UNALASKA

PARKS, CULTURE AND RECREATION

Park and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary illustrates key portions of the Parks, Culture and Recreation (PCR) Park and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (PRMP), providing an understanding of the plan, process, and research. Each section should be reviewed along with the appendix documents that include data used to develop the PRMP.

Purpose of the PRMP

This plan is intended to be a road map for PCR to provide parks and recreation services for the next five to ten years and beyond. The plan is based on extensive community engagement, with goals, strategies, and action items developed based on data reported in the plan.

Planning Process

Developing the PRMP took 12 months and was undertaken by City of Unalaska leadership and staff, community members, and the BerryDunn consulting team, assisted by ETC Institute, a national survey firm, and Bettisworth North, an Anchorage-based planning and landscape architecture firm. The collaborative approach helped create a plan based on local knowledge

of staff and community members, and the consultants' expertise. Each section of the plan included data that came from the Unalaska community's input. See Figure 1.

Development of this plan included the following tasks:

- Document collection and review
- Demographics and trends analysis
- Community engagement process
- A needs assessment survey
- A park and open space inventory and level-of-service (LOS) analysis
- A recreation assessment
- A financial analysis
- A maintenance and operations analysis
- Recommendations–guiding principles (GPs), goals, strategies, actions, and a capital project list

Figure 1: Key Elements of the Planning Process

Engaging the Unalaska Community

Many Unalaska community members participated in the development of the PRMP, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Engagement with Unalaska Community

Engagement Type	No. of Community Participants
Focus group and stakeholder meetings	110
Youth and teen survey, interviews, and classroom projects	141
Digital engagement through Social Pinpoint	75
Open house event	59
Spring festival intercept event	134
Heart of the Aleutians intercept event	85
Statistically valid survey	101

Overall, 705 interactions helped shape the plan. Unalaska residents either visited the project's Social Pinpoint website, shared priorities by participating in a focus group or intercept event/ activity, or completed a survey. An assumption is made that approximately 650 of the 705 interactions came from unique individuals who represented 16% of Unalaska's population.

Parks LOS Summary

The PCR is responsible for parks that collectively provide 41 components made up of playgrounds, walking paths, ballfields, and other park amenities. The components are distributed into four community parks, two special use parks, and four neighborhood parks. The system provides 6.4 acres per 1,000 residents. When the number of residents per park is considered, PCR provides 410, about one third of the density of park use compared to the national average. Within the system, most park components are in good shape and serviceable. Of the 42 components, 16 are in need of upgrade or replacement.

Recreation facilities are discussed at length in the PRMP. The Aquatic Center requires renovation; community members prioritized new weight rooms and an indoor field house.

PRMP Goals and Strategies

In addition to 15 GPs identified in Section 8, six goals are identified, each with strategies and action items. The actions are identified as low, medium, and high priorities.

GOAL 1: Deliver high-quality recreation facilities that provide the greatest level of support for residents and the seasonal fishing industry	
1.1	**Strategy:** Provide improved indoor recreation facilities
1.2	**Strategy:** Provide additional indoor recreation facilities
GOAL 2: Provide high-quality aquatics facilities that support recreation and the safety of Unalaska residents	
2.1	**Strategy:** Replace existing aquatic center with new 25-yard by 25-meter competition and recreation aquatic facility
GOAL 3: Deliver recreation programs that continue to build a sense of community as the focal point for Unalaska residents' and visitors' quality of life	
3.1	**Strategy:** Apply data-driven decision-making to programming to address community member participation capacity
3.2	**Strategy:** Conduct continual program evaluation
3.3	**Strategy:** Consider additional program support for youth and teens, ages 13–18
3.4	**Strategy:** Consider mobile recreation programming
3.5	**Strategy:** Improve fitness and wellness opportunities in Unalaska
GOAL 4: Maintain, preserve, and enhance safe parks and park experiences	
4.1	**Strategy:** Provide improved outdoor sports opportunities
4.2	**Strategy:** Provide additional outdoor park opportunities
4.3	**Strategy:** Provide improved playground opportunities
4.4	**Strategy:** Improve LOS by adding components
4.5	**Strategy:** Create additional walking opportunities in parks and around the city
4.6	**Strategy**: Move or update the skate park to an all-wheels park
GOAL 5: Deliver parks and recreation services in a financially resilient and sustainable manner	
5.1	**Strategy:** Focus on methods of formal communication
5.2	**Strategy:** Work to improve access to recreation programs
GOAL 6: Provide library services that connect residents to educational opportunities, digital literacy, and the power of reading	
6.1	**Strategy:** Place a greater focus on adult and child programs

DEVELOPING THE PRMP

Developing the PRMP was accomplished by a combination of the PCR staff and the BerryDunn consulting team, assisted by ETC Institute, a national survey firm, and Bettisworth North, architects and planners. Unalaska community members included youth and teens, adults, program participants, recreation facility users, and seniors who provided invaluable input at each stage of the planning process.

Unalaska's unique community required a great amount of local knowledge and input of staff, appointed and elected city leadership, and many stakeholders. The consultants applied their expertise and best practices reflective of other similar communities.

The key elements of the planning process are illustrated in Figure 1 in the Executive Summary.

Communication between the consultants and the city's project team was key to the successful planning process and included biweekly project management check-in meetings, and multiple input opportunities for the community and the PCR Advisory Committee that included project updates and status.

PRMP Project Objectives

The city defined project objectives, which set the foundation for the planning process. The objectives set the stage for the PRMP that is intended to position PCR to meet the needs of Unalaska residents and visitors through 2034 and beyond. The PRMP is intended to help ensure PCR offers opportunities for families and guests to enjoy well-placed and maintained playground equipment, maximize outdoor recreation opportunities, and help position the PCR to be as effective as possible in providing recreation delivery.

The PRMP was intended to identify ways to improve access and opportunities for recreation for residents, regardless of demographic and socioeconomic status.

The following objectives were established as critical success factors for the project:

Describe existing, new, and pending regulations and their impacts to PCR. Provide recommendations about regulatory required and non-regulatory changes and improvements.

Provide a Capital Improvements Program, prioritizing new recommended systems or processes as well as current and future rehabilitation and replacement needs in short-, medium-, or long-term phases.

- Evaluate current LOS for parks and with appropriate recommendations for improvements.

- Complete an assessment of PCR's budget, operations, and staffing that includes employee training and O&M needs.

- Provide an assessment of recreation program and facilities, including the Unalaska Public Library.

- Complete a demand and needs assessment, demographics, and trends analysis.

- Benchmark PCR with at least three similar communities.

PCR's Mission and Values

The PRMP considered the PCR mission statement and aspirational values at each step.

PCR MISSION STATEMENT

"To enrich our diverse community by providing exemplary, accessible, and safe cultural, leisure, and recreation facilities and services that nurture youth development and inspire people to learn, play, and engage with our unique and welcoming environment."

ASPIRATIONAL VALUES

CREATE INSPIRING PROGRAMMING

ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY

ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

PROVIDE EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO DELIVER OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PCR Services Profile

The PCR department was established in 1980 and provides a 30,000-square-foot community center, aquatic center, and public library as well as eight parks, Burma Road Chapel, the Henry Swanson House, and two school facilities. The community provides important economic impact and support for the fishing industry in the remote location 800 miles south of Anchorage in the north Pacific and Bering Sea.

Unalaska's economy is based on commercial fishing, seafood processing, fleet services, and marine transportation, contributing approximately 1.7 billion pounds of frozen seafood to the United States and worldwide. Quality of life of those who work and support this industry is greatly impacted by the critical facilities and services the PCR provides.

The PCR provides 26.1 acres of parkland in eight parks and two school facilities that include 42 park components such as playgrounds, sports fields, open turf areas, etc.

Related Planning Efforts and Integration

To gain a thorough understanding of PCR's challenges and opportunities, BerryDunn reviewed previous planning efforts. This summary review provided background and perspective used throughout development of the PRMP. The consultants recognize and acknowledge PCR's work in developing the business plans described in this section.

Comprehensive Plan 2020 Unalaska, Alaska (adopted 2011)

This plan, prepared by the City of Unalaska and adopted in 2011, is the road map for future development within the city. The city considered the health and safety of residents, businesses, and visitors. Some notable actions that have implications for the current PCR master planning effort are as follows:

- Overall Quality of Life. Secondary action #4, make community more bike friendly.

- Construct additional restrooms along walk/bike trails.

- Erect additional/better signage along trails, walkways, and public facilities and leading to community parks, sites, and services.

- Consideration should also be given to the strategic placement of bike storage racks at heavily visited attractions, such as schools, the library, retail shops, tourist attractions, etc.

- Overall Quality of Life. Secondary action #5, embrace our ethnic diversity.

- Support the Qawalangin Tribe's efforts to safeguard and support the Unanagan language, culture, customs, and traditions.

- Education, Art, Culture, and Entertainment. Secondary action #5, continue the development of park, cultural, and recreation facilities and offering of programs.

- The City of Unalaska Parks, Culture and Recreation 2005–2009 Master Plan revealed that the top three PCR facilities were all-purpose trails, a fitness center, and expansion of the community center.

- Complete all-purpose trails to and from the Unalaska spit, from the Port of Dutch Harbor to Unalaska, and connect to trails in Unalaska.

- Connect the Carl E. Moses Boat Harbor to existing trails.

- Construct additional restrooms along walk/bike trails.

- Erect additional/better signage along trails, walkways, and public facilities and leading to community parks, sites, and services.

- Provide additional recreational services on Amaknak Island as land availability and affordability allows.

- Expand activities and programs (bowling, tumbling, dance, climbing wall, and ropes course, put diving board back in pool, pitch and putt).

- Develop ski/rope tow area.

- Purchase/lease property at Tutiakoff Park.

- Build a large pavilion-style structure for outdoor events.

- Build an additional community gymnasium.

- Expand Community Park.

- Create dock/trail at Margaret's Bay fishing area.

- Maintain new Iliuliuk Creek float next to Alyeska Seafoods plant.

- Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure.

- Identified apparent land use conflicts/opportunities for improvements: placement of a children's play area adjacent to an industrial zone.

Parks and Operations Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Business Plans July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025 (2024).

Prepared by the PCR, these documents strive to align budget with PCR goals and objectives, clarify the goals and objectives for the City Council members and the community, assess and adapt to resident and visitor needs, and enhance outdoor experiences. These reports provide an overview of existing facilities as well as near-term projects including:

- **Ounalashka Community Park:** Potential to relocate the skate park to this park and expand

to an all-wheels park or pump track. New equipment for the soccer fields can be overlaid in the outfield. An additional goal is to update the kitchen to get more vendor participation.

- **Skate Park:** Potentially relocate park due to the expansion of the adjacent clinic.

- **Expedition Park:** Replace site amenities such as benches and grills.

- **Sitka Spruce Park:** Add new grills that were removed during the playground construction.

- **Ideas:** Add a rental shop at the Burma Road Chapel (camping gear, fishing, bike or electric scooters, wildlife viewing equipment, kayak/paddleboard/canoe, local artisan souvenirs).

Unalaska Land Use Plan (2015)

Written as a component of the Unalaska Comprehensive Plan (2011), this document provides guidance for the development of the city based on land use. The City of Unalaska is considered by neighborhood, providing existing uses, recommended uses, and specific notes. Two applicable sections are as follows:

- Standard Oil Hill Subarea: Shows industrial storage adjacent to Sitka Spruce Park. This is

not an ideal adjacency. The plans recommend reducing the amount of industrial storage from 10% to 5%. There is also a recommendation to increase public open space from 15% to 16%

- Downtown/Unalaska Townsite Subarea: Industrial storage is sandwiched by institutional uses (including the library). The plan's recommendation is to remove all industrial storage from this area. The stated goal of this area is to be walker-friendly, youth-oriented, and a central focal point of the community.

Transportation Study 2017– 2018, City of Unalaska Planning Department (2018)

This study assessed the feasibility of a public transit system for the City of Unalaska. During the August–September study period, 92% of trips were made by car or truck, with pedestrians and bikers only accounting for 1%. The Planning Department suggests this is because distances are far between amenities and the weather is unpredictable. Of the 190 Bus Study Survey responses, 45% of respondents reported they do not have their driver's license. The report states that most of this unlicensed population works in the processing plants and stays close to the plants and the on-site bunkhouses.

Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), Standards for Accreditation

CAPRA provides 68 standards that are fundamental to the success of all parks and recreation agencies across the United States. Achieving accreditation is a long and challenging process. BerryDunn recommends that PCR become highly familiar with the standards. This recommendation is not meant to recommend immediate action toward accreditation but rather to utilize these standards as guides to best practices. The standards are grouped as follows:

- Agency Mission and Purpose
- Administration and Organizational Resources
- Community and Park Planning
- Human Resources Planning, Workforce Development, and Culture
- Financial Management, Responsibility, and Accountability

- Programs and Services Management
- Facilities and Land Use Management
- Law, Risk Management, Safety, and Security
- Marketing, Communications, and Community Engagement
- Evaluation, Assessment, and Research

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COMMUNITY PROFILE

Demographic Profile

BerryDunn conducted a thorough demographic assessment for the City of Unalaska as part of the master planning process, focusing on household and economic data. This analysis offers valuable insights into potential markets for community amenities such as parks, trails, waterways, and recreational and library services, highlighting how the community may develop.

To compile this analysis, BerryDunn gathered population statistics from the State of Alaska, examining age distributions, income levels, racial and ethnic demographics, and other household characteristics using ArcGIS Business Analyst with U.S. Census estimates from April and July 2024. The review focused on Unalaska's boundaries and included relevant comparisons with data from Alaska and the United States to enhance contextual understanding.

Unalaska features a robust commercial fishing industry, leading to a notable increase in both population and diversity during fishing seasons. While the workforce in the fishing industry may not be considered part of the permanent demographic makeup, their presence significantly impacts the parks and recreation system.

Population Characteristics

In 2023, the population of Unalaska was approximately 4,067 residents, marking a minor decrease from 2010 (Figure 2). However, in 2024, there was a small increase in population. Projections indicate a relatively stable population. It is crucial to consider population forecasts alongside shifts in the local fishing industry.

Figure 2: Population Change (2000–2029)

2000	2010	2023	2024	2029
4,283	4,376	4,067	4,113	4,002
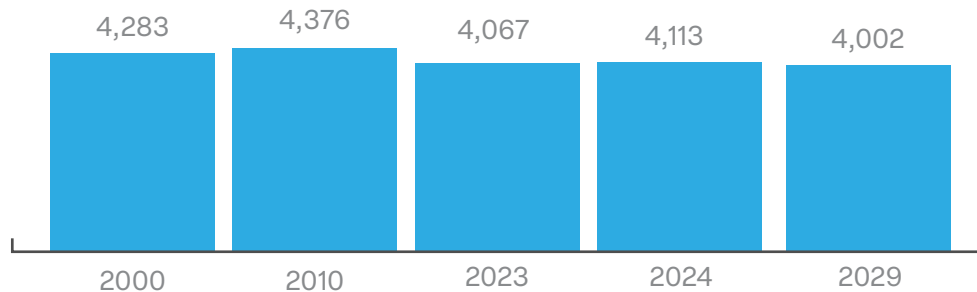
The State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section provides population projections to 2050 based on census data. Unalaska makes up greater than 80% of the Western Aleutians population category tracked by the state. While the projections include areas outside Unalaska, the trends show anticipated increases. It is important to acknowledge that youth account for an increase of only 42 residents, anticipated by 2050. See Table 2.

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Table 2: State of Alaska Western Aleutians Population Projections 2023–2050

Year	Population
2023	4,894
2025	5,024
2030	5,138
2035	5,252
2040	5,349
2045	5,425
2050	5,486

Table 3: Compound Annual Growth Rate (2010–2029)

Unalaska	
2010–2020 Compound Annual Growth Rate	-0.28%
2020–2024 Compound Annual Growth Rate	-0.67%
2024–2029 Compound Annual Growth Rate	-0.65%

Population Growth Rate

The city's population annual growth rate from 2010 to 2020 was -0.28%. According to projections from Esri Business Analyst, the city was expected to see a decline of 1.37% from 2020 to 2024 but was adjusted to -0.67% based on updated population forecasts generated in July 2024. From 2024 to 2029, the population is expected to stay at a similar rate at a decline of 0.65%. See Table 3.

Age Distribution

The median age of residents is 41.9 years, which is slightly higher than the median age of both Alaska (36.1) and the United States (39.1). The age groups composing the largest percentages of Unalaska's population are adults (35–54 years) at 36.1%, young adults (20–34 years) at 21.6, and older adults (55–74 years) at 18.5%. See Figure 3.

Figure 3: Age Distribution (2023)

Older Adult (55-74 years) 18.5%

Senior (75+ years) 6.2%

Adult (34-54 years) 36.1%

Young Adult (20-34 years) 21.6%

Youth 17.6%

0-4 years 3.9%

5-9 years 3.8%

10-14 years 3.8%

5-19 years 6.1%
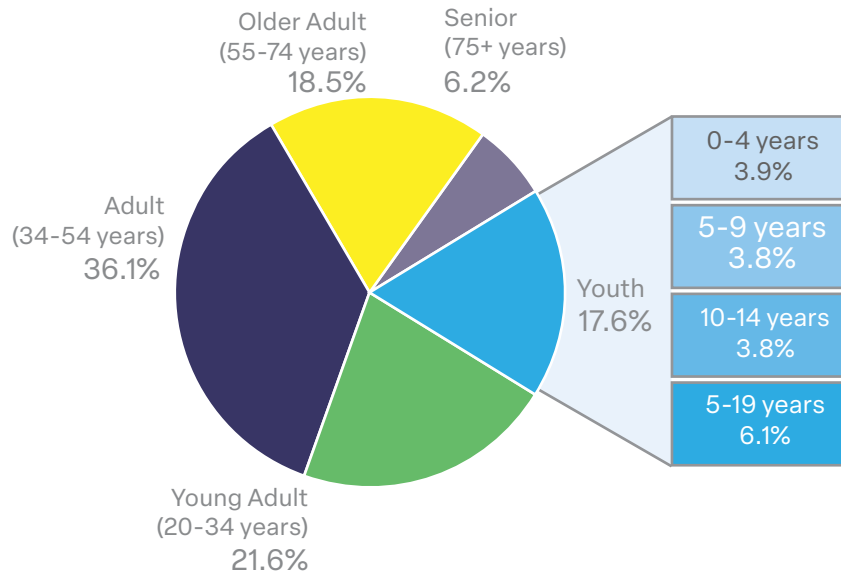
Age Change Over Time

By 2028, the youth and adult populations are projected to decrease minimally, while the senior and young adult populations will increase slightly. Overall, Unalaska's population in each age group is projected to remain stable into 2028.

Household Characteristics

Figure 4 illustrates the median household income and the incidence of poverty among households in the city, comparing these figures to those of Alaska and the United States. The data indicates Unalaska has a higher median household income than that of both Alaska and the national average. Furthermore, Unalaska shows a lower percentage of households living in poverty compared to households in both Alaska and the United States.

Figure 4: Household Characteristics (2023)

$72,603
Median Household Income
12.4%
Households in Poverty
UNITED STATES

$80,114
Median Household Income
9.6%
Households in Poverty
ALASKA

$104,175
Median Household Income
2.3%
Households in Poverty
UNALASKA
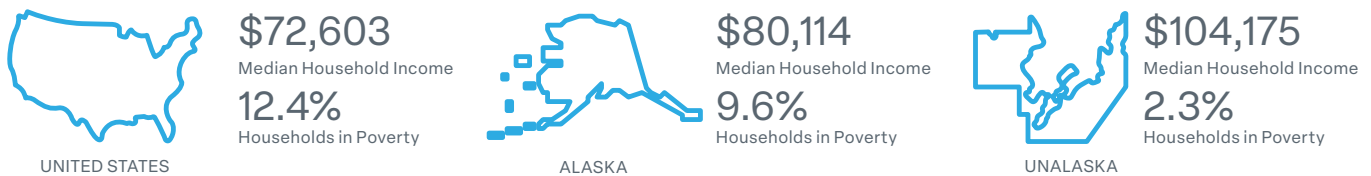
Racial Diversity

Between 2010 and 2023, Unalaska experienced a shift toward greater diversity, marked by a 7.6% decline in the white population and a 3.2% increase in the Pacific Islander community. By 2023, the proportion of residents identifying as Hispanic (regardless of race) reached 14.5%. Predictions indicate minor changes in racial demographics from 2023 to 2028, with the most significant shift being a 1.4% decrease in the white population. For more details, see Figure 5.

Figure 5: Racial Diversity (2010–2028)

Year	White	Black or African American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Other Races
2028	30.2%	5.6%	33.4%	6.2%	8.3%	10.9%
2023	31.6%	5.4%	34.6%	5.4%	7.7%	10.2%
2010	39.2%	6.9%	32.6%	2.2%	5.6%	7.4%
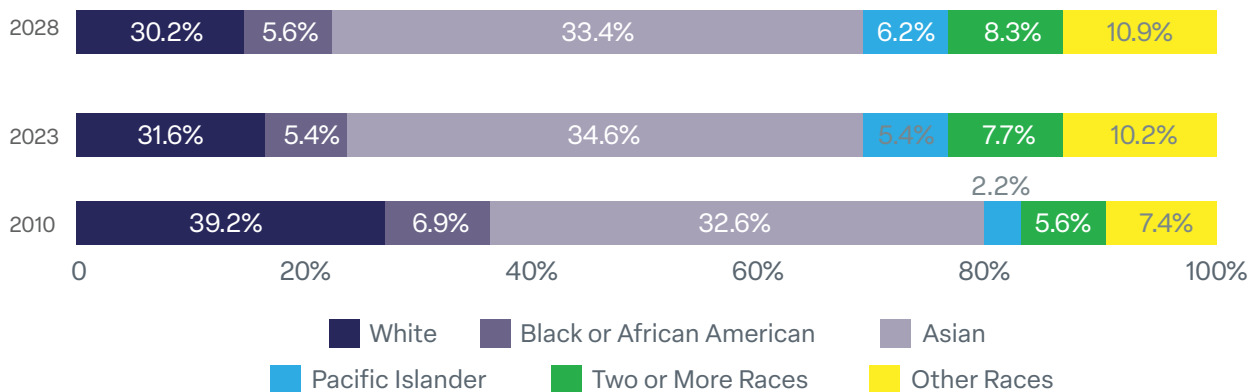
Local, Regional, and National Recreation Participation and Trends

Introduction

Recreational trends and preferences change over time. This report outlines the current parks and recreation trends across the United States, drawing from several annual reports:

- Academy of Sports Medicine (ACSM), "Worldwide Fitness Trends," 2024

- National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA), "Top Trends in Parks and Recreation," 2024

- NRPA, "Engagement with Parks Report," 2023

- NRPA, "Agency Performance Review," 2023

- Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), "Topline Participation Report," 2024

The purpose of this report is to provide Unalaska with a thorough overview of the state of parks and recreation nationwide, focusing on trends in the following areas:

- Recreation participation

- Facilities

- Local recreation programming

- Policies and procedures

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

- Dog parks

- Inclusive playgrounds

- Water activities

- Recreation trends by age group

By examining these trends, PCR can gain valuable insights into evolving community habits and preferences in recreation. This information can help identify potential areas for growth, opportunities for improvement, and ways to enhance inclusivity.

