



Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan

2023-2027

Prepared By

ZEC EIGHT INSIGHTS^{LLC}
PUBLIC SPACES, PLACES, AND PROGRAMS | CONSULTING

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Master Plan Acceptance Resolution

RESOLUTION 11-01-2022-2

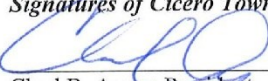
WHEREAS, Cicero Town Council is aware of the parks and recreation needs of the residents of Cicero, Indiana, and;

WHEREAS, the Cicero Town Council realizes the importance of sound planning in order to meet the needs of its citizens;

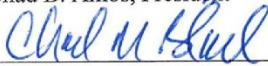
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CICERO TOWN COUNCIL, by declaration, does adopt the Park and Recreation Master Plan as its official plan for the next five years, for the growth and development of parks and recreation opportunities in Cicero, Indiana.

Passed and signed this 1st day of November, 2022.

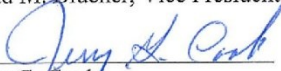
Signatures of Cicero Town Council



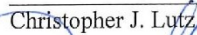
Chad B. Amos, President



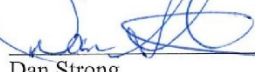
Chad M. Blueher, Vice President



Jerry G. Cook

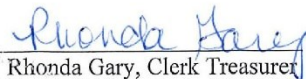


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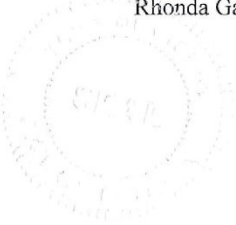


Dan Strong

Attested:



Rhonda Gary, Clerk Treasurer



Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Master Plan Overview

The Town of Cicero, Indiana, is located in Jackson Township, Hamilton County. Founded in 1835, Cicero took its name from Cicero Creek, a tributary to the White River. The town has grown around the northeast shore of Morse Reservoir and currently encompasses a total area of approximately 2 square miles. The opening of Morse Reservoir in 1956 brought a wave of steady growth and development. Today, Cicero offers its residents the qualities of a small town with the recreational amenities of the lake and the convenience of being close to several large metropolitan communities.

A *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* is typically a cyclical process undertaken by most Indiana parks and recreation agencies. The previous plan was finalized in 2017 and this document serves as an update.

The *2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan* identified needs in four distinct areas:

1. Staffing
2. Programming
3. Red Bridge Park facility improvements
4. Community Park facility improvements

This *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* builds upon the foundation set four years ago while presenting strategic goals for the next five-year reporting period.

1.2 Department Overview

The Cicero Parks Department (“Department”) is overseen by the parks superintendent. Accounting for all full-time, part-time, and seasonal support, the Department has 5.2 full-time equivalents dedicated to its system. However, the nearly 29,000 hours dedicated to the park system are largely part-time and seasonal help, as there are only three people (including the superintendent) that are full-time employees (**Figure 1**).

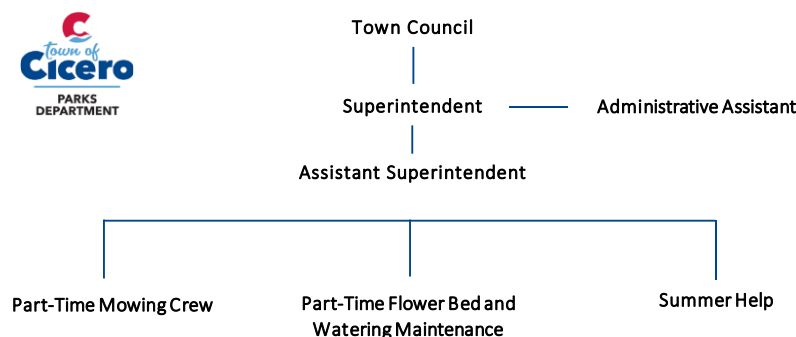


Figure 1: Organizational Chart

The Department does not actively administer programming; instead, Cicero Friends of the Park, a non-profit organization, leads the effort to schedule events utilizing park facilities. This group also helps fundraise for park-specific special projects. Additionally, Our Town Cicero, Cicero’s Main Street Association, provides and sponsors community events each year.

The Cicero parks system consists of two parks, totaling 45.6 acres. The system also includes sports facilities (baseball, softball, outdoor basketball, and tennis), a dog park, multiple playgrounds, a park shelter, and a community building (**Figure 2**).

1.2.1 Parks and Facilities

Community Park (39 Acres)

Located on the east side of town along Stringtown Pike, Community Park (originally called Tri-Town Park) provides a wide variety of outside activities such as baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, playgrounds, a dog park, and a large picnic shelter. A multi-purpose paved pathway provides connectivity.

Red Bridge Park (6.6 Acres)

Red Bridge Park is located on the northwest side of town along Morse Reservoir. The park consists of walking paths, playground equipment, restrooms, the 2,500-square-foot Community Building (available for events), and a marina. A fully-accessible kayak/canoe launch, and 60 boat slips (for rental).

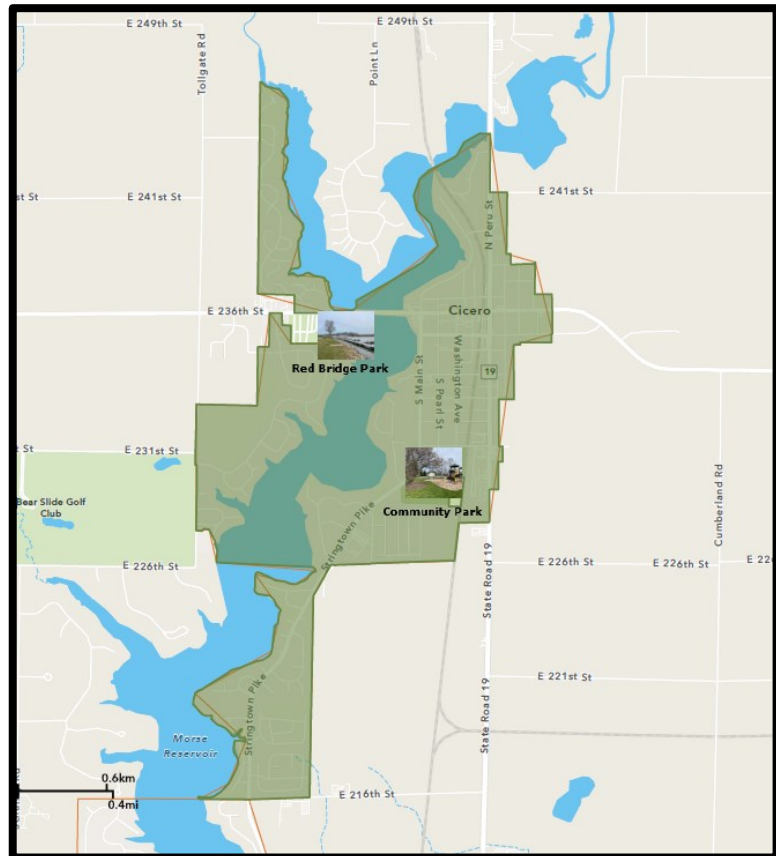


Figure 2: Town of Cicero Planning Area with Parks System Highlighted

1.2.2 Vision

“We are the preferred recreation and park provider and destination for northern Hamilton County.”

1.2.3 Mission

“The Cicero Parks Department exists to engage and grow with our community, acquire and preserve greenspace, activate and facilitate use of recreation amenities, and maintain and sustain our parks.”

1.3 Master Plan Goals and Objectives

The *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* development process began in March 2022. At the project’s onset, the consultant met with elected officials and parks department staff to understand their goals and objectives for this planning effort. The following three overarching goals resulted:

1. A more robust understanding of what Cicero Parks Department should offer
2. A realistic approach to plan implementation
3. A planning process that facilitates a better understanding of parks and recreation management, governance, and available resources

2.1.3 Natural Resource Challenges

Hamilton County's farming economy is thriving, according to the *2020 Hamilton County Comprehensive Plan*. In fact, Hamilton County's farmland revenues have increased by 104% during 2012-2020. With the presence of so much agricultural land, it is understood future park land acquisition (along with general town growth as depicted on the previous page) will involve farmland; therefore, it will be the responsibility of the Department to reforest and reshape agricultural features as land use changes to more active and passive recreation opportunities. This means a more intentional approach to natural resource management is in the future for the Department, but it is several (if not many) years away.

Currently, the Department does not interface with invasive species, as it does not manage any natural areas. The only consideration the Department faces is the interaction with Morse Reservoir from Red Bridge Park. The Department plays a role in ensuring invasive aquatics species are not transported to the body of water, although the Department does not directly manage the reservoir itself. Additionally, algae can build up in the reservoir during summer months, but its presence does not create significant problems or inconveniences for park users.

2.1.4 Climate

In Cicero, the summers are long, warm, humid, and wet; the winters are freezing, snowy, and windy; and it is partly cloudy year round. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 21°F to 84°F and is rarely below 3°F or above 92°F. Facilitating recreation activities as four-season ventures is challenging for the Department given its existing facilities. There is a need for more indoor recreation space(s) along with winter activities that get people outside, active, and engaged with the parks system.

2.2 Man-Made, Historical, and Cultural Features

2.2.1 Trails and Pathways

As of this plan, a new park path is under construction from Cicero to Strawtown Koteewi Park, along 234th Street. This would not only provide additional exercise and transportation opportunities, but also it would connect residents to the largest Hamilton County Parks and Recreation Department property (about 773 acres) that includes aerial adventure trails, archery ranges, bike trails, canoe launches, equestrian center and trails, fishing, hiking trails, nature trails, and a natural history center.

Currently, the pathway system in Cicero is limited to within the two parks. More urban users can use sidewalks to make their way into Community Park and there is a newer pedestrian bridge that creates better access to Red Bridge Park; however, the town itself is rather isolated from surrounding rural areas that utilize the town's features and amenities. People from towns such as Arcadia and Sheridan travel into Cicero because of businesses, the reservoir, and the parks (especially Community Park's sports fields), but all travel is primarily vehicular in nature because rural Hamilton County towns are largely unconnected to each other. As development continues to move north within the county, it is a tremendous opportunity for smaller towns to put plans in place to create pathways and connections to each other and destination facilities, parks, and areas.

The *2007 Thoroughfare Plan* identified primary and secondary arterials throughout Hamilton County. Arterials related to Cicero include:

- **Primary:** State Road 19 and 234th Street
- **Secondary:** Tollgate Road and Stringtown Road

Identified ways to address transportation routes include creating networks of safe pedestrian linkages with clear and safe pedestrian and bicycle access, along with preserving and maintaining corridors. As the town continues to expand, the Department will need to play a prominent role in creating regional linkages along primary and secondary arterials and more localized connections along collectors (connecting neighborhoods to arterials).

2.2.2 Cultural Significance

Bridges

Hamilton County is known for iconic covered bridges. Cicero was the location of the first bridge built (1838) in Hamilton County over a major stream, Cicero Creek. In 1870, the bridge was converted to a covered bridge and painted red (hence, the derivation of “Red Bridge Park”). Sadly, the bridge was torn down in the early 1950s as part of the Morse Reservoir construction. The Hamilton County Parks and Recreation Department puts on the Potter’s Bridge Fall Festival each year, which draws thousands of people to the area. The rich history of Indiana’s covered bridges is an opportunity for small towns such as Cicero to leverage county tourism in nearby areas.

Native American History

The Cicero area was home to the Paleo-Indians, considered to be the first Hoosiers. Additionally, the area was home to the Oliver Phase Native Americans who settled along the east and west forks of the White River. Nearby Strawtown Koteewi Park takes its name from the Miami Native American word for *prairie* or *fire*. The connection opportunity between Cicero and Strawtown Koteewi Park cannot be stressed enough because of the implications associated with local history, tourism, and increased recreational opportunities.

2.2.3 Signature Events/Programs

Cicero Tri

Each summer, Red Bridge Park is home to the Cicero Triathlon & Duathlon. Sanctioned by USA Triathlon, the Cicero Tri has been continuously operated for over 40 years and attracts hundreds of people to Cicero for the annual event. Red Bridge Park’s connection to the Morse Reservoir, and Cicero’s ability to utilize open countryside for bicycling and running, makes it a preferred destination for triathlon enthusiasts and beginners alike.

Fishing

Red Bridge Park is also home to the annual Kids Fishing Day event each summer. Children are invited to learn about and enjoy fishing on days that coincide with free fishing days posted by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish & Wildlife. Poles and bait are provided for the catch and release activity. Additionally, lunches are typically provided along with door prizes for participants.

2.2.4 Sports Tourism

Cicero offers baseball and softball fields located in Community Park. Collectively, these fields are known as the Cicero Sports Complex. The complex is used predominantly by Hamilton Heights Amateur Sports Association (HHASA) and Ultimate Tournament Series (UTS). HHASA utilizes all of Cicero’s fields in addition to the two fields located in Arcadia. Programs offered include baseball (t-ball, 6u, 8u, 10u, and 12u) and softball (6u, 8u, 10u, 12u, and 14u). Additionally, HHASA offers travel baseball and softball teams.

UTS specializes in providing community travel teams (baseball and softball) a place to compete against similar-caliber competition. Baseball events include both youth and high school, while softball events are primarily youth teams.

Given the Cicero Sports Complex's high use during baseball and softball seasons, the complex has a rather large visitor draw to the area. Research produced and provided by Hamilton County Tourism indicates the Cicero Sports Complex hosted 81% residents and 19% visitors during 2021 (**Figure 4**). Additionally, there are days during the summer months the visitor-to-resident ratio is quite high, indicating the draw sports tourism (tournaments) has in Cicero (**Figure 5**).

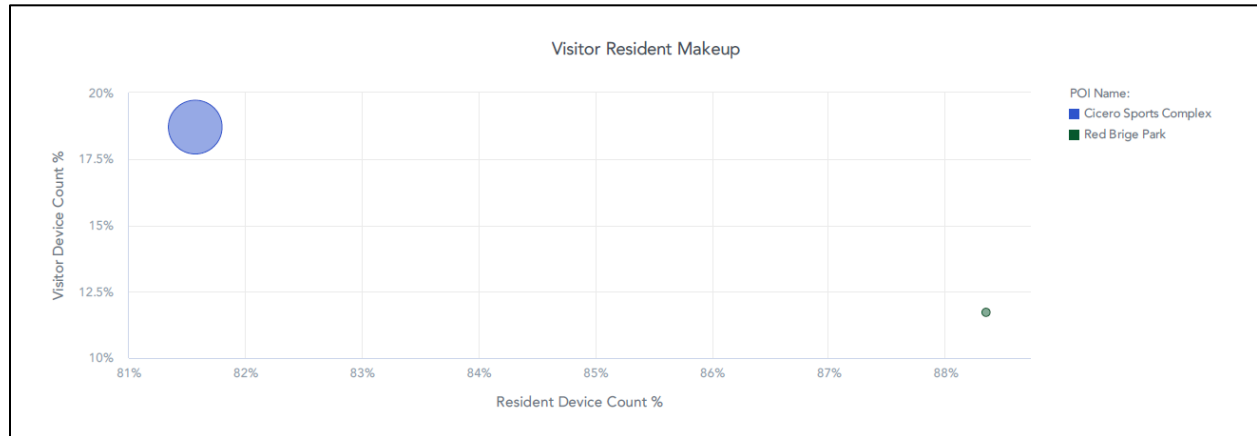


Figure 4: Overall Visitor-to-Resident Ratio (2021)

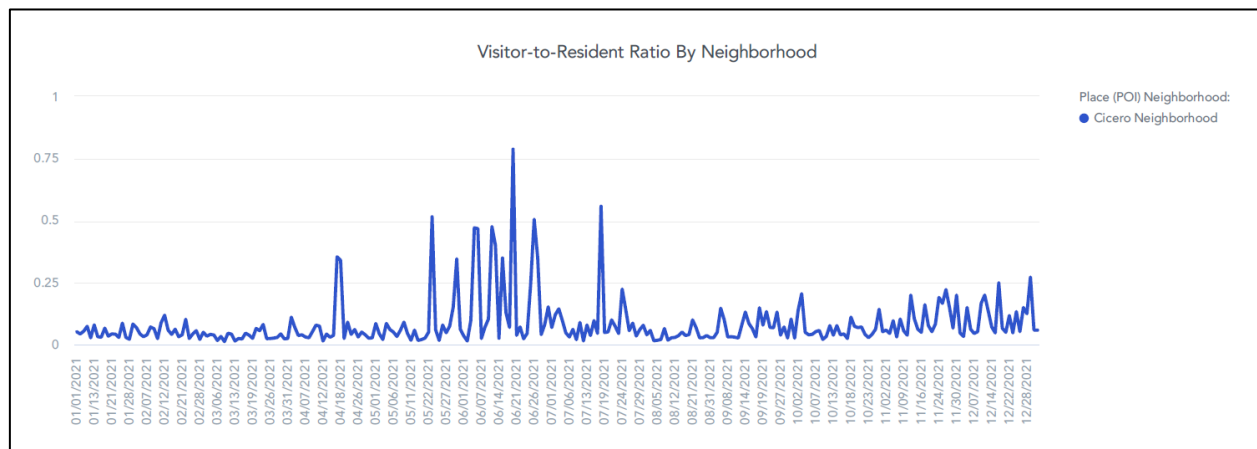


Figure 5: Visitor-to-Resident Ratio by Day (2021)

The top five visitor markets in 2021 indicate the far-reaching breadth sports tourism has in Cicero:

1. Indianapolis, IN
2. Lafayette, IN
3. Fort Wayne, IN
4. Champaign and Springfield-Decatur, IL
5. Louisville, KY

Trends indicate sports tourism is a viable and important characteristic of both the Cicero parks system and the local economy. The opportunity to leverage sports tourism is apparent.

2.2.5 Education

Cicero, and the surrounding area, is served by the Hamilton Heights School Corporation. Covering over 100 square miles, the district boundaries cover mostly northeastern rural communities in Hamilton County, consisting of mostly farmland areas within Jackson and White River townships. The three schools (elementary, middle, and high) are located between the two largest towns, Cicero and Arcadia.

The school corporation allows outside use of public facilities (with a fee), including:

- Classrooms
- Middle school gym
- Elementary school gyms (two)
- Large instruction room
- Cafeteria (with or without the kitchen)
- Swimming pool
- High school auditorium
- Middle school park

Given the ability for outside rental use, there may be an opportunity for the Cicero Parks Department to work with the Hamilton Heights School Corporation for shared facility use.

2.3 Social and Economic Factors

The Town of Cicero, Indiana, is located in Jackson Township, Hamilton County. Founded in 1835, Cicero took its name from Cicero Creek, a tributary to the White River. The town has grown around the northeast shore of Morse Reservoir and currently encompasses a total area of approximately 2 mi². The opening of Morse Reservoir in 1956 brought a wave of steady growth and development. Today, Cicero offers its residents the qualities of a small town with the recreational amenities of the lake and the convenience of being close to several large metropolitan communities.

All demographic data was obtained from Esri in June 2022. Esri specializes in delivering the world's most powerful mapping and spatial analytics software available.

2.4 Population

Cicero has grown by 23% since the 2010 Census and currently has 5,513 residents. Projecting ahead, it is estimated Cicero will grow faster and will add another 26% to its population in the next five years.

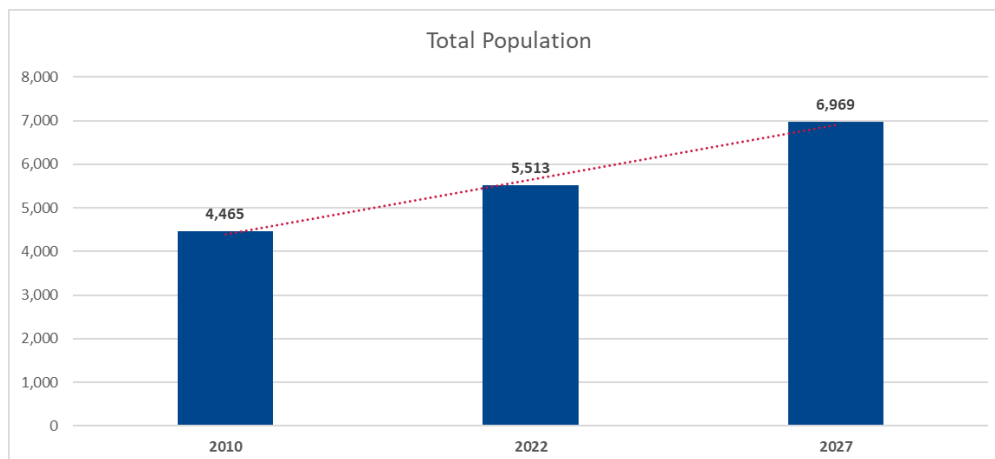


Figure 6: Town of Cicero Population

2.5 Age Segmentation

According to the 2020 Census, 60% of Cicero's population is over the age of 35. Projecting ahead, an aging trend will be realized as the 60-and-older population continues to be the fastest-growing age segment. There is still approximately 40% of the total population under 20 years of age. This metric's importance highlights the need for age segment appeal for recreation services within Cicero.

