



Norwalk City Hall,
Recreation and Parks
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**RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, August 14th, 2024
7:00 PM**

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 Members of the public may call in to participate. Callers will not be able to see the meeting participants. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial *9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.

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- I Roll Call
- II Minutes of July 10, 2024
- III Public Participation
- IV **Old Business**
- V **New Business**
- VI **Discussion**

1. Fee study presentation and discussion.





CITY OF NORWALK
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE
BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2024.
REGULAR MEETING
7:00PM.



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ATTENDANCE: Darlene Young, Chair, Heather Dunn; Lisa Shanahan; Jenn McMurrer

ABSENT: Johan Lopez; Nicol Ayers

STAFF: Robert Stowers, Director, Recreation and Parks; Ken Hughes, Superintendent, Recreation and Parks; Sarah Cruz, Arborist / Horticulturist, Recreation and Parks

I. ROLL CALL

At roll call there were five (5) committee members present. A quorum was present.

Ms. Young called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

II. MINUTES OF MAY 8, 2024

**** MS. DUNN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION- MS. MCMURRER**

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Vero said he would like to speak on the pickleball pilot project. Ms. Young said that item is not on the agenda for this evening and suggested he reach out to Mr. Stowers directly to discuss.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY. W. RILLING , TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT AND SIGN ALL REQUIRED PAPERWORK WITH THE US FORESTRY SERVICE FOR THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT, NORWALK IMPROVEMENTS TO INCREASE URBAN FORESTY GRANT # 24-DG-11094200-058, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,000,000.

Mr. Stowers said that a lot of folks were involved in getting this grant award and thanked Ms. Nigri and Ms. Cruz for their work on getting the grant submitted. He said they were approved for the grant and will be receiving \$1 million dollars for a program that is needed as the tree canopy needs addressing.

Mr. Cruz said staff in seeking authorization to move into the signatory and agreement process on this grant and the grant funds will be coming through the inflation reduction act and will be administered through the US Forest Service. She said the grant that was awarded involves almost \$500,000 for tree plantings within the city and will only be executed in areas that are federally recognized as environmental justice disadvantaged tracks with Norwalk which is primarily in South Norwalk and the hospital hill area. She said the proposal also includes hiring two folks to work on a tree stewardship crew to steward and water our young trees and some public outreach as well as a more formal volunteer organization as it pertains to our tree stewardship initiatives.

Ms. Shanahan said this is fantastic work and the council has been speaking for a long time on how to address the canopy especially in South Norwalk and hospital hill area and she is especially happy that they will be hiring some local people to begin to learn how to take care of trees because it is super important, and they could also be used to help out on Meadow Street.

Ms. Young agreed with Ms. Shanahan and said as a council and city we want to use that as an example it and could be a really good model on how we bring environmental justice to a community and an area that has been so left behind and not taken care of for so long, and she is excited about that and is also a huge opportunity to address these issues in other areas as well as she appreciates the work and the vision.

Ms. Dunn said one of her concerns is how to maintain the canopy that we have when there are parcels being purchased and clear-cut and asked if there is anything that can be done to educate people away from doing that or incentivizing them not to. Mr. Stowers said the grant will allow us to do a lot of community education. Ms. Cruz said the Tree Master Plan that is in progress will certainly address both public and private property but her understanding is that private property issues are primarily addressed through permitting by Planning and Zoning and Conservation.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY. W. RILLING , TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT AND SIGN ALL REQUIRED PAPERWORK WITH THE US FORESTRY SERVICE FOR THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT, NORWALK IMPROVEMENTS TO INCREASE URBAN FORESTY GRANT # 24-DG-11094200-058, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,000,000**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- 2. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY. W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A 5-YEAR LEASE EXTENSION WITH THE PASTIME SOCIAL AND ATHLETIC CLUB FOR THE USE OF A SMALL PORTION OF LAND ALONG SEAVIEW AVENUE. REMAINING TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT TO REMAIN UNCHANGED.**

Mr. Hughes said for many years the city has executed a lease agreement with the Pastime Athletic Club. He said there are a set of docks that are located across from, and they have to cross over 3' of city

sidewalk in order to access their docks and this agreement gives them permission to cross over that piece of city property to access their docks.

Ms. Young asked if there is any reason the agreement is not done for longer than five years. Mr. Hughes said it was originally a ten-year agreement but changed to five years for any changes to the council or mayor, but he is not averse to making a 10-year agreement. Ms. Young asked if he saw the situation ever changing. Mr. Hughes said “no” and that it is strictly a formality. Mr. Stowers said it is basically an easement agreement, but he thinks the 5-year agreement is good and doesn’t recommend going any longer than that as it should be reviewed periodically, and he has a few concerns with the agreement but not enough to not recommend it.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY. W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A 5-YEAR LEASE EXTENSION WITH THE PASTIME SOCIAL AND ATHLETIC CLUB FOR THE USE OF A SMALL PORTION OF LAND ALONG SEAVIEW AVENUE. REMAINING TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT TO REMAIN UNCHANGED
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. APPROVE THE USE OF CALF PASTURE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY MOUNTAIN WORKSHOP FOR THEIR TEAM BUILDING & SCHOOL CLIMATE PROGRAMS TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9TH, SEPTEMBER 26TH, OCTOBER 7TH, AND OCTOBER 10TH FROM 7:00AM TO 4:00PM. APPROXIMATELY 120+ PEOPLE.

Mr. Tullo provided an overview of the event and said it has been held for the past 20 years and work with the schools across Connecticut on team building based programming and has always appreciated how beautiful Calf Pasture Beach is and it has worked very well for the programs. He said the program is typically for middle school aged children, and they do a series of activities and events on the fields with them and is only held during the week on school days.

Mr. Stowers said staff has not had any issues at all with the event and endorses it.

Ms. Dunn asked if the organization is non-profit. Mr. Tullo said “no” and they are a small operation that runs programs four months a year and is a program that he is passionate about.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE USE OF CALF PASTURE AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY MOUNTAIN WORKSHOP FOR THEIR TEAM BUILDING & SCHOOL CLIMATE PROGRAMS TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9TH, SEPTEMBER 26TH, OCTOBER 7TH, AND OCTOBER 10TH FROM 7:00AM TO 4:00PM. APPROXIMATELY 120+ PEOPLE.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. APPROVE THE USE OF WASHINGTON STREET PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY GORDON FINE ARTS, LLC FOR THEIR SONO ARTS FESTIVAL TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 3RD, AND SUNDAY, AUGUST 4TH 2024, FROM 10:00AM TO 5:00PM. SET-UP TIME BY 6:00AM SATURDAY WITH TEAR-DONE BY SUNDAY 7:00PM. APPROXIMATELY 1000 PEOPLE

Ms. Gorden provided an overview of the event and said the event has been held for over 50 years and is a free community arts event that takes place the first full weekend of each August and they include all the merchants to participate and invite artists from all over the country to participate. She said she would also like to invite and departments of Norwalk to participate in any manner at no cost as they appreciate all of the work and cooperation that they have received from the city over the years.

Ms. Gorden said that Ms. Dunn has been instrumental in the event for many years, and she wants to acknowledge her support.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE THE USE OF WASHINGTON STRET PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY GORDON FINE ARTS, LLC FOR THEIR SONO ARTS FESTIVAL TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 3RD, AND SUNDAY, AUGUST 4TH 2024, FROM 10:00AM TO 5:00PM. SET-UP TIME BY 6:00AM SATURDAY WITH TEAR-DONE BY SUNDAY 7:00PM. APPROXIMATELY 1000 PEOPLE
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. APPROVE THE USE OF NATHANIEL ELY SCHOOL FIELD AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY PROJECT 9 FOUNDATION FOR THEIR COMMUNITY FUN DAY TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 17H, FROM 1:00PM TO 7:00PM. SET-UP TIME BY 11:00AM SATURDAY WITH TEAR-DOWN BY SATURDAY 8:00PM. APPROXIMATELY 78 PEOPLE.

Mr. Stowers said this is an event that went very well last year, and they have completed all of the permitting and he sees no reason not to approve it.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE THE USE OF NATHANIEL ELY SCHOOL FIELD AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY PROJECT 9 FOUNDATION FOR THEIR COMMUNITY FUN DAY TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 17H, FROM 1:00PM TO 7:00PM. SET-UP TIME BY 11:00AM SATURDAY WITH TEAR-DOWN BY SATURDAY 8:00PM. APPROXIMATELY 78 PEOPLE
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VI. DISCUSSION

Mr. Stowers said we have received a draft on the fees and charges analysis, and he has briefed the Chief of Operations as well as the Chief of Staff and the consultant will present a briefing to the mayor and he Chief of Staff as well of the Chief of Operations and finance for any input they may have and finalize the proposal. He said the consultant will also present the proposal to the committee which he is hoping to have on next month's agenda.

Mr. Stowers said we have received all the funding for 98 South Main Street and have a final design and the mayor has approved to proceed with the bidding process for a construction company and will have a company on board by September or October, and construction should begin in November, and the expected opening date will be in the spring 2026. He said the budget also includes outfitting the

community center as well but will be needing a few staff positions, but it will be a very comprehensive community center. He thanked the committee for their part in this and it will be a highlight of Norwalk.

Ms. McMurrer thanked Mr. Stowers for the work that he has done on this as it will be a huge benefit to the City of Norwalk.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd



Recreation and Parks Fee Study

City of Norwalk, Connecticut
August 5, 2024



Agenda



I. Project Scope

II. Determine Cost of Services

III. Fee Study Findings

IV. Perception of Services

V. Conclusions

VI. Recommendations



I. Project Scope



- **Determine cost of fee services and compare to current prices**
 - Recreation fees are typically priced at 25 to 30 percent of cost because the services are expected and are used by people that would not participate if fees were as high as necessary to fund all costs.
- **Engage with Participants**
 - Through focus groups, a mailed survey, and an online survey, determine perceptions of service that may affect pricing decisions
 - Explore openness to increases in fee prices.
- **Discuss pricing strategy based on cost findings and community feedback**



II. Determine Cost of Services



- Baseline costs are from enacted appropriation.
- Documentation happens in the consultant's Excel model built for this purpose
 - All analyses and raw data necessary are in that model.
- Confirm effort by fee category
 - Departmental staff advised on how employee time applies to each fee category.
- Develop non-personnel cost additives
 - Typically, if “x” percent of staff time supports a type of fees, that same percentage of non-personnel cost applies to that category too. The model allows for exceptions

Pricing decisions are informed by knowing how costs compare to revenues, how customers perceive the services, and on input on openness to potential price changes



III. Fee Study Findings



Departmental staff report that Norwalk fees are below peer price levels.

