

Community Needs Assessment Study for the Town of Durham New Hampshire Parks and Recreation: Final Report



Submitted to the
The Town of Durham New Hampshire
Parks and Recreation



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Recreation Management and Policy
The University of New Hampshire

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Town of Durham New Hampshire Parks and Recreation:
Final Report**

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Study Purpose and Methods

The Town of Durham, New Hampshire, is home to a dynamic, multifaceted parks and recreation system that serves approximately 16,000 residents through a range of recreational facilities, community programs, and public spaces. [The Durham Parks & Recreation Department \(DPR\)](#) manages active and passive recreation opportunities, including playgrounds, sports fields, trails, waterfront access, fitness and wellness programming, and multigenerational events. These offerings play a critical role in supporting community health, wellbeing, and social cohesion. As a growing department, DPR is committed to data-informed decision-making that ensures its services align with current and future needs.

This report presents findings from a comprehensive needs assessment and visitor use management study conducted in 2024 to evaluate community use, perceptions, and priorities related to two key facilities: Jackson's Landing and Woodridge Park. The study was led by the [Applied Recreation Research Collaborative \(ARRC\)](#) lab within the University of New Hampshire's [Department of Recreation Management and Policy](#). It was designed to generate scientifically grounded, representative, and legally defensible data to support DPR's planning, programming, and policy development moving forward.

Understanding community needs and preferences is vital for parks and recreation departments aiming to provide high-quality services. DPR strives to offer programming and spaces that reflect the diversity of its community and meet its residents' evolving recreation interests. To do this effectively, departments must proactively seek input from users, non-users, and stakeholders. Formal needs assessments provide a systematic method for identifying service gaps, facility conditions, desired improvements, and future priorities—guiding strategic decision-making in a transparent and accountable manner.

The study outlined in this report reflects a rigorous and collaborative approach to public engagement and data collection. The research process was guided by a collaborative planning model designed to elevate community voice and inform strategic decision-making. Carried out by a research team with expertise in community recreation and visitor engagement, the study aimed to generate actionable insights that reflect the needs, experiences, and priorities of Durham residents across a range of user groups and engagement levels.

The resulting data represents a robust and inclusive sample of residents from Durham and surrounding communities and provide a strong empirical foundation for data-driven planning. Responses offer insight into visitation patterns, satisfaction levels, perceptions of impact, and preferences related to management, facilities, and programming. The report also includes open-ended feedback, reflecting the voices and values of those who use and care about these public spaces.

Ultimately, this report is intended to support DPR in making informed, strategic decisions about the future of Jackson's Landing and Woodridge Park. It offers specific managerial guidance based on community input and rigorous social science methods and is intended to serve as a foundational resource in the town's development of a Parks and Playground Master Plan. The following sections outline study methods, summarize key findings, and present actionable recommendations grounded in community values and best practices.

1.2 Study Methods

To assess community perceptions and needs regarding Durham’s parks and recreation system, a three-phase, mixed-methods research design was implemented during the summer of 2024. This approach combined qualitative and quantitative methods to capture input from current users, non-users, and potentially displaced users of Durham Parks and Recreation (DPR) facilities. The three phases included focus groups with stakeholders, a population-level survey, and an on-site QR code survey at DPR park locations. This approach was selected to ensure broad participation and collect both in-depth feedback and generalizable data.

Phase 1: Stakeholder Focus Groups

Three focus groups were conducted to collect qualitative data from community stakeholders—two in-person on April 1, 2024, at the Durham Public Library, and one virtually on April 3 due to inclement weather. Participants were recruited to include a diverse range of community members. All sessions yielded insights into local needs and priorities. Themes explored included facility use, unmet needs, barriers to access, and perceptions of DPR services.

Phase 2: Population-Level Survey via Knock-and-Drop Method

A stratified cluster sampling strategy was used to implement a knock-and-drop survey method. Surveys were distributed from June to August 2024 in Durham, Lee, and Madbury—towns selected based on DPR visitation data and geographic relevance. Each town was divided into clusters of about 100 residential units using ArcGIS Pro's "Build Balanced Zones" tool. A total of 30 clusters were randomly selected—25 in Durham, 3 in Lee, and 2 in Madbury. Trained field researchers canvassed selected residences (approximately 3,000 homes), introduced the study, and distributed survey kits to consenting adults (18+). Each kit included a paper survey, a cover letter, a prepaid return envelope, and a link to an online version. Non-respondents received up to two reminder postcards. Respondents who had visited DPR facilities completed the full survey; others completed a shorter version. Approximately 60 % of contacts resulted in direct interaction with residents—a high engagement rate for this method and indicative of a responsive community. A total of 454 surveys were returned, yielding a 15.1% response rate, considered strong for this method and likely reflecting local interest in parks and recreation planning. Responses were distributed across Durham (60%), Lee (30%), and Madbury (10%), aligning with DPR visitation patterns identified through secondary analysis and meeting distribution goals set by project funders.

Phase 3: On-Site QR Code Survey

To supplement the population sample, DPR staff posted flyers with QR codes linking to the online survey at Jackson’s Landing and Woodridge Park from July through August 2024. This effort yielded an additional 101 completed surveys. The QR-based approach ensured participation from active users of DPR facilities during the summer.

Final Data and Data Integrity

The population-level and on-site datasets were assessed for non-response bias and statistically compared. As no significant differences were found, both datasets were merged into a unified sample of 555 completed surveys. The final dataset is considered representative, inclusive, and scientifically robust. It reflects a diverse cross-section of DPR users and non-users, is geographically aligned with established visitation patterns, and meets methodological standards for generalizability to the broader service population. As such, it provides a strong empirical foundation for data-driven decision-making in DPR’s future planning and policy development.

Interpreting Likert Scale Scores

This report presents results based on a series of 7-point Likert-type scales, a widely accepted method in social science and recreation research for measuring attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral intentions. The study employed both one-way (unimodal) scales, which measure a single continuum from low to high (e.g., Satisfaction, Future Intention), and two-way (bimodal) scales, which capture opposing positions, with the midpoint (4) indicating neutrality or indifference (e.g., Support, Agreement).

To support meaningful interpretation of the data, the tables below provide general thresholds used to categorize average (mean) scores across all scales. While exact cutoff points may vary by context, these ranges are grounded in established survey research practices and are commonly used to interpret public perception data in parks and recreation planning. This framework enables consistent and transparent interpretation of survey findings throughout the report.

General Interpretation Guidelines (All Scales)

| Score Range | Interpretation |
|-------------|---|
| 1.0 – 2.9 | Low / Negative / Opposition |
| 3.0 – 3.4 | Slightly Low / Below Neutral |
| 3.5 – 5.0 | Moderate / Neutral to Somewhat Positive |
| 5.1 – 6.0 | High / Strong Support or Agreement |
| 6.1 – 7.0 | Very High / Near-Unanimous Support |

Scale-Specific Anchors and Meaning

| Scale Type | Low (1.0–3.4) | Moderate (3.5–5.0) | High (5.1–7.0) |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Satisfaction | Poor to Adequate | Good to Very Good | Excellent to Perfect |
| Future Intention | Definitely Not to Unlikely | Neutral to Likely | Very Likely to Without a Doubt |
| Impact | No to Slight Impact | Moderate to Noticeable Impact | Strong to Major Impact |
| Support | Strongly Oppose to Somewhat Oppose | Neutral to Somewhat Support | Support to Strongly Support |
| Importance | Not at All to Slightly Important | Neutral to Moderately Important | Very to Extremely Important |
| Agreement | Completely Disagree to Somewhat Disagree | Neutral to Somewhat Agree | Agree to Completely Agree |

These interpretive guidelines provide a standardized lens for evaluating the survey findings presented in this report. While mean scores offer a useful summary of community sentiment, they should be interpreted alongside the broader context of the study—including demographic patterns, site-specific conditions, and open-ended feedback. This combined approach enhances the validity and applicability of the results, helping to inform evidence-based decision-making and long-term planning for Durham Parks and Recreation.

1.3 Key Findings

This section summarizes major findings from the Community Needs Assessment Study and establishes a baseline to guide future decision-making related to Durham Parks and Recreation Department (DPR) facilities, programming, and operations.

Visitor Profile and Engagement

DPR visitors were predominantly white (96.5%), college-educated (96.1%), and approximately 51 years old. Most respondents (60%) lived in Durham, and 78.6% reported household incomes exceeding \$100,000. Gender distribution was relatively balanced. Respondents indicated strong attachment to DPR facilities, with an average of 9 to 11 years of use and moderate to frequent annual visitation. These findings suggest a stable and invested user base with consistent patterns of engagement.

Indicators of visitor loyalty (measured on a 7-point scale, where 1 = *Definitely Not* and 7 = *Without a Doubt*) revealed moderate intention to volunteer (mean = 3.74) or attend public meetings (mean = 3.94), but stronger likelihood to recommend DPR to others (mean = 5.52) and contribute financially (mean = 4.21). This suggests high community value placed on DPR, even if direct civic engagement is more limited. Visitors appear to act more as advocates and supporters than as active participants in public planning processes.

Non-visitors tended to be younger and more likely male. On a 7-point scale (1 = *No Impact*, 7 = *Major Impact*), the most cited barriers to use included a lack of awareness of DPR offerings (mean = 5.59) and scheduling conflicts (mean = 4.29). Cost and transportation were not viewed as significant limitations, indicating that communication and outreach may be the more pressing issues for this group.

Facility Accessibility and Health Benefits

On a 7-point scale (1 = *Poor*, 7 = *Perfect*), respondents rated DPR facilities highly accessible by vehicle (mean = 6.48) and moderately accessible by walking or biking (mean = 5.80). On a 7-point scale (1 = *Completely Disagree*, 7 = *Completely Agree*), perceptions of inclusivity were favorable across racial/ethnic groups (mean = 5.52) and income levels (mean = 5.34), though access for individuals with disabilities was rated lower (mean = 4.66), suggesting an area for improvement. Improving ADA access could help expand usage among underserved groups.

On a 7-point scale (1 = *Completely Disagree*, 7 = *Completely Agree*), the health and wellness benefits of DPR were widely affirmed. Respondents reported that DPR contributed to reduced stress (mean = 6.12), improved life satisfaction (mean = 6.05), enhanced fitness (mean = 6.08), and prevention of future health issues. The importance of preserving these benefits for future generations was rated highly (mean = 5.96), reinforcing DPR's role in community wellbeing.

