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# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



## Summary

Community input was gathered using various techniques designed to engage a wide cross-section of the City of Little Rock's population. These methods included an On-line Survey, Steering Committee Workshop, and Pop Up Events, where members of the design team were able to have spontaneous, casual conversations about park and recreation needs with members of the public in a variety of settings throughout the City.

Collectively, over 719 individuals participated in public engagement activities providing responses that help to shape park and recreation needs and preferences across the community. As a result, the following

themes were identified:

- Current facilities and programming are not meeting community needs.
- Waterways should be highlighted and used for canoe trails and blueways.
- Individual outdoor activities, in addition to canoeing and kayaking are desired.
- Demand for golf, adult sports, and tennis are met with current facilities and programming.

## Survey

An online survey was conducted by the City of Little Rock from June 18, 2018 to June 29, 2018. Questions pertained to the quality of and demand for various Parks and Recreation Department programs, activities and facilities. In total, 189 indi-

viduals participated in the survey, providing a wide array of answers related to the Parks and Recreation Department. Questions ranged from demographic information to programmatic and facility needs and preferences.

### Survey Results *The following themes emerged from survey responses.*



*Individual activities are more popular than group activities.*



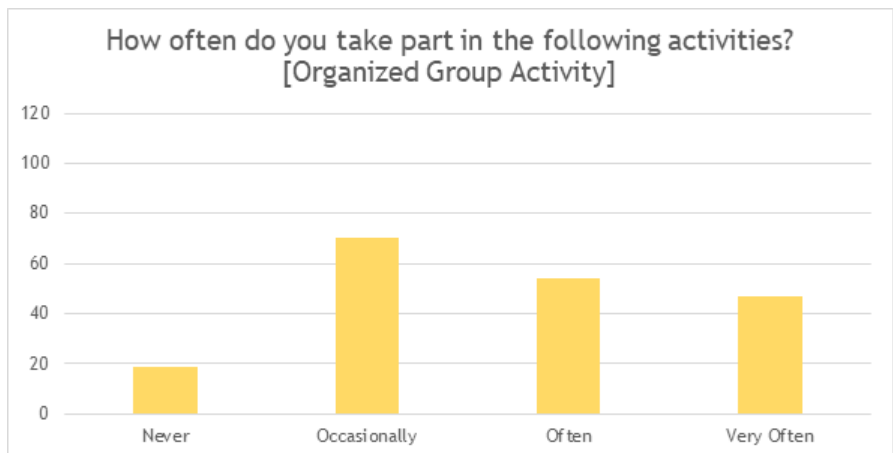
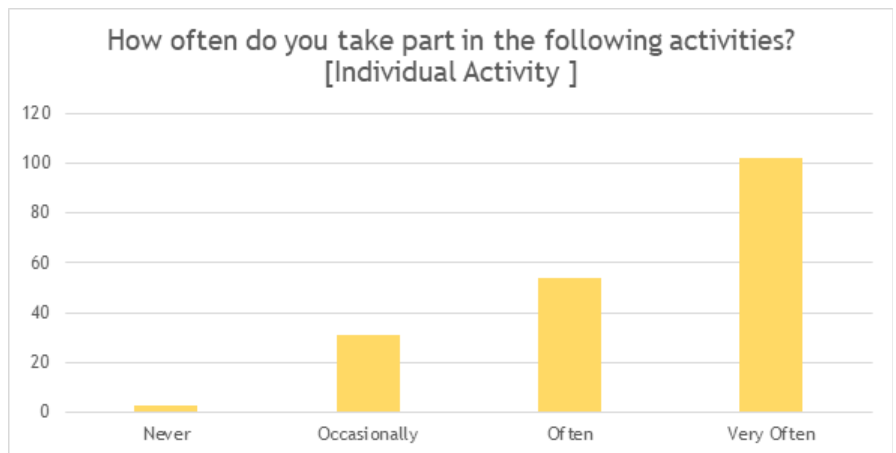
*Outdoor recreation appears to be more popular overall than organized athletics.*



*Most facilities are viewed as inadequately serving the needs of the community, except for a few specific offerings such as equestrian trails; golf courses; tennis centers; and disc golf.*

Input from the online survey reinforces observations made by the design team and insight provided by LRPR staff. While Little Rock Parks and Recreation controls significant numbers of acres and facilities, many of these assets are underutilized, designed inefficiently, or in poor condition which limits use. These factors restrict Little Rock Parks and Recreation's ability to effectively address community needs.