Industry norms are to recover 25 to 30 percent of recreation service costs from fees. There is room to increase prices and remain in this range.

Program Area	Cost	Revenue	Subsidy	Current Cost Recovery
INDOOR/OUTDOOR SPORTS	1,133,238	112,575	1,020,663	10%
AQUATICS	339,233	73,049	266,184	22%
FACILITY RENTALS	543,513	104,098	439,415	19%
MARINAS, MOORAGES, AND BOAT RAMPS	339,806	80,014	259,792	24%
YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS	636,954	480,940	156,014	76%
PICNIC GROUNDS AND TABLES/PARK USAGE	1,050,975	92,892	958,083	9%
NON-FEE RELATED ACTIVITIES	868,403	7,689	860,714	1%
PARKING	173,580	196,255	(22,675)	113%
Total	5,085,701	1,147,512	3,938,189	23%



IV. Perception of Services



There were three methods of learning about customer preferences:

- **Focus groups** with people who had participated in activities from each program area (e.g., indoor/outdoor sports, aquatics...). The consultant and Director Stowers attended those, along with 23 residents.
- **A mailed survey** with 278 responses
- **An online survey** with 325 responses

Participants thought that services were generally of good quality.

Participants favored fee increases over program reductions if that is the choice for how to address financial challenges.

Respondents viewed fee increases of as much as 15 percent as acceptable.



V. Conclusions



- The Department reports that peers charge more for fees than Norwalk.
- Current fee recovery is within the range expected but could remain so even if many fee prices were increased.
- Participants believe that the services are of good quality.
- Participants prefer that the city address financial challenges with modest fee increases than reducing service offerings.



VI. Recommendations



- Fees should increase by up to 15 percent. This would keep them within the range considered effective nationally. That percentage is what respondents reported to be acceptable.
- Price increases need not be uniform by program area. Youth Summer Camps and Parking are already recovering a greater share of cost, but other areas are well below an industry-standard level of cost recovery.
- Respondents would like certain facilities improvements and would be willing to pay for them. How much funding would be available after using price increases just to improve cost recovery is unclear.
- The cost to refresh aging facilities should be reported under GASB 34 and addressed in the Capital Improvement Plan. That does not amount to a promise to fund them, but only to recognize that aging assets require occasional investment.



VI. Recommendations, cont.



- Establish a cost recovery policy of 25 to 100 percent. Consider single or small group use vs activities benefitting larger segments of the community.
- Based on survey results, increase communication to the public of activities available. Include public engagement, public relations, and Marketing to families for family recreation programs; Youth and Adults for Sports programs; and Adults for Facility Rentals. As participation varied by demographics, the Plan should seek to reach people of color, and adults of all races and ages.



Recreation and Parks Fee Study

Final Draft Report

MAY 2024



City of Norwalk,
Connecticut

Submitted by:

BRUCE COWANS

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Norwalk issued an RFP to conduct a market demand study; which would include a cost to revenue assessment; a study of customer perceptions of acceptable fee increases, and a customer satisfaction survey. The City of Norwalk retained MGT of America Consulting, LLC.

The cost of providing activities grows over time and unless fees increase too, the City may be unable to continue levels of service. At some point, attempting to increase revenue by increasing prices could lead to a reduction in revenue caused by a reduction in demand. However, if customers were to react to price increases by reducing demand, total revenue might decrease. Therefore, the study's elements of assessing customer satisfaction and willingness to pay are important to those making fee policy.

The City of Norwalk provides a variety of recreational and sports programs and youth and family enrichment programs through the Department of Parks and Recreation. The City charges fees for most programs. For years, fees have been maintained at a very low level in comparison to what other cities charge without considering the rising costs of programs and facilities.

The study gathered information on customer perceptions of price in several ways. A mailed survey received 278 returns of approximately 6,000 surveys sent to residents. Other forms were an online survey and roundtable discussions with people who had registered for activities previously.

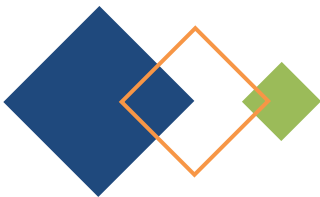
The study found that demand for services was most sensitive to larger increases in price. Price increases of up to 15 percent appear feasible, if not popular. By and large, residents were happy with services and customer service.

The third component of the study was a financial analysis to identify the cost of activities and compare those findings to current prices. The fees and charges analysis found that prices do not recover all costs. This is not surprising, as the industry-wide average for recreation program cost recovery is between 25 to 30 percent. Even if a city does not intend to charge the full cost of an activity, pricing decisions depend on understanding true cost.

The City of Norwalk Connecticut had never conducted a full assessment of the cost of its fee services. There have been comparative studies of pricing vs surrounding jurisdictions. The problems with pricing based on peer comparison are that other communities may have different willingness and ability to pay, may measure "cost" differently (if at all), or not seek to recover costs to the same degree.

Fiscal pressures alone should not be the rationale for price adjustments upward, but a determination of the cost of activities sold is a useful guide to setting fee prices.

The intent is not always to recover all costs. In some cases, activities and recreation programs benefit a small group of people that are single users. (say for instance (Golf; Water Skiing; Skiing; Boating). In others, the fee covers participation of larger numbers of users, which affects the cost charged per use.



II. RESEARCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To compare costs to revenue at the activity level to support consideration of possible pricing changes.
2. Test customer sensitivity to pricing and ability to pay.
3. To assess customer satisfaction with the programs, activities, and facilities as an element affecting the ability to set prices.
4. To determine where improvements can be made to improve services to justify costs.
5. Assessing the level of resident participation in Recreation and Parks offerings,

The Department sought to know not only what each program or activity costs, but also, what the community thinks of current services and the charges for those services. These variables could affect how the City sets prices.

The research involved a sampling of residents. The online survey was sent to people who had listed their email addresses with the Department. The mailed survey was sent to a list of thousands of Norwalk residents.

The study conducted three types of community outreach to learn user opinions. That involved the following methods and responses:

Outreach Method	Responses
Online Surveys	325
Mailed Surveys	278
Roundtables	23 people attended

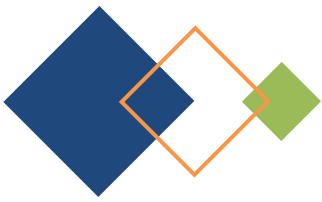
III. METHODOLOGY

There were four different areas of inquiry: a fee study, a mailed survey, an online survey, and roundtable discussions with people who had participated in activities previously.

A. Financial Analysis (Fee Study)

To develop findings on the cost of fee services, the consultant used its proprietary user fee application to analyze program costs and determine break-even pricing. This is a table-driven approach where each table covers a narrow aspect of the department’s finances, demand for services, and approach to providing services. It is both an interview guide, working paper, and documentation of findings. The purpose of the fee study was to examine the cost of billed programs and activities and compare the findings to current prices. This shows which programs are priced to recover costs and which have costs greater or lesser than current prices.

Some people use the terms “price” and “cost” interchangeably. In this context, “price” is a policy choice of how much to charge, while “cost” is a fact derived from how the work is done.



Governmental fees and charges generally do not exceed costs. But fees and charges for programs and services that generally provide for an individual or small group benefit but do not serve a broad population base or broad public benefit can be charged the full costs. For instance, Municipal Golf fees and charges; or a Municipal Tennis Center.; or individual or groups renting municipal or Parks Facilities for meetings; celebrations are examples. Additionally, Parking can generally be charged at full cost.

Nationally, recreation program fee prices average 25 to 30 percent of cost. Even if one is comfortable using tax dollars to support services, it helps to know what costs are to set a price at a designated percentage of cost.

This fee study associates the cost of staff time with descriptions of time spent on billable activities. There are several industry conventions for how to do this.

In accordance with a Federal regulation (2 CFR Part 200) that provides cost principles for contracts, grants, and intergovernmental agreements This study based its cost Analysis upon. While not specifically mandated for use in local government cost studies, the rules are in widespread use. This methodology was used as an industry standard for local government cost studies. As written guidance in widespread use, that regulation may be considered as falling within Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, or "GAAP."

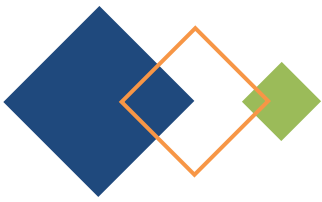
Fee studies require many calculations. For this reason, having a model to capture staff descriptions of how the work is done is very important. The model is a place to put financial data and descriptions of time spent by activity. It amounts to an interview guide as well as documentation of findings. MGT has such models and used it for this project.

An analyst uses the most recent financial data and transaction counts to explain costs. To some extent, this amounts to using the recent past to predict the near future. Different analysts model costs differently, but in MGT's experience, all approaches need to address the same questions:

- What is the cost of time? Usually, this is calculated as an hourly rate.
- How does the organization staff the work?
- How should the study associate non-personnel costs with the cost of staff time?
- How is the indirect cost of support from outside a department related to the cost of services?
- How do costs compare to current prices?

The fee analysis for this project happened in a proprietary consultant model that has been shared with City staff. It is a Microsoft Excel model with extensive use of linking and macros to automate tasks. One needs to exercise caution not to move data elements, insert or delete rows or columns in the wrong places, or otherwise overwrite formulas or break links. MGT staff that use it have specialized training and project experience with it.

The City has a copy of it and an explanation of how to read it. The rest of this section addresses the components of that model in the sequence of worksheets in the model.



B. Mailed Survey

The consultant obtained from the City a mailing list of 6,000 people and sent them questionnaires. The City worked with the consultant to review the questions. Participation was voluntary and led to 215 surveys being returned by the cutoff date

The questions included demographic questions about participants, questions about prior participation in activities and satisfaction with them, and hypothetical questions about reactions to fee increases of varying levels.

The consultant discussed the interpretation of responses with the Norwalk Director of Recreation and Parks

C. Online survey

To encourage participation, the questions were a slightly abridged version of the mailed survey. The questionnaire had a free-form response section that elicited interesting comments. Those are included in Appendix 1 to this report.