Experience Quality and Site Impacts

Overall satisfaction and future use intentions were favorable across both primary sites. On a 7-point scale (1 = *Poor / Definitely Not*, 7 = *Perfect / Without a Doubt*), Jackson's Landing received a satisfaction mean of 4.84 and intention-to-return mean of 5.08. Woodridge Park respondents reported slightly lower but still positive scores (satisfaction mean = 4.47; intention-to-return mean = 4.64).

Perceived on-site impacts were low to moderate. Respondents noted concerns related to environmental conditions (e.g., standing water, poison ivy), the number of users during peak times, and general upkeep.

These impact levels suggest that while current conditions are manageable, continued maintenance and monitoring are recommended to preserve experience quality. Regular attention to environmental conditions may help prevent long-term degradation.

Management and Investment Priorities

On a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly Oppose*, 7 = *Strongly Support*), the development of a Durham Community Center received the strongest support among proposed initiatives (mean = 5.92). Respondents emphasized the value of a centralized, year-round space for recreation, education, social interaction, and wellness. The center was viewed as a foundational piece of infrastructure to meet evolving needs.

Other high-priority system-wide initiatives included increasing trail connectivity between town properties (mean = 5.87), developing an indoor recreation center (mean = 5.38), and expanding DPR programming (mean = 5.28). These preferences reflect strong interest in improving walkability and offering recreation opportunities throughout the year.

Park-specific priorities also emerged. On the same 7-point support scale, Jackson's Landing's top improvements included playground upgrades (mean = 5.24), expanded recreation infrastructure (mean = 4.96), and renovations to Churchill Rink. Support was nearly equal for both enclosed (mean = 4.80) and unenclosed (mean = 4.74) rink options. At Woodridge Park, constructing a professional skatepark (mean = 5.46), upgrading the current skatepark (mean = 5.33), and adding new pickleball courts (mean = 5.21) were the highest-ranked actions. These preferences suggest residents value facility diversity that can serve multiple generations.

Financial Management Preferences

On a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly Oppose*, 7 = *Strongly Support*), funding strategies to support DPR were generally well supported. Creating a Recreation Revolving Fund received the highest endorsement (mean = 5.56), reflecting strong interest in reinvesting program revenue and donations into DPR operations and facilities. Other well-supported strategies included increasing non-resident fees (mean = 5.48) and hiring additional full-time staff (mean = 5.49) to meet programming and maintenance needs. Voluntary donation models received moderate support (mean = 4.93), while a mandatory day-use fee was generally opposed (mean = 2.66). These responses suggest that residents prefer flexible, low-barrier financial strategies that preserve access while enhancing sustainability.

Non-Visitor Insights

Though based on a smaller sample, non-visitor feedback underscored the importance of improved marketing and awareness. Increasing visibility of DPR services could help address informational barriers. Transportation and cost concerns were minimal among this group, reinforcing the opportunity to better engage non-users through outreach rather than infrastructure expansion alone.

Community Value of DPR

Respondents consistently emphasized DPR's role in supporting public health, social connection, youth development, and access to nature. DPR offerings were broadly viewed as community assets that enhance quality of life. On a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at All Important*, 7 = *Extremely Important*), protecting and maintaining these resources for future generations was viewed as a high priority (mean = 5.96), reinforcing support for sustained investment and stewardship. These findings align with broader public values around accessible, inclusive, and wellness-driven parks and recreation systems.

1.4 Management Takeaways

This section outlines specific, evidence-based recommendations for the Durham Parks & Recreation Department (DPR) based on the findings summarized in Section 1.3. Takeaways are grouped by management theme and aligned with the most highly supported priorities. Each action item reflects community input and is intended to support data-driven planning, investment, staffing, and operations.

Investment Priorities

Infrastructure improvements emerged as a top-tier priority across both survey and focus group data. The most widely supported project was development of a Durham Community Center (mean = 5.92), seen as a critical investment to expand indoor, multi-use space for youth, adult, and intergenerational programming. Residents noted the absence of a central gathering place to support year-round recreation and wellness.

Increased trail connectivity between town properties (mean = 5.87) was also strongly supported and aligns with the community's interest in non-motorized access, walkability, and equitable entry into natural spaces. Expanded trail systems may reduce vehicle traffic to high-use sites, link neighborhoods to parks, and improve recreation access for seniors and youth without independent transportation.

At the site level, investment priorities were clear. Woodridge Park visitors prioritized a professional skatepark, upgrades to the current skatepark, and the addition of pickleball courts—amenities that would serve youth, teens, and older adults alike. Jackson's Landing respondents called for playground updates, infrastructure expansion, and renovations to Churchill Rink. Support for rink upgrades was balanced between enclosed (mean = 4.80) and unenclosed (mean = 4.74) options, suggesting cost, functionality, and seasonal flexibility will be key considerations during design.

The data suggest that DPR may benefit from pursuing a phased capital improvement strategy, beginning with projects receiving the strongest community backing (e.g., the community center and trail connectivity), while addressing site-specific needs through scalable renovations. All new infrastructure could incorporate universal design, ADA accessibility, and sustainable materials. For examples, see the [National Park Service's Accessibility & Universal Design Standards](#) as well as the [United States Access Board's Guide to Outdoor Developed Areas](#).

Staffing and Service Delivery

Infrastructure expansion and increased programming demand may warrant investment in staffing. Residents supported hiring more full-time staff (mean = 5.49) and part-time or seasonal staff (mean = 5.14) to improve service delivery and responsiveness to visitor needs. Respondents indicated that the current staffing model may be insufficient to support maintenance, programming, and safety at DPR's most heavily used sites.

Focus group participants emphasized that greater staff visibility—meaning a more noticeable and approachable presence of DPR staff in parks and at events, particularly during peak hours and community programs—would enhance user experience and foster a stronger sense of connection between the department and the public. Additional staffing could also support program diversification, particularly for underserved populations such as working adults, seniors, and teenagers.

The data suggest that DPR might consider developing a staffing plan that defines core roles, builds seasonal hiring pipelines, and provides training for both frontline and supervisory staff. Partnerships with schools, universities, and regional organizations could help recruit a diverse and mission-aligned workforce. Internal check-ins and performance reviews may improve retention and reinforce a culture of accountability and service. Explore NRPA's [Workforce Development resources](#) to support this effort.

Financial Management Preferences

Responses showed strong support for transparent, sustainable funding strategies. The highest-rated financial approach was creating a Recreation Revolving Fund (mean = 5.56), which would allow DPR to reinvest revenue generated from fees and donations back into programs, infrastructure, and staffing.

Other mechanisms supported by residents included increasing non-resident fees (mean = 5.48), implementing tiered pricing models, and allocating a portion of property tax revenue toward DPR capital projects (mean = 5.20). While residents opposed mandatory day-use fees (mean = 2.66), voluntary donation options—such as signage with suggested donation amounts, digital pay portals, or “friends of the park” sponsorship models—received *moderate support* (mean = 4.93).

To maintain public support for these strategies, DPR might consider prioritizing financial transparency. Dashboards, infographics, or annual reports that communicate how revenues are collected and spent can build trust and lay the groundwork for future funding initiatives. See NRPA's [Finance and Budgeting tools](#) for best practices.

Experience Quality and Site Impacts

Although respondents rated satisfaction and intention to return highly at both core parks, recurring concerns were identified regarding environmental conditions, visitor congestion, and general facility maintenance. These issues were more frequently mentioned at Jackson's Landing, though similar patterns were noted at Woodridge Park.

Concerns included standing water, poison ivy, trail overgrowth, and uneven mowing or upkeep—all issues that, while not currently limiting use, could impact long-term perceptions if left unresolved. Based on these insights, DPR may benefit from adopting a proactive maintenance plan with regular site inspections, seasonal checklists, and issue tracking tools to support responsive operations.

Installing real-time feedback systems (e.g., comment forms, QR code surveys, or mobile apps) could allow visitors to report concerns, helping DPR address problems before they escalate. To improve experience quality and balance site use, DPR might explore small-scale infrastructure improvements like shade structures, better drainage, and ADA upgrades, as well as distributing programming across underutilized spaces. Refer to NRPA's [CAPRA certification guidelines](#) for planning support.

Summary of Management Takeaways

Community feedback highlights strong support for a new community center, improved trail connectivity, and targeted upgrades at Jackson's Landing and Woodridge Park. Expanded staffing is needed to sustain operations and broaden programming, especially for underserved groups. Financial strategies favoring reinvestment and transparency—such as a Recreation Revolving Fund and tiered user fees—were well supported. While overall satisfaction was high, recurring concerns about maintenance, environmental conditions, and user congestion suggest areas for proactive attention. These findings offer DPR a clear path for future investment, service delivery, and community trust.

1.5 Data Snapshot



2.0 Key Study Highlights by Park

2.1 Jackson's Landing Park

Visitor Profile

The typical visitor to Jackson's Landing Park is a 51-year-old white female from Durham with a graduate or professional degree and a household income above \$100,000. Visitors most frequently engage in playground use (39.1%), waterfront activities (32.4%), and skating or spectating at Churchill Rink (13.3%). On average, visitors report coming to the park 6.39 times per year, with an average visitation history of 11.4 years. These findings suggest that Jackson's Landing is especially valued by long-term residents and families with children and serves both active and passive users. It also sees broad use throughout the year, with seasonally specific activities like skating and kayaking contributing to visitation.

Experience Quality

Visitor experience at Jackson's Landing was generally rated as *very good* (mean satisfaction = 4.84), with 59.7% rating their trip as either *excellent* or *perfect*. Intention to return was also *very likely* (mean = 5.08), with nearly one-third (32.8%) of respondents stating they would return *without a doubt*. Visitors also reported high satisfaction with site elements such as the waterfront setting and convenience of location but noted lower satisfaction with facility maintenance and restrooms.

Perceived Impacts

Impacts on visitor experience were rated as *moderate* overall. The highest concerns included environmental conditions (mean = 3.29), number of other users (mean = 3.17), and general upkeep (mean = 3.07), followed by user behavior (mean = 2.94) and crowding (mean = 2.82). These scores suggest manageable conditions but potential areas for monitoring. In open-ended comments, poison ivy, standing water, and uneven trails were frequently noted as concerns that detracted from experience quality.

Management Preferences

Support for management actions was strongest for updating the playground (mean = 5.24), building more recreation infrastructure (mean = 4.96), and enclosing Churchill Rink (mean = 4.80). Among those with *moderate* support, building community boat storage (mean = 4.77) and waterfront development (mean = 4.75) ranked highest. Increasing ADA accessibility (mean = 4.46) and restroom availability (mean = 4.64) also drew consistent interest. Mandatory day-use fees received the lowest support (mean = 2.73). These findings suggest that residents value infrastructure that supports families and improves basic amenities.