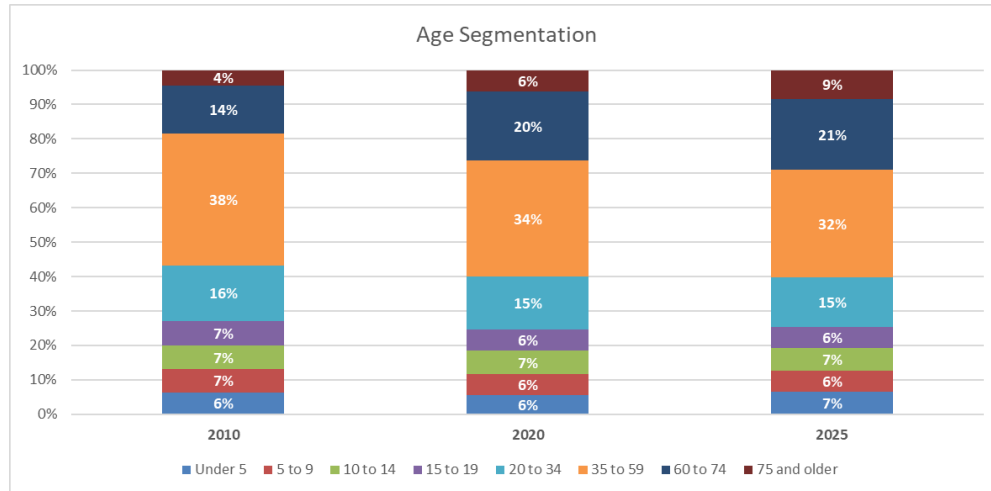


Figure 7: Age Segmentation Breakdown (2010-2025)

2.6 Race and Ethnicity

Cicero has been diversifying slightly since 2010. Projections indicate the town will continue diversifying as more residents move to the area. The largest minority population is projected to be Two or More Races followed by Asian. In terms of ethnicity, Cicero has diversified by less than 1% since 2010. Approximately 2.2% of the total population is recorded as Hispanic or Latino (up from 1.6% in 2010). It should be noted that ethnicity is recorded separately from race, as people who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.

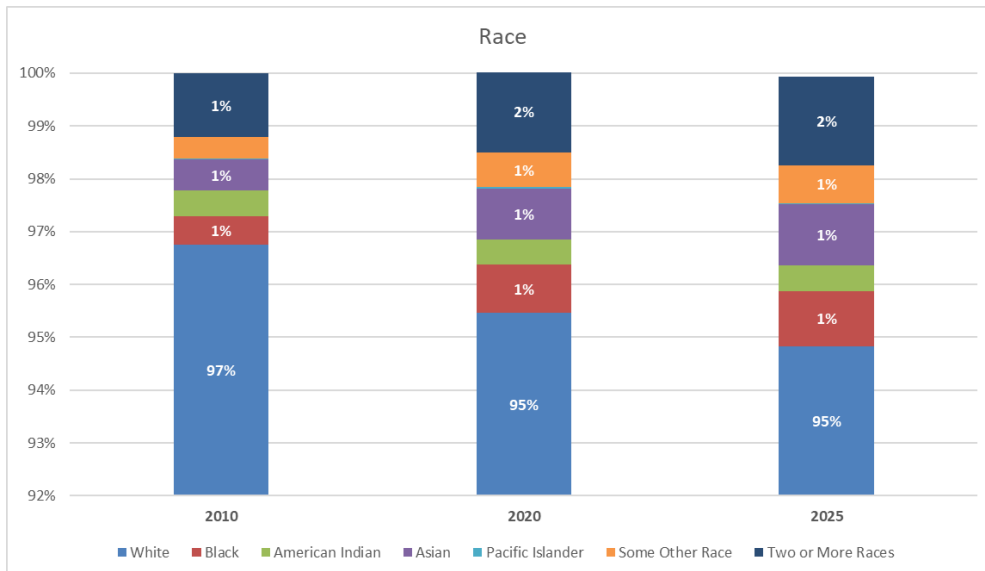


Figure 8: Race Statistics (2010-2025)

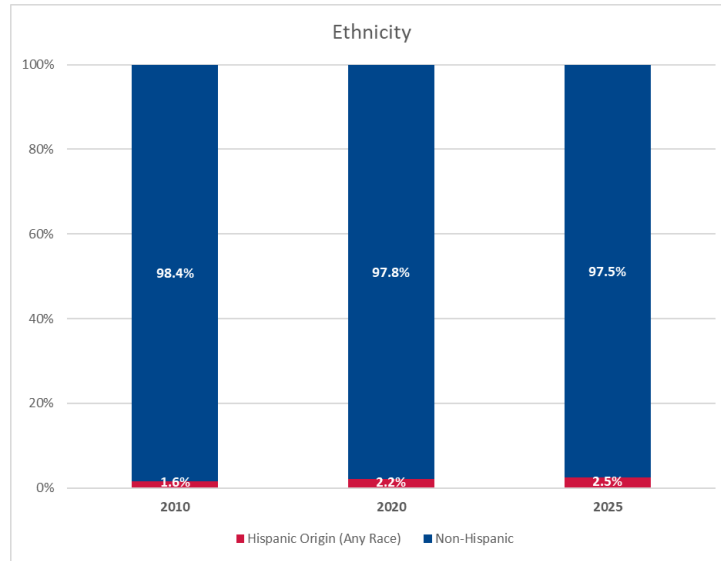


Figure 9: Ethnicity Statistics (2010-2025)

2.7 Household Characteristics

As community populations change, household compositions change as well. Specifically, the number of households, household sizes, and family sizes all change. Cicero's number of households increased by a little over 100 the last 10 years; however, both average

Household Statistics			
Characteristic	2010	2020	2025
Total Households	1,820	1,937	2,073
Avg. Household Size	2.45	2.41	2.41
Avg. Family Size	2.88	2.81	2.80

Figure 10: Household Statistics (2010-2025)

household size and average family size have decreased. This can be indicative of families moving to the area with fewer children, the Cicero population aging and kids moving away, or other familial trends. Regardless, it is important to note household composition trends for Cicero when planning for recreation amenities, facilities, and experiences.

2.8 Household Income

Cicero's median household income is \$75,344, a figure 23% higher than the median household income for the entire state of Indiana. The largest household income category in Cicero is the \$50,000-\$99,999 range. Projecting ahead, Cicero's average household income is expected to increase with the \$100,000-\$199,999 category expected to receive the greatest percentage increase. This trend is important when considering future spending power and willingness to pay for recreation services.

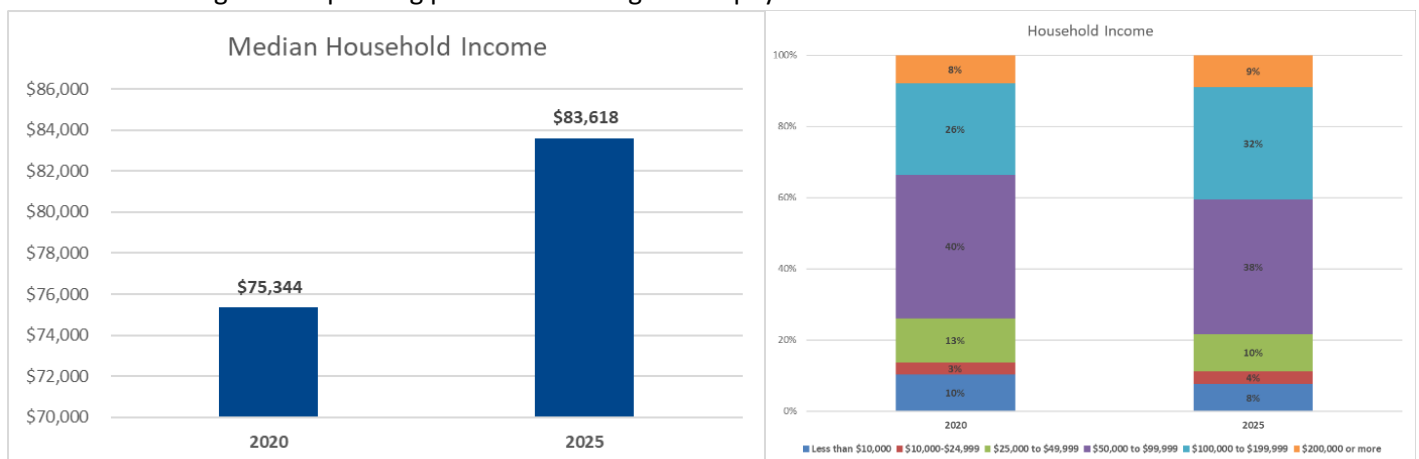


Figure 11: Left – Median Household Income (2020-2025); Right – Household Income by Category (2020-2025)

2.9 Educational Attainment

Cicero's largest educational attainment category for the population 25 years and older is a high school degree, followed by those with some college, but no degree. Approximately 40% of the population has attained an Associate Degree or higher.

Educational Attainment	
Level	2020
Less than 9th Grade	0.8%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	3.7%
High School Graduate	28.4%
GED/Alternative Credential	2.7%
Some College, No Degree	23.9%
Associate Degree	9.7%
Bachelor's Degree	19.1%
Graduate/Professional Degree	11.8%

Figure 12: Educational Attainment Statistics (2020)

2.10 Disability Status

Approximately 17% of the Cicero population reports having some sort of disability. Almost half (44%) of all those older than 65 report having a disability. The percentage decreases for the 18-64-year-old population, with only 15% reporting having a disability. Still, these numbers reflect a relatively high disability status for the Cicero population, a fact that necessitates a closer attention to facility accessibility and providing recreation facilities and amenities with all abilities in mind.

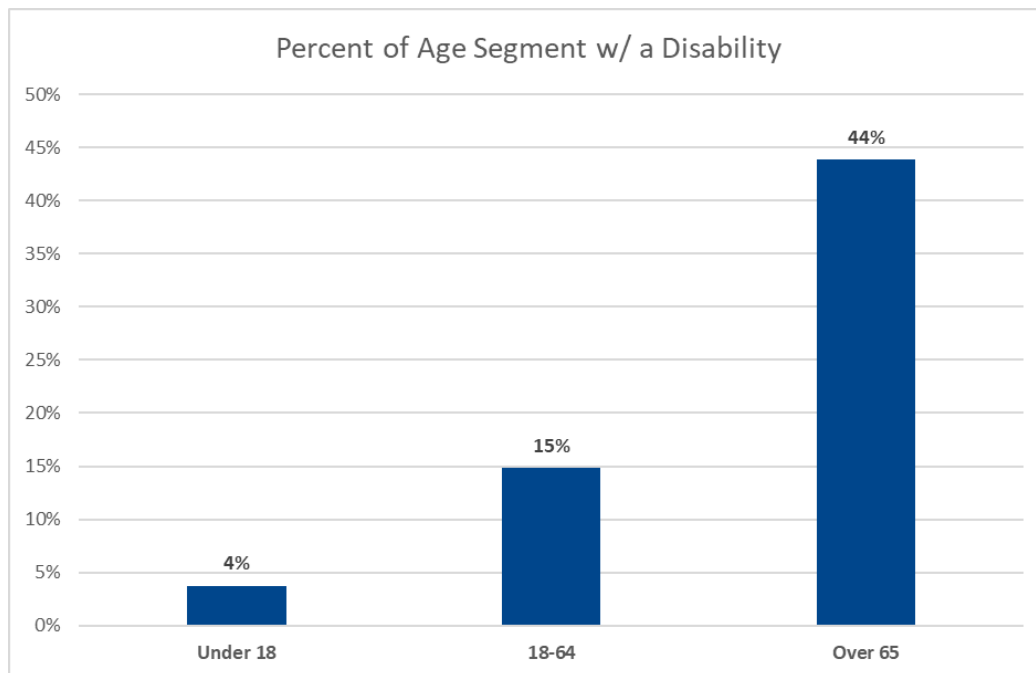


Figure 13: Disability Statistics (2020)

2.11 Unemployment

Cicero experiences relatively modest unemployment rates based on age segments. The largest unemployment rate is for those between the ages of 25 and 54 (5%). The unemployment rate is negligible for the other three age categories.

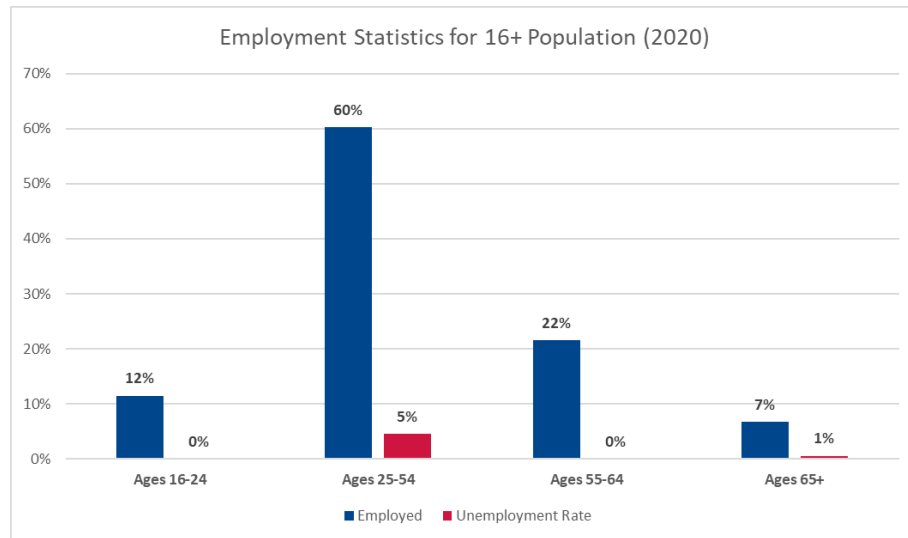


Figure 14: Unemployment Rate (2020)

2.12 Industry and Occupation

Cicero's top five leading industries combine to represent 58% of all industries within the town:

- Health Care/Social Assistance (14%)
- Retail Trade (14%)
- Manufacturing (12%)
- Professional/Scientific/Tech (10%)
- Educational Services (8%)

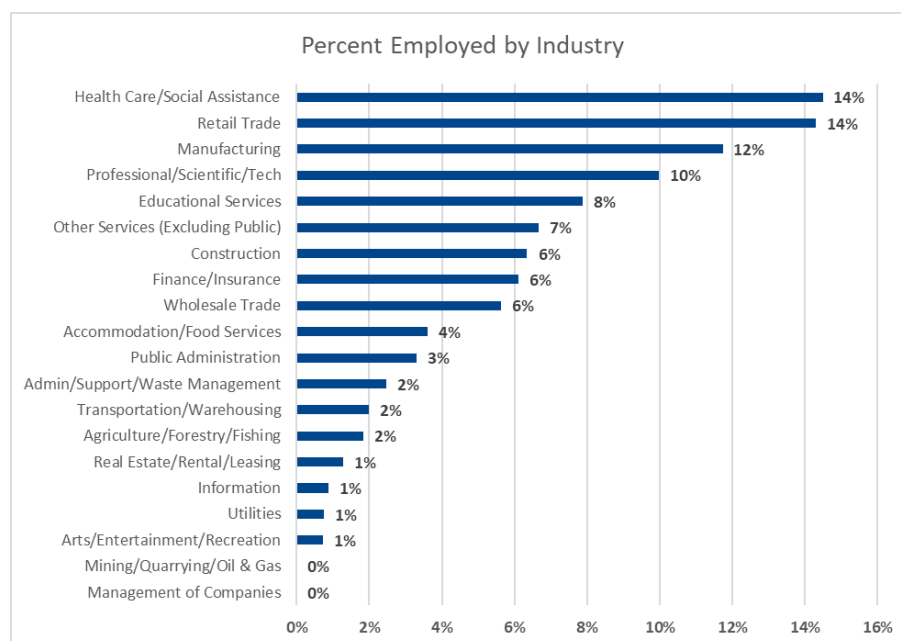


Figure 15: Industry Composition (2020)

2.13 Market Potential Index

Esri's Market Potential Index (MPI) data measures the likely demand for a product or service in an area. An MPI compares the demand for a specific product or service in an area with the national demand for that product or service. A value of more than 100 represents higher demand, and a value of less than 100 represents lower demand. For example, a service with a score of 125 translates into being 25% higher than the national average.

MPI scores were pulled for three categories:

- Exercise/Personal Health Activities
- Sport Activities
- Outdoor Activities

2.13.1 Exercise/Personal Health Activities

Walking for exercise, weight lifting, and swimming all have higher MPI scores than the national average. More specialized activities such as Yoga, Zumba, and Pilates score well below the national average.

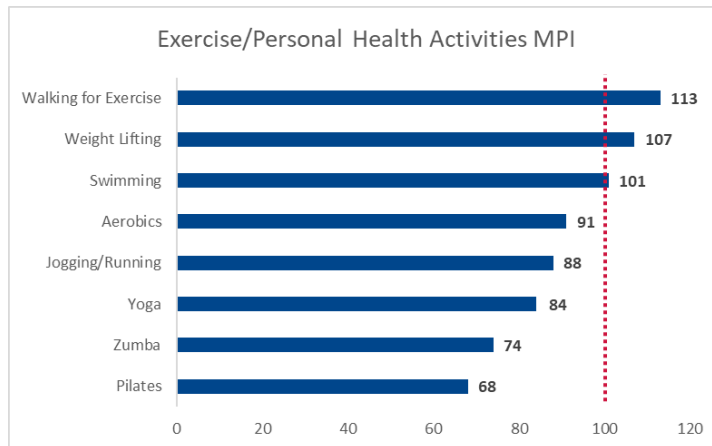


Figure 16: Exercise/Personal Health Activities MPI Scores for Cicero

2.13.2 Sport Activities

Only two sport activities score above the national average: golf and volleyball; however, six sports score above 90, with several close to 100. Only soccer and tennis are well below the national average.

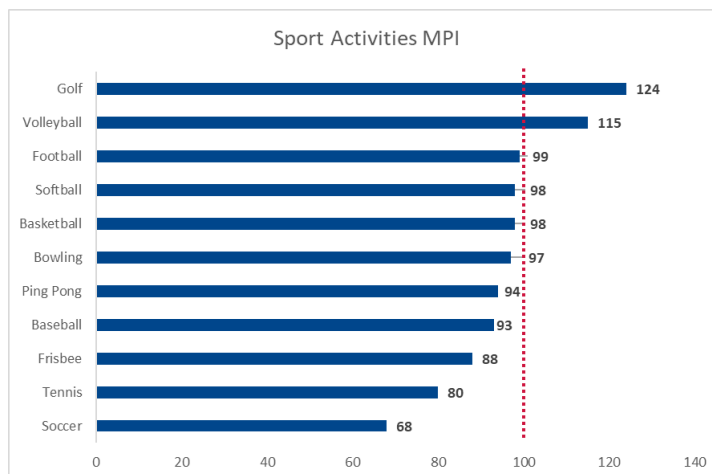


Figure 17: Sport Activities MPI Scores for Cicero

2.13.3 Outdoor Activities

Being a lakeside community, it makes sense many outdoor activities score above the national average. Freshwater fishing, canoeing/kayaking, target shooting, archery, and power boating are the highest scored activities, whereas ice skating, mountain biking, and saltwater fishing have the lowest scores.

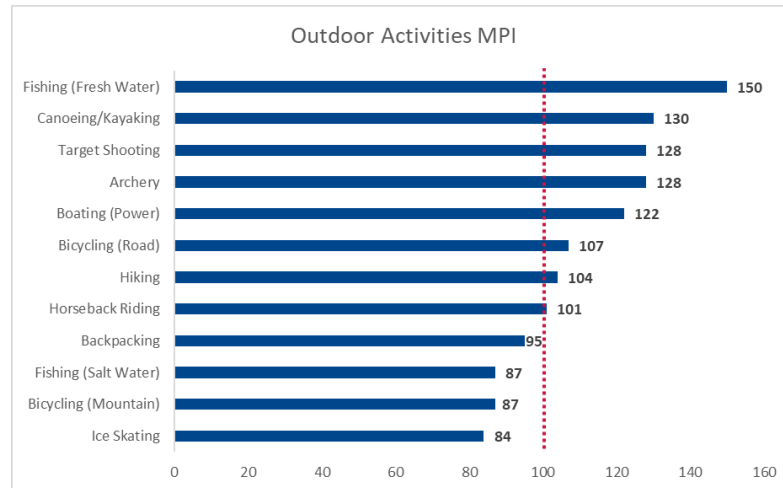


Figure 18: Outdoor Activities MPI Scores for Cicero

2.14 Spending Potential Index (SPI)

Esri's U.S. Consumer Spending data is based on the latest Consumer Expenditure Surveys (CEX) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Spending Potential Index (SPI) compares the average amount spent locally for a project to the average amount spent nationally. Like the MPI score, an index of 100 reflects the national average.

SPI scores were pulled for two categories:

- Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions
- Sports, Recreation, and Exercise Equipment

2.14.1 Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions

Cicero residents exhibit SPI scores at or above average for all recorded activities. Activities that receive the highest average amount spent annually include membership fees for social/recreation/health clubs, fees for recreational lessons, and fees for participant sports (excluding trips).

Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions		
Activity	SPI	Average Amount Spent
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	117	\$75.06
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts	108	\$87.15
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	108	\$124.70
Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Health Clubs	107	\$266.13
Tickets to Parks or Museums	102	\$34.56
Fees for Recreational Lessons	100	\$141.36

Figure 19: Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions SPI Scores for Cicero

2.14.2 Sports, Recreation, and Exercise Equipment

Cicero residents exhibit a mix of SPI scores for all recorded activities. Activities that receive the highest average amount spent annually include exercise equipment and gear, hunting and fishing equipment, and bicycles; however, the SPI scores in general denote slightly below and slightly above average tendencies for spending. This is an important trend to understand for recreational planning.

Sports, Recreation, and Exercise Equipment		
Activity	SPI	Average Amount Spent
Hunting and Fishing Equipment	116	\$56.27
Water Sports Equipment	115	\$9.58
Exercise Equipment and Gear, Game Tables	105	\$58.11
Other Sports Equipment	104	\$7.40
Rental/Repair of Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment	101	\$2.90
Bicycles	98	\$29.11
Camping Equipment	94	\$19.47
Winter Sports Equipment	85	\$6.28

Figure 20: Sports, Recreation, and Exercise Equipment SPI Scores for Cicero

2.15 Demographic Implications

2.15.1 Level of Service

Level of service (LOS) refers to the degree in which a community provides services to its residents. LOS metrics typically represent the number of acres/miles/trails/facilities per 1,000 residents. Given the fact that Cicero's population is projected to increase by over 20% in the next five years, if no other recreation facilities or amenities are added to the system, the existing LOS will automatically decrease based on the increased population. Therefore, it will be imperative for Cicero to monitor the following:

- Recreation Impact Fee (RIF) collections and the town's progress toward reducing (or removing) identified recreation deficiencies
- Financial investments for existing infrastructure, as they will most likely see an increased use pattern with a larger population served
- Land acquisition and capital development to expand the park system to accommodate new and increased recreation uses

2.15.2 Serving a Wider Audience

There are three demographic trends that indicate a need to focus on a growing audience: (1) a large age segment below 20 years old, (2) an overall population aging trend, and (3) a relatively high percentage of people with a reported disability. First, approximately 40% of the population is under the age of 20. As a result, more amenities and facilities will need to cater to young families and young adults.

Currently, the parks system does not have many amenities beyond playgrounds for this age segment. Second, an aging population necessitates a different portfolio of programs, services, and experiences. More opportunities for gathering and socialization will most likely be required. Finally, a population with a high level of reported disabilities necessitates an increased focus on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) facility requirements along with ensuring disabilities beyond physical (sensory, auditory, visual, etc.) are taken into consideration for future system enhancements.

2.15.3 Ability and/or Willingness to Spend

Cicero's median household income is higher than the state of Indiana's. Additionally, the average household income is expected to increase with the \$100,000-\$199,999 category expected to receive the greatest percentage increase over the next several years; however, the expected SPI scores are relatively average for Cicero. Given the projected increase in household income over the next few years and the relatively average SPI scores, there may be an ability to increase recreation spending, but all price increases for goods, services, and experiences should be modest.

2.15.4 Facilitating Residents' Outdoor Behaviors

MPI scores highlight the importance of trails and water access. Activities such as freshwater fishing, canoeing/kayaking, swimming, power boating, road bicycling, hiking, and walking for exercise are potentially popular activities with the local population. Given Cicero's proximity to a large body of water and surrounding rural communities, access to the water from park land and trails connecting surrounding communities and regional trails will most likely be popular decisions over the next several years.



Chapter 3 - Facility and Program Supply Analysis

3.1 Benchmark Comparison

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) compiles data from municipalities and parks and recreation agencies across the country annually. NRPA's Park Metrics provides insights into "average" statistics in terms of park land provided per 1,000 residents, trail miles, full-time equivalents, budget allocation, and much, much more. This comparison provides a baseline understanding of Cicero Parks Department in terms of how it relates to agencies of similar scope. All metric standards represent the *median* statistic based on the NRPA's parks and recreation agency performance benchmarking tool. It should also be noted that this process is self-selected, meaning parks and recreation agencies choose to participate *and* upload their own information.

3.2 Park Land and Trails

In terms of the number of residents per park, Cicero has a lower level of service (LOS) based on a variety of comparison categories (meaning there are more residents served per park); however, the number of park land acres per 1,000 residents is more comparable. This indicates Cicero may not have a lot of distinct park sites, but the size of the ones they do have are on the larger side. This statistic is supported by Community Park, which is approximately 39 acres, a larger-sized park for a town of Cicero's size. In terms of trail mileage, Cicero is comparable to agencies of its size in what it offers residents.

Metric	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Residents per Park	2,757	1,932	1,998	1,233	1,998
Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents	8.3	9.0	5.1	12.9	11.3
Miles of Trail	3.1	7	3	3	5

Figure 21: Park Land and Trails Inventory and Benchmark

3.3 Outdoor Facilities

In terms of outdoor facilities tracked and measured by NRPA, Cicero offers an adult baseball field, basketball court, dog park, youth baseball fields, multi-purpose fields, playgrounds, and youth softball diamonds. In terms of an LOS, Cicero has a relatively high LOS for each of these facilities because the town's population is rather small. Of note, the surrounding communities of Sheridan and Arcadia (for example) utilize Cicero's parks and recreation resources; therefore, the LOS may be lower when adding in additional populations.

When examining common outdoor amenities offered by agencies of similar size, soccer fields, community gardens, and multi-use sport courts are often provided by smaller (relatively speaking) agencies. More uncommon outdoor amenities offered include cricket fields, field hockey fields, lacrosse fields, synthetic turf fields, and outdoor ice rinks.

The percentages in the chart on the following page represent the number of agencies that offer this type of outdoor facility/amenity based on the benchmark characteristic. The numbers in the chart represent the LOS metric (i.e., 1 facility/amenity for every X number of people).

Facility	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Baseball Diamond (Adult)	1	47%	45%	45%	57%
	5,513	12,998	11,395	7,954	7,774
Baseball Diamond (Youth)	2	82%	77%	78%	82%
	2,757	4,225	4,561	3,107	3,927
Basketball Courts	1	95%	85%	86%	86%
	5,513	5,500	5,274	3,750	5,102
Community Gardens	-	48%	37%	40%	45%
	-	16,059	14,691	8,773	10,213
Cricket Fields	-	3%	3%	1%	2%
	-	-	55,715	-	-
Dog Parks	1	48%	46%	44%	43%
	5,513	25,097	18,286	11,100	10,501
Field Hockey Fields	-	5%	4%	2%	2%
	-	-	20,385	-	-
Football Fields	-	21%	24%	26%	20%
	-	12,162	12,304	8,004	8,694
Lacrosse Fields	-	11%	5%	4%	-
	-	7,051	14,833	7,102	-
Multi-Purpose Fields (Natural)	3	77%	66%	60%	61%
	1,838	6,450	7,036	4,362	4,574
Multi-Purpose Fields (Synthetic)	-	16%	11%	3%	6%
	-	24,894	30,507	12,962	-
Multi-Use Courts	-	42%	47%	46%	49%
	-	10,000	10,250	5,400	9,693
Outdoor Ice Rink	-	21%	14%	21%	16%
	-	10,115	7,997	7,997	8,784
Overlay Fields	-	11%	8%	6%	6%
	-	9,473	10,592	8,707	-
Playgrounds	3	99%	96%	96%	96%
	1,838	3,292	3,106	1,986	3,000
Soccer Fields (Adult)	-	37%	39%	35%	29%
	-	9,889	11,448	8,017	9,183
Soccer Fields (Youth)	-	45%	45%	52%	45%
	-	4,416	4,000	3,504	3,396
Softball Diamond (Adult)	-	55%	55%	51%	45%
	-	9,501	9,330	5,667	7,331
Softball Diamond (Youth)	2	64%	59%	62%	65%
	2,757	8,215	7,568	5,339	5,596

Figure 22: Outdoor Facilities Inventory and Benchmark

3.4 Indoor Facilities

Indoor recreation facilities provide guaranteed access and program space regardless of weather conditions. Cicero has one indoor facility located in Red Bridge Park. The 2,500-square-foot Community

Building accommodates up to 150 guests. The building includes kitchen amenities that can be utilized for events, gatherings, and meetings. For the purposes of the benchmark comparison, the Community Building is considered a community center; however, the Community Building is more comparable to an indoor pavilion space rather than a true community center. Community centers and recreation centers (and gyms) in general are the most common indoor recreation facilities provided by smaller parks and recreation agencies, if offered.

The percentages in the chart below represent the number of agencies that offer this type of indoor facility/amenity based on the benchmark characteristic. The numbers in the chart represent the LOS metric (i.e., 1 facility/amenity for every X number of people).

Facility	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Aquatics Centers	-	12%	24%	15%	11%
	-	17,206	23,620	11,375	11,100
Arenas	-	8%	4%	4%	2%
	-	10,524	12,850	6,137	-
Community Centers	1	58%	57%	51%	49%
	5,513	17,000	14,000	8,504	12,161
Indoor Ice Rinks	-	8%	8%	6%	2%
	-	13,100	11,000	8,002	-
Nature Centers	-	12%	9%	10%	2%
	-	27,891	22,200	11,821	-
Performance Amphitheaters	-	26%	21%	16%	18%
	-	26,199	26,000	9,291	11,100
Recreation Centers and Gyms	-	53%	58%	49%	43%
	-	12,732	15,318	9,126	10,000
Senior Centers	-	34%	30%	25%	22%
	-	23,800	24,000	12,935	10,406
Stadiums	-	14%	13%	11%	14%
	-	24,747	24,500	9,126	11,384
Teen Centers	-	10%	14%	8%	6%
	-	18,737	25,322	14,426	-

Figure 23: Indoor Facilities Inventory and Benchmark

3.5 General Programming

Cicero Parks Department does not offer recreation programs. Recreation opportunities exist within Cicero mainly through Friends of the Park events, Our Town Cicero events, and sports opportunities provided by Hamilton Heights School Corporation. Recreation programming is an interest of Cicero Parks Department, however, and program areas such as social recreation events, themed special events, team sports, health and wellness education, and fitness enhancement classes are most often provided by smaller agencies with more limited budgets.

The percentages in the following chart represent the number of agencies that offer this type of recreation programming based on the benchmark characteristic.

Program Area	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Aquatics	<input type="checkbox"/>	60%	61%	55%	51%
Cultural Crafts	<input type="checkbox"/>	59%	53%	40%	40%
eSports/eGaming	<input type="checkbox"/>	9%	7%	7%	7%
Fitness Enhancement Classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	85%	79%	67%	62%
Golf	<input type="checkbox"/>	37%	28%	22%	11%
Health and Wellness Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	82%	76%	67%	60%
Individual Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	75%	72%	64%	64%
Martial Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	66%	57%	39%	38%
Natural and Cultural History	<input type="checkbox"/>	59%	43%	37%	29%
Performing Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	62%	51%	40%	24%
Racquet Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	81%	65%	60%	56%
Running/Cycling Races	<input type="checkbox"/>	47%	39%	41%	33%
Safety Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	79%	69%	62%	53%
Social Recreation Events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	91%	88%	83%	84%
Team Sports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	88%	89%	85%	91%
Themed Special Events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	91%	87%	83%	78%
Trips and Tours	<input type="checkbox"/>	63%	54%	43%	36%
Visual Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	66%	52%	43%	36%

Figure 24: Programming Inventory and Benchmark

3.6 Targeted Programs

When examining targeted recreation offerings, senior programs, summer camps, and after school programs are most offered by smaller agencies with similar budgets; however, the prevalence of offering targeted programs in general is low among agencies of similar size and scope.

Program	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
After School Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	51%	50%	47%	36%
Before School Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	17%	17%	16%	7%
Full Daycare	<input type="checkbox"/>	8%	6%	4%	7%
Preschool	<input type="checkbox"/>	39%	32%	25%	19%
Programs for People with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	49%	45%	36%	30%
Specific Senior Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	77%	72%	65%	68%
Specific Teen Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	63%	56%	46%	35%
STEM Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	65%	47%	40%	31%
Summer Camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	83%	74%	61%	57%

Figure 25: Targeted Programming Inventory and Benchmark

3.7 Staffing

The national median for the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) for all towns is 13.9. This means that the median town agency has approximately 28,912 staff hours available across full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees. Currently, Cicero has 5.2 FTE dedicated to its system, a metric lower than the national average and agencies with similar characteristics.

Metric	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	5.2	13.9	19.3	11.8	7.4

Figure 26: Staffing Levels and Benchmark

3.8 Budget Metrics

Cicero's 2021 park's budget was \$694,774. Comparatively speaking, Cicero's annual operating expenditure is similar with the median figure for all agencies within the same budget range. When examining other operating metrics, Cicero has a high operating expenditure per capita, per acre, and per FTE figure. This is in large part due to Cicero's population being only around 5,000 people. The metrics would decrease if adding in the surrounding communities that also utilize Cicero's parks and recreation system. Due to gasoline sales, concessions, facility rentals, and boat dock sales, Cicero generates a high revenue per capita amount compared to industry medians. Furthermore, a higher cost recovery percentage exists.

Metric	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Annual Operating Expenditures	\$694,774	\$1,500,000	\$1,956,716	\$1,200,000	\$712,512
Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$126	\$90	\$102	\$117	\$65
Operating Expenditures per Acre	\$15,236	\$9,437	\$15,758	\$8,188	\$4,924
Operating Expenditures per FTE	\$133,610	\$105,011	\$93,078	\$101,772	\$98,894
Revenues per Capita	\$59.30	\$32.99	\$26.95	\$34.55	\$14.97
Revenue as a Percentage of Operating Expenditures (Cost Recovery)	57%	38%	25%	25%	29%

Figure 27: Budget Metrics and Benchmark

3.8.1 Without Fuel and Dock Revenues

When removing the revenues associated with dock rentals and fuel sales, Cicero's budget metrics begin to align more with smaller agency benchmarks, with the exception of operating expenditures per FTE and generated revenues.

Metric	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Annual Operating Expenditures	\$382,025	\$1,500,000	\$1,956,716	\$1,200,000	\$712,512
Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$69	\$90	\$102	\$117	\$65
Operating Expenditures per Acre	\$8,378	\$9,437	\$15,758	\$8,188	\$4,924
Operating Expenditures per FTE	\$73,466	\$105,011	\$93,078	\$101,772	\$98,894
Revenues per Capita	\$2.55	\$32.99	\$26.95	\$34.55	\$14.97
Revenue as a Percentage of Operating Expenditures (Cost Recovery)	4%	38%	25%	25%	29%

Figure 28: Budget Metrics and Benchmark (Without Fuel and Dock Revenues)

3.9 Distribution of Operating Expenditures

When examining the distribution of operating expenditures, Cicero aligns with agency medians. Personnel services (salaries, benefits, overtime, etc.) requires approximately half of all operating expenditures, closely followed by general operating expenses. Capital outlays not associated with a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget represent the remaining 6%.

Function	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Personnel Services	50%	54%	52%	50%	56%
Operating Expenses	44%	40%	40%	42%	38%
Capital Expense (Not In CIP)	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%
Other	0%	2%	2%	2%	1%

Figure 29: Distribution of Operating Expenditures and Benchmark

3.10 Sources of Operating Expenditures

In terms of sources for operating expenditures, Cicero's distribution is inverted compared to industry medians. Most agencies receive their largest support from the general fund, typically funded by property taxes. In Cicero, only 38% of operating expenditures are funded by general fund tax support. Earned (or generated) income is the largest revenue support for the parks system. In fact, over half (57%) of Cicero's annual budget is self-generated. The ability to generate revenue explains why Cicero's budget metrics are higher than other comparable agencies of its size. However, with more revenue generation reliance, the more dependent an agency is on the services being available to users/customers and the more an agency must invest in operations for those revenue-generating opportunities.

Source	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
General Fund Tax Support	38%	64%	65%	62%	66%
Earned/Generated Income	57%	27%	22%	24%	26%
Dedicated Levies	.2%	2%	7%	7%	3%
Other Dedicated Taxes	4.7%	2%	2%	2%	.5%
Grants	-	2%	2%	2%	2%
Sponsorships	-	1%	1%	1%	2%
Other	.1%	2%	1%	2%	.5%

Figure 30: Sources of Operating Expenditures and Benchmark

3.10.1 Without Fuel and Dock Revenues

When removing the revenues associated with dock rentals and fuel sales, Cicero becomes more dependent upon the general fund to support its services.

Source	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
General Fund Tax Support	83%	64%	65%	62%	66%
Earned/Generated Income	5%	27%	22%	24%	26%
Dedicated Levies	1%	2%	7%	7%	3%
Other Dedicated Taxes	10%	2%	2%	2%	.5%
Grants	-	2%	2%	2%	2%
Sponsorships	-	1%	1%	1%	2%
Other	1%	2%	1%	2%	.5%

Figure 31: Sources of Operating Expenditures and Benchmark (Without Fuel and Dock Revenues)

3.11 Capital Budget

Capital spending varies greatly from park agency to park agency. The national median statistic for capital improvement spending is approximately \$1.75 million over a five-year period for all towns. During 2017-2021, Cicero spent approximately \$70,627 on park capital improvement projects, an amount well below the median for agencies with a similar budget. These projects included items such as riprap, equipment upgrades, parking lot paving, and other repairs and improvements.

Metric	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Five-Year Capital Budget Spending	\$70,627	\$1,758,900	\$2,000,000	\$1,022,750	\$700,000

Figure 32: Capital Budget and Benchmark

3.12 Targets for Capital Expenditures

Translating the approximate \$70,000 to capital improvement categories, the majority of the funds were utilized for renovation projects, followed by other (new equipment in Cicero's case) and new development. Cicero's targets for capital expenditures are not out of line with agency median statistics, with the exception of acquisition. Most agencies report a nominal percentage earmarked for land acquisition (park land, trails, etc.) over a five-year period.

Metric	Cicero	All Towns	<250 Acres of Parks Maintained	<20,000 Population Served	Agency Budget \$500K-\$1M
Acquisition	0%	4%	7%	5%	8%
New Development	14%	31%	25%	24%	18%
Renovation	67%	55%	60%	61%	62%
Other	19%	10%	8%	10%	12%

Figure 33: Targets for Capital Expenditures and Benchmark

3.13 Discussion and Implications

3.13.1 Parks and Acres

Cicero is positioned well in terms of the number of acres per 1,000 residents provided along with the number of trail miles available. The challenge associated with this information centers on the number of people actually being served. Cicero is surrounded by smaller communities that often utilize Cicero's parks and recreation system. If adding in the populations of Sheridan and Arcadia (for example), Cicero's population effectively doubles, meaning the LOS metrics provided in this section are realistically cut in half; therefore, the LOS conversation for park acres, trail mileage, and recreation facilities/amenities must consider who all is being served to understand the fuller/bigger picture. As an industry standard, the more use a system receives, the more operations, maintenance, and capital requirements are needed.

3.13.2 Recreation Facilities

Cicero does not offer a lot of outdoor recreation facilities compared to the average parks system in the country; however, compared to agencies of similar size, the facilities offered by Cicero have a relatively high LOS. Again, this metric is only calculated based on Cicero's population and not any surrounding communities' populations. In addition to what Cicero offers, common outdoor amenities provided by agencies of similar size include soccer fields, community gardens, and multi-use sport courts. In terms of indoor recreation facilities, the only noticeable deficit is related to indoor gym space. Approximately half of all agencies similar in size to Cicero offer some sort of recreation center and/or gymnasium space.

3.13.3 Programming

As previously mentioned, Cicero does not provide programming for residents; instead, that role is provided by non-profit groups and the school system. Non-profit groups organize community events and special activities while the school system focuses on athletics. Cicero does, however, utilize field agreements with HHASA and UTS to utilize Community Park's diamond fields for tournaments. General recreation programming is not a core function provided by Cicero. In terms of recreation programming offered by agencies similar in size, team sports, social recreation events, themed special events,

individual sports, health and wellness education, and fitness enhancement classes are provided the most.

3.13.4 Staffing and Budget Metrics

Cicero's staffing levels are below median averages for agencies similar in size; however, operating budget metrics are higher. This presents an interesting juxtaposition for Cicero. Staffing levels feel constrained, but the system is able to generate a high degree of earned income. With a higher degree of earned income, there is an increased ability to provide staffing (even if the staffing level is lower comparably), but if the earned income opportunities were somehow diminished or were to have a poor performing year, it would greatly inhibit Cicero's ability to maintain its system to its existing level. This notion is supported by the fact that Cicero's overall parks budget is only supported 38% from general fund tax support. An increase in the percentage attributed to general fund tax support would help better balance the system and would help protect the agency from economic elasticity.

3.13.5 Capital Funding

Capital funding availability, with the budget metrics discussed in the previous section, help explain the Cicero parks system. On one hand, Cicero shows it has a decent operating budget compared to agencies of similar size, but on the other hand, there is little capital investment (or reinvestment) being made into the system. This idea, coupled with the economic elasticity concept for its revenue-generating opportunities, provides a concerning trend. Revenue generation depends a lot on the quality being received, experience provided, and degree of amenities/goods/services meeting the expectations of users. Without appropriate capital investment, facilities and amenities will move quicker toward their end of lifecycle stages and will possibly affect earned income opportunities along the way. This poses a challenge to Cicero's financial model that largely depends on revenue generation to maintain the entire parks system, let alone expand and improve the parks system by adding in new amenities, facilities, and experiences as the town grows.

3.14 Accessibility and Universal Design

The Town of Cicero has a dedicated ADA coordinator, Planning Director Frank Zawadzki:

Frank Zawadzki
331 East Jackson Street
Cicero, IN 46034
fzawadzki@townofcicero.in.gov
(317) 984-5845

3.14.1 Grievance Procedure

The Town of Cicero's Personnel Policy governs employment-related complaints of disability discrimination. The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, and phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to the ADA coordinator, Frank Zawadzki.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, Mr. Zawadzki or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, Mr. Zawadzki or his designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Town of Cicero and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by Mr. Zawadzki or his designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the Cicero Town Council.

Within 20 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Cicero Town Council will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the Cicero Town Council will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by Mr. Zawadzki or his designee, appeals to the Cicero Town Council, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the Town of Cicero for at least three years.

3.14.2 ADA Compliance Projects

Since the last *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, the Cicero Parks Department has completed the following projects:

- Red Bridge Park
 - Poured firm and stable pad for all benches and added arm rests
 - Regraded access path to marina docks and adjusted gang plank slope
- Community Park
 - Provided firm and stable access to the dog park

Moving forward: **Figure 34** identifies ADA compliance projects yet to be completed.

ADA Compliance	
Location	Required Action
Red Bridge Park	Regrade path to community building
	Regrade path to playground
	Level surface, move access panel, access route, transfer point height (playground equipment access)
	Regrade path to restroom
	Pave parking, stripe, and add signage
Community Park	Provide firm and stable access route to under 2 years area (playground access)
	Provide firm and stable access route to 5-12 age area (playground access)
	Add firm and stable access route and pad (picnic tables)
	Pour firm and stable pad, add arm rests (park benches)
	Firm and stable surface, stripe, and add signage (parking) at sports complex
	Firm and stable surface (viewing pad) at sports complex

Figure 34: Needed ADA Compliance Projects

3.14.3 ADA Accessibility Sign-Off Sheet

ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:

**ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended); SECTION 504 OF THE
REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As Amended); AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS
WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (As Amended)**

The Town of Cicero ADA Coordinator, Frank Zawadzki, has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

SIGNATURE: 

ADA Coordinator



ADA Printed Name

ATTESTED: 

Rhonda Gary, Clerk Treasurer

DATE: 11/15/2022



Figure 35: ADA Compliance Form

Chapter 4 - Community Engagement

4.1 Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

Zec Eight Insights conducted stakeholder interviews from late April to early June 2022 as part of the *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* update process. Interviews were held with the following stakeholder groups: Cicero Town Council, Hamilton North Public Library, Hamilton Heights School Corporation, Our Town Cicero, Friends of the Park, Kiwanis Club, Cicero Police Department, Cicero Fire Department, and local business owners. The following key themes were derived from the stakeholder interview process. Of note, the themes are not presented in any particular order of magnitude or importance. A complete listing of focus group responses can be found in the **Appendix**.

4.1.1 Key Themes

Strengths

Proximity to the water is a great asset. Stakeholders indicate Cicero's proximity to Morse Reservoir provides a great opportunity for parks and recreation services. Not every community has a large body of water that attracts visitors; therefore, leveraging and maximizing the recreational value of the Morse Reservoir is a top priority.

The two parks provide different experiences. With Cicero being a small town, stakeholders acknowledge the two existing parks do provide a lot of experiences for residents. The different park features cater to a different type of user. Community Park is focused more on diamond sports, court sports, walking/exercising opportunities, pet activities, and playgrounds. Red Bridge Park has a focus on the reservoir due to its proximity, so more users are seeking water access and/or water views.

Department leadership likes to get things done. Stakeholders highly support department leadership and acknowledge there is an ability to complete projects, not be complacent, and always have a mind toward the future.

Underserved

Age segment appeal may not be fully integrated. While stakeholders do mention there is a lot in the system, they also mention not every age group seems to have a lot of experiences/opportunities. For example, older adult populations and teenagers may not have a lot of choices in the existing parks system. The idea brought forward is to focus on safe gathering spaces, ADA accessibility, and having an increased age segment appeal mentality when expanding and improving the parks system.

There may be a geographical barrier. Stakeholders indicate a need for increased connectivity and/or park land distribution. With the reservoir separating the town, Red Bridge Park can be "cut off" a bit from residents, while Community Park may have access concerns due to a lack of shoulders on the nearby roads. Beyond improved connectivity, stakeholders desire to see a downtown green space option to help connect the community, both physically and socially.

Families should be a large focus of the parks system. Cicero's population is expected to increase substantially over the next several years. As a result, new homeowners (families) are moving to the area and will bring along different expectations, desires, and interests. The parks system's evolution needs to ensure it aligns with family needs more now than ever.

Unmet Needs

The pool's removal has left a void. Stakeholders indicate the removal of the pool has left a physical and social gap in the community. Physically, there is more green space in Red Bridge Park that can now be utilized for something else. Stakeholders provide different suggestions such as a splash pad, destination playground, large shelter, and amphitheater. Socially, the pool was a mainstay in the community and its removal was a hard change to accept. This idea exposes a challenge the Department will face in the future as it seeks to balance providing amenities and services to both long-term residents and newer populations.

Connectivity is wanted to help reduce access barriers. Stakeholders mention several connectivity points including to Noblesville, to Sheridan, along Stringtown Pike, to Red Bridge Park, and to Community Park.

More unique, destination, and interesting amenities are needed. Stakeholders are ready to see how the Department will create different experiences within the parks system. Stakeholders offer up the following considerations:

- Destination amphitheater/shelter/structure
- Multi-season facilities
- Programming in the parks such as yoga, pickleball, tennis, karate, etc.
- Water features such as a splash pad or spray ground
- Summer camps
- Art in the parks and/or on the trails
- A larger dog park
- Live music series

Partnerships

Collaborations will be an essential mechanism to enhancing the existing parks system. Stakeholders acknowledge there are great partnerships in place, and the ability to maximize, leverage, and/or enhance them will be paramount moving forward. Additionally, the idea of a community calendar would help bring the various efforts together and would create the semblance of a unified approach. The following partnerships were identified as important:

- Businesses/corporations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Hamilton County Tourism
- Hamilton Heights School Corporation
- Hamilton North Public Library
- Kiwanis Club
- Lights Over Morse Lake
- Nickel Plate Art Foundation
- Our Town Cicero Main Street Association

Big Picture Vision

Make parks and recreation a driving force for our community's growth. Stakeholders see parks and recreation facilities, amenities, programs, and services as a catalyst for continued growth. Whether it is

Modernization will be key. Small towns tend to have challenges associated with infrastructure improvements, technological enhancements, and overall modernization. This can be attributed to a variety of causes; however, financial resources are typically a large part of it. Stakeholders like the improvements to the system over the past year, and they desire to see continued maintenance and infrastructure investments. Stakeholders acknowledge it can be challenging to secure financial resources, but having a vision and an associated plan is paramount.

Long-term sustainability is needed. Stakeholders desire to see infrastructure improvements and continued maintenance priorities. They acknowledge there have been significant improvements as of late, and they would like to see continued momentum. Additionally, stakeholders mention governance sustainability may also be important for the system's longevity. Having a dedicated oversight body would be helpful when planning for land acquisitions and trail developments because the parks system needs to grow commensurate with the community it serves.

Cicero is a regional service provider. Smaller towns such as Arcadia and Sheridan utilize Cicero’s resources. Therefore, parks and recreation planning should take into consideration the regional context.

Four-season recreation is lacking. Midwest communities are tasked with identifying ways to facilitate year-round recreation activities. Stakeholders acknowledge the winter months can be challenging because of the lack of recreation opportunities in Cicero.

4.2.1 Methodology

4.2.2 Findings

[illegible]

Figure 36: Public Survey Announcement

How Respondents Learned About the Survey

To better understand the communication channels utilized during the *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* development process, the first survey question asked respondents how they heard/found out about the online survey. Approximately 89% of survey respondents learned about the survey from Facebook posts (either the Department page or from friends/family/some other source). Nobody indicated they learned about the survey from a newspaper announcement.

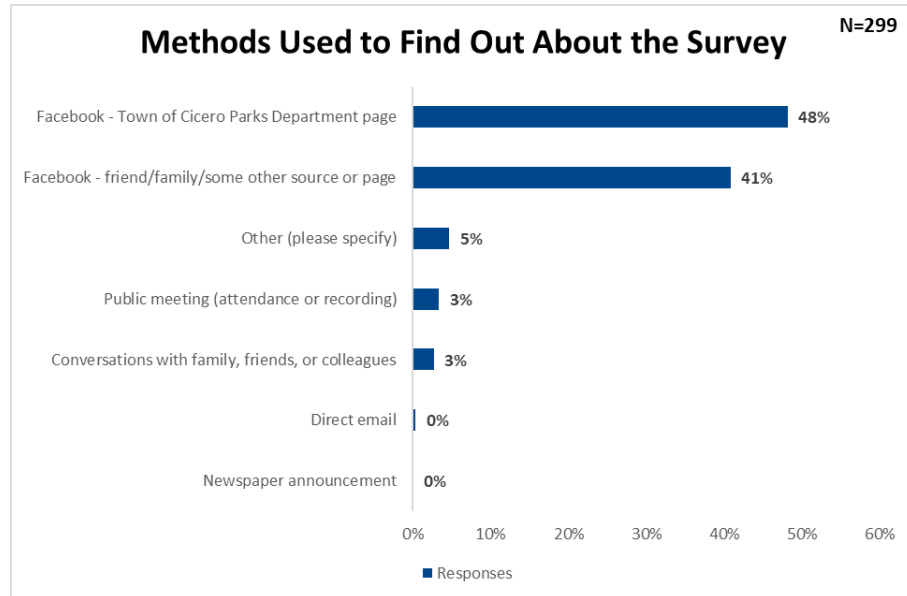


Figure 37: Methods Used to Find Out About the Survey

Residency

Respondents were asked to indicate if they are current Town of Cicero residents. As this was an open surveying process and was not restricted to the town boundaries, and understanding Cicero serves surrounding areas such as Sheridan, Arcadia, Noblesville, and others, it was expected the survey would attract non-resident responses. Approximately 89% of respondents live in Cicero, with the other 11% coming from outside the town limits.

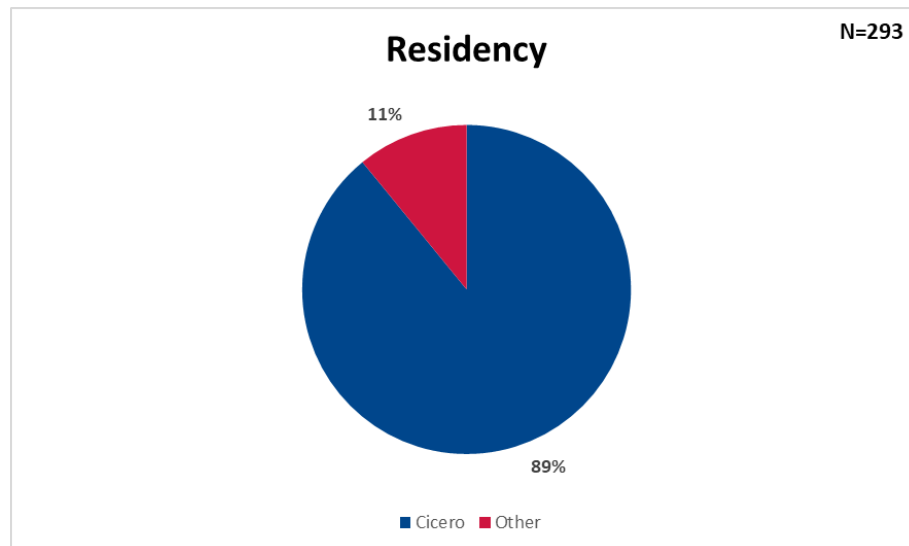


Figure 38: Survey Respondent Residency

"Other" Residency

For respondents that indicated they do not live in Cicero, they were then asked to provide their ZIP Code. Based on the ZIP Code analysis, the majority of "other" responses came from Arcadia and Noblesville. In total, 10 Indiana communities were represented in the survey (including Cicero residents).

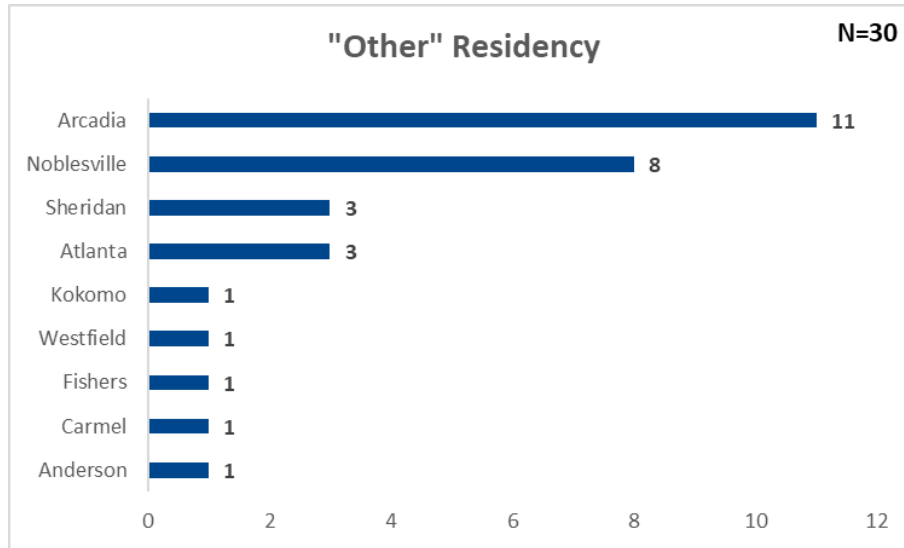


Figure 39: Survey Respondent Residency for Those Selecting "Other"

Parks System Use

Respondents were asked two questions in order to understand parks system use.

Last Year Use

First, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they have used either Community Park or Red Bridge Park within the last 12 months. Almost everyone (96%) indicated they have used one or both of the parks during the last year.

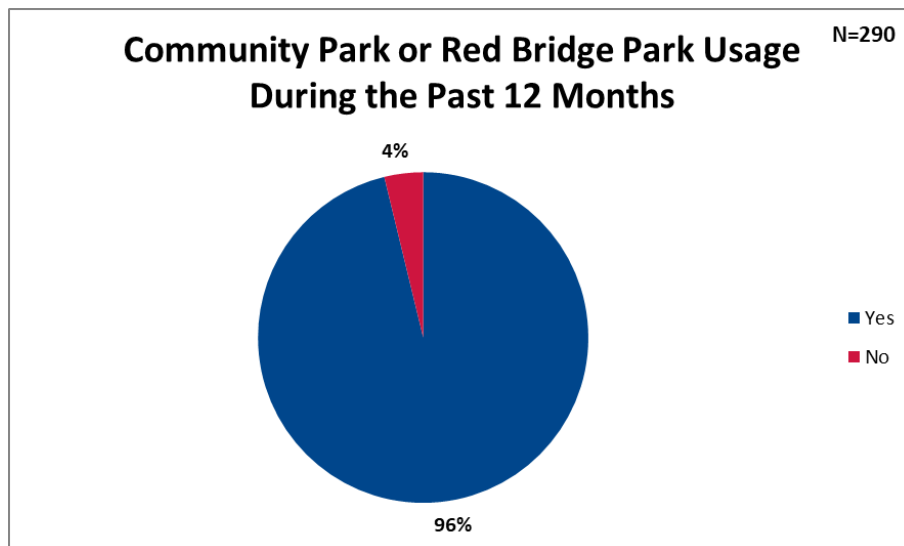


Figure 40: System Use the Past 12 Months

Use Frequency

Once establishing whether or not respondents used the parks system in the past year, those who indicated “yes” were then asked to provide an average measurement of how often they use either Community Park or Red Bridge Park. The majority of respondents (51%) indicated using the parks system only a few times a month or less on average.

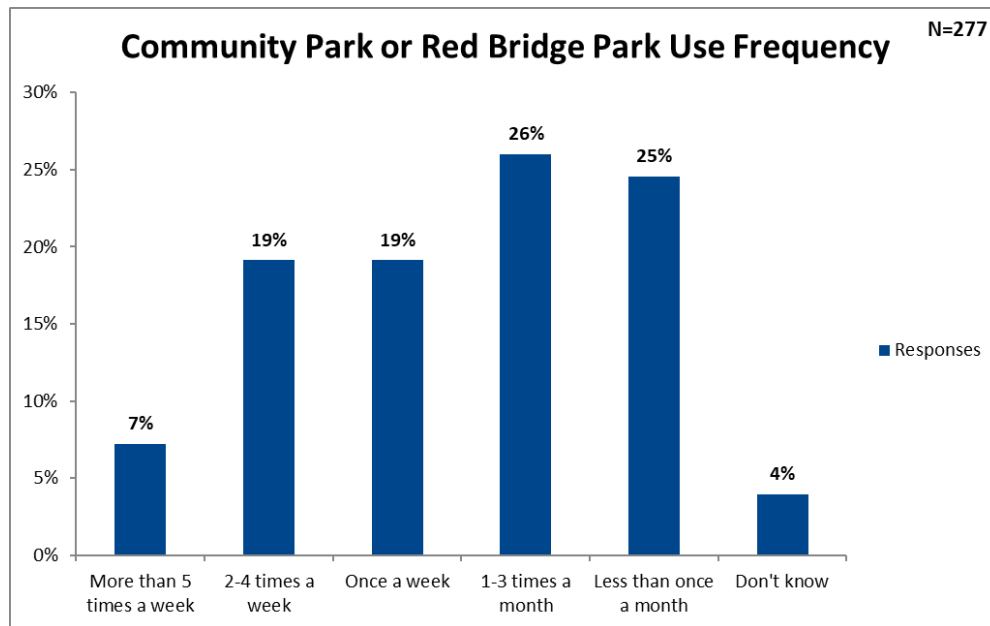


Figure 41: Average System Use Frequency

Capital Improvement Needs

In order to better understand desired capital improvements, respondents were asked to state if there are any maintenance, capital improvements, or amenities/facilities needed at Community Park or Red Bridge Park. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicated there are needs.

For those that responded “yes,” an open-ended follow-up question asked respondents to provide the specific improvement, maintenance concern, or facility/amenity needed. When examining the open-ended responses, the majority of

respondents indicated capital improvements were needed at Red Bridge Park, namely, a pool facility. It should be noted the park used to have a public swimming pool, but the facility was removed when the financial considerations of operating and maintaining the pool became too much of a burden on town resources. Other high-ranking improvements mentioned include restrooms, splash pads, play equipment, paths/trails/sidewalks, playgrounds, and buildings.

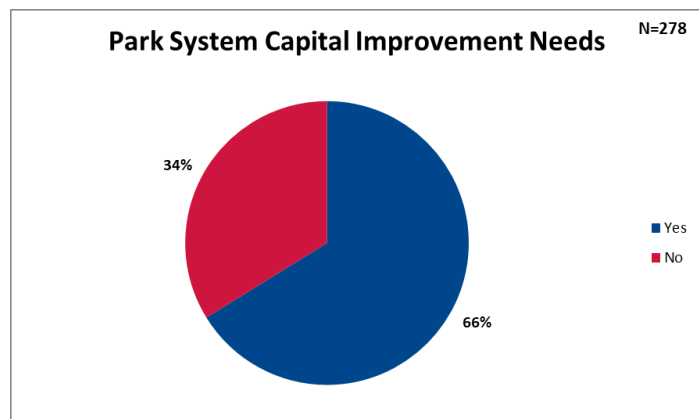


Figure 42: Park System Capital Improvement Needs

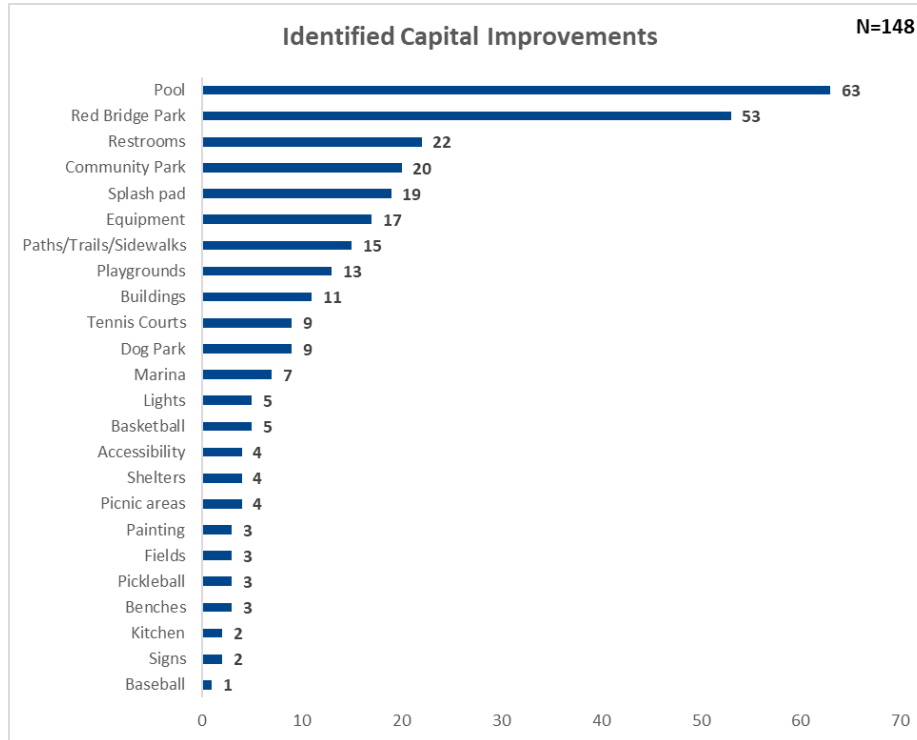


Figure 43: Specific Capital Improvement Needs

Barriers to Parks System Use

Respondents were asked to select reasons that currently prevent them (or members of their household) from using Cicero parks more often. The top barriers to system use included “I do not know what is being offered,” “No time to participate,” “Facilities lack the right equipment,” and “Facility not offered.” Respondents also indicated several “other” reasons, including nothing is preventing them from using the system more, no pool/water features, and not having relevant things to do (among others).

