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# Readington Township Parks and Recreation Public Opinion Survey Report 2008

# Benefits of Parks and Recreation...

*... essential to the public good*

## **Individual Benefits**

- Adds years to your life...and life to your years
- Reduces stress
- Reduces the isolation of the elderly
- Exercise, fitness & conditioning
- Fun and entertainment
- Learning and education
- Relaxation
- Health

## **Economic Benefits**

- Increase nearby property values
- Attracts and retains businesses and employment opportunities
- Create/Increase expenditures on food, lodging and services
- Reduce damage and financial loss from flooding
- Reduces public health care costs by fostering active healthy lifestyles

## **Social Benefits**

- Provide significant public places to connect residents to the community
- Improve health and wellness
- Heighten sensitivity to and interaction with the natural environment
- Deters anti-social behavior such as juvenile crime and substance abuse
- Builds strong family bonds, the foundation of our society

## **Environmental Benefits**

- Promote and sustain wildlife diversity through protection of habitat and migration corridors
- Create an awareness and appreciation for the environment
- Absorb and filter storm water and floodwaters
- Provide access to historically and culturally significant features
- Improve air quality and reduce noise
- Connect or reconnect fragmented landscapes
- Focus attention and clean up efforts on damaged/degraded corridors
- Help to preserve the character and aesthetic appeal of a place or landscape

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# Readington Township Public Opinion Survey Report 2008

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# Readington Township Public Opinion Survey Summary

Readington Township conducted a direct mail survey in the fall of 2007 to assess public opinion about the parks and recreation in Readington Township.

## Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to determine the opinions, ideas and concerns of the residents to serve as a foundation for decision-making regarding parks and recreation. By understanding the citizens' needs and interests, the Township will be able to direct planning and resources for the benefit of the community.

## Process

The process produced statistically reliable and valid survey results with a return of 476 completed questionnaires. The return rate of 34 percent exceeded typical direct mail return rate of two to four percent.

## Results

- **Positive Ratings** - Respondents rated parks and recreation favorably, mostly good to excellent.
- **Level of Support** - Approximately 52 percent of respondents indicated a willingness to pay more in taxes for parks and recreation improvements. Twenty-five percent would not support any increase. Another 19 percent needed more information to formulate an opinion. Only four percent supported a decrease
- **Park Priorities** - The priority for future focus is on protection of natural resources and upgrading existing facilities.
- **Indoor Recreation** - Indoor recreation was listed as a priority of 52 percent of the respondents when viewed within the context of all parks and recreation improvements. However, improving existing parks and recreation facilities including trail development need to be done before a community recreation center is undertaken. Respondents desire more study and information about an indoor center:
- **Programs and Services** - Approximately 73 percent of respondents indicated that enhancing programs and services should be a future priority. Enhancing program quality and accommodating the schedules of working citizens is key.
- **Public Awareness** - More outreach to promote parks and recreation opportunities would be a valuable public service.

## Future Directions

A strategically sound approach for township parks and recreation in order of priority would be to:

1. Establish a plan for parks and recreation over the next ten years.
2. Create a financial plan that incorporates a mix of tax and non-tax resources and partnerships.
3. Improve existing parks and recreation facilities.
4. Improve the quality and expand recreation programs to adults and families based on staff capacity.
5. Develop and implement a township trails plan.
6. Undertake an indoor recreation center feasibility study with solid public involvement.
7. Work towards increasing public awareness about all aspects of parks and recreation.

# I. Introduction

Readington Township conducted a direct mail survey in the fall of 2007 to assess public opinion about the parks and recreation in Readington Township. The Township wanted to determine the opinions, ideas and concerns of the residents to serve as a foundation for decision-making regarding parks and recreation. By understanding citizens' needs and interests, the Township will be able to direct planning and resources for the benefit of the community.

In addition to this public opinion survey to assess the interests of citizens as individuals, the public participation process also included interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups. Balancing the needs of the general public with those of organized community associations that provide important public service such as organized sports is crucial to meeting overall community needs.

## Survey Reporting Parameters

**Survey responses are reported as percentages. Percentages and numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding and/or non-responses.**

# II. Process

Organization, Goals and Survey Instrument – Readington Township retained Toole Recreation Planning to conduct the public opinion survey. The Readington Township Recreation Department, a Study Committee and the consultant worked together collaboratively to develop the topics to be addressed in the survey. Topics identified by the Study Committee included: programs, services, parks, recreation facilities, priorities for parks and recreation, level of support in terms of paying for parks and recreation improvements, outdoor and indoor recreation and specific opinions about an indoor recreation center. A CPRP/CPP (Certified Park and Recreation Professional/Certified Program Planner) developed the survey instrument in partnership with the Recreation Department and the Project Study Committee. The survey instrument underwent six revisions until it was fine-tuned for public distribution.

- **Random Sample** - Every household in Readington Township had an equal chance of participating in the survey that was sent to 1,500 residences.
- **Distribution** – Respondents received a pre-survey letter informing them that they would receive a questionnaire the following week. The pre-survey letter informed the respondents about the project, the importance of their response and the time frame. The survey was mailed out via first class mail along with a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped reply envelope the following week.

### III. Survey Follow Up

Follow-up included telephone calls to the respondents who had not yet returned their surveys. Toole Recreation Planning is authorized in federal “Do Not Call” registry to make telephone calls to survey participants. Up to three calls were made to a random group of non-respondents asking them to complete and return their questionnaire. The phone calls yielded the following:

- **Unreachable:** 131 of the survey sample that had not returned a questionnaire were unreachable. That is they did not respond to the survey or any of the telephone calls.
- **Refusals:** 40 non-returned questionnaires refused in telephone follow up. Of the refusals, some were “hang ups” while others refused after listening to the purpose of the call. The main reasons given for refusals were lack of time, non-use of Readington Township parks and recreation opportunities and lack of interest.
- **Reachable and Non-refused:** 25 of the survey sample contacted stated that they appreciated the Township undertaking the survey as a convenient way for them to provide feedback to the Township. They also expressed the opinion that there is a lot to do. Many contacted mentioned the need to improve what the Township has, the desire for bike trails, and preserving the scenic beauty of the area.

### IV. Return

The goal was to generate 361 completed returned questionnaires out of the 1,500 distributed to attain statistical significance. This number would produce a high level of confidence in the survey response along with a low margin of error. The response to Readington Township’s survey exceeded that goal with 476 completed returned questionnaires. The yield produced exceeded the number required to achieve a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent +/- 5 percent.

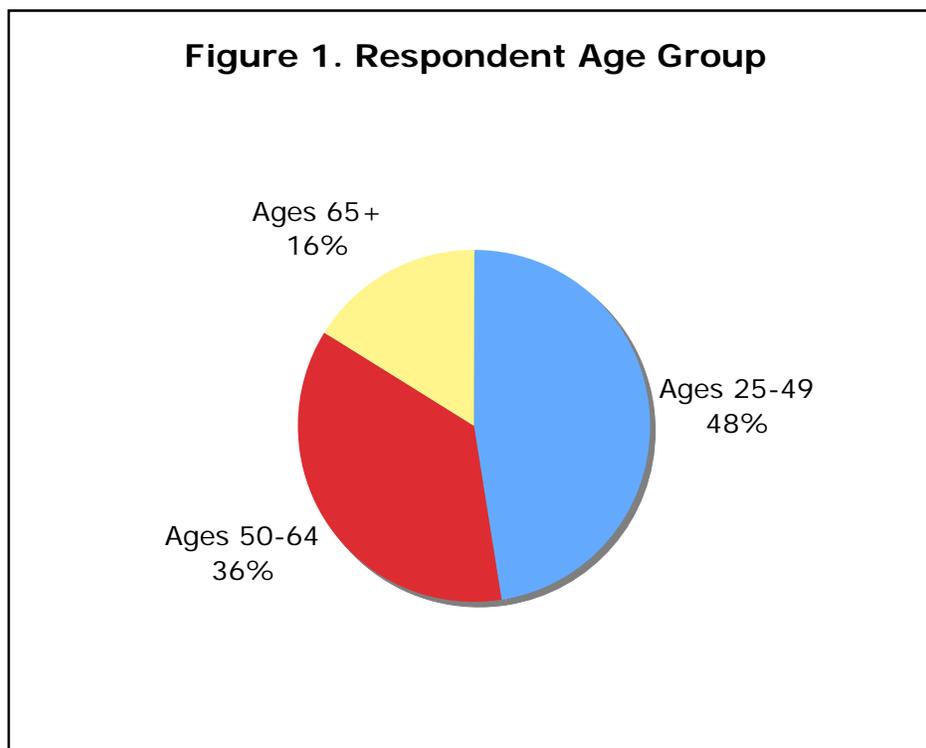
- Of the 1,500 surveys mailed, 91 were undeliverable due to incorrect addresses, changes of address, refusals or deaths effectively reducing the sample to 1,409.
- Completed questionnaires returned totaled 453.
- Another 23 were returned after the survey distribution schedule for a total of 476.
- The township’s return rate was 34 percent. Typically direct mail surveys generate a return rate of two to four percent.

## Respondent Characteristics

Respondents provided demographic information that included their gender, age group, educational level, and household composition.

### Respondent Age Group

**Figure 1** presents the response according to age group of the respondents. The age group of 18 to 24 had only one respondent, a typical response level in park and recreation direct mail household surveys.



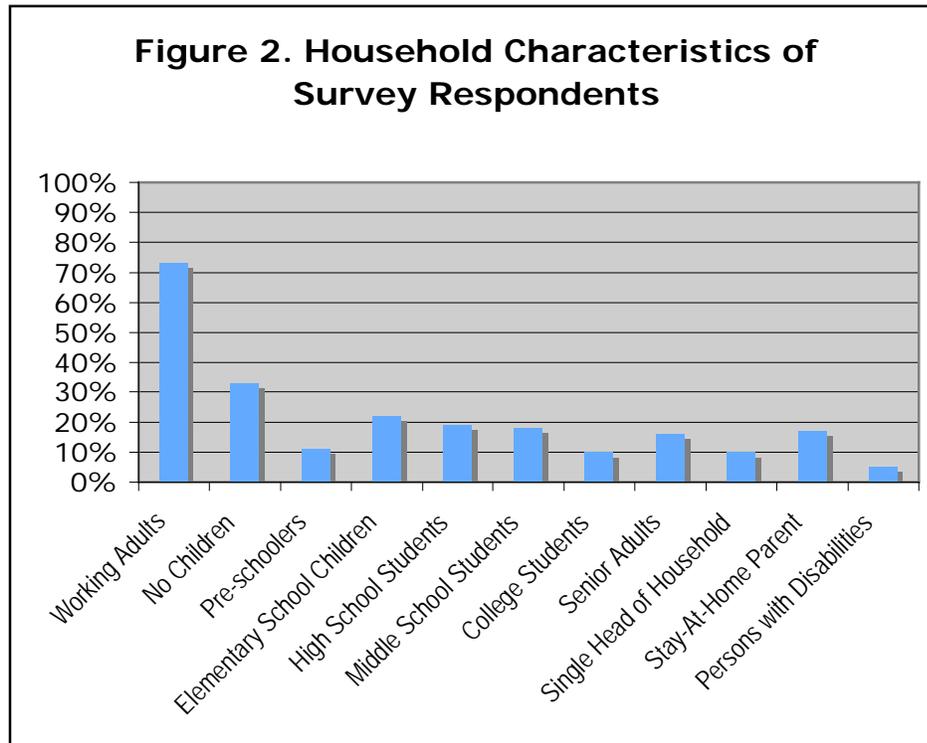
### Gender of Respondents

Of those who answered the question about respondent gender, 50 percent reported that they were males and 46 percent females. Four percent of the survey respondents did not answer this question.

### Household Composition

The following figures and table present the household socio-economic characteristics of the survey respondents.

- **Figure 2** – Household Composition
- **Table 1** – Response by Planning District in Readington Township
- **Figure 3** – Place of Residence in Readington Township
- **Figure 4** – Income Level



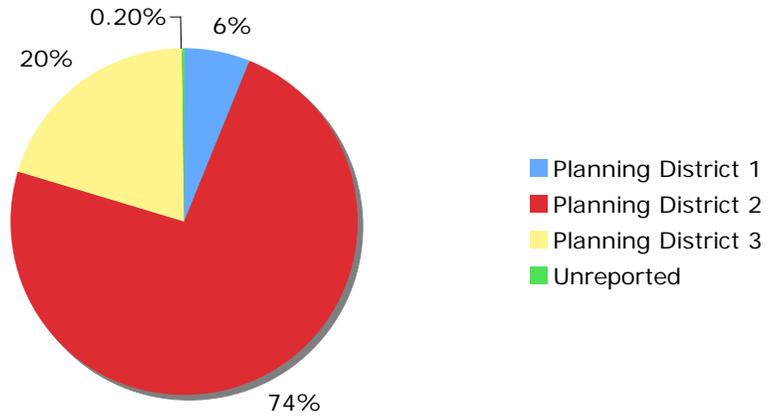
The survey found a relatively high percentage of stay-at-home parents at 17 percent in Readington Township. Nationwide about 5.2 percent of households have a stay-at-home parent.

#### Respondents by Place of Residence in Readington Township

**Table 1** presents the distribution and return of questionnaires. The response by planning district, as shown in **Figure 3**, corresponds to the population distribution in the Township. Most of the residents live between Routes 22 and 629. Fewer people live north of Route 22 or South of Route 629.

