

1/1/2019

City of Collegedale Parks and Recreation

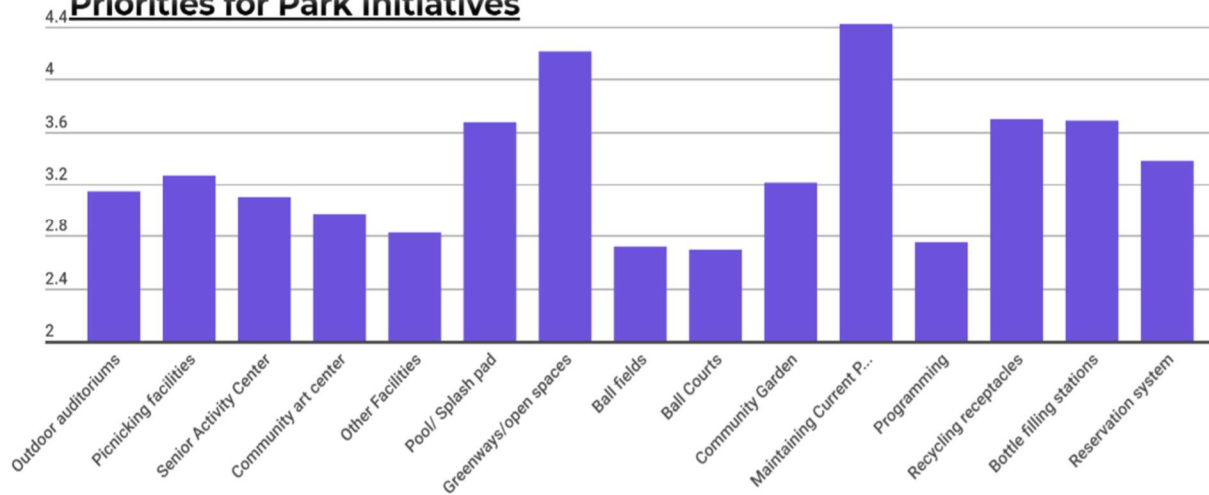
2019 Assessment



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Collegedale Parks & Recreation Assessment, 2019

Priorities for Park Initiatives



Barriers to Park Visitation

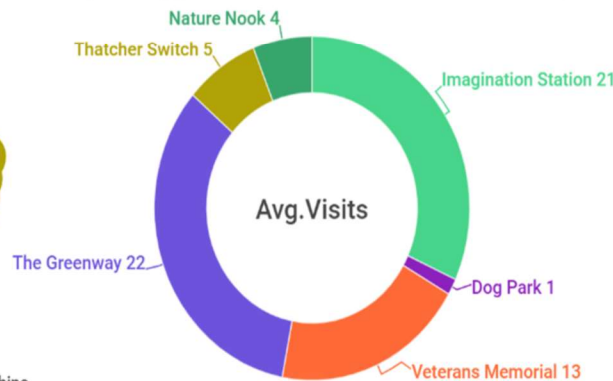


Support for Revenue Generation



● Parking fees
 ● Tax increase
 ● Activity fees
 ● Other
 ● Private Sponsorships

Average Annual Visits Per Resident



Average Annual Participation

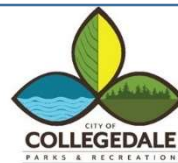
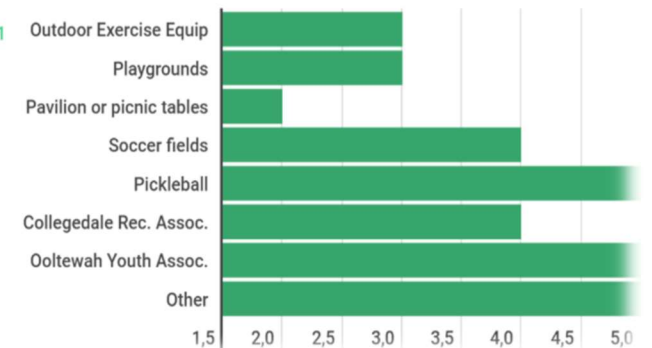


Table of Contents

.....	0
Executive Summary	1
Key Findings.....	1
Recommendations	1
Introduction.....	2
Park Assets.....	4
Park Visits & Participation Rates.....	6
Park Priorities	8
Programming.....	9
Staffing	10
Revenue.....	11
Preventive Savings	12
Barriers and Constraints	13
Information Sources.....	14
References.....	15
Appendix A: Collegedale Asset Inventory.....	0
Figure 1 Comparative Diversity for Collegedale and Surrounding Cities.....	2
Figure 2 Priority Areas for Park Acreage and Access	5
Figure 3 Annual Visits to Collegedale Parks.....	6
Figure 4 Non-programmed park activities.....	6
Figure 5 Annual engagement with park amenities.....	7
Figure 6 Attendance at events over the last 12 months.	7
Figure 7 Key Responsibilities of Park and Recreation Agencies (NRPA, 2018)	8
Figure 8 Common programming options for all U.S. parks and recreation agencies.	9
Figure 9 Average Full-time parks employees per 10,000 residents.....	10
Figure 10 Breakdown of FTE responsibilities across U.S .municipal park systems.	10
Figure 11 Revenue sources for most municipal parks districts (NRPA, 2018)	11
Figure 12 Barriers to recreation participation.	13
Figure 13 Preferred method of receiving parks information.....	14
Table 1 Population Growth of Collegedale and Surrounding Communities	2
Table 2 Demographics of Census and Study Sample	3
Table 3 TPL Park Score Metrics for Collegedale and Surrounding Cities	4
Table 4 NRPA Standards for Collegedale Park Facilities	5
Table 5 Support from Collegedale residents for proposed revenue generation.....	11

