



Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation

PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



**Mecklenburg County
Park and Recreation**

*The Natural Place
To Be...*



By The Numbers....

- **Serving Mecklenburg County** - includes City of Charlotte & six Towns
- **Population 1,000,000+** (as of Sept. 2013) **covering 523 sq. miles**

- **MCPR owns and manages 20,800+ acres**
- **305 Full Time** (437 in FY10) / **500+ PT & Temp Employees**
- **\$28M County Funding + \$6M Revenue = \$34M Total Budget** (FY15)
- **210+ parks & special facilities:**

240 Athletic Fields

158 Picnic Areas

149 Tennis Courts

196 Miles of Trails

115 Playgrounds

109 Basketball Courts

18 Recreation Centers

14 Disc Golf & 5 Golf Courses

12 Boat Ramps

10 Historic Sites

8 Community Gardens

6 Spraygrounds & 3 Pools

6 Dog Parks

3 Nature Centers

56-site Campground, Equestrian Center, BMX Track, Skate Park, Model Airplane Field, Senior Center, special venues such as Grady Cole & Memorial Stadium, and unique partnerships such as US National Whitewater Center, Carolina Raptor Center, Rural Hill, Historic Latta Plantation, NC Sailing Center...

Programming

- **Recreation Centers:** programming for 188,000 participants yearly
- **Aquatics:** 3,100 aquatic programs for 345,000 participants yearly
- **Nature Centers:** 2,400 nature programs for 140,000 participants yearly
- **Therapeutic Rec:** 1,300 TR programs for 10,700 participants yearly
- **Athletics:** 1,300 athletic events yearly for 270,000 participants
- **Special Facilities:** 80,000 patrons yearly to special facilities
- **Volunteers:** 13,000 volunteers yearly donating 97,000 hrs valued at \$2.1M



The Impact of Parks

Access is Key: Living close to parks and recreation facilities is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth. One study showed **children living within 1/2 mile of park or playground are 5 times more likely to be a healthy weight**, rather than overweight, as compared to children who didn't have a park nearby. Another 3-year study concluded children have a much better chance of avoiding the obesity epidemic if they live in neighborhoods where they can safely bike, walk and have access to parks.

Significant health care cost savings are realized by individuals living near parks and utilizing them. Adults under 65 who are moderately active in parks experience approx. \$300 in health savings per year. This rises to \$700/year for individuals over 65.

Parks and open spaces create community, strengthen relationships & build caring qualities. Park users who are more physically active and make frequent contact with friends during their leisure are less likely to report feeling depressed.

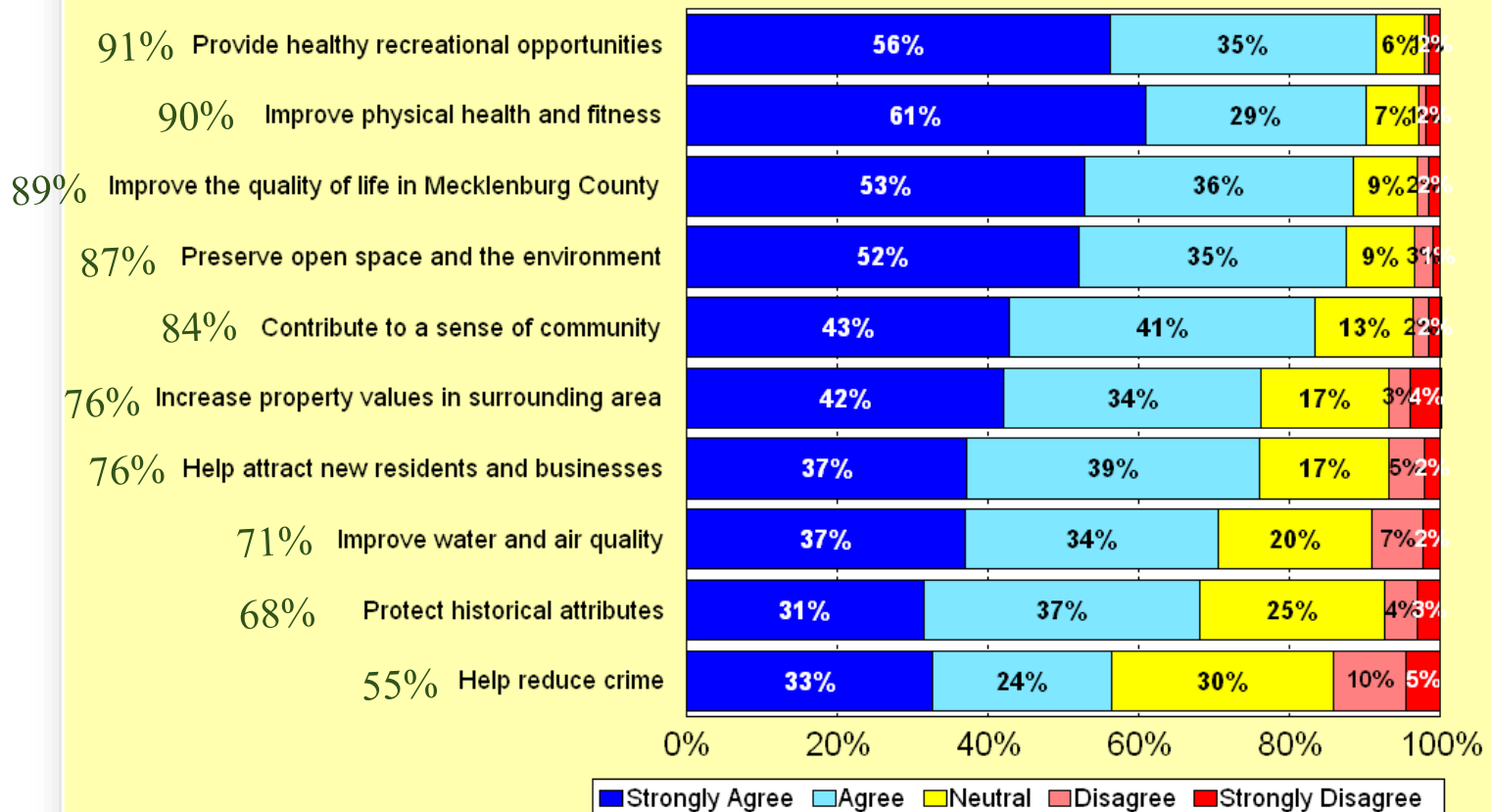
Close proximity to green spaces and parks is associated with less depression, anxiety, and other health problems.

