *GCRD should continue conversations in the community to get a sense of which facilities are particularly old and was in need for update.*

The next set of opinions is related to who uses specific facilities and the cost of use. Nearly 85% of the respondents agreed that they prefer the restrictions placed on non-resident use of the facilities. This is something that GCRD is currently doing and it should continue to do that. The respondents also indicated that swimming pool would be made more accessible and affordable if short term passes were made available to the residents. Such findings suggest that the *GCRD*

should ensure affordable access to facilities where the residents get first preference in attendance and use.

The other facility related issue dealt with the specific question of adding an artificial turf field. Less than a quarter of the respondents agreed that there was a need for this facility. This was also reflected in the fact that only 17% of the respondents felt that “indoor turf field” should be an area of emphasis. The results from the facility-related opinion items are presented in the next table.

Table 2: Opinions about Recreation Facilities

	Agree	Disagree	DK
Well-maintained parks add to the quality of life in the community	96%	1%	3%
I am satisfied with the quality of maintenance of the public gardens, trees, bushes	93%	6%	1%
I am satisfied with the aesthetic quality of Village parks	89%	8%	3%
The Village should continue to restrict the non-resident use of facilities	85%	8%	7%
I am satisfied with the level of maintenance of the recreation facilities	79%	18%	3%
The pool should allow short-term passes/membership	77%	13%	10%
The recreation facilities are getting old and need to be updated	43%	40%	17%
There is a need for artificial turf fields	23%	51%	26%

Opinions about programs and administration

Some items in the opinions section of the questionnaire address issues related to programming and general operations of the GCRD. More specifically, the items tap into the residents’ opinions about how the GCRD responds to programmatic needs of the community and the perceptions of the community with respect to the way the GCRD handles its internal activities.

Nearly all the respondents endorsed the importance of parks and recreation in Garden City. This finding is particularly important since it shows that nearly 95% of the respondents felt that parks and recreation constituted an “essential service” for Garden City. Such a strong support bodes well for the Department and

the *GCRD should strive to continue to offer the high level of service and facilities that has led to such a strong endorsement.*

The respondents also felt that the GCRD should offer a good quality of programs. More than two-thirds of the respondents felt that there was a good variety of programs offered by GCRD. This is further supported by the fact that fewer than half the respondents felt the need for additional services for any specific demographic group. For instance, less than 10% of the respondents felt that programs were tailored for seniors or adults, instead, the general sentiment was that the programs were well distributed for different sets of participants. Therefore, *GCRD should work towards promoting the opportunities that should be diverse, of high quality and suitable for the community.*

The respondents also felt that the GCRD should offer more programs for the entire family. While there was a sense that the programs were adequately diverse, there was a strong (66%) sense that there was need for more activities for the entire family. This tendency has been noticeable in similar studies across the United States and is also reflected in the fact that there was a strong endorsement of special events, often attended by the entire family, suggested in the findings from other segments of the study. Therefore, *GCRD should work towards providing programs and activities that would be attractive to all members of a family.*

The respondents were also satisfied with the quality of staffing and leadership provided by GCRD. The respondents indicated that GCRD was adequately staffed by courteous and helpful employees. Additionally, there was an endorsement of the quality of leadership of the GCRD with 71% of the respondents agreeing to the statement: “The quality of leadership/supervision provided by the Village is good.” The quality of staffing was also reflected in the fact that 83% of the respondents felt that they were well informed about the activities and facilities of the GCRD. This high level of endorsement suggests that the GCRD is going a good job of “getting the word out.” When a community is satisfied with the leadership, they are also more likely to volunteer, which is reflected in the fact that 54% of the respondents were willing to volunteer. Therefore:

1) GCRD should maintain the high level of professionalism within its staff and leadership, 2) the GCRD should offer volunteering opportunities to the community and 3) the GCRD should continue to work towards keeping the community informed.

The results from these questions are presented in the next table.