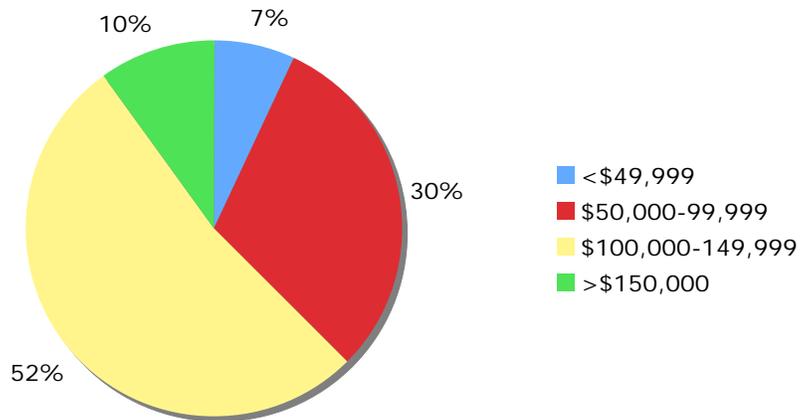
| Table 1. Distribution and Return of Surveys by Planning District |                                       |                       |                           |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Planning District  | Location                              | Questionnaires Sent # | Questionnaires Returned # |
| Planning District 1  | North of Route 22                     | 229                   | 27                        |
| Planning District 2  | South of Route 22, North of Route 629 | 1029                  | 331                       |
| Planning District 3  | South of Route 629                    | 242                   | 89                        |

**Figure 3. Response According to Place of Residence**



**Respondents According to Income Level**

**Figure 4. Income Level of Respondents**



# V. Summary of Overall Findings

The six major findings of the survey include the following:

1. The survey is a statistically valid and reliable survey with a level of confidence of 95 percent with a margin of error of +/- five percent. Overall 69 percent of the respondents rated parks and recreation favorably with most describing them as good to excellent. However, the Township has a way to go in achieving a high satisfaction level of 80 percent. The survey results provide a clear direction on how to get there.
2. The respondents clearly want parks and recreation improvements in all areas including natural resource protection, programs and services, upgrading existing facilities, trails and indoor recreation. These were all listed as priorities by over half of the respondents. Four out of five respondents indicated that achieving a balanced system of parks and recreation and natural resource conservation should be the future focus of township parks and recreation efforts.
3. When asked about the level of support for parks and recreation improvements, the majority of respondents were willing to pay from \$6 to \$11 more per person annually for this purpose. They outnumbered those who are not willing to pay any more by a margin of two to one. Another 19 percent needed more information in order to formulate an opinion. This is an important finding for a community with high anti-tax sentiment, which appears to be about school taxes.
4. The priority for future focus is on protection of natural resources, program and service enhancement, and upgrading existing facilities. Undertaking anything new before existing facilities are in the best condition possible is not likely to have a high level of public support. Developing new parks ranks lowest in future focus with a level of support of only 25 percent.
5. Indoor recreation was listed as a priority of 52 percent of the respondents when viewed within the context of all parks and recreation improvements.

When asked specifically about the Township moving ahead with a community recreation center, only 10 percent stated that the Township *should not* develop an indoor recreation center. Respondents answered primarily in support of more municipal exploration and information about an indoor recreation center:

- 23 percent stated that the Township should develop an indoor recreation center.
- 25 percent needed more information.
- 26 percent supported Readington Township exploring the idea of creating a community recreation center.

When asked when they would be likely to participate in recreation opportunities, 71 percent of the respondents said that they would be likely to participate indoors and 57 percent they would be likely to participate in the daytime. Regarding when people would like to participate in township recreation programs, 77 percent said they would be likely to participate on weekends, 62 percent in the evenings and 45 percent on weekdays. Adults and families ranked highest in terms of program interest by client group.

6. Interest in programs and services is high with about 72 percent of respondents citing enhancing programs and services as a future priority for parks and recreation. Written comments revealed that enhancing quality of services is the key factor and broadening opportunities for adults and families is important beyond the current emphasis on children and sports. Having indoor recreation facilities would make this possible to a great extent.

## Applying the Findings: Future Directions and Recommendations

The survey findings provide guidance for Readington Township in terms of responding to the public opinion of the citizens at-large:

1. **First, improve existing parks and recreation facilities.** Establish a plan to phase in capital improvements in all of the municipal parks. Prioritize the parks by use, starting with Pickell, Hillcrest and Summer Road Parks. Create a park improvement plan for each park using a public participation process to develop the plan. Develop a municipal financing strategy for investing in park improvements. Consider partnerships, sponsorships and grants to leverage every dollar of municipal investment. Establish a five-to seven year Capital Improvement Program for these projects to enable long term planning and maximize advantages in construction and purchasing.
2. **Phase in program expansion to adults and families and in areas beyond sports.** Since the staff is small, consider partnerships with other organizations and phasing in staff positions over time. Staff additions could be full-time, part-time or independent contractors. Start program enhancement by focusing on current offerings using the suggestions provided by survey respondents. Focus on high quality. Develop a three to five year program management plan for programs that lists goals, objectives, actions, resources required, costs and revenues. Structure the program area as a revenue producing function while providing access to citizens with financial need.
3. **Develop a township trail plan.** Coordinate with the Open Space Committee and pursue grant funds for this purpose. Funding is available for trail development and is most often secured when a trail plan is in place.
4. **Schedule the feasibility study for the community center with respect to the completion of park improvements.** Timing and information are the crucial factors regarding an indoor recreation center. Given the level of support for an indoor recreation center and the low level of opposition (only 10 percent), the Township could move ahead with exploring the idea of a community recreation center when the timing is right: the existing facilities need to be in good to excellent condition (or on their way there) and recognized as such by the public before moving ahead with any new facilities. About 74 percent of the respondents are open to hearing information about an indoor center in the community. Undertake a feasibility study for a community recreation center using this public participation process as the springboard. Retain a company with expertise and experience in indoor recreation center planning and operation. The study needs to address capital costs and most importantly on operations, management and financing as primary elements for consideration. Use a public participation process in the feasibility study. Consider having elected officials and the Recreation Director make visits to a variety of indoor recreation centers to see them first hand and learn about their experiences. Consider

sending representatives to the annual indoor recreation center school in Colorado held annually in June. The center offers extensive information about construction, operation, management, financing, cost recovery, partnerships and so on to participants. Include exploration of partnership potential with the YMCA, Healthquest and schools through shared services as a potential joint venture.

## VI. Responses

**Survey responses are reported as percentages. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding and/or non-response.**

The following section presents the responses to the questions, interpretation of the findings, and implications. It is important to note that the percentages are high in the responses. Corporate America makes major marketing and investment decisions based upon numbers as low as ten percent.

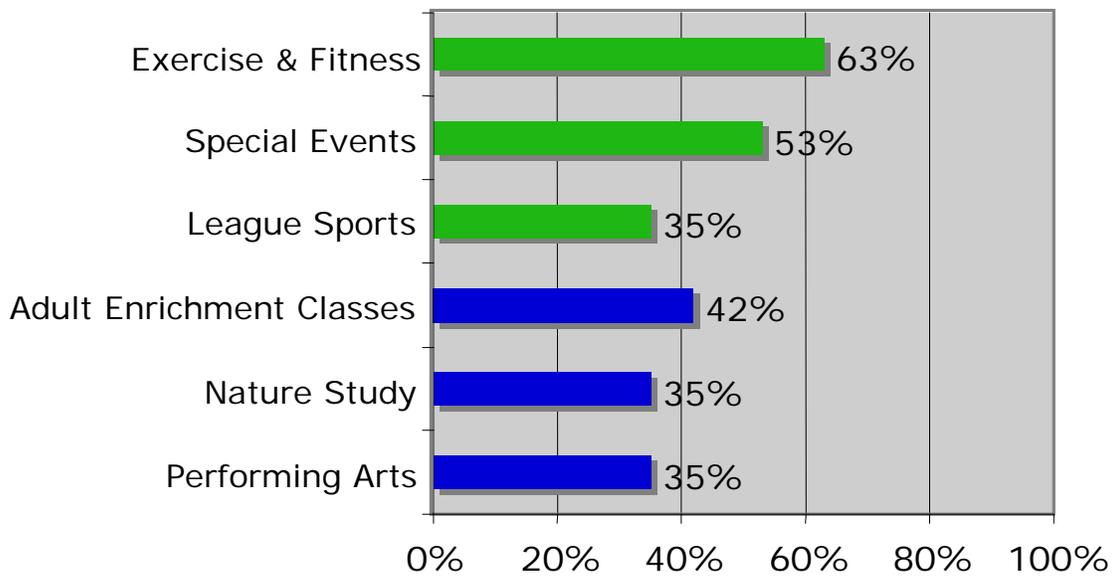
Question 1. Please indicate if you or members of your household participate or are interested in the following activities. *Circle one response for each.*

Participation in Recreation Activities

|   | Yes                 | No, but interested | No, not interested |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Exercise and Fitness (walking, biking, working out etc.)        | 63%                 | 25%                | 12%                |
| Special Events (concerts, Memorial Day Parade, Family Fun Day)* | 53                  | 25                 | 22                 |
| League Sports (e.g. baseball, soccer, etc.)                     | 35                  | 15                 | 50                 |
| Performing Arts (music, arts, drama, dance)                     | 34                  | 35                 | 30                 |
| Non-league Sports (e.g. golf, tennis, etc.)                     | 31                  | 24                 | 45                 |
| Nature Study  | 24                  | 35                 | 40                 |
| Adult Enrichment Classes  | 20                  | 42                 | 37                 |
| Arts & Crafts   | 20                  | 30                 | 50                 |
| Summer Recreation Program: Whitehouse, Holland Brook, RMS       | 20                  | 17                 | 62                 |
| Other:  | Reported on page 39 |                    |                    |

Interpretation

**Figure 5. Top Activities in which Households Participate or Are Interested**



**Figure 5** illustrates the programs in which most respondents participate or the programs in which they are most interested. While participation in league sports emerged at 35%, it is important to note that this is a relatively high number since organized sports participation is concentrated in youth between the ages of five and thirteen.

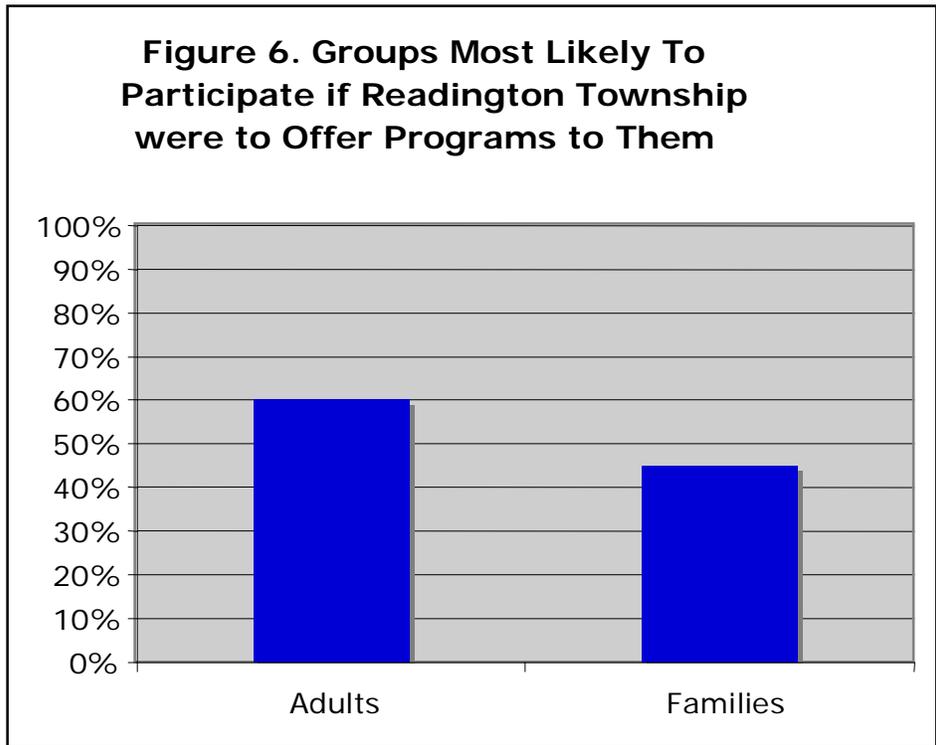
## *Implications*

- **Provide places to walk and bike and indoor facilities.** This could be outdoors as well as in private facilities or in a community recreation center.
- **Continue to serve organized sports.** In this family-oriented community, organized sports emerged as the third highest activity group. While about one out of three respondents is already involved, another 50 percent would be interested. Based upon written comments, much of this interest lies in participation for adults in sporting activities whether they be socially oriented or set up as leagues.
- **Expand fitness opportunities.**
- **Phase in programming for the arts and environmental education.**
- **Create opportunities for “experiences”.** The high interest in special events reflects the trend in which people are looking for “experiences” and ways to create memories with their families and friends.
- **Plan summer recreation programming enhancements.** About one out of three households responding participate in the summer recreation programs or are interested in them. This represents about 1900 households. Focus on how to deliver the kinds and quality of programs and services the residents want.
- **Improve Township Recreation Programs by:**
  - **Extending the hours of the programs for youth.** Try to accommodate the needs of working families.
  - **Adding a variety to existing programs.**
  - **Enhancing the quality of all programs.**
  - **Exploring support services, especially transportation for recreation.** Related factors affect program participation. Since Readington Township occupies about 48 square miles and is bisected by major throughways, location of programs is important. Providing transportation for children in camps and for senior citizens would enable more people to participate and support the needs of parents who work and have limited time due to long work hours and extended commutes

Question 2. If Readington Township were to offer programs for the following groups, how likely would you or members of your household be to participate in them? *Circle one response for each.*

| Program Interest According to Client Group |             |        |              |             |            |                |
|--|-------------|--------|--------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Programs for:                              | Very Likely | Likely | LIKELY TOTAL | Less Likely | Not Likely | Not Applicable |
| Adults                                     | 21%         | 39%    | 60%          | 17%         | 16%        | 6%             |
| Families                                   | 16          | 29     | 45           | 11          | 18         | 25             |
| Elementary students                        | 17          | 10     | 27           | 1           | 6          | 66             |
| Middle school students                     | 12          | 13     | 25           | 2           | 6          | 66             |
| High school students                       | 10          | 13     | 23           | 5           | 7          | 64             |
| Senior Citizens                            | 9           | 14     | 23           | 8           | 13         | 56             |
| Pre-schoolers                              | 9           | 3      | 12           | 1           | 6          | 80             |
| People with disabilities                   | 2           | 6      | 8            | 5           | 13         | 73             |

*Interpretation*



**Figure 6** shows that services for adults and families are the most likely to generate a positive response from the community. When considered in light of the written comments, the respondents generally feel that children and youth have many recreation

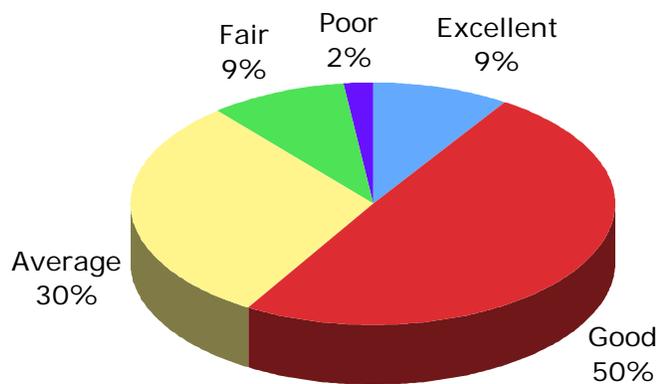
opportunities but opportunities for adults are limited. Offering services in the area of fitness and wellness for adults and special events for families would respond to citizen preferences. Indoor recreation plays an important role in both these areas as the climate in Readington warrants services year round and not just half the year when weather is more conducive to outdoor activities. Opportunities for biking and walking emerged as a top priority indicating the need for paths as well as promoting where they are located. Most people like to walk for fitness and bicycling is becoming more popular especially among the Boomer generation.