The City distributed the online survey through its social media links, so the consultant does not know the number of surveys distributed. The survey received responses from 325 people.

The consultant discussed the interpretation of responses with the Director of Parks and Recreation.

D. Roundtable discussions

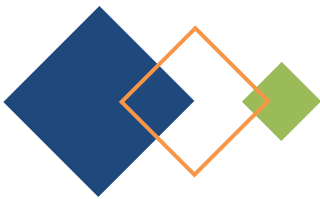
The consultant facilitated roundtable discussions with prior participants in programs. The Director of Parks and Recreation attended.

As with the surveys, discussion topics covered perceptions of the quality of activities, the customer-friendliness of City staff, and reactions to hypothetical increases in different levels of fee increases.

Roundtable meetings were conducted virtually in the early evening after standard work hours. The groups included:

- Racquet Sports
- Youth Sports
- Field and Facility Rentals
- Summer Camps
- Adult Sports
- Marina Moorages
- Aquatics

The goal was to have a minimum of two to eight plus the facilitator and a Rec and Parks staff in each Roundtable discussions. The participation ranged from two to eight participants per roundtable.



Staff working with user groups suggested the names of users and participants that were historically users or advocates.

IV. Findings

A. Fee Study

It was clear from the inception that current fees do not recover costs. In the past there have been no correlation with fees and Charges (Revenues to Expenses in Norwalk's Recreation and Parks Department. The issue that was tested here was the degree of cost recovery. As the report noted earlier, the prevailing average costs to revenues for Recreation and Parks Departments Nationally has been 25 to 30 percent of the cost of activities. The pricing discussion needs to know total cost to enact pricing that achieves results in that range.

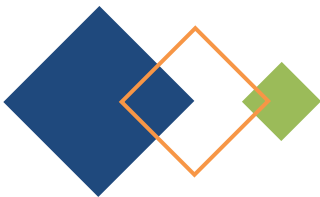
The Department of Recreation and Parks has been monitoring its prices in comparison to what nearby communities' charge. In the past the Department have conducted costs comparisons surveys. It had found in some cases that Norwalk's fees were comparatively lower. The main purpose of this study is to explore price sensitivity for City Residents when it comes to services and participation in programs and activities that charge fees. The City has a desire to charge fees according to what the community can afford visa vis the cost of the services and programs. On-line and Mail-in surveys were conducted to ascertain that information.

The Table directly below exhibits services and programs in the seven categories. It reveals the average costs to Revenue for these programs using 2022 and 2023 FY data.

Program Type	Current Revenue	Full Cost	Current Recovery %
INDOOR/OUTDOOR SPORTS	\$112,575	\$1,133,238	10%
AQUATICS	\$73,049	\$339,233	22%
FACILITY RENTALS	\$104,098	\$543,513	19%
MARINAS, MOORAGES, AND BOAT RAMPS	\$80,014	\$339,806	24%
YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS	\$480,940	\$636,954	76%
PICNIC GROUNDS AND TABLES/PARK USAGE	\$92,892	\$1,050,975	9%
PARKING	\$196,255	\$173,580	113%

With an industry average of 25 to 30 percent of cost recovery. most of these findings support the Department's assertion that fees are low. The unexpected surplus from parking fees may bear on any price changes there. The other programs are at or below the industry expectation for cost recovery.

The fee analysis is a technical document contained in a separate technical appendix. Generally, policy makers and the public do not ask to see it, but it is available from Director Stowers.



B. Mailed Survey Results

The mailed surveys received 325 responses. The discussion below summarizes the results.

i. Respondent Demographics

Only eight respondents reported having children under the age of 18 in the home. The US Census Bureau QuickFacts report says that 19.4 percent of Norwalk’s population is age 18 or younger. This suggests that responses related to adult programs may be more compelling than comments on youth programs.

The ethnicity of respondents compares to US Census data as follows:

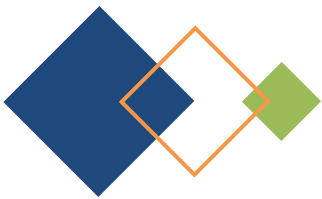
Race or Ethnicity	Mailed Survey Result	Online Survey Result	2023 Census QuickFacts
African American	0.5%	3%	18%
Hispanic	1.4%	8%	31%
Asian	0.5%	2%	4%
Caucasian	95.3%	75%	55%

Does not add to 100% because of other ethnicities reported.

The income levels reported by the mailed survey are notably different than the online survey results.

Race or Ethnicity	Mailed Survey	Online Survey
Up to \$80k	82%	18%
\$80-\$100k	4%	11%
\$100k-\$150k	5%	20%
\$150-\$200k	2%	16%
\$200k+	4%	34%
N/A	3%	1%

Mailed survey responses capture data from a less wealthy segment of the community. 86 percent of respondents were at or below the median income level reported by the US Census Bureau, vs. 29 percent for the online survey. Lower levels of income may influence the willingness and ability to pay for recreational activities.



ii. Respondent Participation in Recreational Activities



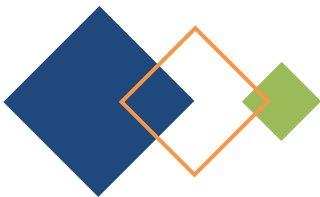
By comparison, the results of the online survey showed 25 percent of respondents somewhat likely to participate and 18 percent as extremely likely to participate. This is supported by responses on whether someone in the home has participated in an activity on a city field. Only 5.1% of respondents indicated that someone in the home participated. So, potentially there is 43% of the respondents that have some interest in participating, highly significant.

For those reporting an interest in participating in the coming year,

- 80.2 percent said they might play Pickleball.
- 5.2 percent indicated an interest in concerts.
- 96.8 percent of respondents said they were not likely to participate in an adult athletic league.
- 98.2 percent of respondents indicated no interest in swimming or aquatics.
- 98.1 percent said it was not likely that they would rent a facility or outdoor space for an event or party.
- 56.5 percent of respondents rated the condition of city fields as good or excellent.
- 50.5 percent rated the tennis and pickleball courts as good or excellent.
- 60.5 percent of respondents would like to see the courts and fields improved.

C. Online Survey Results

The online surveys received 277 responses. The discussion below summarizes the results.

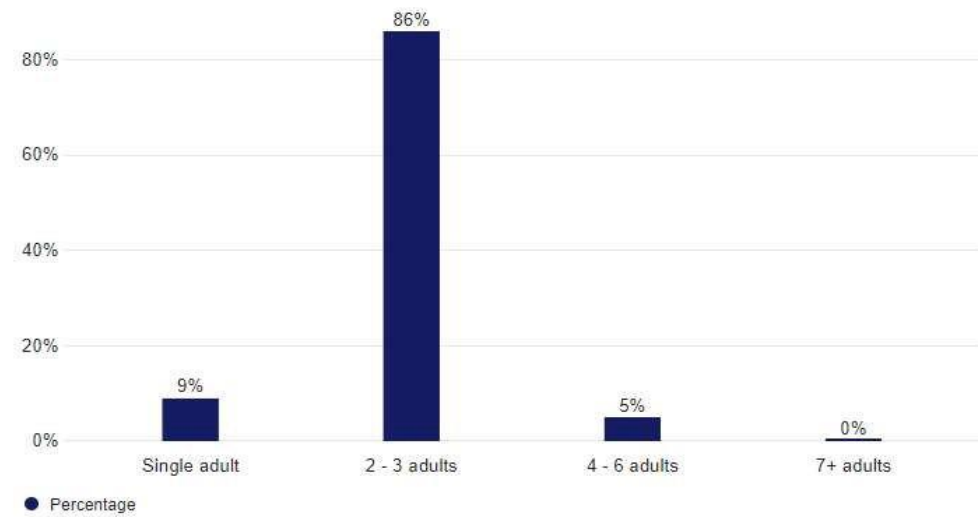


i. Respondent Demographics

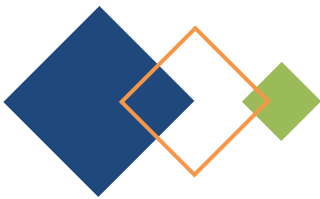
The following results are from the online survey.

Zip Code	Percent of Responses
06581	0.29%
06776	0.29%
06843	0.29%
06850	20.23%
06851	35.55%
06852	0.58%
06853	3.18%
06854	22.25%
06855	15.90%
06856	0.29%
06860	0.29%
06864	0.29%
06950	0.29%
10590	0.29%

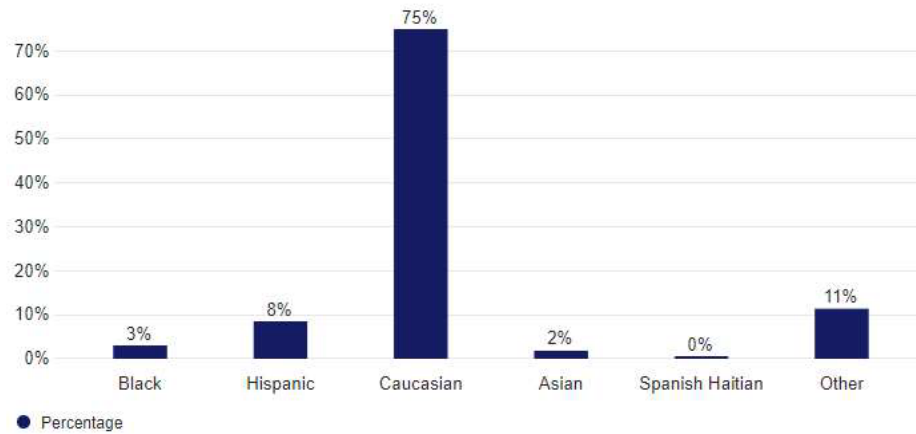
How many adults are in your household?



Most of the households were three (3) adult households



What is the majority race or ethnicity of your household?