Table 3: Opinions about Programs and Administration

	Agree	Disagree	DK
Parks and recreation is an essential service to the Village	95%	4%	1%
I am aware of the recreation programs and activities that are offered	83%	15%	2%
The Village staff dealing with parks and recreation are generally courteous and helpful	81%	10%	9%
The recreation programs and facilities are adequately staffed	72%	6%	22%
The quality of leadership/supervision provided by the Village is good	71%	18%	11%
I am satisfied with the variety of recreation programs offered by the Village	70%	25%	5%
There is a need for activities for the whole family	66%	18%	16%
I would volunteer for activities, programs, and projects	54%	33%	13%
There needs to be greater cooperation between schools and recreation	54%	12%	34%
The recreation activities are primarily tailored for the youth	50%	33%	17%
There is a need for more teen programs	50%	19%	31%
There is a need for programs for preschool age children	37%	30%	33%
There is a need for more recreation opportunities for people with disabilities	35%	15%	50%
The recreation activities are primarily tailored for seniors	11%	71%	18%

Opinions about funding recreation

There was a section of the questionnaire that focused on funding issues to assess how the community felt about different funding mechanisms. The respondents were offered several different options including items like “bond issues,” and “sales taxes” so that the respondents could express their opinions about each option on a four-point scale similar to the personal opinion questions.

Respondents generally felt that they were receiving valuable service for their tax dollars. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents felt that they received satisfactory

recreation opportunities for their tax dollars. This is a reflection of the overall satisfaction with the department as shown in other findings from the study. This being the case, the *GCRD should continue to offer the free tax-supported services and facilities.*

Respondents felt that user fees were an acceptable way for paying for recreation opportunities. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents agreed that they were willing to pay reasonable user fees for recreation opportunities and 72% of the respondents felt that user fees should be a way of finding recreation. Thus it is clear that reasonable user fees could be an appropriate way of funding GCRD activities, with the caveat that non-residents should pay a higher fee for participation. Thus, the *GCRD should consider developing a fee schedule for some of its activities, keeping in mind that the resident fee needs to be lower than the non-resident fee just as resident fees need remain in line with local economics.*

The respondents felt that grants and endowments should be sought to fund recreation. More than 80% of the respondents considered extra-mural grants and endowments as appropriate sources of funding recreation. There are different opportunities for such funding and the *GCRD should actively seek external grants and endowments for funding recreation.*

Other sources of funding that either had to be paid back, or led to fees and taxes, received less support. Few respondents supported bonds, impact fees, property taxes and other taxes as a mode of funding recreation. This was also reflected in the findings from other segments of the study. Overall, the data suggests that the respondents are willing to pay user fees for special events and special interest activities. For instance, 54% of the respondents felt that “after school programs,” the item which was considered to be an important area of emphasis by 61% of the respondents, would be funded by user fees. On the other hand, 34% of the respondents felt that taxes should be used to pay for “playground equipment, which was considered important by 43% of the respondents. This suggests that *GCRD should try and fund facilities and events of general interest with existing taxes and special interest activities with user fees.*

The results related to funding are presented in the next table.

Table 4: Opinions about Finances and Funding Sources

	Agree	Disagree	DK
Non-residents should pay a higher fee for participation	93%	4%	3%
I am willing to pay reasonable user fees for recreation opportunities	77%	18%	5%
I am satisfied with the recreation opportunities I receive for my tax dollars	64%	32%	4%
Federal, state and other grants	87%	6%	7%
Endowments	82%	5%	13%
User fees	72%	20%	8%
Impact fees charged to developers	56%	13%	31%
Bonds	48%	34%	18%
Property tax	33%	60%	7%
Hospitality tax	24%	48%	28%

Areas of Importance

One section of the questionnaire was designed to determine the importance of various facilities and services in the community. Several recreation facilities and several programs were listed for the respondents, and they were asked to indicate how important the service or facility is for them or their family. These results can help the GCRD prioritize its future additions in terms of what the community perceives as necessary; they can also help the GCRD recognize areas that may be perceived as necessary simply because residents are not aware of existing provisions. The items were listed in alphabetical order in the questionnaire but they have been thematically arranged for ease of analysis and presentation. The items listed included things that might be completely new to the community as well as some things that are already available. The objective of this section was to develop a measure of the current and future needs for things that are already available and things that might become available in the near future. The respondents were asked to indicate how each item ought to be funded – by tax or user fees.

To begin with, after school programs was highest in the list. Exactly 61% of the respondents indicated a need for after school programs. Given the demographics of the village this is an important need, and the respondents are willing to pay user fees for this service. The need for programs such as after-school services is also reflected in the fact that 45% of the respondents expressed a need for summer camps and parent/child programs. This is also in line with the need for more family activities. As such, the *GCRD should consider offering fee-based after school programs, seasonal camps and opportunities for parents and children to have activities together*.