## *Implications*

- **Add programs with respect to staff capacity.** Readington Township Recreation Department has a small staff. Adding major program areas such as service to adults and families and programs expanded beyond present offerings that focus on summer recreation and sports would need careful consideration.
- **Involve client groups in planning services.** Planning services for adults and families should be done through involvement with representatives of these groups in order to zero in on programs, schedules, hours, fees and charges, promotion and marketing, and identifying other factors that could affect participation. Use focus groups, an advisory committee, and interviews with citizens in planning services and facilities.
- **Offer both scheduled recreation activities and self-directed opportunities.** Consider both organized scheduled programs as well as drop in-self-directed activities that citizens could undertake at their own discretion.

Question 3. How would you rate Readington Township's recreation programs? *Circle one response.*

**Figure 7. Readington Township Recreation Rating**



### *Interpretation*

**Figure 7** presents the respondents' ratings of Readington Township's recreation programs. Approximately 59 percent of the survey respondents rated the township's recreation programs as good to excellent. About one in ten rated them as excellent. Only two percent rated them as poor. This is a positive finding.

This finding also presents a comparison with a benchmark goal. A rating of 80 percent good to excellent by the citizens is an achievable and desirable benchmark for all aspects of parks and recreation. Striving to improve programs to achieve the goal of 80 percent would mean bumping up the rating another 20 percent. This could be achieved incrementally over the next few years by the next time a community recreation survey is undertaken. In the meantime, using program evaluations would help to measure improvements in ratings. Interviewing non-participants would produce information about what and how to offer programs for target markets.

## *Implications*

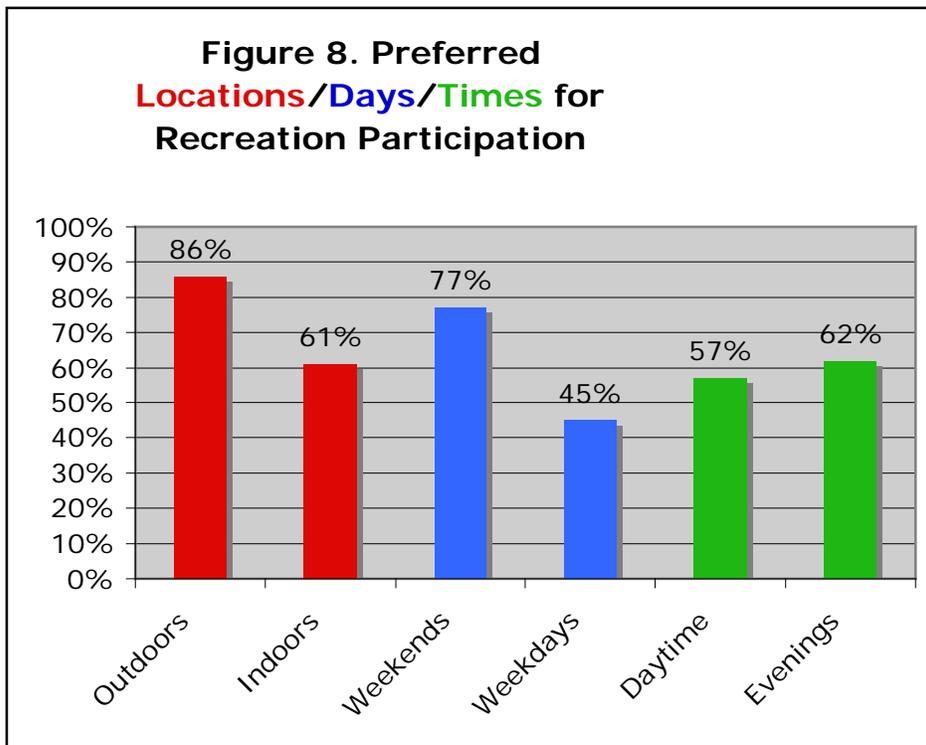
Using findings from other questions and the open-ended comments, there are specific things that Readington Township can do to reach an 80 percent rating of good to excellent:

- **Ensure that the programs are of high quality.**
- **Offer programs for adults and families as the next target market.** Limited or lack of opportunities for these groups is likely a factor in ratings. Target families first as that would be the easiest effort that would yield the highest return in terms of involvement and public responsiveness. Next in priority would be young adults and “singles”.
- **Explore transportation where warranted for recreation programs.**
- **Schedule hours convenient for working parents when planning youth activities.**
- **Provide and advertise both scheduled activities and recreation opportunities that citizens could engage in on their own.**
- **Provide more diverse outdoor recreation facilities for citizens of all ages and abilities.** Develop or expand facilities bicycling, walking, nature enjoyment, social gathering areas, scenic locations, trees and shady areas, and indoor facilities for fitness and wellness, social recreation, adult activities and family recreation.
- **Promote and advertise heavily.** Use a variety of mechanisms to get the word out through township wide advertising as well as through targeted marketing.
- **Offer programs in areas beyond sports such as the arts, nature, and wellness.**
- **Consider programs for stay-at-home parents.** With 17 percent of the respondents indicating that they fall in to this category, this would be an important citizen market. Weekday year round programs would be important. Should the Township pursue an indoor recreation center, this would be an important customer group.
- **Offer only programs that can be planned, managed and directed to achieve high quality and with respect to staff capacity.** It is better to do a few things very well than many things at poor quality. In Readington Township, quality is the key.

Question 4. Where and when would you or members of your household be likely to participate? *Circle one response for each.*

| Recreation Participation: Indoor, Outdoor and Time Preferences |             |        |        |             |            |
|--|-------------|--------|--------|-------------|------------|
|  | Very Likely | Likely | LIKELY | Less Likely | Not Likely |
| Outdoors   | 39%         | 47%    | 86%    | 5%          | 9%         |
| Weekends   | 30          | 47     | 77     | 11          | 11         |
| Indoors  | 26          | 45     | 61     | 13          | 16         |
| Daytime  | 18          | 39     | 57     | 16          | 26         |
| Weekdays   | 16          | 29     | 45     | 24          | 31         |
| Evenings   | 20          | 42     | 62     | 19          | 19         |

*Interpretation*



As shown in **Figure 8**, the top two favored times and places to participate in recreation are outdoors and weekends. Indoor recreation scored high as well with three out of five percent of respondents stating they would be likely to engage in recreation indoors. About 57 percent of the respondents indicated that daytime is their preferred time for recreation.

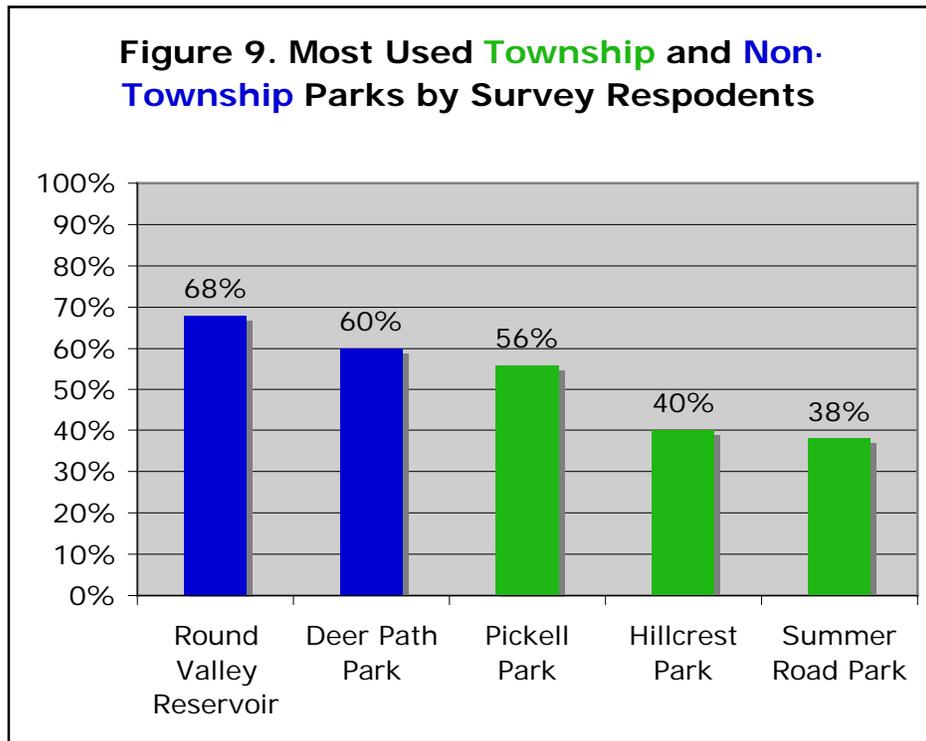
## *Implications*

- **Include both Saturday and Sunday opportunities.** Sunday is the day in which most families spend their time together. Weekend recreation has implications for recreation staff scheduling demonstrating that recreation is a non-traditional profession outside of traditional weekday nine to five job.
- Provide evening recreation opportunities. Approximately 62 percent of the respondents indicated that they would be likely to participate in recreation programs held in the evenings.
- **Recognize that indoor recreation is significant here.** The results of this question are important in terms of indoor recreation: 61 percent of the respondents indicated that they would be likely to participate in indoor recreation. Refer to the responses to Question 9 in which respondents listed their preferences for indoor recreation facilities. This is an important benchmark figure as anything over 60 percent is a very strong finding.
- **Focus on outdoor recreation first.** Residents have indicated that they are likely to use indoor recreation facilities, which should be planned to be phased in over time as outdoor improvements are in place first.
- **Make existing facilities the highest priority.** Enhance what the township already has before undertaking expansion of facilities and services in new directions. The list of preferred improvements and written comments underscores the importance of fixing up existing facilities and adding facilities that are limited or lacking in the parks.

Question 5. The following is a list of parks and recreation facilities available in or near Readington Township. *Circle how often your household uses each park or facility.*

| Percentage of Respondents Using Parks and Recreation Facilities in and Near Readington Township |       |        |         |            |           |       |
|---|-------|--------|---------|------------|-----------|-------|
| In Readington Township  | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Seasonally | Total Use | Never |
| Deer Path Park, West Woodschurch Rd.  | 1%    | 4%     | 10%     | 45%        | 60%       | 39%   |
| Pickell Park, Mountain Rd.  | .5    | 5      | 14      | 37         | 56        | 42    |
| Hillcrest Park, Hillcrest Rd.   | .7    | 6      | 3       | 30         | 40        | 60    |
| Summer Road Park, Summer Rd.  | .7    | 6      | 5       | 26         | 38        | 61    |
| School District facilities  | 5     | 8      | 5       | 18         | 36        | 64    |
| Lake Cushetunk, off Railroad Ave.   | 3     | 6      | 5       | 15         | 29        | 72    |
| Cornhuskers Park, East Dreahook Rd.   | .7    | 1      | 1       | 16         | 19        | 80    |
| Old Highway 28 behind East Whitehouse Fire Co.  | .5    | .5     | 1       | 6          | 8         | 91    |
| Near Readington Township  |       |        |         |            |           |       |
| Round Valley Reservoir, County Rt. 629, Clinton   | 1%    | 7%     | 11%     | 49%        | 68%       | 33%   |
| Private such as YMCA, Healthquest   | 10    | 11     | 7       | 12         | 40        | 58    |
| White Oak Park, Branchburg Township   | .8    | 3      | 6       | 20         | 30        | 69    |

### Interpretation



As shown in **Figure 9**, Pickell Park is the municipal park that most citizens use. Hillcrest and Summer Parks are next in terms of use. The most popular of all parks is Round Valley Reservoir with about seven out of ten respondents reported using this facility. As shown in the table with the responses, seasonal use is the most popular. Given the geographic size of the Township and the nature of most of the township parks, the municipal parks would tend to attract neighborhood use and thus capture low use ratings in a community wide survey. The parks are also focused on sports facilities, which would limit their attraction to a broad base of users.

## *Implications*

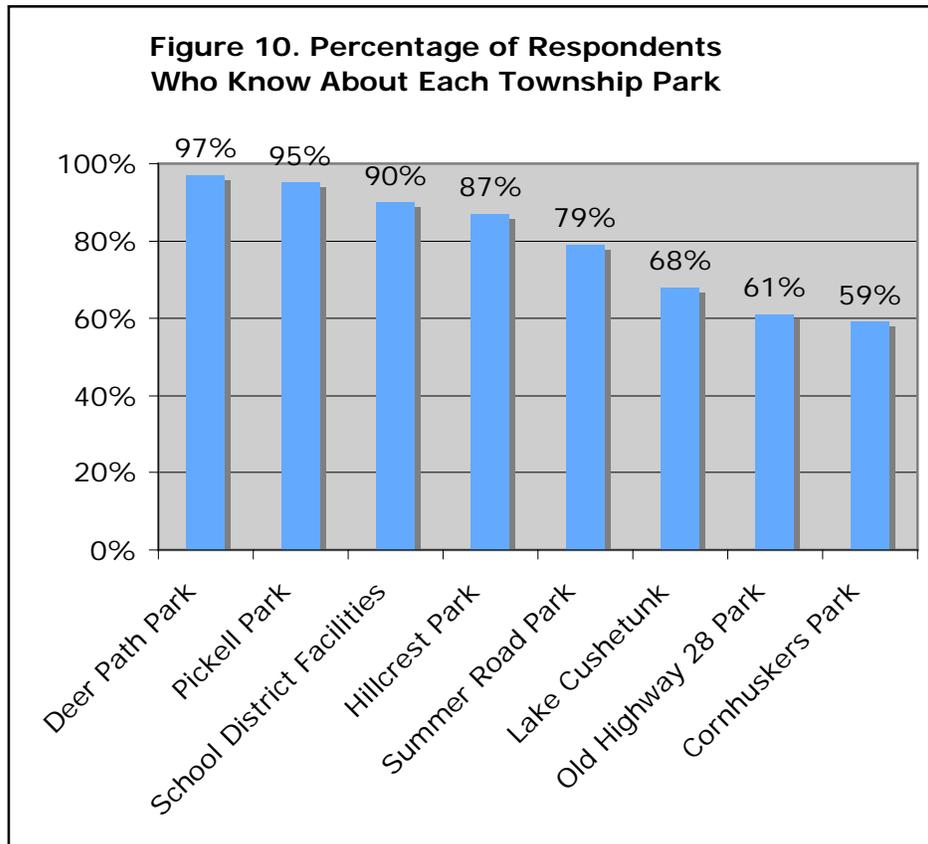
- **Use written comments from the respondents to plan for what the community would like to see in the parks.** This will help to create great public spaces in Readington Township – places where citizens would like to spend time, fostering a sense of community and community pride. Include:
  - Trails and path ways
  - More shade and trees (especially at Summer Road Park)
  - Bigger playgrounds
  - Beautification
  - Sports field lighting and other items as indicated in Question 8.
- **Prioritize improvements according to park use and area of the township needing additional public parks and recreation facilities.** Based upon the parks citizens report using, priority for park improvements could be based upon allocating funds to improve the parks most people use. Use the findings from Question 8 to plan improvements to parks according to use by the citizens.