Increased Social Capital: Research shows residents who live near outdoor green space and parks are more familiar with their nearby neighbors, socialize more with them, and express greater feelings of community and safety than residents lacking nearby parks.

The Impact of Parks – Residents Agree

Q13. Level of Agreement with the Benefits Being Provided by Parks, Nature Preserves, and Greenways

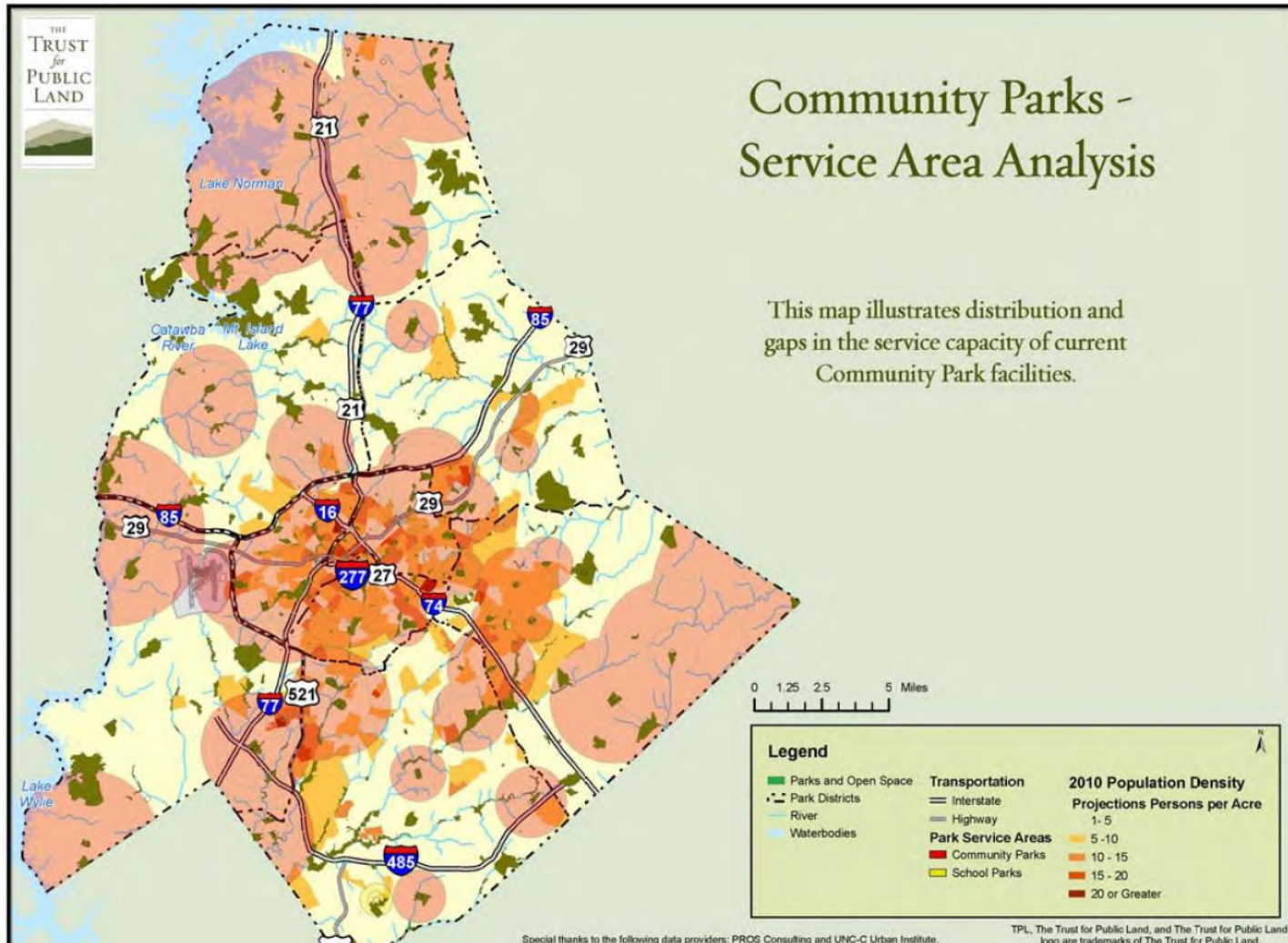
by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)