The respondents also indicated the importance of fitness programs. There was a need for fitness programs and a health and fitness center. The overall interest in fitness is a recurring theme amongst the respondents and the community. This is also reflected in the fact that 47% felt the need for a health and fitness center and 41% felt the need for a work out center. This need is also demonstrated in the fact that nearly 60% of the respondents indicated that they regularly visit private health clubs. Based on this, *the GCRD should offer opportunities for fitness related activities*.

The respondents also indicated the importance of special events. As demonstrated earlier, there is a significant interest in special events with 54% of the respondents showing an interest in special events, 58% showing interest in concerts, and 31% showing interest in lecture series. Given this interest, the *GCRD should offer special events and activities*.

The respondents also indicated the importance of athletic courts. Nearly 60% expressed a need for athletic courts, and there was some support for an indoor skating rink, indoor tacks, and indoor tracks as well. These findings suggest that *GCRD needs to provide facilities for athletic activities*.

The respondents also indicated the importance of having a centralized recreation facility. Many of the responses indicate that there is need for a centralized recreation facility to accommodate the different kinds of activities. Considering the fact that 51% of the respondents want a year-round facility, the need for indoor facilities, 50% express the need for a teen center, 49% support a centralized community center, 42% express the need for an extended pool season, and between 35% and 40% of the respondents want rental spaces, meeting rooms, performance space and space for birthdays. All of these needs suggest that GCRD

need to be considering offering a centralized facility which would offer the space of different activities and programs.

Such a place would allow for fulfilling other needs such as senior programs, arts and crafts programs, performing arts programs, and performing arts programs. The respondents indicate an interest in a variety of programs for different demographic groups, performing arts, crafts, and environment. *The GCRD should try and address needs for different programs that address specific demographic and special interest groups.*

The respondents also indicated needs for more water fountains, playground equipment, child care at facilities, better lighting and concession stands. These are support services that make facilities more accessible and attractive to the community. *The GCRD should consider offering support services and everyday conveniences at their facilities.*

Other programs and facilities such as a dog park, indoor turf field, transportation services and climbing was endorsed by less than a third of the respondents. The results are tabulated next.

Table 5: Areas of Importance

Program/facility	Needed	Tax to fee ratio (less than 1.0 indicates tax preferred)
After school programs	61%	5.0
Fitness programs	59%	8.2
Athletic courts	58%	1.3
Concerts	58%	1.9
Senior programs	57%	1.5
Special events and festivals	54%	1.7
Arts and crafts programs	52%	9.2
Year-round facility	51%	1.2
Teen Center	50%	1.2
Centralized community center	49%	0.7
Health and fitness center	47%	3.9
Summer camps	45%	11.0
Parent/Child programs	45%	4.0
Performing arts programs	44%	2.6
Playground equipment	43%	0.2
Concession and cafeteria	42%	8.9
Extended pool season	42%	7.1
Workout center	41%	4.5
Indoor pool	39%	2.7
Environmental programs	39%	0.8
Rental space and rooms	38%	4.7
Meeting space	36%	1.7
Performance space (e.g. theater)	35%	1.6
Space for birthday parties	35%	11.0
Child care at facilities	35%	10.2
Better lighting at facilities	32%	0.3
Lecture series	31%	3.6
Dog park	30%	1.3
Indoor Tracks	29%	1.5
Water fountains	29%	0.2
Transportation system	29%	1.6
Indoor skating rink	23%	4.6
Indoor turf field	17%	1.7
Climbing wall	15%	2.5

Information about Parks and Recreation Opportunities

The next section of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate which methods of communication would be the most effective in keeping them informed about parks and recreation programs and activities. The scale included the options, “effective,” “ineffective,” and “don’t know.” The results are described in terms of the percentages of respondents who selected the “effective” and “ineffective” options.

Direct e-mail appears at the top of the ranking, with 79% of the respondents indicating this type of communication as being effective while only 8% indicating it as non-effective. The preference for digital communication is an indication of the way in which people prefer to receive information sent to them. This preference is also reflected in the fact that 63% want information through a Website and 42% via social media. Therefore the *GCRD should try to keep residents informed of upcoming recreation activities through digital electronic means using direct e-mail, Website and social media.*

Notification through direct mailers to households appeared next in the ranking. Almost the same percentage of respondents who wanted to get information by direct e-mail also felt that the direct mailer was important. This is a reminder that it is not possible to replace the direct mailer by e-mail, but one must supplement the other. *GCRD should use a direct mailer to keep people informed.*

Advertisements in newspapers appeared next. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents affirmed advertisements in newspapers as effective methods. *Therefore newspapers should be utilized to promote activities and facilities.*

The respondents feel that word of mouth and flyers in school are moderately effective. About half of the residents surveyed felt that word of mouth is a good way of getting information to the community. Only a quarter of the respondents felt flyers are effective.