Question 6. In Question 5 please place a check mark in front of any park or recreation facility that you did not know about.

**Percentage of Respondents Who Did Not Know About the Park**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 41%                             | Cornhuskers Park, East Dreahook Rd.             |
| 39                              | Old Highway 28 behind East Whitehouse Fire Co.  |
| 32                              | Lake Cushetunk, off Railroad Ave.               |
| 21                              | Summer Road Park, Summer Rd.                    |
| 13                              | Hillcrest Park, Hillcrest Rd.                   |
| 10                              | School District facilities                      |
| 5                               | Pickell Park, Mountain Rd.                      |
| 3                               | Deer Path Park, West Woodschurch Rd.            |
| <b>Near Readington Township</b> |   |
| 21%                             | White Oak Park, Branchburg Township             |
| 2                               | Private such as YMCA, Healthquest               |
| 1                               | Round Valley Reservoir, County Rt. 629, Clinton |

*Interpretation*



The majority of the respondents know about the township parks as demonstrated in **Figure 10**. Given the fact that 20 percent of the township residents lived elsewhere in 1995 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the extent of recognition of all the townships parks is notable. Once again, the goal would be for about 80 percent of the residents to recognize the municipal parks. Pickell Park and Deer Path Parks are known to more than 95 percent of the respondents.

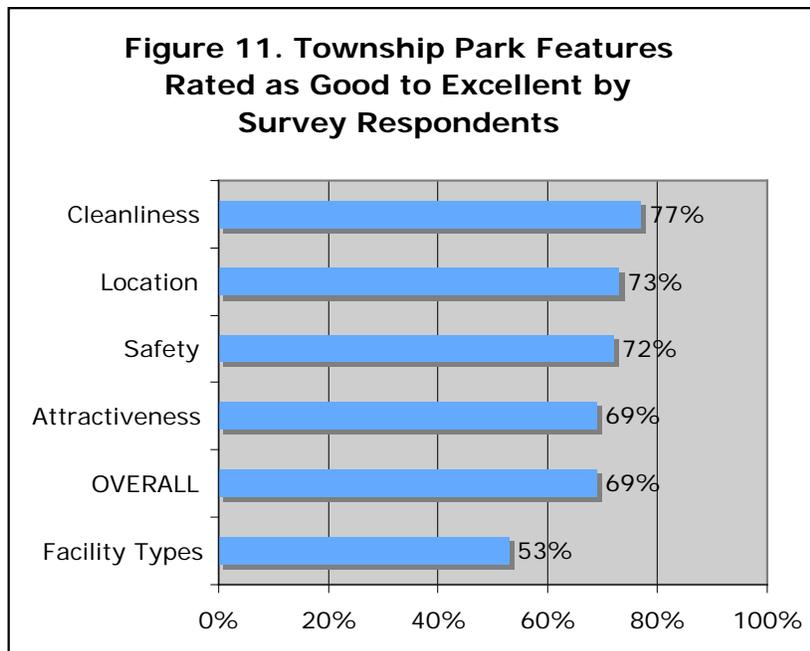
## *Implications*

- **Consider the parks an essential component that contributes to the strong sense of place of Readington Township.** The parks and recreation facilities are a major township asset.
  - **Promote the benefits of parks and recreation as a way to garner public support.** Parks improve the quality of life and help to build a sense of community, increase property values, protect the environment, preserve natural resources, and facilitate active healthy life styles.
  - **Recognize that the public values parks.** In a nationwide study, 76 percent of Americans responded that they value local parks – whether they use them or not! Promoting the parks to township residents – whether they use them or not – is important to increase community awareness about this public amenity.
- **Add facilities and natural features to the parks.** This should increase their use. The addition of safe and attractive places to walk in the parks would increase their use.
- **Beautify and enhance the parks** through the addition of paths, play equipment, seating and scenic features, game courts, restrooms, drinking fountains and pavilions would entice more park visitors. Parks that are used the most have the least vandalism and non-desirable activity.

Question 7. Please rate Readington Township parks and recreation facilities as listed above in Question 5. *Circle one response for each feature.*

| Ratings of Township Parks                          |           |      |                               |      |      |                  |
|--|-----------|------|-------------------------------|------|------|------------------|
|  | Excellent | Good | TOTAL<br>Good to<br>Excellent | Fair | Poor | No<br>Impression |
| a. Cleanliness                                     | 23%       | 54%  | 77%                           | 9%   | 1%   | 13%              |
| b. Location  | 18        | 55   | 73                            | 13   | 1    | 13               |
| c. Safety  | 16        | 56   | 72                            | 11   | 1    | 15               |
| d. Attractiveness                                  | 18        | 51   | 69                            | 16   | 1    | 13               |
| e. Overall rating of parks & recreation facilities | 11        | 58   | 69                            | 16   | 1    | 13               |
| f. Types of facilities available                   | 8         | 48   | 53                            | 25   | 4    | 14               |
| g. Indoor recreation facility availability         | 5         | 18   | 23                            | 17   | 21   | 40               |

*Interpretation: Existing Township Parks and Recreation Facilities*

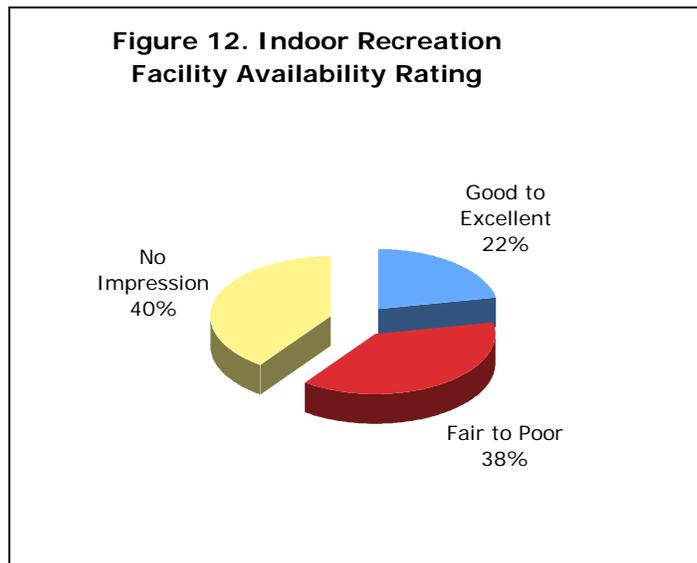


- Readington Township captured high ratings of good to excellent for most of the features of the municipal parks as shown in **Figure 11**. Cleanliness, location, safety, attractiveness all rated good to excellent by 69 to 77 percent of respondents. Overall about 69 percent of respondents rated the parks as good to excellent.

- Not surprisingly, “Facilities Types” was rated the lowest in park characteristics. This is because facilities the respondents most want to have in the parks are limited or absent as indicated in the findings in Question 8.

The target rating towards which the Township should strive is 80 percent. Readington Township does not have far to go in reaching this benchmark in location, safety, maintenance and attractiveness. The facility types rating of 53 percent indicates where there is the most room for improvement.

### *Interpretation: Indoor Recreation Facility Availability*



**Figure 12** shows the respondents’ low rating of indoor recreation availability. About 78 percent of the respondents have a fair/poor rating or no impression at all. Slightly more than one in five respondents rated indoor recreation availability as good to excellent.

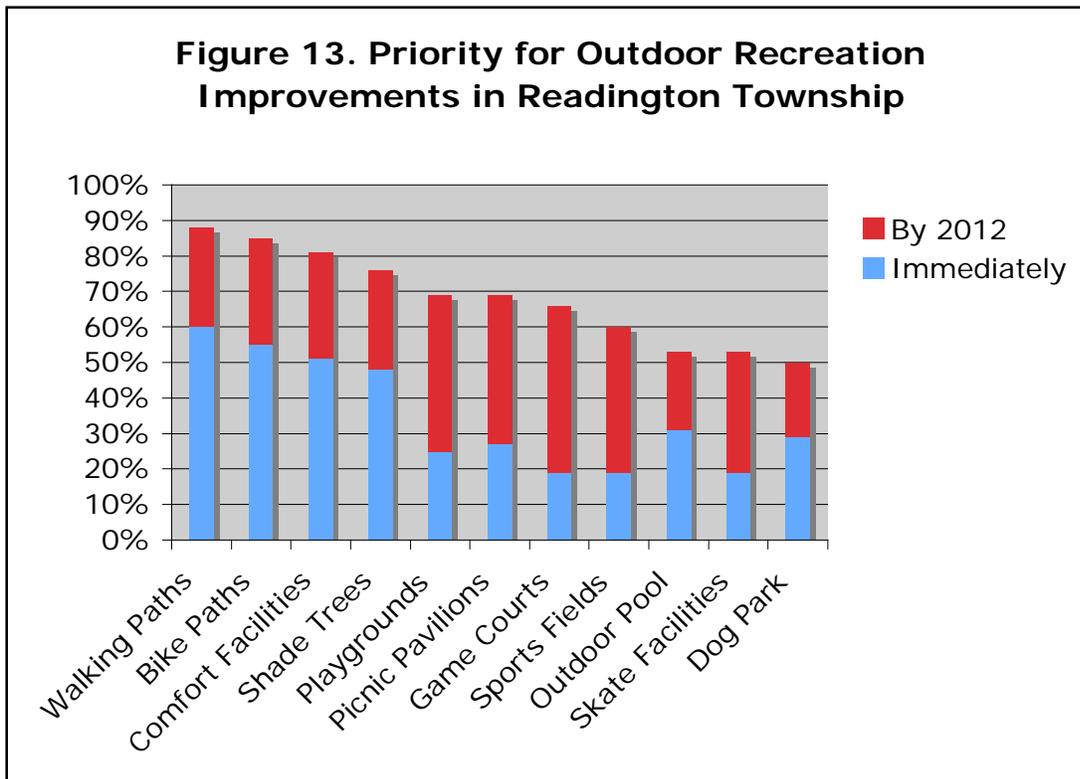
### *Implications*

- **Provide the types of facilities that the respondents desire in the parks.** Refer to the findings in Question 8. Park deficiencies appear to be related to the absence of the types of facilities the respondents desire. Create a five to seven year plan for capital improvements in the parks.
- **Set a time frame and create a plan in which to attain an 80 percent good to excellent rating for park features.** Recognize that it is easier to increase the 53 percent rating that it is to close the mark between 77 and 80 percent!
- **Explore how to provide indoor recreation facilities and involve the citizens in a transparent planning process with a high level of public outreach.** Township residents clearly know that indoor recreation facilities are limited.

Question 8. We need your opinion about future outdoor parks & recreation facility improvements. When do you think the facilities below should be established or expanded? *Circle one response for each.*

| Future Outdoor Recreation Facility Improvement Preferences |                     |         |               |          |       |
|--|---------------------|---------|---------------|----------|-------|
|  | Immediately         | 5 Years | Imm. + 5 Yrs. | 10 Years | Never |
| Walking paths  | 60%                 | 28%     | 88%           | 5%       | 7%    |
| Bike paths   | 55                  | 30      | 85            | 5        | 9     |
| Comfort facilities: restrooms, benches                     | 51                  | 30      | 81            | 7        | 11    |
| Shade trees  | 48                  | 28      | 76            | 11       | 13    |
| Playgrounds  | 25                  | 44      | 69            | 16       | 14    |
| Picnic pavilions   | 27                  | 42      | 69            | 12       | 19    |
| Game courts  | 19                  | 47      | 66            | 20       | 13    |
| Sports fields  | 19                  | 41      | 60            | 24       | 16    |
| Outdoor pool   | 31                  | 22      | 54            | 12       | 33    |
| Skate facilities   | 19                  | 34      | 53            | 20       | 26    |
| Dog park   | 29                  | 21      | 50            | 12       | 38    |
| Other  | Reported on Page 40 |         |               |          |       |

*Interpretation*



**Figure 13** illustrates the outdoor recreation improvements that respondents want to see undertaken according to the priority of time frame of immediate versus within the next five years. The blue portion of the bars indicates the percentage of respondents who want to see the improvements immediately while the red section of the bars indicates a 2012 time frame. The blue and red sections of the bars combined represent the short-term priority for these improvements. The most preferred facilities that respondents want to see undertaken within the next five years are those that will make the parks park-like and attractive to more citizens: paths, comfort facilities, shade trees, playgrounds and picnic pavilions. Pathways and comfort facilities are the highest priority.

The facilities falling lower as priorities are still important over the next five years for more than one out of two respondents. Game courts and sports fields emerged at over 60 percent in importance for park improvements.

About one in three respondents responded that an outdoor pool, dog park and skate facilities should not be built.

## *Implications*

- **Continue Readington Township’s work in developing safe places to walk and bicycle.** For the general public, adding paths and facilities that would make parks more comfortable to us is the most important thing the Township could do to improve the parks. The good news is that these are among the least expensive park improvements. Walking paths would serve most of the population throughout their lifetime and enable people to lead active healthy lifestyles.
- **Add perimeter paths to the parks as well as loop trails within the parks.** Install mile markers, seating, and water fountains. Provide restrooms in larger parks.
- **Continue planning to connect parks to neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, business, public transit via bike paths.** This includes connecting local trails to regional trail networks for longer distance cycling to attractive destinations.
- **Develop a township wide bicycle plan to enable the township to secure the links needed preferably before areas are developed.** Many communities are negotiating for trail links and actual paved paths in the land development process.
- **Pursue grant funds.** The next round of Transportation Enhancement grants is likely to occur in 2009. Getting trail segments planned and designed including specifications up to the point where they could be constructed would position the Township to be competitive for funding.