Estimated Local Participation in Recreation Programs

Figure 6 compares adult participation levels for fitness, sport, and outdoor activities for both the city and Alaska. The activities with the highest participation in Unalaska are walking for exercise, weightlifting, and jogging or running.

Figure 6: Local Participation in Fitness Activities
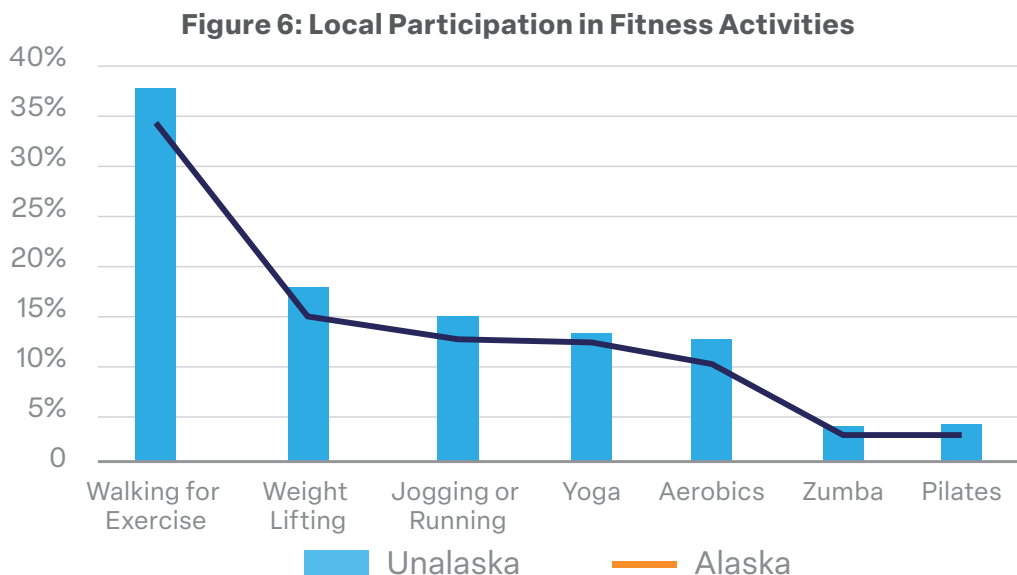
Trends in Recreation Facilities

Per NRPA, a typical parks and recreation agency will manage approximately 22 parks and seven buildings. The type and number of facilities and parks an agency can manage vary greatly; however, the NRPA Agency Performance Review for 2024 provides insight into what most agencies offered across the nation in 2023.[1] See Table 4.

Table 4: Typical Facilities Offered in the United States in 2023

Type of Facility	% of Agencies Offering	Type of Facility	% of Agencies Offering
Playgrounds	93%	Swimming Pools	49%
Baseball Fields	85%	Skate Parks	46%
Soccer Fields	83%	Multiuse Courts (Basketball, Volleyball)	42%
Basketball Courts	84%	Pickleball Courts	42%
Tennis Courts (Outdoor)	72%	18-Hole Golf Course	29%
Dog Parks	68%	Synthetic Fields (Multipurpose)	25%
Tot Lots	53%	Fitness Zones/Exercise Stations	22%
Community Gardens	52%	Ice Rink (Outdoor)	19%

Trends in Recreation Programming

Per the 2024 "NRPA Agency Performance Review," a typical parks and recreation agency will offer approximately 200 programs annually.[2] Table 5 depicts the most common types of programs offered by parks and recreation agencies and what percentage of agencies nationwide are offering those programs.

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1   NRPA. 2024. "NRPA Agency Performance Review." National Recreation and Park Association. Accessed April 8, 2024. *NRPA Agency Performance Review*

2   NRPA. 2024. "NRPA Agency Performance Review." National Recreation and Park Association. Accessed April 8, 2024. *NRPA Agency Performance Review*

Table 5: Typical Programming Offered in 2023

Type of Program	% of Agencies Offering	Type of Program	% of Agencies Offering
Themed Special Events	89%	Cultural Crafts	63%
Social Recreation Events	88%	Visual Arts	62%
Team Sports	86%	Trips and Tours	62%
Fitness Enhancement Classes	82%	Performing Arts	62%
Health and Wellness Education	80%	Martial Arts	56%
Individual Sports	76%	Running/Cycling Races	53%
Racquet Sports	70%	After School Programming	52%
Safety Training	68%	Golf	49%
Aquatics	66%	Esports/E-Gaming	26%
Natural and Cultural History Activities	63%		

In addition to these trends, NRPA publishes top trends to consider for each year. For 2023, NRPA highlighted the following programming trends:[3]

Walking activity has declined 36% since 2019.

Special events—such as family nights, seasonal festivals, and holiday karaoke—are on the rise.

Pickleball is the fastest growing recreational sport; however, noise complaints have become a major sore spot for nearby residents. USA Pickleball recently approved sound-eliminating equipment, which could help reduce noise by up to 50%.

Dog ownership rocketed during the pandemic, which led to a rise in dog parks. Dog parks are now the fastest growing park type, with off-leash dog parks leading the pack.

Cricket is on the rise in some areas, notably among the Southeast Asian population.

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3 Dolesh, R. December 21, 2023. "Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2024." National Recreation and Park Association. Accessed April 8, 2024. *https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2024/january/top-trends-in-parks-and-recreation-for-2024/*

Fitness Trends

Each year, the ACSM surveys global fitness trends, now in its 18th year. The ACSM distributes an electronic survey to thousands of fitness professionals worldwide to identify key health and fitness trends. The following are the top 10 fitness trends for 2024:

1. WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

These devices track various metrics, including heart rate, calories burned, and sedentary time.

2. WORKSITE HEALTH PROMOTION

Employers can enhance health-promoting behaviors like physical activity and preventive screenings, leading to reduced insurance costs, increased productivity, and improved mental health.

3. FITNESS PROGRAMS FOR OLDER ADULTS

As people age, they become more susceptible to chronic illnesses and cognitive decline. Regular aerobic and strength-training exercises are vital for mitigating these risks and maintaining independence.

4. EXERCISE FOR WEIGHT LOSS

Exercise helps preserve lean body mass during weight loss, emphasizing its importance in long-term weight management strategies.

5. REIMBURSEMENT FOR QUALIFIED EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS (QEPS)

This trend shifts focus from advocating for licensure of QEPs—previously hampered by policy challenges—to reimbursement for services provided by professionals like personal trainers and exercise physiologists, recognizing their value in healthcare.

Employing Certified Exercise Professionals Hiring certified professionals is a top trend, as companies realize the importance of trained individuals leading fitness programs. Accredited certifications help ensure consumers of professionals' expertise in helping them achieve fitness goals safely.

6. MOBILE EXERCISE APPS

These apps provide flexible program delivery and have shown effectiveness in increasing users' physical activity levels through diverse options.

7. EXERCISE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

With mental health challenges affecting about one in eight people globally, this trend highlights the importance of integrating physical activity into mental health support. ACSM resources assist exercise professionals in promoting this holistic approach to wellness.

8. YOUTH ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

Initiatives aimed at teaching fundamental movement patterns prepare young individuals for skill acquisition, emphasizing the need for specialized training among exercise professionals working with youth.

9. PERSONAL TRAINING

Personal training services provide valuable support for effective exercise selection, safety protocols, and recovery techniques. Professionals with nationally accredited credentials, such as those from ACSM, are well-equipped to meet diverse client needs, highlighting the importance of certification in helping ensure quality service delivery.

Trends in Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures highlighted from the "NRPA Agency Performance Review" for 2023 can help Unalaska shape policies and procedures based on national trends.[4]

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4   NRPA. 2023. "NRPA Agency Performance Review." National Recreation and Park Association. Accessed April 8, 2024. *NRPA Agency Performance Review*

66% of agencies offer health food options at vending machines or concession stands

86% of agencies charge fees to enter some of their parks

16% of agencies have parking fees at some of their facilities

Recreation Participation Trends in 2024

This section aims to identify and analyze current trends in sports and recreation, with a particular focus on participation trends derived from the SFIA 2024 Report.[5] Understanding the latest trends in sports is crucial for Unalaska to effectively plan and develop programs and use space in a way that reflects participation data.

Mosts Popular Sports and Activities

Basketball is the most popular team sport with 29.7 million participants.

Tennis is the most popular racquet sport with 23.8 million participants.

Pickleball continues to grow rapidly with participation growing by 51.8% in 2023.

Increase in Popularity

Walking for fitness is the most prevalent form of aerobic exercise.

Tai chi saw a 16.3% increase in participation in one year; however, yoga continues to lead in popularity for conditioning activities.

Dance, step, and other choreographed exercises have grown by 3.3% since 2018, attracting 26.2 million participants each year.

Decline in Participation

Ultimate Frisbee has experienced a significant decline in participation (-4.9% since 2018).

Stationary cycling (group exercise) has been heavily impacted by at-home fitness equipment, declining by 6.2% in five years with 6.2 million participants.

5   SFIA. February 27, 2024. "SFIA's Topline Participation Report Shows Strong Positive Trends Across All Sports and Fitness Categories." Sports & Fitness Industry Association. Accessed April 8, 2024. *SFIA's Topline Participation Report Shows Strong Positive Trends Across All Sports and Fitness Categories*

Top Trending Activities and Five-Year Growth

Figure 7 demonstrates the total U.S. participation rates in different sport categories for those ages six years and older from 2018 and 2023. Fitness has led in popularity the last five years.

Figure 7: United States Sports Participation, 2018 vs. 2023
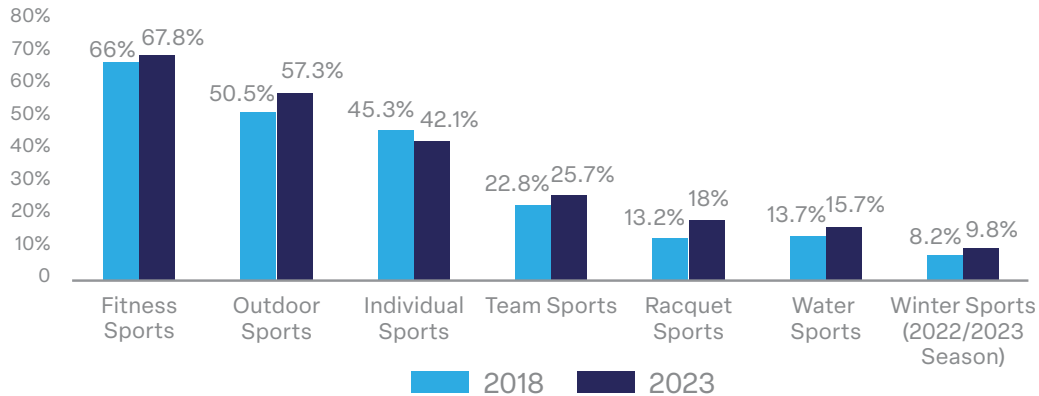
Table 6 shows the top activities by participation and growth rate over the past five years (2018–2023) from the latest SFIA report.

Table 6: United States Sports Participation by Activity

	2023 Participation (Millions)	Five-Year Growth (2018–2023)
TEAM SPORTS		
Basketball	29.7 M	+4.3%
Baseball	16.6 M	+1.0%
Football (Flag)	7.2 M	+2.0%
Football (Tackle)	5.6 M	+1.8%
Football (7-on-7)	2.6 M	0.0%
Lacrosse	1.9 M	-1.0%
Roller Hockey	1.2 M	-6.5%
Soccer (Outdoor)	14 M	+4.3%
Softball (Fast-Pitch)	2.3 M	+0.9%
Swimming on a Team	3.3 M	+2.1%
Volleyball (Court)	6.9 M	+2.3%
RACQUET SPORTS		

	2023 Participation (Millions)	Five-Year Growth (2018–2023)
Badminton	6.5 M	+0.6%
Pickleball	13.5 M	+35.7%
Tennis	23.8 M	+6.3%
STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING		
Free Weights	53.8 M	+1.0%
Weight-Resistance Machines	29.4 M	+1.0%
Yoga	34.2 M	+3.6%
AEROBIC EXERCISE		
Running/Jogging	48.3 M	-0.5%
Stationary Cycling (Recumbent/Upright)	32.6 M	-2.0%
Treadmill	54.8 M	+0.7%
INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES		
Golf (On- or Off-Course)	45 M	+6.1%
Skateboarding	8.9 M	+7.3%
Trail Running	14.8 M	+8.3%
Triathlon (Non-Traditional/Off-Road)	1.3 M	-2.9%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	1.7 M	-4.3%
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		
Bicycling (BMX)	4.4 M	+5.4%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	9.2 M	+1.4%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	42.2 M	+1.8%
Camping (RV)	16.4 M	+1.0%
Fishing (Freshwater/Other)	42.6 M	+1.9%
Fishing (Saltwater)	15 M	+3.3%
Hiking (Day)	61.4 M	+5.3%

Inactive Americans' Aspirational Activities by Age

The SFIA report provides data related to what inactive Americans were most interested in participating in by age. Unalaska has a median age of 41.9. By comparing the SFIA inactive aspirational activities by age, the top activities for most residents (falling in the category of 35–54 years) may include working out with weights, fishing, working out using machines, and cardio fitness. See Table 7.

Table 7: SFIA Inactive Americans' Aspirational Activities by Age

6–12 Years	13–17 Years	18–24 Years	25–34 Years
1. Fishing 2. Running/jogging 3. Bicycling 4. Sledding 5. Swimming for fitness 6. Cardio fitness 7. Yoga 8. Camping 9. Soccer 10. Tennis	1. Fishing 2. Running/jogging 3. Swimming for fitness 4. Working out with weights 5. Camping 6. Cardio fitness 7. Bicycling 8. Working out using machines 9. Hiking 10. Skateboarding	1. Running/jogging 2. Working out with weights 3. Cardio fitness 4. Working out using machines 5. Bicycling 6. Swimming for fitness 7. Camping 8. Fishing 9. Yoga 10. Trail running	1. Working out with weights 2. Working out using machines 3. Cardio fitness 4. Camping 5. Yoga 6. Fishing 7. Running/jogging 8. Hiking 9. Swimming for fitness 10. Bicycling
35–44 Years	**45–54 Years**	**55–64 Years**	**65+ Years**
1. Working out with weights 2. Cardio fitness 3. Fishing 4. Working out using machines 5. Swimming for fitness 6. Running/jogging 7. Camping 8. Yoga 9. Hiking 10. Shooting	1. Fishing 2. Working out with weights 3. Camping 4. Working out using machines 5. Cardio fitness 6. Hiking 7. Yoga 8. Shooting 9. Swimming for fitness 10. Running/jogging	1. Fishing 2. Camping 3. Working out with weights 4. Working out using machines 5. Cardio fitness 6. Swimming for fitness 7. Shooting 8. Hiking 9. Yoga 10. Running/jogging	1. Fishing 2. Working out using machines 3. Camping 4. Working out with weights 5. Swimming for fitness 6. Cardio fitness 7. Shooting 8. Yoga 9. Hiking 10. Hunting

ADA Compliance

On July 26, 1990, the ADA officially acknowledged the needs of individuals with disabilities at the federal level. This civil rights legislation broadened the rights for activities and services provided by state and local governmental entities (Title II) as well as non-profit/for-profit entities (Title III). Parks and recreation agencies are mandated to comply with this legal directive, which entails removing physical barriers to help ensure access to facilities and offering reasonable accommodations for recreational programs through inclusive policies and procedures.

Agencies are required to develop and uphold an ADA transition plan, outlining the steps to eliminate physical and structural barriers to facilitate access to programs and services. Additionally, the transition plan serves as a tool for planning, budgeting, and helping to ensure accountability.

Accessibility studies serve as invaluable resources for parks and recreation agencies. Specialists conduct thorough inventories of facilities and parks, examining building codes and regulatory requirements to create a prioritized list of projects aimed at enhancing accessibility.

Dog Parks

A dog park offers an excellent opportunity for people to enjoy some fresh air, bond with their furry companions, and foster community ties. With approximately 90 million dogs across the United States, dog parks are witnessing rapid growth, particularly in urban areas, making them the fastest-growing type of park, as reported by NRPA. While not everyone desires to have a dog park in their neighborhood, these parks are sought after in nearly every community.

According to an article in Recreation Management titled "Four-Legged-Friendly Parks," dog parks contribute to community cohesion and can attract potential new residents and tourists traveling with pets (2016). They are viewed as a cost-effective means of providing a highly frequented and popular amenity to the community. Dog parks range from simple fenced areas to more elaborate setups featuring amenities tailored for dogs, such as water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash

stations. Some even incorporate spray grounds designed specifically for dogs. Moreover, dog parks serve as social hubs where people can connect with others while enjoying the outdoors.

The best dog parks prioritize both human and canine comfort and enjoyment, often incorporating various design features and creative programming. Ideal amenities in a dog park may include:

- Benches, shade, and water stations for both dogs and their owners

- A spacious area of at least one acre with proper drainage

- Double-gated entry for safety

- Ample waste stations stocked with bags

- Sandy beaches or sand bunker areas for digging

- Custom-designed splash pads for dogs of all sizes

Additional amenities catering to human needs, such as walking trails, restroom facilities, picnic areas, and dog wash stations

Water-Related Activities

Annually, the SFIA issues the "Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report." According to the SFIA report, water sports have seen the most substantial increase in participation across all seven sports categories.

Table 8 below illustrates the changes in water-related activities between 2016 and 2021. It charts the one-year, two-year, and five-year average annual growth (AAG) rates to indicate the degree of change for boardsailing/windsurfing, canoeing, jet skiing, kayaking, sailing, standup paddling, and water skiing.

Between 2020 and 2021, the water sports that experienced the highest overall growth were boardsailing/windsurfing (+9.9%), kayaking–sea/touring (+5.6%), and water skiing (+4.7%). Conversely, kayaking–recreational (-14.6%), canoeing (-6.4%), and sailing (-3.6%) saw the most significant decreases in participation during the same period. See Table 8.

Table 8: Water Sport Overall Participation 2016–2021
Source: SFIA Topline Report, 2022

	One-Year Change 2021	Two-Year Change 2020	Five-Year AAG 2016
Boardsailing/Windsurfing	2.3%	-7.6%	-5.5%
Canoeing	-4.1%	2.3%	-1.6%
Jet Skiing	3.3%	-0.9%	-2.6%
Kayaking (Recreational)	2.7%	17.3%	6.0%
Kayaking (Sea/Touring)	3.1%	-2.5%	-3.6%
Sailing	-0.7%	-4.3%	-3.3%
Standup Paddling	1.8%	5.0%	3.0%
Water Skiing	0.2%	-4.5%	-3.7%

Recreation Trends Applicable to Age Groups

Separating recreation trends by age group can be helpful when determining an appropriate program mix.

Trends for Youth Ages 13 and Younger

STEAM PROGRAMS

The popularity of STEAM programs, which encompass arts programming, is on the rise. Examples include coding workshops, video game design, Minecraft creations, Roblox game development, robotics engineering, 3D printing, and laptop building.

SUMMER AND SCHOOL BREAK CAMPS

Participation in youth camp programs offered by parks and recreation departments remains robust, with these programs.

YOUTH FITNESS

Reimagine Play has identified the following top eight trends in youth fitness, drawing from sources such as the ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends, ACE Fitness, and SHAPE America:

- Shift from sports-focused physical education to physical literacy curricula emphasizing fundamental movement skills and healthy eating

- High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) classes featuring brief bursts of intense exercise followed by short rest periods, typically lasting 30 minutes or less

- Adoption of wearable technology and digital fitness media, including activity trackers, smartwatches, heartrate monitors, GPS trackers, and virtual reality headsets

- Emergence of ninja warrior training and gyms, inspired by popular television shows like American Ninja Warrior and Spartan Race

- Increasing interest in outdoor recreational activities such as running, jogging, trail running, and BMX biking

- Growing popularity of family (intergenerational) fitness classes, such as family fitness fairs, escape rooms, and obstacle races, catering to Generation X and Generation Y families valuing quality family time

- Kids' obstacle races held alongside adult races

- Establishment of youth running clubs that not only promote physical fitness but also teach valuable life skills such as risk-taking, goal-setting, and teamwork

Trends for Teens/Younger Adults Ages 13 – 24

Local parks and recreation agencies are increasingly tasked with providing diverse programming options for teenagers beyond traditional youth sports. Given that suicide ranks as the second leading cause of death among U.S. teens, mental health remains a pressing concern for this demographic.

Activities such as meditation, yoga, sports, art, and civic engagement can serve as outlets for teens to develop life skills and enhance cognitive functions. Many agencies are also exploring innovative multigenerational activities, wherein seniors and teens collaborate to learn life skills together. Agencies that offer support for teens in career development and continuing education tend to achieve positive outcomes and mitigate at-risk behaviors effectively.

PARKOUR

Parkour, a physical training discipline inspired by military obstacle courses, challenges participants to navigate urban environments using body movements like running, jumping, and swinging.

OUTDOOR ACTIVE RECREATION

Outdoor activities such as kayaking, canoeing, standup paddleboarding, mountain biking, and climbing have seen increased popularity since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rentals are often available for those interested in trying out these activities before committing to purchasing equipment.

LIFE SPORTS

A trend identified in the Learning Resources Network's article "Top Trends in Recreation Programming, Marketing, and Management" is the prioritization of "life sports." These activities, such as archery, biking, kayaking, tennis, golf, swimming, and jogging/walking, aim to foster lifelong interests in physical fitness and recreation.

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Parks and recreation agencies are increasingly recognized for their role in promoting holistic lifestyles. Individuals are seeking opportunities to practice mindfulness, embrace authentic living, and disconnect from electronic media. Programs supporting mental health, including those addressing anxiety, perfectionism, and substance abuse among youth and young adults, are in growing demand. The United Nations has urged governments worldwide to prioritize mental health support in response to the mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trends for Adults Ages 25–54

AEROBIC ACTIVITIES

Swimming for fitness and weight training remain the top choices for most age groups, with running, walking, and biking also experiencing consistent growth. To stay current with trends, it is essential to offer a balanced mix of equipment and classes. The priority investment rating (PIR) considers both the demand for a particular activity among households and the unmet needs within the community.

FUN FITNESS

"Fun" fitness programs have emerged as a prominent trend. Exercise routines like P90X®, Insanity®, and CrossFit® have demonstrated that extensive equipment is not necessary to achieve fitness goals. As these programs gain popularity, newer versions are being introduced, some of which promise quicker results. Expect to see continued growth in these types of classes at recreation departments and fitness centers.

GROUP CYCLING

Group cycling remains popular, particularly among younger fitness enthusiasts. High-performance group cycling sessions and tailored programs designed for beginners are attracting participants of all levels.

CORNHOLE (OR BAGS)

Cornhole is a low-impact, budget-friendly activity suitable for all ages. Young adults are increasingly joining leagues, which can be hosted indoors or outdoors throughout the year. Easy to learn and highly social, cornhole appeals to both recreational and competitive players.

Trends for Adults Ages 55 and Over

LIFELONG LEARNING

According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, 73% of adults identify as lifelong learners. DIY project classes and programs aimed at personal enrichment are gaining popularity, with consumers increasingly turning to the internet for how-to information. Courses addressing online privacy protection are also in demand.

FITNESS AND WELLNESS

Programs like yoga, Pilates, tai chi, balance training, chair exercises, and others remain popular among older adults seeking to maintain their health and well-being.

ENCORE PROGRAMMING

Designed for soon-to-be-retired baby boomers, encore programming covers a wide range of topics to help individuals transition into retirement activities. Popular offerings for the 55+ demographic include fitness and wellness classes (including yoga, mindfulness, tai chi, relaxation, and personal training), art courses (such as drawing, painting, and photography), language classes, writing workshops, technology courses, social media tutorials, cooking classes, mahjong, card games, and volunteer opportunities.

SPECIALIZED TOURS

Participants are increasingly interested in day trips that offer unique local experiences or focus on historical themes. Themes such as cultural food tours, guided night walks, bike tours, explorations of specific artists' work, and ghost walks are particularly sought after.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement Process

The findings and recommendations in this PRMP are primarily derived from input from the Unalaska community. BerryDunn facilitated various types of public engagement opportunities, including discovery sessions (focus group meetings and interviews with key stakeholders), surveys, community workshops, and intercept opportunities at events like PCR's Spring Festival and Heart of the Aleutians events. The engagement process generated 720 interactions. Community members shared numerous challenges and opportunities throughout the engagement process. This section summarizes the feedback received, while Section 4 presents the results of the statistically valid survey. Appendix 1 includes the engagement summary and Appendix 2 includes the needs assessment survey report.

Focus Group and Stakeholder Discovery Sessions

In addition to various logistical challenges related to shipping supplies for facilities and events and recruiting and retaining quality employees, PCR must also consider Unalaska residents limited discretionary leisure time. As a "working community," many residents hold multiple jobs, which can affect participation in programs. Expanding any program areas may impact others.

THE KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING THIS ENGAGEMENT INCLUDE:

- Resource and staff availability

- Logistics of providing services in the remote location

- Future health of the fishing industry

- Capacity for community members' leisure time

- Weather patterns that affect outdoor participation

SERVICE CHALLENGES INCLUDE:

- Lack of child care for infants and young children

- Need for storage for program materials

- Limitations on restroom hours of operation

- Requirement to relocate the skatepark

- Absence of sufficient spectator viewing areas at the Aquatic Center

Youth and Teen Needs Assessments

The youth and teen needs assessments were conducted in May and June 2024, with 141 participants. Including the perspectives of young people in the master planning process is vital to help ensure that facilities and programs meet the needs of this primary user group. Engaging youth in planning fosters a sense of ownership, encourages healthy lifestyles, and promotes overall well-being.

One key goal of this engagement was to identify gaps that adults might overlook. In Unalaska, approximately 715 youth and teens comprise 17.6% of the total population. With limited recreational and social opportunities available to them, the programs and facilities PCR offers are especially important.

Kindergarten Playground Ideas

Kindergarten students were asked to share their ideas for playground equipment. The most common requests included features for climbing, trampolines, and bouncy houses. The kindergarteners identified the following desired playground features:

- Swings
- Trampolines
- Zipline
- Slides of various sizes
- Climbing wall
- Crawling wall
- Swirly slide
- Garden
- Hut or hideaway
- Musical instruments
- Monkey bars
- Climb and steppingstones
- Shared swing
- Bouncy castle and water slide
- Interlinking parks
- Gymnastic bars
- Sandbox
- Seating
- Bumpy slide with truck faces

Letters From First-Grade Students

Fifteen letters were received from first-grade students in Unalaska. The most frequently requested features included taller slides, new monkey bars, and bouncy equipment. Their complete list of requests reflected those of the kindergarteners, with added suggestions for snake slides, merry-go-rounds, covered playhouses, and ninja rope courses.

Letters From Fourth-Grade Students

Thirteen letters were received from fourth-grade students outlining improvements they would like to see at the PCR. The most common request was for better maintenance of the Eagles View soccer field, including properly marked lines, goal nets, and grass instead of mud, so they would not have to use the basketball court for soccer. They also

requested better lines on the outdoor basketball courts. Students suggested a variety of modern playground features, with "accelerator swings" being the most popular. Other requests included spiral slides, "noodle climbers," trampolines, and monkey bars/rings. One student proposed adding spring-mounted animals for younger children.

Teen Engagement

BerryDunn used a SurveyMonkey tool to evaluate the needs and preferences of teens, complementing the individual and group interviews conducted during the stakeholder engagement efforts. The survey was completed by 106 participants aged 12 to 21, representing more than 25% of Unalaska's teen population. All respondents were in Grades 7 to 12 (see Figures 8 and 9).

Figure 8: Survey Responses by Age
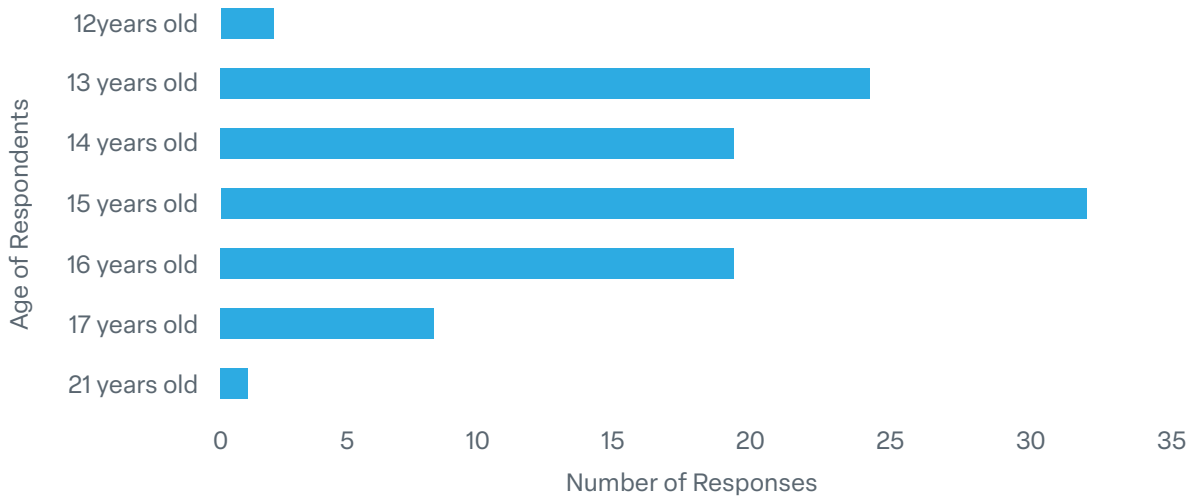
Figure 9: Survey Responses by Grade
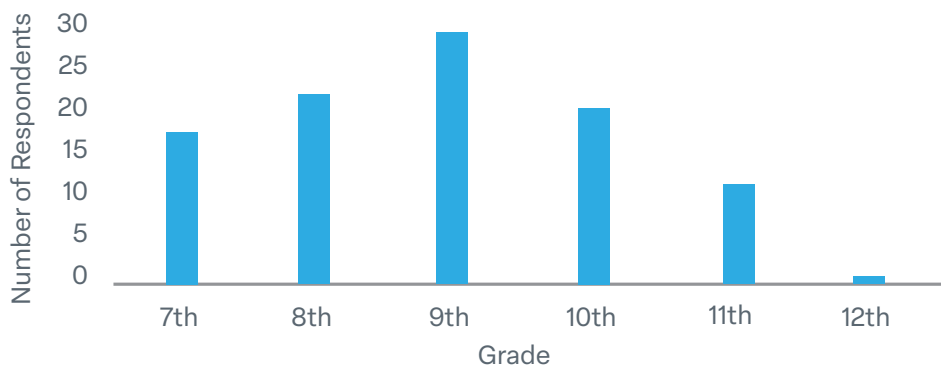
The survey featured several questions, including one asking participants to identify their favorite park or facility and how often they visit. Most teens reported that the community center, particularly the teen room, was their most frequented location, followed by the Aquatic Center and the library. Nearly all respondents indicated they use their favorite facilities at least once a week (see Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10: Favorite Parks Facility

Number of teens reporting a park or facility as their favorite
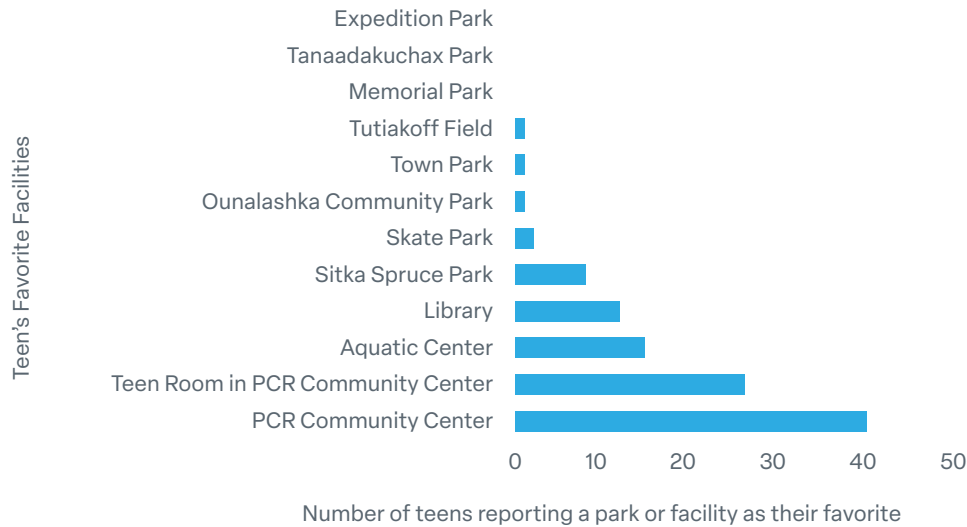
Figure 11: Frequency of Use
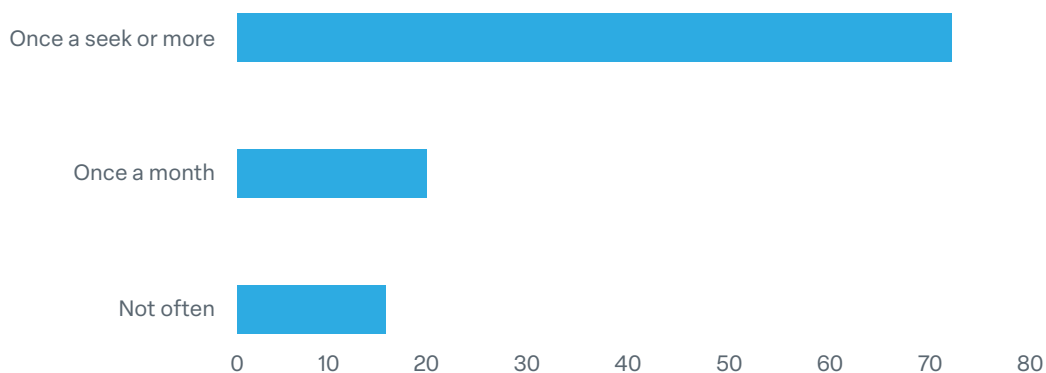
Teens were asked to explain the reasons for any limited use of parks and facilities. The most commonly cited reason was their busy schedules, which are filled with school and family responsibilities, leaving little free time. While many factors affecting usage are beyond PCR's control, the top needs identified were improved transportation options and better-quality facilities (see Figure 12).

Interestingly, only 28 teens responded to the question about barriers to using the facilities, while over 100 participants answered the questions immediately before and after it.

When asked about desired activities, teens expressed a strong preference for organized, team-based sports, with football, baseball, and wrestling being the top requests. Individual sports like martial arts, climbing, and ice skating were also popular. Additionally, various classes, such as art, dance, and cooking, were requested (see Figure 13).

Figure 12: Factors Limiting Use of Facilities
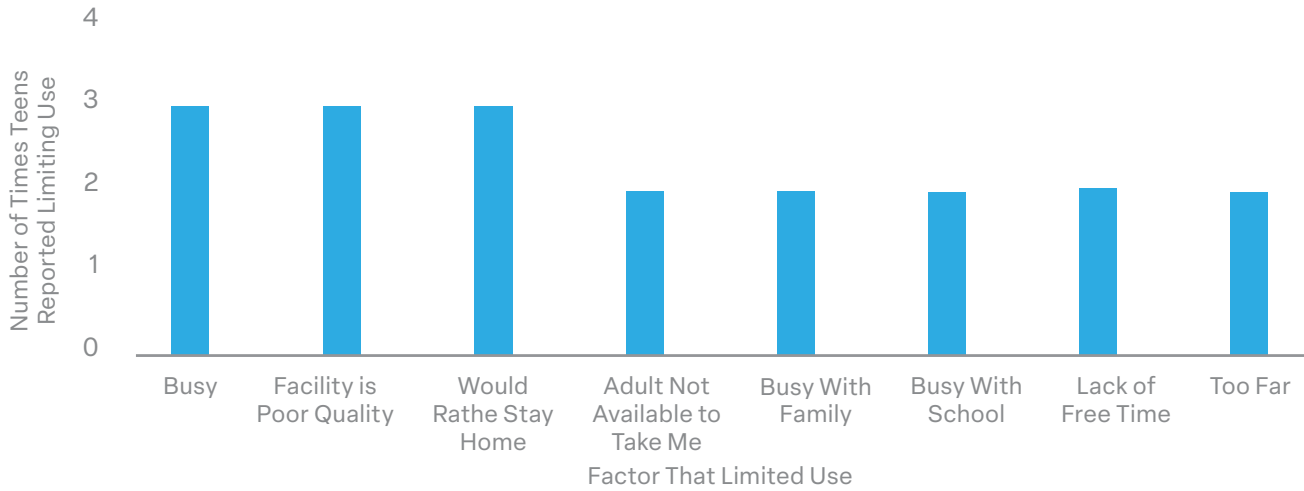
Figure 13: Teens' Most Requested Facilities
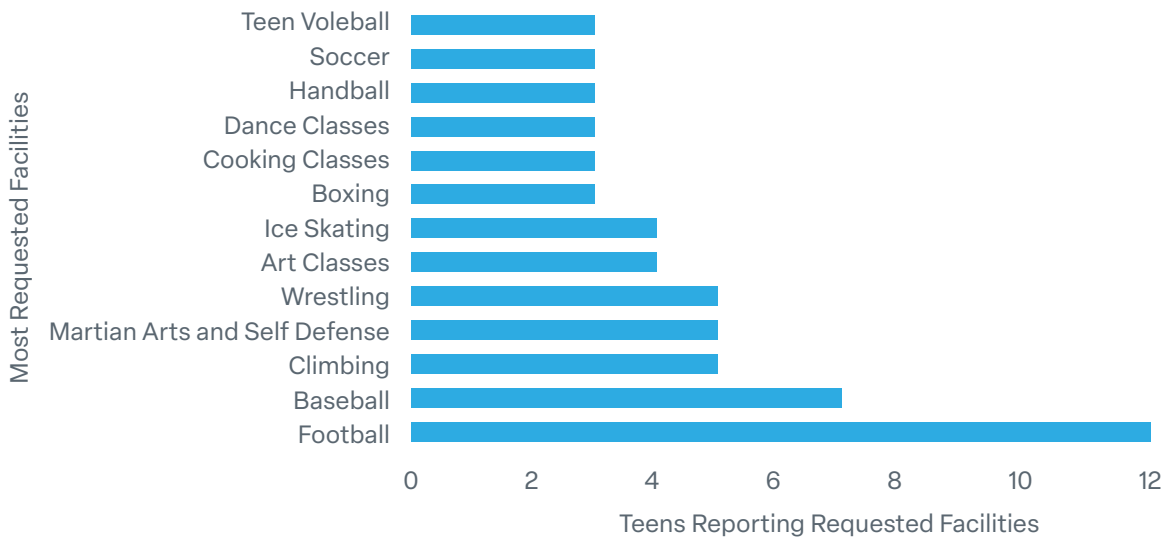
Teens were asked to identify equipment and spaces they would like that are not currently offered. Additional weight and cardio exercise equipment, a skating rink, and vending machines were the most requested features (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Equipment and Spaces Requested
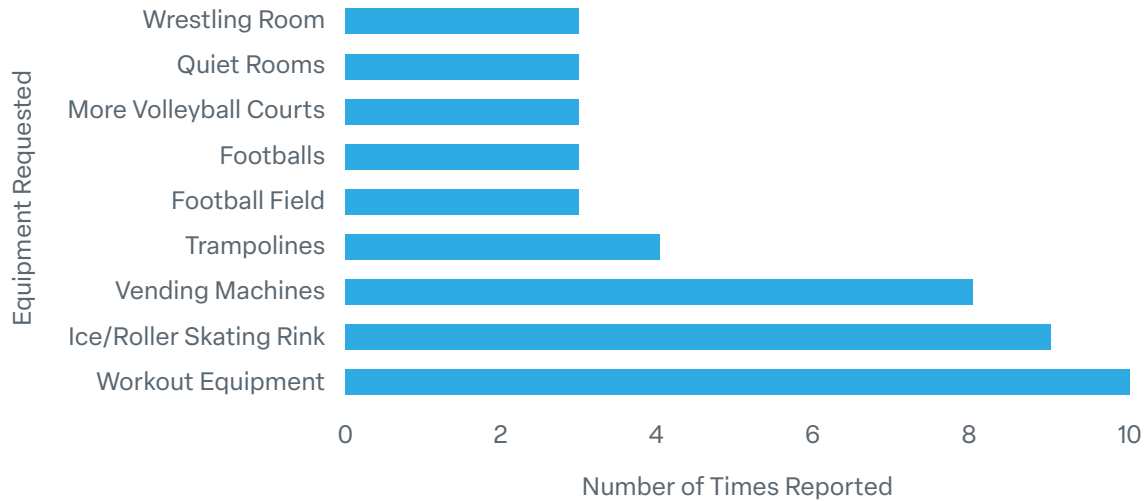
Teens identified the teen room as one of their two favorite spaces in the community. When asked about improvements that could increase its usage, they expressed a desire for stricter age limits, believing that allowing 10- to 12-year-olds undermines the purpose of a "teen room." Additionally, they highlighted the need for more comfortable seating, a pool table, vending machines, and updated gaming equipment as priorities (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Desired Improvements to the PCR Teen Room
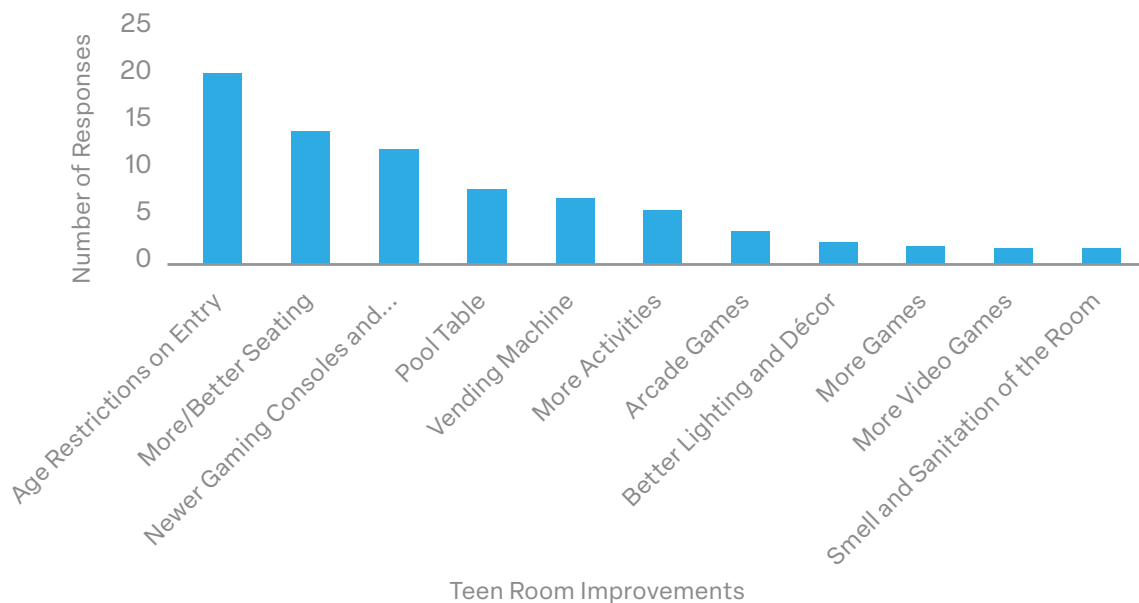
Understanding teens' use of leisure time adds an important perspective. The teens surveyed spend most of their free time playing video games, playing sports, or hanging out with friends (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Spare Time Usage
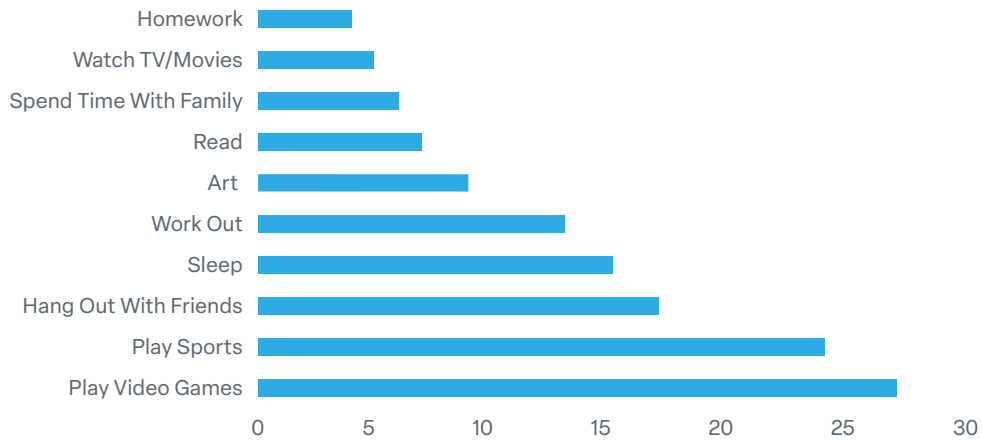
Understanding requested improvements to teens' quality of life offers an important perspective. Teen respondents overwhelmingly wanted a movie theater, as well as "more opportunities to be active" and additional "activities." Quality of Life Improvements are shown in Figure 17.[6]

Figure 17: Requested Quality of Life Improvements
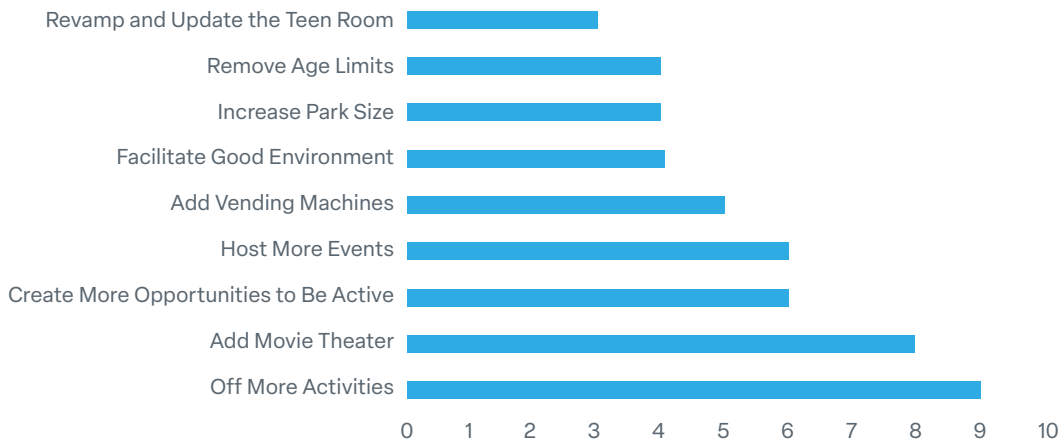
Key Findings from the Youth Engagement Process

Unalaska's young children (Grades K–4) expressed a strong desire for a variety of modern playground equipment, including new slides, multi-person round swings, spinning and climbing features,

and, most importantly, jumping or bouncing equipment. They also emphasized the need for well-maintained and properly lined soccer fields and painted basketball courts. Many noted that the Eagles View Soccer Field was often too muddy to use, which forced them to play soccer on the basketball court.

6 Removing age limits refers to the PCR and weight rooms

The survey of teenagers revealed the most requested activities included football, baseball, wrestling, and various enrichment classes such as art, dance, ice skating, and cooking, all of which require instructors or coaches and careful scheduling. Teens also expressed interest in individual activities, updated gaming and exercise equipment, access to a pool table, and an ice skating rink. Additionally, many felt that the teen room did not adequately serve its purpose, as it was frequently occupied by younger children.

Social PinPoint Digital Input

The digital website offered an additional way for input to be provided. Visitors to the website included 29 unique individuals who collectiely visited 75 times.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

75
TOTAL VISITS

26
UNIQUE USERS

4:14
AVERAGE TIME
(MIN)

3
UNIQUE
STAKEHOLDERS

COMMENTS INCLUDED:

- I think it might be nice to stream the school's away games for everybody to watch together. We all watch them, just separately.

- Town Park could really use a bathroom. It is a well-loved park, but the porta-potties there are pretty gross. I have had kids pee their pants rather than step inside them.

- It would be nice to have a bigger gym and additional newer equipment to use. As a person who loves going to the gym, I have observed that more people work out today than they used in the past. The gym has always been packed, and there's no available equipment to use.

- I love the idea of a walking trail/boardwalk around Unalaska Lake.

- I would love to see a covered playground facility. It does not need to be fully indoors but somewhere my kids could play out of the rain with some good wind-blocking barriers.

An exercise was also offered to distribute $100 between seven priority areas. Five community members participated and results are in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Social PinPoint Budget Exercise Results
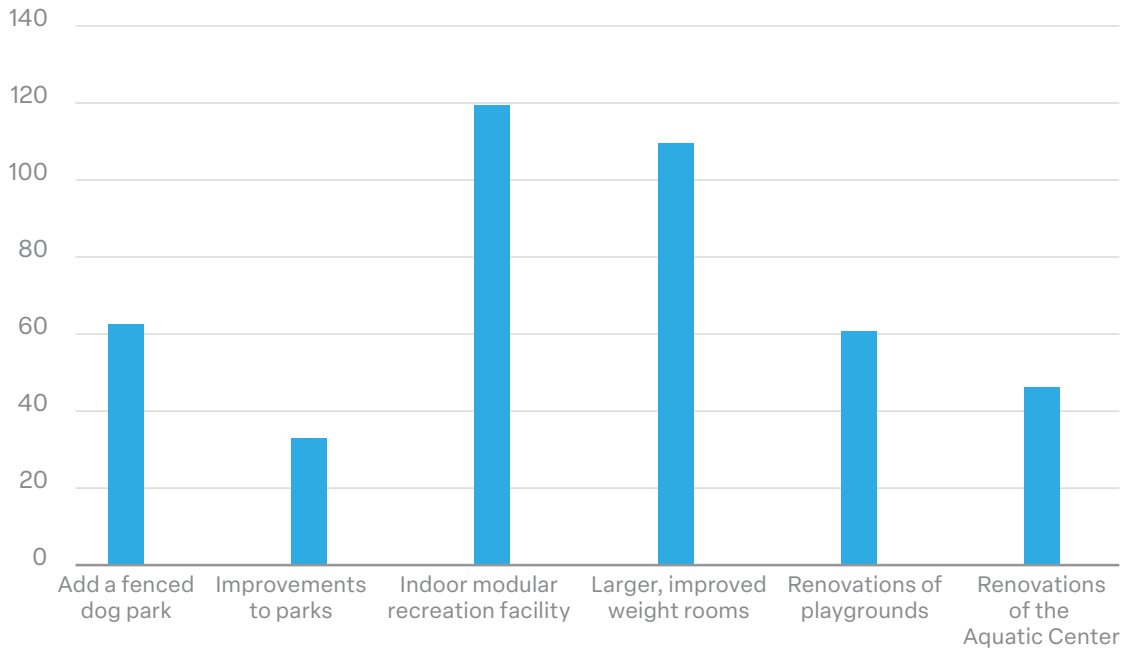
Open House–April 2024

Fifty-nine community members took part with top priorities identified as follows:

- Hockey Rink
- Indoor Sports Facility
- Indoor Batting Cage
- Pump Track
- Climbing Walls
- Outdoor Winter Activities
- Recreation Equipment Rental

Intercept Opportunities

Spring Festival–April 2024

Storyboards were used at the festival to help prioritize new amenities (134 community members participating):

- New Playground at the Eagle Elementary School
- Indoor Sports Facility
- Outdoor Winter Activities
- Tool Lending Library
- Recreation Equipment Rental
- Indoor Batting Cage
- Climbing Walls

Heart of the Aleutians Festival–August 2024

Storyboards were used at the festival to help prioritize new amenities (85 community members participating).

THE MOST IMPORTANT PARKS OR FACILITIES (204 PRIORITY VOTES ON A STORYBOARD) WERE:

- Aquatic Center   37
- Off-Leash Dog Park   31
- Community Center   24
- Library   20
- Covered Outdoor Spaces   20
- Community/City Parks   16
- Bike/Walking Trails   14
- Weight Room   13
- Walking Paths   10
- Multiuse Hiking   9
- Other
  » Hockey Rink   9
  » Trampoline Park   1

DESIRED LIBRARY SERVICES (135 PRIORITY VOTES ON A STORYBOARD):

- Game Night   27
- Tween/Teen Programs   20
- 3D Printer for Public Use   18
- Children's Programs   17
- Student Tutoring/Homework Help 14
- ESL Classes   13
- Tech Equipment for Checkout   6
- Online Access to Local Archives 6
- Summer Reading Competitions   6
- Community-Wide Reading Events   3

Additional Engagement Themes

The following themes emerged from the focus group, stakeholder meetings, youth engagement process, digital engagement, open house, and intercept events.

Changes to the Fishing Industry

The commercial fishing industry fuels the economy and life on the island. Since 2013, climate changes have negatively impacted the fishing industry in Alaska. Since Unalaska is the top-performing fishing port in the United States over the last 20 years, climate change is particularly challenging. Species of fish and crab are changing and no longer as prevalent. As the fishing industry goes, so will the city. City administrators are keeping a watchful eye out for this impact.

More is Not Necessarily Better

Given capacity challenges, the consultants heard that the quality of facilities and programs is more important that quantity. Improving existing facilities or creating a limited number of new opportunities can greatly impact quality of life on the island. The consultants recommend that decisions regarding priorities consider:

- Resource and staff availability

- Future health of the fishing industry

- Capacity of residents' leisure time

- Weather patterns impacting outdoor participation

- Opportunities to efficiently improve existing facilities

- Local, regional, and national recreation trends

PCR's Strengths

PCR's greatest strength is the library building. Special events and the longevity of the events were considered a strength as was the well-used and well-designed Community Center. The Aquatics Center and swim lessons are favorites on the island.

Improvement Opportunities for PCR

To improve parks and recreation services, the community feels there are needs and preferences for:

- Another indoor facility (turf soccer, roller hockey, soccer, gymnastics, indoor playground, etc.)

- Better sports fields

- Better spectator seating for swim meets

- Renovation of the Aquatic Center

- More skilled instructors: cannot get "off island" staff, traveling artists, leads to inconsistent service

Vision for the Role Parks and Recreation Should Play in Unalaska

The vision is one that is flexible, inclusive, brings the community together via a mixture of indoor/outdoor activities and variety for all ages, and provides safe and positive places for children to go after school.

Greatest Needs and Priorities for Parks and Recreation in Unalaska

The greatest needs/priority is for a multipurpose facility with additional activities for all to enjoy. Suggestions for activities included bowling, soccer, a golf simulator, and art classes. Next in line in regard to priority is a community garden and/or greenhouse as well as additional trails and trail maintenance. Specific priorities are:

- Improved playgrounds

- Updated aquatic center

- Additional program focus for teens 14–18

- Covered activity spaces

- Hockey opportunities

- Addressing dog concerns in the parks

- Lending opportunities

- New or enhanced walking trails and paths

Desired New Parks and Recreation Amenities

The most suggested amenity to add was an indoor/multipurpose facility. There was also emphasis on additional bike trails, a dog park, and a regulation size tennis court. There were also suggestions to aquatics center amenities including replacing the slide with a splash pad and adding a hot tub. Lastly, there were several suggestions to add walking trails as well as a walkway around the lake.

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

Overview

ETC Institute administered a parks and recreation needs assessment survey for the City of Unalaska during the winter and spring of 2024. The purpose of the survey was to help determine parks and recreation priorities for the community.

Methodology

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random number of households in the Unalaska area. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it online at unalaskasurvey.org.

After the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute followed up with residents to encourage participation. To help prevent people who were not residents of Unalaska from participating, everyone who completed the survey online was required to enter their home address prior to submitting their survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses entered online with the addresses originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed online did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the online survey was not included in the final database for this report.

The survey aimed to collect a minimum of 100 completed responses from residents, and this target was surpassed with 101 completed surveys collected.

In addition to the summarized survey results in this section, the survey report in Appendix 2 contains:

- Charts showing the overall results of the survey

- The facilities and programs most needed in the community

- Tabular data showing the results for all questions on the survey

- A copy of the cover letter and survey instrument

Survey Findings

The major findings of the survey are summarized for communication; benefit, importance, and improvements to parks and recreation; facilities/amenities needs and priorities; and recreation programs/activities needs and priorities.

Communication

Respondents were asked about the ways they learned about PCR services. The most common sources selected were: word of mouth (69%), social media (55%), and flyers (50%). Based on the sum of the top three choices, the sources that respondents want the city to use the most are: social media (65%), flyers (44%), and recreation activity brochure –web and application based (34%).

Benefits, Importance, and Improvements to Parks and Recreation

Overall Parks and Recreation Facilities Use: Respondents were asked which parks/facilities they use the most (based on the sum of the top three choices). The parks/facilities that were picked the most were: Community center (75%), the Aquatic Center (53%), and the library (45%). Respondents were also asked to select barriers that kept them from visiting facilities more often. The common barriers to use were: too busy/not enough time (34%), lack of amenities we want to use (33%), and lack of restrooms (23%).

Potential Benefits: Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about some potential benefits of the city's parks and recreation services. The statements respondents agreed on the most were: provides positive social interactions for me (my household/family) (87%), improves my (my household's) physical health & fitness (86%), and makes Unalaska a more desirable place to live (82%).

Facilities/Amenities Needs and Priorities

Facility Needs: Respondents were asked to identify whether their household had a need for 28 facilities and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest "unmet" need for facilities.

The three facilities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need:

1. Library–1,394 households
2. Community center–1,362 households
3. Community/city parks–1,347 households

The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 28 facilities assessed is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Estimated Households Who Have a Need for Facilities/Amenities

Q9. Estimated number of households who have a need for facilities/amenities

by number of households based on an estimated 1,600 households

Facility/Amenity	Households
Library	1,394
Community center	1,362
Community/City parks	1,347
Weight rooms	1,331
Walking paths in parks & around lakes	1,317
Swimming pool	1,299
Indoor community gathering spaces	1,299
Multi-use hiking, biking, walking trails	1,299
Indoor, year-round space for soccer, gymnastics, & other activities	1,171
Playgrounds in parks	1,155
Covered outdoor spaces	1,125
Picnic areas & shelters	1,109
Small neighborhood parks	1,046
Outdoor exercise/fitness area	1,000
Outdoor basketball courts	997
Mountain bike trails	950
Playground at Eagle's View Elementary School	950
Playground at Unalaska City High School	950
Off-leash dog park	920
Diamond sports fields	918
Rectangular sports fields	904
Shade	840
The Teen Room at PCR Community Center	838
Pavilion at Ounalashka Community Park	822
Outdoor tennis courts	822
Skateboarding parks	714
Splash pads or spray parks	696
Outdoor pickleball courts	587

Facility Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, these were the four facilities that ranked most important to residents:

1. Community center (50%)
2. Library (48%)
3. Swimming pool (34%)
4. Community/city parks (31%)

The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top four choices is shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Facilities/amenities Most Important to Households

Q10. Which four facilities/amenities are most important to your household?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices

Facility	Percentage
Community center	50%
Library	48%
Swimming pool	34%
Community/City parks	31%
Weight rooms	29%
Walking paths in parks & around lakes	26%
Multi-use hiking, biking, walking trails	22%
Off-leash dog park	17%
Covered outdoor spaces	15%
Indoor, year-round space for soccer, gymnastics, & other activities	14%
Mountain bike trails	10%
Picnic areas & shelters	9%
Indoor community gathering spaces	9%
Playgrounds in parks	8%
Diamond sports fields	7%
Playground at Eagle's View Elementary School	7%
Outdoor basketball courts	5%
Outdoor exercise/fitness area	5%
Splash pads or spray parks	5%
Small neighborhood parks	3%
Outdoor pickleball courts	2%
Playground at Unalaska City High School	2%
Rectangular sports fields	2%
Shade	2%
The Teen Room at PCR Community Center	2%

■ Top choice ■ 2nd choice ■ 3rd choice ■ 4th choice

Priorities for Facility Investments: ETC Institute developed priority investment rankings (PIR) to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The PIR equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facilities.

Based the PIR, the following facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Community center (PIR=146)

- Off-leash dog park (PIR=134)

- Walking paths in parks & around lakes (PIR=131)

- Weight rooms (PIR=130)

- Swimming pool (Aquatic Center) (PIR=125)

- Community/city parks (PIR=121)

- Multiuse hiking, biking, walking trails (PIR=118)

- Library (PIR=113)

Note that teens showed preferences for the dedication space in the community center.

Figure 21 shows the PIR for each of the 28 facilities assessed in the survey.

Figure 21: Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities/Amenities Based on PIR

Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities/Amenities Based on Priority Investment Rating

Facility	PIR
Community center	146
Off-leash dog park	134
Walking paths in parks & around lakes	131
Weight rooms	130
Swimming pool	125
Community/City parks	121
Multi-use hiking, biking, walking trails	118
Library	113
Mountain bike trails	109
Covered outdoor spaces	108
Picnic areas & shelters	105
Outdoor exercise/fitness area	91
Indoor, year-round space for soccer, gymnastics, & other activities	87
Splash pads or spray parks	82
Rectangular sports fields	74
Playgrounds in parks	66
Skateboarding parks	65
Playground at Eagle's View Elementary School	64
Outdoor pickleball courts	63
Shade	63
Small neighborhood parks	63
Outdoor basketball courts	62
Indoor community gathering spaces	59
Diamond sports fields	55
Pavilion at Ounalashka Community Park	52
Playground at Unalaska City High School	52
Outdoor tennis courts	50
The Teen Room at PCR Community Center	41

High Priority (100+)

Medium Priority (50-99)

Low Priority (0-50)

Recreation Programs/Activities Needs and Priorities

Overall Parks and Recreation Programs/Events Use: Respondents were asked why they do not participate in programs more often. The most common barriers were: too busy (23%), I do not know what is offered (21%), and program times are not convenient (12%).

Program Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 26 recreation programs and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest "unmet" need for various programs.

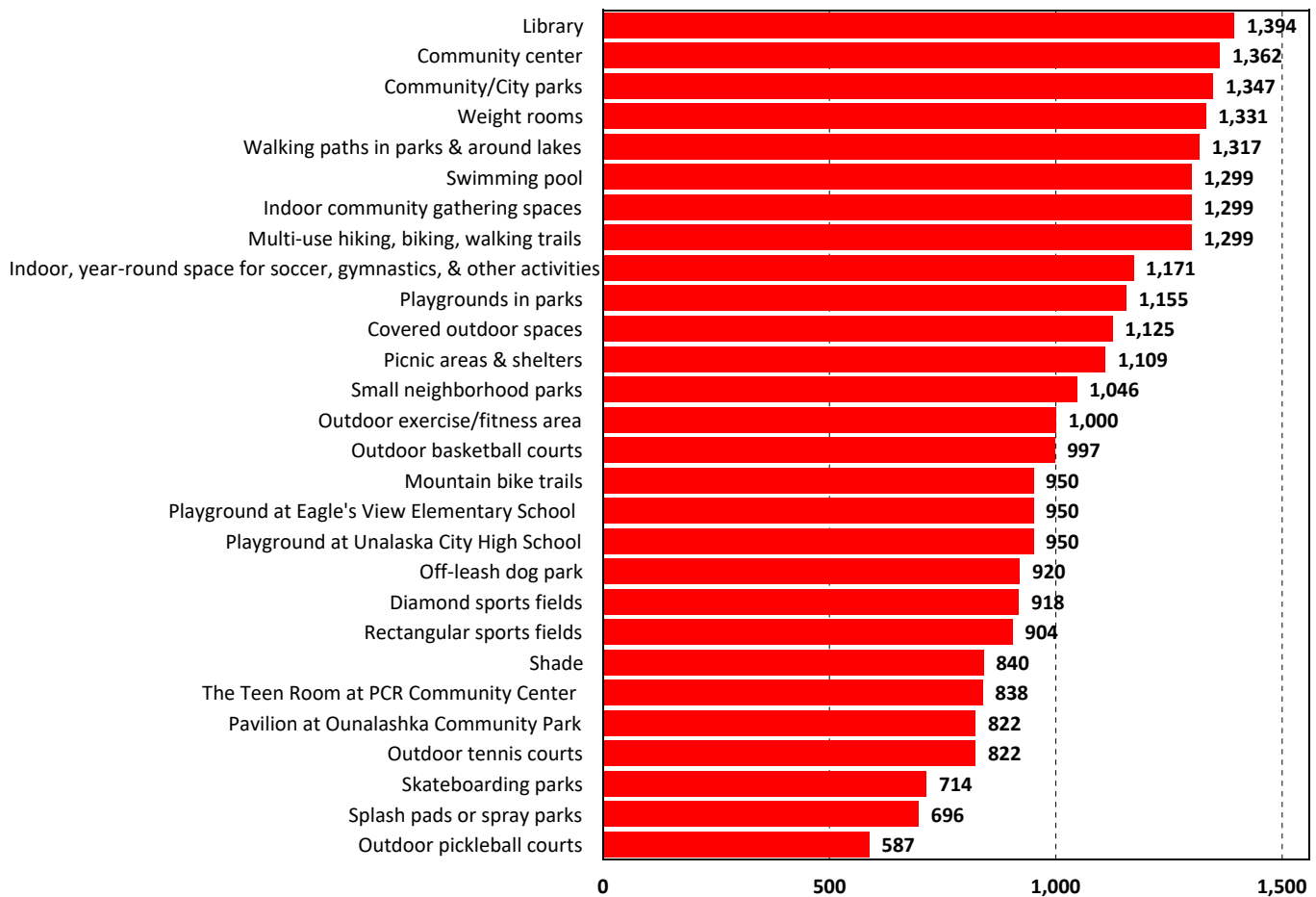The programs with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need are shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22: Estimated Number of Households Who Have a Need for Programs/Activities

Q11. Estimated number of households who have a need for programs/activities

by number of households based on an estimated 1,600 households
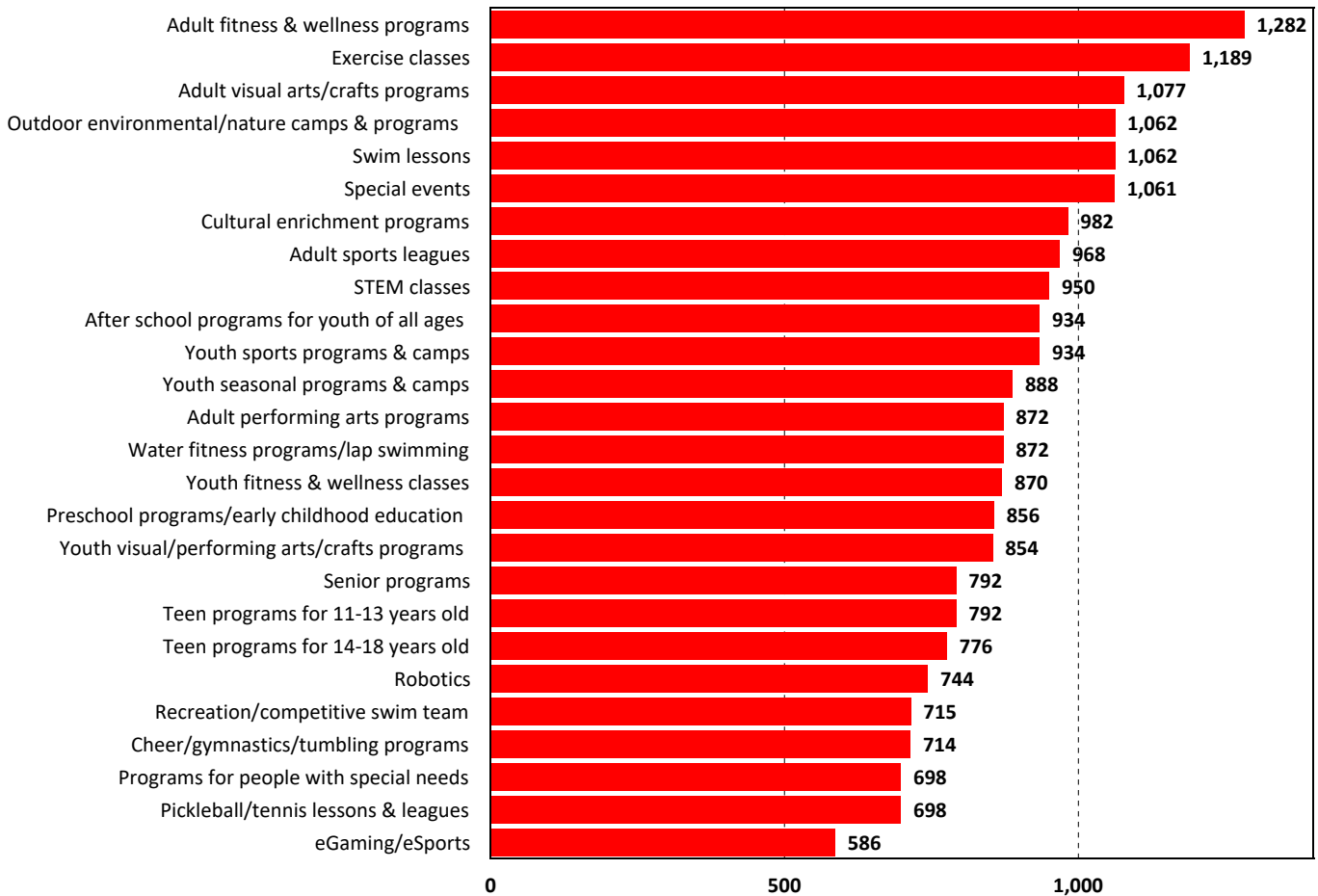
Program Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, these were the four programs that ranked most important to residents:
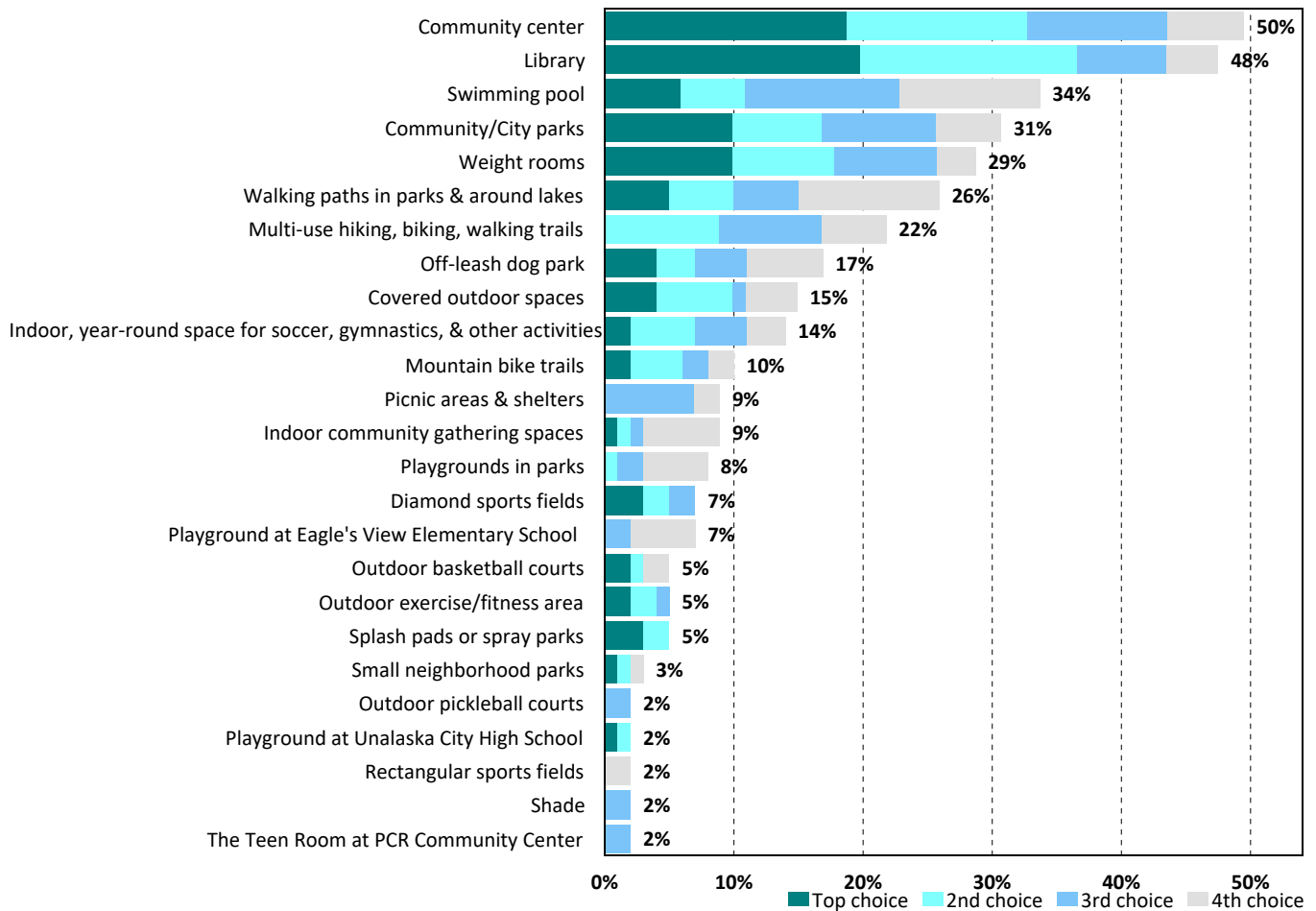
- Adult fitness & wellness programs (43%)

- Exercise classes (25%)

- Outdoor environmental/nature camps & programs (24%)

- Adult sports leagues (24%)

The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below. It is important to note that Teens, when surveyed independent of the household survey reported that access to the teen room at the community center was their 2nd most important need/priority. The overall survey ranking of teen programs being most important to only 4% of residents fails to accurately describe true teen needs and desires.

Q12. Which four programs/activities are most important to your household?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices

Program	%
Adult fitness & wellness programs	43%
Exercise classes	25%
Outdoor environmental/nature camps & programs	24%
Adult sports leagues	24%
Cheer/gymnastics/tumbling programs	19%
Preschool programs/early childhood education	17%
After school programs for youth of all ages	17%
Swim lessons	16%
Adult visual arts/crafts programs	16%
Adult performing arts programs	14%
Special events	14%
Water fitness programs/lap swimming	14%
Teen programs for 14-18 years old	11%
Youth sports programs & camps	10%
Senior programs	8%
STEM classes	8%
Cultural enrichment programs	6%
eGaming/eSports	6%
Robotics	5%
Pickleball/tennis lessons & leagues	5%
Youth fitness & wellness classes	5%
Youth seasonal programs & camps	5%
Recreation/competitive swim team	4%
Teen programs for 11-13 years old	4%
Youth visual/performing arts/crafts programs	4%
Programs for people with special needs	1%

Legend: ■ Top choice ■ 2nd choice ■ 3rd choice ■ 4th choice

Priorities for Program Investments:

Based on PIR, the following programs were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Adult fitness & wellness programs (PIR=190)

- Exercise classes (PIR=158)

- Outdoor environmental/nature camps & programs (PIR=137)

- Adult sports leagues (PIR=125)

- Adult visual arts/crafts programs (PIR=124)

- Cheer/gymnastics/tumbling programs (PIR=110)

Figure 24 shows the PIR for each of the 28 programs assessed in the survey.

Figure 24: Top Priorities for Investment for Programs/Activities

Top Priorities for Investment for Programs/Activities Based on Priority Investment Rating
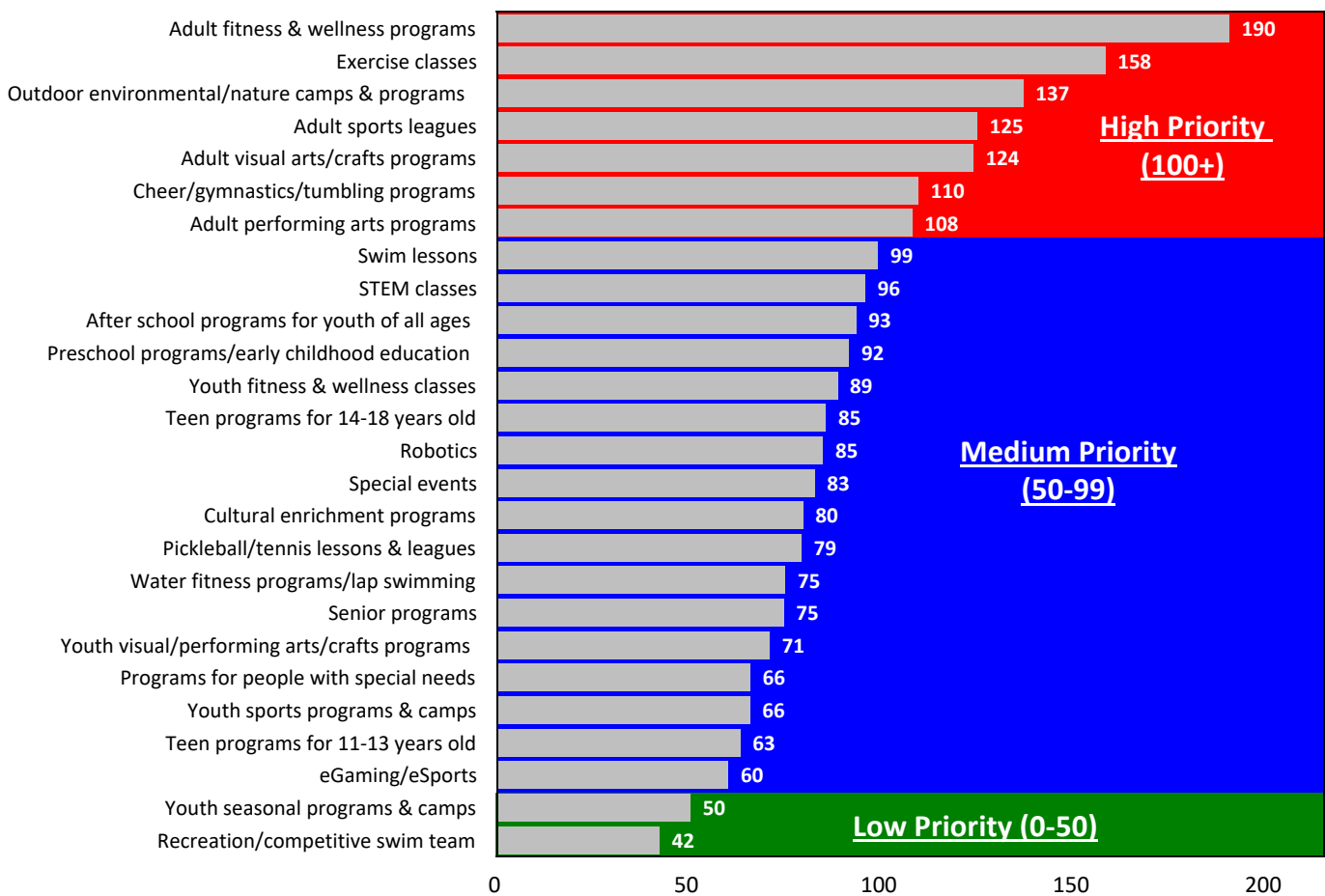
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FACILITY INVENTORY AND LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) ANALYSIS

This LOS analysis outlines how Unalaska's parks and recreation system serves its residents with recreational resources and facilities. LOS signifies the extent to which individuals have access to engage with nature and embrace active lifestyles. LOS in a municipality or region often mirrors community ideals. LOS of recreation systems impacts communities' health, wellness, local economy, and overall quality of life.

Standards and Guidelines

Many professionals in parks and recreation aim to use national standards as benchmarks for their planning efforts. These standards typically outline recommendations for the optimal acreage and amenities, such as ballfields, pools, and playgrounds, that a community should have. The roots of these standards trace back to 1906, when the Playground Association of America proposed allocating 30 square feet per child for playground space.

In the 1970s and 1980s, more comprehensive publications on these subjects began to emerge. One notable example is Roger Lancaster's 1983 book, Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, which suggested a foundational parkland system consisting of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 residents. While these guidelines were not formally endorsed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), a guideline of 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 people has gained widespread acceptance.

These standards may not be universally applicable. Various factors, including the presence of amenities like trails, indoor facilities, and public art, as well as the unique characteristics of each community, can significantly impact ideal standards. Additionally, the quality and maintenance levels of recreational facilities are crucial considerations when assessing their adequacy. Furthermore, as in the case of Unalaska, there may be abundant open space that is not under city jurisdiction and therefore is not factored into LOS assessments but do contribute to the services residents have access to.

Geo-Referenced Composite Values Approach

Parks, trails, recreational areas, and open spaces constitute crucial components of a community's infrastructure, encompassing diverse elements like playgrounds, multipurpose fields, and passive areas. Establishing a methodology to determine the LOS is vital for addressing the value of the amenities to the park user's experience. Composite value methods offer a suitable approach for assessing the services provided by the Unalaska parks and recreation system.

Composite values methodology involves documenting the geographic location, quantity, and capacity of each park component. It also considers factors such as comfort, convenience, and ambiance, which contribute to the overall context and atmosphere of a component. While these qualities are not inherent to the element itself, their presence enhances its value. Typically, the process begins by identifying relevant components, accurately inventorying them, and then conducting thorough analysis.

Inventory Methods and Process

In April 2024, Bettisworth North visited Unalaska to conduct site assessments of the parks and open spaces managed by PCR (either ownership or maintenance). The inventory for this study focused primarily on components at outdoor public spaces. Bettisworth North collected the following information during site visits:

- Component type and geo-location (GIS)
- Component functionality
- Assessment scoring, based on the condition, size, site capacity, and overall quality

The inventory team used the following four-tier rating system to evaluate park components:

- 0 = Nonfunctioning
- 1 = Below Expectations
- 2 = Meets Expectations
- 3 = Exceeds Expectations

Site Amenities

In addition to standard components, the inventory also evaluated features that provide comfort and convenience to users. These are things a user might not go to the parks specifically to use, but are aspects that enhance their experience by making it a nicer place to be. Amenities encourage people to stay longer and enjoy the components more fully. These features are scored as described above on the 0–3 scale. Scoring of amenities focuses on service to the user rather than the quantity.

After the site visits, Bettisworth North created a scorecard (see the example in Figure 25) and an inventory map (example in Figure 26) for each park. Each map outlined the park boundary using a green polygon, with component locations marked with purple circles. The Inventory Atlas (Atlas), included as a supplemental document to the PRMP, encompasses all parks and facilities (refer to Appendix 3).

Figure 25: Example Scorecard

Figure 26: Example Inventory Map

Memorial Park
Inventory Map

Bettisworth North summarized the following general observations of Unalaska parks:

- The standard amenities (signage, benches, dog stations, etc.) were generally in good shape and were available at all parks, giving visitors a sense of familiarity and comfort because they know what they can expect

- Connectivity to parks is good, as there are sidewalks along all the major roads (with gaps along Airport Beach Road)

- Most of the playgrounds look to be in good shape and/or new

- There is little connection to the parks and Unalaska's unique culture, history, or nature

- While there are no trails on City of Unalaska land, there are ample trails on Ounalashka Corporation (OC) land

- There is generally good access to parks for the residents of Unalaska; however, access for transient residents is more difficult, due to locations as well as some workers not having means of transportation. Residents would benefit from a park in the Westward area.

Park Classifications

While NRPA provides definitions for park classifications, it also acknowledges that each community is unique in terms of geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic makeup. As such, each community or park agency should develop its own standards for recreation, parks, and open space, with NRPA definitions as a guide. However, classifying parks allows the ability to compare similar-sized parks (with a similar intent) to other parks within the same classification. For example, the intent and goals of Tanaadakuchax Park (neighborhood park) are different from those of Ounalashka Park (community park).

As a means of organizing the city's public open space facilities, park areas are classified according to a hierarchy that provides for a comprehensive system of interrelated parks. All parks can be placed into specific categories or classifications. Some parks that meet neighborhood needs and have specialized amenities could be placed into more than one classification but are placed in the classification that meets the broadest definition. The park classifications that are appropriate for PCR do not necessarily meet the NRPA guidelines in a strict sense as far as size or amenities are concerned, but they are appropriate to the overall offerings of the city. The PCR classifications are as follows:

- Neighborhood parks

- Community parks

- Special use parks

Neighborhood Parks

Unalaska has four neighborhood parks: Expedition Park, Town Park, Tutiakoff Park, and Tanaadakuchax Park (Figures 27–30). These parks serve an area within a 10-minute walk or half-mile radius uninterrupted by major roads or other barriers, and act as a gathering space for local residents or an opportunity for recreation. Some features of these parks include:

- Playground (local)

- Open turf

- Basketball (practice pad)

- Shelter

- Benches

- Dog stations

- Picnic tables

Figure 27: Expedition Park

Figure 29: Tutiakoff Park

Figure 28: Town Park

Figure 30: Tanaadakuchax Park

Community Parks

Community parks differ from neighborhood parks in their broader scope and purpose. While they may offer similar amenities to neighborhood parks, community parks prioritize meeting the recreational, athletic, and open space needs of the entire community. Additionally, community parks may host activities or amenities with broad appeal to the community that do not fit into specialized categories.

Typically serving multiple neighborhoods, community parks provide special amenities that benefit all residents of the city. Although these parks are generally large, special amenities or athletic fields designed for community-wide use may be accommodated on smaller sites. In Unalaska, four parks are classified as community

parks, including two on school sites. These are Ounalashka Park, Sitka Spruce Park, Unalaska City School District (UCSD) Park, and Eagle's View Elementary School (Figures 31–34). Some features of these parks include:

- Playgrounds

- Baseball

- Basketball (full-size court)

- Volleyball

- Tennis trails

- Concessions

- Large shelter and picnic facilities

Figure 31: Ounalashka Park

Figure 33: UCSD Park

Figure 32: Sitka Spruce Park

Figure 34: Eagle's View Elementary School

Special Use Parks

Special use parks encompass a wide array of recreation areas tailored to specific purposes, typically focusing on a singular major activity. Examples of special use parks include golf courses, historical landmarks, sports complexes, and other facilities with distinct functions. While these parks may incorporate elements found in neighborhood or community parks, they often boast amenities that draw visitors from beyond city limits. The size of these parks or facilities can vary greatly depending on their intended usage. Unalaska's special use parks include the Skate Park and Memorial Park (see Figures 35–36).

Figure 35: Skate Park

Figure 36: Memorial Park
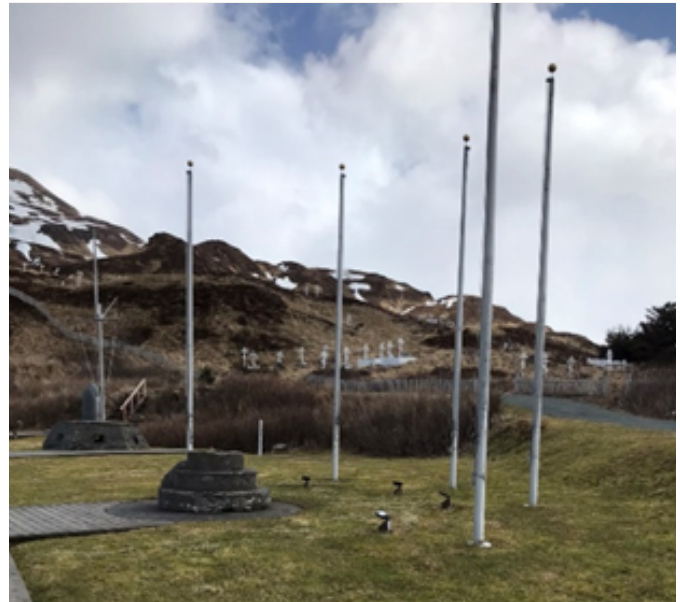
Unalaska Park Component Scores

Component scoring measures how the parks and components serve residents and users. These scores often make the most sense when compared within the same classification (i.e., when comparing one neighborhood park to another). It may be reasonable that there is a wide range of scores within a category. Component scores sorted by park classification are shown in Table 9. Figures 37 and 38 show the breakdown by park classification to demonstrate how one park within a class compares to others. Note there is little benefit to comparing special use parks because of their nature as unique types of parks.

Component scores show opportunities to provide a higher LOS to neighborhoods or the greater community.

For example, Unalaska's neighborhood parks have an average of 2.25 components per park, so Tutiakoff Memorial Park (one component) and Expedition Park (two components) should be considered potential sites to add components.

Table 9: Park Inventory, Classification, and Total Components

Facility	Park Classification	Total Components	Acres
Tutiakoff Memorial Park	Neighborhood Park	1	.8
Town Park	Neighborhood Park	3	0.4
Expedition Park	Neighborhood Park	2	1.5
Tanaadakuchax Park	Neighborhood Park	3	.6
Ounalashka Park	Community Park	14	6.4
Sitka Spruce Park	Community Park	6	4.5
UCSD Park	Community Park	5	1.8
Eagle's View Elem	Community Park	5	1.8
Skate Park	Special Use Park	1	0.1
Memorial Park	Special Use Park	2	8.2
Totals		**42**	**26.1**

Figure 37: Number of Components in Neighborhood Parks

Figure 38: Number of Components in Community Parks

The average number of components in neighborhood parks is 2.25.

The average number of components in community parks is 7.5.

Other Recreation Providers Beyond the City of Unalaska PCR

While the City of Unalaska provides the majority of recreational facilities for residents, the OC provides additional recreational opportunities. The OC is the major landholder in the area, and it allows shareholders, tribal members, and non-shareholders access to its 115,000 acres (on Unalaska, Amaknak, and Sedanka Islands) for recreational and subsistence activities. A permit is required for anyone to be on the land; however, only non-shareholders or non-descendants need to pay for the permit. All of the area's hiking trails are on OC land, as well as opportunities for fishing and foraging seafoods and wild edible plants.

The City of Unalaska has a network of paved paths that also function as recreational opportunities. There are approximately seven miles of sidewalks adjacent to paved roads, with only a few gaps along Airport Beach Road.

Level of Service

To analyze the LOS of PCR assets, the inventory team used a component-based LOS analysis. The process yields analytical maps and data that show access to recreation across a study area. This analysis also combines the inventory with GIS software to produce analytic maps and data that show the quality and distribution of parks and recreation services across the city. The ability to show where the LOS is adequate or inadequate is an advantage of GIS analysis. This is done by defining a service area and using park scores to establish a reasonable number of components residents should have access to within the service area defined as the target value.

Condition Audit

In April 2024, Bettisworth North used a mobile audit tool to assess every park and the two school playgrounds. This tool evaluated and scored both the functionality and quality of:

- Components—features within parks meant for use, such as playgrounds, tennis courts, and picnic shelters (Appendix 3 contains a comprehensive list of components along with their definitions)

- Comfort and Convenience Amenities—elements that improve comfort and convenience, like shade, drinking fountains, and restrooms

Each park site, component, and amenity was assigned a quality value ranging from 0 to 3. This enabled comparison between sites and facilitated analysis of the overall LOS offered by the Unalaska PCR system.

> Component scores analysis suggest a reasonable LOS for Unalaska residents is three recreational components (rounded up from 2.25). The target value is comparable to a typical neighborhood park, which usually offers between one and three components (and is rounded up). For example, within PCR, Town Park and Tanaadakuchax Park would meet the target value, but Expedition Park and Tutiakoff Park are opportunities for higher LOS. Likewise, Unalaska's community parks offer an average of eight components (rounded up from 7.5). Within this classification, only Ounalashka Park meets the target value.

SCORING SYSTEM:

0 = Not Functioning

1 = Below Expectations

2 = Meets Expectations

3 = Exceeds Expectations

An overview of the park assessments, including the scorecard and GIS Inventory Map for each park, can be found in Appendix 3.

Overall, component scoring in Unalaska is similar to that of parks BerryDunn has assessed and tracked in its national database, relative to distribution of scores (see Table 10). BerryDunn's database maintains information on hundreds of parks and thousands of components across the United States.

Table 10: PCR Component Scores Versus National Data Set

PCR Scores		National Data Set Scores	
Scores	%	Scores	%
0	0%	0	3%
1	14%	1	10%
2	63%	2	79%
3	16%	3	8%

Generally, Unalaska parks tend to have newer equipment (score of 3) than do parks in other cities across the country. There was also less equipment that was not functioning (score of 0), but more that was below expectation (score of 1).

Unalaska Park System

As discussed in the public engagement summary, strengths of the Unalaska parks system are that children can access them safely via sidewalks by walking or biking, and some of the parks have been recently updated. Figure 39 shows examples of additional park components.

The system inventory map (Figure 40) shows the relative size and distribution of existing parks and recreation facilities in the city. Green parcels represent parks. Table 11 shows all the components systemwide.

Figure 39: PCR Park Components

Figure 40: System Map

System Map
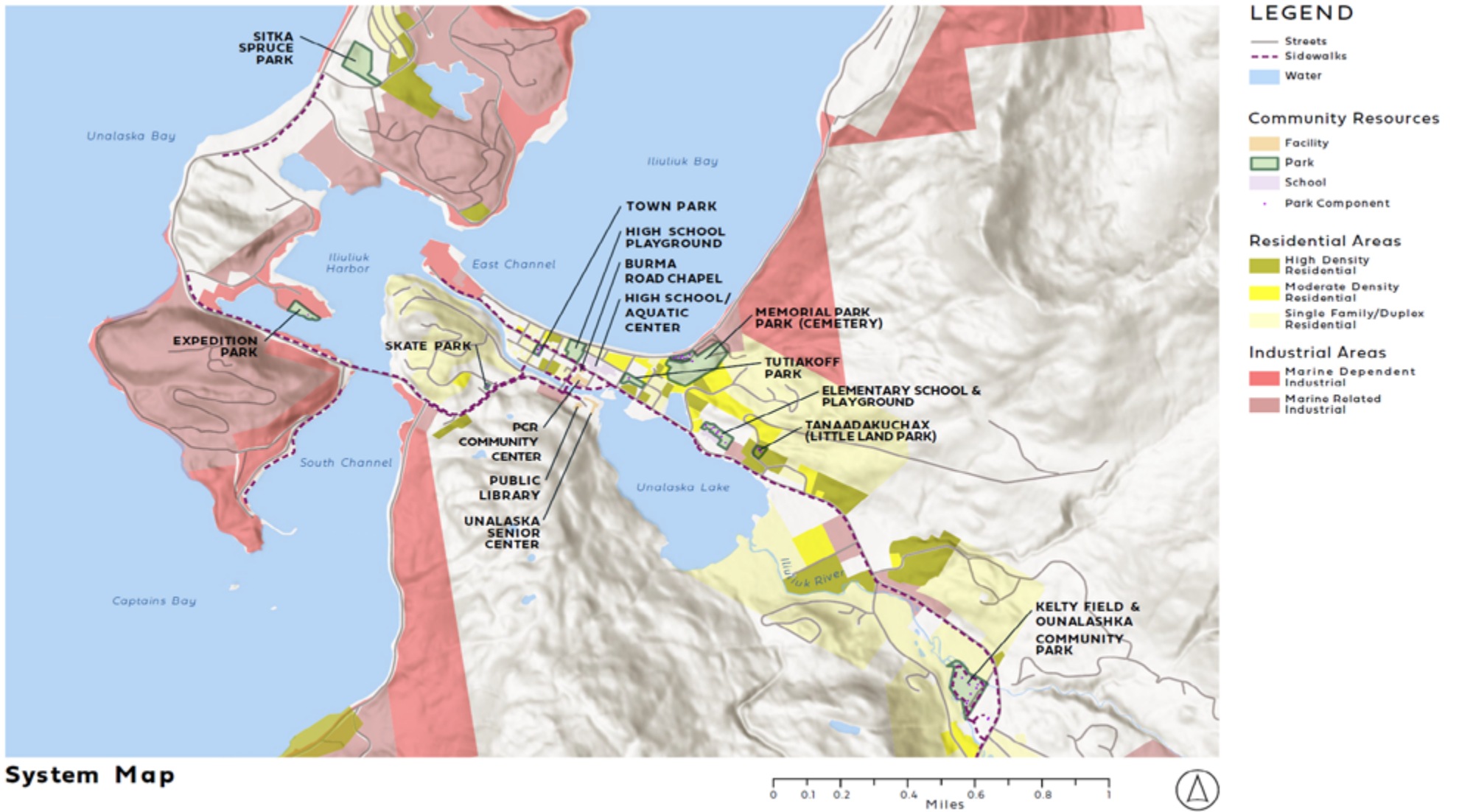
Table 11: Components in the PCR System

	Ounalashka Park	Sitka Spruce Park	Tutiakoff Park	Town Park	Memorial Park	Skate Park	Expedition Park	Tanaadakuchax Park	USCD Playground	Eagles View Elem. School	Total Components in system
Basketball Court	1								1	1	3
Basketball, Practice		1						1			2
Concessions	1										1
Diamond Field	1										1
Educational Experience		1									1
Fitness Course	1										1
Historic Feature					1						1
Horseshoe Court	1										1
Loop Walk									1		1
Multi-use Pad									1	1	2
Open Turf	1	1		1							3
Passive Nodes					1						1
Playground , Destination	1	1							1	1	4
Playground, Local				1				1			2
Rectangular Field, Multiple			1								1
Rectangular Field, Overlay	4										4
Rectangular Field, Small										1	1
Shelter, Large	1									1	2
Shelter, small				1			1				2
Skate Park						1					1
Tennis Court	1										1
Trail, Primitive		1									1
Volleyball Court									1		1
Water Feature							1				1
Water, Open	1	1									2
Total Components/Park	14	6	1	3	2	1	2	2	5	5	41

Park Metrics Analysis

The Park Metrics Analysis compares PCR-owned and -maintained facilities to recent NRPA national statistics from its 2023 Agency Performance Review. For the following comparisons, BerryDunn used the 2024 population count of 4,113 permanent residents.

The metrics analysis shows that PCR is below the NRPA median for park acres per capita, with 6.4 acres per 1,000 residents, versus the NRPA median of 11.2 acres.[7] However, where the national average of residents per park is 1,172, Unalaska boasts only 410 residents per park. This does not take into account OC land that is available to residents.

When comparing specific components to the NRPA Park Metrics, PCR meets the median in most categories. Tennis courts, diamond fields, dog parks, tot lots (playgrounds for six months–five years old), and community gardens are the

exceptions. Park Metrics are not intended to represent any standards against which each parks and recreation agency should measure itself. There is not one single set of standards for parks and recreation, because different agencies serve different communities with unique needs, desires, and challenges.

For example, in Unalaska where it is very windy, another tennis court may not be the best use of space or money. Table 12 provides an NRPA Park Metrics comparison, but the community survey findings shown in Figure 41 provide greater understanding of the importance of components and amenities to PCR residents. The public engagement input shows a priority for a year-round indoor space, activities, trails and trail maintenance, community gardens and/or greenhouses, a covered space, a hockey rink, walking paths, a climbing wall, field space, and a dog park.

Table 12: Park Metrics Analysis

Outdoor Facility	Agencies Offering This Facility	Median Number of Residents per Facility	PCR Current Quantity	PCR Residents per Facility	Need to Add to Meet NRPA Median
Playgrounds	93%	1,990	6	684	0
Multiuse Courts (Basketball, Volleyball)	42%	5,248	5	820	0
Tennis Courts	72%	3,074	1	4,100	+1
Diamond Fields	85%	1,833	1	4,100	+1
Rectangular Fields: Multipurpose	83%	2,493	6	684	0
Dog Parks	68%	10,327	0	N/A	+1
Fitness Course	19%	5,459	1	4,100	0
Skate Parks	46%	11,284	1	4,100	0
Community Gardens	52%	8,800	0	N/A	+1
Tot Lots	53%	5,323	0	N/A	+1

7   The NRPA Park Metrics analysis for acres per 1,000 used 2023 data self-reported from 401 parks and recreation municipalities and special parks and recreation districts.

Figure 41: Community Survey: Facility Importance

Q10. Which four facilities/amenities are most important to your household?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices

Facility	Percentage
Community center	50%
Library	48%
Swimming pool	34%
Community/City parks	31%
Weight rooms	29%
Walking paths in parks & around lakes	26%
Multi-use hiking, biking, walking trails	22%
Off-leash dog park	17%
Covered outdoor spaces	15%
Indoor, year-round space for soccer, gymnastics, & other activities	14%
Mountain bike trails	10%
Picnic areas & shelters	9%
Indoor community gathering spaces	9%
Playgrounds in parks	8%
Diamond sports fields	7%
Playground at Eagle's View Elementary School	7%
Outdoor basketball courts	5%
Outdoor exercise/fitness area	5%
Splash pads or spray parks	5%
Small neighborhood parks	3%
Outdoor pickleball courts	2%
Playground at Unalaska City High School	2%
Rectangular sports fields	2%
Shade	2%
The Teen Room at PCR Community Center	2%

Legend: ■ Top choice ■ 2nd choice ■ 3rd choice ■ 4th choice

Walkability Analysis

A walkability analysis measures how conducive the built environment is to walk from home to a park or from park to park. Because all the major roads in Unalaska have sidewalks, there are very few pedestrian barriers. The rivers running through town are the only barriers, and while they may lengthen a resident's walk, they do not prevent walkability to any of the parks. In Figure 42, half-mile buffers (representing a 10-minute walk) have been placed around each park and shaded purple based on the number of components at each park. This 10-minute standard is consistent with that of other national organizations, such as the Trust for Public Land and the NRPA. Green parcels represent park properties.

Furthermore, Figure 42 considers the LOS provided at each park through the number of components PCR provides, including the schools. The darker purple gradient areas indicate access to a greater number of recreation components. All areas not shaded fall outside a 10-minute walk. While there is a lot of unshaded area, the area of residential land outside the shaded areas is minimal. The walkability analysis depicts the distribution and equity of service across the community. As the map shows, the vast majority of homes are within walking distance of a high LOS. Most of the areas with low or no LOS are industrial lands (which may include fishing-industry housing) or undeveloped land.

Figure 42: Walkability Analysis
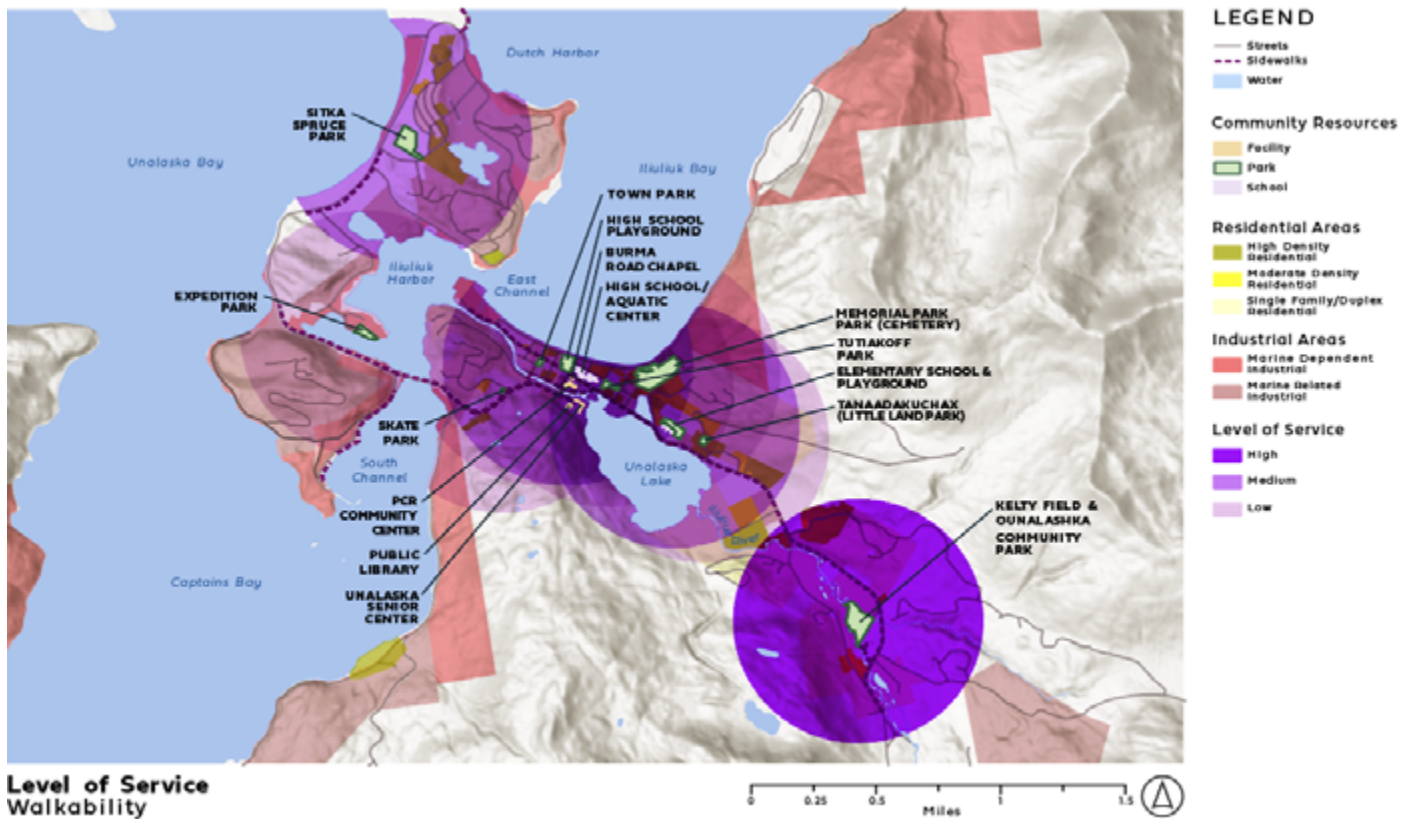
Walkability Gap Analysis

Based on the inventory, a goal of every resident being within walking distance of three components was established. The following map (Figure 43) illustrates where that goal is met and where there is opportunity for improvement. The map illustrates two tiers of service represented by distinct colors. These colors signify regions offering satisfactory or superior service (purple), and those with limited service (golden). In this case, parks having at least three components are considered superior service areas (purple). Golden-shaded areas on the map indicate potential areas for improvement. The map illustrates that the goal of being within walking distance of three components is achieved in the majority of cases in Unalaska.

Figure 43: Walkability Gap Analysis
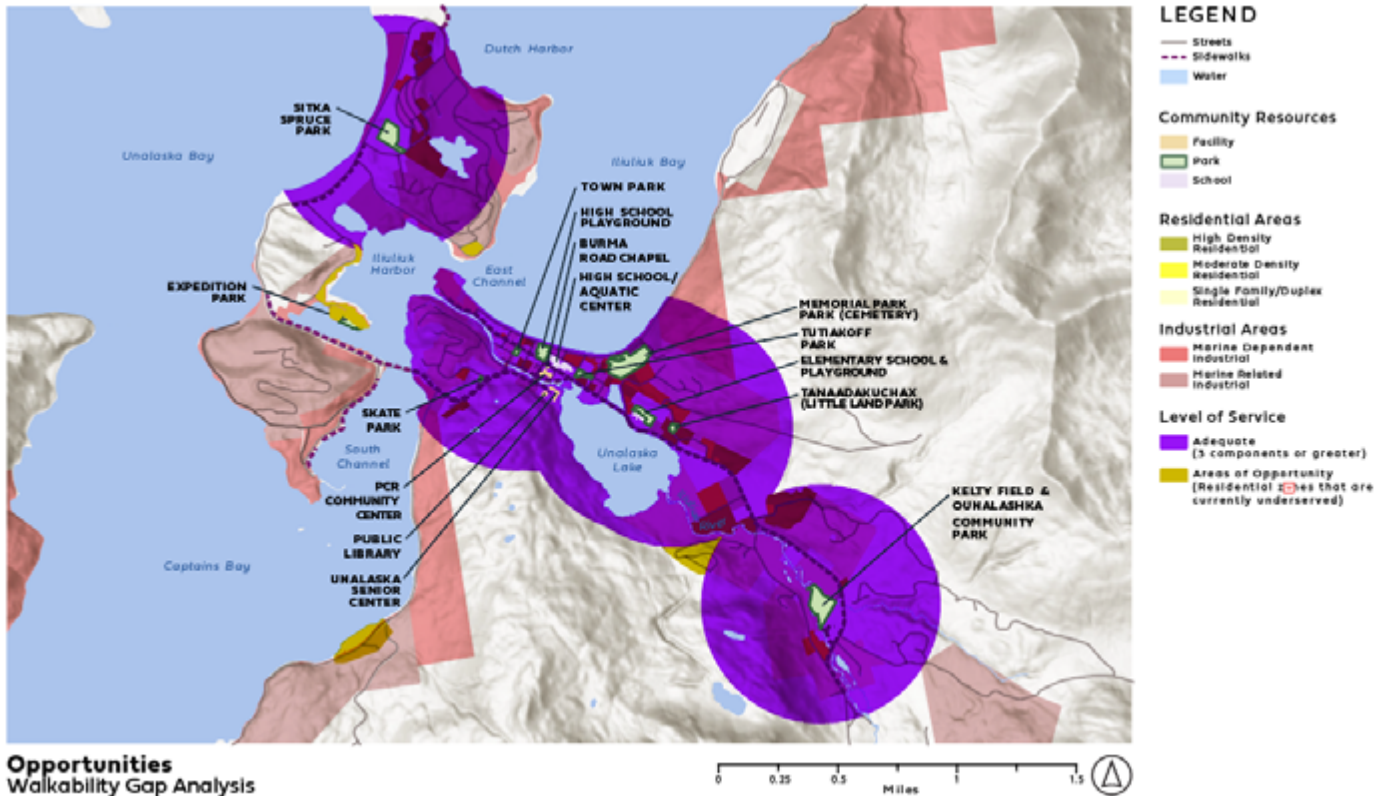
One-Mile Gap Analysis

Due to weather, most trips in Unalaska are by personal vehicle, as discussed in the Transportation Study 2017–2018. Thus, a one-mile (or driving) radius was also considered. In Figure 44, darker purple areas indicate a higher volume of opportunities. As can be seen on the map, all residential areas within the City of Unalaska have a medium-to-high LOS within a one-mile area.

Figure 44: One-Mile Access to Outdoor Recreation
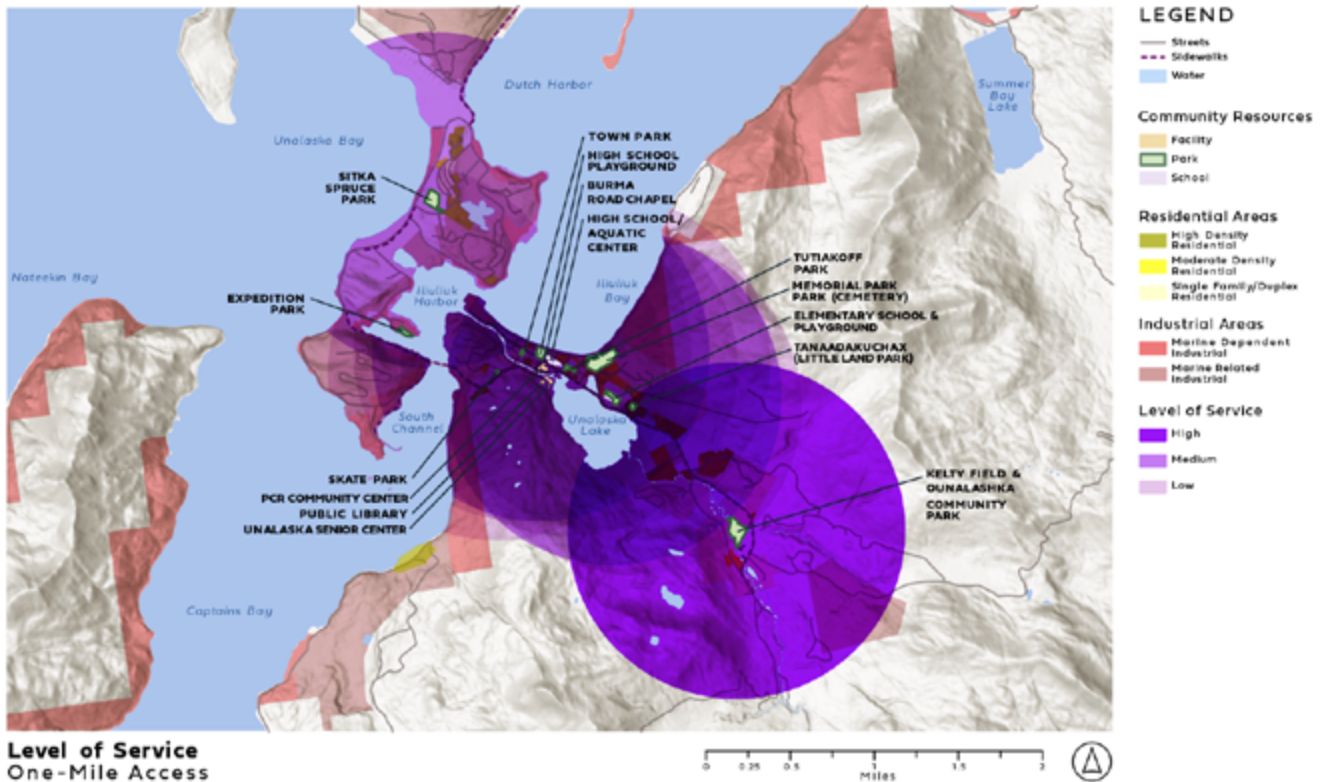
However, when the target number of components (eight for a community park based on the average of existing park components) are considered, opportunities can be seen for additions to existing parks. In addition, when looking at the one-mile/ driving radius, it should be noted that users are less likely to drive from park to park to gain access to a higher number of components (like they would if they were walking), so in this case, parks are considered individually.

Figure 45 reflects access to the LOS target value within a one-mile drive. Purple indicates where LOS values meet or exceed the target value (eight components at one park); all residential areas outside the purple zone, shaded golden, are areas that are below the goal level.

Indoor facilities were not included in this gap analysis, but it should be noted that if the public library, community center, and the aquatic center were included, the analysis would show that almost all residents, except those in the Standard Oil Hill area, are within one mile of a high-component facility. However, if only parks are considered, options to fill the gaps include adding two components to Sitka Spruce Park or adding three more components to UCSD Park, which would put the vast majority of residents within a one-mile drive of a community park with eight components.

Figure 45: One-Mile Gap Access
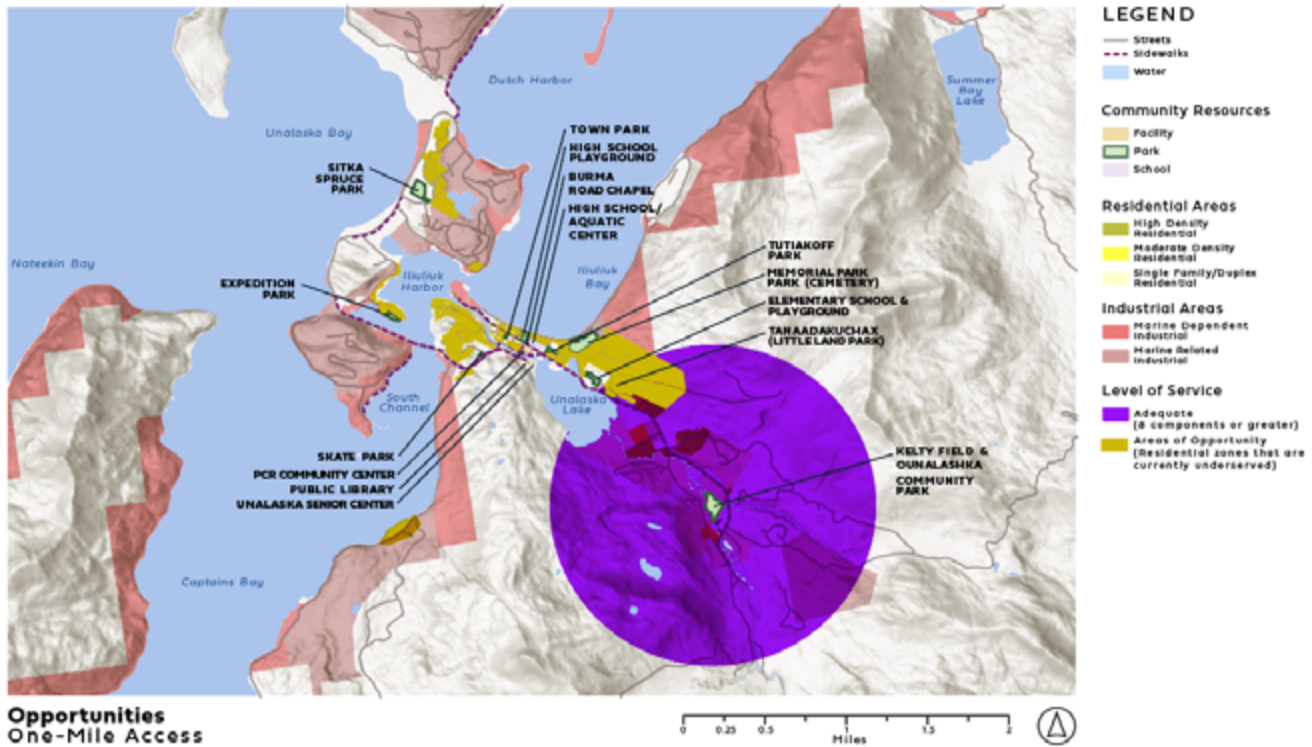
LOS Key Findings and Discussion

The following highlight BerryDunn's key findings and discussion points:

- The city should adopt a LOS standard of three recreational components in a half-mile proximity and eight components at a single park within a one-mile drive. While many children walk and bike to parks, as described in the engagement section of the PRMP, the Transportation Study 2017–2018 showed that 99% of trips were made by car, truck, or taxi—hence the importance of the one-mile drive to a community park.

- Adding amenities at existing parks to support and enhance a diversity of outdoor activities will significantly increase LOS. The consultants analysis suggests a need for an additional basketball court (1), a dog park (1), a community garden (1), and a tot lot (1). Community input

and stakeholder feedback showed particularly strong support for a community greenhouse and a dog park. While some play equipment caters to younger age groups (bucket swings, the train at Town Park), the vast majority of play equipment is rated for 5- to 12-year-olds. Providing additional play equipment for the 6-month-old to 2-year-old and the 2- to 5-year-old ranges is recommended.

- A dog park ranked as highly desired among the stakeholder groups providing input at the Spring Festival, and is recommended based on the Park Metric Analysis. There are estimated to be between 400 and 450 dogs owned in Unalaska. Dog parks are typically at least one acre, but due to Unalaska's small population, a smaller dog park might suffice.

- The most cost-effective location for both a dog park and/or a multi-purpose facility would be at Ounalashka Park, southwest of the tennis court. This area is about half an acre. This places it on the outskirts of the city, which is more ideal than being in one of the many parks in the core area. Noise at dog parks is a common complaint, so a barking policy and hours should be enforced to respect the surrounding neighbors. Other options might include:

- Tanaadakuchax Park; however, this park is very close to residential areas, the size would be limited to 1/3 acre, and all other equipment

(playground, grills, basketball) would need to be removed to achieve the maximum size

- Purchase additional land at Sitka Spruce Park as an option, if available

- Tutiakoff Park could support a half-acre dog park, but like Tanaadakuchax Park, it is very close to residential areas

- To progress toward achieving the goal of eight components at a park within a one-mile drive, the city should consider that Sitka Spruce Park demonstrates potential for further development, enhancing amenities for Amaknak Island residents. See Figure 46.

Figure 46: View Looking Northeast from Bench at Sitka Spruce Park Pond

- Other options to increase LOS include adding components to either of the schools. Eagle's View Elementary is talked about in detail below. Options at the Unalaska City High School would be to include some components that support winter programming. Hockey boards could be installed around the basketball court to provide an opportunity for hockey or ice skating. When snow is present, a loop around the playground could be groomed by snowmachine for skiing, which would further diversify recreational opportunities.

- Another identified need from the Park Metric Analysis and during the public engagement process is a community garden/greenhouse. The city-owned land near the library would be an excellent location for this. Centrally located, the facility can share some services (utilities, parking) with the library. The residents of the senior housing development would be within easy walking distance as well.

- A tot lot was recommended by the park metric analysis and in conversations with parents at the open gym during the site visits. Tutiakoff Park would provide a centrally located site, which is also adjacent to a low-income housing development. The field has drainage issues, which makes it unusable at times, but cannot be corrected because it is owned by the Unalaska United Methodist Church. Adding a tot lot would allow greater usability on the city-owned portion of the park. A shelter over the tot lot would provide greater year-round use.

- Eagle's View Elementary School's playground equipment rated low relative to the other play equipment in Unalaska. Most of the play equipment in the city is in very good to excellent condition, whereas the elementary school's equipment is showing its age through rust, missing parts, and fading. A general overview of equipment is as follows:

  » There are many opportunities for climbing and sliding on the traditional post and deck play equipment

  » The swings are well-used, as observed during the site visit

  » There is a balancing beam or area to promote confidence and agility

  » The preschool has its own fenced-in play area

  » Many benches are provided for caregivers

  » The pavilion offers opportunities for play and gatherings when it is raining

  » The basketball court is popular

  » The lack of fencing creates a safety hazard and should be remedied.

There are many elements that are working well at the elementary school, and one solution for helping improve the playground's rating would be to remove some of the redundant and aged equipment and infill with new pieces that focus on:

  » Imaginary play (playhouse, kitchens)

  » Sensory play (music)

  » Vestibular (rotating, bouncing)

A saucer swing could be added that is accessible and allows several children at a time to play on it.

Furthermore, modifying the soccer field to artificial turf would provide an even, low-maintenance playing surface.

- There are 16 low-scoring components at six locations. The following represent needed improvements from the LOS analysis. Low-scoring components identified in the inventory are shown in Table 13. These are components that scored a "1" (Below Expectation).

Table 13: PCR Low-Scoring Park Components

Park Name	Component	Notes
Sitka Spruce Park	Signage	Site sign needs to be reset. Interpretive signage could use updating.
Tutiakoff Park	Parking	Off-street parking along King Street is not marked.
Town Park	Bike Parking	Bike rack is very rusty.
	Parking	There are two parking stalls off 3rd Street; is this sufficient?
	Seating	Seating needs to be reset or relocated on level ground.

Park Name	Component	Notes
Memorial Park	Parking	Parking is unorganized and confusing.
	Seating	Many benches are in very poor shape and do not face views.
	Signage	There are opportunities for signage about monuments and/or history.
Expedition Park	Park Access	Park is not accessible and hard to get to.
	Parking	There are two parking spots; one van was camped out in one space.
	Picnic Tables	Park has only one picnic table. With so many grills, consider adding a second table.
	Restrooms	Restrooms are lacking; park only has a porta-potty.
	Seating	Bench is in poor shape.
	Signage	Signage at west entry is very cluttered.
Tanaadakuchax Park	Bike Parking	Boards underneath the bike rack are rotting.
	Seating	Benches are bent and rusty.

An indoor fieldhouse facility is needed, and there may be future opportunities at Ounalashika Community Park for this facility. The facility could double as an emergency shelter and may be eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or other state funding. This would through, require movement of tennis and basketball courts to another location.

It is important to note that the OC intends to build a cultural center near the site.

Figure 47: Ounalashika Community Park

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Comparative analysis, or benchmarking, is a recognized tool that helps parks and recreation managers make informed resource-allocation decisions. Understanding the size and scope of similar organizations or those serving comparable populations can provide valuable insights. However, benchmarking should not be the sole criterion for decision-making, as each community has unique ways of accounting for revenues and expenses, and facilities and structures can vary significantly. The results of the comparative analysis are presented in Table 14.

This analysis compares Unalaska's investment in parks and recreation with that of four other small communities in Alaska, three NRPA Gold Medal recognized agencies, and 41 additional small agencies that self-report data through the NRPA Park Metrics program. The data sources are as follows:

- **NRPA Park Metrics:** Agencies with populations of 6,476 or under were identified. Unalaska's population fell slightly in the middle of this range.

- **Small Alaska Communities:** Palmer and Homer provided data, while Valdez and Kodiak did not respond to BerryDunn's request; data from these communities was sourced from their websites and published budgets.

The individual factors reported include:

- **Population:** Unless otherwise provided by PCR, BerryDunn used Esri data from the most recent U.S. Census.

- **Operating Expenditures and Revenues:** These figures reflect operational revenues and expenses, excluding capital expenditures. The facilities are listed at the bottom of the table.

- **Cost Recovery:** This metric represents the percentage of operating costs recovered through non-tax revenues.

The comparisons were calculated using the data in Table 14.

Operating expenses per capita illustrate that Unalaska is a well-funded agency. Expenses per capita are higher than those of the others in the analysis; however, when the seasonal industry population is factored in and the library taken out (most parks and recreation agencies do not fund a library), then the PCR is still funded above average. Revenues per capita are the highest among the Alaskan communities analyzed, although cost recovery is lower. Cost recovery illustrates a service-based program. The amount of park space per 1,000 residents is a function of available, developable land. In this case, acres of park space are lower than that of the other communities.

Table 14: Alaskan Small Community Comparative Analysis

	Unalaska	NRPA Metrics (41 agencies)	Small Alaskan Communities			
			Valdez	Palmer	Homer	Kodiak
Population	4,113	2,800–6,476	3,846	6,218	5,876	5,326
Population density per sq mile	19.4	378–903	18	1,226	400	1,355
Operating expenditures	$4,428,737	N/A	$1,954,432	$1,732,924	$735,357	$2,836,368

	Unalaska	NRPA Metrics (41 agencies)	Small Alaskan Communities			
			Valdez	Palmer	Homer	Kodiak
Operating expenditure per capita	$1,076 ($442 without library and with 6,000 seasonal fishing industry residents)	$59 to $412 ($175 median)	$508	$279	$125	$533
Revenue	$205,200	N/A	$40,000	$418,200	$57,000	$239,811
Revenues per capita	$49.89	$0–$53	$10.40	$67	$9.7	$45
Cost recovery	4.6%	0%–35.7% (8.9% median)	2%	24%	7.7%	8.4%
Acres of park space	26	N/A	423	70	400	302
Acres of park space per 1,000 population	6.3 acres	7.1 to 28.2 acres	112	11	68	57
# Residents per park	514	462–1,297 (711 median)	99	1,036	195	1,331
Department facilities	Community center, library, indoor aquatic center	N/A	Recreation center, aquatic center	Library, community center, events center	Use of an older school property for recreation programs. No other facilities as well as a swimming pool and library	Aquatic center, teen center, gymnasium, library
Recreation program guide	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	No

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DELIVERY OF SERVICES

The purpose of the services assessment section is to explore, evaluate, identify findings, and make recommendations to enhance the operations and recreation delivery of PCR. The services provided by PCR are vital to the Unalaska community and local economy.

This section focuses on four key areas related to daily operations: an organizational and financial analysis, maintenance and operations assessment, recreation and library program analysis, and communication effectiveness.

The services assessment used metrics from the NRPA to determine the appropriate level of investment in recreation services for the community and to compare these services with those offered by similar-sized agencies across the United States.

The NRPA collects metrics data from over 1,000 agencies annually. This self-reported data can vary significantly between agencies, reflecting differences in programs, facilities, services, and accounting methods for revenues and expenses. Despite the unique circumstances faced by PCR, this data provides valuable perspective.

To help ensure meaningful comparisons, it is essential to consider the types of parks and facilities within the community and the agency's position within the population ranges defined by the NRPA metrics. NRPA aggregates and reports data within each population range in three quartiles: low, median, and high.

For this assessment, BerryDunn used data from 41 parks and recreation agencies serving populations of up to 6,476 residents. Although no Alaskan agencies were included in this metrics data set, the comparative analysis in Section 6 of the PRMP did feature four smaller Alaskan cities.

Introduction

BerryDunn assessed PCR's organizational and financial structure, staffing, and its parks and recreation investments to deliver high-quality services to the community. Under the guidance of the City Manager, the PCR Director autonomously oversees daily operations, including the budget,

personnel, policy development, parks, recreation programs and facilities, special events, and cultural programs. The Public Works Department is responsible for daily maintenance of the city's parks and open spaces.

Organizational and Financial Analysis

BerryDunn assessed the organizational and financial structure, staffing, and investment the city makes in parks and recreation to deliver services to Unalaska residents and to the seasonal workforce. PCR delivers services through six work units—PCR Administration, Recreation Programs, Community Center, Library, Aquatics, and Parks.

Parks and Recreation Staffing

In 2024, the director is supported by 17.48 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, which include administrative staff and personnel for aquatics, sports, enrichment classes, and special events. The department employs 5.5 FTE for library operations, while the Public Works Department has 3 FTE dedicated to maintaining parks and facilities.

Data indicates that comparable agencies serving similarly sized communities might invest in up to 21.3 FTE. This suggests that Unalaska's staffing levels are appropriate when compared to 41 similar agencies included in the 2023 park metrics database. However, it is important to consider that many agencies do not directly supervise libraries as PCR does, which suggests there is an argument to be made that PCR may be slightly understaffed.

Another important consideration is the distribution of positions. Typically, agencies allocate about 46% of FTE to park O&M. In contrast, Unalaska dedicates less than 15% of its parks and recreation FTE to these areas. However, this should be viewed alongside Unalaska's low park space per 1,000 residents (6.34 acres), which is slightly below the lower quartile, as well as the seasonal use of parks due to harsh weather conditions. This indicates that the current number of park maintenance FTEs is sufficient for the size of the park system. Additionally, having three FTEs within the Public Works Department adds support from a larger workforce.

Current Circumstances

PCR adopts an annual budget that establishes priorities, directs staff, and allocates the primary resources needed to meet the parks and recreation needs of city residents. The city's general fund serves as the main operating fund, supplemented by minimal revenues generated by PCR.

The revenue growth and increased expense budgets shown in Table 15 reflect a process of "right-sizing" PCR in response to population declines following suspended air travel after a plane crash in 2019, as well as the ongoing challenges related to transportation on and off the island and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 15: PCR Operating Budgets–Trends FY 2021–FY 2024

	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	Change Since 2021
PCR Admin	$213,956	$264,619	$286,300	$291,890	+36%
Recreation Programs	$636,565	$674,238	$800,998	$1,015,885	+60%
Community Center	$869,513	$932,418	$1,106,343	$1,252,469	+44%
Library	$817,276	$898,096	$945,391	$1,119,375	+63%
Aquatics	$479,379	$504,889	$474,131	$699,018	+14%
Parks	$1,566,534	$1,601,448	$1,846,979	$1,962,235	+25%
Total	**$4,583,223**	**$4,875,708**	**$5,460,142**	**$6,340,872**	**+38%**

Department revenues in 2024 are budgeted to increase by 48% compared to 2020. See Table 16.

Table 16: PCR Revenues in 2024

	2024 Budget	Growth Since 2020
Facility Passes	$110,000	162%
Recreation Program Fees	$68,000	168%
Facility Rental Fees	$6,500	39%
Equipment Rental Fees	$500	-96%
Other PCR Fees	$5,500	42%
Library Fees	$14,700	38%
Total	**$205,200**	**48%**

Capital improvements such as the library renovation were funded locally and without a need to use bonds or finance improvements.

Measuring the Financial Health of the Department

The contributions made by PCR in support of quality of life in the remote area play a direct and vital role in the local economy. Without PCR programs and facilities, the local fishing industry and economy may be significantly and adversely impacted.

Comparing revenues to expenses provides insight into the cost recovery for the PCR. Comparable departments may recover between 0% (low) to 35.7% (high) or a median of 8.9%. This is fairly low compared to that of overall agencies, but illustrative of the much smaller departments serving 7,000 or less population. PCR's total cost recovery is

UNALASKA OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA: $442/Year

Source: 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review

calculated used 2024 budgets to be projected at 4.6% in 2024, typical of a service-based and well-funded parks and recreation agency.

Operating Expenditures per Capita

Another metric NRPA aggregates and reports on annually is operating expenditures per capita. In 2023, the typical small parks and recreation agency similar in size to Unalaska's spent between $22 and $184 or a median of $83 per capita. For the purposes of this assessment, a population number of 10,000 was used to account for the approximate 6,000 temporary and seasonal population PCR serves.

In 2023, the city spent $367 per person and is budgeted to spend $442 per capita. Without the transient workforce, spending per capita in 2024 is over $1,076 in 2024.While this demonstrates the importance and necessity of the recreation and park services the PCR provides, it also illustrates the high cost of providing services in an extremely remote location.

Traditional Parks and Recreation Operations and Capital Development Funding Sources

Local governments can employ a variety of mechanisms to provide services and make public improvements. Parks and recreation operating and capital development funding typically comes from conventional sources such as sales, use, and property tax referenda voted upon by the community, along with developer exactions. Operating funds may fluctuate based on the economy, public spending, or assessed valuation and may not always keep up with inflationary factors.

Additional funding opportunities are noted in Appendix 4, including:

- Traditional tax and exactions-based funding resources
- Development funding
- Fees and charges
- Alternative operations and capital development funding sources

- Loan mechanisms
- Alternative service delivery and funding structures
- Partnership opportunities
- Community resources
- Grants

- Philanthropy
- Community services fees and assessments
- Permits, licensing rights, and use of collateral assets
- Funding resources and other options

- Cost-saving measures
- Green trends and practices

Park Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Assessment

BerryDunn evaluated the resources and practices related to parks maintenance and operations to assist the City of Unalaska in efficiently managing its parks, trails, and open spaces. This assessment identifies best practices, efficiencies, and recommendations that align with the current needs and management of park spaces, as identified in the needs assessment survey and community engagement components of this PRMP.

Maintaining Unalaska's eight parks is challenging due to the island's harsh weather conditions. Grass maintenance is difficult given the limited growing season and variable precipitation.

The responsibility for parks maintenance lies with the Public Works Department, which funds three FTEs working a five-day-per-week schedule. The department provides support through various trade positions, including carpentry, mechanical functions, and facility maintenance. Custodial services are contracted to a local vendor. The consultant observed that the maintenance team performs admirably despite these challenges.

Additionally, it is important to note that many common issues faced by parks and recreation agencies elsewhere do not significantly affect Unalaska. Graffiti, vandalism, restroom camping, and homelessness do not pose major challenges for the community.

Park Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of City Parks and Open Spaces

Currently, Unalaska operates and maintains 26.1 acres of park space and 41 park components. The components include:

- Basketball Court
- Basketball, Practice
- Concessions
- Diamond Field
- Educational Experience
- Fitness Course
- Historic Feature

- Horseshoe Court
- Loop Walk
- Multiuse Pad
- Open Turf
- Passive Nodes
- Playground, Destination
- Playground, Local

- Rectangular Field, Multiple
- Rectangular Field, Overlay
- Rectangular Field, Small
- Shelter, Large
- Shelter, Small

- Skate Park
- Tennis Court
- Trail, Primitive
- Volleyball Court
- Water Feature
- Water, Open

Public works, in close coordination with PCR also maintains the library, aquatic center, and the PCR recreation center.

Community Satisfaction With Parks

The needs assessment survey revealed that many Unalaska residents rate the quality of the parks as excellent or good. The highest ratings were for Sitka Spruce Park (82%), Town Park (72%), Ounalashka Community Park (70%), and Memorial Park (69%). In contrast, Tanaadakuchax Park and Tutiakoff Field both received below-average/poor ratings of 25%, while the Skate Park had a rating of 46%. Notably, only the Skate Park received more below-average and poor ratings than excellent and good ratings.

When respondents were asked to select their top four priorities from a broader list of parks, facilities, and park components, 31% identified city parks among their top choices. Additionally, survey data indicated that only 12% of respondents felt that parks and facilities were not well maintained.

Figure 48: Satisfaction with Unalaska Parks and Facilities

Q2. Please rate the overall quality of the parks/facilities (offered by the City of Unalaska).

by percentage of respondents (excluding "haven't used")

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Below average	Poor
Library	78%	21%			1%
Sitka Spruce Park	33%	49%	16%	1%	
PCR Community Center	38%	42%	19%	1%	
Town Park	36%	36%	27%	1%	
Ounalashka Community Park	31%	39%	29%	1%	
Memorial Park	26%	43%	28%	1%	1%
Aquatic Center	26%	42%	26%	6%	1%
Expedition Park	13%	46%	29%	12%	
Tanaadakuchax Park	18%	36%	26%	18%	2%
Tutiakoff Field	16%	17%	41%	19%	7%
Skate Park	8%	17%	29%	24%	22%
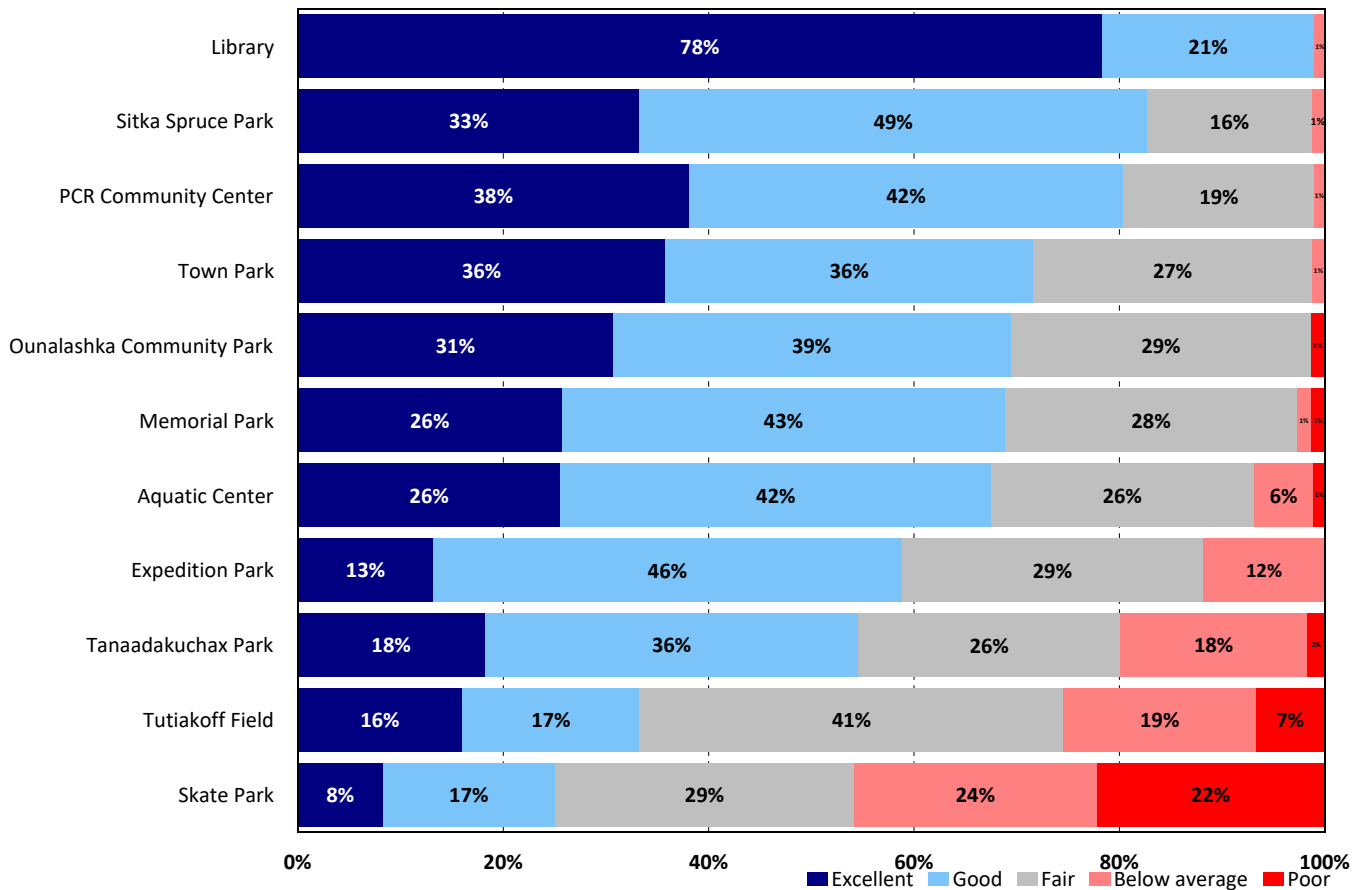
Park Use

Use of parks can help prioritize maintenance functions. The most-used parks are shown in Figure 49.