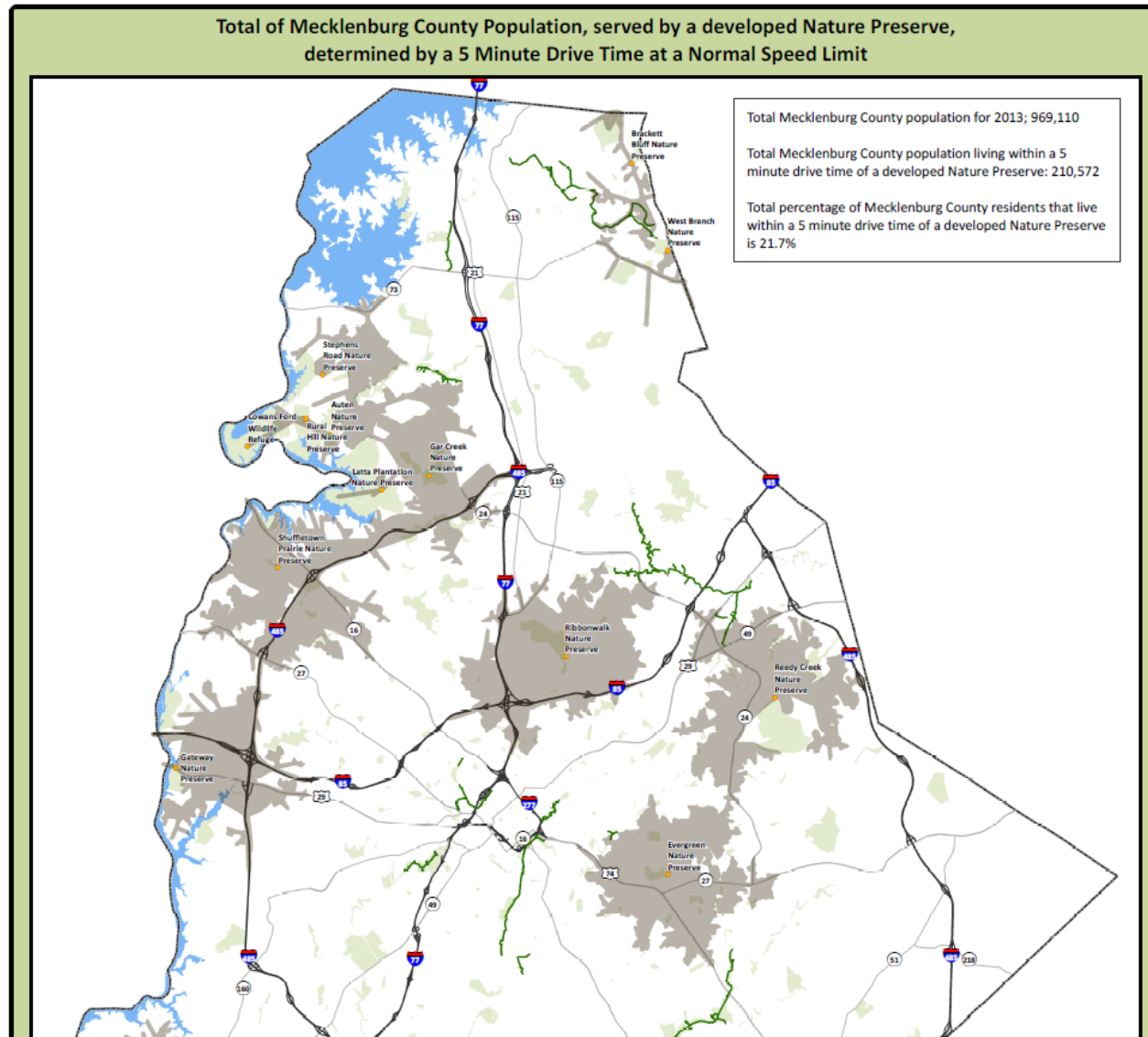
The Impact of Parks



Initiatives – Access

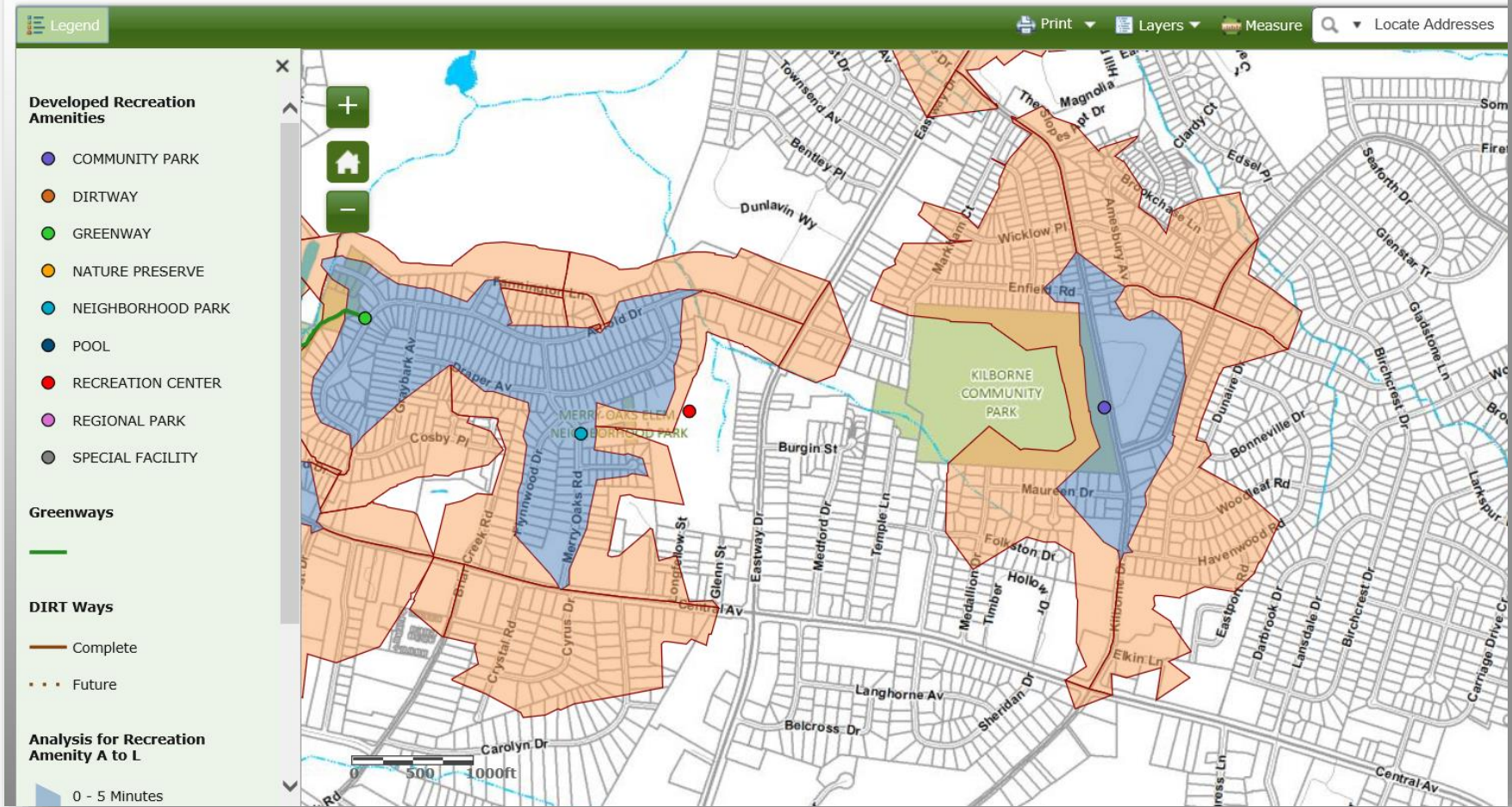


Initiatives – Access



Initiatives – Access

Parks & Recreation - Access Analysis



Initiatives – Fit Zones & Prioritization

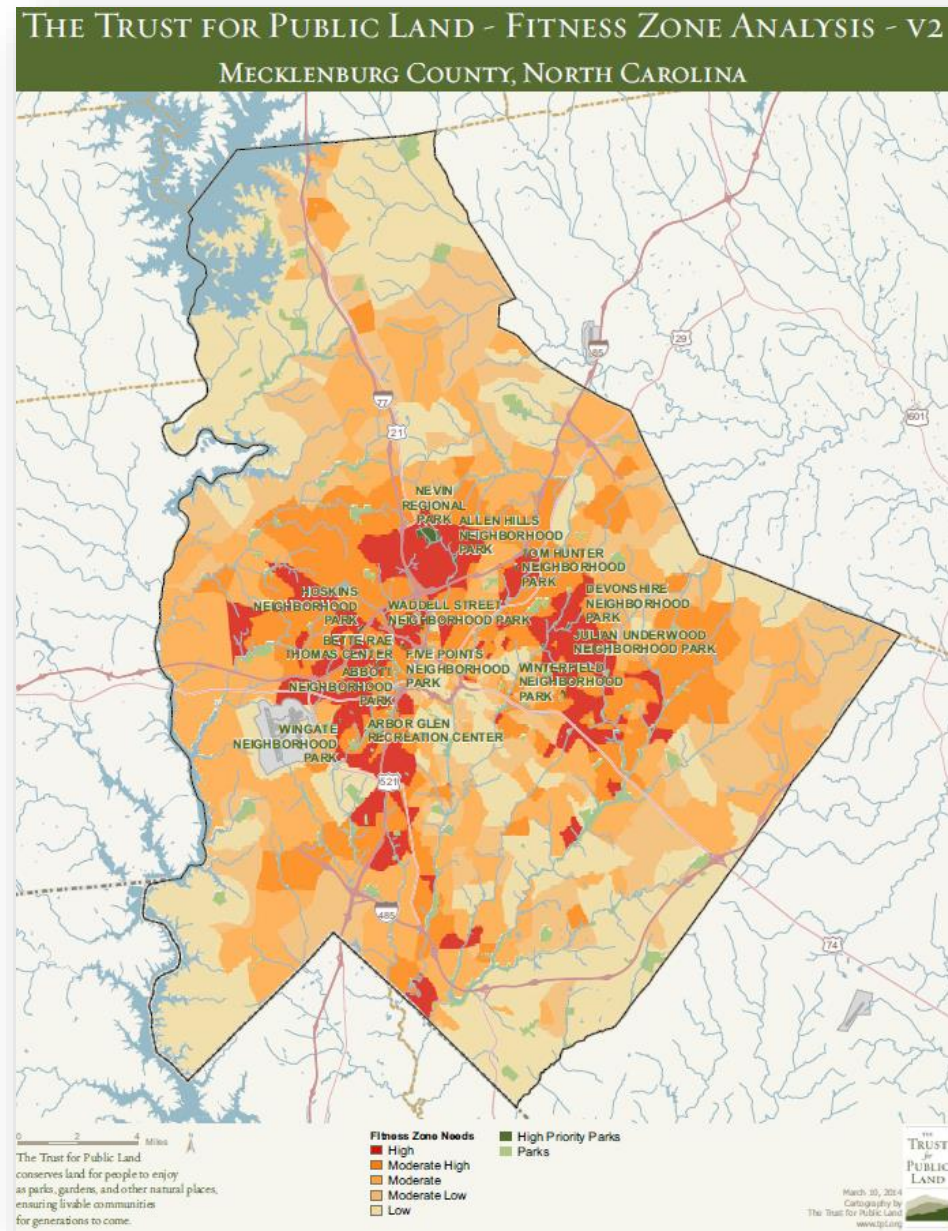