Management Improvements (Open-Ended)

Facility upgrades were the most common improvement theme (40.0%), including calls to enclose the rink, improve restrooms, and update the playground. Parking and waterfront access improvements (23.8%) were frequently cited, with emphasis on additional parking for kayaks and accessible launch points. Trail and grounds maintenance (15.0%) centered on trail signage, clearing overgrowth, and reducing poison ivy. Other themes included sustainability, public awareness, and program expansion. A number of respondents expressed interest in converting the park into a more year-round destination with four-season facilities and more flexible indoor/outdoor use spaces.

Respondent Profile- Jackson's Landing Park

| Variable | Valid Percentages or Means |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 48.6% |
| Female | 51.4% |
| Age | |
| Mean Age | 50.7 years |
| 18-35 years | 4.0% |
| 36-50 years | 38.9% |
| 51-64 years | 35.4% |
| 65+ years | 21.7% |
| Ethnicity | |
| White | 96.9% |
| Other | 3.1% |
| Income Level | |
| Under \$25,000 | 0.7% |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 1.8% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 4.9% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 7.4% |
| \$100,000-\$149,999 | 38.4% |
| \$150,000 or more | 41.5% |
| Education Level | |
| Less than high school | --- |
| Some high school | --- |
| High school graduate | 2.1% |
| Some college | 1.4% |
| 2-year college | --- |
| 4-year college | 33.2% |
| Graduate/professional degree | 63.4% |
| Town of Residence | |
| Durham | 58.6% |
| Lee | 31.7% |
| Madbury | 9.7% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

Trip Visitation Patterns and Experience Quality- Jackson's Landing Park

| Variable | Valid Percentages or Means |
|--|----------------------------|
| Experience Use History | |
| Average days in the last year visited | 6.39 days |
| Total years visited | 11.4 years |
| Primary Activities | |
| Playing at/visiting the playgrounds | 39.1% |
| Playing at/visiting the waterfront | 32.4% |
| Playing at/visiting Churchill Rink | 13.3% |
| Boating | 4.2% |
| Exercising (e.g., jogging, Tai Chi, yoga, etc.) | 3.7% |
| Experience Quality | |
| Overall Satisfaction ¹ | 4.84 |
| Intention-To-Return ² | 5.08 |
| On-Site Impacts³ | |
| Environmental factors (e.g., standing water, poison ivy, etc.) | 3.29 |
| The number of other users | 3.17 |
| A lack of general upkeep (e.g., fresh mulch, mowing, etc.) | 3.07 |
| The actions or behaviors of other users | 2.94 |
| Crowding | 2.82 |
| Visible litter, garbage, or vandalism | 2.71 |
| Unsafe equipment and/or play spaces | 2.67 |
| Conflict with other users | 2.61 |
| Limited ADA accessibility | 2.61 |

¹Note. Response Code: 1 = poor and 7 = perfect

²Note. Response Code: 1 = definitely not and 7 = without a doubt

³Note. Response Code: 1 = no impact and 7 = major impact

Management Preferences- Jackson's Landing Park

Question: Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following hypothetical management actions at JL. "Durham Parks and Recreation should consider at Jackson's Landing Park..."

| Variable* | Mean |
|---|------|
| Updating the playground (e.g., new paint, new play features, etc.) | 5.24 |
| Building more recreation infrastructure (e.g., trails, outdoor classroom, etc.) | 4.96 |
| Renovating Churchill Rink- enclosing the facility (e.g., extended skating season, 4-season use, multi-use surfaces for camps, programs, activities, etc.) | 4.80 |
| Building community small boat storage near the waterfront | 4.77 |
| Developing the waterfront (e.g., amphitheater, seating, etc.) | 4.75 |
| Renovating Churchill Rink- without enclosing the facility (e.g., updated: seating, boards, glass, improve locker rooms, new equipment, etc.) | 4.74 |
| Increasing availability of restrooms | 4.64 |
| Applying a <i>voluntary</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., donation box) | 4.63 |
| Increasing ADA accessibility | 4.46 |
| Increasing signage (e.g., welcome, info kiosks, trail signs, etc.) | 4.27 |
| Increasing availability of parking | 4.20 |
| Applying a <i>mandatory</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., fee station) | 2.73 |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = strongly oppose and 7 = strongly support

Open-Ended Comments: Management Improvements- Jackson’s Landing Park

Question: *If you could ask management to improve JL, what might you ask them to do?*

| Themes and Sub-Themes | Theme N¹ <i>(Sub-Theme N²)</i> | Theme Valid % <i>(Sub-Theme Valid %)</i> |
|---|--|--|
| Facility improvements | 32 | 40.0 |
| Enclose rink | (8) | (25.0) |
| Improve bathrooms/restrooms | (7) | (21.9) |
| Improve playground equipment | (4) | (12.5) |
| Add seating/pavilion/shade | (4) | (12.5) |
| Access and parking | 19 | 23.8 |
| Increase general parking | (7) | (36.8) |
| Waterfront parking for kayaks/boats | (5) | (26.3) |
| Waterfront access for kayaks/boats | (4) | (21.1) |
| Accessibility for seniors | (3) | (15.8) |
| Trail and grounds maintenance | 12 | 15.0 |
| Trail signage improvements | (4) | (33.3) |
| Trail maintenance/clearing | (5) | (41.7) |
| Reduce poison ivy | (3) | (25.0) |
| Environmental sustainability | 6 | 7.5 |
| Solar panels/environmental focus | (3) | (50.0) |
| Goose poop cleanup | (3) | (50.0) |
| Marketing and public awareness | 4 | 5.0 |
| Better promotion of park | (2) | (50.0) |
| Tide charts/signage | (2) | (50.0) |
| Program and activity expansion | 4 | 5.0 |
| Pickleball/roller sports | (2) | (50.0) |
| Teen/child activities expansion | (2) | (50.0) |
| Affordability and community equity | 3 | 3.8 |
| Discounts for residents | (2) | (66.7) |
| Voluntary donation/payment suggestions | (1) | (33.3) |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

¹Theme N refers to the total number of individual comments coded within each major thematic category.

²Sub-Theme N refers to the number of comments coded within a specific sub-category under each border theme.

Illustrative Quotes from Community Members- Jackson's Landing Park

The following quotes were selected to illustrate common sentiments expressed by community members regarding facility improvements, access and parking, and trail and grounds maintenance at Jackson's Landing Park.

Facility Improvements (32 comments)

- *"Enclose rink, warm viewing area at rink, get rid of poison ivy and goose poop! Real bathrooms open at all times."*
- *"Enclose the rink. The current facility has decimated the youth hockey program. Players are leaving because of the subpar facilities."*
- *"Several pieces of equipment on the playground could use some maintenance (steering wheel broken off, microphone broken)."*
- *"Bathrooms available when the rink isn't open."*

Access and Parking (19 comments)

- *"Make parking available at the waterfront."*
- *"Parking at the waterfront for kayakers, not just big boaters; see the nice kayak launch site in Dover."*
- *"Increase parking for cars with boat trailers."*
- *"Parking for non-trailer and handicap use. Regular cars!"*

Trail and Grounds Maintenance (12 comments)

- *"Better kept walking trails, although I think they're fairly nice as is."*
- *"Keep trails marked and clear of poison ivy."*
- *"The trails are kind of rough though, plants grow over the path often."*
- *"Trail signage improvements would help first-time visitors."*

2.2 Woodridge Park

Visitor Profile

The typical Woodridge Park visitor is a 50-year-old white female from Durham, holding a graduate/professional degree and reporting a household income over \$100,000. Visitors most frequently walk or walk their dogs (33.9%), attend baseball games (32.2%), or use the playground (17.5%). The average visitor reports 8.57 visits per year and a 9.21-year history of use. These findings highlight the park's dual identity as both a neighborhood walking area and a formal athletic facility. Baseball use, in particular, is strongly tied to seasonal programming, while dog walking and playground use represent informal, year-round engagement. Additionally, several users referenced using the park as a key social gathering point for neighbors and families, particularly during summer evenings and youth games.

Experience Quality

Overall satisfaction was rated as *good* to *very good* (mean = 4.47), with 47.1% rating their experience as *excellent* or *perfect*. Intention to return was *likely* to *very likely* (mean = 4.64), with 18.6% stating they would return *without a doubt*. While most respondents expressed general satisfaction, several open-ended comments referenced aging infrastructure, limited seating, and the need for shade as potential barriers to enjoyment. Residents also noted that playground surfacing and path conditions could be improved for strollers and mobility devices.

Perceived Impacts

Impacts on visitor experience were rated as *moderate*. Environmental concerns (mean = 3.22), general upkeep (mean = 3.11), and crowding (mean = 3.04) were the most frequently cited concerns. Litter, vandalism, and safety issues with equipment were also noted. Though none of these concerns reached a high severity level, the consistency of responses suggests an opportunity for more structured seasonal maintenance, especially around athletic fields and informal gathering spaces.

Management Preferences

Support was strongest for constructing a professional skatepark (mean = 5.46), updating the existing skatepark (mean = 5.33), and building pickleball courts (mean = 5.21). Other *moderately supported* upgrades included refreshing the playground (mean = 5.17) and resurfacing the basketball courts (mean = 5.03). Permanent pavilions, increased restrooms, and ADA improvements received moderate support. Like Jackson's Landing, mandatory day-use fees received the lowest support (mean = 2.99). When ranked by overall strength of support, the professional skatepark stood out as the clearest infrastructure priority, particularly among teens and younger families. Respondents also showed interest in multifunctional spaces that could support a wider variety of programming.

Management Improvements (Open-Ended)

Facility improvement was the most common theme (38.8%), including calls to update the toddler playground, improve the skatepark and tennis courts, and add restrooms or seating. Program and activity expansion (21.3%) centered on pickleball, town events, and new amenities like a pump track. Parking and access improvements (13.8%) focused on ADA paths and event congestion. Environmental and trail enhancements (12.5%) included drainage fixes and trail connections. Residents emphasized affordability and better signage. There was a recurring call for more inclusive and intergenerational design elements to support seniors, teens, and families with young children—suggesting an opportunity to expand year-round use through facility and program diversification. Many also encouraged community input during the design phase of major improvements to ensure upgrades reflect resident priorities.

