

Section 3:
Benchmarking Comparisons

National Benchmarking

Since 1998, Leisure Vision (a division of ETC Institute) has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 400 communities in over 40 states across the country.

The results of these surveys has provided an unparalleled data base of information to compare responses from household residents in client communities to “National Averages” and therefore provide a unique tool to “assist organizations in better decision making.”

Communities within the data base include a full-range of municipal and county governments from 20,000 in population through over 1 million in population. They include communities in warm weather climates and cold weather climates, mature communities and some of the fastest growing cities and counties in the country.

Communities within the following states are included within the National Benchmarking data base.

- **Arizona**
- **Arkansas**
- **California**
- **Colorado**
- **Connecticut**
- **Florida**
- **Georgia**
- **Kansas**
- **Kentucky**
- **Idaho**
- **Illinois**
- **Indiana**
- **Iowa**
- **Maine**
- **Massachusetts**
- **Michigan**
- **Minnesota**
- **Mississippi**
- **Missouri**
- **Montana**
- **Nevada**
- **New Hampshire**
- **New Jersey**
- **New York**
- **North Carolina**
- **Ohio**
- **Oklahoma**
- **Oregon**
- **Pennsylvania**
- **Rhode Island**
- **South Carolina**
- **South Dakota**
- **Texas**
- **Utah**
- **Vermont**
- **Virginia**
- **Washington**
- **Wyoming**

“National Averages” have been developed for numerous strategically important parks and recreation planning and management issues including: customer satisfaction and usage of parks and programs; methods for receiving marketing information; reasons that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often; priority recreation programs, parks, facilities and trails to improve or develop; priority programming spaces to have in planned community centers and aquatic facilities; potential attendance for planned indoor community centers and outdoor aquatic centers; etc.

Results from household responses for the City of Columbia were compared to National Benchmarks to gain further strategic information. A summary of all tabular comparisons are shown on pages 3-9.

Note: The benchmarking data contained in this report is protected intellectual property. Any reproduction of the benchmarking information in this report by persons or organizations not directly affiliated with the City of Columbia is not authorized without written consent from Leisure Vision/ETC Institute.

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	Columbia
Have you or members of your household visited any City/County/ Park District <u>parks</u> over the past year?			
	Yes	72%	87%
	No	28%	13%
How would you rate the quality of all the <u>parks</u> you've visited?			
	Excellent	31%	41%
	Good	54%	54%
	Fair	12%	5%
	Poor	2%	0%
	Don't know	1%	0%
Ways respondents learn about recreation programs and activities			
	"Leisure Times" Activity Guide	51%	63%
	Newspaper articles/advertisements	40%	47%
	From friends and neighbors	42%	47%
	Parks & Recreation Website	15%	35%
	Radio	10%	30%
	Television	9%	28%
	School flyers/newsletter	17%	22%
	Repeat Customer	NA	19%
	Flyers/Newsletters in mail	31%	19%
	Info displayed at P&R facility	18%	10%
	E-mail bulletins or E-newsletters	5%	6%
	Conversations with P&R staff	6%	3%
	Facebook	NA	3%
	Twitter	NA	1%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	Columbia
Reasons preventing the use of parks and recreation facilities and programs more often			
	We are too busy or not interested	34%	26%
	Household uses facilities from other organizations	15%	13%
	Location of City facilities not close to my home	14%	12%
	Fees are too expensive	12%	11%
	Security is insufficient	7%	7%
	Not enough shade/trees	NA	5%
	I don't know where City facilities are located	13%	5%
	Facilities are not well maintained	6%	4%
	Parks do not contain the facilities we need	13%	3%
	Hours of operation are not convenient	6%	3%
	Facilities do not have the right equipment	7%	2%
	Rules are too restrictive	NA	2%
	Poor customer service by staff	3%	1%
	City does not have quality programs	NA	1%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	Columbia
Recreation <u>programs</u> that respondent households have a need for			
	Special events/festivals	40%	46%
	Adult fitness and wellness programs	47%	42%
	Nature education programs/Outdoor adventure	32%	33%
	Youth Learn to Swim programs	24%	28%
	Youth/teen sports programs	27%	26%
	Education/Life skills programs	32%	26%
	Adult sports programs	23%	25%
	Water fitness programs	29%	24%
	Adult art, dance, performing arts	21%	19%
	Travel programs	NA	18%
	Golf lessons	21%	17%
	Tennis lessons, clinics and leagues	18%	16%
	Youth/teen summer camp programs	19%	16%
	Pre-school programs	14%	16%
	Youth/teen fitness and wellness programs	18%	15%
	Senior programs	23%	15%
	Gymnastics and tumbling programs	14%	15%
	Youth/teen art, dance, performing arts	17%	15%
	Before and after school programs	15%	14%
	Adult swim programs	19%	14%
	Martial arts programs	15%	14%
	Programs for people with disabilities	11%	9%
	At-risk programs for youth	NA	7%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	Columbia
Most important recreation <u>programs</u> (sum of top choices)			
	Special events/festivals	20%	29%
	Adult fitness and wellness programs	29%	26%
	Youth Learn to Swim programs	13%	16%
	Youth/teen sports programs	15%	15%
	Nature education programs/Outdoor adventure	14%	15%
	Adult sports programs	9%	12%
	Education/Life skills programs	14%	10%
	Pre-school programs	7%	8%
	Water fitness programs	12%	8%
	Golf lessons	10%	8%
	Adult art, dance, performing arts	9%	7%
	Youth/teen summer camp programs	9%	7%
	Senior programs	13%	6%
	Before and after school programs	7%	6%
	Travel programs	NA	6%
	Tennis lessons, clinics and leagues	7%	6%
	Youth/teen fitness and wellness programs	6%	5%
	Martial arts programs	4%	4%
	Adult swim programs	7%	4%
	Gymnastics and tumbling programs	4%	4%
	Programs for people with disabilities	4%	3%
	Youth/teen art, dance, performing arts	6%	3%
	At-risk programs for youth	NA	2%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	Columbia
Parks and recreation <u>facilities</u> that respondent households have a need for			
	Walking and biking trails	69%	76%
	Park shelters and picnic areas	53%	70%
	Small (2-10 acres) neighborhood parks	60%	68%
	Large community parks	55%	66%
	Nature trails	55%	55%
	Playground equipment and play areas	42%	51%
	Outdoor pool and aquatic area	43%	47%
	Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	46%	45%
	Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	44%	45%
	Outdoor running/walking track	NA	45%
	Spraygrounds/spray parks	NA	33%
	Ice skating	25%	31%
	Outdoor amphitheater/theater	35%	31%
	Off-leash dog parks	26%	30%
	Baseball and softball fields	21%	29%
	Golf courses	30%	29%
	Sledding hills & cross country skiing	NA	29%
	Boating and fishing	28%	25%
	Outdoor tennis courts	26%	25%
	Soccer fields	22%	24%
	Indoor shelters/meeting space	21%	23%
	Outdoor basketball courts	24%	22%
	Mountain bike trails	22%	21%
	Nature interpretive center	NA	21%
	Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	26%	21%
	Football/Lacrosse fields	14%	11%
	Skateboard park/bike park	13%	11%
	Equestrian trails	12%	5%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	Columbia
Most important parks and recreation <u>facilities</u> (sum of top choices)			
	Walking and biking trails	41%	37%
	Small (2-10 acres) neighborhood parks	29%	33%
	Large community parks	19%	22%
	Playground equipment and play areas	21%	20%
	Nature trails	20%	17%
	Park shelters and picnic areas	17%	16%
	Outdoor pool and aquatic area	17%	14%
	Off-leash dog parks	12%	13%
	Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	17%	11%
	Golf courses	14%	11%
	Baseball and softball fields	7%	10%
	Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	15%	9%
	Soccer fields	8%	8%
	Ice skating	6%	7%
	Spraygrounds/spray parks	NA	6%
	Outdoor running/walking track	NA	6%
	Boating and fishing	8%	6%
	Football/Lacrosse fields	3%	6%
	Outdoor tennis courts	7%	6%
	Outdoor amphitheater/theater	9%	5%
	Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	7%	4%
	Sledding hills & cross country skiing	NA	4%
	Mountain bike trails	6%	3%
	Indoor shelters/meeting space	6%	3%
	Outdoor basketball courts	5%	3%
	Skateboard park/bike park	3%	2%
	Nature interpretive center	NA	2%
	Equestrian trails	3%	1%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys			
		National Average	Columbia
Satisfaction with the overall value received from the parks and recreation department			
	Very Satisfied	26%	41%
	Somewhat Satisfied	35%	34%
	Neutral	19%	14%
	Somewhat Dissatisfied	5%	3%
	Very Dissatisfied	3%	2%
	Don't Know	12%	6%