Initiatives – Access

15 Park Sites Prioritized

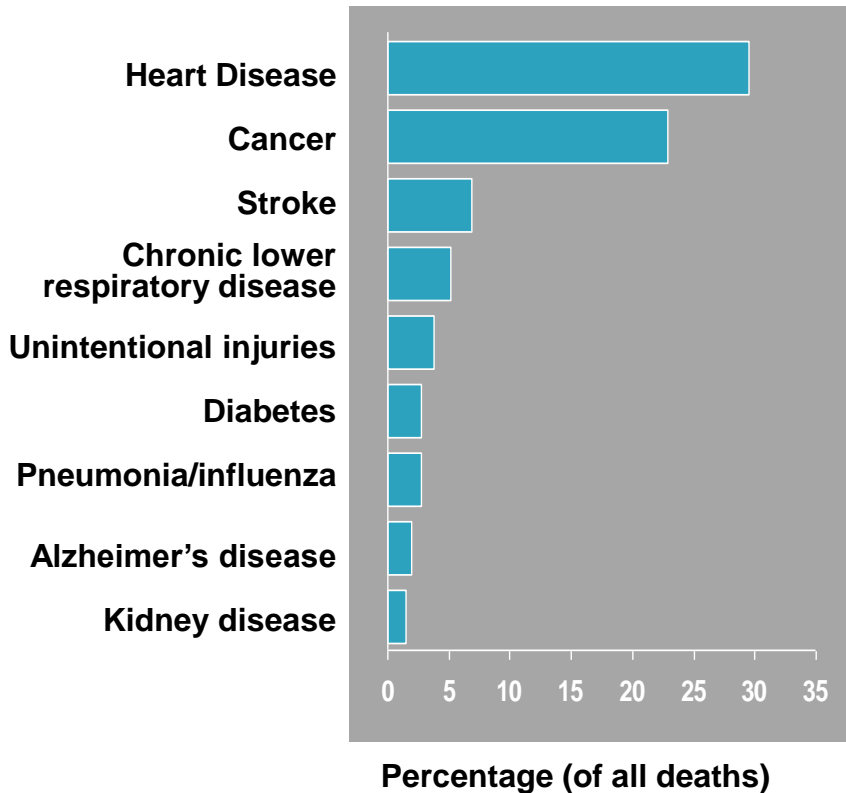
Methodology Included:

- Population Density
- % Low Income
- % Obese Children
- Diabetes Mortality Rate
- Heart Disease Mortality Rate
- Access to Fitness
- Likelihood of Adult Physical Inactivity