The results from these items are presented in the following table. Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each response option as effective or non-effective for each method of communication.

Table 6: Information about Parks and Recreation Opportunities

Information method	Percent claiming the method effective	Percent claiming the method ineffective
Direct e-mail	79%	8%
Direct mailers to household	78%	11%
Websites	63%	13%
Newspaper advertising	62%	16%
Word of mouth	47%	32%
Social Media	42%	27%
Flyers at schools	28%	44%
Flyers in public places	23%	44%
Kiosks	14%	51%

Attendance

One section of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate how many times they and/or their family have visited various facilities in the past 12 months. The scale included the options, “never,” “1 to 2 times,” “3 to 6 times,” “7 to 12 times,” “13 to 24 times” and “more than 24 times.” The results are described in terms of the percentages of respondents who indicated never having visited facilities in the last year. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they had “heard of” the program or facility. The data suggests that all the respondents were aware of the listed facilities and programs. The results presented in Table 7 are arranged in order to highlight the least number of people never having visited facilities at the top of the table or in other words the facilities that maximum number of people had visited are kept at the top.

Parks in general were the most widely visited facilities in Garden City. Less than one-fourth of the respondents indicated never visiting a neighborhood park in the past 12 months. The respondents also indicated that they frequently visit Garden City Community Park and 70% of the respondents indicated that they

visited a playground at least once in the past 12 months. The importance of parks is also reflected in the need for neighborhood parks and the GCRD *should ensure that the population has access to parks.*

St. Paul’s Complex was also quite popular with the respondents. Only 29% of the people have denoted that they have not visited this facility in the past 12 months.

Nearly 70% of the respondents also indicated visiting the Garden City Pool. The popularity and need for pools has been reflected elsewhere in the study too. The GCRD *should ensure that the aquatic activities are kept available to the population.*

The results from the attendance items are presented in the next table.

Table 7: Attendance

Facility/Program	Not visited in the past 12 months
Neighborhood parks	18%
Garden City Community Park	28%
St. Paul’s Complex	29%
Playgrounds	30%
Garden City Pool	33%
Gazebo Concert Series	54%
Garden City Tennis Center	54%
Easter Egg Hunt	64%
Senior Centers	71%

Reasons for Non-use

After the “Attendance” section, another part of the questionnaire was aimed at investigating the possible factors that limit residents from participating in organized recreation activities offered by the GCRD. The results are described in terms of the percentages of respondents who selected each option as a reason why they or their family have not participated in programs, activities, and/or not visited facilities.

The most important factor affecting participation is lack of time. About a third (31%) of the respondents said they have not participated in programs or attended facilities because they do not have enough time. There is not much that a recreation agency can do to address this matter. On the other hand a quarter of the respondents indicated that they find inconvenient timing of events a barrier to participation and 18% claimed that hours of operation was a barrier to participation. This is something that GCRD can respond to. *The GCRD should continue to explore the best time for activities and participation to maximize community involvement.*

The next most important factor affecting participation is lack of information. About a quarter (28%) of the respondents said they have not participated in programs or attended facilities because they were not acquainted with the events or facilities. This is not an unusual reason for non-attendance, however in the case of Garden City a balancing factor is the fact that a large portion of respondents also claimed that they are aware of events and facilities. The GCRD should review the other recommendations in this report to address this matter.

The next most important factor affecting participation is lack of interest in what is provided. About a quarter (26%) of the respondents said they have not participated in programs or attended facilities because they were not interested in what is offered by GCRD. This is often connected with a lack of information. The GCRD should review the other recommendations in this report to address this matter.