Question 9. What do you think about the availability of indoor recreation facilities in Readington Township? *Please circle one response for each facility.*

| Perception of the Availability of Indoor Recreation Facilities |                     |            |            |          |
|--|---------------------|------------|------------|----------|
|  | Enough              | Not Enough | Not Needed | Not Sure |
| a. Gym   | 23%                 | 34%        | 13%        | 27%      |
| b. Indoor track  | 10                  | 33         | 25         | 32       |
| c. Indoor pool   | 13                  | 34         | 26         | 27       |
| d. Fitness and wellness facilities                             | 25                  | 37         | 14         | 24       |
| e. Activity rooms for recreation programs                      | 12                  | 34         | 15         | 39       |
| f. Place to go for adult enrichment programs                   | 11                  | 38         | 12         | 38       |
| g. Senior citizens center                                      | 8                   | 31         | 11         | 49       |
| h. Teen center   | 5                   | 45         | 9          | 41       |
| i. Dedicated indoor community center                           | 5                   | 42         | 12         | 41       |
| j. Other   | Reported on Page 41 |            |            |          |

### *Interpretation*

- **Very High “Not Enough & Not Sure” Response on dedicated Indoor Recreation Center Availability.** With respect to the big picture, a dedicated indoor community center yielded a 42 percent rating of “not enough” and 41 percent of “not sure” for a total of 83 percent. This is an important finding as conceptually an indoor community center could be explored with individual components evaluated in terms of what should be included in such as center.
- **High “Not Sure” Response.** The “not sure” rating regarding the perception of the availability of specific indoor recreation facilities is substantial. Nearly one in two were not sure about senior citizens centers. Forty one percent were not sure about a teen center or a dedicated indoor recreation center.
- **Low “Enough” Response.** Less than 25 percent of the respondents indicated that there are enough indoor recreation facilities. Only one in four stated that there are enough gyms and fitness and wellness facilities – the highest of all indoor recreation facility choices presented. Teen center and a dedicated indoor community center ranked highest in terms of “not enough”. Respondents were not sure about the availability of these facilities ranging from 24 percent for fitness and wellness facilities to 49 percent for senior citizen center.
- **Low “Not Needed” Response.** A small percentage of survey respondents indicated that indoor recreation facilities are “not needed”. This is a most important finding. Approximately one in four rated an indoor pool and track as not needed, the highest of any other facility type. Under 15 percent of respondents indicated that the indoor facilities listed are not needed except for the indoor pool and track which 25 percent said are not needed.

## *Implications*

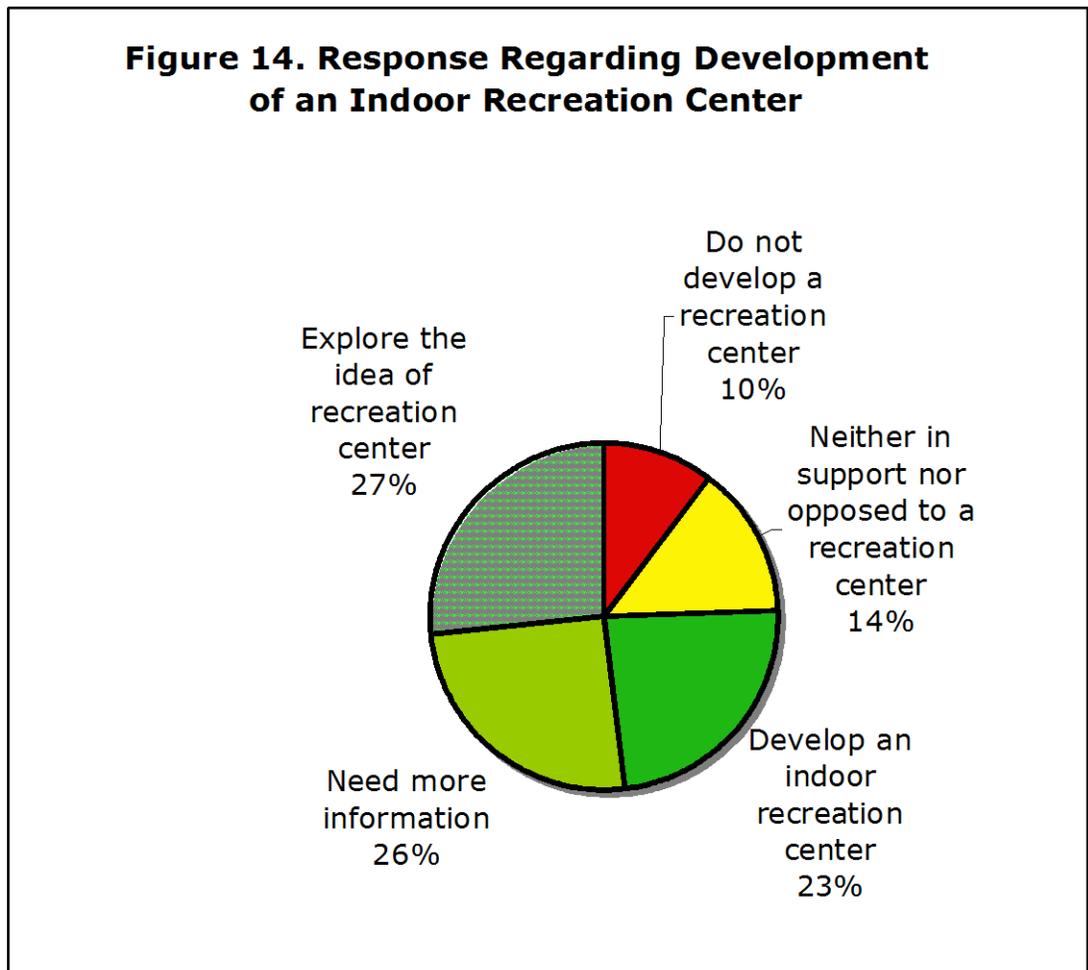
- **Conduct an indoor recreation center feasibility study.**
- **Include public participation as a main project component.** Use the results of this public opinion survey as a foundation for the feasibility study.
- **Develop a schedule for this study with respect to making the improvements to the parks before an outreach program about a potential indoor recreation center.**
- **Create a formalized public outreach program designed to inform the public about the facts and figures of an indoor recreation center.** This should include, construction and operating costs, revenues from municipal and non-municipal sources, offsetting operating costs with outside revenue sources, and the benefits of recreation centers for communities and individuals. Use a mix of media, speakers, articles, the WEB site, newsletters and other means to be determined. Involve key stakeholders and potential partners.
- **Conduct a road tour of community recreation centers.** Participants should include elected and appointed township officials and management team. Visit a mix of centers ranging from basic to state of the art.
- **Send two to three township representatives to the Recreation Center Management School in Denver Colorado held annually in June.** This school provides state-of-the art information and on-site examples of community recreation centers with respect to design, construction, funding, programming, operation and maintenance. The cost is an investment that has produced substantial costs savings for other municipalities undertaking a recreation center project.

These implications and recommendations apply to the following question as well.

Question 10. What is your overall opinion about an indoor recreation center? *Please circle one response.*

| Choice  | Response Rate |
|---|---------------|
| The Township <i>should explore</i> the idea of creating an indoor recreation center.....                  | 26%           |
| I <i>need more information</i> about this to provide an opinion.....                                      | 25%           |
| Readington Township <i>should develop</i> an indoor recreation center. ....                               | 23%           |
| I am <i>neither in support nor opposed</i> to Readington Township having an indoor recreation center..... | 14%           |
| Readington Township <i>should not develop</i> an indoor recreation center.....                            | 10%           |

*Interpretation*



Approximately 75 percent of survey respondents, as shown in the yellow bars in **Figure 14**, indicated that they “need more information” about a recreation center, want the township to “explore the idea of a recreation center”, or “neither support nor oppose it”. Generating information with facts and figures about Readington Township developing a recreation center to provide three out of every four respondents with solid information is clearly necessary. This level of openness to a major community development is positive.

Those in favor of developing a recreation center outnumbered those opposed by a margin of more than two to one with 23 percent stating that the Township should develop a center and 10 percent stating that the Township should not develop one. Two percent of the survey participants did not respond to this question.

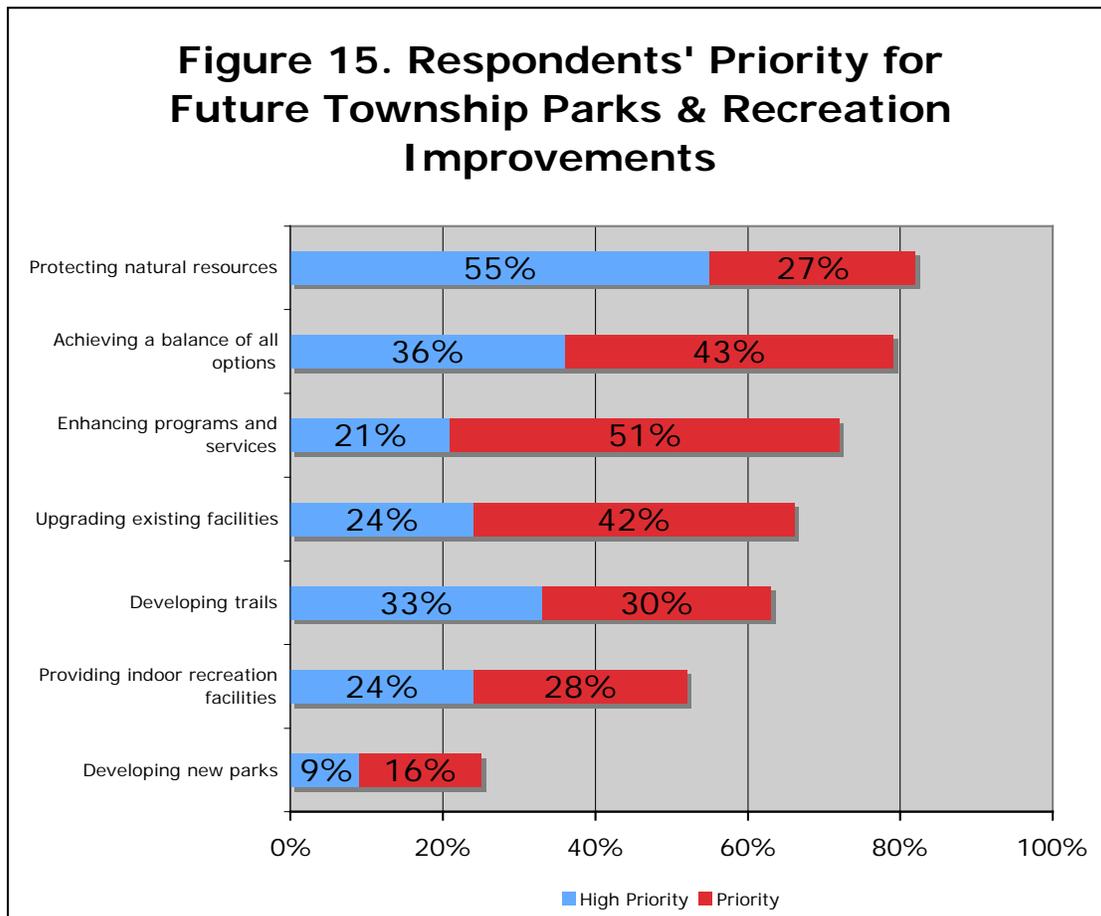
### *Implications*

- **Follow the implications and recommendations from the previous question.**

Question 11. Where do you think Readington Township should focus future parks and recreation improvements? *Please circle one response for each item.*

| Priority for Future Focus of Readington Township in Parks and Recreation |               |          |          |              |               |              |
|--|---------------|----------|----------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|  | High Priority | Priority | PRIORITY | Low Priority | Not Necessary | NOT PRIORITY |
| Protecting natural resources   | 55%           | 27%      | 82%      | 9%           | 7%            | 16%          |
| Achieving a balance of all the above                                     | 36            | 43       | 79       | 10           | 11            | 21           |
| Enhancing programs and services  | 21            | 51       | 73       | 19           | 9             | 28           |
| Upgrading existing facilities  | 24            | 42       | 66       | 25           | 9             | 34           |
| Developing trails  | 33            | 30       | 63       | 25           | 12            | 37           |
| Providing indoor recreation facilities                                   | 24            | 28       | 52       | 29           | 18            | 47           |
| Developing new parks   | 9             | 16       | 25       | 47           | 28            | 75           |

*Interpretation*



**Figure 15** presents a comparison of the potential focus areas according to “Priority” or “Not Priority”. The future focus of parks and recreation in Readington Township, including High Priority and Priority, identifies natural resource protection for four out of five respondents (82%). Achieving balance of all options was a close second at 79 percent. All choices were considered a priority for future focus by over half of the respondents. The exception was developing new park, which was listed as a priority by one out of four respondents. In the case of developing new parks, 75 percent of the respondents indicated that this is a low priority or not needed.

Natural resources, balance, program enhancement, facility improvements, and trail development were listed as “Priority” over “Not Priority” by margins from 5:1 to approximately 2:1. Indoor Recreation Center as a focus area was about evenly split between “Priority” at 52 percent and “Not Priority” at 47 percent. Developing new parks is clearly not a priority according to 75 percent of the respondents.

## *Implications*

- **Develop a plan to protect the township’s natural resources.**
  - **Strive to achieve a balance of all of the options.** This offers a sound approach for improving parks and recreation.
  - **Make the protection of natural resources and upgrading existing facilities a priority over developing new facilities.**
  - **Formulate an action plan to get existing facilities in top shape.** Include improvements suggested in the survey findings and promote these efforts in a highly visible way before any new projects are started in order to build public support. *If new projects are undertaken before improvements are made to existing facilities, it is likely that public support would be minimal or potentially oppositional.*
- 
- **Respondents indicate support for new facilities such as trails and indoor recreation.** A strategic approach in parks and recreation planning in Readington Township would be to improve the current parks and recreation system before developing new facilities.
-

Question 12. In Question 11, place a checkmark in front of the area of focus that is most important to you and your household.

| Comparison of Rank Comparison of Question 11 Most important Focus Area and Question 10 High Priorities |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Q. 11. Most Important Focus Area   |  | Q. 10. High Priorities for Future Focus |  |
| 30%  | Protecting natural resources           | 55%                                     | Protecting natural resources           |
| 14   | Achieving a balance of all choices     | 36                                      | Achieving a balance of all choices     |
| 14   | Developing trails                      | 33                                      | Developing trails                      |
| 14   | Providing indoor recreation facilities | 24                                      | Providing indoor recreation facilities |
| 13   | Upgrading existing facilities          | 24                                      | Upgrading existing facilities          |
| 11   | Enhancing programs and services        | 21                                      | Enhancing programs and services        |
| 4  | Developing new parks                   | 9                                       | Developing new parks                   |

### *Interpretation*

Question 12 provided respondents to further prioritize potential focus areas. They chose the single most important focus area to them and members of their household. The table above presents the percentage of responses for each focus area in rank order in column one. Column two presents a comparison of these responses with the “High Priority” choices in Question 10 shown in rank order as shown in **Figure 15**. The rank order is exactly the same although the percentage numbers differ. This response further validates the preference of the respondents’ regarding parks and recreation priorities in Readington Township.

### *Implications*

The implications for this question mirror those in the preceding question.

- **Conserve Readington Township’s natural resources.**
- **Upgrade existing facilities before undertaking new projects.**
- **Undertake new projects after existing facilities are improved.**

Question 13. If we could do one thing to improve parks and recreation in Readington Township, what do you think that should be? Please print your response below.

### *Interpretation*

This question required a write-in answer. The specific items listed as one thing are shown in pages 42-48 of this report. The items listed were in 270 surveys. Many respondents listed more than “one thing” but all responses are reported once. The number of individual items listed totaled 255 but many were named several times. The italicized number after the theme topic indicates the number of comments received on that theme.

- Outdoor recreation facilities (67)
- Trails (48)
- Indoor Recreation Facilities (46)
- Activities (27)
- Advertising (21)
- Environment (14)
- Maintenance (13)
- Financing (10)
- General Comments (8)
- Accessibility (6)
- Thanks (5)
- Security and safety (5)

### *Implications*

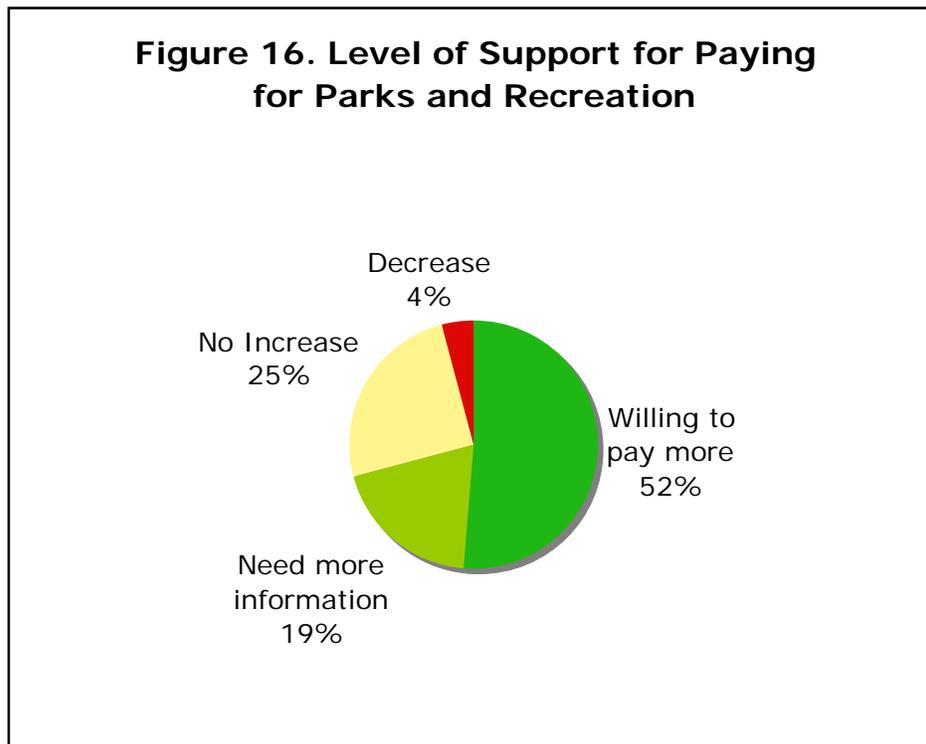
The items suggested cover a wide range of ideas from relatively inexpensive, easy to do solutions to very expensive and more challenging items.

- **Use the list suggested as the basis for developing a plan of action to improve existing facilities and services.**
- **Develop a five to seven year capital improvement program for parks, recreation facilities and trails.**
- **Incorporate the first year of the capital improvement program in to the annual work program.** Budget for the respective fiscal year depending upon resources available.
- **Use a mix of financial resources.** Include township funds, partnerships, sponsorships, grants and gifts to undertake park improvements.
- **Consider developing a long-term financing plan to support park and recreation improvements.** Some communities create capital funding programs using bonds and/or loans to undertake capital parks and recreation projects. Such programs require careful study of the municipality’s financial capacity.

Question 14. Readington Township's recreation programs support themselves, primarily with fees paid by the users. Public tax funds pay for park improvements, maintenance & administrative expenses. The public tax-based budget is about \$9.49 *per person*. New Jersey's average for communities with about Readington's population size is well over \$21 *per person*. The national average is about \$62 *per person*. Circle one response that best describes your position on public tax-based funds for recreation.

| Choice  | Response Rate |
|---|---------------|
| I would support paying another \$9-\$11 annually.             | 33%           |
| I would support paying another \$6-\$8 annually.              | 19            |
| I would not support any increase.                             | 25            |
| I would support a decrease on taxes for parks and recreation. | 4             |
| I need more information.                                      | 19            |

### Interpretation



- As shown in **Figure 16**, fifty-one (52) percent of the survey respondents indicated that would support paying more annually in tax-based funds for recreation.

- Those willing to pay the higher amount of \$9 to \$11 (33%) outnumbered those willing to pay the lesser amount of \$6-\$8 (18%) by a margin of nearly two to one.
- About 25 percent would not support any increase.
- Only four percent would support a decrease.
- One in five respondents needed more information to answer the question.

## *Implications*

- **Note that the survey findings regarding willingness to pay more for parks and recreation are positive in the community as a whole.** The findings in this question might surprise the municipality. What most of the respondents are saying is that they would support paying more in taxes *for recreation*.
- **Provide more information about the facts and figures about parks and recreation plans.**
- **Promote the benefits of parks and recreation.** Use facts derived from Readington Township such as real estate values, local spending, natural resource conservation efforts and so on.
- **Use this information to develop plans and make decisions that benefit the community at large.**
- **Create the means for public involvement to ensure that the community has input.**
- **Strive to increase municipal investment in parks and recreation.** Readington Township's investment in parks and recreation is about 45 percent of the statewide average. Updated figures on the nationwide municipal average of \$65 per person place Readington at about 15 percent of the nationwide average.
- **Recognize and work with the reality of the high tax situation in the township.** The conundrum is that tax levels are high in Readington overall but municipal investment in parks and recreation is low. Furthermore, the demographics of this community would indicate that the parks and recreation system should be premiere in keeping with the quality of life in a township of this caliber. **Money** magazine ranked Readington Township number 58 in its list of the top 100 places to live in the USA in 2007. Anti-tax sentiment appears to be focused on school taxes.
- **Develop a revenue strategy that includes a mix of resources including taxes, fees and charges, partnerships, sponsorships, fundraising, grants, gifts, bequests, leases, and concessions.** Partnerships and strategic alliances are key aspects of most successful parks and recreation systems. Readington Township alone cannot, nor be expected to, provide all the financial support required for a premiere parks and recreation system. Create a 20-year funding plan for parks and recreation capital improvements.

## **Open Ended Question: Your Turn!**

Please use this space to share your ideas and suggestions. We welcome your opinions.

### *Interpretation*

Over 150 respondents provided additional comments in this space. These fell into broad categories the same as in the “One Thing” to improve parks and recreation question. The specific comments of the respondents are shown in the Appendix.

### *Implications*

- The comments were favorable and appreciative of municipal efforts in parks and recreation.
- The list has concrete suggestions for items that could be considered.

## VII. Volunteers

Survey respondents were asked to indicate if they would be interested in volunteering for parks and recreation initiatives. Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that they are interested in volunteering for a variety of parks and recreation projects. The Township can use this information as a source of new volunteers. The list of volunteers is being provided as a separate document to the Director for privacy reasons.

## VIII. Open Ended Questions

Responses to questions that contained open-ended questions are listed in the Appendix.

# Appendix

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Readington Survey Findings

Question 1. Other Programs or Activities of Interest

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Each response was listed once. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

Activities or Interests –

1. Chess club
2. College classes
3. Arthritis programs
4. Hunting- fishing-boating –outdoors
5. Adult evening volleyball which is no longer available to us
6. Fishing
7. Bicycling
8. Swimming
9. Night recreation for young adults
10. Line dancing at night
11. Trips through Recreation like to Disney on Ice
12. Movie night
13. Fishing and snake hunting

Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Note: respondents indicated the need for outdoor recreation facilities in the questions that asked for program or activity preferences. This included:

- Bike path
- Trails
- Walking trails away from traffic

Question 8. Other Future Outdoor Recreation Improvements

---

Each response was listed once. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the frequency of multiple responses.

General Comments

1. It's time for everyone to join together to help
2. Partner with the YMCA on an indoor/outdoor pool
3. Visit Green Knoll Park in Bridgewater – it's a great facility

Environment/Appearance

4. Shade trees at Summer Road Park (2)

Indoor Recreation Facilities

5. Indoor recreation center (2)
6. Community center
7. Gym with weight machines
8. Senior building for seniors to go
9. Indoor activity center

Outdoor Recreation Facilities

10. Bridle trails (2)
11. Lighted fields for games and practice (2)
12. WiFi in parks
13. Trail Bike Park
14. Golf Course
15. ATV riding area for children
16. Bicycle lanes on Route 523
17. Skateboard/inline skate park
18. Town pool
19. Shuffleboard
20. Fitness course
21. Arboretum
22. More walking paths in the Whitehouse parks
23. Signage
24. Horse trails, improved and maintained
25. Update facilities and keep pace with trends by updating facilities
26. Facilities for shooting sports like trap, skeet
27. Basketball lights, tennis courts lights and surface
28. Resurface tennis courts
29. Paved walking trails through parks like in Bernards Township
30. Football field
31. Outdoor ice skating rink
32. Sled riding hill
33. Softball complex

Readington Survey Findings  
Question 9. Indoor Recreation Improvements

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### General Comments

1. Even Pottersville has something
2. Support expansion of HYMCA facilities and address many of these needs
3. Wellness center types of facilities are private facilities
4. Leave the facilities in private hands or county

### Environment/Appearance

5. Shade trees at Summer Road Park (2)

### Indoor Recreation Facilities

6. Something for kids 14-18 to keep them off the streets
7. Special needs facilities
8. Place for pool, ping pong other games for the kids, basketball, volleyball
9. Indoor hockey/soccer arena
10. Meeting rooms for discussion groups
11. \*\*\* bowling alley, roller rink, movie theatre – there is so much space on Rt 22 that is for sale and available
12. Teen center very needed
13. Dedicated indoor community center needed

### Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Note: respondents indicated the need for indoor recreation facilities in the questions that asked for outdoor need preferences. This included:

- Indoor recreation center (2)
- Community center
- Gym with weight machines
- Senior building for seniors to go
- Indoor activity center

Readington Survey Findings  
Question 13: One Thing to Improve Parks and Recreation in  
Readington Township

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### General Comments

1. Keep thinking in this fashion – good things will happen
2. I need more information to provide an answer about one thing to improve Readington through parks and recreation.
3. Keep it quiet after 9:30 P.M.
4. I have no complaints
5. Stop focus on special interests like ball fields and golf centers
6. Keep our parks – I think they're great!
7. Insure space for better garbage disposal
8. Leave everything just like it is now

### Thanks

9. Thanks for letting us comment
10. I think you are doing an outstanding job!!
11. You do a wonderful job keeping all parks immaculate and well manicured. Kudos to the grounds crew!
12. Park and rec areas upkeep is excellent. They are always well cared for, neat and beautiful
13. I don't have any issues with the park system or recreation system – Both my kids have been involved with sports or the summer program. We are thankful for both.

### Accessibility/Service Areas

34. Some type of public transportation available to them over the weekdays and on weekends.
35. Make sure the activities can accommodate all that are interested
36. Improve communication regarding available facilities and programs
37. Strike a balance between the North End and the South End of the Township/ Three Bridges people do not look to Whitehouse for facilities.
38. Walking access to parks and programs. Everything is driving and just adds to the congestion. We are now experiencing our main school rd artery needs a sidewalk so we can access other school facilities.
39. Make curb cuts to provide access to Pickell Park and remove barriers in the parks.

### Activities/Programs

40. More special needs friendly
41. Indoor recreation
42. While the cost is not overly expensive, Raritan Township offers a similar program at about half the price. Maybe someone should look at what they're doing over to try to cut costs out of the program.
43. Extend timeframe and improve quality of summer recreation program
44. Activities for older kids – good video games, good interaction between children, more “today” stuff: billiards, dancing, concerts, coffee house, music listening – more social so that kids don't go to someone's house to drink alcohol all night
45. Focus more on single adult services, not so much on just family activities

46. Provide weekend family activities. Memorial Day Parade. Community Day is great
47. Better summer camp program
48. Affordable adult activities
49. More programs and services
50. Provide “independent evaluations” of children for travel sports
51. A daily scheduled group walks for security and companionship. Also need to have restrooms at parks or I can’t use them. I would love discussion groups and book groups
52. More activities for children and senior citizens and get people with disabilities involved including the parents.
53. Senior citizens activities and trips
54. Provide more adult wellness programs and facilities
55. Adult evening volleyball
56. Improve quality of performers at summer concerts
57. Place more emphasis on walkers and bikers. Develop more greenways from one section of the township to another
58. Focus on adult outdoor activities
59. Golf and tennis
60. More activities
61. More good instruction for kids like UK Elite
62. Offer adult and senior citizen programs
63. Have programs available to residents of all ages
64. More fitness options: running, walking biking, and water fountains to quench thirst – both facilities and programs
65. Provide more summer music programs in the parks\Have more summer recreation programs and longer programs for the summer. The children love it.
66. Exercise programs for young children

## Advertising

67. Public awareness
68. Communication – let people know about your programs
69. Rec WEB site is frequently out of date. Plus you only get voice mail or no response to e-mails to rec dept.
70. Get the information on programs, sports, events out to the public
71. Make park & rec more “user friendly” – better marketing draw for resident
72. Inform the community about the locations, services and programs available at the parks, walking and biking paths etc. I have lived in Hunterdon County for 30+ years and am not aware of all the parks and recreation facilities available.
73. Mail all homeowners a recreation schedule of activities. My children attend private school and we do not receive recreation newsletters
74. Make residents aware of existing facilities
75. More information about these offerings to the residents
76. More exposure
77. Provide information about trails and walking paths in Readington and near here
78. Provide information to township homes on parks, activities, special events
79. Publish what facilities and amenities are available. Very few people in the township know what we have or where they are located
80. Better awareness of adult activities
81. Improve promotion so that information is easily available
82. Get the word out and promote what we have.