**102**  
 RESPONDENTS SAID THEY TAKE PART IN INDIVIDUAL RECREATION ACTIVITIES **VERY OFTEN**



# “Pop Up” Engagements

In an effort to meet customers where they are, the Parks and Recreation Department organized eight “Pop Up” events where Little Rock citizens were engaged in one-on-one conversations with Parks and Recreation staff or members of the design team. While not statistically valid, these events

produced spontaneous unfiltered responses from active members of the community. Events were located across Little Rock over the span of several weeks to and engaged nearly **530 individuals**.

## Pop Up Results

**TOP 5  
PROGRAM  
INTERESTS**

NATURE PROGRAMS  
SPECIAL EVENTS  
ADULT FITNESS /WELLNESS  
CLASSES  
MOVIES IN THE PARK  
COOKING CLASSES

**203**

RESPONDENTS RANKED  
**CANOE/KAYAK TRAILS**  
AS THE #1 **ACTIVITIES/EXERCISE**  
INTEREST

**#1**

**NATURE PROGRAMS**

RANK HIGHEST IN THE LIST OF  
PROGRAM INTERESTS

**3**

OF THE HIGHEST RATED FUTURE INTERESTS WERE:

- DEVELOP CANOE/KAYAK TRAILS
- DEVELOP URBAN PARKS & NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- DEVELOP GREENWAYS







Results are discussed in three categories: Programs; Activities/Exercise and Future Development. Programs include Park and Recreation offerings like organized classes or special events. Activities/Exercise include opportunities such as independent sports and interests like bird watching or gardening. The Future Development category asks what physical improvements the residents would like to see constructed related to parks and recreation. This might include aquatics facilities, nature centers, trails, etc.

Results  
Results  
Results

## Programs

The top five programs according to the Pop-Up events were: Nature Programs; Special Events; Adult Fitness/Wellness Classes; Movies in the Park; and Cooking Classes. These top interests were immediately followed by programming addressing the needs of youth such as, teen programs, camps (summer and school breaks), and before and after school programming. Outdoor dining and programs for people with disabilities round out the top ten.

Athletic programming such as marathons, 5ks, adult and youth athletics did not receive as much interest as some of the less competitive, nature based and community-oriented programming options.

## Activities/Exercise

By far, the activity or exercises with the greatest amount of interest was Canoe/Kayak Trails. This is not too surprising given Little Rock's incredible access to water. However, access to these waters could be much improved and interested boaters could benefit from the development of blueways with designated launches and routes.

Other high interest activities were other outdoor activities such as cycling, walking and running. Organized field sports and casual "pick-up" sports also made the top ten in this category.





*Images this page represent the Pop Up Engagements held throughout the community.*



## Future Development

Survey participants were asked how future investment and development of existing and future facilities should be directed. Paddle sport and canoe and kayak trails were the most popular. Smaller pocket parks and neighborhood parks ranked second overall. Greenway and nature trail development also ranked very high, reinforcing the idea of individual outdoor facilities being highly desired by the community.

## Conclusion

In summary, the public input process was designed to engage the Little Rock community through online and spontaneous on site activities to determine park and recreation needs. Feedback consistently illustrated the communities desire for additional outdoor recreation facilities like canoe and kayak trails and greenways. The team also heard that current facilities and programs are not adequately meeting the needs of the community. This information was advanced in developing recommendations found in this plan.