The issue of cost is also important since the second most important factor affecting participation is cost. About a quarter (23%) of the respondents said they have not participated in programs or attended facilities because of high cost. In an economic climate where people have to watch household expenses in view of rising fuel costs along with the increasing cost of daily needs, it is important to consider ways in which recreation activities can be made more affordable. As such, the GCRD should take into account ways in which different financing options can be considered as indicated in the funding section of this report. The perception of high cost could also be related to a lack of information about the true cost of participating in recreation activities. The GCRD should *make good efforts to keep residents well informed about recreation opportunities and the costs in order to spark participation in programs and events.*

Around 12% to 17% of the respondents were also concerned about the quality of the facilities where activities were offered. 16% of people claimed that the facilities were not modern, and 13% blamed the condition of the facilities as a barrier to attendance. However, the condition is related more to age than maintenance, cleanliness and safety since very few claimed those factors are reasons for non-attendance. This suggests that there is a need for modern facilities as has been indicated elsewhere in the report. The GCRD should review the other recommendations in this report to address this matter.

The results from the reasons for non-use are presented in the next table. Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who indicated each response as a reason for limited participation in programs and/or not visiting facilities.

Table 8: Reasons for Non-use

Barrier	Percent saying yes
Not having enough time	31%
Lack of information	28%
Not interested in what is provided	26%
Inconvenient timing of activities	25%
Cost of participation	23%
Hours of operation	18%
Facilities are not modern	16%
Condition of facilities	13%
Lack of maintenance	9%
Lack of cleanliness	7%
Lack of transportation	6%
Safety at facilities	3%

SUMMARY

This section of the report takes some of the key recommendations from each section of the report and suggests a plan of action for the GCRD. Some of these can be achieved in the short term, while others need to be considered as long-term plan elements.

Facilities: The results clearly suggest that the GCRD needs to emphasize maintenance of its facilities along with the development of a centralized facility:

- *GCRD should ensure that it provides opportunities and spaces for their residents to participate in special events.*
- *GCRD needs to provide facilities for athletic activities.*
- *GCRD should thus strive to offer a high level of maintenance.*
- *GCRD should continue conversations in the community to get a sense of which facilities are particularly old and was in need for update.*
- *GCRD should ensure affordable access to facilities where the residents get first preference in attendance and use.*
- *GCRD needs to consider offering a centralized facility which would offer the space of different activities and programs.*
- *GCRD should consider offering support services and everyday conveniences at their facilities.*
- *GCRD should ensure that the population has access to parks.*

Programming: The results clearly suggest that there are several areas of interest that include fitness, aquatics, arts and crafts and athletics:

- *GCRD should consider offering more fitness-related activities and facilities for their residents.*
- *GCRD should consider providing opportunities for its residents to enjoy the active recreation that would include traditional sports activities.*
- *GCRD should consider providing various activities that can lead personal development.*

- *GCRD should consider offering more activities and facilities related to environmental recreation.*
- *GCRD should consider providing opportunities for its residents to enjoy the range of activities that fall in the general area of arts, crafts and performance.*
- *GCRD should work towards providing programs and activities that would be attractive to all members of a family.*
- *GCRD should offer volunteering opportunities to the community*
- *GCRD should offer special events and activities.*
- *GCRD should ensure that the aquatic activities are kept available to the population.*

Financial issues: The respondents had specific feelings about the way in which GCRD should be funded and how its funding should be used. To that end, the GCRD should consider adopting the following recommendations:

- *GCRD should continue to offer the free tax-supported services and facilities.*
- *GCRD should consider developing a fee schedule for some of its activities, keeping in mind that the resident fee needs to be lower than the non-resident fee just as resident fees need remain in line with local economics.*
- *GCRD should actively seek external grants and endowments for funding recreation.*
- *GCRD should try and fund facilities and events of general interest with existing taxes and special interest activities with user fees.*

Administrative issues: Based on the data, the GCRD should consider the following as recommendations for action with respect to the way in which it performs its activities. These are important issues since there is an opportunity for GCRD to better showcase its activities and functions in the community to gain the respect it deserves:

- *GCRD should maintain the high level of professionalism within its staff and leadership and*
- *GCRD should continue to work towards keeping the community informed.*

- *GCRD should continue to explore the best time for activities and participation to maximize community involvement.*
- *GCRD should strive to continue to offer the high level of service and facilities that has led to such a strong endorsement.*

Incorporated Village of Garden City – Recreation and Parks Needs Assessment

**Management
Learning
Laboratories**

June 2013

Management Learning Laboratories



Method used in the needs assessment



- ***Focus groups with different segments of the community***
- ***Questionnaire development***
- ***Adult data collection – Paper and Web***
- ***Aggregate analysis of the adult data***