For comparison, the 2023 US Census QuickFacts data compares to this result as follows:

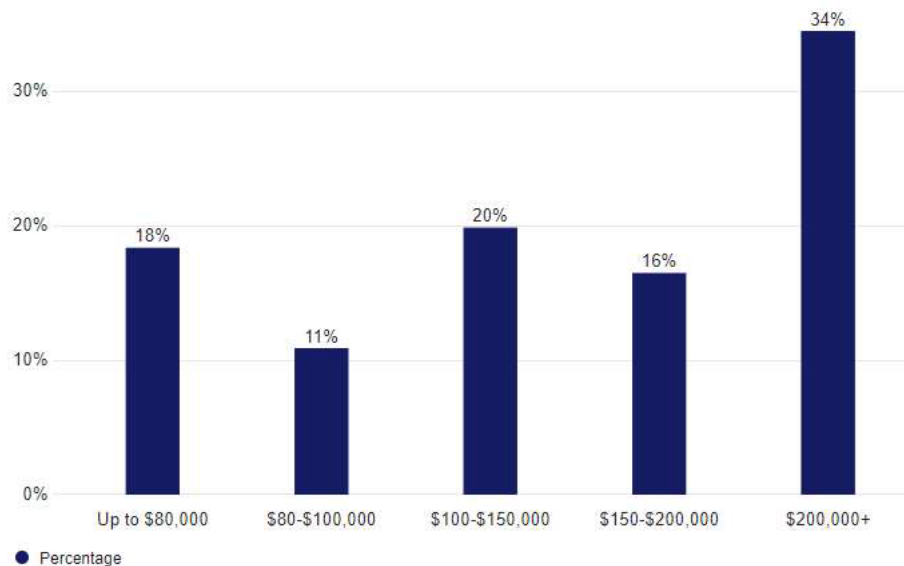
Race or Ethnicity	Survey Result	2023 Census QuickFacts
African American	3%	18%
Hispanic	8%	31%
Asian	2%	4%
Caucasian	75%	55%

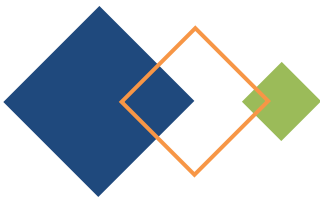
Does not add to 100% because of other ethnicities reported.

75 percent of respondents were Caucasian. The next highest category was Hispanic at 8 percent.

Consider that the survey participation by minority members of the community was lower.

What is the income level of your household?

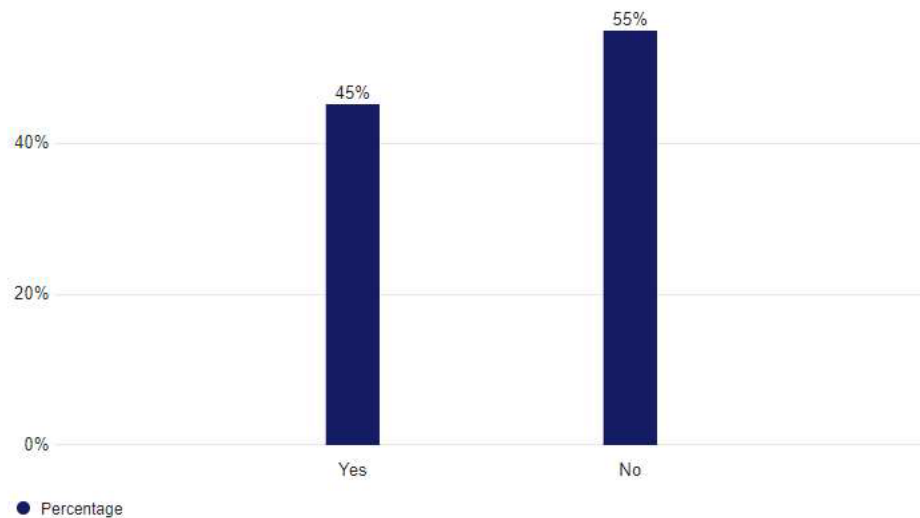




The US Census QuickFacts report shows the median household income to be approximately \$98,000, so the survey responses have more representation of higher income residents. This is worth considering with respect to later information on the ability or willingness to pay. One presumes that higher-income residents are better able to pay.

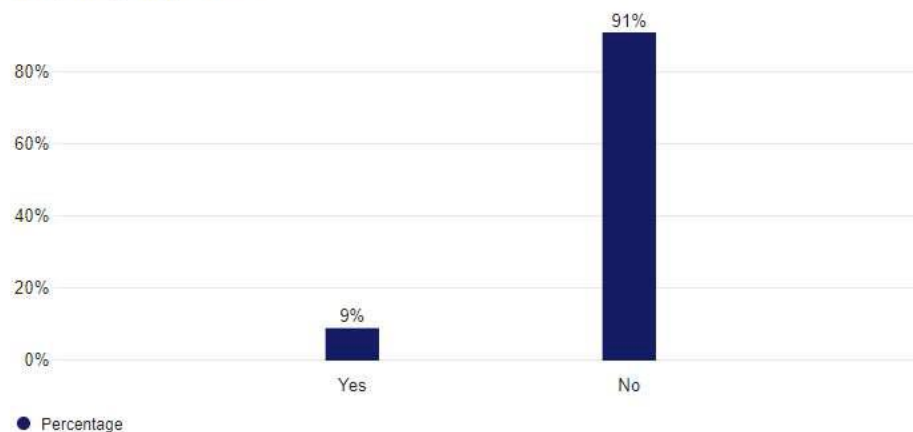
ii. Respondent Participation in Recreational Activities

In the last two years, have you registered someone in your home for a city recreational program?



Most respondents had some prior participation in recreational activities, but some did not within the last two years.

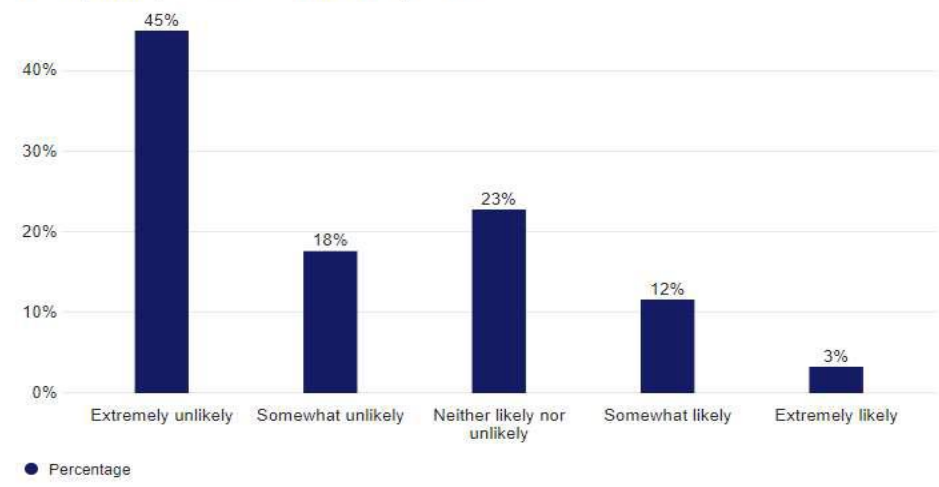
In the last two years, have you rented or reserved a park or facility for a family or group event?



The graph showed that very few respondents had rented the use of a park or facility for events. Only 9% of the public rented a park or a facility for a family event.

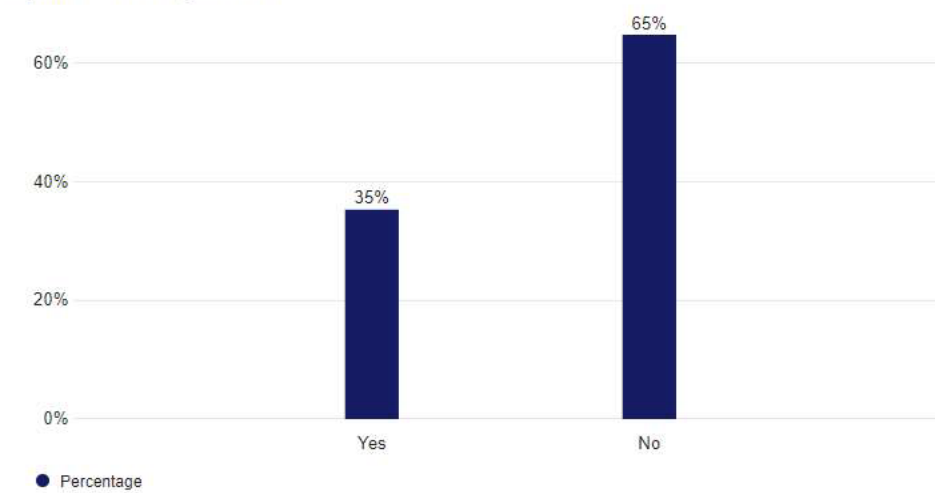


How likely are you to rent a Park's facility or outdoor space for a wedding, event picnic, or celebration this year?



The upper chart shows that the percentage of respondents who are likely or somewhat likely to rent a facility is higher than those who have done so recently (15% were “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” vs 9% who have rented recently).

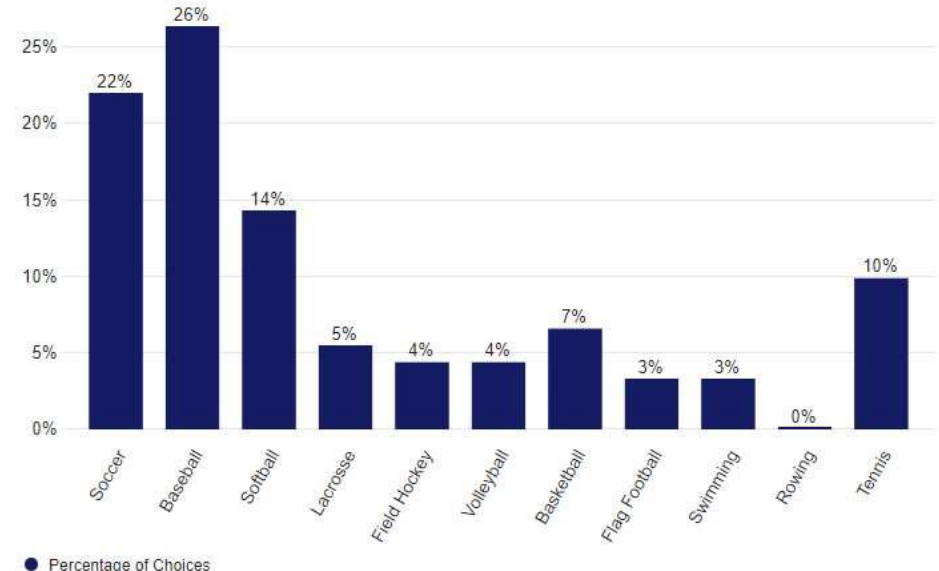
In the last two years, has someone in your home played an organized sport on a City ball field?