Respondent Profile- Woodridge Park

| Variable | Valid Percentages or Means |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 46.8% |
| Female | 53.2% |
| Age | |
| Mean Age | 50 years |
| 18-35 years | 1.4% |
| 36-50 years | 43.5% |
| 51-64 years | 40.7% |
| 65+ years | 14.5% |
| Ethnicity | |
| White | 95.9% |
| Other | 4.1% |
| Income Level | |
| Under \$25,000 | --- |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 2.1% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 4.2% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 6.4% |
| \$100,000-\$149,999 | 40.3% |
| \$150,000 or more | 44.1% |
| Education Level | |
| Less than high school | --- |
| Some high school | --- |
| High school graduate | 1.6% |
| Some college | 0.8% |
| 2-year college | 0.4% |
| 4-year college | 34.4% |
| Graduate/professional degree | 62.7% |
| Town of Residence | |
| Durham | 56.7% |
| Lee | 35.9% |
| Madbury | 7.4% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

Trip Visitation Patterns and Experience Quality- Woodridge Park

| Variable | Valid Percentages or Means |
|--|----------------------------|
| Experience Use History | |
| Average days in the last year visited | 8.57 days |
| Total years visited | 9.21 years |
| Primary Activities | |
| Walking and/or dog walking | 33.9% |
| Baseball | 32.2% |
| Playing at/visiting playgrounds | 17.5% |
| Tennis | 8.8% |
| Skateboarding and/or biking (e.g., skatepark) | 4.2% |
| Experience Quality | |
| Overall Satisfaction ¹ | 4.47 |
| Intention-To-Return ² | 4.64 |
| On-Site Impacts³ | |
| Environmental factors (e.g., standing water, poison ivy, etc.) | 3.22 |
| A lack of general upkeep (e.g., fresh mulch, mowing, etc.) | 3.11 |
| The number of other users | 3.09 |
| Crowding | 3.04 |
| Visible litter, garbage, or vandalism | 3.03 |
| Unsafe equipment and/or play spaces | 3.03 |
| The actions or behaviors of other users | 2.97 |
| Limited ADA accessibility | 2.94 |
| Conflict with other users | 2.92 |

¹Note. Response Code: 1 = poor and 7 = perfect

²Note. Response Code: 1 = definitely not and 7 = without a doubt

³Note. Response Code: 1 = no impact and 7 = major impact

Management Preferences- Woodridge Park

Question: Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following hypothetical management actions at WP. "Durham Parks and Recreation should consider at Woodridge Park..."

| Variable* | Mean |
|---|------|
| Building a professional skatepark (e.g., larger, permanent, concrete, etc.) | 5.46 |
| Updating the skatepark (e.g., new paint, new features, etc.) | 5.33 |
| Building pickleball courts | 5.21 |
| Updating the playground (e.g., new paint, new play features, etc.) | 5.17 |
| Updating the basketball courts | 5.03 |
| Updating the baseball fields | 5.02 |
| Building a permanent pavilion | 4.83 |
| Applying a <i>voluntary</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., donation box) | 4.69 |
| Increasing availability of restrooms | 4.46 |
| Increasing ADA accessibility | 4.24 |
| Increasing signage (e.g., directional, welcome, info kiosks, etc.) | 4.09 |
| Increasing availability of parking | 4.03 |
| Applying a <i>mandatory</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., fee station) | 2.99 |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = strongly oppose and 7 = strongly support

Open-Ended Comments: Management Improvements- Woodridge Park

Question: *If you could ask management to improve WP, what might you ask them to do?*

| Themes and Sub-Themes | Theme N¹ <i>(Sub-Theme N²)</i> | Theme Valid % <i>(Sub-Theme Valid %)</i> |
|--|--|--|
| Facility Improvements | 31 | 38.8 |
| Update/refresh toddler playground | (7) | (22.6) |
| Improve tennis courts (repair, drainage) | (6) | (19.4) |
| Add restrooms/changing rooms | (6) | (19.4) |
| Improve skatepark safety or features | (5) | (16.1) |
| More benches/seating | (4) | (12.9) |
| Field drainage improvements | (3) | (9.7) |
| Program and Activity Expansion | 17 | 21.3 |
| Add pickleball courts | (10) | (58.8) |
| Add pump track for bikes | (4) | (23.5) |
| More town events/games | (3) | (17.6) |
| Access and Parking Improvements | 11 | 13.8 |
| Expand general parking | (6) | (54.5) |
| Add accessible paths to fields/bleachers | (5) | (45.5) |
| Environmental/Trail Enhancements | 10 | 12.5 |
| Improve trail connections to Foss Farm | (5) | (50.0) |
| Increase mowing/frequent maintenance | (3) | (30.0) |
| Address hornets/ticks | (2) | (20.0) |
| Affordability/Community Equity | 6 | 7.5 |
| No or reduced fees for residents | (5) | (83.3) |
| Voluntary day-use fee for non-residents | (1) | (16.7) |
| Marketing and Signage | 5 | 6.3 |
| Improve park signage | (3) | (60.0) |
| Install directional signs from Mill Rd | (2) | (40.0) |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

¹Theme N refers to the total number of individual comments coded within each major thematic category.

²Sub-Theme N refers to the number of comments coded within a specific sub-category under each broader theme.

Illustrative Quotes from Community Members- Woodridge Park

The following quotes were selected to illustrate common sentiments expressed by community members regarding facility improvements, program/activity expansion, and access/parking improvements at Woodridge Park.

Representative Quotes by Major Theme:

Facility Improvements (31 comments)

- *"The toddler playground is in dire need of an update. It is outdated and splintered."*
- *"Fix the tennis net that's torn. Replace the hitting wall. Crack repair."*
- *"Bathroom stalls — better availability of restrooms/changing rooms would be nice."*
- *"Skate park is close to parking and easy for kids to fall toward a car — needs better safety measures."*

Program and Activity Expansion (17 comments)

- *"Please... we've been promised pickleball courts for several years. All ages play this sport."*
- *"Build a pump track for bikes — would be a great addition for local kids."*
- *"More use of the grounds for town events or games — it's a great space but underused."*

Access and Parking Improvements (11 comments)

- *"I think improving the skatepark and increasing parking would be a great thing for local middle and high school kids."*
- *"Accessible path to fields and bleachers would really help families and older visitors."*
- *"Better parking. Lockable chain bike parking would be great too."*

Environmental/Trail Enhancements (10 comments)

- *"Better connection to West Foss Farm hiking trails would really improve the park."*
- *"Mowing a little more frequently during the season would make the park more usable."*
- *"Treat for ticks more regularly."*
- *"A couple of signs need repair as they are illegible or almost."*

3.0 Management Recommendations

The following section outlines data-informed management recommendations for the Durham Parks & Recreation Department (DPR), based on survey and focus group results. Organized by system-wide and site-specific priorities, the recommendations build upon the key takeaways in Section 1.3 and provide guidance for future planning, staffing, funding, and site improvements. The language aims to remain neutral and adaptable, offering ideas for consideration rather than prescriptive directives.

3.1 DPR System-Wide Management Actions

Consider Developing a Durham Community Center

The creation of a year-round, indoor community center received the highest level of public support among proposed system-wide improvements. Residents indicated interest in a flexible facility to support wellness, education, and recreation for all ages. The data suggest that such a center could expand DPR's programming capacity, accommodate events, and offer winter recreation options. Management might consider initiating a feasibility study and community engagement process to explore phased development. Priorities may include accessibility, sustainability, and multi-use design principles with resources from NRPA in developing [Community Wellness Hubs](#) and prioritizing [Community Engagement](#).

Expand Trail Connectivity Across Town Properties

Trail expansion was the second most-supported initiative, reflecting interest in walkable, bikeable, and connected neighborhoods. Improved trail access could support recreation, mobility, and equity for users without vehicle access. DPR may wish to coordinate with relevant departments to identify gaps, prioritize linkages, and align improvements with broader environmental and health goals. Trail projects that promote active transportation may also align with [NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) priorities and qualify for state or federal funding.

Assess Staffing Needs for Expanded Operations

As infrastructure and programming expand, survey respondents expressed support for increasing staffing levels to maintain service quality. Residents endorsed adding full-time staff (mean = 5.49) and part-time/seasonal staff (mean = 5.14) to support supervision, programming, and maintenance. While these findings do not indicate a measured need, they suggest public readiness to invest in workforce expansion. A staffing plan aligned with capital priorities and guided by NRPA's [Workforce Development Best Practices](#) could help build a flexible, inclusive workforce.

Explore Establishing a Recreation Revolving Fund

Support was strong for a dedicated fund to reinvest revenue and donations into DPR operations. Such a fund could improve transparency, adaptability, and long-term fiscal health. Management may wish to define eligible uses, track fund impacts publicly, and align practices with NRPA's [Park Prioritization Tool](#) and [Other Financial Management](#) resources.

Encourage Voluntary Contributions and Promote Transparency

While residents did not favor mandatory day-use fees (mean = 2.66), moderate support was shown for voluntary donations (mean = 4.93). Tools such as QR code signage and online platforms could facilitate

giving without affecting access. Transparency efforts like budget snapshots and donor impact summaries may help sustain public trust and future support.

3.2 Jackson’s Landing Park Management Actions

Renovate the Playground

Jackson’s Landing playground was the top-ranked site-level improvement (mean = 5.24), with concerns about aging equipment, lack of shade, and limited accessibility. The data suggests a full renovation that incorporates shaded seating, new surfacing, and age-diverse features could meet current user expectations. DPR may consider conducting a site assessment to ensure compliance with New Hampshire’s 2024 accessibility standards under HB 467, which require solid-surface pathways connecting park entrances to all play equipment. These updates also align with NRPA’s [Parks for Inclusion resources](#) and may be strong candidates for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding under the [NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) themes of “Recreation for All.”

Improve Waterfront Access and Small Boat Facilities

Respondents noted functional limitations and underutilized shoreline at the boat launch area. Management might explore improvements such as paddlecraft racks, improved signage, and seating to enhance passive use (e.g., picnicking, relaxing by the water, or nature observation). Additional considerations could include shoreline stabilization, ADA-compliant access points, and educational signage on ecological stewardship. Collaborations with local watershed organizations could support grant-seeking and sustainable design. Facilities promoting nature-based recreation may also support "Health and Wellness" [NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) goals.

Explore Renovation Options for Churchill Rink

Churchill Rink received moderate support for enhancements to expand seasonal usability. Potential upgrades include enclosing the rink for multi-season use or making targeted improvements to seating, lighting, or locker rooms. Energy efficiency retrofits—such as LED lighting or HVAC upgrades—may also increase long-term cost savings. A cost-benefit analysis and community dialogue may help assess whether modest investments or full renovation best meet evolving needs. Referencing NRPA’s [Green Infrastructure Development](#) and [CAPRA Accreditation Guidelines](#) may offer helpful planning templates. Identifying regional recreation trends, such as multi-use indoor facilities, could also strengthen justification for investment.