Major Findings



Top Recreation Interests

- Outdoor Fitness 65%
- Indoor Fitness 64%
- Special Events 62%
- Aquatics 57%
- Water-based recreation 55%
- Sports and Athletics 54%
- Hobbies 50%

Facilities Used

1. Neighborhood parks
2. Garden City Community Park
3. St. Paul's Complex
4. Playgrounds
5. Garden City Pool

Non-use reasons

- Not having enough time
- Lack of information
- Not interested in what is provided
- Inconvenient timing of activities
- Cost of participation
- Hours of operation
- Facilities are not modern
- Condition of facilities

How to keep informed

1. Direct e-mail
2. Direct mailers to household
3. Websites
4. Newspaper advertising
5. Word of mouth
6. Social Media

Opinions 1

Between 80% and 96% felt:

- Well-maintained parks add to the quality of life in the community (96%)
- Parks and recreation is an essential service to the Village (95%)
- I am satisfied with the quality of maintenance of the public gardens, trees, bushes (93%)
- Non-residents should pay a higher fee for participation (93%)
- I am satisfied with the aesthetic quality of Village parks (89%)
- The Village should continue to restrict the non-resident use of facilities (85%)
- I am aware of the recreation programs and activities that are offered (83%)
- The Village staff dealing with parks and recreation are generally courteous and helpful (81%)

Opinions 2

Between 66% and 79% felt:

- I am satisfied with the level of maintenance of the recreation facilities (79%)
- I am willing to pay reasonable user fees for recreation opportunities (77%)
- The pool should allow short-term passes/membership (77%)
- The recreation programs and facilities are adequately staffed (72%)
- The quality of leadership/supervision provided by the Village is good (71%)
- I am satisfied with the variety of recreation programs offered by the Village (70%)
- There is a need for activities for the whole family (66%)

Finances

1. Federal, state and other grants
2. Endowments
3. User fees
4. Impact fees charged to developers
5. Bonds
6. Property tax
7. Hospitality tax

Needs

(45% and above showing Tax:Fee Ratio, high number suggests support for fees, less than zero means support for tax)

– After school programs	61% 5.0
– Fitness programs	59% 8.2
– Athletic courts	58% 1.3
– Concerts	58% 1.9
– Senior programs	57% 1.5
– Special events and festivals	54% 1.7
– Arts and crafts programs	52% 9.2
– Year-round facility	51% 1.2
– Teen Center	50% 1.2
– Centralized community center	49% 0.7
– Health and fitness center	47% 3.9
– Summer camps	45% 11.0
– Parent/Child programs	45% 4.0

Needs

(35% to 40%; showing Tax:Fee Ratio, high number suggests support for fees, less than zero means support for tax)

– Performing arts programs	44% 2.6
– Playground equipment	43% 0.2
– Concession and cafeteria	42% 8.9
– Extended pool season	42% 7.1
– Workout center	41% 4.5
– Indoor pool	39% 2.7
– Environmental programs	39% 0.8
– Rental space and rooms	38% 4.7
– Meeting space	36% 1.7
– Performance space (e.g. theater)	35% 1.6
– Space for birthday parties	35% 11.0
– Child care at facilities	35% 10.2

Needs

(34% and lower; showing Tax:Fee Ratio, high number suggests support for fees, less than zero means support for tax)

– Better lighting at facilities	32% 0.3
– Lecture series	31% 3.6
– Dog park	30% 1.3
– Indoor Tracks	29% 1.5
– Water fountains	29% 0.2
– Transportation system	29% 1.6
– Indoor skating rink	23% 4.6
– Indoor turf field	17% 1.7
– Climbing wall	15% 2.5

Preliminary Discussion

- *Importance of Fitness*
- *Special events and family activities*
 - There is a need for activities for the whole family (66%)
 - Attendance of Garden City Community Park, Neighborhood parks, pool, St. Paul's Complex, playgrounds
- *Aquatics and water based*
 - High Use of pool
 - The pool should allow short-term passes/membership (77%)

Preliminary Discussion

- *Mix of new and traditional modes of information and promotion*
- *Overall very satisfied with parks and recreation and sees the importance*
 - Well-maintained parks add to the quality of life in the community (96%)
 - Parks and recreation is an essential service to the Village (95%)
 - I am satisfied with the quality of maintenance of the public gardens, trees, bushes (93%)
- *User fees would be an appropriate way for financing*

Questions and Comments

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RECREATION INTERESTS

For each activity listed below please circle the appropriate number to indicate whether you and/or anyone in your family would have interest in the activity. Then circle the appropriate number to indicate if you and/or anyone in your family have participated in the activity in the past 12 months.