Executive Summary

The City of Collegedale Parks and Recreation mission is to provide places, avenues and recreational opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, learn and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

Key Findings

1. Support for Collegedale Parks and Recreation is strong.
 - Nearly all respondents (99%) are somewhat or very satisfied with the City of Collegedale Parks and Recreation.
 - 73% of residents believe the parks teach them valuable skills, 94% believe parks contribute to their physical health, 91% agree that parks improve their mental health, 85% believe parks improve their social vitality, and 93% agree that parks improve their overall quality of life.
2. Park usage is high, with the average resident visiting a park 66 times every year. The greenway and Imagination Station are the most visited parks in Collegedale.
3. The top five park priorities include: 1) Maintaining current parks, 2) Developing new greenways, 3) Recycling receptacles, 4) Bottle filling stations, and 5) Construction of a splash pad or pool.
4. Top barriers to participation include: 1) Overcrowding, 2) Parking issues, 3) Lack of shade, 4) Lack of energy, 5) Lack of information, and 6) Lack of activities.
5. Residents generally support all forms of revenue generation, with the exception of parking fees. Private sponsorships and activity/special event fees were favored.
6. Park acreage and access to parks in Collegedale exceeds that of comparable cities (Soddy-Daisy, Red Bank), but is still below the national average.

Recommendations

1. City managers could explore opportunities to increase revenue for park initiatives (ticketed events, dedicated tax, etc.).
2. Increased revenue would support additional staffing, to increase programming and development.
3. Greenways and linear park corridors should be identified and prioritized before over-development.
4. Explore development of high-profile facilities (i.e. splash pad) to satisfy all constituents.
5. Continue partnerships with organizations to provide outsourced programming in public spaces.

Introduction

This report provides the results of a study conducted for Collegedale Parks and Recreation by faculty and students at the University of TN, Chattanooga.

Collegedale, located in the northeast corner of Hamilton County, TN, is home to McKee Foods and Southern Adventist University. Its geographic location, adjacent to Chattanooga and Cleveland, makes it an ideal setting for those seeking a small town culture with easy access to urban amenities. Collegedale is experiencing a population boon, making parks and green space planning an urgent priority.

TABLE 1 POPULATION GROWTH OF COLLEGEDALE AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

City	Population (2010)	Population (2016)	Percent Change
Chattanooga	164,481	175,462	6.68%
Cleveland	41,285	43,276	4.82%
East Ridge	20,979	21,311	1.58%
Soddy Daisy	12,714	13,162	3.52%
Red Bank	11,651	11,794	1.23%
Collegedale	8,282	10,438	26.03%
Signal Mountain	7,554	8,500	12.52%

According to the U.S. census (2016), Collegedale's diversity is comparable to Cleveland, Red Bank, and Signal Mountain, TN. This study utilized a purposive sampling method in the effort to obtain feedback from a representative sample of residents.

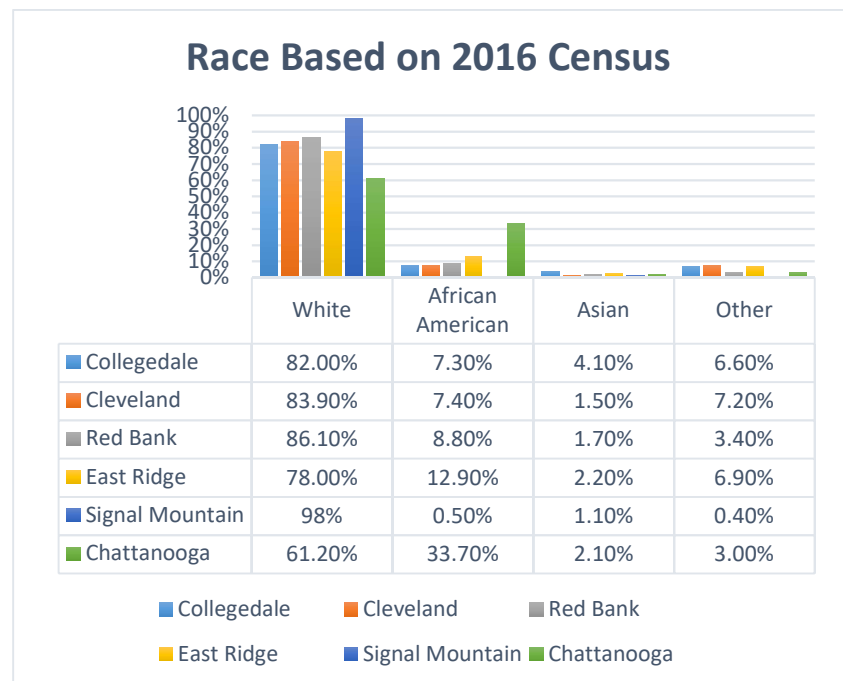


FIGURE 1 COMPARATIVE DIVERSITY FOR COLLEGEDALE AND SURROUNDING CITIES

Survey respondents (n = 328) were comparable to the Collegedale population, albeit having slightly higher education and income levels. Additionally, females tend to be more responsive to survey requests, as was also true of this study (69% female). Fifty-one percent of respondents identified as Collegedale residents, which could be problematic when advocating for public services sponsored by tax payers. To determine if non-residents unduly influenced the results, an analysis of variance was conducted to determine if resident status influenced any variables of interest. This analysis revealed no significant differences based on residential status for park use, priorities, or constraints, so all responses were included in all subsequent analyses.

Finally, respondents represented households including residents of all ages. While they completed the form individually, questions were directed toward the experience of their entire household. Table 2 illustrates the household age distribution of survey respondents.