A third of respondents had someone in their household play a sport on a city field, participation in these activities was much greater than for facility rentals. Of those, the most common were soccer, baseball, and softball.

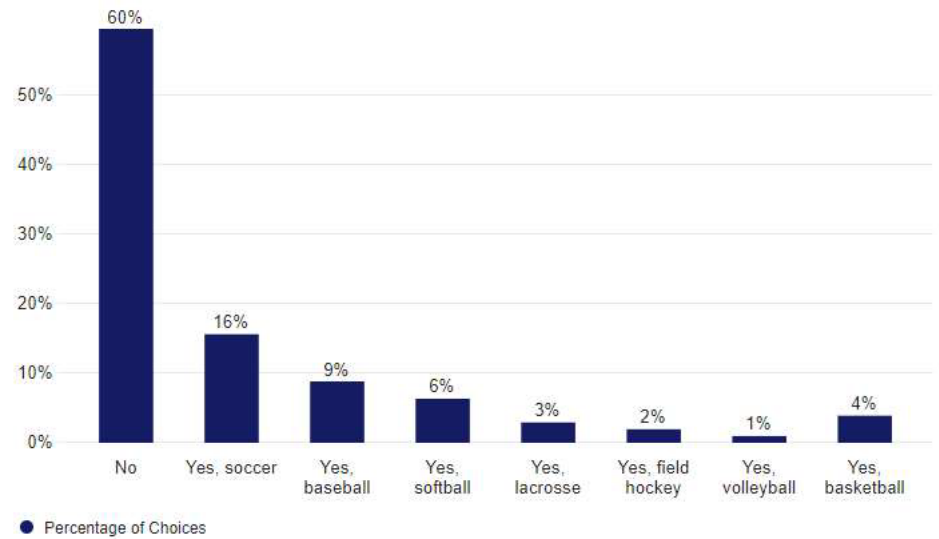


If you selected "yes," what sport was it?

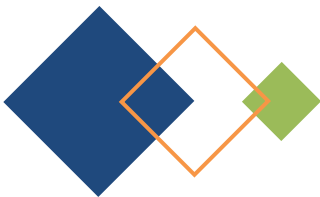


Of those, the most common were soccer, baseball, and softball.

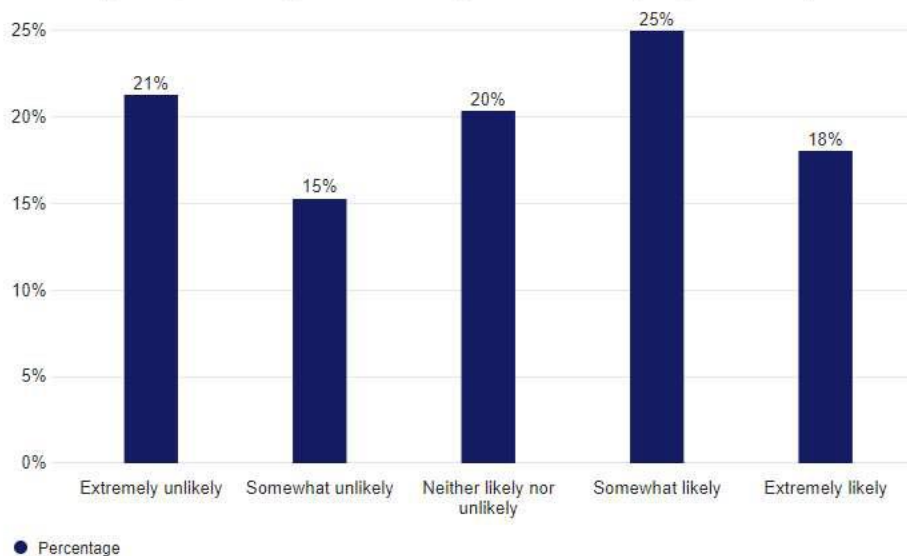
In the last two years, has your son or daughter played on organized sports leagues that operate on a city or school sports field?



Fewer than half of respondents had a child participate in an organizes league that used a city field. That participation was relatively even across all activities, except for greater participation in soccer; followed by baseball and softball.

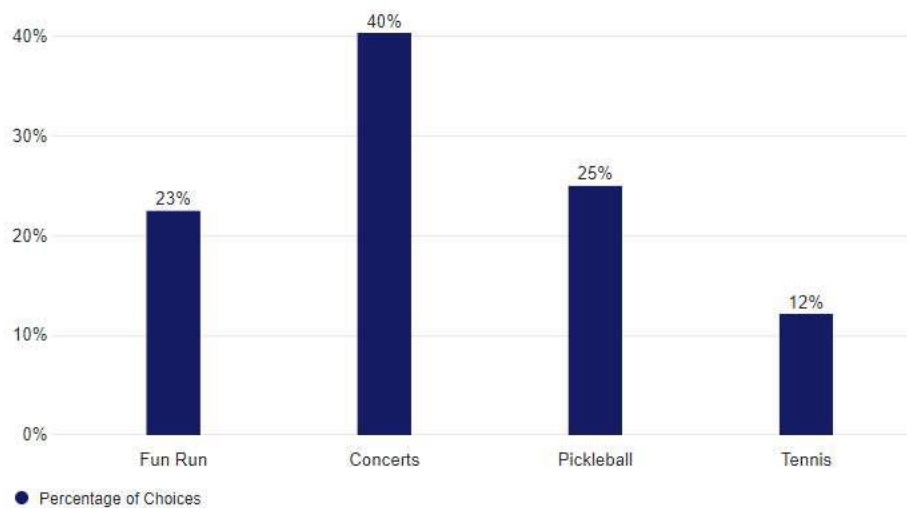


How likely are you to register for a city recreational program this year?

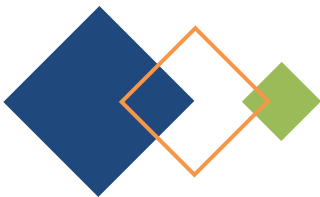


This finding (43 percent likely or somewhat likely to participate in the coming year) is consistent with an earlier one that showed 55 percent of respondents having participated in an activity in the last two years.

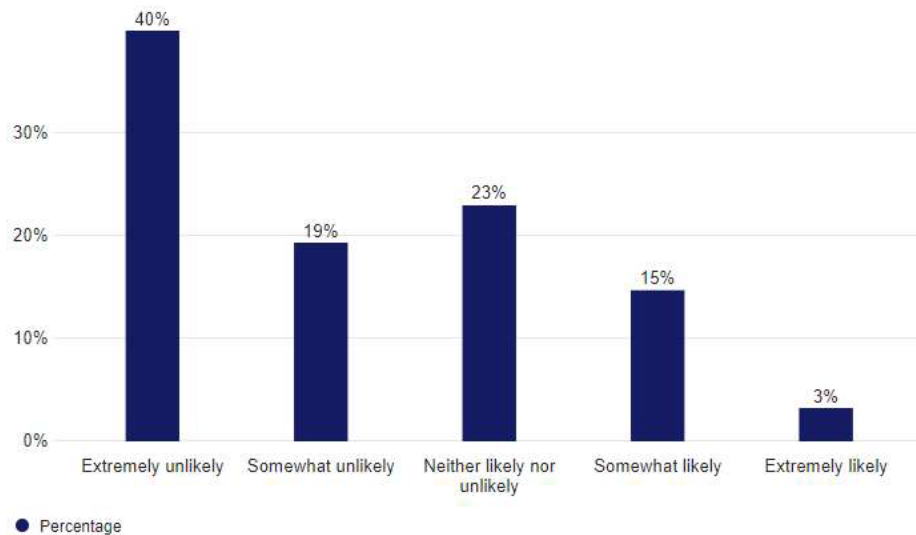
If you're interested in registering for a city recreational program, which interests you the most? (Select all that apply)



Potential interest in activities covers a range of interests, with concert attendance as the area of greatest potential interest.

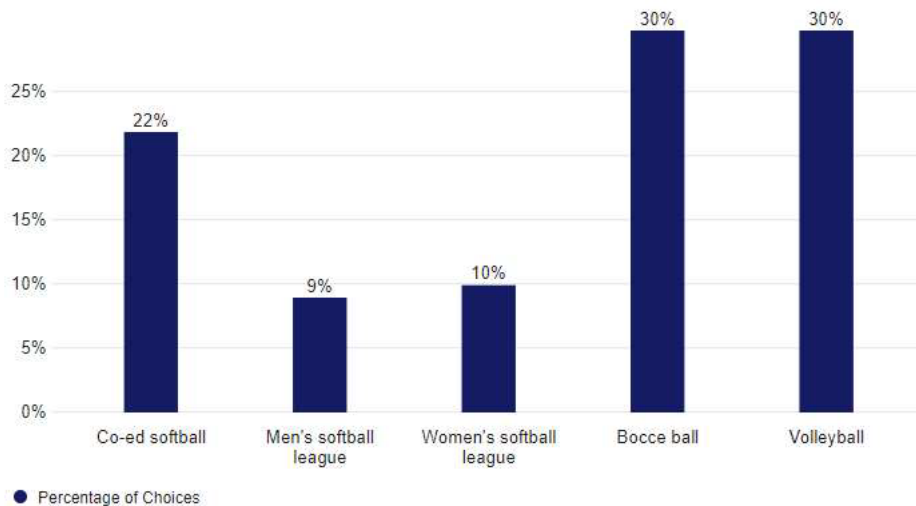


How likely are you to register for an adult city athletic league this year?



Participation in adult athletic leagues might be characterized as having a small but loyal following. Roundtable discussions with participants support that finding. As the next chart shows, interest in leagues covers several types.