Enhance Site Maintenance and Natural Resource Management

Recurring issues—such as poison ivy, water accumulation, and overgrowth—suggest opportunities for improved seasonal maintenance. DPR might consider creating a rotating inspection schedule, visitor feedback mechanism, and site-level priorities matrix. These efforts could reduce wear on assets while supporting a safe and enjoyable user environment. Incorporating best practices from NRPA’s [Resources on Park Maintenance](#) and [CAPRA Accreditation Guidelines](#) can further support efficient scheduling, resource allocation, and effective upkeep.

3.3 Woodridge Park Management Actions

Pursue a Professional Skatepark

Support was highest for a professionally designed concrete skatepark (mean = 5.46), with many noting the current structure was outdated and unappealing to both beginners and experienced users. The data suggest strong interest in a facility that meets safety and flow standards, encourages positive social interaction, and accommodates multiple age groups. Management might consider hiring a certified skatepark designer and facilitating a community-based participatory design process. Including local youth in planning may enhance long-term stewardship and reduce misuse. DPR may also wish to explore The Skatepark Project's [Skatepark Planning and Design Best Practices](#) resource.

Address Drainage and Landscape Conditions

Concerns about poor drainage, soggy turf, and mosquito-heavy zones were widespread. These issues affect both formal programming and unstructured play. DPR may benefit from a full site drainage assessment to identify topographic constraints, soil composition, and stormwater pathways. Solutions may include bio-swales, native vegetation buffers, or subsurface drainage infrastructure. Preventative strategies may also tie into broader environmental education efforts or community volunteer days focused on landscape restoration.

Add a Pavilion or Shaded Gathering Space

A pavilion or shaded shelter was frequently cited as an amenity that would improve comfort, usability, and event programming. This structure could serve as a hub for picnics, birthday parties, small events, or community gatherings. DPR might explore options for modular construction to allow phased upgrades. Design features could include solar lighting, accessible picnic tables, and rainwater collection systems, aligning with NRPA's [Green Infrastructure Strategies](#).

Upgrade Playground and Court Amenities

Residents showed interest in refreshing the playground and basketball court facilities to improve safety, accessibility, and engagement. For the playground, DPR should evaluate options that ensure HB 467 compliance, including pathways and surfacing. Consideration could also be given to inclusive play features, such as sensory elements, ground-level components, and adaptive swings. For the courts, resurfacing, improved lighting, and multi-use striping for shared activities such as basketball and pickleball may extend play hours and broaden use.

3.4 Next Steps & Future Research

Based on the findings in this study, DPR might consider the following action steps:

- Prioritize shovel-ready and community-backed projects like skatepark construction and trail connectivity.
- Launch outreach and feasibility planning for the Durham Community Center.
- Create a capital improvement roadmap with phased projects aligned to available funding cycles.
- Pilot voluntary giving platforms and track contribution trends.
- Strengthen coordination with other departments (e.g., Public Works, Planning, Conservation) to streamline development.
- Expand engagement with underrepresented users—including renters, seniors, and people with disabilities—through targeted outreach, intercept surveys, or stakeholder interviews.
- Reference [NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) priorities—"Recreation for All" and "Health and Wellness"—when applying for grants like the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#).
- Consider incorporating performance tracking systems, such as NRPA's [Park Metrics](#) and [CAPRA standards](#), to monitor improvement effectiveness and support accreditation goals.

DPR may also consider repeating this type of community needs assessment every 4–5 years to monitor shifting needs, adjust priorities, and evaluate long-term investment outcomes. Longitudinal data can improve competitiveness in funding applications and support data-driven decision-making.

3.5 Management Recommendations Summary and Conclusions

This study offers clear data-supported direction for DPR's future efforts. Residents prioritized a new community center, improved trail systems, and enhanced staffing. Financial strategies—particularly those that support reinvestment, such as a Recreation Revolving Fund—were favorably received. Voluntary contributions were also viewed as viable alternatives to user fees. At the park level, playground and skatepark upgrades stood out as early opportunities for capital reinvestment. Aligning these actions with state legislation (e.g., HB 467), [NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) priorities, and NRPA best practices may strengthen public support and increase access to funding. Long-term success will depend on thoughtful planning, transparent communication, and continued community engagement. DPR's commitment to equity, stewardship, and responsiveness will be central to building a resilient and inclusive recreation system.

4.0 Appendix – Summary Data Tables

4.1 Respondent Profile

| Variable | Valid Percentages or Means |
|--|----------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 48.9% |
| Female | 51.1% |
| Age | |
| Mean Age | 51 years |
| 18-35 years | 5.0% |
| 36-50 years | 38.3% |
| 51-64 years | 33.8% |
| 65+ years | 23.0% |
| Ethnicity | |
| White | 96.5% |
| Other | 3.5% |
| Income Level | |
| Under \$25,000 | 1.0% |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 2.3% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 4.7% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 7.0% |
| \$100,000-\$149,999 | 38.3% |
| \$150,000 or more | 40.3% |
| Education Level | |
| Less than high school | --- |
| Some high school | --- |
| High school graduate | 2.3% |
| Some college | 1.6% |
| 2-year college | 1.0% |
| 4-year college | 32.9% |
| Graduate/professional degree | 62.2% |
| Town of Residence | |
| Durham | 60.0% |
| Lee | 20.5% |
| Madbury | 9.6% |
| Miles from Home to Nearest DPR Park | |
| Mean | 5.86 miles |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

4.2 DPR Programs Used

Q24. Which of the following DPR programs have you used?

DPR Programs Used (Q24)

| Variable | Valid % |
|--|---------|
| Community Programs (e.g., Gunstock Ski Program, Pottery Classes) | 40.4% |
| After School Programs (e.g., Mad Science, Seven Rivers, Pottery, Mtn. Bike Club) | 22.9% |
| Community Events (e.g., Downtown Trick or Treat, Durham Day) | 20.1% |
| Adult Programs (e.g., Pickleball, yoga, Tai Chi, bootcamp) | 8.4% |
| Camps (e.g., REACH Camp, Outdoor Adventure Camp, STEM Camp) | 8.2% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

4.3 Visitor Loyalty

Q23. Please indicate whether you intend to take the following actions in the future regarding DPR.

Visitor Loyalty (Q23)

| Variable* | Item Mean | Scale Mean |
|---|-----------|------------|
| <i>"In the future, I intend to..."</i> | | |
| Referral | | |
| Recommend DPR to friends and family | 5.52 | 5.36 |
| Recommend DPR to others | 5.21 | |
| Financial Support | | |
| Donate money to DPR | 4.21 | 4.09 |
| Donate money to maintain recreation facilities at DPR | 3.98 | |
| Advocacy | | |
| Attend public meetings/hearings about DPR | 3.94 | 3.78 |
| Write and/or speak to town officials | 3.61 | |
| Volunteerism | | |
| Volunteer to help DPR | 3.74 | 3.58 |
| Volunteer to give back to DPR | 3.42 | |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = definitely not and 7 = without a doubt

4.4 Management Preferences

Q25. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following DPR hypothetical management actions.

Management Preferences (Q25)

| Variable* | Mean |
|---|------|
| <i>“Durham Parks and Recreation should consider...”</i> | |
| Creating a Durham community center (e.g., social, cultural, education space) | 5.92 |
| Increasing trail connectivity between town properties | 5.87 |
| Creating a Durham indoor recreation center (e.g., multi-use indoor rec space) | 5.38 |
| Increasing the frequency in which DPR programs are offered | 5.28 |
| Increasing trail connectivity to access downtown Durham | 5.04 |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = strongly oppose and 7 = strongly support

4.5 Financial Management Preferences

Q26. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following DPR hypothetical financial actions.

Financial Management Preferences (Q26)

| Variable* | Mean |
|---|------|
| <i>“I support...”</i> | |
| The creation of a <i>Recreation Revolving Fund</i> that allows DPR to collect user fees to fund recreation programs and facilities | 5.56 |
| Hiring more full-time DPR staff | 5.49 |
| Having non-Durham residents pay <i>more</i> than Durham residents to use DPR programs and facilities | 5.48 |
| Using a portion of Durham residents' property taxes to offset DPR costs for building and maintaining recreation programs and facilities | 5.20 |
| Hiring more part-time DPR staff (e.g., seasonal employees) | 5.14 |
| Applying a <i>voluntary</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., donation box) | 4.93 |
| Having non-Durham residents pay <i>the same</i> as Durham residents to use DPR programs and facilities | 4.42 |
| Applying a <i>mandatory</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., fee station) | 2.66 |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = strongly oppose and 7 = strongly support

4.6 Accessibility

Q27. To what extent do you agree that DPR facilities and/or programs are *accessible*?

Accessibility Perceptions (Q27)

| Variable* | Mean |
|---|------|
| <i>“DPR parks, facilities, and/or programs are...”</i> | |
| Accessible by vehicle | 6.48 |
| Accessible by walking and/or bicycle | 5.80 |
| Accessible within 10 minutes of where you live | 5.61 |
| Accessible to people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds | 5.52 |
| Accessible to people of all income levels | 5.34 |
| Accessible to people with disabilities | 4.66 |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

4.6 Health Outcomes

Q28. Please indicate how important each of the following *health outcomes* is to you when visiting DPR facilities and/or programs.