Table 2 Demographics of Census and Study Sample

	2016 Census	Study Sample
% White	82	85
% Black	7.3	5
% Asian	4.1	1.25
% Hispanic	12	4
Avg. Income	52,165	65,000
% B.S. degree	32	37
% under 5 yrs	-	18.3
% 5-10	-	20.2
% 11-18	-	15.5
% 19-30	-	14.6
% 31-40	-	25.3
% 41-55	-	24.4
% 56-65	-	11.4
% 65+	-	13.0

Park Assets

Parks and open space have been consistently shown to influence physical and mental health (Godbey, 2009; Mass et al., 2009). Equal access to these resources for all citizens should be a priority. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and Trust for Public Land (TPL) have established metrics for comparison of parks and recreation assets across the U.S. These metrics can be interpreted as recommendations rather than mandates, as each community will prioritize various assets. As shown in Table 3, Collegedale is below the national average in access to parks and in acreage per capita, while the number of residents per city park is better than the U.S. average. ***Linear parks and greenways would provide a means of access to parks for a larger percentage of the population.***

TABLE 3 TPL PARK SCORE METRICS FOR COLLEGEDALE AND SURROUNDING CITIES

	National Average	Signal Mountain	Red Bank	Soddy Daisy	Collegedale	Collegedale/National Avg.
% within 1 mile of park	54	68	24	16	25	-29
Park acreage		471	95	54	65	
Acreage per 1,000	10.1	57.5	7.7	4.0	6.1	-4
Total Parks		26	7	4	8	
Residents per Park	2114	315	1774	3406	1325	-789

Figure 2 illustrates high-need areas where residents have little-to-no park access. While the greenway provides access to residents central to the city, those in the outskirts generally have to access a park by car. This can be especially troublesome for youth or those who can't drive themselves. ***Children's use of a park can increase by 400% if they have access close to home (Babey, Brown & Hastert, 2005).***

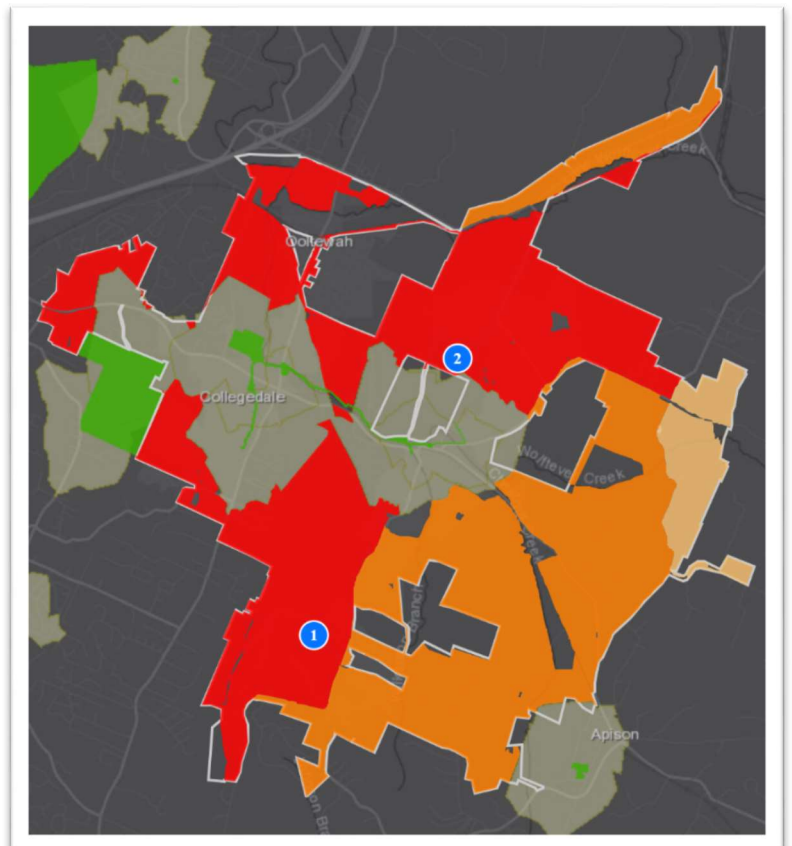


FIGURE 2 PRIORITY AREAS FOR PARK ACREAGE AND ACCESS

Table 4 provides a comparison of Collegedale’s current park facilities with those of adjacent cities and the national average. While not all jurisdictions will match national averages, deficits should be considered when prioritizing future initiatives. For a detailed presentation of assets managed by the City of Collegedale Parks and Recreation, see Appendix A.

TABLE 4 NRPA STANDARDS FOR COLLEGEDALE PARK FACILITIES

	National average (per capita)	Signal Mountain	Red Bank	Soddy Daisy	Collegedale	Collegedale (+/- Nat'l Avg.)
Recreation Center	1/27,000	1	1			-0.4
Playground	1/3,600	5	2	3	4	1.05
Pickleball Courts	N/A				4	
Tennis Courts	1/4,000	8	5	4		-2.65
Basketball Courts	1/7,000	3		4		-1.5
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	1	1			-0.53
Senior Center	1/45,000			1		
Soccer Fields	1/6,000	2			5	3.2
Baseball Fields	1/6,000	4	5	6	5*	3.2
Softball Fields	1/12,000	3	3	4	8*	7.1
Stadium/Arena	1/64,000	1				-0.15
Picnic Areas	N/A	4	10	10	11	
Pavilions	N/A	2	4	1	5	
Gyms	1/27,000	1				-0.4
Dog Park	1/43,000		1	1	1	0.7
Amphitheater	1/47,000	1			1	0.8
Community Garden	1/27,000	2				-0.4

* Not owned by Collegedale

** Based on Darden, Nevad & Saylor (2018)

Park Visits & Participation Rates

The Greenway (22) and Imagination Station (21) are the most visited parks in Collegedale, followed by Veteran’s Memorial (13), Thatcher Switch (5), Nature Nook (4) and the Dog Park (1). While average visits for all respondents can provide information about park use by the entire community, frequency of visits per actual user should not be overlooked. Thatcher Switch, for example, only receives an average of 5 visits per year from all community members. However, if we remove those who reported never going, it is clear that actual users of that area visit close to 30 times a year.