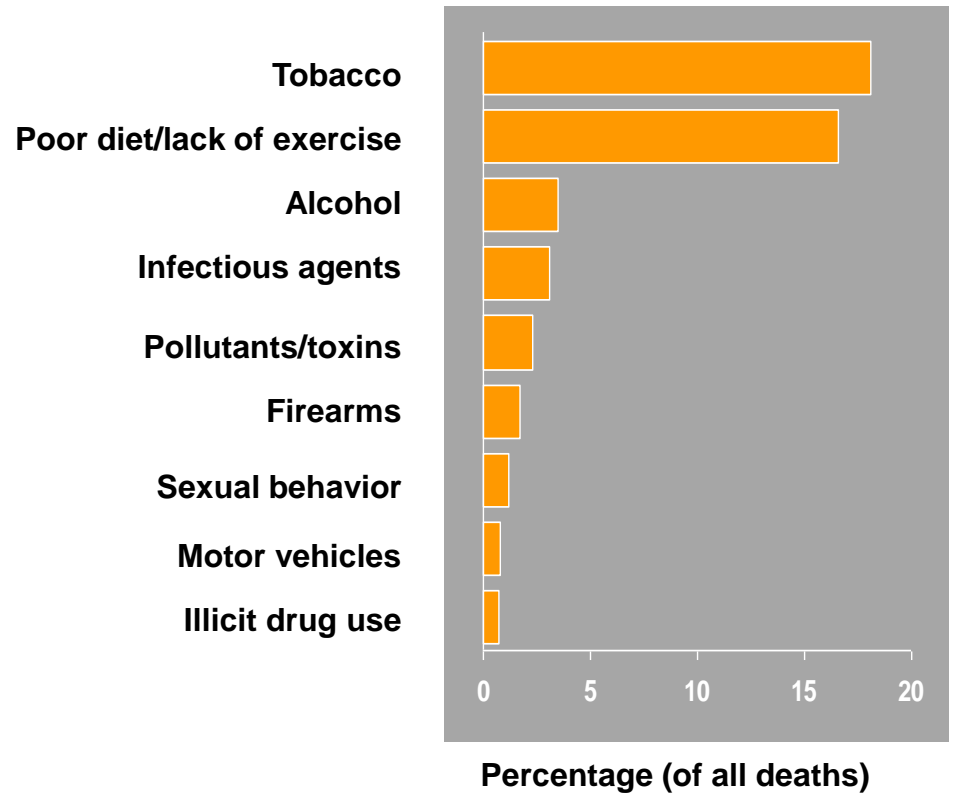


Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Leading Causes of Death*

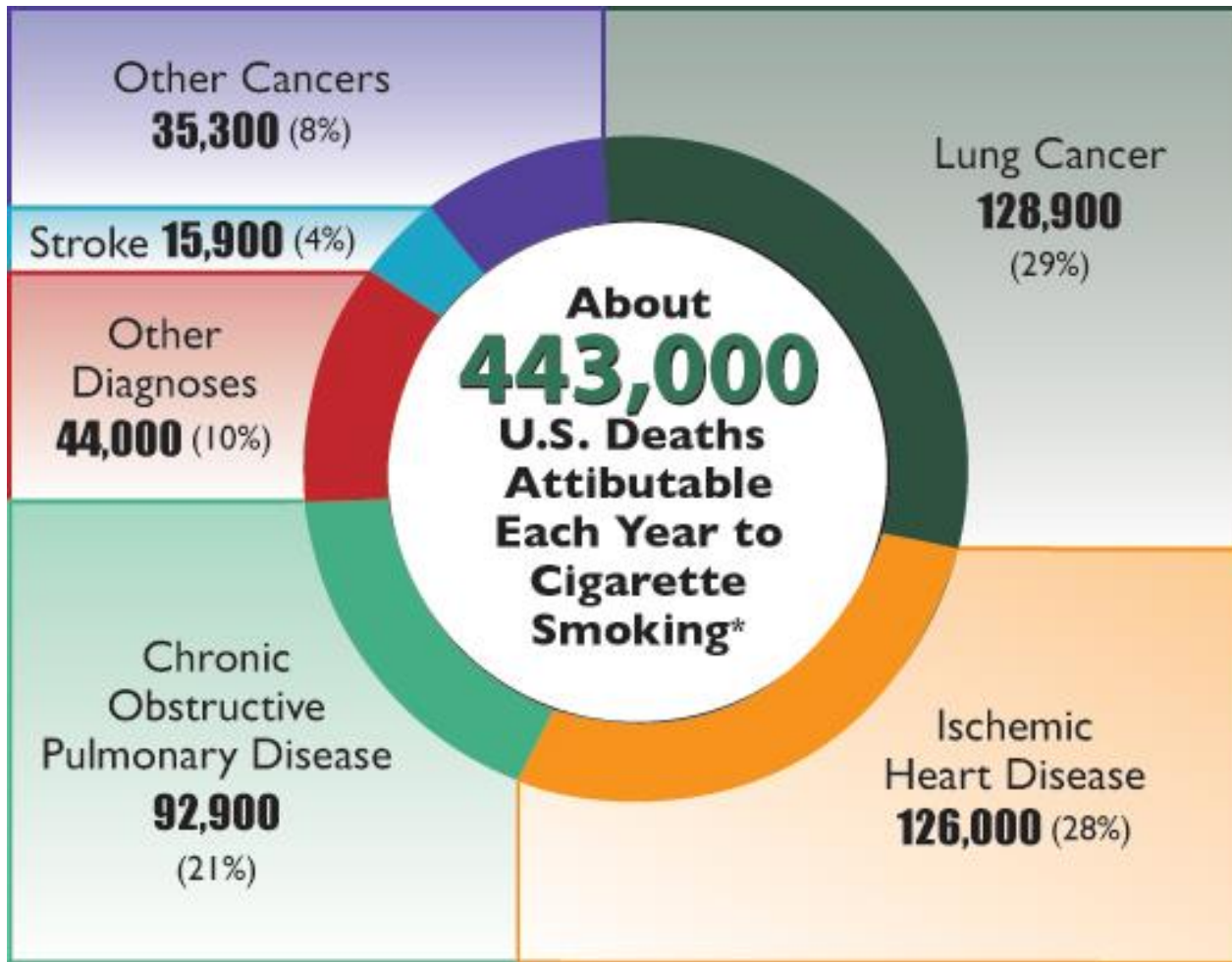


Actual Causes of Death†

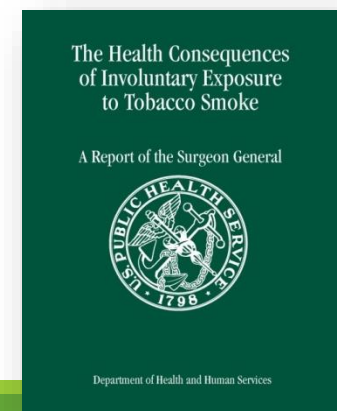


* National Center for Health Statistics. Mortality Report. Hyattsville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2012
† Adapted from McGinnis Foege, updated by Mokdad et. al.

Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks



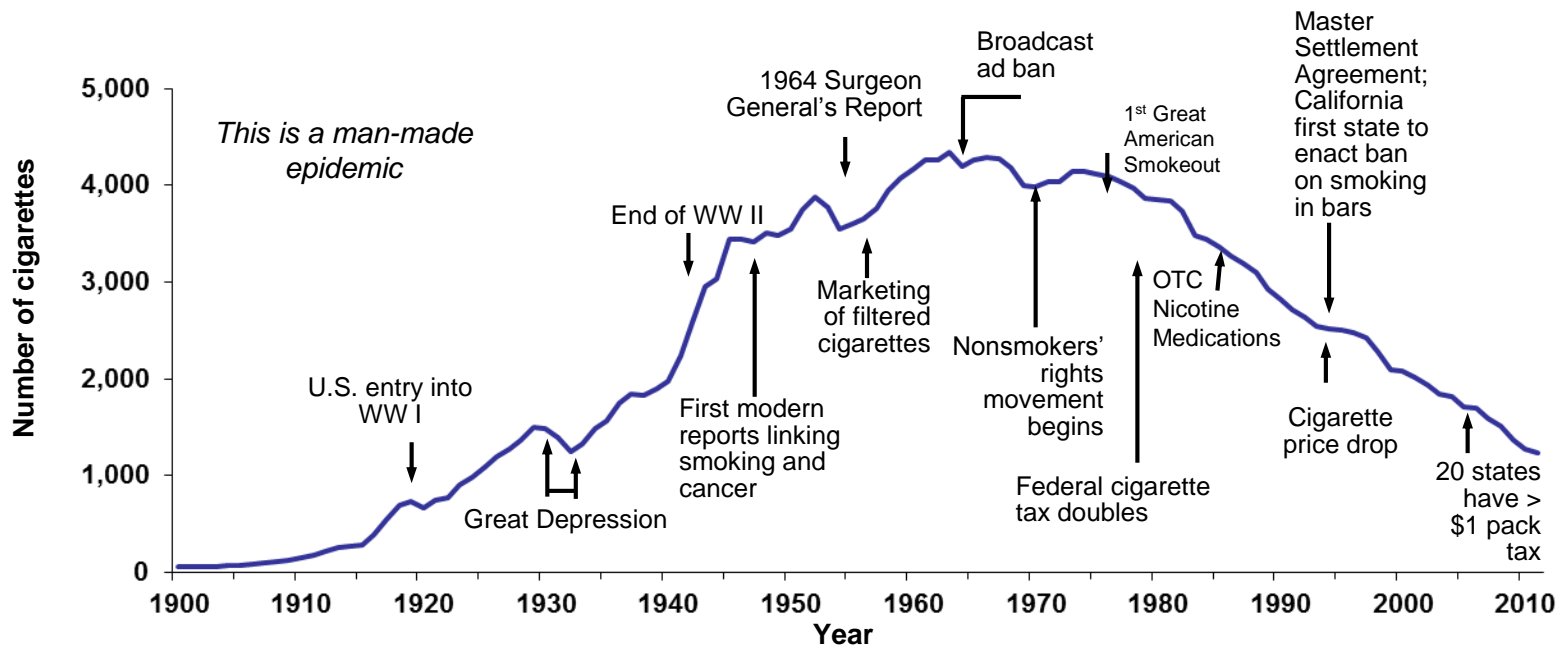
**U.S. Deaths
Attributable
Each Year
to Cigarette
Smoking***



Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

TRENDS in ADULT CIGARETTE CONSUMPTION—U.S., 1900–2011

Annual adult per capita cigarette consumption and major smoking and health events



Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Proven Strategies with Most Impact to Reduce Tobacco Use

Public Policy

- Expand tobacco-free policies to all workplaces and community establishments
- Increase the price of tobacco

Community level interventions

- Expand smoking bans and restrictions
- Mass media campaigns
- Access to cessation resources

Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

The Impact of smoke-free policies

Findings:

Reduces exposure to secondhand smoke

Increases the number of tobacco users who quit

Reduces the initiation of tobacco use among young people

Reduces tobacco-related morbidity and mortality, including acute cardiovascular events

Reduces healthcare costs substantially.

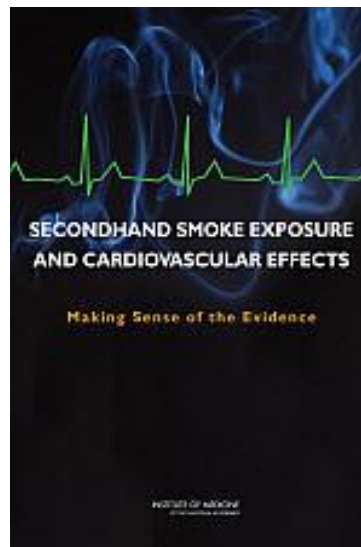
No adverse economic impact on businesses, including bars and restaurants.

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/Tobacco/smokefreepolicies.html>

Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

The NC Smoke-Free Restaurants and Bars Law

Emergency room visits for heart attacks reduced by 21 percent!



Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Smoke-Free Policies Work

Helena, Montana:

Hospital admissions for heart attacks fell by 40% during the first six months after a smoke-free workplaces law was implemented (2002).

After the law was struck down in court, the rates returned to their previous level within 6 months.

Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Why is it Important to De-normalize Tobacco Use?

Nearly 90% of adult smokers begin smoking by age 18.

- *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults, USDHHS, Centers for Disease Control, 2012.*

Preventing youth from starting tobacco is the key to changing norms.



Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks – Why Support?

Creating tobacco-free zones outdoors encourages smokers and other tobacco users to quit and changes social norms to support tobacco-free living.

Less role modeling of tobacco use de-normalizes the behavior to youth.

Outdoor exposure to tobacco smoke can be high especially when someone is near a smoker. Kleipis, Ott and Switzer. Real-time measurement of outdoor tobacco smoke particles. *J. Air & Waste Manage. Assoc.* **57**:522–534. 2007.; Kleipis, et al. Outdoor air pollution in close proximity to a continuous point source. *Atmospheric Environment* **43** (2009) 3155–3167;

Studies show that tobacco smoke is detected as far as 30 feet or more from the smoking source. *Hwang & Lee, Nicotine Tobacco Research, 2013* and *Stafford, Daube & Franklin, Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 2010.*

Cigarette butts are dangerous to small children and animals who may eat them.