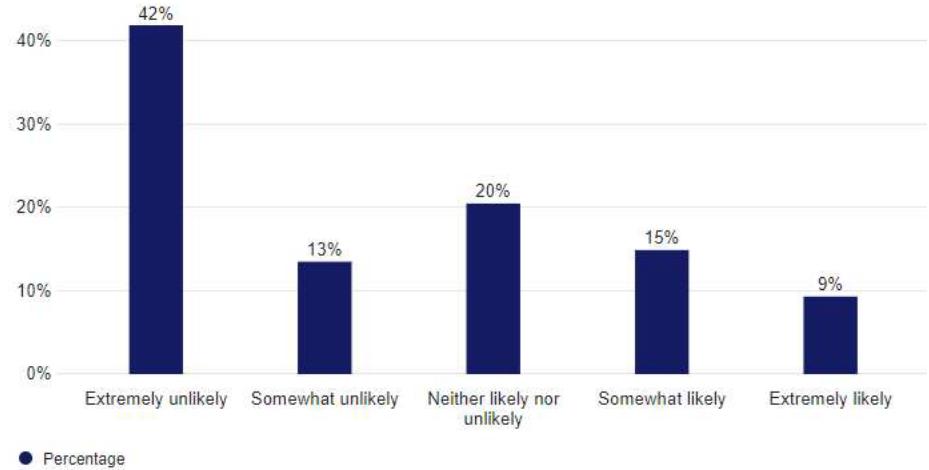
If you're interested in registering for an adult city athletic league this year, which interest you the most? (Select all that apply)



Many adults (30 percent) were interested in Volleyball and Bocce. Coed Softball was the second choice and women's interest in women's only teams was greater than men's interest in all-male teams.



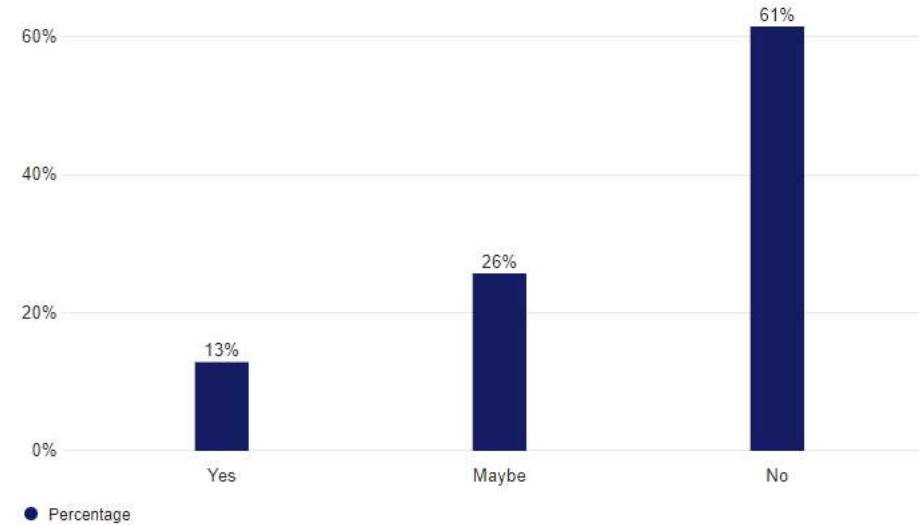
How likely are you to register for a swimming or aquatics program this year?



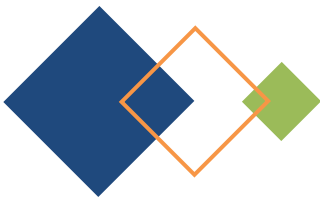
24% of respondents were interested in swimming and aquatics programs which is significant.

Aquatics and swimming appeal to a narrower group.

Would you be willing to pay to park if the funds were dedicated to improving parking or park grounds and amenities?



The percentage of respondents willing to pay for parking if the proceeds improved parking or facilities is 13 % with direct yes responses and 26% suggested that they might be willing to pay a higher fee With these respondents being wealthier than the citywide average, this may be a concern for a potential price increase.



D. Roundtable Results

MGT conducted roundtable discussions with each focusing on a different category of Recreation fee-based programs or sports. Participants in the Roundtable discussions were composed of those who had registered for similar programs, activities, or sports recently.

The roundtables were conducted virtually in the early evening on weeknights. The goal was to have five to eight participants in each discussion. The participation ranged from two to eight participants per Roundtable. Mr. Robert Stowers, Director of Parks & Recreation, joined the sessions that were facilitated by the consultant.

Roundtable Groups
Racquet Sports / Courts (Pickleball & Tennis)
Outdoor Courts (Bocce/Basketball)
Rental Facilities (non-athletics)
Special Amenity Facilities (Marina & Moorage, Boat Lines)
Summer Camps
Aquatics & Kayaks
Sport Facility Rentals
Adult Sports Leagues
Youth Sports Leagues
Parking

The Director of Parks and Recreation and the consultant hosted the sessions. In some cases, attendance was robust. In others, attendance was sparse, but that allowed residents to discuss their perceptions in more detail than is possible in a larger group.

Below are comments received from these groups. Roundtables that had no attendance are not discussed below.

i. Racquet Sports

Participants provided rank orders of their preferences. For example, participant A said that “schedule fits my free time” was the second most important reason to participate.

When you register for a program or Activities; what are some of the things that make it easier for you?

- Online or app on phone is ideal.
- Online directly to where I need to go.
- Reserving courts online.
- The Court Reserve system is excellent.

- No registration for open play Pickleball, no fee, works well. Rotation of who gets to play.

If you had your preference, would you prefer to have dedicated racquet courts or multiple purpose Courts (pickleball, Tennis)?

- Dedicated courts for single purposes are best. Avoids visual clutter of lines on the court.
- Playing different sports on adjacent courts is distracting.

How satisfied with the Recreation and Parks Department's Customer Services or Staff response?

- They care.
- Has improved greatly in recent years. Helpful, receptive, accessible info.
- Programming is strong.

Accessibility of programs and transit to/from, especially for seniors

- Donated/free check-out of equipment? Pickleball - People may not want to buy equipment until they know if they like it. Can we rent equipment?

Willingness / Ability to Pay

- Tennis has its devoted followers. Pickleball is a fast-growing sport that generated more comments. In total, the fairness of the prices tied among this group for the third most important factor in choosing to play at a Norwalk facility.

There is no fee, which likely means that Norwalk has a high number of non-residents playing. Surrounding cities charge a fee. This suggests that Norwalk could implement a fee without a significant drop in usage.

- One person mentioned that given Pickleball's growing popularity and Norwalk's seasonal weather, lack of an indoor or covered facility was likely affecting demand. The respondent believed that there would be interest in and willingness to pay for indoor play.
- A new Recreation Center and an offseason Bubble facility would increase capacity. There would be a possibility of indoor play.

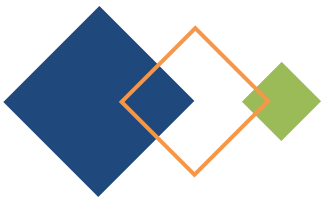
ii. Outdoor Courts (Basketball and Bocce)

When you choose to rent a facility in the City, what are some of the things that make that process easier?

- Dealing with only one person seamlessly is the goal.

Do you have suggestions of what would make more people want to rent these facilities?

- People don't know the process. The City may want to include a "how to with a mailing about program offerings.



What percentage increase in pricing of our current facilities should non-residents pay over the regular price?

- As much as possible. 10-15% more than residents,
- Prices for local business rentals or non-profits can be more, but maybe only 5-10% more.

Do you believe that current pricing is fair?

- Yes, but modest increases for residents and greater increases for non-residents are fine. Annual increases of 3-5 percent are acceptable.

iii. Rental Facilities

When you choose to rent a facility in the City, what are some of the things that make that process easier?

- Space needs to be adequate (AKC Dog Show 1,000-1,200 dogs, tents, etc.)
- Need a flat area for tents.
- Ask for early approval to commit to an event 6+ months in advance. Brochures for larger events need to be sent well ahead of an event, which can be a challenge if the City is not accepting applications that much in advance. Would like some City flexibility for larger event advance booking.
- Different City departments (e.g., Police for event permits, Building for tent permits) have their own permit processes. It is not always obvious which permits are necessary nor is there a single person in the City to coordinate the permit process.
- Why are police officers necessary? They may be, but no one explained it.

Do you have suggestions of what would make more people want to rent these facilities?

- Pricing is part of it.
- A single person to coordinate the permit process.

How satisfied are you with the experience of arranging rentals from City staff?

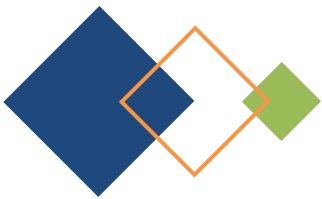
- Staff usually respond quickly, but not always.

Willingness / Ability to Pay

- Modest increases are fine.

iv. Summer Camp

When you register for a program or Activities; what are some of the things that make it easier for you?



- Pre-planning of activities helps.
- Kids like to swim at the end of a beach day, so the facility needs to accommodate that.

How satisfied with the Recreation and Parks Department's Customer Service staff?

- Very

Willingness / Ability to Pay: Residents do not pay full price. What percent of full cost should non-residents pay?

- Same price if possible, or 35 to 40 percent

If inflation forced you to choose between a price increase or a reduction of services, which would you pick?

- Price increases.

v. Marina, Moorage, Boat Lines

When you register for a program or Activities; what are some of the things that make it easier for you?

- Phone and pick up the key person. Online registration is appealing, but the Department would need a new way to get the key to users.

How satisfied with the Recreation and Parks Department's Customer Service staff?

- The city staff is good, and communication is good.
- We are kept in the loop. We appreciate that.

Willingness / Ability to Pay: What percent of full cost should non-residents pay?

- Non-residents should pay 50% more than residents.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers requires parity for Federally maintained areas.

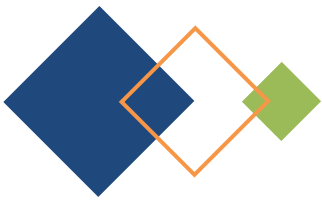
If fiscal pressures on the department forced a choice between a price increase or a reduction of services, which would you pick?

- Price increases.

The Master Plan calls for some improvements that have yet to be made, but which might be funded with fee increases (e.g., a kayak rack).

vi. Sport Facility Rental

When you register for a program or Activities; what are some of the things that make it easier for you?



- Local clubs should be the first choice. The group expressed a strong consensus that to generate revenue, clubs with non-resident membership make it harder for residents to reserve fields.
- The amount that a for-profit pay should not create priority access.
- The majority (75%? 90%?) of the roster should be residents
- In the past, but not recently, Residents and non-profits have contributed to minor improvements in the baseball fields. It is galling if they can't get access to them because private leagues do.
- Prices need to be available in advance to plan the leagues.

How satisfied with the Recreation and Parks Department's Customer Service staff?

- The soccer field quality is not good.
- No Access where synthetic turf fields are located.
- The city does an ok job for the fields it maintains, but regular maintenance of all fields is a challenge for Parks Maintenance Staff and
- March-April is a narrow window for field prep. City can't keep up.