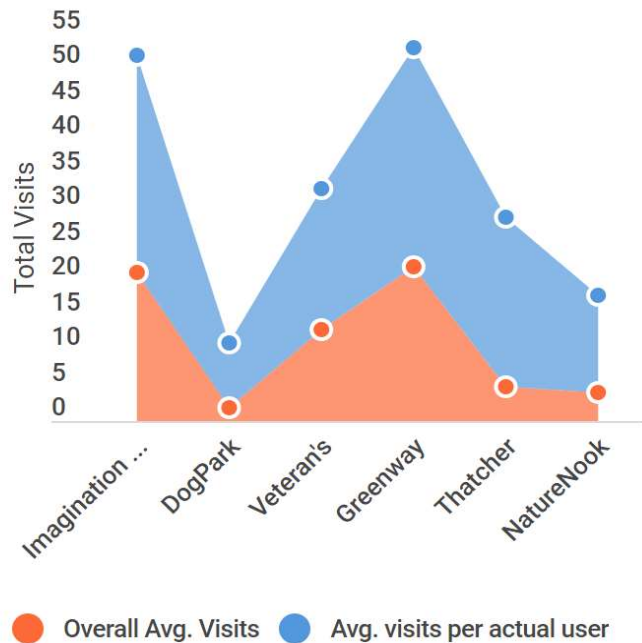


FIGURE 3 ANNUAL VISITS TO COLLEGEDALE PARKS

As shown in Figure 4, the most common non-programmed activities enjoyed in the parks include: Horseshoes, various ball sports (soccer, pickleball, softball, etc.), dog-walking, reading, running, and biking. While these activities aren’t directed by park staff, residents engage in these activities frequently on their own.

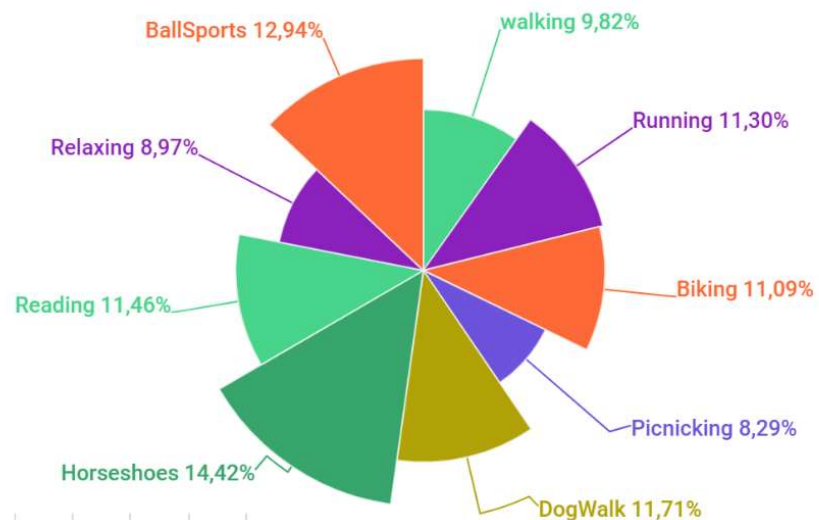


FIGURE 4 NON-PROGRAMMED PARK ACTIVITIES

Figure 5 illustrates the frequency with which Collegedale residents engaged with park amenities and services. Playgrounds, pickleball courts, and recreation associations are the most commonly used assets. Finally, Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of respondents who attended each event hosted by the City of Collegedale over the last year. The largest responses for “other” include: Fit4Mom, Table Tennis, and 4th of July celebrations.

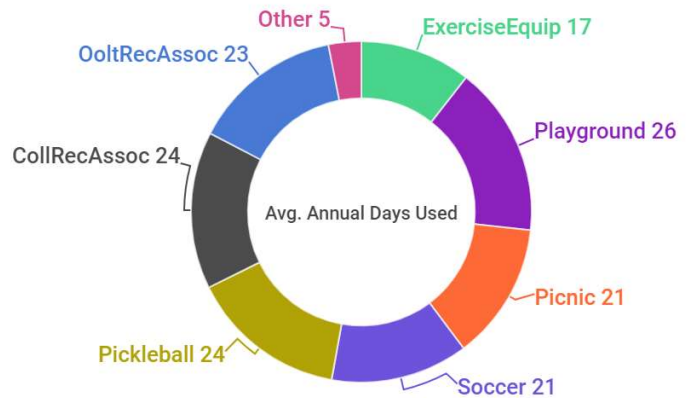


FIGURE 5 ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT WITH PARK AMENITIES.