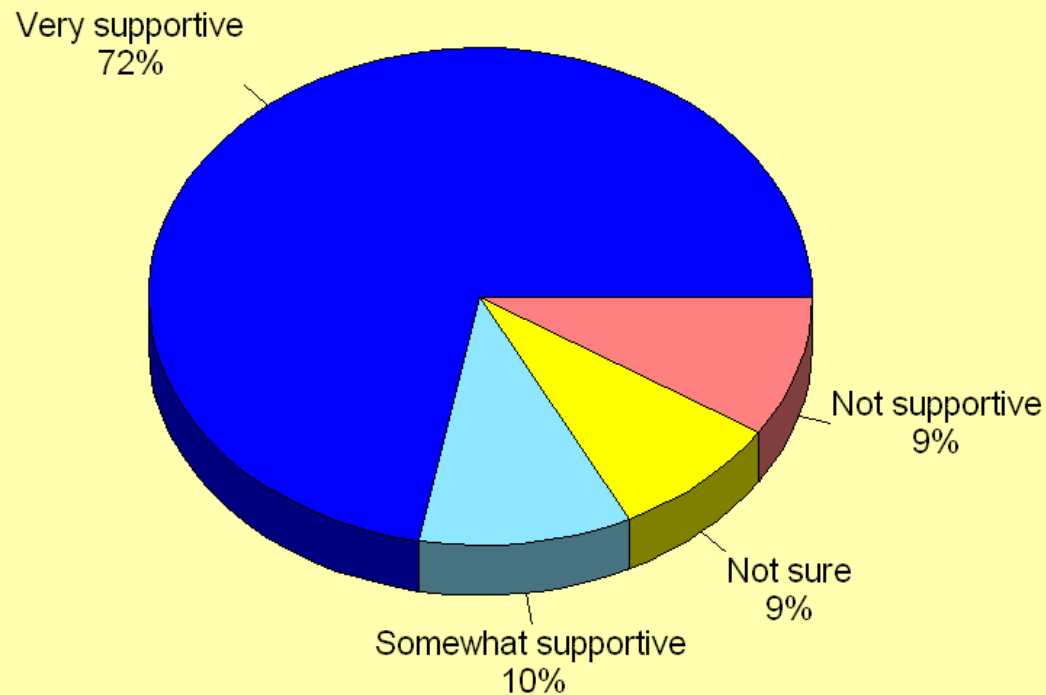
Citizens go to parks to enjoy fresh air and healthy physical activity. Parks are intended to be family friendly venues.



Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

Q18. How Supportive Would You Be for All Mecklenburg County Parklands, Including Parks, Greenways, Nature Preserves and Golf Courses to Be Tobacco Free?

by percentage of respondents



Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks



All Signs Point to a Healthier Mecklenburg County



Learn more inside and at tobaccofreemeck.org

Initiatives – Tobacco Free Parks

National 2020 Goal – 10% smoking rate

If Mecklenburg County adult smoking rate decreased from current 20% to 10%:

582 Mecklenburg County lives would be saved per year

\$4,357,280 **cost savings** per year to Mecklenburg County government due to savings in direct medical costs and lost productivity caused by smoking (\$3,856 per smoker per year saved).

P&R Master Plan – Progress Since 2007

2007

Population 852,657



2014

Population 956,904 (12% ↑)



Significant Progress & Investment

- 8 Neighborhood Parks Opened**
- 10 Community & Region Parks Opened**
- 13 Miles of Greenways Opened**
- 2 Nature Preserves Opened**

Signature Venues Completed & Opened

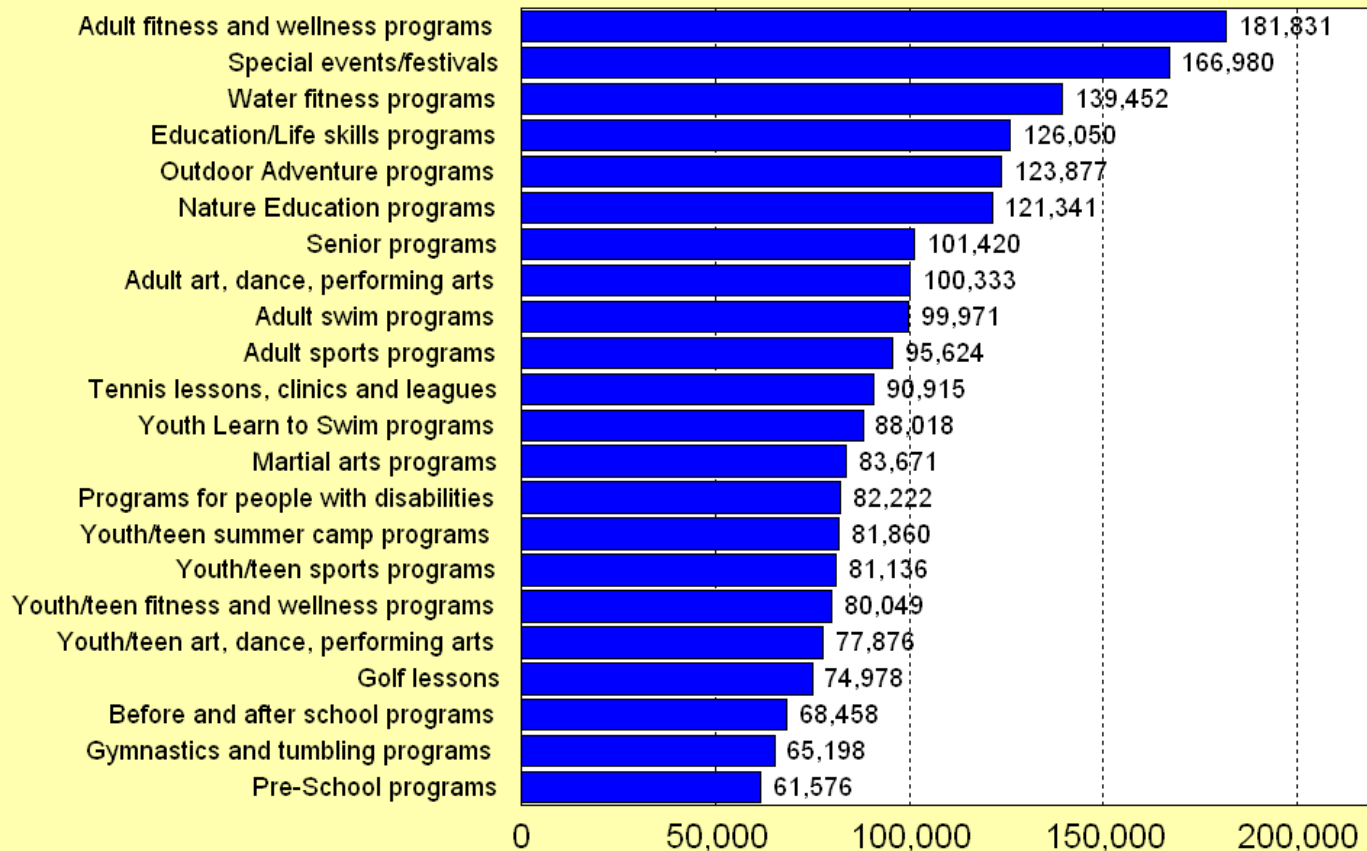
- Little Sugar Creek Urban Sections
- Romare Bearden Park
- Revolution Sports Academy
- Mecklenburg County Sportsplex