Category	Example	Not Interested	Interested	Participated
Activities for the disabled	Sports, crafts, trips, social events, etc.	1	2	1
Aquatics	Lap swim, swim lessons, open swim, etc.	1	2	1
Arts & Crafts	Ceramics, photography, calligraphy, painting, etc.	1	2	1
Environmental	Nature study, nature walks, bird watching, etc.	1	2	1
Family Programs	Parties, and parent/child dances, family nights, etc.	1	2	1
Gardening	Gardening, landscaping, etc.	1	2	1
Hobbies	Cooking, flower arranging, models, chess, sewing, etc.	1	2	1
Indoor Fitness	Exercise equipment, jogging track, aerobics, etc.	1	2	1
Outdoor Fitness	In-line skating, running, walking, biking, etc.	1	2	1
Passive recreation	Sitting in the parks, enjoying scenery, etc.	1	2	1
Performing Arts	Music classes, dance classes, drama classes, etc.	1	2	1
Senior Activities	Bingo, walking, bridge club, etc.	1	2	1
Special Events	One or two day events, festivals, shows, fairs, etc.	1	2	1
Sports and Athletics	Baseball, soccer, basketball, football, tennis, golf, etc.	1	2	1
Water-based recreation	Boating, beach activities, etc.	1	2	1

ATTENDANCE

Please indicate by circling the appropriate number approximately how many times in the past 12 months you and/or another member of your family utilized the following Village facilities and/or programs. Also, please let us know if you were not aware of the facility and/or program.

	Never	Once	1 to 6 times	7 to 12 times	12 times or more	Never heard of it
Easter Egg Hunt	0	1	2	3	4	8
Garden City Community Park	0	1	2	3	4	8
Garden City Pool	0	1	2	3	4	8
Garden City Tennis Center	0	1	2	3	4	8
Gazebo Concert Series	0	1	2	3	4	8
Neighborhood parks	0	1	2	3	4	8
Playgrounds	0	1	2	3	4	8
Senior Centers	0	1	2	3	4	8
St. Paul's Complex	0	1	2	3	4	8

Please indicate by circling yes if the following are barriers to participation in programs & facilities (indicate all that apply).

Cost of participation	Yes	Lack of information	Yes
Facilities are not modern	Yes	Lack of maintenance	Yes
Hours of operation	Yes	Not having enough time	Yes
Lack of transportation	Yes	Not interested in what is provided	Yes
Inconvenient timing of activities	Yes	Safety at facilities	Yes
Lack of cleanliness	Yes	Condition of facilities	Yes

INFORMATION ABOUT RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Please circle the appropriate number on how effective the following methods would be for keeping you informed.

	Ineffective	Not Sure	Effective		Ineffective	Not Sure	Effective
Direct mailers to household	1	2	3	Kiosks	1	2	3
Flyers in public places	1	2	3	Direct e-mail	1	2	3
Flyers at schools	1	2	3	Newspaper advertising	1	2	3
Websites	1	2	3	Social Media	1	2	3
Word of mouth	1	2	3	Other: _____	1	2	3

Please add your comments below:

PERSONAL OPINIONS

The Village of Garden City would like to obtain your personal opinions about a variety of issues. Please indicate by circling the appropriate number your opinions about the following.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
I am aware of the recreation programs and activities that are offered	1	2	3	4	8
I am satisfied with the aesthetic quality of Village parks	1	2	3	4	8
I am satisfied with the level of maintenance of the recreation facilities	1	2	3	4	8
I am satisfied with the quality of maintenance of the public gardens, trees, bushes	1	2	3	4	8
I am satisfied with the recreation opportunities I receive for my tax dollars	1	2	3	4	8
I am satisfied with the variety of recreation programs offered by the Village	1	2	3	4	8
I am willing to pay reasonable user fees for recreation opportunities	1	2	3	4	8
I would volunteer for activities, programs, and projects	1	2	3	4	8
Non-residents should pay a higher fee for participation	1	2	3	4	8
Parks and recreation is an essential service to the Village	1	2	3	4	8
The pool should allow short-term passes/membership	1	2	3	4	8
The quality of leadership/supervision provided by the Village is good	1	2	3	4	8
The recreation activities are primarily tailored for adults	1	2	3	4	8
The recreation activities are primarily tailored for seniors	1	2	3	4	8
The recreation activities are primarily tailored for the youth	1	2	3	4	8
The recreation facilities are getting old and need to be updated	1	2	3	4	8
The recreation programs and facilities are adequately staffed	1	2	3	4	8
The Village should continue to restrict the non-resident use of facilities	1	2	3	4	8
The Village staff dealing with parks and recreation are generally courteous and helpful	1	2	3	4	8
There is a need for activities for the whole family	1	2	3	4	8
There is a need for artificial turf fields	1	2	3	4	8
There is a need for more recreation opportunities for people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	8
There is a need for more teen programs	1	2	3	4	8
There is a need for programs for preschool age children	1	2	3	4	8
There needs to be greater cooperation between schools and recreation	1	2	3	4	8
Well-maintained parks add to the quality of life in the community	1	2	3	4	8