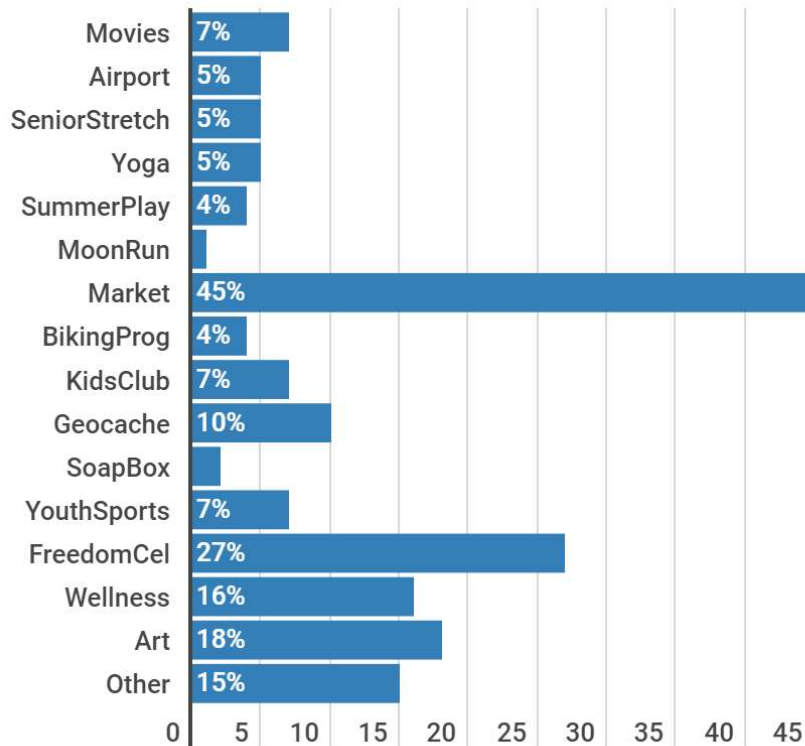


FIGURE 6 ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS.

Park Priorities

Collegedale residents were overwhelmingly satisfied with park services, and provided clear priorities for the future. Maintaining current facilities was top priority (*Mean* = 4.4/5), followed by the development of greenways (*Mean* = 3.6/5). A three-way tie for third place included construction of a pool/splash pad, recycling receptacles, and bottle-filling stations. Though there was no distinction on the survey between a pool or splash pad, many commented in the “other” category that a splash pad was preferred.

As a relatively new parks administration, Collegedale staff would also benefit from a national perspective on park mandates. According to a recent NRPA (2018) study, parks administrators report their main responsibilities to be maintenance of parks and facilities, programming, and budgeting for staff, followed closely by greenway and event management. While programming is currently limited in Collegedale, other responsibilities line up well with reported park priorities.

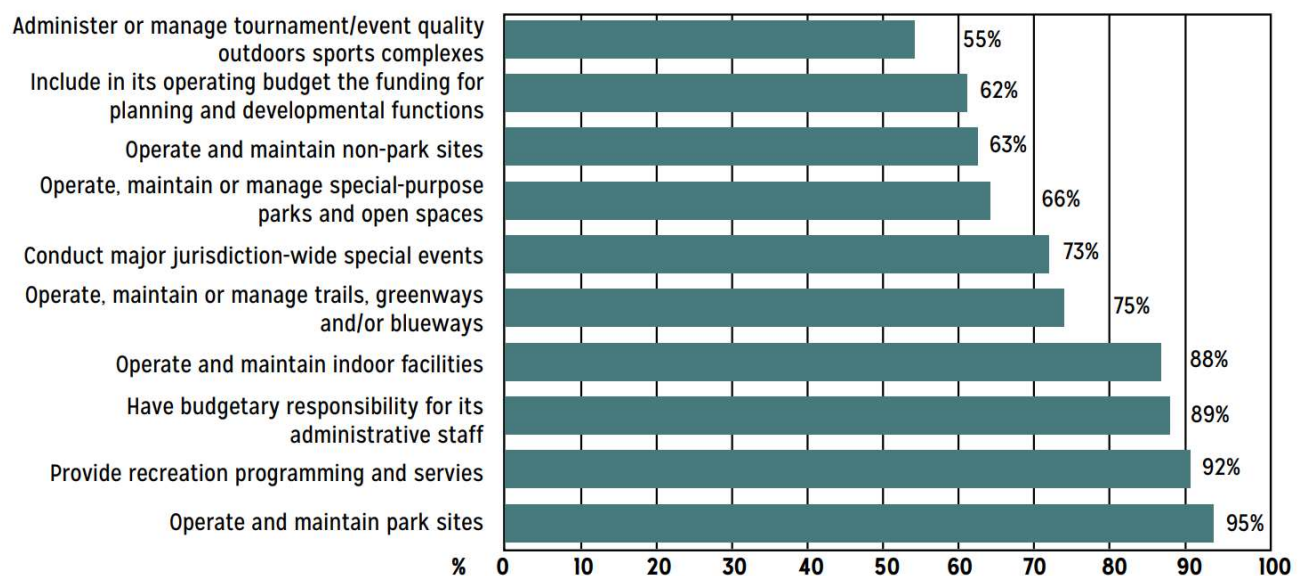


FIGURE 7 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES (NRPA, 2018)

Programming

Programming was nearly last on the list of priorities as reported by survey respondents, likely due to the fact that team sports programming is currently outsourced to youth organizations. Should Collegedale explore other programming options, the following figure could provide some guidance. Based on a national study of parks and recreation agencies (NRPA, 2018), themed special events, health and wellness courses, and fitness enhancement are the most common programming types.