83. Publicize the available programs at each location. We would use them more often if we knew what was happening and when.
84. Regular update on progress, programs and plans
85. Provide more information on available programs and locations of existing parks and programs
86. Provide residents with info about facilities, trails, parks etc in existence. I've been here 12 years and did not know about several parks in the twp.
87. Promote awareness – I've lived here 2 years and haven't heard much from the Rec Dept. Your WEB site is a bit lackluster and barely has useable information

## Environment/Appearance

88. Display endangered species and make people aware of their status
89. Provide better stewardship of natural resources and parks
90. Public pond with water feature for cleanliness surrounded by a walking trail. No picnic area to respect the natural setting and its Inhabitation Park Theme: Bonding with Our Natural Neighbors. It could be part of an indoor nature center.
91. More attractive landscaping and signage
92. Preserve natural space as much as possible – avoid large groups, noise etc
93. Improve the grounds for safety and beauty
94. Clean and protect parks and natural areas
95. Preserve natural resources
96. Add more lakes and ponds for fishing
97. Reduce use of fossil fuels – encourage biking and use photo cells to power facilities
98. More shaded areas
99. Township wide deer control
100. A township arboretum on several acres with specimen plantings, flower arrangements etc. Use volunteers to assist staff. Charge admission. Could be a beautiful place to shoot photos of weddings and other events
101. Tick control!

## Facilities

### Indoor Recreation Facilities

102. Indoor recreation facility (5)
103. Teen Center (2)
104. Some sort of municipal complex with indoor and outdoor facilities that serves as a town center including tennis courts, basketball etc
105. Better parking
106. Create a safe indoor facility for teens
107. Creation of indoor re creation facility
108. My kids were very involved in recreation. Now as adults we need more for old folks. Like the indoor outdoor pool idea
109. Indoor and outdoor pool complex
110. Building an indoor pool would be a great idea!
111. State of the art indoor recreation facility
112. More safe places for teens and tweens to go without having to be in a sport activity
113. Add more areas indoors and out where practices can be held
114. Indoor facilities for fall, winter and early spring
115. Create indoor facilities for seniors and young adults – outdoor hockey in winter – you'd get a huge turn out for a youth league
116. Provide indoor facility for winter activities

117. Indoor teen center and community pool
118. Establish indoor recreation center for teens with supervised enhancement (arts, crafts, music instruction, various elective courses etc.) Keep the teenager busy with worthwhile programs
119. Create a community center where young and old can go. Use existing infrastructure to do so. It should provide indoor and outdoor areas – a surrogate for a town center
120. Have a safe place where kids can go and have supervised entertainment
121. Indoor recreation facility for evening games
122. Playgrounds
123. An indoor teen center in the Whitehouse area. I have grandchildren in the area that could benefit from that kind of facility and other children would in the future.
124. Indoor recreation center to take the pressure off school resources
125. Build an indoor rec center with facilities for all ages
126. A nearby exercise facility
127. Expand facilities that we need, develop a teen center and skate park so our children have a safe environment to go to.
128. Fitness center
129. More fitness facilities and indoor track
130. Indoor pool facility
131. Indoor teen center where they could meet, dance, listen to music etc
132. Provide a community center.
133. I would benefit from an indoor pool at a community center that had activity rooms for classes like these mentioned in this questionnaire
134. Plan and develop a community recreation center.
135. An adult/teen-senior community center – one building would be great
136. Pool indoor/outdoor) that residents could use year-round
137. Large outdoor pool
138. Indoor recreation
139. Indoor facilities for gyms and senior adults and teen activity center
140. I believe there is a need for an indoor recreation facility.

## Outdoor Recreation Facilities

141. More tennis courts (30)
142. Dog Park (2)
143. Upgrade existing facilities (2)
144. Community pool (2)
145. Football field (2) with lights
146. More dog parks
147. Complete field hockey field at Cornhuskers Park
148. More playgrounds and comfort facilities
149. We don't need more parks. We need to utilize the one we have more efficiently. Many times you pass by, they are empty 90 percent of the year and they have lights on with no one using them. Even the baseball fields aren't used continually throughout the season.
150. Area to do paddle boating like in Colonial Park in Somerset/Franklin Township area. No water activities out this way? (Three Bridges)
151. Update equipment
152. Water fountains and porta-johns
153. Improve existing facilities
154. Improve seating and shade for sports viewing
155. Outdoor community pools
156. Better seats at Hillcrest

157. Turf & lighted facility for sports
158. Develop new parks
159. Town pool
160. Keep what is here protected and up to date
161. Fix tennis courts
162. More outdoor tennis courts and tennis programs. Bathrooms.
163. Improve seating at field 2 in Pickell Park
164. Install child friendly play equipment if needed
165. Build a sports complex e.g. "Sports at the Beach" in Georgetown, Delaware
166. We'd be interested in an outdoor community pool. We are frequent users of parks and rec programs and are happy with what we have available.
167. Football field
168. There is no opportunity for the sport of football. Private organization such as the Falcons and Pioneers need practice fields. On many occasions the township has said no. If it's not baseball or soccer, it's township programs
169. Skate park for hockey
170. Sheltered picnic areas with plenty of trees and shade and lawn areas. Availability of water fountain a plus.
171. Provide a low cost ice rink for families during the winter.
172. Build a couple of soccer kick walls in the parks
173. Larger picnic areas
174. Indoor roller rink
175. Develop major parks accenting outdoor activities with trails and parking
176. Tennis courts; would be nice to have racquetball and squash courts too.
177. Maintain existing facilities by repairing them and keeping them clean.
178. For my kids, fields to play sports including one with lights
179. All parks should have play equipment if it does not exist already.
180. Leave them alone, only maintain them
181. Hillcrest Park soccer fields need re-seeding or re-sodding.
182. Upgrade existing facilities
183. Batting cages at all baseball facilities i.e. Pickell Park
184. Better bathroom facilities
185. A community pool available to all residents
186. More parks and open space are needed
187. Set aside area for a dog park
188. Shade trees and restrooms in existing parks
189. Skate park and motor cycle trails
190. Build a skate park
191. Build comfort stations
192. Make parks attractive and of interest to kids
193. Enhance family use facilities e.g. picnic areas, pavilions etc
194. Improve parking mainly at Summer Road
195. Install lights for night games
196. Lights
197. Lights on fields
198. Lights and bleachers for all of the fields, both sides of field
199. Installation of lights for outdoor activities

## Financing

200. Don't charge to get in (Note: refers to indoor recreation facilities)
201. Reduce taxes – stop spending, spending spending! Operate with a tight, tight budget
202. Cut our taxes now!!
203. Improve cost effectiveness
204. Dedicate more public funds to the recreation program
205. Help save costs by looking for businesses to advertise
206. Focus on voluntary contributions and user fees rather than taxation to fund these facilities and activities
207. Readington residents should not have to pay to use Round Valley Reservoir in the summer
208. Don't increase taxes to do it.
209. Keep tax burden to a minimum

## Management/Maintenance

210. Turn off the tennis court lights when no one is using them. Really irritates me to drive by and see them on when the courts are empty.
211. Improve communication and coordination of existing rec office. Hire someone to answer phones and questions
212. Upgrade the maintenance
213. Keep parking off the streets at all times
214. Control geese droppings, a problem at Deer Path
215. Have a very good maintenance program
216. Plant grass/apply seed to bare spots. Create more shade trees (trees, small gazebos, roof/pole structures).
217. Plan for proper maintenance of existing facilities but do not plan to expand and increase costs for tax payers
218. Be certain parks are free of litter!
219. Require dog walkers to pick up poop!
220. Maintenance
221. Make them clean and maintain them
222. Expedite cleaning after heavy use

## Safety/Security

223. Screen sports coaches more carefully (or instruct them better to assure fairness in rec sports.
224. Prosecute anyone who harms or litters public property
225. Keep the parks safe for the people that use them/improving the current infrastructure/increase police patrols
226. Improve the safety and playgrounds. Add cameras.
227. Maintain wood chip levels and mulch at parks for safety of children especially at Pickell Park and Lake Cushetunk Park

## Trails

228. Bike trails (3)
229. Bike trails for all levels
230. Develop bike trails
231. Close parks with low usage; maintain those parks that are being used and expand hiking and walking trails
232. More nature trails and places to hike, mountain bike trails
233. More walking trails

234. Pathways for walking, biking, strollers and dogs
235. Walking, jogging and bike paths
236. Walking paths and bike lanes – we need more and better options for local transportation that doesn't involve cars and congestion
237. Walking and biking trails. There are no sidewalks in town for kids to ride bikes. Streets are not safe enough
238. Provide sidewalks to walk safely to the parks
239. ATV and minibike riding area
240. Easy bike and hike trails
241. Bike trails, walking paths - paved
242. Walking and biking trails like in Essex County's Brookdale Park could be enjoyed by all
243. Walking path at Summer Road Par
244. Bike paths
245. Develop walking and biking trails
246. Develop bike paths – we don't have any good ones
247. More walking trails and bike paths for families with dogs, leashed of course
248. ATV and mini bike riding area
249. More running and biking trails
250. Walking/biking trails through open space  
development of walking and biking paths would be of great benefit
251. Hiking and biking trails
252. I think we should provide bike paths to parks and recreation so both adults ad teenagers can get to them safely  
walking and biking paths along major roads e.g. Readington Rd
253. Make a desirable trail to walk with friends, feel safe and have a nice surface to walk or bike
254. Develop nature trails
255. Dedicate some funds to improve horse riding trails
256. As a senior, we need safe walking trails
257. Facilities where folks could exercise or walk in the evening
258. Develop a walking trail for seniors
259. We should establish a network of walking/biking trails to provide connectivity to township facilities. I do not like to ride on Route 523.
260. Walking paths and bike paths are a good use of parkland and not costly.
261. For me, trails to walk
262. I did enjoy the fitness trail at Pickell Park. I especially liked the pull-up bars. They were taken out a few years ago.
263. More bike trails
264. Improve sidewalks on Main Street for uneven surfaces. Create a system of trails using town preserved space, to link parks and open space.
265. Create biking, walking, jogging, nature trails. Not for use by horses.
266. Provide walking trails with exercise stations around each park and make sure that there is adequate playground equipment (Hillcrest Park is ridiculous).
267. Nature trail
268. Expand trail network and work to connect existing trails in Readington and adjoining towns
269. Paved trails at several parks for walking and biking like in parks in Bernard's & Mendham
270. Build more bike paths and rollerblading paths
271. Develop walking trails at Hillcrest and or Summer Road
272. More paved walking and running paths
273. Walking paths for adults
274. Provide bike & walking/running trails
275. Improve hiking and biking trails

Readington Township Survey Findings  
Open Ended Question: Your Turn

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### General Comments

1. You should have done this 30 or 40 years ago.
2. Make things happen!
3. Next time you send a survey, just send the survey without the letter beforehand. Thanks you.
4. Will the Survey be published? If so, when? Will any actions follow?
5. This thinly veiled push poll is most probably being used to justify the eminent domain plans for the Solberg Family land. There are already enough parks and recreation facilities in our township without adding more, both to the tax and maintenance burden
6. I believe in Readington's future. I also believe our township and its board members are doing and will continue to make decisions that will better our community.
7. I did not complete the survey completely because my children are grown and I don't use the facilities. However, good survey for those who do use the facilities!
8. Readington is a beautiful place to live & enjoy. We should do whatever is in our means to keep it that way.
9. I am a senior citizen so I do not feel like I should answer these questions as I do not know anything about your recreation programs.
10. At my age I could not find useful answers. But I certainly support any effort you make to have the township a more desirable in which to live.
11. We moved from Bridgewater a year ago. This town is wonderful!
12. I would be interested in participating in any groups or fact-finding committees.
13. Any improvements would be welcome but in all honesty, I'm pretty happy with the township.
14. Overall satisfied with parks & recreation. Hopefully, the township will continue to grow in this area and maintain land availability to continue to provide.
15. We love this town! We have lived here for 4 years and are involved with t-ball & soccer. We also use the playgrounds frequently. Our town is beautiful & the fields are great! The playground at Pickell Park needs bigger gyms/slides for bigger kids like White Oak Park.
16. I think New Jersey is overpopulated and we have enough parks.

### Thanks

17. Thank you for taking the time to seek our opinion. You have a tough job – but we appreciate all the efforts and time involved on this.
18. I think the survey is a good idea. I hope the results prove to be useful. My answers may not be representative of the typical township resident since I don't participate in township recreational activities. Thanks!
19. We love the parks & rec department & its services. Keep up the good work!
20. Glad to see the focus on recreation improvements! Looking forward to learning about future plans.
21. Overall – town is doing a great job.
22. This survey was a good idea. I only wish I had more experience using the facilities so I could comment with more knowledge.
23. Glad you are trying!
24. Great – thanks for what we have!
25. Thanks for the survey. Keep events publicized. Improve appearance of route 22 businesses and their buildings. They do not always reflect the rest of the township.

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## Accessibility

26. I am an 81 senior citizen living alone, self-supporting. I do not drive – have to rely on Link service for medical, Shopping, appointments during weekdays – have no transportation available for weekends unless I take a private car which is expensive on a limited income. I am a resident of NJ for only 1½ years. Lived in NY before where public transportation was available.

## Activities/Programs

27. Subsidize golf at Stanton Ridge during the week.
28. Recreation offerings have always been appropriate. My children enjoyed the sports. The facilities were always clean.
29. You could make it easier to enroll in programs.
30. We enjoy summer concerts and attend them sometimes and practice our golfing skills at Hillcrest Park. I think they do a good job of maintaining them.
31. I have only lived here for two years. My typical exercise regime is a private gym out of the area and biking/walking on paths. We spend most of our time enjoying Round Valley. I feel any additional funding for future facilities should be paid for by the end users through appropriate fees based upon services provided.
32. Expanded choices for league sports would be nice.
33. We don't participate in the many programs offered by Readington Parks & Rec. Our only daughter is a senior at HCRHS and was never an athlete. Her passion was music not sports. We do enjoy Pickell Park and spent many hours there when she was small. My husband is an avid bicycle rider so he would like to see bike paths and perhaps organized bike tours in beautiful Readington Twp.
34. Some senior activities like luncheons, bridge.
35. My husband and I are from the same town as Gerry Shamey and we believe that unfortunately there is no place for the kids to get together – to just hang out without getting in to trouble – downtown area in WHS has nothing for the kids – no stores, for them to shop, no simple food place like pizza or subs, no movie theater.
36. Please consider offering summer camp at Three Bridges School. For those of us living near Route 202, it is a 40-mile per day commute to bring our children to Whitehouse School.
37. Any improvements to summer camp would be great. Too many field trips, perhaps some educational activities or sports games.
38. I would like to see a more suitable summer camp program for kids. The hours of the program are extremely difficult for working parents, many of whom work in NY or PA. Enabling a more suitable program would give parents more time to spend quality time as they won't have to take personal time during the summer.
39. Reduce or eliminate hunting near housing.
40. I would like more community events (parades, community picnic, Fall festivals)
41. We only used facilities when kids were in school and info about sports was sent home. I try to see what is available for my husband and I in the Democrat but that's iffy at best. I don't think I would support additional facilities but would like to see middle-income activities like casino night, comedians. Bus trips to AC, major league sports. Events I considered in the past but felt too rich for my taste. More things for young single adults. Enticing them is the trick!
42. I don't have kids so I cannot comment on the type of facilities families with children would want. As you plan please be aware that those of us without children may want our space and activities not because we don't like children but because we may not feel comfortable participating in such activities. For example, I am more inclined to participate in a walk or nature program at a time when kids are in school – something I have the freedom to do since I have a home office.