P&R Master Plan

Q8a. Estimated Number of Households in Mecklenburg County That Have a Need for Recreation Programs

by number of households based on 362,213 households in Mecklenburg County

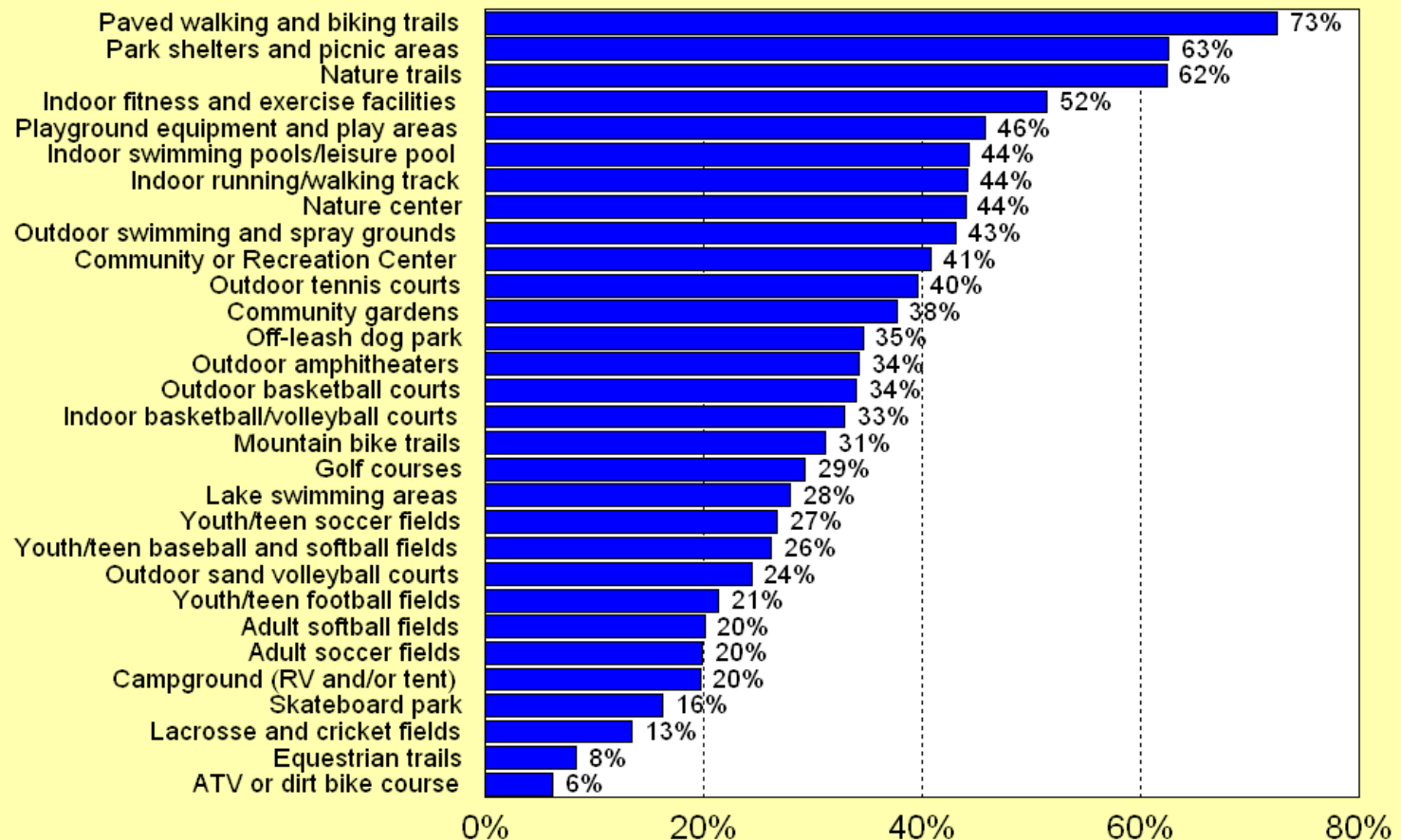


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2013)

P&R Master Plan

Q6. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have a Need For

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



P&R Master Plan – 2014 Major Recommendations

- Access: Goal is a public recreation amenity (includes greenway or nature preserve) within 5 minutes or ¼ mile walk of every resident. (Currently 15.47% of public has such access)
- Household Program Participation: Increase from 21% to 30%
- Programs & Program Lifecycle
 - Keep 50-60% of programs in the Introductory, Take-Off, or Growth stages to meet evolving community needs, 40% in Mature stage for stability & retire Saturated/Declining programs
- Increase cost recovery (currently 27% cost recovery)
- Marketing: Develop a Branding Plan & begin strategic Marketing. Greatly increase marketing efforts (to aid in both Program Participation & Cost Recovery Goals)

Master Plan Calls for:

- Acquiring 2,810 acres of additional parkland by 2018 (485 acquired in FY15)
- 30 new Neighborhood Parks, 3-5 new Community Parks, 3-4 new Regional Parks
120 picnic pavilions, 55 athletic fields, 35 playgrounds, 34 tennis courts, 25 basketball courts, 24 community gardens, 14 off leash dog areas, 6 disc golf course, 3 skateboard areas, etc.
- 33 miles of new Greenway trails w/in 10 years. (40 existing - 200 more miles over next 30 yrs)
- Expand 7 Rec Centers & build 4 new Regional Rec Centers (100,000+ sq. ft. each)
- 14 new spraygrounds & 9 new outdoor family aquatic centers
- 3-4 new Nature Centers

THERE'S NO APP FOR THIS



4 MILE CREEK GREENWAY
MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION



Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation

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