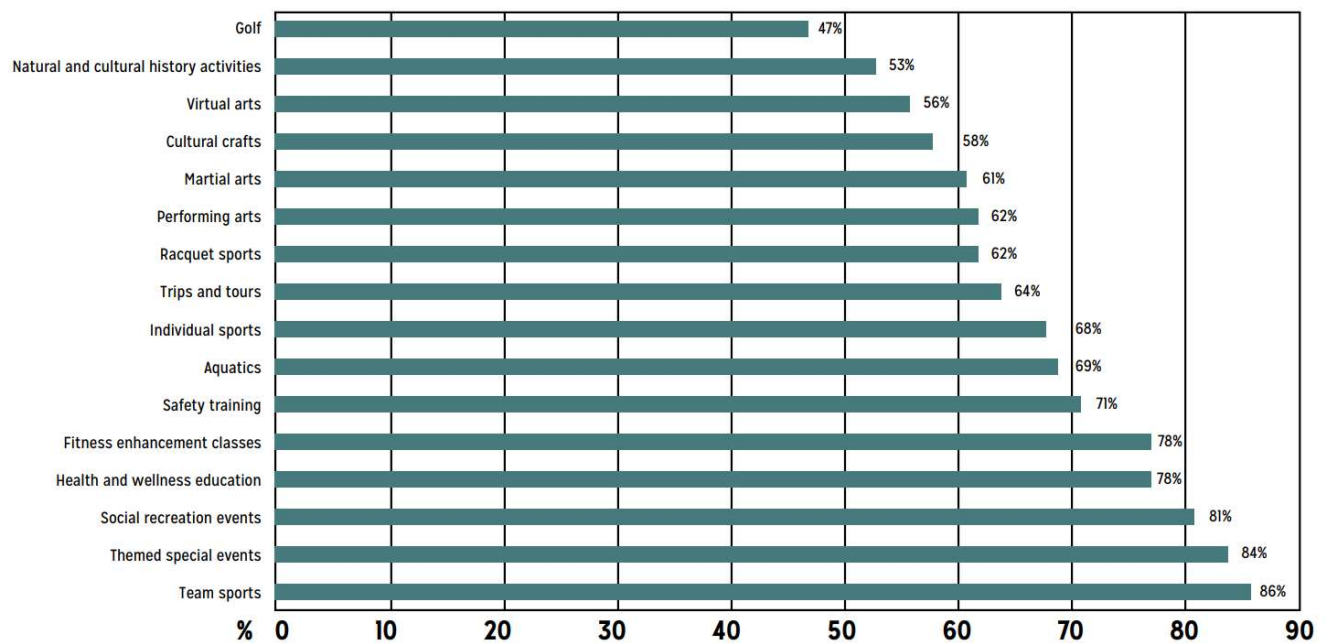


FIGURE 8 COMMON PROGRAMMING OPTIONS FOR ALL U.S. PARKS AND RECREATION AGENCIES.

Staffing

Park and programming improvements cannot be made without additional resources. One key resource that Collegedale could expand is that of staff. With one full-time employee (FTE) dedicated to parks administration, Collegedale is currently well-below the national average.

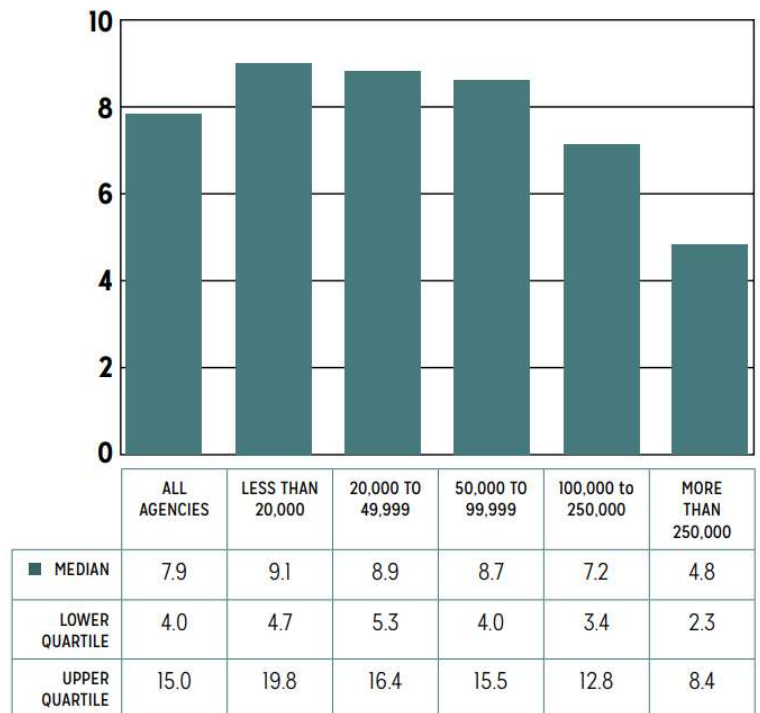


FIGURE 9 AVERAGE FULL-TIME PARKS EMPLOYEES PER 10,000 RESIDENTS

Figure 10 illustrates the typical job description distribution for all parks employees. Aside from operations and maintenance, all tasks are currently managed by a single FTE in the Collegedale system.

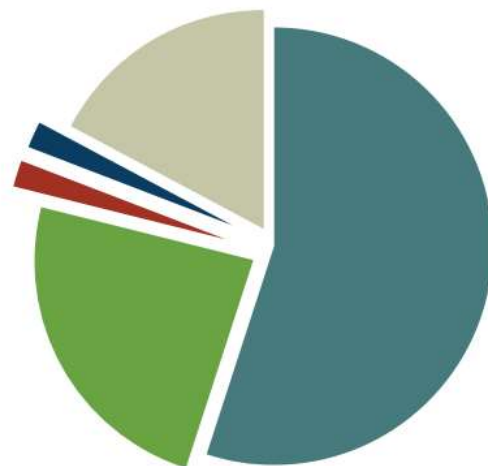
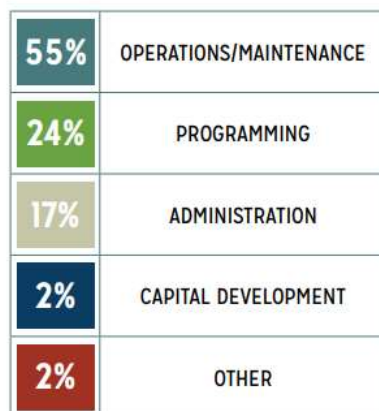
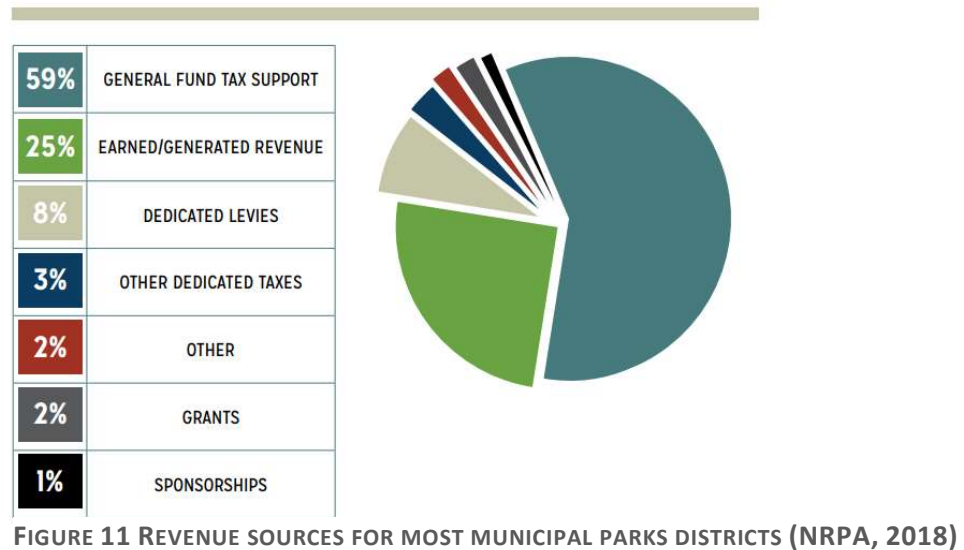


FIGURE 10 BREAKDOWN OF FTE RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS U.S. MUNICIPAL PARK SYSTEMS.

Revenue

Staffing and programming cannot exist without significant funding, most of which typically comes from resident taxes. While most recreation agencies are dependent on support from the General Fund, revenue is also generated from special events & activity fees, dedicated taxes, and grants.



Collegedale residents were generally in favor of all types of revenue generation, with the exception of parking fees. Sponsorships and “other” forms of revenue generation received the highest support. The most common description for “other” was some form of special event (i.e. 5k run).

TABLE 5 SUPPORT FROM COLLEGEDALE RESIDENTS FOR PROPOSED REVENUE GENERATION.

	Strongly oppose	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Strongly Support	Balance
Activity-based fees	11.76%	17.65%	31.51%	31.51%	7.56%	9.66%
Parking fees	46.58%	33.76%	14.53%	4.27%	0.85%	-75.22%
Dedicated tax increase	17.52%	13.68%	35.90%	29.91%	2.99%	1.70%
Private Sponsorships	0.84%	0.42%	14.64%	44.35%	39.75%	82.84%
Other	13.46%	0.00%	48.08%	19.23%	19.23%	25.00%

Preventive Savings

While revenue generation is an important piece of the puzzle, the contribution of green space to environmental sustainability and preventive health care should not be overlooked. Trees and vegetation reduce costs associated with maintenance of air and water quality (i.e. carbon sequestration, heat islands, erosion, flood control). This is especially relevant in regions, such as Collegedale, which are experiencing high levels of growth and land development. Collegedale currently maintains 65 acres of developed park space with another 37 acres of undeveloped public land. Given NRPA estimations, Collegedale's 102 acres of green space provides \$9,680.82 in air benefits, with another \$76,266.42 in water quality and flood prevention.

Preventive health care savings can also be estimated for the community based on developed park space. The provision of park space facilitates regular physical activity, which can be a robust preventer of chronic illness (Godbey, 2009). Collegedale's 65 developed acres of park space save an estimated \$22,815 of health care costs associated with physical inactivity. ***Together, the environmental and health benefits associated with the City of Collegedale Parks and Recreation system equate to \$108,762.24 in preventive maintenance.***

Barriers and Constraints

Collegedale parks are well-utilized, but barriers to park use and participation do exist. Figure 12 illustrates the main user constraints as reported by Collegedale residents. Barriers are grouped into categories based on previous research (Carlson et al., 2010), including: 1) Personal & Interpersonal [Purple], 2) Park Design [Green], 3) Park Management [Orange], and 4) Programming [Grey]. Parking and overcrowding are primary concerns, perhaps explaining the aversion to parking fees stated previously. Programming and regular communication could help with information, activities and activity partners, while park design issues require capital investment.