FUNDING PUBLIC RECREATION

The Garden City Recreation and Parks Department would like to obtain your personal opinions about different ways of funding public recreation. Please circle one number for each question that most closely reflects your attitude.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Bonds	1	2	3	4	8
Endowments	1	2	3	4	8
Federal, state and other grants	1	2	3	4	8
Hospitality tax	1	2	3	4	8
Impact fees charged to developers	1	2	3	4	8
Property tax	1	2	3	4	8
User fees	1	2	3	4	8

Please add your comments below:

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

The Recreation and Parks Department needs to know what it should emphasize as it tries to serve the community better. Please indicate whether you or your family thinks that these are needed, and if needed please indicate how they should be paid for.

	Not Needed	Need	Tax	Fees		Not Needed	Need	Tax	Fees
After school programs	1	2	1	2	Indoor turf field	1	2	1	2
Arts and crafts programs	1	2	1	2	Lecture series	1	2	1	2
Athletic courts	1	2	1	2	Meeting space	1	2	1	2
Better lighting at facilities	1	2	1	2	Parent/Child programs	1	2	1	2
Centralized community center	1	2	1	2	Performance space (e.g. theater)	1	2	1	2
Child care at facilities	1	2	1	2	Performing arts programs	1	2	1	2
Climbing wall	1	2	1	2	Playground equipment	1	2	1	2
Concerts	1	2	1	2	Rental space and rooms	1	2	1	2
Concession and cafeteria	1	2	1	2	Senior programs	1	2	1	2
Dog park	1	2	1	2	Space for birthday parties	1	2	1	2
Environmental programs	1	2	1	2	Special events and festivals	1	2	1	2
Extended pool season	1	2	1	2	Summer camps	1	2	1	2
Fitness programs	1	2	1	2	Teen Center	1	2	1	2
Health and fitness center	1	2	1	2	Transportation system	1	2	1	2
Indoor pool	1	2	1	2	Water fountains	1	2	1	2
Indoor skating rink	1	2	1	2	Workout center	1	2	1	2
Indoor Tracks	1	2	1	2	Year-round facility	1	2	1	2

GENERAL INFORMATION

To help us make better decisions, please tell us a little bit about you and your family.

What is your gender?

Male...1 Female...2

What is your age?

18-24...1 25-34...2 35-44...3 45-54...4
 55-64...5 65-69...6 70-74...7 Over 75...8

What was your household income before taxes in 2011?

Under \$49,999.....1 \$100,000 to \$124,900....4
 \$50,000 to \$74,999....2 \$125,000 to \$149,999....5
 \$75,000 to \$99,999....3 Over \$150,0006

How many people, including yourself, currently live in your household?

Under age five ____; ages 5 to 10 ____; ages 11 to 14 ____; ages 15 to 18 ____; ages 19 to 30 ____; ages 31to 54____; ages 55 to 64____; ages 65 to 74____; ages 75 & older ____

What is your marital status?

Married...1 Divorced/Separated...2 Single...3 Widowed...4

How many years have you lived in the Village of Garden City? _____

Please indicate ALL the other places you go for recreation and leisure activities (indicate all that apply)?

Sports clubs and associations...1 Private health clubs...2 Programs offered by school district...3
 Programs by libraries...4 Private country clubs...5
 Other (Specify) _____

Which Property Owners Association do you live in:

East...1 West...2 Central...3 Estates...4

Please add comments below: