

TRENDS

Columbia Participation Levels – Analysis

Adult Sports

Men’s and women’s participation in traditional sport leagues continues to remain flat or show a slight decrease. Women’s leagues show the most significant decrease with overall registration indicating that players are opting for coed participation as a replacement. Coed adult kickball, introduced in 2004, has experienced a 98% increase since 2008. Adult kickball is a growing sport nationwide with individuals viewing league play as a way to meet people and socialize with friends. An overall decrease in local adult sport league participation stems from a speculation that young adults no longer want to commit to an extended sport season – often scheduled in 16-week increments. The Department will offer multiple reduced seasons to address these concerns.



Ultimate Frisbee at Cosmo Park

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), individual sports have experienced dramatic increases in participation. Participation data comparing 2011 vs. 2001 indicates increases in the following individual sports: bicycling (73.0%), running/jogging (57.6%), hiking (49.9%), walking (36.3%) and exercising with equipment (28.9%). Archery experienced a 34.0% increase and is a program area the Department will be expanding in 2013.

Youth Sports

An increase in private youth sport organizations has significantly reduced the number of participants in city co-sponsored baseball, softball and soccer leagues. Fewer canceled games and field conditions for league play are a result of improved general maintenance practices and facility improvements - aerification, disease control, mowing height, ag-lime infield surface and irrigation. Youth basketball numbers continue on an upward trend despite a shortage of adequate facilities. Overall, Columbia has strong participation numbers in traditional youth sports. Public requests continue to be strong for winter sports (hockey and ice skating), as well as extreme sports that include BMX bicycling and skateboarding. Columbia’s existing skate park is currently experiencing overcrowding and misuse by BMX riders. The need for additional facilities to accommodate these user groups is prevalent.



Girls Softball
at Antimi Sports Complex

Adapted Community Recreation/Adapted Sports

The Adapted Community Recreation (ACR) program housed at Paquin Tower (Columbia Housing Authority property) continues to have steady growth with expanded community outreach and promotional opportunities. In 2011, collaboration with Boone County Family

Resources (BCFR) led to increased marketing efforts targeting the thousands of Boone County residents living with development disabilities. BCFR helps by funding a portion of ACR programs yearly, and they review the program to make sure their clients' needs are being met. BCFR funding has allowed for the expansion of programs into the evening (after 4 pm) and weekend hours, which raises the participation levels for the program. Some of the expansions include evening and weekend craft/ceramic hours, dances at the ARC, additional workshops, and card and domino games during the evening hours. The ACR program plans to continue its partnership with BCFR and expand the program to other facility sites.



Adapted Sports

Adapted Sports Program serves over 200 individual athletes each year; many athletes compete in 6-7 different sports annually. In 2012, Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO) went from a four-state games system to a two-state games system, resulting in prolonged sport seasons and additional practices and competitions. This change along with registration of new athletes accounts for an increase in participation. As SOMO evaluates and modifies their competition structure, so will the Adapted Sports Program.

Community Recreation

Research studies clearly indicate that sedentary lifestyles contribute to an unhealthy population in terms of mental, physical and societal health. The Department has successfully reached out to policy makers, health care providers, public safety officers and educators to communicate the benefits that recreation facilities and programs play in addressing these concerns within Columbia's First Ward.



Community Recreation Program at the Armory

An increase in participation numbers is due to improvements to long-standing programs and creation of innovative activities/events. Blue Thunder Track was initiated by CPRD in the mid-90's, but did not see substantial growth until 2007 as a result of increased promotional efforts and membership with the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and USA Track and Field (USATF). Volunteer coaches subsequently filed for non-profit status and now operate as a City of Columbia co-sponsored youth organization. S.T.A.R.S. Summer Camp and K.E.Y. Lock-Ins (overnight experiences

focusing on character building and mentoring for youth) have recently been introduced to help combat problems faced by central-city youth. Aditional support of business sponsors, as well as presence of Columbia Police Department for Moonlight Hoops, led to increased participation for this program in 2010. The After School Program participation more than doubled in 2012 due to the dedication of an activity room to the Xbox 360 video game and through word of mouth by participants. On the flip side, a decrease in league sponsorship for Douglass Athletic Association

Baseball and reduced availability of Douglass High School's gymnasium contributed to a decrease in overall sports participation numbers. Sunday "DJ in the Park" activities were expanded to both weekend days in 2012 and have been enthusiastically received.

Continued collaboration with central Columbia residents, the Columbia Police Department, civic organizations and private businesses will prove to be invaluable in improving central Columbia's social and economic conditions through innovative recreation programs and facility development.

Aquatics

Swimming ranked third in the NSGA report in terms of total outdoor aquatic participation in 2011, surpassed only by exercise walking and exercising with equipment. Swimming did experience a participation decrease of 16% from 2001. The National Swimming Pool Foundation recently initiated the Step Into Swim™ campaign. This campaign focuses on encouraging more people to swim as a means of addressing the national health crisis and water safety/drown proofing awareness. The 10-year campaign will initially team up with nine national organizations that teach adults and children how to swim, with a focus on minority populations.



Albert-Oakland Family Aquatic Center

Eliminating cool and rainy weather years (2008 and 2009) from the equation, outdoor pool participation in Columbia has remained relatively flat. The Douglass Family Aquatic Center experienced a 55% increase in participation in 2008 vs. 2007 as result of reduced admission fees - \$1 for all visitors. The Department is implementing reduced daily fees for Little Mates Cove and Lake of Wood pools in the summer of 2013 in hopes of increasing participation at these facilities. The popularity of free, local aquatic facilities with less restricted hours (spraygrounds and swimming lake at Stephens Lake Park) have contributed to a slightly downward trend in participation, in addition to an increase in development of private, fee-based facilities.

As mentioned in the Trends Analysis section, the national trend in aquatic facility development is that of adding play structures to existing "cement-hole" facilities. CPRD recently went through a master planning process for Twin Lakes Recreation Area. The new master plan for the park includes adding an aquatic facility (currently unfunded) to complement Little Mates Cove (a children's waterpark). The anticipated growth of residential areas near Battle High School will likely impact the future needs assessment of aquatic facilities at Lake of the Woods Recreation Area. The development of an indoor/outdoor water park at Philips Park is proposed in the area's master plan and unfunded at this time.

Golf

According to the National Golf Foundation (NGF), golf courses across the United States experienced a 10-20% decrease in the number of rounds of golf played. Additionally, the golf industry continues to experience ramifications from an era of overbuilding courses followed by an economic recession. Golf participation at L.A. Nickell (LAN) and Lake of the Woods (LOW)

saw a decrease in participation beginning in 2001 due to an increase in private course development, extreme weather conditions and discounted golf specials via coupon booklets. A review of the past five years indicates flat participation numbers at LOW and moderate growth at LAN. Participation numbers for both courses remain far below the levels experienced in the late 90's.

The NGF also states that between 2005 and 2008 the number of golfers age 6 to 17 dropped 24%; 3.8 million to 2.9 million. Speculation is that both organized youth sports and the economic climate are inhibiting factors for enticing the next generation. In addition to the factors identified by NGF, youth golf participation in Columbia was significantly affected by Columbia Public School's (CPS) free Summer School Program. CPS offered an "attendance bonus" to encourage participation in the program. In order to combat the declining participation numbers, the Columbia Golf Foundation was formed in 2009. The focus of the foundation is to introduce the game of golf to area youth.



Mill Creek Elementary Students
at LOW Golf Course

In the face of declining rounds, participation expectations are optimistic in regards to an increase in the number of retirees generated from the post-World War II baby boom. This influx of retirees, along with Columbia's reputation as an affordable and attractive place to retire, weighs heavily as a potential boon for future participation. Columbia was recently rated as 4th overall in the 2012 "Best Cities for Successful Aging" study generated by the Milken Institute. This has the potential to affect a number of program areas, including the Activity & Recreation Center (ARC).

Senior Programs

The "graying of America" is presenting both challenges and opportunities for CPRD in working with a group that is not only diverse in age but also economic status and physical and mental capabilities. Older seniors who have participated in group activities, such as bingo, music groups and potlucks are declining in numbers due to illness or death. OAK Tours participant numbers have been fluctuating since 2009 with the economy impacting the ability of seniors to pay for extended, overnight trips. Theatre and day trips continue to have steady participation. Numbers increased in 2010 when the senior program partnered with Osher @ Mizzou, to provide classroom space at Stephens Lake Activity Center. Osher, under the auspices of MU Extension and the Bernard Osher Foundation, focuses on programming designed to complement the interests, concerns and lifestyles of the over 50 adult. The partnership has been very positive and efficient use of the building space.



Osher French Dinner
at Stephens Lake Activity Center

Special Events/Programs & Life Enrichment Classes

Quality programs and special events often originate from community collaboration. In 2004, CPRD began coordinating children's activities for the Downtown District's summer Twilight Festivals. The District opted to cancel Twilight Festivals in 2008, resulting in recreation staff introducing the highly successful Family Fun Fests. CPRD and the MU Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism began working together in 2009 to both educate and partner with students to develop and implement the Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt. The community event reached its



4th of July Event in the Downtown District

maximum participation limit the first year and continues to be popular. The Missouri Parks and Recreation Association (MPRA) award winning program, Walk a Hound, Lose a Pound, is another collaborative effort involving several "pet friendly" organizations including the MU College of Veterinary Medicine Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction and the Central Missouri Humane Society. The annual citywide 4th of July Fire in the Sky event continues to thrive because of financial support from local business sponsors and cooperation from local downtown businesses, MU facility operations staff and several City departments.

Long standing citywide events, such as Movies in the Park, Tons of Trucks and Heritage Festival, continue to show consistent or steady growth in participation indicating continued special event appreciation by the various demographic segments of the community.

Construction was completed on the Stephens Lake Amphitheater in June 2010, providing an additional venue for CPRD sponsored events and revenue generation through rentals. First-year sponsored performances were well received, although extreme heat was an issue for spectators in 2012. Installation of stage lights is planned for the facility and is anticipated to increase rentals, as well as attendee participation.

Tae Kwon Do and Fencing are long-standing Life Enrichment classes with steady participation. Adult martial arts classes were expanded in 2009, with the addition of Karate and Aikido. Youth Aikido was offered beginning in 2012. An increased variety of youth and adult dance classes and camps have been offered over the years successfully, expanding into toddler and preschool age groups, as well. Fourth Friday Kids' Nights, a program designed to offer kid-free time to parents, has been a popular addition. Technology-based classes are growing in popularity, resulting in the Department offering an increased number of adult computer workshops, along with computer camps, game programming and Lego engineering.



Fencing at Rock Quarry House

Activity & Recreation Center (ARC)

The pursuit for personal fitness has been immune from the economic downturn. The demand for gyms and fitness facilities continues to grow. The ARC opened its doors in December 2002 after passage of a 1999 ballot issue that raised about \$10.5 million for its construction. Private efforts generated funding to add 10,000 square feet to the design, making the completed building 73,000 square feet in size. Operating as an enterprise fund, the ARC has exceeded expectations in all facets of operations and membership/revenue projections. The breakdown in membership categories in 2012 was 57% family, 24% adults, 17% seniors and 2% youth. Membership percentages have remained relatively unchanged since the ARC opened. The option of a 30-day renewable pass was introduced in 2009 to address a downturn in the economy, as well as busy family schedules and the seasonal lure of an indoor facility.



Happy New U Event at the ARC

Membership and traditional fitness center program participation has experienced steady growth. National fitness-related trends continue to infiltrate the heartland from both the east and west coast. In the late 90's, step aerobics was the craze. Television programming, such as *Dancing with the Stars*, has influenced the aerobic dance fitness craze of Zumba®, a Latin inspired dance fitness program. This is clearly evident in the filled to capacity ARC Zumba® classes and the demand for more Zumba® classes to be offered. These high-energy, age

resistant classes are predominantly responsible for the

46% percent increase from 2011 to 2012 in drop-in exercise classes. Fitness staff will continue to adapt the Group Exercise schedule to stay fresh and current with local and national trends.

An aging American public is more attuned to health issues due to the rising cost of medical care, chronic disease epidemic, and a growing number of overweight Americans. From 2000 to 2010 Columbia's population grew by 23,969 which was a 28.4 percent increase. According to the *U.S. Census 2010*, Columbia's population was 108,500. Locally, the industry stands poised for significant growth based on the ARC's proven financial success paired with predicted population growth.

Facility Rentals and Park Special Use Permits

Indoor facility rentals have remained fairly consistent over the past five years. Riechmann Pavilion and Rock Quarry House are reserved most weekends of the year. Rock Quarry has a group size limit of 50 persons, and Riechmann has a group size limit of 150 persons. Patrons have expressed a desire for an affordable indoor facility that can accommodate a larger crowd, especially for wedding reception use.



Riechmann Pavilion

Outdoor picnic shelters are regularly rented during moderate weather months and often sell out during peak times of the year, especially around graduation time. Shelters at Stephens Lake Park are the most popular.



Private Event at Cosmo Park

Requests to use the parks for special events have increased 56% from 2008 to 2012. Although special events held at local parks can bring revenue to the city, they can also tax the Department through staff time spent processing applications, meeting with event coordinators, helping with set up, accommodating special requests, picking up trash, cleaning up, repairing turf, etc. The Department has developed a fee schedule for special events to help recoup expenses incurred. It is hoped that decision-makers will enforce collection of event fees, so that department resources do not get drained with the increasing public requests to hold special events at park facilities.

Sport Facility Rentals

The number of field rentals has increased with the addition of the baseball complex at Atkins Park and conversion of a practice field to a game field at American Legion Park. Privately developed baseball and soccer facilities have not impacted the number of rental requests for CPRD sports facilities, thus having no adverse impact on revenue. Field rentals are limited by field availability around league schedules. Public comments indicate a need for additional practice and tournament-quality game fields.



Atkins Park

Financial Assistance

The number of applicants benefitting from recreation financial assistance has increased 48% from 2008 to 2012. In the past few years, the amount of financial assistance requested has exceeded the amount budgeted in the Department's operating budget. However, donations through the City's Share the Light Program have added the needed revenue to fulfill the application requests. (Share the Light allows City of Columbia utility customers to contribute to specific city projects through their monthly utility bill.) The majority of the financial assistance given is used for admission to the ARC. If at some point the amount of funds available can no longer accommodate the requests for financial assistance, adjustments to the program will need to be made.

Did you know?

According to the World Health Organization, "...providing access to facilities, parks and activity programmes is positively associated with physical activity levels among children and adolescents."