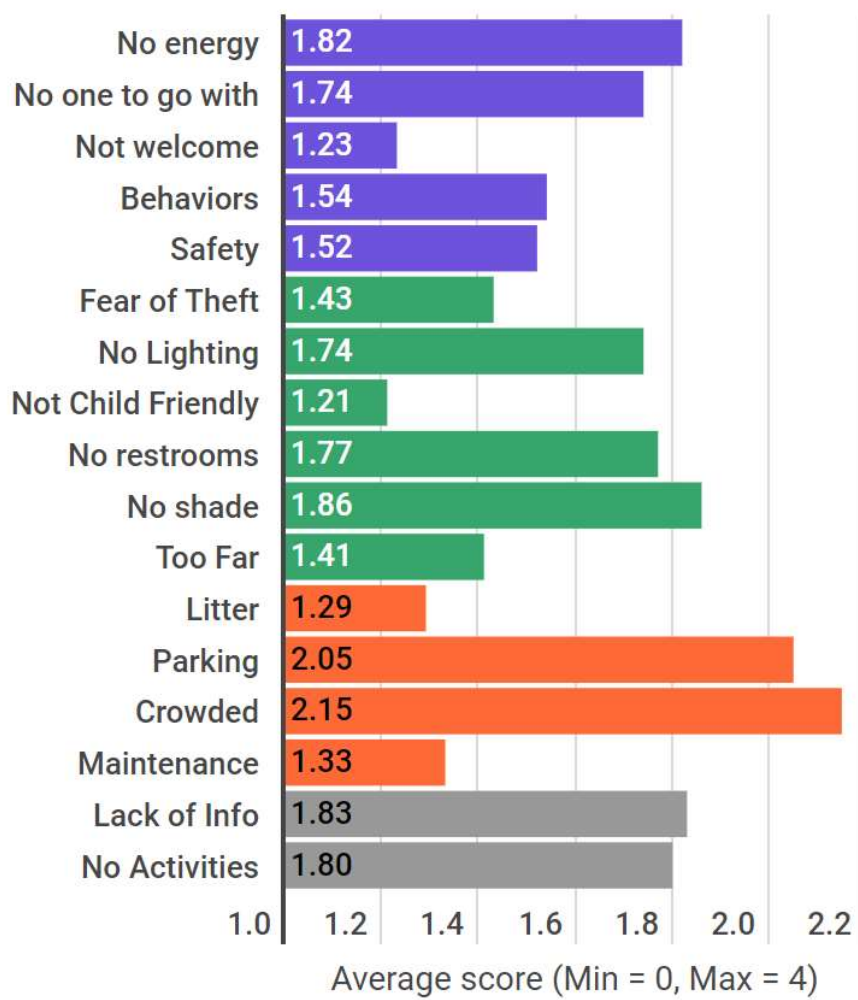


FIGURE 12 BARRIERS TO RECREATION PARTICIPATION.

Information Sources

Regarding park information resources, residents would prefer contact through web-based sources, such as social media and email. This form of communication is affordable and non-invasive, being commonly preferred for programming information. Interestingly, older participants (50+) had a stronger preference for social media than other age groups. Brochures and radio remain valuable sources of information distribution, but are becoming less relevant.

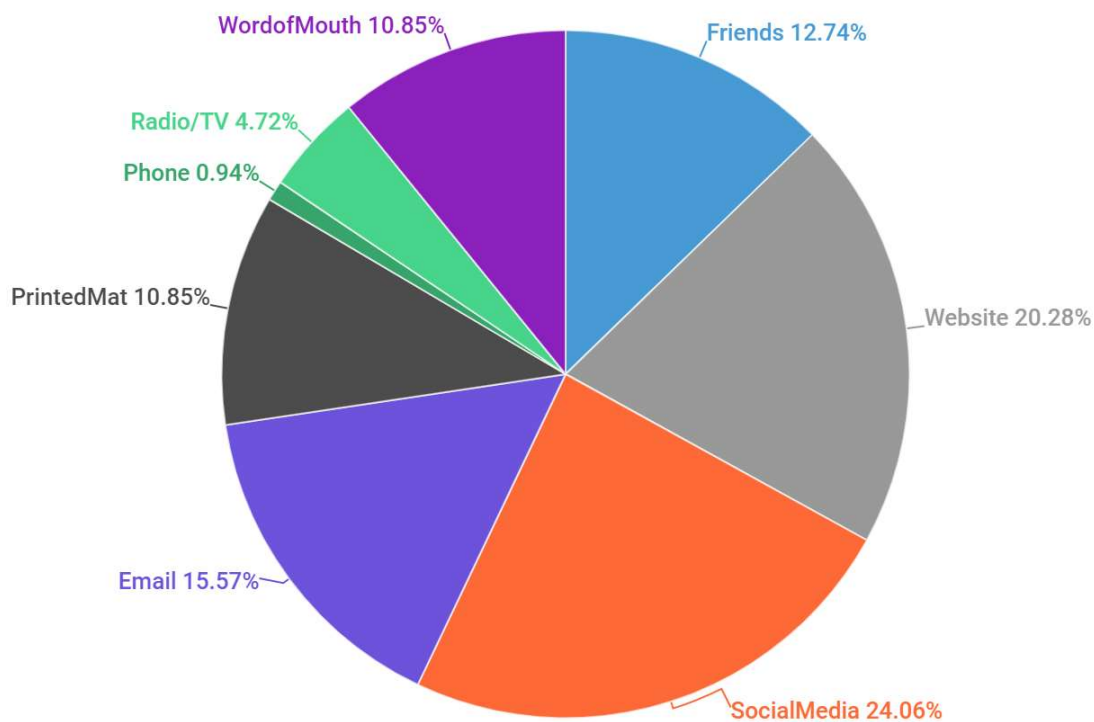


FIGURE 13 PREFERRED METHOD OF RECEIVING PARKS INFORMATION.

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Appendix A: Collegedale Asset Inventory

	Imagination Station	Thatcher Switch	Dog Park	Veteran's Memorial	Nature Nook	Duck Pond	The Commons	East HC Rec. Park	Wolftever Creek	Misty Valley & Edgmon	Airport Parcel	Tallant Rd Swamp	Total
Recreation Center													0
Playground	2	1			1								4
Tennis Courts													0
Basketball Courts													0
Swimming Pool													0
Senior Center													0
Soccer Fields		1											1
Baseball Fields								5					5
Softball Fields													0
Stadium/Arena													0
Gyms													0
Dog Park													0
Amphitheater					1								1
Community Garden													0
Exercise Elements	3	3							3				9
Pickleball Courts	4												4
Picnic Areas									3				3
Pavilions	1	1			1	2	1						6
Bathrooms	1	1					1						3
Horseshoe Pits	1												1
Sand Box	1												1
Greenway Access	1	1	1	1									4
Greenspace				1									1
Pond								1					1
Undeveloped acres										6	1	30	37
Developed Trail Miles									3.0125				3.0125