43. Need to have more recreation options besides team sports for kids – e.g. community based clubs and activities like offered at Raritan Valley College – science clubs, robotics. Etc.

## Advertising

44. More advertising & education on what each park has to offer.
45. Promote town events in the parks.
46. Even though I don't use the parks too much, I'm glad to see there are many available for others. More publicity about them would help.
47. More advertisement and education about where trails are located in the twp.
48. I rented here for seven years then bought a home this year. I am unaware of many parks and programs listed in this survey. I take my bike to Princeton or Frenchtown because I am unaware of trails here. I have requested a brochure from Hunterdon Adult Ed but never received it. I finally joined Adult Ed through the jointure due to lack of a response. I feel that parks and programs are only focused on families and children.
49. Increase awareness of parental responsibilities (through schools?) for recreational activities and transportation thereto.
50. Having had the experience of moving into the town without the benefit of having information being sent home with school-age children, it took a long time for us to learn about available recreational resources. It would have been greatly appreciated if we had received a general information packet that listed parks, facilities, activities – a great way to welcome new community members!
51. Map all the park sites. List all activities. Awareness is the biggest thing.

## Environment/Appearance

52. We moved to Readington 5 years ago from Staten Island. We were so glad to see so much open space. We would like Readington to continue to maintain its rural feel. We feel that we have the best possible area in which to live, rural in feel, yet close to all!
53. This is a beautiful area. Preserve green and open space.
54. We would really like to see more open space
55. Development in Readington should be more focused on pedestrians. The parks would be a way to help. I cut through Summer Road Park when I walk down Lazy Brook Road to avoid some traffic. However there are no trails and in wet seasons this can be difficult. Consider getting pedestrian access to the edge of farmers' fields like how it is done in England.
56. I would like to see the continued focus on open space and expanding the trail system connecting the trail network. Better trail heads, more signage (mark trails, yield triangles (who yields to whom), get the Twp involved in National Trails Day, Would also like to see an equestrian voice included the trail planning, and we have a huge number of equestrians in the twp.
57. Desperately need appropriate management of natural resources and open space.
58. Display endangered species: turtles, frogs, birds, plants.
59. Preserving green space by preserving the farms and thereby preventing urban sprawl is a good town initiative. Upgrading the parks is a good thing but taxes are rising at an alarming rate and although these initiatives may be a small percentage of the overall local tax burden it may seem like spending out of control. Overall I am happy with the town.

## Facilities

### Indoor recreation Center

60. I think Readington Township should look in to the feasibility of a recreation center/community center/senior complex such as Woodbridge Township has. Also should consider upgrading recreation facilities while developing and expanding more programs and services
61. Fitness facilities needed.
62. I can't stress enough – a community center. The children, especially teens, have nowhere to go in Readington.
63. A local teen center is long overdue. Also a local (Whitehouse) senior center or exercise center that is not too expensive unlike the Wellness Center.
64. Readington Township should create partnerships with Health quest, YMCA, and Hunterdon Wellness Center for indoor recreation purposes.
65. Fitness center and indoor pool
66. I think an indoor roller rink would be fun for all ages. It could satisfy this through a teen center. Time slots could be established for special events and age groups (family skate, high school night, school recognition night etc). A municipal pool would be very useful and welcomed.
67. Readington would greatly benefit by building or renovating a building for the performing arts.
68. I support the notion of a community center for teen, adult and senior adult activities and social events.
69. While I very much enjoy the tennis facility at Pickell Park, I feel that there is great waste with the lighting. Would it be possible to have them on a switch so that they can be turned off when not in use?
70. Greta, I Hope all is well. I used all the recreation parks as our children grew up. Now it's time for us! We would love to see an indoor pool and track. Keep up the good work and stay well.
71. More commercial facilities are being established and the future of self-care and the demands are increasing. Then the need to have facilities to service people is a must!! If you build it the right people will come to use it.
72. Been hearing about a possible indoor recreation enter for over ten years. Still waiting for results-
73. Greta Kenney has been the most outstanding leader of these activities for years! While we no longer have kids in these programs, we trust the guidance she will continue to provide for future programs. As members of the local Y, we see a no need of our twp to create a redundant facility. We totally support preservation of additional acreage for parks and recreation.
74. We need an indoor community center for winter and indoor activities year round.
75. Readington has been a wonderful community to raise children. The rec program is excellent. My children took full advantage of programs over the years. As they move to high school, the shift is to high school sports, however there is still a need for indoor facilities or a community recreation center for evenings. Summer and for times when you are not participating in high school activities. Most folks turn to the YMCA or Healthquest, however, such a facility would benefit all age groups equally, therefore a plus for those who don't have children as well.
76. When my kids were younger, they played soccer & baseball. The fields in Readington are very nice & well maintained. The seniors do a great job as well. My sons all play or have played youth football. There is a need for football practice fields.
77. Develop a community center where children, teenagers and adults can go for activities and health conscious programs i.e. fitness center, swimming pool, skate park and sport courts.

78. Community Center should meet various needs: gym, senior citizen, activity rooms. Teen center. Fitness, rummage sales, art shows, theater, outdoor recreation and parking.
79. Study a community center to see if it could be a possibility.
80. As an 81-year-old very active senior, I cannot comment on many of these questions as I have not taken advantage of them. I feel there are already many fitness and wellness centers around, we do not need any more. With the Senior Center in Raritan Twp., people come and there is something for everyone. We must keep in mind there are many senior citizens and we do not need any more taxes or added expenses.
81. I have approached Mr. Gotti about pool facilities in the past and was told that insurance cost is too high. Oddly Flemington had a community pool for years. If land could be donated and money received from corporate sponsors and indoor/outdoor pool could serve the community and make a profit. My children are competitive swimmers at the Y and since the Y was shut out of expanding, we have to go all over to train. If a pool were designed properly, it would be good here.
82. I think a rock climbing wall and a skate park for kids would be great.

### General

83. Being involved in sports, Readington need lighted fields for soccer and baseball
84. I think an outdoor pool with reasonable cost (less than Silver Saddle or the like) would be very beneficial to the township. Similar programs exist in Hackettstown and Washington. Readington would need a larger pool or pools. Would buy a seasonal family pass if available.
85. Please develop a dog park or dog friendly area.
86. It's important to upgrade or modernize current facilities to ensure it's safe and well lit although it will require planning board approval, but safety comes first and many outdoor sports go beyond 7 PM.
87. We need an ice rink.
88. Additional fields house be developed only if there are not enough currently to serve existing sports leagues.
89. Readington Township should stick to basics in parks and recreation. The ballfields around Nelson St are overdone. Batting cages?! Avoid this overdevelopment in the future. Overall you do a good job, the employees I see are usually friendly and helpful
90. We need a facility for sportsmen and women: trap and skeet shooting and rifle and pistol range.

### Financing

91. Do nothing that increase taxes in the township. Control spending. Take on no new initiatives until property taxes are reduced.
92. Willing to pay more and suggest having fundraisers to help with community efforts.
93. Based on a population of 16,300 and a per person tax budget of \$9.49, it seems more than adequate to maintain current parks & recreation facilities for \$154,600 per year, if not more than needed.
94. With all the open space we own, we can easily take proceeds for one property to improve and already existing park.
95. My taxes in 2001 were \$6600. Today \$11,400. I get very little for my tax dollar.
96. My family and I have lived in five different NJ communities over the past 25 years but Readington carries the highest tax total of them all by at least \$3,000. So I'm not terribly in favor of higher taxes for facilities or features that are not in urgent need for our well-being. As an added fact our present dwelling is similar in size to the others we lived in.

97. Please stop the “feel good” expenditures of our hard earned income and stop wasting our money on programs. Cut our taxes then some to speak to us about these kinds of programs.
98. The township is so expensive to live in that young people and seniors are forced to move out. We have to find a solution for this. And especially for middle class residents.
99. Enough of the recreation programs! People who want to play should pay. People who want peace and quiet should be allowed to put any recreation taxes to protecting natural resources and not into more recreation. Also money is better spent in safety and protection i.e. streetlight.
100. I wonder how much this survey cost the taxpayers of Readington. I feel we, as residents of Readington pay more than enough taxes. Our money should be used for this survey.
101. If you increase taxes to pay for this it should be a flat rate of \$x/person not a percentage of property tax averages. Our taxes are already way too high. I support parks & recreation but can't afford another tax increase.
102. Hard getting around and to afford recreation.
103. Additions may add usefulness to some people but nothing for me. Just add to the tax, which is unbearable now.
104. We are paying 60%+ to schools and have no children. Give more to adults – biking, walking, hiking trails by allowing residents to access all of our open space that we taxpayers paid for.
105. As long as the real estate taxes are the highest in the nation, there should be no additional taxes levied. The waste of money in the education system must be dealt with before anything else.
106. Seriously, aren't our taxes high enough?
107. No more schools! Need to keep the population of residents from growing so dramatically. Invest in facilities to improve existing residents' quality of life.

## Parks

108. As nice as our area is to live, our parks stink! This is a top place to live in NJ and our facilities are outdated, boring and no fun. New equipment, new fields. No more **soccer** fields! Football, lacrosse, playgrounds, walking or running trails. **Indoor REC Center** with weights, cardio, ping-pong, basketball. Racquetball. Sand pit volleyball.
109. Keep the parks safe and clean.
110. Overall parks are a major step in community improvement. They should be kept abreast of growth of all /town development. Nothing raises town evaluation faster.
111. We have beautiful parks. I think they just need to be updated and maintained.
112. Summer Road Park needs more trees to be usable in the summer and on sunny days.
113. Hillcrest Park is kind of boring for kids 5+. Maybe it could be expanded.
114. We need more parks like the ones in Bedminster, Mendham and Bernard's Twp. Take a road trip to see paved trails, outdoor theater, platform tennis, parks with lights, hills to sled on.
115. I think Readington Rec does a fine job especially on the baseball programs. The major improvements I see are adding tennis courts to the area parks. Cornhuskers Park need a sign identifying it and Pickell Park needs a fence along the busy road by the ball field – that is dangerous for small kids.
116. The parks look a lot better than the ones I had in Piscataway.
117. Pickell Park bathrooms need exterior lighting. Tennis courts are in poor condition, cracks need to be filled, nets needs replacing. Need to address the mud build up near the roller hockey rink at Summer Road Park. Shade trees should be planted at Summer Road Park to provide shade and provide a windbreak.
118. It seems like we could improve the walking paths at Pickell Park. My husband and I have walked there and it is not lit or paved. Could it be expanded? Deer Path Park has the only

nice walking paths. I think all the residents should be able to drive a short distance 10 minutes to get to a nice park.

## Safety/Security

119. Improve police presence to prevent vandalism & misuse of property, skaters, alcohol

## Trails

120. I know the town has spent time and money developing the trails, it would be great having a map showing where they are and where parking is to access the trail. I purchased an open space map but it doesn't show entrances, parking or trails.
121. I like to walk the trail system at Deer Path Park but feel unsafe walking alone, which is my only alternative. I am a woman and feel unsafe with the hunters in the park most of the months of the year, although I support deer hunting.
122. Bike paths are a much-needed addition, as traffic becomes more of an issue.
123. Trails for hiking, snowshoeing, running.
124. More seniors would use the walking path at RR Ave if there were some benches along the path. Also some of the area should be cleaned out of scrub and stagnant water. Perhaps area could be sprayed for mosquitoes.
125. We need more bike paths and trails.
126. I use Hunterdon Health & Wellness Center for most of my exercise. I do walk outside and would like safe walking areas.
127. In the 14 years I've lived here, I have seen horses on the road no more than 4 times. However, now we have signs posted on our roads asking drivers to slow down for the horses. I am all for the safety of horses and their riders but what about the safety of the bike riders on the back roads?
128. I walk/run in the Whitehouse Area and shop on 523. I would appreciate any traffic calming enhancements that would allow me a safe experience to walk/run and shop on the main street. The new walkway from Whitehouse Station to Cushetunk Development has provided a safe walk/run area. Any plans for others would be great.
129. Benches available along 523 so that walking seniors have a place to rest.
130. Connect town's open space with trails.
131. More sidewalks in critical areas of the town are way overdue. I go walking on School Road and with no sidewalk in one side or the other it's difficult to feel safe on our walks.
132. A low cost addition to the Readington Twp recreational facilities would be to develop the existing walking easement from Rowlands Road to Deer Path Park that is owned by the township. The existing easement is unusable the homeowner has allowed a small section of the 30 foot wide path to be overgrown. If this easement were to be opened up, it would give residents easier access to the park by walking or biking as well allow park walkers and runners to access quiet safe streets. The estimate given by the twp engineers at a 2006 township meeting to clear the brush and mark the easement was \$500. Regardless, the town council voted no action. I feel this is a disservice to the public.
133. I like the walking trails such as exist at Lake Cushetunk and Deer Path parks. They are quiet, easily accessed well marked and interesting. Would like to see more trails like these.
134. Would like to see off-road biking and walking trails...perhaps a trail connecting Deer Path Park to Whitehouse Station.

135. Would love to see a public bike trail park as in off-road motorcycles. Readington has enough undeveloped land far enough away from residences to have such as park. Nowhere to ride except on a friend's farm. I know liability could be a problem.
136. The trails in Bridgewater and Branchburg are great. It would be nice to have something like that in Readington.



*“Leave all the afternoon for exercise and recreation, which are as necessary as reading. I will rather say more necessary because health is worth more than learning.”*

*--Thomas Jefferson*