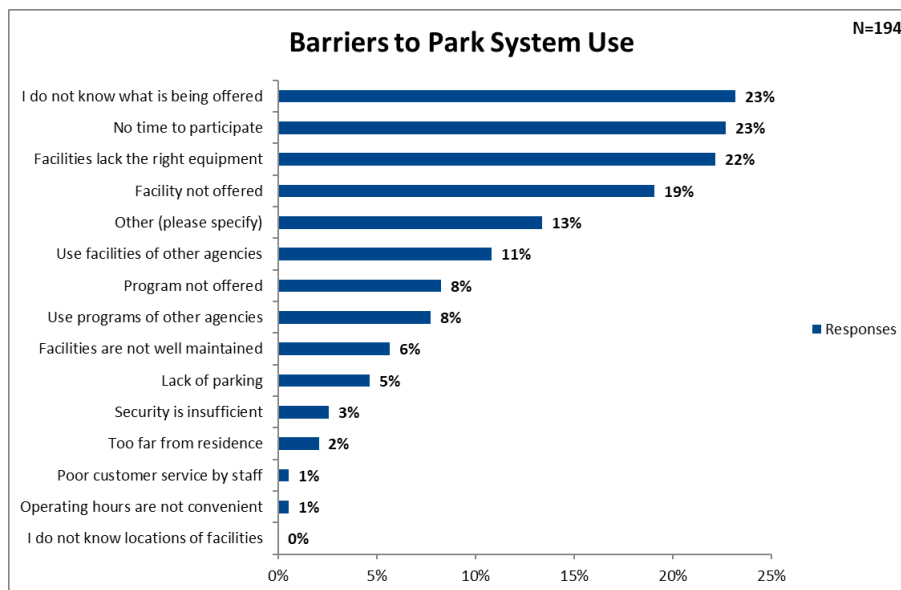


Figure 44: Barriers to Park System Use

Marketing

When asked to indicate preferred ways to learn about parks, activities, and events, respondents indicated Facebook (85%), facility/park signage (37%), community calendar (36%), and Department website (28%) as top choices.

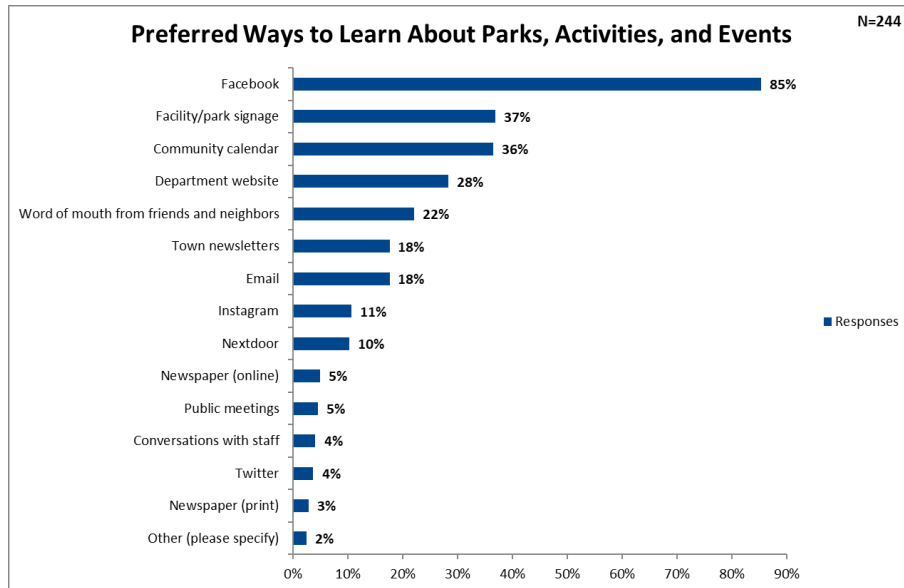


Figure 45: Preferred Ways to Learn About Parks, Activities, and Events

Park or Facility Features

Respondents were provided a list of 21 park or facility features. Respondents indicated what they believe are the most important ones to have in Cicero. Top choices included splash pads/spray grounds (42%), playgrounds (39%), lake access (36%), and paved trails (33%). “Other” answer choices included a community pool, boat docks, vending machines, lazy river, tour equipment rentals, Pride Celebrations, and public beaches.

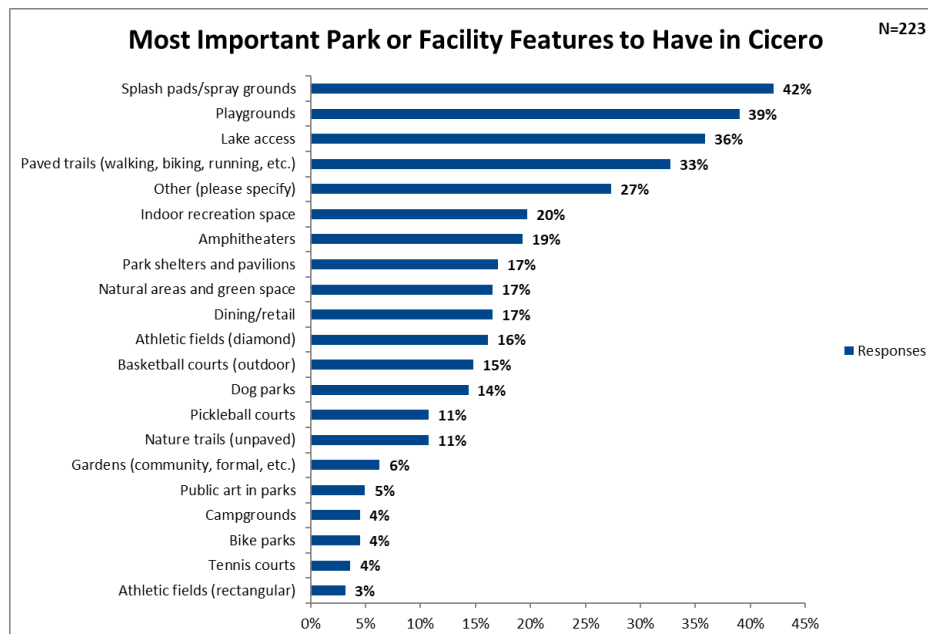


Figure 46: Most Important Park or Facility Features to Have in Cicero

Programs or Services

Respondents were provided a list of 14 programs or services. Respondents indicated what they believe are the most important ones to have in Cicero. Top choices included farmers markets (56%), concerts and performing arts (54%), canoeing/kayaking/stand-up paddle boarding (35%), youth summer camp programs (31%), and sports/athletics programs and leagues (31%). “Other” answer choices included swimming, water safety programs, programs designed for teenagers, yoga, dance, arts, water aerobics, and Pride events.

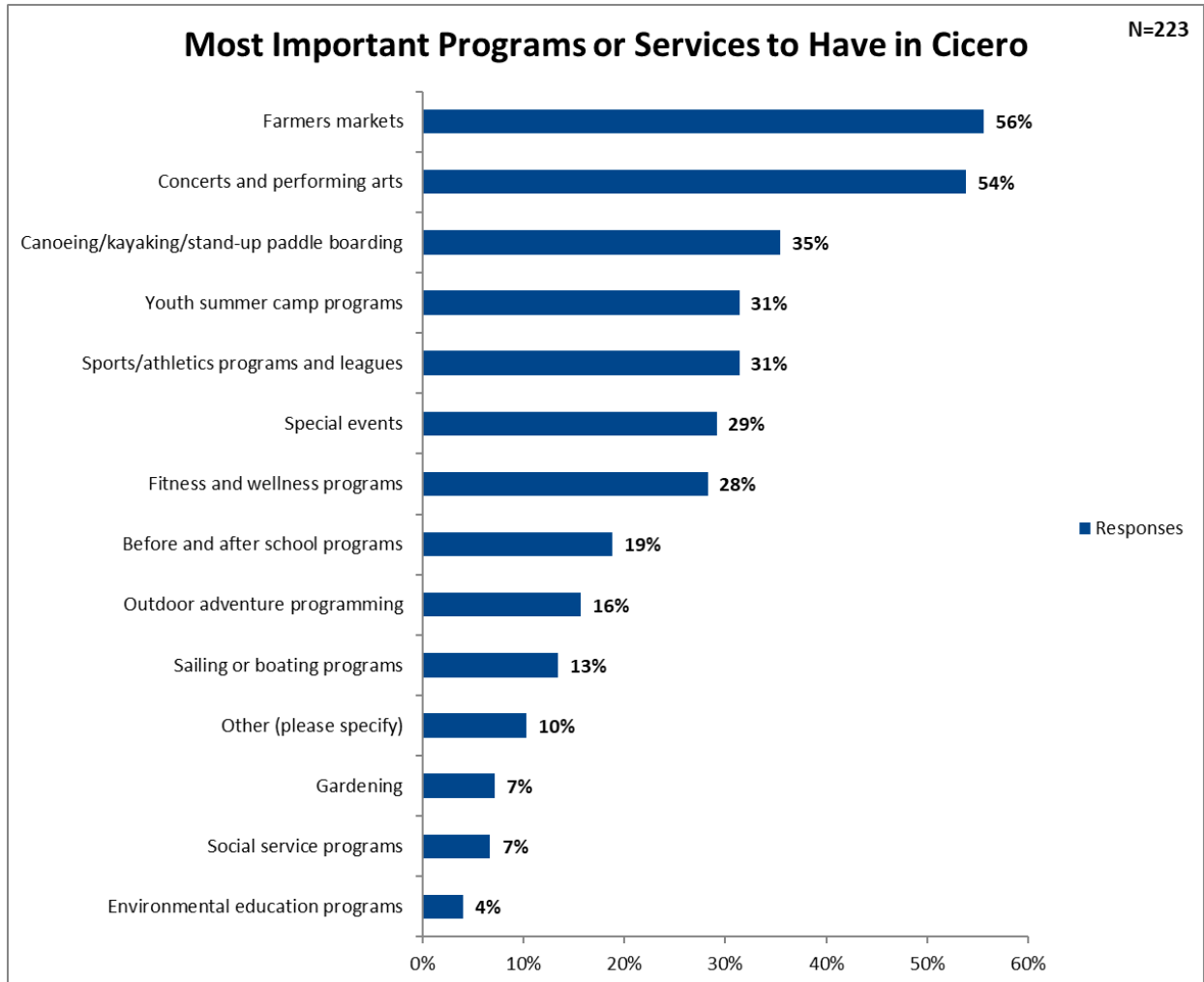


Figure 47: Most Important Programs or Services to Have in Cicero

Top Unmet Need

Once respondents answered questions about the most important park features and programs/services, they were asked to select their top four most unmet needs for themselves and/or members of their household. When examining the top unmet needs based on the number of selections, the top unmet needs included splash pads/spray grounds (60), farmers markets (51), concerts and performing arts (31), indoor recreation space (26), and lake access (25).

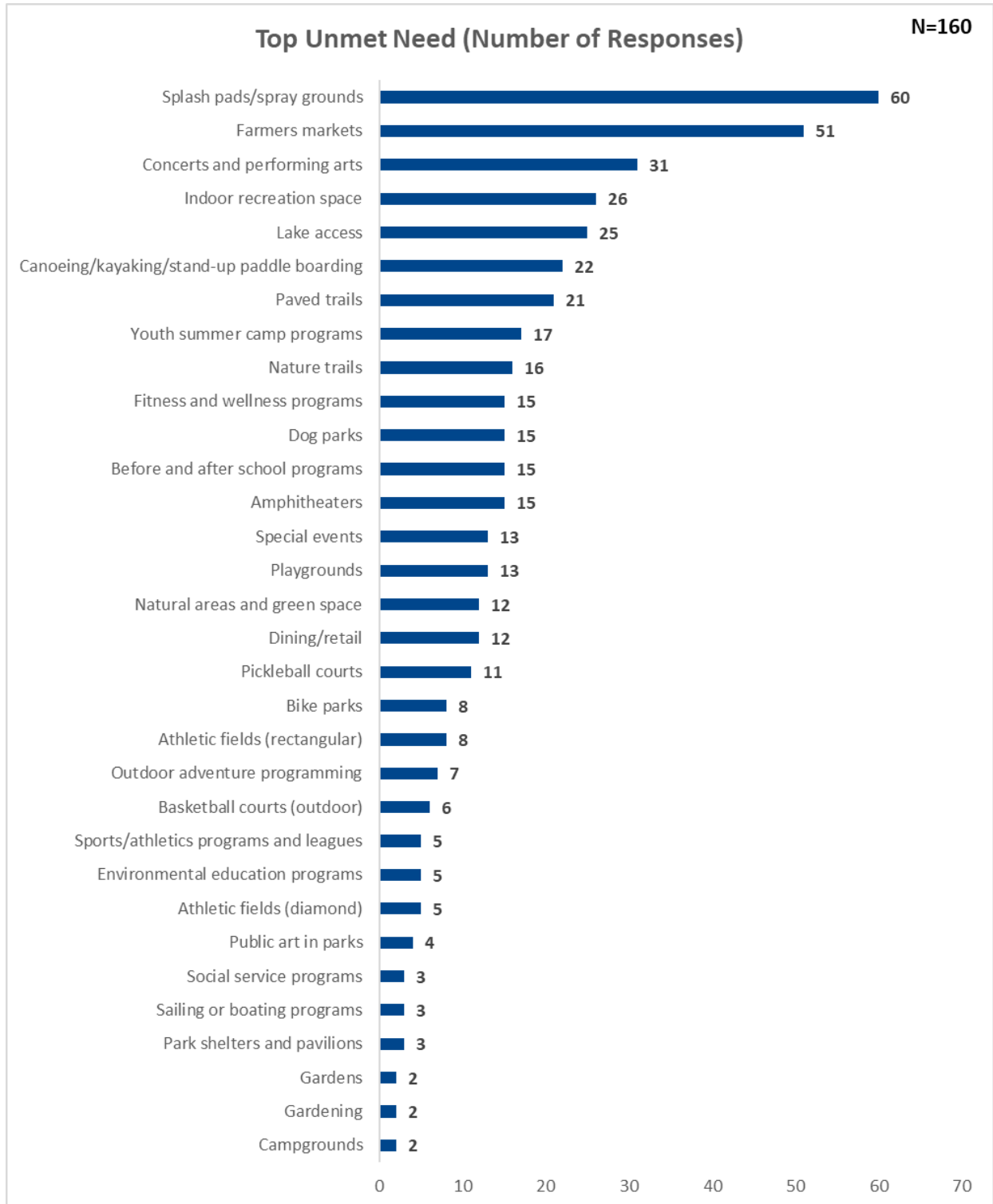


Figure 48: Top Unmet Needs (Number of Responses)

Prioritization of \$100

Respondents were asked to indicate how they would prioritize \$100 (fictitiously) across four competing categories. Based on response averages, respondents prefer to see more investment in improvements/maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities (about \$40), followed by development/construction of new recreation facilities (about \$37), acquisition of new park land and open space (about \$26), and acquisition and development of pathways and greenways (about \$26).

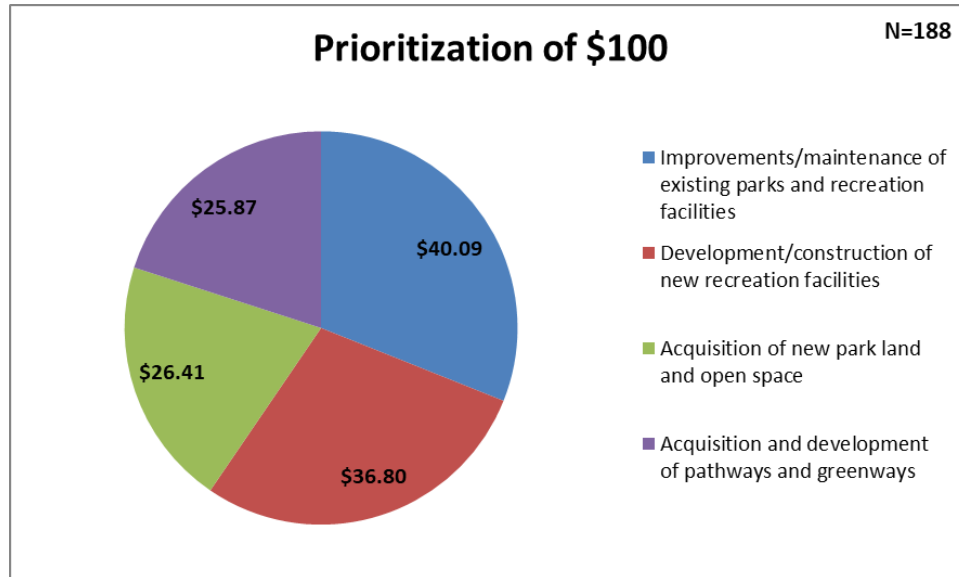


Figure 49: Prioritization of \$100

Department Satisfaction

The second-to-last survey question, before the demographics section, asked respondents to indicate how satisfied they are with the overall value their household receives from Cicero Parks Department recreation services and parks. This question is asked toward the end of the survey because respondents will have been thinking about their experience in Cicero leading up to it. Based on a five-point scale, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied, respondents indicated an average rating of 3.9.

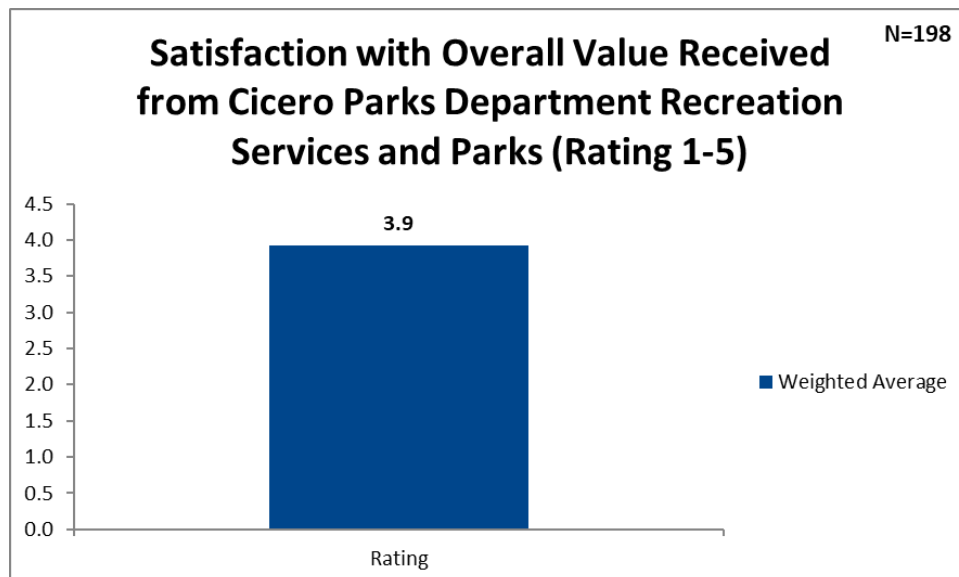


Figure 50: Satisfaction with Department Services and Parks

Open-Ended Comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to provide any additional feedback they felt would be helpful for Cicero Parks Department to know as they plan for recreation services in the town. Responses are reported in terms of “general comments.” A total of 79 responses were recorded.

General Needs	
#	Need/Issue
1	We would love a pool.
2	Capitalizing on access to the lake is key to Cicero’s niche, particularly for those who don’t live on it.
3	The town should not need to spend \$ to acquire land; look to get from developers, greenspace grants, donations.
4	The past 5 years seemed stagnant and unreceptive to local households. The new park management has provided hope with recent paving and pickleball. Continued greenspaces with connecting paths will be key as more development occurs.
5	I think it’s a great park and has come so far in the past years. I love the direction we are moving with the parks and think that the way we need to keep going. Adding a few more modernized games and playset items would be great. A few more things for the older kids.
6	A pool would be nice. I love Cicero.
7	I would love to see an indoor recreation space! It would be wonderful to see the town develop and run recreational sports for the children, like the YMCA.
8	Please consider how connections can be made with parks departments in other areas. It would be amazing to have the trails in Cicero linked up to Noblesville. Especially, to give access to Hague park.
9	They are doing a wonderful job! Keep it up!
10	Having a trail where the rail road is would be amazing.
11	I would love for the 236th Street trail to be incorporated through town. Maybe a fitness park somewhere along 236th with outdoor fitness equipment.
12	I would really love to see a water component. Whether that be a splash pad or pool.
13	I love our parks. We use both of them heavily. They are a great asset to our community.
14	I understand the cost of a pool is expensive, but it was so nice having a community pool. My kids and I spent a lot of time there and one of my sons worked as a lifeguard there for a couple of seasons. Sad when it closed! Would like to see another one. Definitely not interested in spending money for a splash pad. They are only good for little ones! Don’t waste the money.
15	We are so happy to have pickleball courts in Cicero now!!! Thank you!!!
16	We need a pool back. I do not like driving to Tipton each week. Forest Park pool isn’t even an option. It is too crowded and way too expensive for our family.
17	Would love more reasons for the community to gather at the park. Weekly summer concert line-ups and weekly farmers markets.
18	Wheelchair accessible paths!!
19	Really miss the swimming pool.
20	Cicero is a beautiful small town that needs to have more options for residents like more bike trails/ walking trails, playgrounds, pool/splash pad.
21	Remove existing railroad tracks and convert into meaningful walking/bike trail. Promote the development of commercial space in town to compliment paved/unpaved trail/trails.
22	We should have a pool.
23	We have fallen behind what a town our size can provide.