Health Outcome Perceptions (Q28)

| Variable* | Item Mean | Scale Mean |
|--|-----------|------------|
| <i>“Recreation at DPR parks, facilities, and/or programs...”</i> | | |
| Psychological and Emotional Well-Being | | |
| Causes me to be more satisfied with my life | 6.05 | 5.84 |
| Causes me to appreciate life more | 5.62 | |
| Physical Well-Being | | |
| Improves my overall fitness | 6.08 | 5.82 |
| Improves my overall health | 5.56 | |
| Preventative and Mental Health Benefits | | |
| Reduces my stress levels | 6.12 | 5.75 |
| Reduces chances of future health issues | 5.38 | |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = not at all important and 7 = extremely important

4.7 Open-Ended Comments: Value of DPR in the Community

Open-Ended Comments: Value of DPR in the Community (Q29)

Question: *What do you value most about DPR in our community? Please elaborate and explain why it is important to you.*

| Themes and Sub-Themes | Theme N ¹ (Sub-Theme N ²) | Theme Valid % (Sub-Theme Valid %) |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Access to Outdoor Spaces | 37 | 36.6 |
| Trails and preserves (e.g., Foss Farm, Oyster River) | (17) | (45.9) |
| Playgrounds and parks | (12) | (32.4) |
| Tennis courts, waterfront access | (8) | (21.6) |
| Community Events and Activities | 26 | 25.7 |
| Community-building events (Durham Day, Winter Fest) | (14) | (53.8) |
| Adult and family programming | (12) | (46.2) |
| Youth Programs and Opportunities | 20 | 19.8 |
| Youth camps, classes, and sports | (14) | (70.0) |
| Teen programs (skate nights, REACH) | (6) | (30.0) |
| Affordability and Access Equity | 10 | 9.9 |
| Free or low-cost programming | (6) | (60.0) |
| Access for all ages and abilities | (4) | (40.0) |
| Health and Wellness Benefits | 8 | 7.9 |
| Physical activity and fitness | (5) | (62.5) |
| Mental health and community belonging | (3) | (37.5) |
| Total | 101 | 100% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

¹Theme N refers to the total number of individual comments coded within each major thematic category.

²Sub-Theme N refers to the number of comments coded within a specific sub-category under each border theme.

Illustrative Quotes from Community Members- Value of DPR in the Community

The following quotes were selected to illustrate common sentiments expressed by community members regarding access to outdoor spaces, community activities, and youth programming provided by DPR.

Access to Outdoor Spaces (37 comments)

- *"I use the forest trails maintained by the town more than anything else. They are important as my primary source of exercise."*
- *"All the trails, being able to get out in nature helps me de-stress — and I love birding and seeing all the wildlife."*
- *"Really appreciate the walking trails more than the parks."*
- *"Playgrounds to take grandchildren — safe, accessible, and well-maintained."*

Community Events and Activities (26 comments)

- *"In addition to the wonderful parks, DPR offers events and activities for all and fosters a wonderful community."*
- *"How it feels like a small community — the events bring us together."*
- *"I appreciate community events like Durham Day and the Winter Fest — important for multigenerational community building."*

Youth Programs and Opportunities (20 comments)

- *"The kid programs, whether it be REACH or teacher workshop days, are wonderful."*
- *"Youth programs and camps provide safe spaces for sports and being outdoors."*
- *"Great to have so many nice programs for kids in our community — it really lets you meet other parents too."*

Affordability and Access Equity (10 comments)

- *"Affordable options for adults and children need to be available. DPR offers a wide range of activities for all ages."*
- *"Provides inexpensive activities for almost all residents."*
- *"I think children, families, and community members need safe outdoor spaces to encourage their physical and mental health and to have a strong sense of community belonging."*
- *"Free access to public parks is really important — it ensures everyone can participate regardless of income."*

4.8 Open-Ended Comments: DPR Suggested Improvements

Open-Ended Comments: DPR Suggested Improvements (Q29)

Question: *If you could ask management to improve anything about DPR, what might you ask them to do?*

| Themes and Sub-Themes | Theme N ¹ (Sub-Theme N ²) | Theme Valid % (Sub-Theme Valid %) |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Facility Improvements | 33 | 41.3 |
| Playground and park upgrades | (10) | (30.3) |
| Bathroom/restroom accessibility | (6) | (18.2) |
| Churchill rink renovation | (5) | (15.2) |
| ADA accessibility improvements | (5) | (15.2) |
| Water features (splash pad) | (4) | (12.1) |
| Program and Activity Expansion | 21 | 26.3 |
| Expanded adult programming (exercise classes) | (9) | (42.9) |
| Expanded summer/childcare programs | (8) | (38.1) |
| New community events or spaces | (4) | (19.0) |
| Access and Parking Improvements | 11 | 13.8 |
| Increased parking/trailhead parking | (6) | (54.5) |
| Improved trail/bike path connectivity | (5) | (45.5) |
| Marketing and Public Awareness | 8 | 10.0 |
| Improved communication about programs | (5) | (62.5) |
| More signage and directional information | (3) | (37.5) |
| Affordability and Community Equity | 7 | 8.8 |
| Keep recreation free or low-cost | (5) | (71.4) |
| Fund improvements without raising taxes | (2) | (28.6) |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

¹Theme N refers to the total number of individual comments coded within each major thematic category.

²Sub-Theme N refers to the number of comments coded within a specific sub-category under each bro

Illustrative Quotes from Community Members- DPR Suggested Improvements

The following quotes were selected to illustrate common sentiments expressed by community members regarding facility improvements, program expansion, access/parking, and affordability.

Facility Improvements (33 comments)

- *"Updating playground equipment, especially at Jackson Landing and Woodridge, it's really needed."*
- *"Improve ADA accessibility and bathroom accessibility — everyone should be able to enjoy the parks."*
- *"Renovate Churchill Rink — it's long overdue."*
- *"Provide a splash pad or pool for summer — a big draw for families."*

Program and Activity Expansion (21 comments)

- *"Expand summer programming so more kids can participate — a full-day camp would be great."*
- *"More pickleball courts and more adult exercise classes would be wonderful."*
- *"It would be amazing to have a community center where kids, teens, and seniors could gather year-round."*

Access and Parking Improvements (11 comments)

- *"Increase parking access for trails and small boat launches."*
- *"Create more safe trails and bike paths connecting different parts of town."*
- *"Better signage would really help — sometimes it's hard to find fields and trail entrances."*

Affordability and Community Equity (7 comments)

- *"Find ways to fund DPR activities without raising property taxes — residents already pay enough."*
- *"Free or low-cost programming ensures everyone can enjoy it, not just those who can afford extra fees."*
- *"Please do not charge fees for basic park use — keep parks free and open for all families."*

4.9 Existence and Community Value Assessment

Q33. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

Existence and Community Value Perceptions (Q33)

| Variable* | Mean |
|--|-------------|
| <i>“DPR is important to be me because...”</i> | |
| Future generations can use and experience DPR | 5.96 |
| I value the benefits DPR provides myself and/or others | 5.94 |
| I value the benefits DPR provides the community | 5.94 |
| I value the existence of DPR | 5.92 |

*Note. Response Code: 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree

5.0 Appendix – Summary Data Tables: DPR Non-Visitors

5.1 Respondent Profile: DPR Non-Visitors^A

| Variable | Valid Percentages or Means |
|--|----------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 63.5% |
| Female | 26.5% |
| Age | |
| Mean Age | 49.4 years |
| 18-35 years | 22.3% |
| 36-50 years | 36.2% |
| 51-64 years | 16.8% |
| 65+ years | 25.2% |
| Ethnicity | |
| White | 93.3% |
| Other | 6.7% |
| Income Level | |
| Under \$25,000 | 2.9% |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 8.6% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 11.4% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 34.3% |
| \$100,000-\$149,999 | 25.7% |
| \$150,000 or more | 14.3% |
| Education Level | |
| Less than high school | -- |
| Some high school | -- |
| High school graduate | 2.8% |
| Some college | 11.1% |
| 2-year college | 5.6% |
| 4-year college | 22.2% |
| Graduate/professional degree | 58.3% |
| Town of Residence | |
| Durham | 62.2% |
| Lee | 27.0% |
| Madbury | 10.8% |
| Miles from Home to Nearest DPR Park | |
| Mean | 4.48 miles |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

^ANote. This data reflects approximately 35 responses and should be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size.

5.2 Open-Ended Comments: Reasons For Not Visiting DPR

Open-Ended Comments: : Reasons For Not Visiting DPR (Q31)

Question: *For individuals who have never visited DPR parks, facilities and/or programs- Why have you never visited? What are the reasons for this? What changes would encourage you to use DPR in the future?*

| Themes and Sub-Themes ¹ | Theme N ² (Sub-Theme N ³) | Theme Valid % (Sub-Theme Valid %) |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Lack of Awareness | 14 | 46.7 |
| Unaware of DPR parks/facilities/events | (9) | (64.3) |
| No clear or accessible information | (5) | (35.7) |
| Life Stage/Personal Factors | 9 | 30.0 |
| Aging/health-related reasons | (5) | (55.6) |
| No longer have young children | (4) | (44.4) |
| Recent Movers/New Residents | 4 | 13.3 |
| Just moved to Durham or area | (4) | (100.0) |
| Alternative Recreation Preferences | 3 | 10.0 |
| Prefer trails/other outdoor areas | (3) | (100.0) |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

*Note. Percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

¹Note. This data reflects approximately 35 responses and should be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size.

²Theme N refers to the total number of individual comments coded within each major thematic category.

³Sub-Theme N refers to the number of comments coded within a specific sub-category under each border theme.

Illustrative Quotes from Community Members- Reasons For Not Visiting DPR

The following quotes were selected to illustrate common sentiments expressed by community members regarding lack of awareness, life stage factors, and moving to the area.

Lack of Awareness (14 comments)

- *"Generally not aware of DPR programs, classes, etc."*
- *"I haven't visited most of them because I did not know about them."*
- *"Knowledge of facilities or information on events is limited — I didn't even know the other parks existed."*

Life Stage/Personal Factors (9 comments)

- *"Older/retired — only visit when my grandchildren come visit."*
- *"It's been a long time. I rarely have visited since my kids were little 25–30 years ago."*
- *"Group trail walks would be nice. I'm 77 and hesitant to walk alone in the woods."*

Recent Movers/New Residents (4 comments)

- *"Just moved to Durham."*
- *"I think I have visited some places but didn't realize they were DPR facilities — there are a lot of trails and walks around."*

*Note: This data reflects approximately 35 responses and should be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size.

Q32. For individuals who have never visited DPR parks, facilities, and/or programs- Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on a 7-point scale.

Non-Visitors Perceived Constraints to DPR Visitation (Q32)

| Variable^A | Item Mean |
|---|------------------|
| <i>“I am unable to visit DPR parks, facilities and/or programs because of...”</i> | |
| A lack of available information about parks, facilities, and/or programs | 5.59 |
| Scheduling conflicts | 4.29 |
| The availability of parks, facilities, and/or programs | 4.26 |
| Transportation issues | 2.18 |
| The cost of participation | 2.03 |

*Note. Response Code: 1= completely disagree, and 7= completely agree.

^ANote. This data reflects approximately 35 responses and should be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size.