Willingness / Ability to Pay: Residents do not pay full price. What percent of full cost should non-residents pay?

- Full cost recovery plus - no reason outsiders should have access to Norwalk fields if residents can't get access.

If fiscal pressures on the department forced a choice between a price increase or a reduction of services, which would you pick?

- Prices are already a factor - no higher, please.

vii. Adult Sports Leagues

When you register for a program or Activities; what are some of the things that make it easier for you?

- The leagues handle it, so there is no burden on those playing in leagues.
- Friends joining is very important. League play is social.

How satisfied with the Recreation and Parks Department's Customer Service staff?

- They are very responsive and proactive.
- Staff relocated them as needed due to rain.

Willingness / Ability to Pay

- This is a team thing. If the team wants to play, people will pay. Price increases are never popular, but within reason, should not affect enrollment.
- We would be willing to pay for drying material to be put in the field.
- One field didn't have a porta potty. How can that be a rentable field?

viii. Parking

The percentage of respondents willing to pay for parking if the proceeds improved parking or facilities is 13 % with direct yes responses and 26% suggested that they might be willing to pay a higher fee. With these respondents being wealthier than the citywide average, this may be a concern for a potential price increase. Or maybe they have no interest because they are supplying their own aquatic and already are swimmers. their concern for potential price increases.

67% of respondents prefer that any improvements be funded by fees rather than taxes. This is consistent with the Master Plan.

V. Pricing Policy And Willingness to Pay

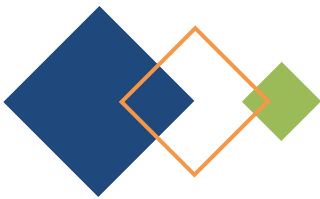
Economists use a term of “price elasticity of demand.” In plain English, this addresses how demand changes when prices change. Sometimes, higher prices result in more revenue, but it is also possible that price increases could reduce demand and result in less revenue. The study examined how citizens in Norwalk would respond to changes in fee prices.

The question of elasticity is one of how demand would respond to price changes. The research was able to establish that users are generally pleased with service levels and accepting of modest fee increases but did not have sufficient data to conclude how demand will change in response to a fee increase. However, there is data to support a fee increase.

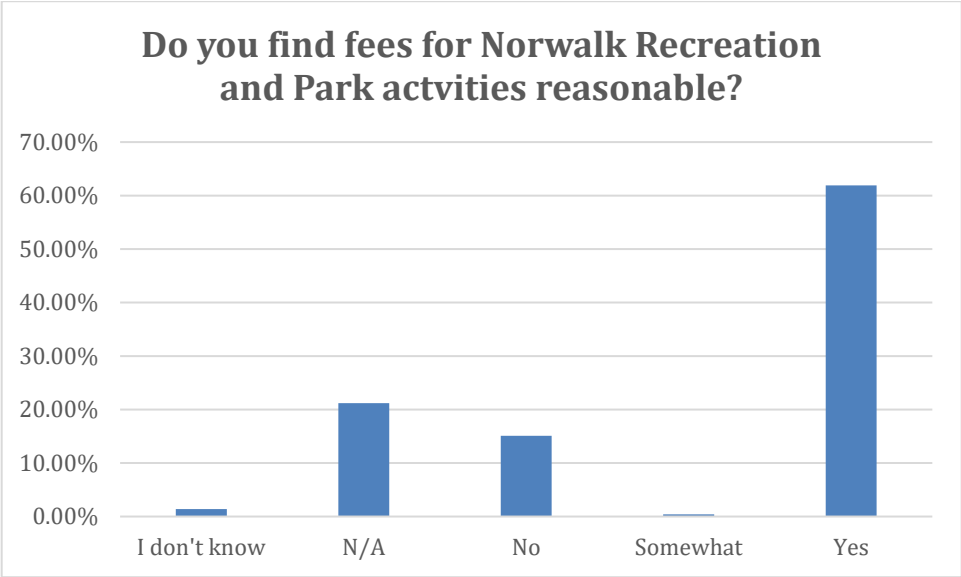
The Parks and Recreation Department reports that Norwalk’s fees are lower than peers. While that is market proof that some places charge more, the impact on the revenue that Norwalk needs to provide these programs is not entirely predictable.

There was some acceptance that fees are necessary and that they need to increase periodically. The online survey’s respondents were wealthier and expressed some understanding that occasional price increases are necessary. The mailed survey respondents were less wealthy and only slightly understanding of the need for occasional price increases.

One cannot ask how much of an increase a customer would welcome. Instead, we try and measure price sensitivity – But in assessing the data in this study, MGT’s opinion is that given the Department’s certainty that Norwalk fees are lower and some customer understanding that fee increases are inevitable, an increase in current prices in the range of 5 to 10 or even 15 percent would be feasible. There may be some reduction in participation, but how much is difficult to predict. Fee increases may also be associated with a higher perceived quality or value.



Perception of Fee Levels and Measure of price sensitivity



This section addresses questions about price sensitivity but omits mention of improvements. Below is the result.

58.3 percent of respondents found fees fair vs. 17 percent who do not. And (What about the other 23%??

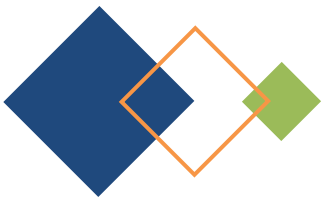
22.2 percent of respondents would not encounter price sensitivity and would be willing to pay more to park if funds were used to improve parking or facilities vs. 70.8 percent who encountered price sensitivity and would not be willing to pay more.

For 38.1 percent of the respondents were not affected said they would be willing to pay more if the extra funds were used to improve fields and facilities, vs. 47 percent who would not be willing to pay.

As to how much more people encountered price sensitivity at a certain price point, the response was as follows: 57 % of the respondents were not willing to pay more. It is unclear if there was a price sensitivity issue or if they were people who did not use the park and Recreation facilities or programs. from those who would be willing to

Percentage of respondents compared to Price points

Percent Acceptable Fee Increase	Responses
0%	0.9%
5%	12.6%
10%	15.9%
15%	5.1%
20%	5.1%
10%-20%	0.5%



Percent Acceptable Fee Increase	Responses
5%-10%	0.5%
Depends on improvements	0.5%
N/A	57.0%
No	1.9%
0%	0.9%

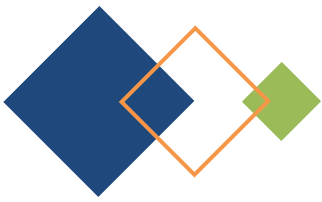
Approximately 39 % of the public would accept a fee increase of up to 15%. Only 2% of the respondents find any level of fee increase to be unacceptable. Most respondents (57%) had no opinion.

In the graphic below the results reveal that 67% Respondents prefer that any improvements be funded by fees rather than taxes. This is consistent about what was discovered in the research that went into the Financial section of the Master Plan

Preferred Way to Fund Increased programming opportunities and quality of programs, sports fields, and park facilities	
Funding source	
N/A	17.5%
Neither	0.9%
Taxes	14.3%
Fees	67.3%

Percent Acceptable Fee Increase	Responses
0%	0.9%
5%	12.6%
10%	15.9%
15%	5.1%
20%	5.1%
10%-20%	0.5%
5%-10%	0.5%
Depends on improvements	0.5%
N/A	57.0%
No	1.9%
0%	0.9%

Percentage of Respondents Supporting Different Levels of Price Increase. 41.7 % would agree to some type of Fee increases



VI. Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. Current cost recovery in many program areas is below the expected national range of 25 to 30 percent. Only fees for parking and Youth Summer Camp exceeded the national average.

- **Recommendation:** Aquatic programs; outdoor and Indoor sports; Facility rentals and Park usage fees should be considered for price increases in accordance with the Price sensitivity constraints mentioned in this report.

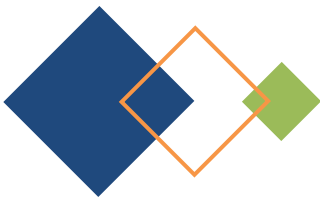
2. Assessing the level of Participation by Residents in Recreation and Parks Offerings

- From on-line surveys and mailed surveys. It is apparent that there is a lot of residents that do not participate in our activities and Recreation programs. – More public engagement, public relations and marketing may help.
- Only 5.1% of respondents indicated that someone in the home participated. Potentially 43% of the respondents to the online survey have some interest in participating. 51% were not interested.
- Demographically, Caucasians responded in numbers 3 times as great as the residents of color. The Department hopes to change this.
- There is an opportunity of getting more rentals revenue from facilities. 38 % of respondents were interested in renting a facility.
- Participation numbers in Field Sports were higher than any other program category. most common were soccer, baseball, and softball. 40% of respondents had a child that played one of the sports; soccer; baseball, softball, lacrosse, hockey, volleyball, or basketball
- The highest interest among adults were concerts, pickleball, funruns and tennis, in that order
- Participation in Adult Sports was small, but there was a loyal following.
- 24% of participants were interested in swimming and Aquatic Programs

Recommendation: Norwalk Recreation and Parks Provide a Plan that will allow Norwalk Recreation and Parks to provide effective public engagement, public relations, and Marketing to families for Family recreation programs; Youth and Adults for Sports programs; and Adults for Facility Rentals. The Plan should effectively reach people of color, and adults of all races.

3. Test Customer sensitivity to Pricing and Ability to pay.

- 58.3 percent of respondents found fees fair vs. 17% percent who did not. 24.7% were neutral.
- 38.1 percent of the respondents said they would be willing to pay more
- The City could charge up to 15% more and likely maintain 39 percent of the audience that have participated traditionally in Recreation programs.
- Norwalk's Recreation and Parks Department did not have a pricing policy that distinguished single (or individual benefit) recreation programs and sports activities, and aquatic programs



from those that had widespread interest and widespread public participation. Nor was there a cost recovery goal associated with the programs and activities.

Recommendation #1: An increase in fees of up to 15 percent would bring Norwalk closer to the national range of cost recovery. Given that residents appear to like the offerings and that neighbors are reported to charge more, one cannot predict the impact on demand. Yet an increase of up to 15 percent appears feasible. Sensitivity may be appropriate for price increases of activities more heavily used by children or by demographic groups that are not participating at a desired level.