24	Indoor fitness of some sort or partnership with a YMCA, etc. would be great!
25	Shade at CCP – sometimes grandparents need a shady place to watch the kids :-)
26	Maybe not a parks department topic, but teenagers need places to go and hang out. Roller skating rink, indoor rec facility, just something that's open year-round that teenagers can go be teenagers and be social without getting into trouble.
27	More events should be scheduled in the park and Red Bridge.
28	Don't waste tax payer money on a pool. There are 2 great pools less than 15 minutes away. Let them lose money.
29	Clean up the park I mean I live near red bridge park and it's gross to take kids there do something with the geese and new equipment for kids!!!
30	I would love if the park department was more inclusive to all who lived in this small town. I don't often come back due to the encouragement of one side of politics and beliefs and don't feel welcomed or safe in a town I grew up in.
31	Pool needed!
32	We need bike and walking paths. Preferably where the train is currently. It would be great if the kids could use that path to walk or bike to school.
33	It's not very welcoming for non-white, non-straight people.
34	I don't live in town, but I have worked here and have a deep tie to the community. I offer my comments as objective and not as a political agenda. Jim has made vast improvements and has great vision. We can only do so much so fast. Keep up the great work!
35	I think they do a great job of maintaining the current parks and hosting events. I think a pool is important for this community and to offer swim lessons. The importance of teaching people how to swim is often overlooked by the public.
36	The parks have recently been getting better than they have been for years but still need a lot of upgrades.
37	We need more programs or activities for children!
38	The Red Bridge Park has lots of space to expand the playground area and should do so with new equipment, a shelter for picnics and kids programming.
39	We need a pool. Why wasn't that even an option?
40	Jim Hunter is the absolute best parks director the town has ever had and will take the parks in the right direction.
41	I don't feel we need more parks. Just keep doing the good things you are doing at the current locations.
42	We truly miss the pool. My child is too old for the playground but not very athletic. Swimming was something he loved to do.
43	Keep up good work. Communication plan is important to let us know what's going on – what to attend. A solid communication plan is more valuable than some other spends. No pool, please. Loved the concert on the pier. Food truck with dinner menu would have been nice. Farmers market a few times a year would be good.
44	Wish there were more community-minded activities that were promoted. Seems like there's baseball and LOML and then not many other opportunities to meet people at social events.
45	Not sure why pool issues were avoided in survey.
46	Pool, kids camp days, boating education.
47	Shaded trails such as trees, or adding shade to existing bike paths would be appreciated.
48	It would be absolutely heartbreaking if all the farmland and green spaces are developed so that our little town is turned into just another Carmel/Westfield/Fishers/Noblesville. You can't

	even tell where one ends and the other begins. Please protect our little town from being swallowed up until it's just one big unrecognizable corporate run wasteland.
49	In the last year the Parks Department has contended to update the facilities and the parks. Restroom updates, pickleball courts and updating the fencing. Keep up the good work it is appreciated.
50	I would like a pool with ice skating rink in winter. I would like more things for older kids to do. I think the park bathrooms should always be open and clean. I appreciate all the parks people do... we use our parks often and we love them! ♥
51	The park is the same as 30 years ago with nasty restrooms and antiquated equipment. Why are tennis courts not operational?
52	Walking trail connecting to Noblesville path by marina.
53	The playground design is so outdated. New equipment that doesn't feel so staggered and disconnected would be nice. More shaded areas for parents would be nice.
54	Would love a pool if it's in the budget. Use to love laying out after work because we do not live on the lake.
55	Maintain and improve existing facilities...
56	Find a space for a public pool. Tipton has a nice facility and as Cicero grows, we should be able to support a similar facility.
57	I would like to see a pool and splash pad in Cicero.
58	Forget the pool. Noblesville and Tipton have them. We have a lake. Go with a splash pad and make your life less of a headache.
59	I would like to see fresh mulch at Red Bridge and perhaps more equipment. More shaded areas at the Cicero park.
60	Pickle ball courts would be awesome!!!
61	Cicero parks can offer unique programs relating to water, boating, fishing, swimming, skiing. A certified boating course would be so beneficial to our Morse Reservoir. Lake Tippecanoe offers a boating course. We should use our reservoir for more programs and services. Also, we need to connect our Cicero trail to the Nickel Plate Trail/Monon Trail. Thanks for the opportunity to provide opinions.
62	The parking lot at Red Bridge takes away from a lot of valuable green space and precious viewing opportunities and hangouts. If it were green with trees, it would offer great picnic areas, a great concert listening area and event area.
63	This community needs a pool and it is a shame the one we had was removed and not repaired or replaced. Please make it a priority to put in a new pool. And your team does a great job and we appreciate you. Thank you for keeping our community nice.
64	When we moved to Cicero in 2018, I was very disappointed with the condition of Community and Red Bridge Park. It's nice to see Mr. Hunter making an effort to keep them nice, clean spaces for our children.
65	We want a pool!
66	We need a pool.
67	Offer better lake access to those who don't live on the lake with activities and rentals of equipment.
68	Very well kept!!! Beautiful parks.
69	Need more police patrols 24/7. Security is very poor.
70	I was looking forward to going to the pool when my husband and I moved here a couple years ago. Very disappointed it was closed down.
71	We need a pool.

72	I feel like we have great park space and facilities currently. We just need our pool back!
73	I believe a pool would be very beneficial to the community.
74	Having a pool would be a great amenity.
75	Cicero needs a pool. All the surrounding communities have found funding to have nice pool facilities. Cicero should be able to figure it out.
76	Please, the kids, teenagers and adults want a pool in Cicero.
77	Add a community pool! I mainly go to other parks for their pools.
78	Would be great to see a real budget for a real parks department in Cicero. It's a growing town with young families. We all want safe playgrounds, bike and walking trails.
79	With the steady increase of property taxes and new homes why can't Cicero afford to improve its parks and trails? They either need to issue bonds or receive more money from the county. Carmel continues to improve its parks and community services.

Table 1: Open-Ended Comments

4.2.3 Demographics

Survey respondents were asked to provide demographic information at the end of the survey. First, survey respondents represented all adult age segments (18+), with the majority of responses coming from those 35-54. Second, 70% were female while 30% were male. Finally, voices were heard from new residents, long-standing residents, and those not living in Cicero. One-third of survey respondents have lived in Cicero for over 20 years. Over a quarter (28%) of respondents have lived in Cicero less than five years.

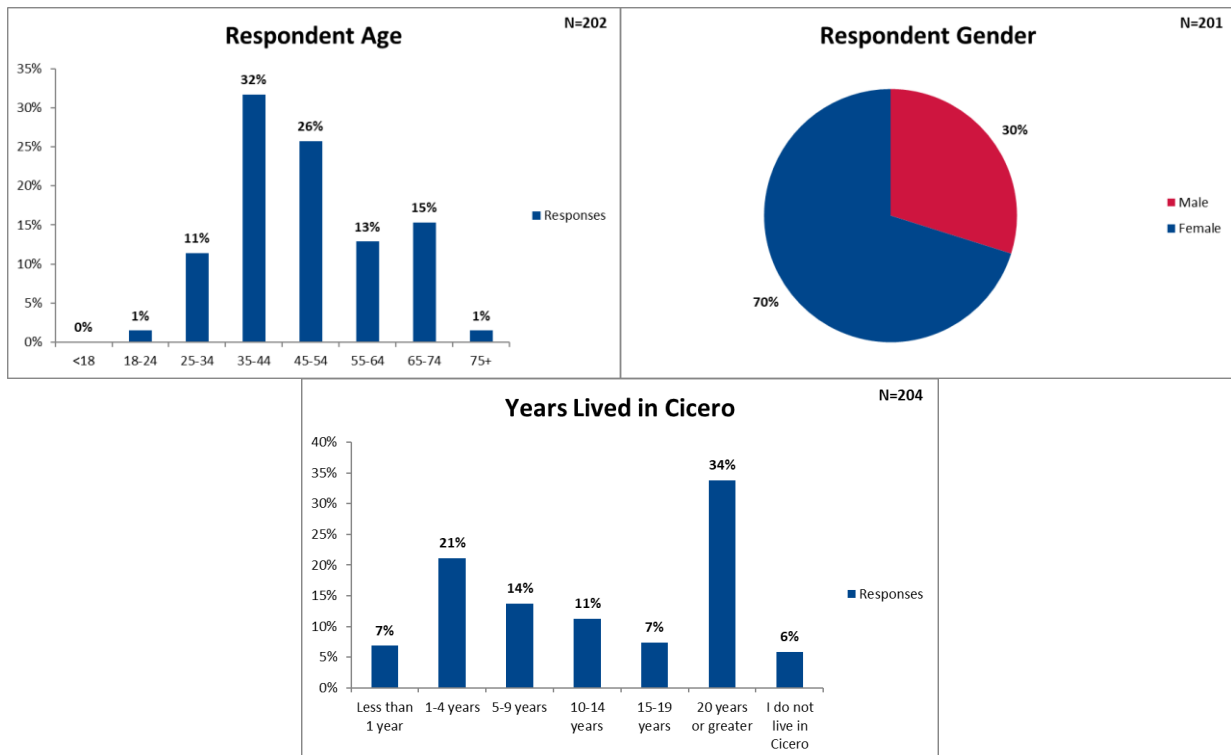


Figure 51: Survey Respondent Demographics

4.2.4 Cross-Tabular Analysis

The following sections provide several survey questions as answered by residents living in Cicero less than 5 years, between 5 and 14 years, and more than 15 years.

System Use

Newer residents indicate using the parks system more often than residents who have lived in Cicero longer than 15 years.

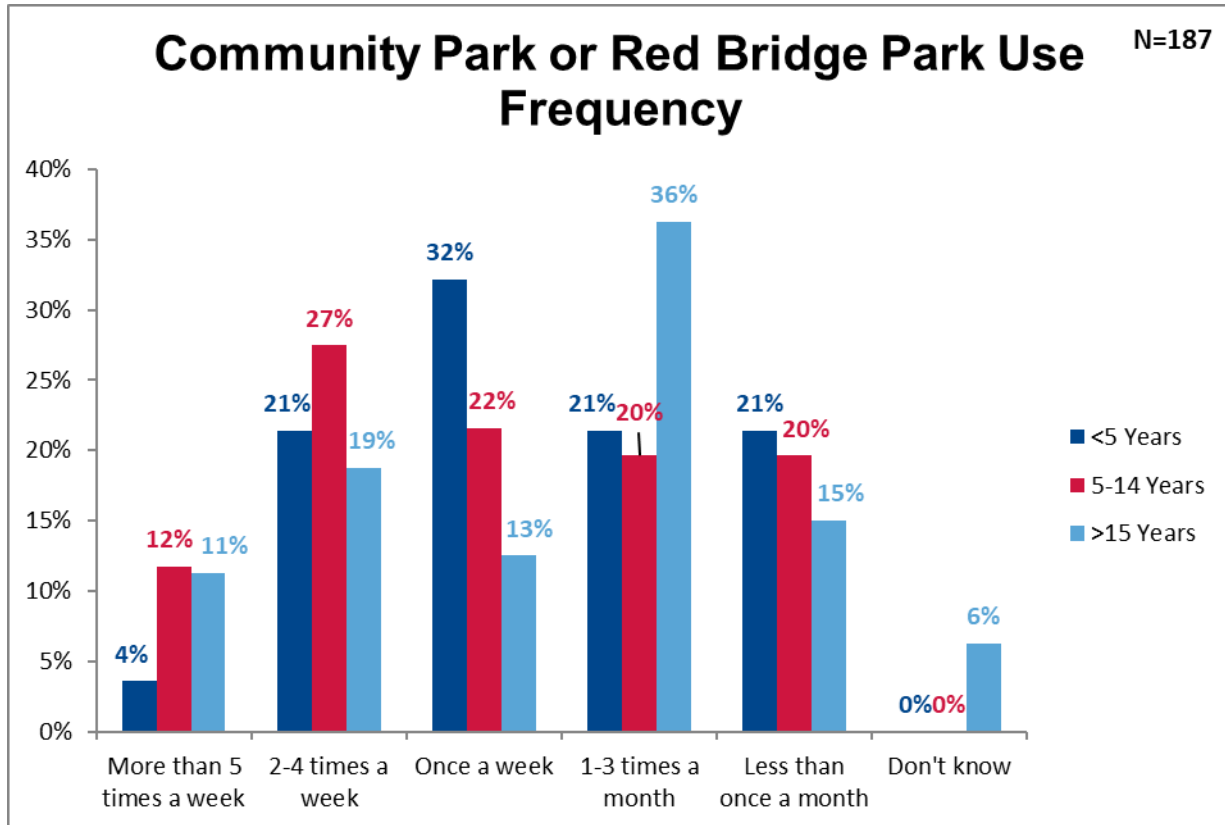


Figure 52: System Use by Years Lived Within Cicero



Barriers

Newer residents reported not knowing what is being offered more than those living within Cicero longer. All age segments report facilities not having the right equipment as a top-two barrier.

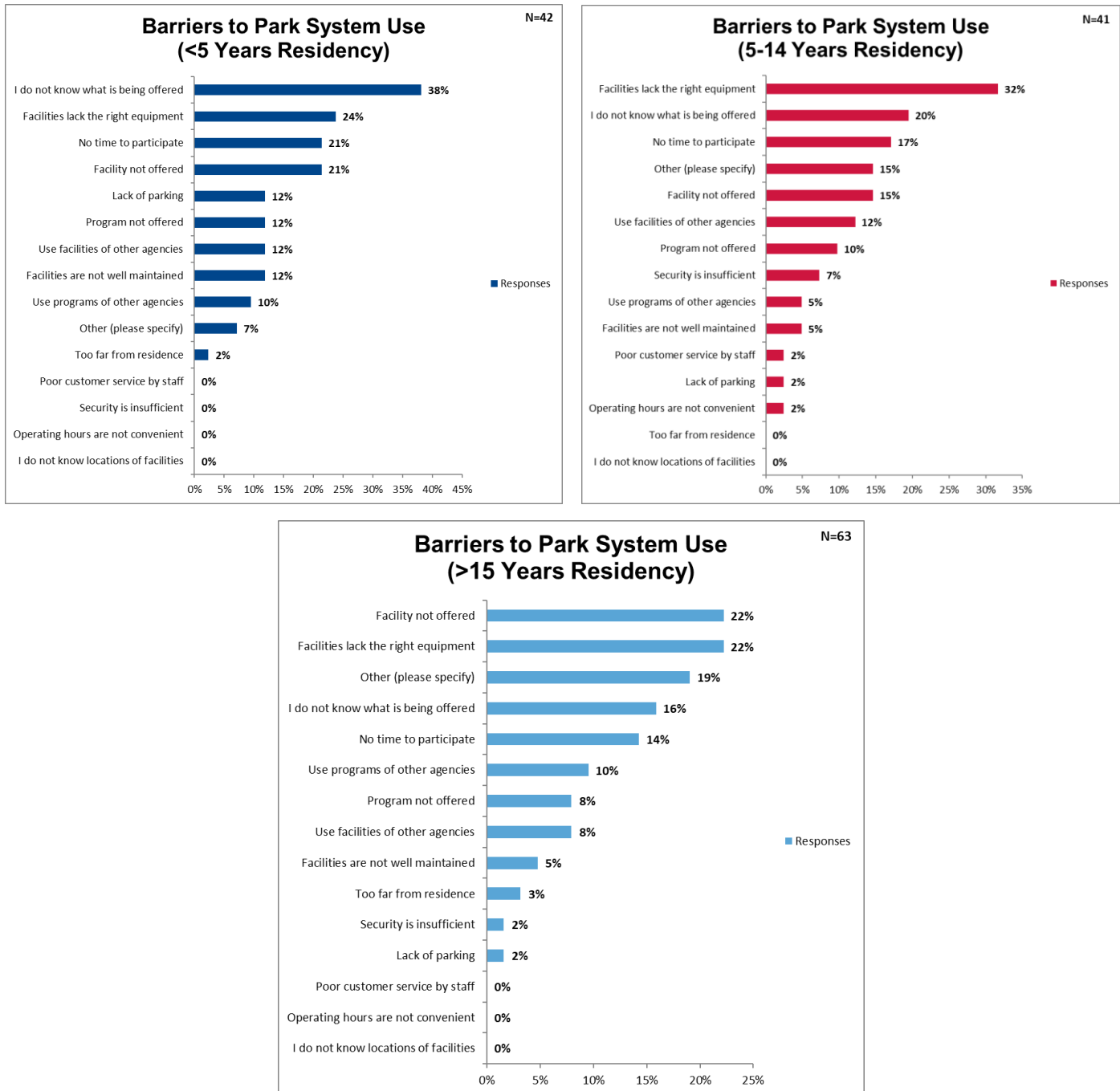


Figure 53: Barriers to System Use by Years Lived Within Cicero

Facility Importance

Lake access is a much higher priority for newer residents. Splash pads/spray grounds are a top-two important feature for all age groups.

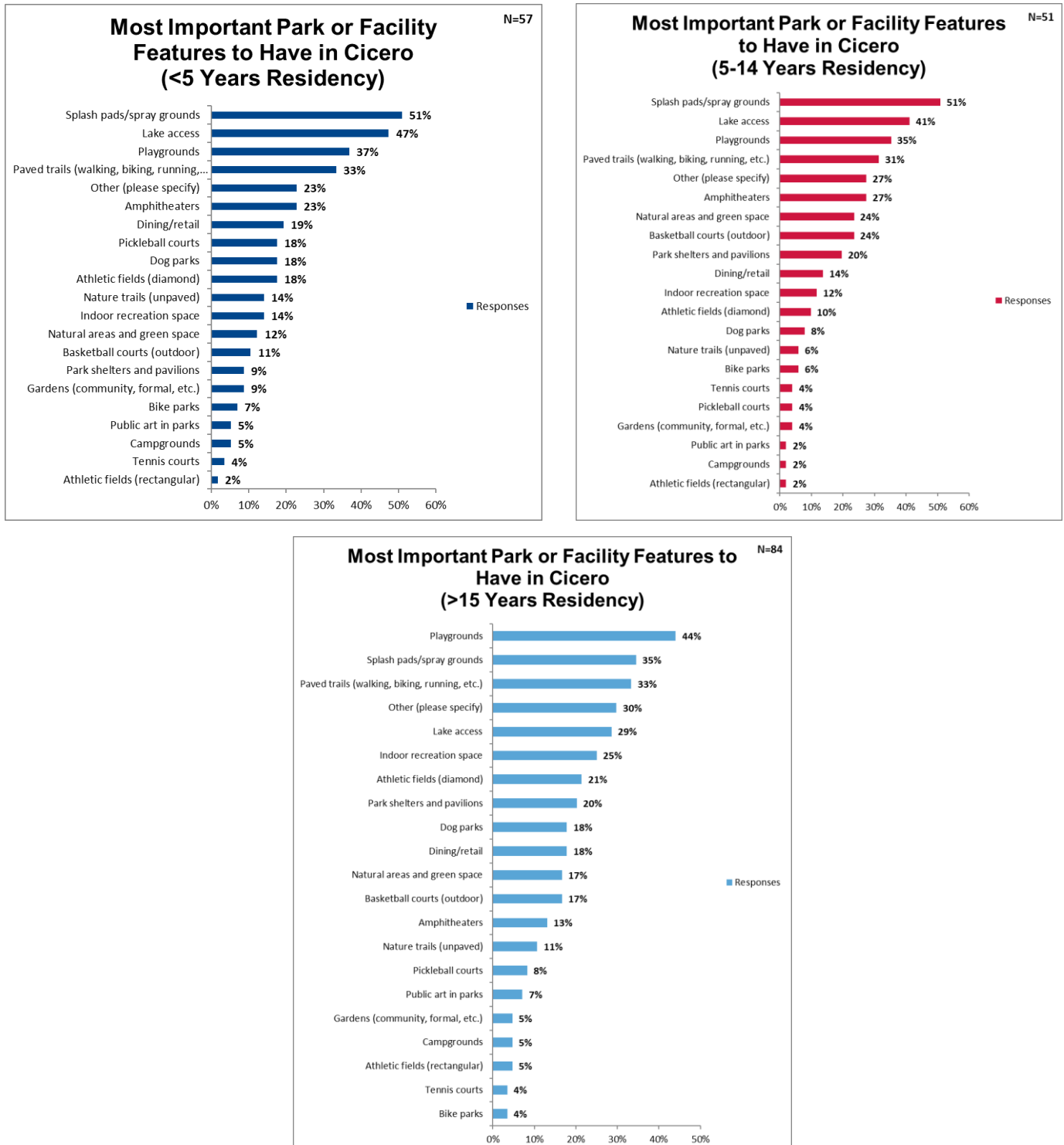


Figure 54: Most Important Features by Years Lived Within Cicero

Program Importance

The top three programs are the same for all years lived within Cicero: farmers markets, concerts and performing arts, and canoeing/kayaking/stand-up paddle boarding.

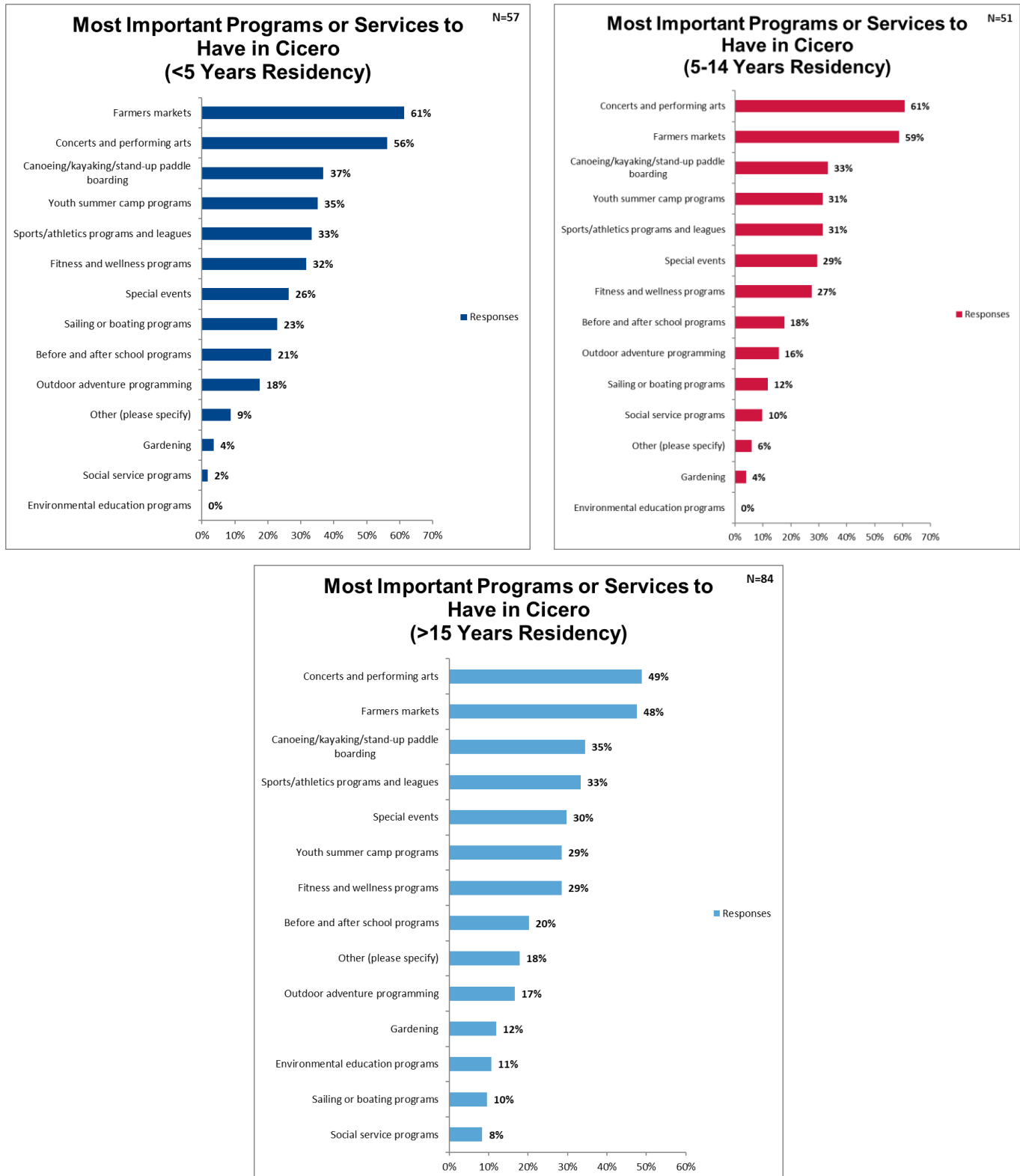


Figure 55: Most Important Programs by Years Lived Within Cicero

Prioritization of \$100

Residents living within Cicero for a longer time put more of an emphasis on improving/maintaining existing parks and recreation facilities, whereas newer residents prefer to see more developing/constructing of new recreation facilities.

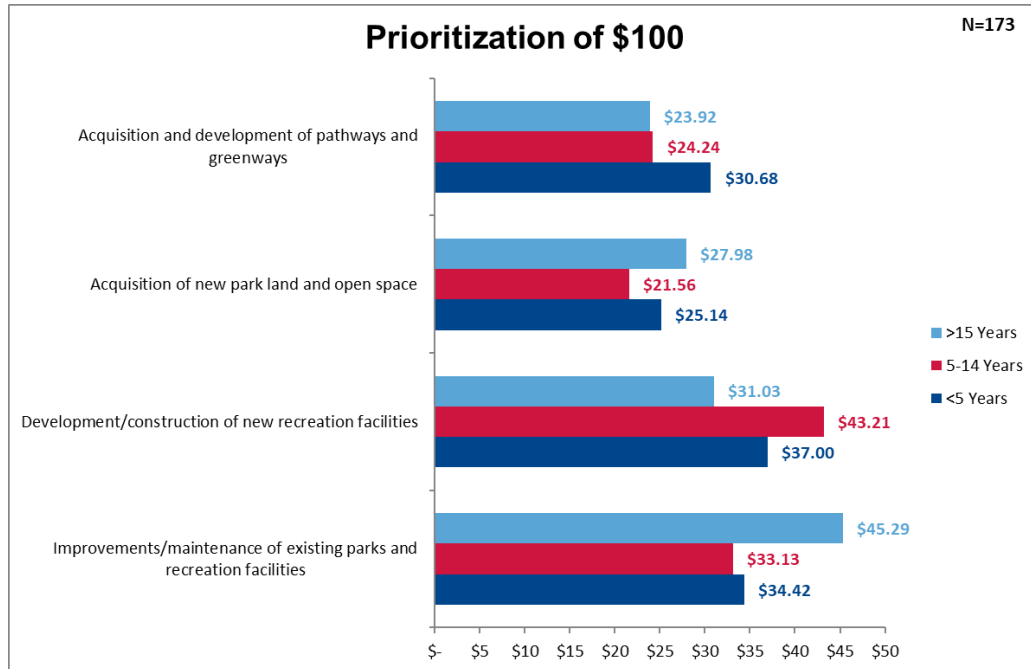


Figure 56: Prioritization of \$100 by Years Lived Within Cicero

4.3 Public Meetings

Zec Eight Insights held two public meetings the week of June 20; an in-person event was held at Red Bridge Park's Community Building the evening of Wednesday, June 22, and a virtual offering was provided the following evening. A total of 24 attendees participated in the meetings and provided feedback for the *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan*.

Each meeting began with a project overview presentation by the consultant. The presentation served as a way to inform the attendees about the overall planning process, key findings to date, and how they could remain engaged beyond their participation in the meeting. Attendees were then asked to provide feedback for four topical questions:



1. What are the most important park amenities, features, and facilities to provide?
2. What are the most important programs and services to provide?
3. What are the top unmet recreational needs within the community?
4. What are your transformational ideas for the next five years?

Additionally, meeting attendees could complete comment cards (if in person) or provide additional written comments/feedback via a chat pod (if virtual). The following sections present the feedback received for each question.

4.3.1 Park Amenities, Features, and Facilities

- Equipment rental – kayaks, paddle boards, etc.
- Concessions at Red Bridge and Community Park
- New playground equipment for all ages – both parks
- Splash park/pad (dogs included)
- Large shelter
- Mini golf
- Bring back our pool
- Trails from library to diamonds – or just more throughout connecting behind the library and/or more trees and plants
- Shaded areas over play equipment
- Musical station
- Park acreage (west)
- Pavilions
- Tike playground equipment
- More playground equipment
- Solar lights along the trail
- More dog waste stations
- More trash receptacles
- The pool makes the community more inviting



4.3.2 Programs and Services

- Open up community center to activities for parents and children, crafts day
- Community pool!
- Are safe, marked crosswalks a service? Street marking for crosswalks would be very helpful
- Group kayaking
- Organized physical fitness programs – Pilates/yoga
- Signage for Community Park off Jackson Street and State Route 19
- Pickleball lessons
- More running, biking, and events



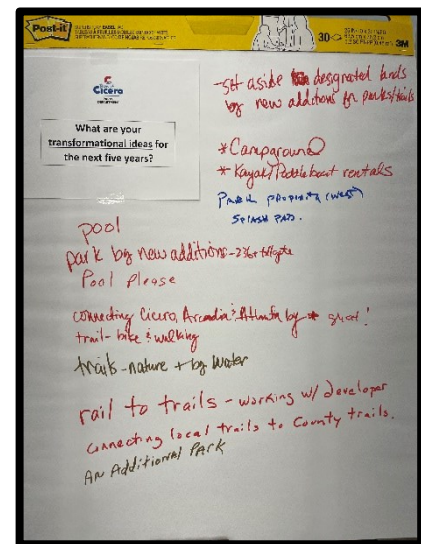
4.3.3 Top Unmet Needs

- Trail linking Cicero to Noblesville
- Tennis courts
- Biking trails
- Baby swings
- Pool
- Affordable train rides – more frequent
- Frisbee golf
- Pickleball courts

- Bike path connecting the two parks along Main Street
- Dog park
- Beach access to lake
- Educational playground equipment
- Pickleball classes
- Bigger dog park
- Additional parking
- Connectivity among the trails; especially to Noblesville – Wolfies Grill, 216th Street, and toward Koteewi Park

4.3.4 Transformational Ideas

- Set aside designated lands by new additions for parks/trails
- Campground
- Kayak/paddle boat rentals
- Park property (west)
- Splash pad
- Pool
- Park by new additions – 236th and Tollgate Road
- Pool please
- Connecting Cicero, Arcadia, and Atlanta by trail – bike and walking
- Trails – nature and by water
- Rail to trails
- Working with developers
- Connecting local trails to county trails
- An additional park
- Need to keep/make people healthy
- Park land acquisition – farmland in general



4.4 Final Public Presentation and Review

The final public presentation was held during the Town Council meeting on October 4, 2022. No members of the public were present. After reviewing the document and asking questions, Town Council formally approved the *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* on November 1, 2022. Five members of the public were present along with other Cicero department leaders. No public comment was received during either of the final two Town Council meetings.

Chapter 5 - Needs Assessment

5.1 Introduction

A needs assessment determines “gaps” between current conditions and desired conditions. An important tenet of a needs assessment is the accurate measurement of desired conditions so needs, or gaps, can be appropriately identified. A distinction must be made between “wants” and “needs.” A community may want or desire a specific amenity, program, or experience, but determining the actual need may manifest a bit different from the stated want based on many factors including, but not limited to: economic realities, physical land restrictions or constraints, system growth based on phasing, and the like.

5.2 Identified Needs

The *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* included a multi-pronged approach to its creation, including societal research, industry benchmarks, existing supply, public feedback, and consultant analysis and opinion. As a result, the following sections outline and discuss key needs for the Cicero Parks Department over the next five years.

5.2.1 Four-Season Enhancement

As a midwestern town, Cicero is subject to the changing seasons, including cold, icy, and potentially snowy winter months. Community engagement revealed a desire to see more focus put on four-season recreation activities. This thinking, combined with the Department’s fiscal realities and position, point toward the direction of activating Red Bridge Park during the winter months. **To accomplish this idea, a new multi-purpose pavilion is needed.** This facility will accomplish several pressing needs, such as:

- Winter recreation opportunities through activities such as a seasonal ice rink
- Enhanced revenue generation capabilities year round
- More activation, connection, and use of the Community Building
- More diverse age segment appeal within Cicero
- New programming opportunities such as farmers markets, rentals, concerts, and events
- An additional destination facility for Cicero to increase visitation and tourism

5.2.2 More Water-Based Recreation Opportunities and Access

Given the town’s location along Morse Reservoir, it makes sense that community members desire to see increased recreational use of the resource. The Department constructed a canoe/kayak launch before this plan’s development, which helped increase community water access. **To further this idea, water-based recreation equipment rental and programs are needed.** With the addition of the canoe/kayak launch combined with Red Bridge Park’s marina operations, the logical next step is to seek a third-party vendor to provide rental opportunities. Hamilton County Parks and Recreation partners with the White River Canoe Company to enhance user access to the White River, as an example.

5.2.3 A Strategy for Aquatics is Warranted

A community pool was located in Red Bridge Park adjacent to the Community Building. The pool’s maintenance and operation costs (along with asset condition) affected the pool’s viability, and ultimately, the decision was made to remove the facility altogether. As a result, there is a demonstrated need for aquatics within Cicero. **Given the community’s size and the cost to develop (and maintain/operate) a pool facility, a partnership with Hamilton Heights School Corporation is needed.**

Many communities partner with the local school system to utilize aquatic facilities for public use. Through use agreements, municipalities and parks departments assist the school corporation by providing staff and/or compensation for staff overtime. This type of partnership has proven successful throughout Indiana and around the country.

In addition to a school partnership, a long-term strategy is needed for aquatics. As Cicero grows, the need for a standalone aquatic facility and/or splash pad/spray ground will become more prominent. **The town and Cicero Creek Pool Foundation (among other vested stakeholder groups) should pursue a feasibility study for an aquatic facility.** A feasibility study will provide a comprehensive analysis of preferred facility location, costs (both capital and operations), and the conditions that make operating the facility “successful” for the town. It is recommended a feasibility study be completed and approved before building an aquatics facility.

5.2.4 Expanded Funding Strategies

The Department is heavily reliant on earned income (self-generated revenue such as building rentals, dock rentals, and fuel sales). As mentioned previously, diversifying earned income opportunity by developing a four-season facility is needed; however, additional strategies are warranted. **Pursuing a food and beverage tax, capital replacement fees, revolving/non-reverting accounts, and establishment of a park board is necessary.**

Indiana’s Food and Beverage Tax applies to transactions in which food or beverages are furnished, prepared, or served by a retail merchant for consumption at a location or on equipment provided by a retail merchant for consideration (payment). This tax is only applicable in counties/municipalities that have enacted this type of tax. A municipality has a tax limit of 2% when combined with a county tax rate. Many Indiana communities and counties have enacted this tax that helps support public services, including parks and recreation. Many communities are proponents of this tax because it is also supported by tourism and visitors to the municipality. This concept is positive for Cicero, considering its strong sports tourism market and potential.

Many departments develop capital replacement fees and attach these nominal amounts to paid services. When combined with revolving/non-reverting accounts, these fees allow a department to plan ahead and prepare for asset lifecycle improvements, repairs, or recapitalization. Additionally, facility users are more apt to support facility fees when they know the fees are being reinvested into the facilities they use the most.

A park board in Indiana is a form of governance, but it is also a conduit for expanded funding strategies. First, having an established park board (and an approved *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan*) allows the municipality to be eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies administered through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). These monies are matching grants for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Since the program began, Indiana has received approximately \$90 million in federal funds, of which over \$50 million has been allocated to local agencies. Second, having a park board allows the ability to bond for parks and recreation services. Bonding can help with the acquisition and development of recreation facilities. Third, having a park board can increase the ability for land donations. Many communities experience land acquisition through planned giving, and a park board can help facilitate the process in Cicero as residents desire to see property preserved for recreation as opposed to development.

5.2.5 Leveraging Sports Tourism

As discussed in Chapter 2, sports tourism is a rather large market for Cicero, with the Cicero Sports Complex located in Community Park. **To help grow this market, a stronger alliance and partnership with Hamilton County Tourism and a measured investment in sports facilities is needed.** Hamilton County Tourism researches and supports the amenities, attractions, and experiences that attract people and places. Invest Hamilton County is focused on empowering economic vitality for the county's businesses and residents. They accomplish this by fostering collaboration, conducting quality research, and implementing workforce development and quality of life priorities across the county.

A closer partnership with Hamilton County Tourism will better inform an infrastructure improvement plan for the Cicero Sports Complex (along with any future park land acquisition and development). Understanding the main assets needed to attract more sporting events such as lighting, field conditions/requirements, number of fields, and field size will be important for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). However, and possibly equally as important, the appropriate *support* amenities should also be identified including, but not limited to: seating, parking, shade, concessions, and restrooms. Together, understanding how to enhance the Cicero Sports Complex commensurate with a high degree of return on investment will be paramount to leveraging sports tourism.

5.2.6 Existing System Improvements

Many recreation amenities exist within the parks system; however, **several system improvements are identified, including:**

- A newer, larger concession building at Red Bridge Park
- ADA improvements (various)
- Dog park reconfiguration
- Dog waste stations
- Fence replacements
- Field drainage
- Lighting
- New seawall
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Outdoor yard games
- Parking lot repaving
- Pathway connections
- Pathway repaving
- Play equipment updates
- Playground surface updates
- Safety netting
- Signage
- Updated fuel pumps
- Updated fuel pump software

5.2.7 Working With Developers to Help Grow the Parks System

Almost every community has legal language regarding how land will be developed and used. Elected officials can leverage this process for parks systems by establishing specific public amenities, green space, and/or trail/pathway connections requirements that help improve or close the gaps for identified community needs. **Currently, Cicero has established language that outlines open space requirements; however, a direct linkage to the current *Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan* would strengthen the town's ability to reduce community recreation needs and barriers.** By facilitating the collaboration between developers and the Cicero Parks Department, a more holistic approach could be implemented and more robust conversations could be had.

5.2.8 Formalized Land Acquisition Strategies

Many communities develop a set of criteria for assessing the viability to acquire new park land. This set of criteria is a gap area for Cicero. The following definitions represent an example set of criteria that can be ranked and prioritized when considering potential land acquisitions. Criteria can be scored and weighted by municipal staff to prioritize land acquisitions as well.

- **Adequate size.** Property is evaluated for its size to accommodate park uses based on adopted park classification system.
- **Availability of utilities.** Property is reviewed for proximity of existing municipal utilities to the sites (i.e., water, sanitary, and storm sewers).
- **Cost/availability of acquisitions.** Property is scored based upon the park land cost and the ease of acquisition.
- **Impacts (soils, earthwork, etc.).** Property is scored based upon reviewed GIS information on soils, topography, drainage, and wetlands that may impact park development.
- **Operational impact.** Property is scored based upon the operations and maintenance impacts it will have on the system (i.e., staffing, funding, lifecycle replacements, etc.)
- **Pedestrian/bike access.** Property is scored based upon its general proximity to existing and proposed sidewalks and trails/pathways in Cicero and how it will impact the overall pedestrian system.
- **Population (5-, 10-, 15-minute walk time).** Property is evaluated based on its general proximity to existing population densities.

5.2.9 Continue Using Partnerships for Programmatic Opportunities

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Department does not offer recreation programming itself; instead, it partners with non-profit organizations to provide events and recreation experiences. **Throughout the plan's development, it is clear a collaborative approach to enhanced recreation programming is necessary.** Based on an assessment of stakeholders and identified community needs, a partnership strategy that includes the following entities is needed (including the organizations that already have a working relationship with the department):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Chamber of Commerce | • Lights Over Morse Lake |
| • Hamilton County Tourism | • Local businesses/corporations |
| • Hamilton Heights School Corporation | • Nickel Plate Art Foundation |
| • Hamilton North Public Library | • Our Town Cicero Main Street Association |
| • Kiwanis Club | |

Additionally, a community resource webpage should be created that links all providers from one place.


5.2.10 Foster Connectivity

As pathway and trail connections are becoming more and more popular, Cicero will need to continue finding mechanisms to connect local pathways to regional trails while continuing to close gaps in the existing pathway system in town. **It is recommended to identify and prioritize primary, secondary, and tertiary corridors based on development and use patterns, population density, and community input, and to create a hierarchical approach to enhancing the pathway system.** The philosophy for trail development will most likely need to include working across borders with other municipalities (including the county) to facilitate the pathway network.

Chapter 6 - Implementation Plan

6.1 Organization

The Implementation Plan is categorized into six focus areas based on the needs assessment. Specific strategies, or tactics, are provided along with suggested focus year(s) and funding implication(s). The Implementation Plan includes actions beyond capital improvement needs and represents a more holistic approach to system and department enhancement.

Town of Cicero, IN Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2023-2027)									
Implementation Plan									
#	Focus Area		Strategy/Tactic	Focus Year					Funding Implication(s)
				2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
1	New Development	A.	Construct a multi-purpose pavilion at Red Bridge Park.	X					RIF
		B.	Construct paved areas for food trucks with electric outlets.	X					RIF
2	Funding Strategies	A.	Pursue Food and Beverage Tax.	X					Park Budget
		B.	As programmatic functions increase, explore the feasibility of creating a Recreation Partnership in which surrounding communities pay into a fund that is used to deliver recreation services for partnership communities.				X		Park Budget
		C.	Utilize Recreation Impact Fees (RIF) to reduce identified levels of service deficits.		X	X	X	X	RIF
		D.	Pursue Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to develop downtown park space.					X	TIF
		E.	Pursue facility naming rights within the park system.		X				Donations/Endowments
		F.	Continue to expand programmatic sponsorship opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	Donations/Endowments
		G.	Pursue parks and recreation bond for facility development and improvements.				X		New Capital
3	System Facility Improvements	A.	Develop a site master plan for Red Bridge Park.		X				Park Budget
		B.	Develop a site master plan for Community Park.		X				Park Budget
		C.	Continue to increase park system signage and branding.			X			Park Budget
		D.	Replace Red Bridge Park concession building.		X				Park Budget
		E.	Continue making ADA Transition Plan improvements (as identified in 2017-2021 Master Plan).	X	X	X	X	X	Park Budget/RIF
		F.	Reconfigure dog park.			X			Park Budget
		G.	Add dog waste stations.	X					Park Budget
		H.	Fence replacements.	X					Park Budget
		I.	Fix field drainage issues.		X				Park Budget
		J.	Increase park system lighting.			X			Park Budget
		K.	Add park system security cameras and systems.			X			Park Budget
4	System Expansion	A.	Edit Developer Ordinance to refer to the <i>Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan</i> for guidance.	X					-
		B.	Adopt formalized land acquisition strategies.	X					-
		C.	Create pathways and trails prioritization hierarchy.	X					-
		D.	Connect to regional trail system.			X	X	X	RIF
5	Programmatic Opportunities	A.	Work with the Hamilton Heights School Corporation to create public aquatic access.	X					Park Budget/Partnership Agreement
		B.	Work with the Cicero Creek Pool Foundation to complete an aquatics feasibility study.			X			Park Budget/Partnership Agreement
		C.	Meet with Hamilton County Tourism to create facility improvement list and recommendations for enhancements related to Hamilton County sports tourism.		X				Park Budget/Tourism/Grants
		D.	Work with Indiana Home Educators' Network (IHEN) to expand homeschool co-op options at Red Bridge Park's Community Building.		X				Park Budget/Grants
		E.	Create a community resource webpage that links all service providers.			X			Park Budget
		F.	Host a semi-annual similar provider roundtable/workshop that serves to perform collective goal setting, partnership/collaboration opportunities, and updates.	X	X	X	X	X	Park Budget
		G.	Host summer concert series in the parks.		X	X	X	X	Park Budget/Sponsorships
		H.	Host pickleball tournaments.		X	X	X	X	Park Budget/Sponsorships
		I.	Partner with library for both facility access along with programmatic opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	Park Budget/Partnership Agreement
6	Administration and Governance	A.	Establish a Park Board.	X					-
		B.	Conduct annual Park Board training.	X	X	X	X	X	Park Budget
		C.	Regularly attend HAMPA meetings and events.	X	X	X	X	X	Park Budget
		D.	Attend Indiana Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) annual conference.		X	X	X	X	Park Budget
		E.	Regularly attend IPRA meetings and events.		X	X	X	X	Park Budget
		F.	Update and reconfigure Department website.				X		Park Budget



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Chapter 7 - Appendix

7.1 Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Group Detail

1. What are the strengths of the Cicero parks and recreation system that we need to build on for this plan?
 - a. The reservoir is a fabulous resource
 - b. Red Bridge community building is a great asset near the water; the community center and the water go hand-in-hand, they each pull people to each other
 - c. Community Park is close to the library which is nice and it accommodates both users
 - d. There is an active Friends Group that helps
 - e. For a small town, our strengths can also be our weaknesses; we have a reservoir but it separates our town
 - f. Atlanta has a splash pad and Arcadia is getting one too, if we get one where do we put it?
 - g. The planters in town are well kept
 - h. The parks have a well pleasing appearance
 - i. We have a great department staff
 - j. Council is supportive and is ready to accomplish things
 - k. We have a lot of playground equipment
 - l. The budget seems to be good for our system
 - m. We have a really good park system
 - n. The trail system has been improved which has been great; we would like to see connectivity back to the baseball diamonds (need a connection point)
 - o. We have an aggressive and energetic Department head is willing to move things forward
 - p. Our lake is a great strength, and with Red Bridge Park on it, we have an underutilized property that we can provide an opportunity for
 - q. Our parks are central to the community and residents can get to them quickly
 - r. We have expanding walking trails
 - s. Our parks are well kept and managed.
 - t. We have large amounts of green space naturally within our town.
 - u. We need to be mindful of balancing the development of our green space.
 - v. Our reservoir is our largest and most recognized asset.
 - w. Our location is outstanding
 - x. Our two parks are well situated and we have property on both sides of the reservoir
 - y. Our parks help support businesses by attracting them
 - z. We have a great superintendent who is forward thinking and visionary
 - aa. Our sports complex is a great opportunity for continued improvement
 - bb. The walkability of Community Park is great
 - cc. The community's friendliness and connection are a tremendous asset
 - dd. Cicero has done a great job managing growth
 - ee. We need to continue focus on long-range planning
 - ff. We have a good mix of experiences, maybe a bit heavy on restaurants currently
 - gg. The lake is a great asset for the community in general
 - hh. All events are in the parks and they utilize the park spaces and amenities

- ii. Summer concerts along the pier
 - jj. Department leadership is a great strength
 - kk. There's a lot of things going well
 - ll. The baseball fields are a great asset
 - mm. The playground equipment is great for the kids to play on
 - nn. The community building is being used more and more; this is something that could be expanded – maybe another facility? Maybe something more conducive to wedding?
 - oo. The lake is a tremendous asset along with our marina – destination facility, gasoline rentals, etc.
 - pp. Park grounds are being kept well
 - qq. The new shelter at Community Park is well-used and Red Bridge needs one
 - rr. Red Bridge Park sits on the lake and has a natural aesthetic and a marina
 - ss. We have open real estate to plan for at Red Bridge
 - tt. The biggest strength of the system is its fluidity – leadership has great vision, there are non-profit groups assisting, etc.
 - uu. Our parks are heavily utilized
 - vv. We have nice walking paths
 - ww. We have video boards now
 - xx. The community center building could be used more
2. Are there any underserved populations in the community?
- a. Underserved populations include those that live outside of Cicero but utilize our town services, especially towards Tipton
 - b. We have part of the population that is of an old school mentality and another that is of a younger generation that wants to be outside and connected
 - c. We don't really do anything for teenagers in our community; we don't have rectangular sports fields
 - d. The tennis courts are in disrepair but that will be restored this year with pickleball lining as well so that should help
 - e. We don't have any outdoor fitness equipment which is a missing element
 - f. More connectivity into Community Park
 - g. We don't have a lot for older adult populations
 - h. We are not a program-related system, but it would be nice to grow this as our community grows
 - i. Geographically we are underserved – we need a small park close to downtown (near Jackson Street) because Red Bridge is across the causeway and Community Park is a bit of an access challenge because the roads nearby don't have shoulders.
 - j. The senior citizen community may be a bit more underserved (possibly) – can we do more for them?
 - k. We need to continue creating opportunities for youth to have access to the parks, but there are always concerns when youth are unsupervised
 - l. Continue focusing on equal age opportunities
 - m. Continue focusing on gathering places, but in a safe manner

- n. Pickleball
 - o. More youth activities
 - p. Young adult activities because this is an age group we are not serving well
 - q. Families with kids between 5-12-years-old are not necessarily served well; especially now that the pool is gone
 - r. We need more things for high schoolers to do
 - s. Not that I can think of; the two parks seem to be serving different age segments so we need to make sure we are aligning age segments with proximity of residents (current and future)
 - t. Anybody on the west side of the reservoir; green space is limited on that side
 - u. We have a mobile home community that is underserved
 - v. More bike trails and pathways; we could always get more use
 - w. Connectivity to neighboring communities
 - x. ADA compliance will always be a priority
 - y. Getting rid of the pool opened up a market segment that is now underserved (community pool is within 15-20 minutes now)
 - z. Older teens are probably underserved because we have a lot of amenities geared toward younger kids
3. What are the unmet needs of the community in terms of parks and recreation? What facilities, amenities, programs, and services are missing or need improved?
- a. The bathrooms in Community Park get vandalized a lot
 - b. Bathroom availability in general can be tough with the open hours
 - c. Some folks are worried about the pool that went away
 - d. Community Park parking can be a challenge but there is spillover room into the library
 - e. More trails and connectivity; we can connect across Stringtown
 - f. Overall connectivity to Noblesville (completing the loop)
 - g. It would be great to see a splash pad for our younger generation
 - h. The live music series in most Hamilton County cities have a large reach and typically fall to the department to oversee – is there a way to implement this in Cicero? This would increase our visibility and professionalism; they would probably not have a problem finding a lead sponsor.
 - i. Residents would be more excited about cost-effective aquatics feature like a splash pad/sprayground.
 - j. Dog parks – everyone loves dogs and this kind of asset garners community support; there is a lot of space near the baseball diamonds in Community Park that would make a great location.
 - k. Art on the trails – working with local schools or Nickel Plate to provide this experience (agro- or aquatics-themed to match our community). This would be a cost-effective way to enhance our system.
 - l. Red Bridge Park is underutilized and there are a lot of people that would utilize this space as an event center for weddings, conferences, etc.
 - m. Summer activities are needed since the pool was removed; maybe a splash pad?

- n. Multi-use on the tennis courts is a great idea
 - o. We need to be careful of how close our amenities are to each other to avoid overlapping spaces
 - p. We need to continue enhancing lake opportunities because this is something other communities do not have (parking, walking paths, access, experiences, etc.)
 - q. More programming in the parks – partnerships and collaborations such as yoga, pickleball, tennis, karate, etc.
 - r. Softball leagues, cement cornhole, etc.
 - s. A destination amphitheater/shelter/structure would be cool because the library amphitheater is nice but underutilized
 - t. More multi-season facilities with support amenities
 - u. There has been talk about a splash pad/interactive water feature
 - v. What about a beach at Red Bridge (like Morse Beach) to draw people in?
 - w. Some sort of water park would be great
 - x. A summer camp (day camp) would be a great opportunity for our residents; there are a lot of things that can be done around here
 - y. We could utilize the community building for classes
 - z. We need to teach swim lessons because we all live on the lake
 - aa. We need more connectivity (sidewalk between Tamarac and Red Bridge)
 - bb. We need modernization – we have an active community and there is probably a desire to utilize the basketball courts, we probably don't need both tennis courts – we need pickleball, and we need to expand our dog park
 - cc. We need a water-facing community shelter in Red Bridge Park that can be rented out
 - dd. We need to find programs and services that generate money instead of just having parks and recreation being a cost center
 - ee. A small amphitheater somewhere would help as well
4. Are there organizations in the area that the department should consider partnering with? Or, how can Cicero Parks Department partner with your organization?
- a. Main Street could be a potential partner with the department
 - b. There are opportunities to utilize the pavilion and space behind the library
 - c. We need to work together with the library, Our Town Cicero, Lights Over Morse Lake, etc. – can we share volunteers, how do we integrate and enhance communication?
 - d. Maybe a community calendar?
 - e. Our Town Cicero – they are event heavy and they can partner with parks to help fundraise monies through events; they need specific reasons to help fundraise
 - f. Collaborate with park departments of other cities; everyone else has different strengths so learn from them
 - g. They have done a great job partnering with organizations over the years
 - h. The school district could help with diamond field overflow, but there are probably considerations to doing that to ensure amenities are maintained
 - i. The Chamber of Commerce does a tremendous job uniting the small towns around us

- j. Youth baseball, basketball, football, etc. are umbrella agreements that are organized at the school district level
 - k. Lights Over Morse Lake
 - l. Our Town Cicero
 - m. Kiwanis
 - n. Business/corporate sector
 - o. School district
 - p. Library
 - q. We are a bedroom community and have a lot of senior citizens; Noblesville has a dedicated senior center – is there something like this that would work in Cicero?
 - r. Hamilton County Tourism – they put a heavy emphasis on the arts and that is a big draw in our county
 - s. Nickel Plate Art Foundation
5. If you could change one thing about the system over the next five years, what would it be?
- a. Community Park would have self-cleaning toilet facilities
 - b. Continue to make the park users happy which they do very well
 - c. We need to address our overall municipal town structure and elect a Mayor so we can get more things done within our community
 - d. We need to change our perception of “we can’t do this”
 - e. Realistic goal for projects that we can go after and not just wait around for them; get the funding/financing lined up
 - f. Pathway/trail connectivity will be important (south end of Stringtown connectivity is important)
 - g. Keep improving the ballfields
 - h. We need to change the perception within Cicero – the pool’s removal left a black eye and we need to flip the script on how the town views parks and recreation
 - i. Our diamond fields offer a large opportunity for us because this is largely an untapped market for us; we do not want to become a Grand Park, but this is still a big item we can move to – we need to look at funding turf options because of guarantees play and drainage
 - j. We need to elevate our diamond field sponsorships and community ownership because we do not do this well
 - k. Would like to see Red Bridge Park space become a multi-use area with a large, functional shelter
 - l. Would love to see more connectivity brought into Red Bridge Park
 - m. Red Bridge Park is redeveloped based on a community vision
 - n. Extended walkway into Red Bridge Park (near the cemetery)
 - o. A system is in place that shows how we handle future park land development and acquisition – what are our strategies?
 - p. Enhancing trails and implementing more community events (with partnerships) are low-hanging fruit and would do a lot for Cicero.
 - q. Continued improvement of the sports complex

- r. Continue to improve Red Bridge Park, especially the area once used by the pool
- s. Added features to Community Park to make the area more holistically utilized by the community
- t. Continued trail additions
- u. Long term maintenance plan in place
- v. Facility plan that addresses some sort of water amenity/feature
- w. Huge focus on how the Morse Reservoir can be maximized
- x. A plan to maximize partnerships
- y. More destination amenities/experiences to draw people to Red Bridge – bring more excitement to the system and serve more age segments
- z. Red Bridge can be activated more; there is more in Community Park for people to do
- aa. Some sort of water facility is added back to the community
- bb. The park system needs more land somewhere because we are landlocked with what we have
- cc. We need to do something where the pool was – pickleball? We would want more than one court.
- dd. We have a pretty good set up for baseball and softball fields, but our parking lots are not the greatest so pavement improvements, access, and walkability would be huge
- ee. For a small town, we are in a good position
- ff. Something bigger and better at Red Bridge Park for older youth would be good
- gg. Can we do something with the uptown pocket parks? Something small for downtown children?
- hh. We will be a completely different Town in five years because the two most recent housing developments are being completed earlier than anticipated
- ii. We need an independent body overseeing the park department because we need a group of people that focus on the park because councils have a lot of priorities to pay attention to
- jj. More of a vision for what the park system needs long-term
- kk. An implementable Master Plan because having a plan is one thing, but if it isn't acted upon, that wouldn't be good
- ll. Address the pool situation in the community; new subdivisions are building their own pools so I'm not sure we need to add one
- mm. We need more trails, hard sport courts, and updated diamond fields because our support amenities are not very desirable (income generation opportunity for the town)
- nn. A shift in the mindset of leadership – parks have always been important, but they are going to be more important moving forward because we have a natural asset in Morse Reservoir and we need to utilize it; the mindset shift is to not look at everything as a cost, but instead as an investment and business decision
- oo. Adding green space would be great to help with our festivals
- pp. More activation at Red Bridge Park (parking lot, community center, open lawn space, etc.)

6. Is there anything else you want to add to this conversation or have documented?
 - a. There is a mobile sign on a three-way stop that needs to be removed and replaced with something better.
 - b. Communication is key and we need to make this happen and make it a sustainable process
 - c. Cicero started growing once the lake was created and so we service all of Jackson Township because the other smaller communities have remained small
 - d. All the drainage south of town is hopefully being addressed in the next five years so we are hopeful to see more development in that area to help boost the tax base
 - e. Need more safety netting around the baseball diamonds
 - f. Replacing the marina is in the works
 - g. The property to the east of the library – is this something that can be used in the future for expanded ball diamond parking? The property is currently an IDEM property, but we should pay attention to it.
 - h. Park leadership has done a good job planning for the future and we need to include this roadmap in the Master Plan
 - i. Continue to have green spaces in developments – continued partnerships – can we ask them to help fund park features within the system instead of just in a small development?
 - j. Is there any way to partner with the trains that go through town? Special events? Can we procure a couple acres near the train where we can do events, meetings, loading/unloading, etc.?
 - k. Could we be involved in any ski shows? Fishing tournaments?
 - l. Programs is a missing function within our system and it would be great to activate our spaces; look at partnerships with the library
 - m. We need more support amenities for the baseball diamonds such as shelters, benches, bleachers, seating, pathways, lighting (if possible), trees and shade areas, and paved parking lot; drainage infrastructure
 - n. The tennis courts need repaved
 - o. We probably don't need a skatepark
 - p. For the size of our town, our parks are kept really nice
 - q. Dealing with our Town's growth will be the biggest thing – it is happening all below us and it is here now; parks is part of the overall infrastructure and we need to keep this up
 - r. The RIF will be a big part of park system improvement moving forward

7.1.1 Additional Questions Asked (Depending on the Stakeholder)

1. Do you hear anything about parks and recreation services in Cicero? Do you agree with what you are hearing?
 - a. People are starting to see the changes to the parks and are seeing what is being improved
 - b. There was community grumbling about the pool removal, but our Town isn't best positioned to manage this type of resource
 - c. The biggest concern is about the pool ever since it was removed; however, there are those that are for the pool and those that understand why it is no longer there
 - d. They would like to see more trails

- e. Pearl Street extension and new baseball field paving area improvements – these are two spots residents want to see enhanced
 - f. Tennis court improvements (currently in progress)
 - g. More shelters and gathering/venue spaces
 - h. Some folks would like to see a pool, but I think people would be OK with some type of water feature
 - i. The current Department head is doing a wonderful job and all I hear are good things
 - j. Everything we need done is getting done; we are moving at 100 mph
 - k. There are conversations about the pool
 - l. People wish we had “more” – areas, green space, expanded park opportunities
 - m. We have diamond fields, but we don’t have any rectangular fields
 - n. The green space at Red Bridge Park is in a poor location because parking is in the prime spaces
 - o. We need to add another park (especially toward the east side)
 - p. We closed the community pool during COVID; it was planned at some point due to infrastructure concerns, but it was sped up during this time; residents were on alert when the pool was planned for decommission
 - q. We need things in our community for youth
 - r. People are really into pickleball and walking trails/paths
 - s. There seems to be a greater demand for outdoor living now
2. Where does parks and recreation fit in terms of overall community priorities and values?
- a. Parks and recreation is definitely in the top three of community priorities and values
 - b. Public safety comes before parks and we have limited resources out of the general fund to help augment park budgets; however, TIF monies, redevelopment monies, and bonding are all options on the table
 - c. We need to develop the plan of what we want and then we can move toward implementing it
 - d. People move here for the small town feel and amenities
 - e. Parks have to be at the top of that list and it is currently in the top three of community priorities
3. Are there problems or challenges in the community that you believe recreation programs and services can help solve or alleviate?
- a. We don’t see a lot of police issues in northern Hamilton County
 - b. We have an overall lack of activities during the winter in Cicero
 - c. We lack activities for our older populations; we are resurfacing the tennis courts and will include pickleball lines
 - d. We need to provide more things to do overall, but especially in winter
 - e. Tipton is a good example of a community set-up: pool, basketball courts, and commerce all in one area

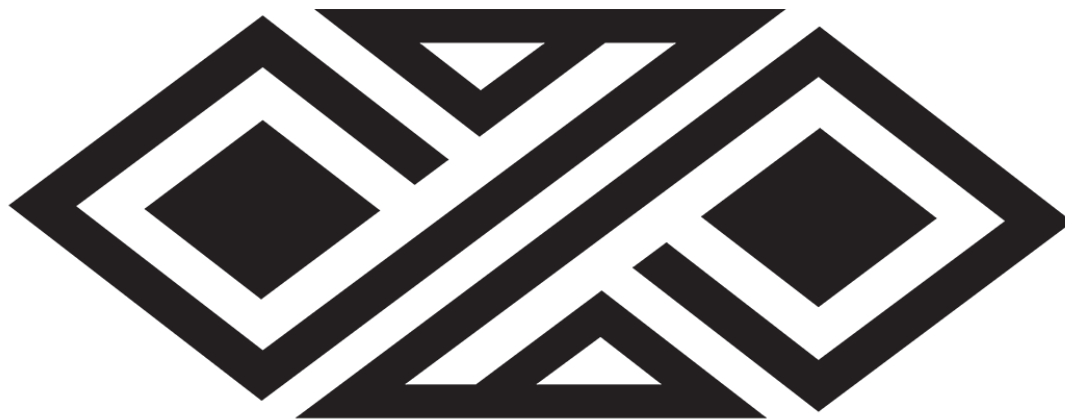
- f. People want to be around other people so we need to develop spaces that allow this; we lack in this area
 - g. Parks and rec gives our community's youth a place to go and things to do
 - h. It gives us social gathering places within our community
 - i. Facility space gives us an opportunity for non-profits to hold events
 - j. Our park system is pretty good and we offer a lot to the community.
 - k. Parks are a huge part of quality of life
 - l. Youth programming is the biggest opportunity for us – what about a day camp?
 - m. Carmel Fire Department puts on a day camp and runs for four days (150 kids a day, 600 kids total); opportunity to learn about natural history, history of the town, playgrounds
 - n. We need more learning opportunities from a social perspective for our youth
 - o. We have funding challenges with our community – replacing our amenities can be cost prohibitive
4. How should the future growth or changes of the system be funded/financed to keep up with the growth/changes of the community?
- a. Grant matching dollars are always great for specific projects
 - b. RIF funds are important
 - c. Examining the budget allocation from the general fund can be revisited
 - d. TIF monies have been used in the past
 - e. CVB funds are used
 - f. We can focus more on land donations from our citizenry
 - g. We need to look at smart land acquisition to the west because our town is developing in that direction – are there any land parcels that would help us prepare for that area?
 - h. We need to maintain our RIF structure that we have done a great job keeping that up
 - i. We are a bedroom community and this can hamper us in terms of opportunities
 - j. We make a decent amount of revenue from gasoline sales at the marina
 - k. The Friends of the Parks helps us tremendously
 - l. Will a Park Board structure help us with our funding opportunities?
 - m. General revenues will probably not be increased for parks and recreation compared to public safety so we need to look toward other funding sources
 - n. We need to work with developers as to how to develop more green spaces; how can we best position parks and recreation in Cicero to help create our own design standards, expectations, etc.
 - o. Our Recreation Impact Fees are going to be a vital piece moving forward
 - p. Grants should always be a possibility
 - q. We will need to look at more dollars coming out of the general fund at some point, but we need to understand our system deficiencies better
 - r. We do not have a Park Board and we know that will make us better positioned for grants

7.2 Staff SWOT Analysis

Strengths and **Weaknesses** are internal to the organization and represent the things that you have control over. **Opportunities** and **Threats** represent items that are external to the organization and although you may have influence, you also may not have complete control over them.

Cicero Parks Department

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support • Our system has a lot of space and baseball diamonds • We have a good complex in which to build off of • Trails and pathways seem to be well served and in good condition (including upcoming paving efforts) • Good relationship with Council • We have rental facilities that help with budget • We have waterfront property (destination) • Waterfront amenities such as kayak launch, fishing pier, rental facilities, etc. (core features to build upon) • We have uniqueness within our system 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the facilities we have • Lacking four-season restroom facilities (have to winterize) • Teenager experiences may be lacking/underserved within the park system • Young adult experiences may be lacking/underserved within the park system • Staffing levels (things tend to get a bit better when seasonal help joins in June) • Staff pay levels • Dog park is undersized for its level of use • Red Bridge Park is underdeveloped in terms of amenities and experiences; playground is undersized • ADA upgrades are needed • Park amenity lighting is lacking (none for baseball/softball)
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity can always be improved • Outdoor workout/fitness equipment • Outdoor cornhole and yard game areas • More dog park amenities (more than just a fenced-in area) • Activating Red Bridge Park more (existing amenities and adding more to the site) • Funding partnerships with foundations, other non-profits, etc. • Identifying what feature(s) should go in the place of the removed pool • More rental opportunities • Establishing a Park Board (perhaps) 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to provide the same level of service as other area systems (competing with Hamilton County, for example) • Losing staffing because of competing pay and benefits • Staff retirements and succession plan



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