6.0 Appendix – Population Sampling Survey Instrumentation

A Survey of Durham Parks and Recreation Users and Non-Users



Recreation Management and Policy



The University of New Hampshire Department of Recreation Management and Policy and Durham Parks and Recreation **are requesting your participation in a brief survey regarding user and non-user perceptions of Durham Parks and Recreation current and future parks and facilities.**

The information you provide in this survey is very important, as it will help inform management actions associated with Durham Parks and Recreation parks, facilities, and programs.

Even if you have never visited any Durham Parks and Recreation parks, facilities, and programs, your responses and insights are still very important.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary, but very important. Only consenting adults (18 + years of age) are eligible to participate. You may decide to quit at any time. All information collected in this survey will be kept confidential. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

You have two options for completing the survey:

1) If you would like to take the survey online, please visit the link below or scan the QR code below:

<https://sites.usnh.edu/DPR>



2) If you would like to take the paper survey, please complete the provided survey and then mail it back in the postage-paid return envelope provided.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact:

Dr. Michael Ferguson
Principal Investigator
The University of New Hampshire
Department of Recreation Management and Policy

Professor Matthew Frye
Co-Principal Investigator
The University of New Hampshire
Department of Recreation Management and Policy

This survey should be taken by the person in the household who has had the most recent birthday and is at least 18 years of age.

Section 1: Qualifying Questions

Please report all answers referring only to you or your immediate family's personal experiences.

1. Do you have about 10-15 minutes to complete this survey? ___Yes ___No
 - a. [**If NO-** Thank you for your time and please discard these materials. Know that you may receive reminder postcards asking you to take this survey in the future as this is an automated system. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience.]

2. Have you **ever** visited **any** *Durham Parks and Recreation parks, facilities, and/or programs* (e.g., Jackson's Landing, Churchill Rink, Woodridge Park)? ___Yes ___No
 - a. [**If YES-** please continue to **Question 3**].
 - b. [**If NO-** please skip ahead to **Question 31**].

Section 2: The Recreation Experience at Jackson's Landing

Please tell us about your recreation experience(s) at Jackson's Landing (JL).
For the purposes of this survey, JL refers to Jackson's Landing Park, Churchill Rink, and the waterfront.

3. Have you **ever** visited *Jackson's Landing (JL)*? ___ Yes ___ No
 - a. **[If YES-** please continue to **Question 4]**.
 - b. **[If NO-** please skip ahead to **Question 13]**.
4. How many **days in the last year** (12 months) have you visited JL? _____ days
5. How many **total years** have you been visiting JL? _____ years
6. Which of the following activities have you participated in at JL? [Select **ALL** that apply].
7. Which **one** of those activities do you most frequently participate in at JL? [Select **ONE** option].

| Q6 Answer [Select ALL that apply] | | Q7 Answer [Select ONE option]. |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| | Playing at/visiting the playgrounds | |
| | Playing at/visiting Churchill Rink | |
| | Playing at/visiting the waterfront | |
| | Walking and/or dog walking | |
| | Picnicking and/or family day gatherings | |
| | Exercising (e.g., jogging, Tai Chi, yoga, etc.) | |
| | Nature trail walking | |
| | Boating | |
| | Relaxing and/or hanging out | |
| | Other [Please specify]: | |

8. Please indicate how satisfied you are with JL on a scale from 1-7; 1= *poor* and 7= *perfect*. [Select **ONE** option].
 Poor Perfect
 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

9. Please indicate whether you intend to return to JL in the future, on a 7-pt scale; 1=*definitely not*; 7=*without a doubt*.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Definitely Not | | | | | | Without a Doubt |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

10. To what extent have the following impacted your recreation experience(s) at JL, on a scale of 1-7; 1= *no impact* and 7= *major impact*. [Select **ONE** per row].

| <i>"On your recent experience(s) at JL, did any of the following impact your recreation experience?"</i> | No Impact | | | | | | Major Impact |
|--|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|
| Crowding | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| The number of other users | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Conflict with other users | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| The actions or behaviors of other users | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Visible litter, garbage, or vandalism | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Environmental factors (e.g., standing water, poison ivy, insects, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Unsafe equipment and/or play spaces | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| A lack of general upkeep (e.g., fresh mulch, mowing, dated features, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Limited ADA accessibility | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

Section 2 (continued): The Recreation Experience at Jackson's Landing

Please tell us about your recreation experience(s) at Jackson's Landing (JL).

For the purposes of this survey, JL refers to Jackson's Landing Park, Churchill Rink, and the waterfront.

11. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following hypothetical management actions at JL on a scale from 1 to 7; 1= *strongly oppose* and 7= *strongly support* [Select **ONE** option for each row].

| <i>"Durham Parks and Recreation should consider at JL..."</i> | Strongly Oppose | ← | Neutral | → | Strongly Support | | |
|--|-----------------|-----|---------|-----|------------------|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing signage (e.g., welcome, info kiosks, trail signs, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing availability of parking | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing availability of restrooms | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing ADA accessibility | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Updating the playground (e.g., new paint, new play features, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Renovating Churchill Rink- without enclosing the facility (e.g., updated: seating, boards, glass, improve locker rooms, new equipment, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Renovating Churchill Rink- enclosing the facility (e.g., extended skating season, 4-season use, multi-use surfaces for camps, programs, activities, etc) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Developing the waterfront (e.g., amphitheater, seating, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Building more recreation infrastructure (e.g., trails, outdoor classroom, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Building community small boat storage near the waterfront | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Applying a <i>voluntary</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., donation box) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Applying a <i>mandatory</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., fee station) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

12. If you could ask management to improve JL, what might you ask them to do?

Section 3: The Recreation Experience at Woodridge Park

Please tell us about your recreation experience(s) at Woodridge Park (WP).

13. Have you **ever** visited *Woodridge Park (WP)*? ___ Yes ___ No

- a. **[If YES-** please continue to **Question 14]**.
- b. **[If NO-** please skip ahead to **Question 23]**.

14. How many **days in the last year** (12 months) have you visited WP? _____ days

15. How many **total years** have you been visiting WP? _____ years

16. Which of the following activities have you participated in at WP? [Select **ALL** that apply].

17. Which **one** of those activities do you most frequently participate in at WP? [Select **ONE** option].

| Q16 Answer [Select ALL that apply] | Q17 Answer [Select ONE option]. |
|---|---|
| Playing at/visiting playgrounds | |
| Walking and/or dog walking | |
| Picnicking and/or family day gatherings | |
| Exercising | |
| Baseball | |
| Basketball | |
| Pickleball | |
| Skateboarding and/or biking (e.g., skatepark) | |
| Relaxing and/or hanging out | |
| Other [Please specify]: | |

18. Please indicate how satisfied you are with WP on a scale from 1-7; 1= *poor* and 7= *perfect*. [Select **ONE** option].

| Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | Perfect |
|------|------|------|-----------|-------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) (6) (7) |

19. Please indicate whether you intend to return to WP in the future, on a 7-pt scale; 1=*definitely not*; 7=*without a doubt*.

| Definitely Not | Without a Doubt |
|----------------|-----------------|
| (1) | (7) |

20. To what extent have the following impacted your recent outdoor recreation experience(s) at WP, on a scale of 1-7; 1= *no impact* and 7= *major impact*. [Select **ONE** per row].

| <i>"On your recent experience(s) at WP, did any of the following impact your recreation experience?"</i> | No Impact | Major Impact |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Crowding | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| The number of other users | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| Conflict with other users | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| The actions or behaviors of other users | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| Visible litter, garbage, or vandalism | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| Environmental factors (e.g., standing water, poison ivy, insects, etc.) | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| Unsafe equipment and/or play spaces | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| A lack of general upkeep (e.g., fresh mulch, mowing, dated features, etc.) | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |
| Limited ADA accessibility | (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) | |

Section 3 (continued): The Recreation Experience at Woodridge Park
Please tell us about your recreation experience(s) at Woodridge Park (WP).

21. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following hypothetical management actions at WP on a scale from 1 to 7; 1= *strongly oppose* and 7= *strongly support* [Select **ONE** option for each row].

| "Durham Parks and Recreation should consider at WP..." | Strongly Oppose | ← | Neutral | → | Strongly Support | | |
|---|-----------------|-----|---------|-----|------------------|-----|-----|
| Increasing signage (e.g., directional, welcome, info kiosks, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing availability of parking | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing availability of restrooms | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing ADA accessibility | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Updating the playgrounds (e.g., new paint, new play features, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Updating the baseball fields | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Updating the basketball courts | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Updating the skatepark (e.g., new paint, new features, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Building a professional skatepark (e.g., larger, permanent, concrete, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Building pickleball courts | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Building a permanent pavilion | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Building a splash pad | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Applying a <i>voluntary</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., donation box) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Applying a <i>mandatory</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., fee station) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

22. If you could ask management to improve WP, what might you ask them to do?

Section 4: Overall Perceptions of Durham Parks and Recreation

Please tell us about your overall perceptions of Durham Parks and Recreation (DPR) parks, facilities, and programs. For the purposes of this survey, DPR refers to Jackson’s Landing, Churchill Rink, and Woodridge Park.

23. Please indicate whether you intend to take the following actions in the future regarding DPR, on a scale of 1 to 7; 1=*definitely not* and 7=*without a doubt*. [Select **ONE** option for each row].

| “In the future, I intend to...” | Definitely Not → Without a Doubt | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Recommend DPR to friends and family | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Recommend DPR to others | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Donate money to DPR | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Donate money to maintain recreation facilities at DPR | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Attend public meetings/hearings about DPR | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Write and/or speak to town officials | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Volunteer to help DPR | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Volunteer to give back to DPR | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

24. Which of the following DPR programs have you used? [Select **ALL** that apply].

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Programs (e.g., Gunstock Ski Program, Pottery Classes) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Events (e.g., Downtown Trick or Treat, Durham Day) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Camps (e.g., REACH Camp, Outdoor Adventure Camp, STEM Camp) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | After School Programs (e.g., Mad Science, Seven Rivers, Pottery, Mtn. Bike Club) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adult Programs (e.g., Pickleball, yoga, Tai Chi, bootcamp) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other [Please specify]: _____ |

25. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following DPR hypothetical management actions on a scale from 1 to 7; 1= *strongly oppose* and 7= *strongly support* [Select **ONE** option for each row].

| “Durham Parks and Recreation should consider...” | Strongly Oppose ← Neutral → Strongly Support | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing the frequency in which DPR programs are offered | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing trail connectivity between town properties | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Increasing trail connectivity to access downtown Durham | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Creating a Durham community center (e.g., social, cultural, education space) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Creating a Durham indoor recreation center (e.g., multi-use indoor rec space) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

26. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following hypothetical financial actions within DPR on a scale from 1 to 7; 1= *strongly oppose* and 7= *strongly support* [Select **ONE** option for each row].

| “I support...” | Strongly Oppose ← Neutral → Strongly Support | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Hiring more full-time DPR staff | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Hiring more part-time DPR staff (e.g., seasonal employees) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Having non-Durham residents pay <i>the same</i> as Durham residents to use DPR programs and facilities | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Having non-Durham residents pay <i>more</i> than Durham residents to use DPR programs and facilities | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Using a portion of Durham residents’ property taxes to offset DPR costs for building and maintaining recreation programs and facilities | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| The creation of a <i>Recreation Revolving Fund</i> that allows DPR to collect user fees to fund recreation programs and facilities | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Applying a <i>voluntary</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., donation box) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Applying a <i>mandatory</i> park day use fee for all users (e.g., fee station) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

Section 4 (continued): Overall Perceptions of Durham Parks and Recreation

Please tell us about your overall perceptions of Durham Parks and Recreation (DPR) parks, facilities, and programs. For the purposes of this survey, DPR refers to Jackson’s Landing, Churchill Rink, Woodridge Park.