Recommendation #2. Norwalk Recreation and Parks Develop Public Standard Guidelines for pricing.
1.The Department established a minimum goal of 25 -100% costs recovery depending on the program or activity. 2. the price range should take into consideration single or small group uses, which only benefit a small number of people versus those that have a widespread participation and therefore more of a Public Benefit and a lower unit cost.

4. The On-Line and Mail -in Surveys as it relates to Customer Service resulted in the following conclusions and Comments from the residents and customers and participants of the Norwalk Recreation and Parks department's programs, activities, and facility uses.

- Customers thought fees and charges were fair, but there was some resistance to price increases, nevertheless. People thought customer service was excellent.

Determine where improvements can be made to improve services to justify costs.

- 67% of respondents prefer that any improvements be funded by fees rather than taxes. This is consistent with the Master Plan.

Recommendation #3:

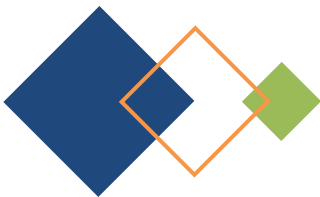
As much as possible Norwalk Recreation and Parks should Try to associate any Increases in fees with Improvements in service, capital improvements or program enhancements, or capital replacement.

The Following areas below show the Top survey results in terms of Resident and Customer satisfaction and where improvement may be needed (associated with dislikes).

Likes	Dislikes
Proximity to our home; Variety of activities; newer/cleaner; availability of restrooms; cleanliness, safety; nice playgrounds and beautiful lawns/trails; The variety and entertainment available. Love the skate Park at Vets.	Dirty bathrooms; goose droppings; lack of relaxation space; Lack of parks on west Norwalk; Lots of mud in the winter/spring; need for a leash law and allowing dogs in the park; Parking is a challenge; small neighborhood parks not maintained as well.

Dog parks:

Likes	Dislikes
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Cranberry Dog Park lacks spaces for dogs to be free; Taylor Farm is large and there is a large space for dogs to be free. Parking is available	Dogs have taken over Cranbury Park; people do not pick up the poop; There needs to be a small dog area in each dog park; Taylor and Cranbury need to completely be enclosed in Fencing; parking a problem.
--	--

Beaches:

Likes	
Well maintained free parking for residents; Splash Pad; concerts; food and entertainment variety; water and beach; tables; and a pavilion.	Splash Pad needs to be updated and upgraded. Bathrooms need attention; Need more beach sand; and grooming; too crowded; bathrooms closed seasonally

Youth Recreation programming

Likes	Dislikes
Program variety; affordable pricings; Summer program offerings variety; great Instructors; well managed; good venues. Summer camps are great, pricing is reasonable, and counselors are great.	Lacking for sports for girls; awareness is poor; not enough options not enough participants

Youth Sports

Likes	Dislikes
Girls Basketball; more girls' activities, including softball, good prices; variety; volleyball; synthetic fields	Not enough options or awareness of offerings; need for more tennis offerings; fields need more maintenance; need for more sports fields, and turf

Adult Recreation:

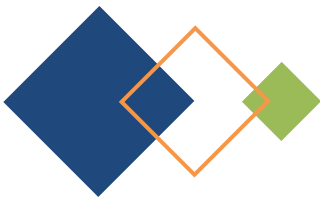
Likes	Dislikes
Availability; pickleball; softball; concerts; pricing	Lacking Childcare Yoga; awareness an issue; need for dance classes and Exercise classes.

Adult Sports:

Likes	Dislikes
Availability and variety of recreation; softball; concerts; pickleball; price; location	Lack of Childcare.; Insufficient number of adult programs; need for yoga; difficulty finding information

Aquatics

Likes	Dislikes
Availability; solid swimming program; good Instructors; Learn to Swim Program for low-income students	Need for community pool; awareness poor; affordable swim lessons for children; High



	school pool too Cold; Locker and pool area always unclean
--	---

6. Top responses for suggested improvements to Park and Recreation Programs that produce revenue.

Capital Improvements

- Dog Parks completely fenced, including a Small Dog area in the Dog Parks
- Improved trails at Cranbury
- More parking
- More parks
- Park benches and shelters
- Increase amount and quality of sand on beaches
- A second Splash Pad and larger Splash Pad at Calf Pasture Beach
- New Bathrooms
- More indoor facilities
- Banquet Halls for gatherings

Youth Sports

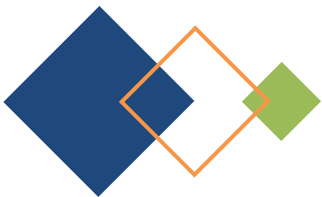
- More Community Sports Teams
- Increase in Girls Recreation and Sports Teams
- More and better Coaches
- Gymnastics programs
- Tennis for all youth
- More outdoor Basketball courts

Adult Sports and Recreation

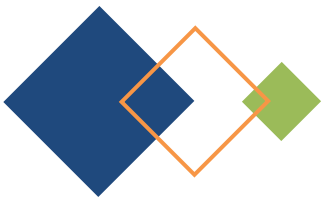
- More Adult Sports Leagues
- Boot Camps
- More Tennis Clinics
- Family Life enrichment program

Aquatics

- Outdoor Indoor Community Pool
- Adult Swim



- **Adult Water Aerobics**



Appendix A Survey Form

Survey Initiation

What is your Postal Zip Code?

Household Makeup

Are there children under the age of 18 in your home? (Check one)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If there are children living in your home, what is their age?

What is the gender of the child in your home?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / Third Gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have another child to report?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is the age of the second child?

What is the gender of the second child?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / Third Gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have another child to report?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is the age of the third child?

What is the gender of the third child?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / Third Gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have another child to report?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is the age of the fourth child?

What is the gender of the fourth child?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / Third Gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have another child to report?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is the age of the fifth child?

What is the gender of the fifth child?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / Third Gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is the majority race or ethnicity of your household?

- ☐ Black
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Asian

☐ Spanish Haitian

☐ Other

How many adults are in your household?

☐ Single adult

☐ 2 - 3 adults

☐ 4 - 6 adults

☐ 7+ adults

What is the income level of your household?

☐ Up to \$80,000

☐ \$80-\$100,000

☐ \$100-\$150,000

☐ \$150-\$200,000

☐ \$200,000+

Sports!

In the last two years, have you registered someone in your home for a City recreational program? (Check one)

☐ Yes

☐ No

In the last two years, have you rented or reserved a park or facility for a family or group event?

☐ Yes

☐ No

In the last two years, has someone in your home played an organized sport on a City ball field?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you selected "yes," what sport was it?

- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Softball
- ☐ Lacrosse
- ☐ Field Hockey
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Flag Football
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Rowing
- ☐ Tennis

In the last two years, has your son or daughter played on organized sports leagues that operate on a city or school sports field?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, soccer
- ☐ Yes, baseball
- ☐ Yes, softball
- ☐ Yes, lacrosse
- ☐ Yes, field hockey
- ☐ Yes, volleyball
- ☐ Yes, basketball

How likely are you to register for a city recreational program this year?

- ☐ Extremely unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Extremely likely

If you're interested in registering for a city recreational program, which interests you the most? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Fun Run
- ☐ Concerts
- ☐ Pickleball
- ☐ Tennis

How likely are you to register for an adult city athletic league this year?

- ☐ Extremely unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Extremely likely

If you're interested in registering for an adult city athletic league this year, which interest you the most? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Co-ed softball
- ☐ Men's softball league
- ☐ Women's softball league
- ☐ Bocce ball
- ☐ Volleyball

How likely are you to register for a swimming or aquatics program this year?

- ☐ Extremely unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Extremely likely

How likely are you to rent a Park's facility or outdoor space for a wedding, event picnic, or celebration this year?

- ☐ Extremely unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Extremely likely

Thinking about programs that interest you, how important are the following on a scale of 1-10? (10 is the most important and 1 is least important.)

	Not at all important		Slightly important		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	7	8	9	10
Offering what I want at a convenient time											
Offering a program near my home											
The fee to participate											

General

How did you become aware of Norwalk Recreation and Parks programs, activities and sports celebrations?

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Promotions
- ☐ Flyers
- ☐ Internet advertisement
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ The City's website

How many members of your household must drive when you visit the park?

Would you be willing to pay to park if the funds were dedicated to improving parking or park grounds and amenities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Free Responses

Please share two thing that you like and/or dislike about Norwalk parks, beaches or recreation programs.

	Likes	Dislikes
Parks		
Dog parks		
Beaches		

	Likes	Dislikes
Youth recreation programs		
Youth sports programs		
Adult sports programs		
Adult recreation programs		
Aquatics and swimming		

What are some additions you desire for Norwalk parks, beaches or recreation programs?

	Desired Additions
Parks	
Sports fields	
Dog parks	
Beaches	
Indoor facilities (Fodor Farms Barn, Cranbury Mansion, The Cranbury Bunkhouse and Pavilions at Cranbury)	
Youth recreation programs	
Youth sports programs	
Adult sports programs	
Adult recreation programs	
Aquatics and swimming	

Facilities Rating

How would you rate the condition of our sports fields?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Needs improvement

How would you rate the condition of our tennis and pickleball courts?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Needs improvement

How would you rate the condition of our Park grass turf and Park amenities?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Needs improvement

How would you rate the condition of our Parks grounds and Park amenities?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Needs improvement

Would you like to see improvement in the sports fields, tennis courts, pickleball courts, park grounds and amenities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you believe the fees for Norwalk's Parks and Recreation activities reasonable?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Would you pay more for user fees if the current fields and facilities were improved, and more amenities were added to the parks in the future?

☐ Yes

☐ No

How much more would you be willing to pay for use of fields and facilities, and recreation programs?

☐ 5%

☐ 10%

☐ 15%

☐ 20%

Would you prefer paying additional taxes or user fees to fund the increase in programming opportunities, and the quality of programs, sports fields and park facilities?

☐ Yes, User Fees

☐ Yes, Taxes

☐ No

How do you feel about a resident and non-resident fee for parking and programs? (The

fee for residents would be lower than the fee for non-residents)

- ☐ I like the idea of separate parking fees
- ☐ I am neutral towards separate parking fees
- ☐ I dislike the idea of separate parking fees

If you like the idea of implementing a separate higher fee for non-residents, how much higher should the fee be?

- ☐ 5%
- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 25%

Final thoughts

Please share any additional comments or thoughts here.