27. To what extent do you agree that DPR facilities and/or programs are *accessible*, on a scale from 1 to 7; 1= *strongly disagree* and 7= *strongly agree* [Select **ONE** option for each row].

| <i>“DPR parks, facilities, and/or programs are...”</i> | Strongly Disagree ← | Neutral | → Strongly Agree | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Accessible within 10 minutes of where you live | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Accessible by walking and/or bicycle | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Accessible by vehicle | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Accessible to persons with disabilities | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Accessible to people of all income levels | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Accessible to people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

28. Please indicate how important each of the following *health outcomes* is to you when visiting DPR facilities and/or programs, on a scale from 1 to 7; 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important. [Select **ONE** option for each].

| <i>“Recreation at DPR parks, facilities, and/or programs...”</i> | Not at all Important ← | Neutral | → Extremely Important | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Improves my overall health | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Improves my overall fitness | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Reduces chances of future health issues | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Reduces my stress levels | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Causes me to appreciate life more | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Causes me to be more satisfied with my life | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

29. What do you value most about DPR in our community? Please elaborate and explain why it is important to you.

30. If you could ask management to improve anything about DPR, what might you ask them to do?

Section 5: Background and Demographic Information

The survey is almost finished - thank you for sticking with us!

Please tell us a little bit about yourself and keep in mind that all responses are confidential and unidentifiable.

31. [***For individuals who have never visited DPR parks, facilities and/or programs***] Why have you never visited? What are the reasons for this? What changes would encourage you to use DPR in the future?

32. [***For individuals who have never visited DPR parks, facilities, and/or programs***] Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on a 7-point scale [Select ONE per row].

| "I am unable to visit DPR parks, facilities and/or programs because of..." | Completely Disagree ← Neither → Completely Agree | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| The cost of participation | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| The availability of parks, facilities, and/or programs | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| A lack of available information about parks, facilities, and/or programs | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Transportation issues | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Scheduling conflicts | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

33. Regardless of whether you have ever visited DPR parks, facilities, and/or programs, please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on a 7-point scale [Select ONE per row].

| "DPR is important to be me because..." | Completely Disagree ← Neither → Completely Agree | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| I value the existence of DPR | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| I value the benefits DPR provides myself and/or others | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| I value the benefits DPR provides the community | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Future generations can use and experience DPR | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |

34. Which town do you reside in? Durham Lee Madbury [Select ONE option].

35. Approximately how many miles is the nearest DPR facility from your home? _____ miles

36. What is your age? _____

37. What is your gender? Male Female Non-binary [Select ONE option].

38. With which racial group do you most closely identify? [Select ALL that apply].

- White American Indian/ Alaskan Native Asian
 Black/African American Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander Other
 Spanish/Hispanic/Latino Middle Eastern/North African

Further detail about race: _____

39. In what income category does your household fall? [Select ONE option].

- Under \$25,000 \$75,000-\$99,999 Don't Know
 \$25,000-\$49,999 \$100,000-\$149,999
 \$50,000-\$74,999 \$150,000 or more

40. What is the highest level of formal schooling you have completed? [Select ONE option].

- Less than high school High school graduate 2-year college Graduate/professional degree
 Some high school Some college 4-year college

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

This information will be used to improve the management of DPR and the overall visitor experience.

Please mail this entire survey back to us in the provided postage-paid envelope.

7.0 Appendix – Focus Group Interviews

As part of the study, three focus groups were conducted to gather in-depth feedback from community members. Participants included parents, active adults, and community residents who regularly use Durham’s parks, facilities, and programs. Participation was excellent, with strong representation across a broad range of ages and racial backgrounds, providing a rich, inclusive perspective on the needs and priorities of the Durham community. Findings are summarized thematically below, highlighting common patterns, concerns, and investment priorities across all participants.

1) General Perceptions of Durham Parks and Recreation

- **General Impressions and Use Patterns**

Participants frequently cited Jackson’s Landing, Churchill Rink, Wagon Hill, Woodridge Park, Foss Farm, school fields, and the trail network as primary recreation sites.

Key factors influencing use included proximity to home, quality of playgrounds, bathroom access, environmental conditions (e.g., drainage, insects), and shade availability.

- **Common themes included:**

- Ease of access and neighborhood proximity
- High-quality playgrounds and outdoor spaces
- Importance of restroom facilities and shaded areas
- Environmental concerns such as mosquitos and water pooling

- **Illustrative Quote:**

- “We go to Jackson’s Landing when it’s hot and Woodridge in the spring.”

- **Facility Adequacy and Desired Improvements**

Participants identified gaps related to walkability, parking access, and a limited number of connected trail systems. There was strong community interest in expanding amenities such as pocket parks, racquet sport courts, a bicycle pump track, and a community indoor facility.

- **Common themes included:**

- Desire for more trail connectivity
- Insufficient parking at trailheads and parks
- Interest in new recreational facilities (e.g., pump tracks, disc golf)
- Strong support for a future community center with gym space

- **Illustrative Quote:**

- “The dream is a community center with access to gym space. No one is happy with the availability of gym space.”

2) Perceptions of DPR Programs and Events

- **Valued Programs and Events**

Summer camps, after-school youth programs, and large-scale community events (e.g., Halloween, Winterfest) were consistently described as valuable, helping to foster social connections and community spirit.

- **Common themes included:**

- Strong appreciation for community-building events
- Value placed on youth programming and engagement
- Seasonal events as important social touchpoints

- **Illustrative Quote:**

- “Community events are important, and they bring people out. They do a great job of offering those types of events.”

- **Programmatic Gaps and Needs**

Participants noted gaps in adult programming, especially for seniors and recreational sports. There was widespread frustration regarding the fragmentation of recreational offerings across different organizations (e.g., DPR vs. ORYA).

- **Common themes included:**

- Insufficient adult and senior programming
- Lack of organized recreational sports for adults
- Desire for expanded outdoor recreation classes (paddleboarding, mountain biking)
- Need for greater collaboration among recreation providers

- **Illustrative quotes:**

- “We’ve got the boat launch. I feel like we should have paddleboard or sailing programs. I would definitely sign up for a nighttime kayaking program.”
- “The system feels fractured. The organizations are siloed, but it’s still hard to figure out who is in charge of what.”

3) Perceptions of Jackson's Landing Park

- **General Impressions and Use Patterns**

Jackson's Landing was consistently described as a preferred and heavily utilized park, especially for families with young children and teens accessing Churchill Rink programs.

- **Common themes included:**

- High use by families and teens
- Strong participation in the teen skate program
- Popular location for playground visits

- **Illustrative Quote:**

- "The teen skate program is huge."

- **Challenges and Opportunities**

Key concerns included the poor condition of the boat launch and the desire to enclose Churchill Rink for year-round use. Participants also suggested better leveraging non-ice months by offering activities such as roller hockey or temporary pickleball courts.

- **Common themes included:**

- Inadequate waterfront boat launch
- Interest in year-round, flexible rink use
- Seasonal adaptation of facilities

- **Illustrative Quotes:**

- "The boat launch is bad. There's no pitch and the king tide flooded all the way up to the stairs."
- "When the ice is out, they could offer roller hockey, and you could stripe a pickleball court or two in the parking lot across the street."

- **Potential Investments**

Prioritized improvements included playground upgrades, rink facility enhancements, and better accommodations for kayakers.

- **Common themes included:**

- Renovating playground surfaces and equipment
- Enclosing and modernizing Churchill Rink
- Expanding boat storage and launch infrastructure

- **Illustrative Quotes:**

- "The playground is great for young kids. There are just little things like the wobbly bridge is too deep."
- "If you enclosed the rink and added some better facilities like high school-sized locker rooms, improved seating, and a pro shop, you'd have a place people will travel to."

4) Perceptions of Woodridge Park

- **General Impressions and Use Patterns**

Woodridge Park was described as both valued and heavily used, but also as a site needing upgrades. It has increasingly become a destination park for activities like tennis, baseball, skateboarding, and playground use.

- **Common themes included:**

- Strong neighborhood pride in the park
- Increasing use from outside Durham neighborhoods
- Shift from quiet neighborhood park to busy community destination

- **Illustrative Quotes:**

- “I think what you can take away is that we really love our park.”
- “It’s now a destination park. It’s not your quiet neighborhood park anymore.”

- **Challenges and Opportunities**

Residents emphasized concerns around poor drainage, mosquito/tick infestations, parking congestion, and safety issues, particularly during busy sports events. There was significant discussion about conflicts between skate park users and bikers.

- **Common themes included:**

- Water drainage and insect management needs
- Insufficient and unsafe parking during peak times
- Overcrowding at the skate park and playground areas
- Conflict between different user groups (skaters vs. bikers)

- **Illustrative Quotes:**

- “It’s not particularly safe... trying to parallel park on both sides of the road for sports events.”
- “The problem at the skate park is that some kids want to ride their bikes there, and the skateboarders don’t really like that.”

- **Potential Investments**

Investment priorities included addressing drainage, upgrading the toddler playground, expanding the skate park, and adding new community features like a pavilion and pollinator gardens.

- **Common themes included:**

- Drainage and field improvements
- Playground and surface renovations
- Expanded, reconfigured skate and basketball areas
- Addition of shade structures and community garden spaces

- **Illustrative Quotes:**

- “There should be some sort of physical barrier between the skate park and the playground.”
- “I personally think we should shrink the tennis courts by half... expand the basketball courts and the skate park.”