Figure 49: Most-Used Parks in Unalaska

Q3. Which three parks/facilities does your household use most often?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices

Park/Facility	Percentage
PCR Community Center	75%
Aquatic Center	53%
Library	45%
Town Park	31%
Sitka Spruce Park	28%
Ounalashka Community Park	26%
Tutiakoff Field	12%
Expedition Park	2%
Skate Park	2%

Legend: ■ Top choice ■ 2nd choice ■ 3rd choice
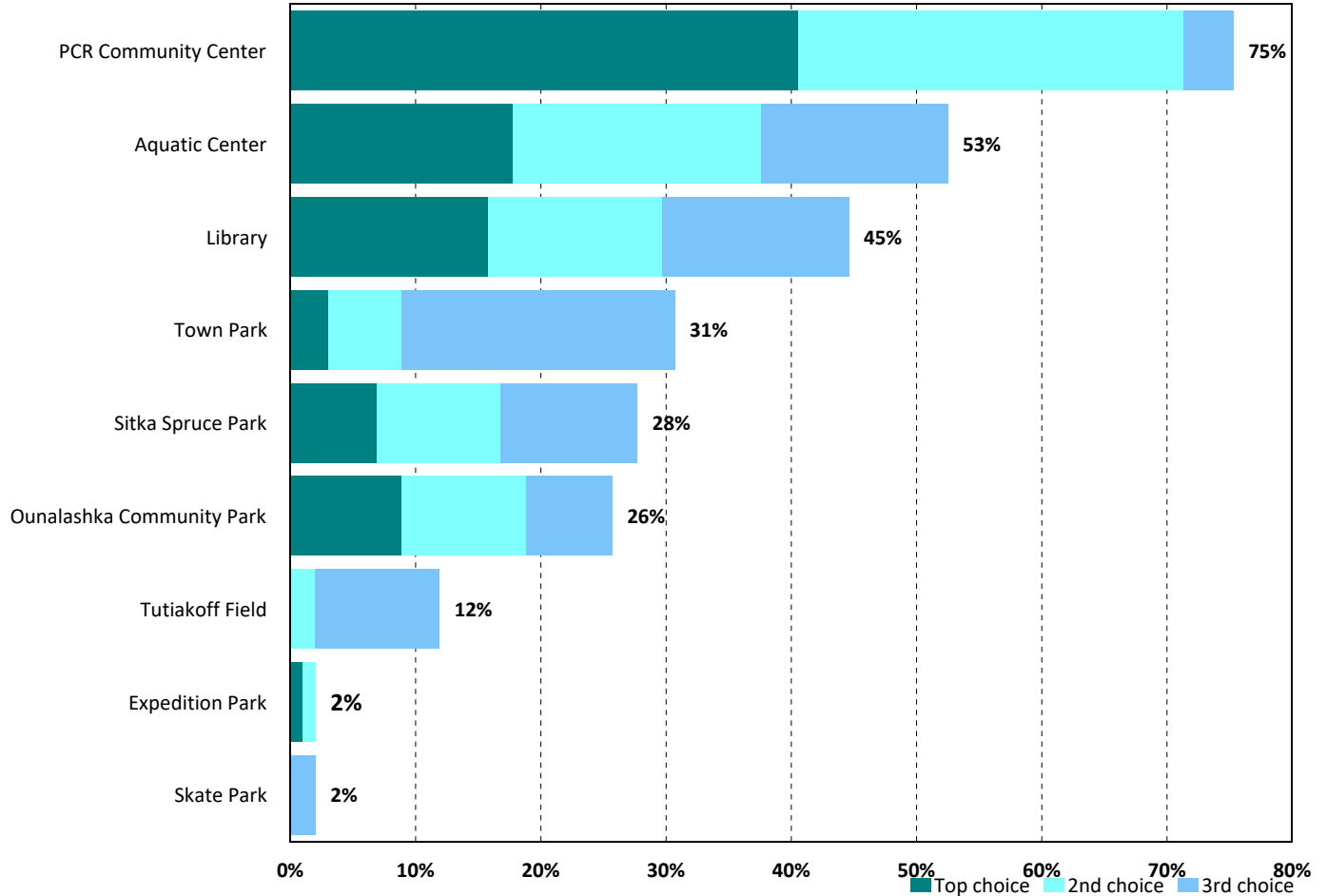
Importance of Quality Park Maintenance

Proper parks maintenance can create positive user experiences while poor maintenance can lead to accelerated depreciation of park components and amenities. The quality of park maintenance is often dependent upon the level of financial investment in park maintenance.

Financial Resources and Staffing

Table 17 shows park maintenance and operations funding between FY 2021 and FY 2024.

Table 17: Unalaska Parks Maintenance and Operations Budgets FY 2019–FY 2024

Park Maintenance and Operations Funding	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	% Change from 2021 to 2024
Labor	$1,298,024	$1,348,257	$1,618,286	$1,724,942	+33%
Utilities	$65,012	$68,608	$34,797	$56,479	-13%
Supplies and Commodities/Other	$203,498	$184,583	$193,896	$180,814	-11%
Total	**$1,566,534**	**$1,601,448**	**$1,846,979**	**$1,962,235**	**+25%**

To evaluate funding levels, it is helpful to benchmark against other typical agencies with similar populations. The NRPA metrics data suggests that agencies typically invest 46% of their operating budgets in park maintenance. In Unalaska, the maintenance budget accounts for 34% of the total investment in parks and recreation. Given the months with severe weather, this appears to be reasonable and appropriate.

Staff Resources and Maintenance Equipment

Another way to assess the city's investment in the O&M of the parks is to look at staffing. Comparable agencies may typically invest approximately 21.6 FTE per 10,000 residents. The city invests 7.47 FTE per 10,000 residents, or about one third of what other agencies may invest. This can be accounted for by the seasonal use and maintenance of the parks due to the harsh weather.

- Maintenance equipment is generally sufficient; however, turf equipment may be needed, including loaders and batwing mowers

Developing the Maintenance Program Plan

While no universal standards exist for park maintenance, the NRPA publishes guidance in the Management of Park and Recreation Agencies, 4th Edition[8] that provides some helpful guidelines:

- The system must be well organized based on the needs of the organization

- Maintenance goals, objectives, and standards should be established

- Use time, personnel, equipment, and materials efficiently and effectively

- Develop work schedules based on established policies and priorities

- Emphasize preventive maintenance

- Make sure adequate resources to get the job done are available

- Incorporate environmental stewardship in the maintenance program

- Assume responsibility for visitor and employee safety

- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations

- Make maintenance a primary consideration during design and construction

Recreation and Library Program Analysis

Recreation Program Analysis

BerryDunn conducted an analysis of the recreation program to evaluate the effectiveness of its community recreation facilities and services. This evaluation aimed to answer several key questions about the city's programs and services:

- What are the core programs, and do they align with community desires and does the mix of recreation programs meet community needs?

- How effective are the facilities and what changes to existing facilities should be considered? What new facilities, if any, should be considered?

- What challenges might hinder the city from delivering high-quality programs and services?

To help ensure an accurate assessment, BerryDunn used the most recent participation data from 2023. The PCR compiled a program inventory using registration data, program guides, and other marketing materials, allowing BerryDunn to analyze how recreation programs are delivered.

The PCR recreation programs are guided by annual business plans that are inclusive of many areas, generally reviewed and analyzed in a master plan recreation assessment. As a result, the business plans for FY 2025 will be referenced in this assessment and can be found in Appendix 5.

The evaluation concluded that the recreation program is highly functional and successfully delivers high-quality programs and services. These services are great contributors to the physical and mental health of Unalaska residents and play a significant role in the local economy.

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8 Management of Park and Recreation Agencies, 4th Edition, Edited by Merry Moiseichik, 2016.

ORGANIZATION OF RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The city delivers recreation services in a variety of program areas, primarily through the Aquatics Center, Community Center, and Public Library. A senior center is available in Unalaska but operates independently of the PCR. The recreation program operates under the supervision of the Recreation Manager in cooperation with the other PCR managers reporting to the PCR Director.

DELIVERY OF CORE SERVICES– RECREATION PROGRAMS

The needs assessment survey revealed that the most important public recreation activities desired by the Unalaska community are adult fitness and wellness programs, exercise classes, outdoor environmental/nature camps and programs, and adult sports leagues. The needs assessment survey results show that when asked to rank the top four program opportunities, over 24% of households confirm the importance of these program areas. Adult fitness and wellness programs were by far the most important as the top choice and received priority among 43% of all Unalaska households. See Figure 50.

Figure 50: Most Important Recreation Activities

Q12. Which four programs/activities are most important to your household?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices
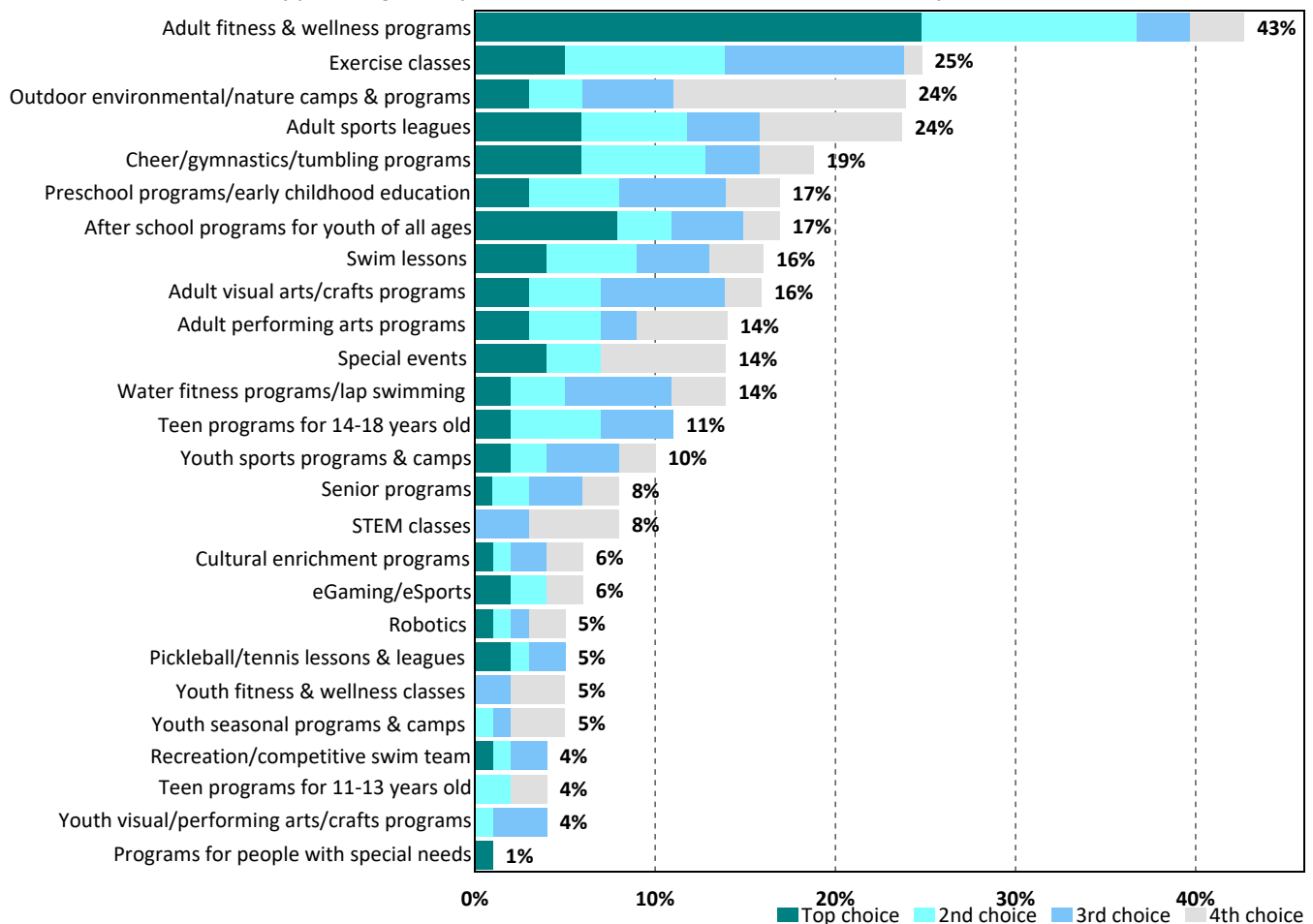
Another perspective is to look at unmet need for programs. Figure 51 illustrates Unalaska households have the most unmet need for the following programs:

- Exercise classes

- Adult fitness and wellness programs

- Adult visual arts/crafts programs

- Outdoor environmental/nature camps and programs

- STEM classes

- Youth fitness and wellness classes

- Adult performing arts programs

- Robotics

- Adult sports leagues

- Program areas with the least unmet need include:

- Recreation/competitive swim team

- Youth seasonal programs and camps

- Youth sports programs and camps

- Water fitness programs/lap swimming

- Special events

Figure 51: Unalaska Households with Unmet Needs for Recreation Programs

Q11c. Estimated number of households whose program/activity needs are only "partly met" or "not met"

by number of households with need based on an estimated 1,600 households

Program	Total
Exercise classes	824
Adult fitness & wellness programs	745
Adult visual arts/crafts programs	713
Outdoor environmental/nature camps & programs	666
STEM classes	634
Youth fitness & wellness classes	633
Adult performing arts programs	619
Robotics	601
Adult sports leagues	571
Pickleball/tennis lessons & leagues	555
Cheer/gymnastics/tumbling programs	540
Cultural enrichment programs	540
Programs for people with special needs	523
Swim lessons	507
Youth visual/performing arts/crafts programs	506
Teen programs for 14-18 years old	491
Senior programs	459
Teen programs for 11-13 years old	443
After school programs for youth of all ages	443
Preschool programs/early childhood education	428
Special events	411
eGaming/eSports	380
Water fitness programs/lap swimming	349
Youth sports programs & camps	349
Youth seasonal programs & camps	317
Recreation/competitive swim team	271

Not Met ▨ Partly Met

GAPS IN RECREATION PROGRAM SERVICE

Figures 50 and 51 collectively illustrate the following gaps in program service:

- Exercise classes

- Adult fitness and wellness programs

- Adult visual arts/crafts programs

- Outdoor environmental/nature camps and programs

DELIVERY OF CORE SERVICES–RECREATION FACILITIES/AMENITIES

The needs assessment survey also illustrated the importance and unmet needs for recreation facilities. The most important facility needs match those offered by the PCR and are the community center, library, aquatic center, and community/city parks. Similarly important to the survey respondents were weight rooms and walking paths in parks and around lakes. See Figure 52.

Figure 52: Most Important Recreation Facilities

Q10. Which four facilities/amenities are most important to your household?

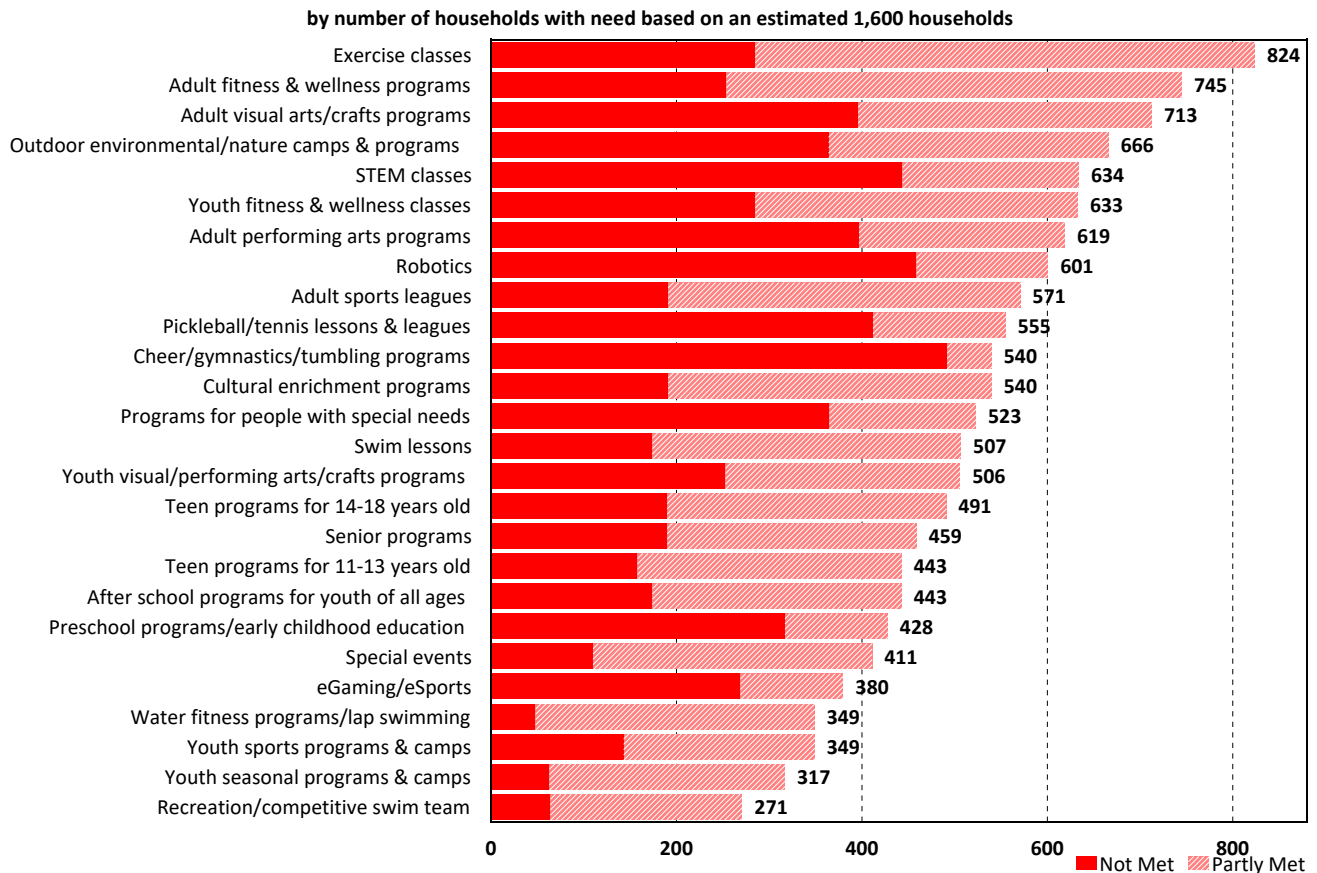**by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top four choices**
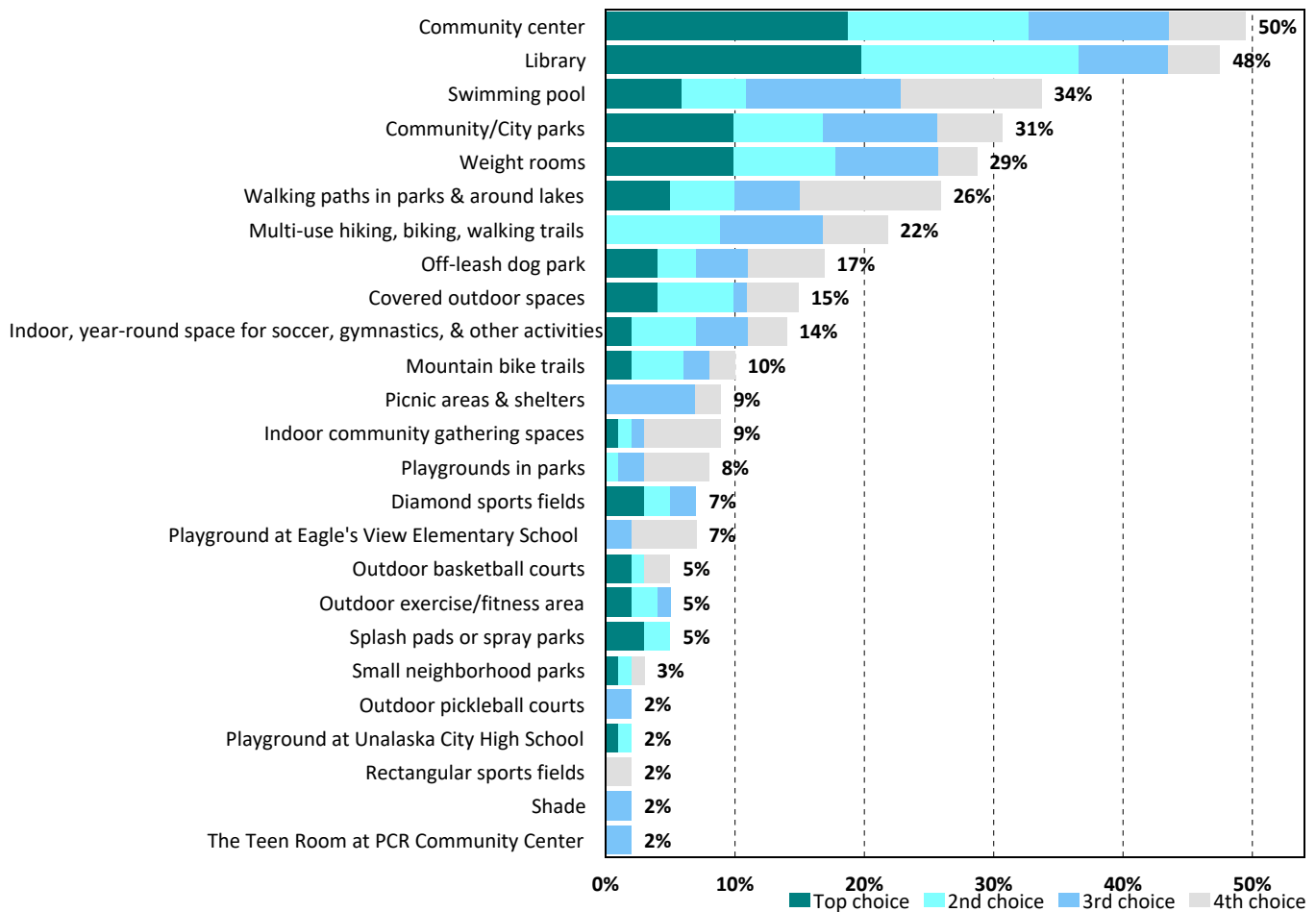
Regarding unmet need for facilities, Figure 53 illustrates that there are households with the greatest unmet need for many outdoor facilities/amenities that include the list below. The indoor recreation facilities with the greatest number of households that have unmet need are weight rooms and an indoor, year-round space for soccer, gymnastics, and other activities.

- Off-leash dog park

- Mountain bike trails

- Picnic areas and shelters

- Outdoor exercise/fitness areas

- Walking paths in parks and around lakes

- Covered outdoor spaces

Figure 53: Unalaska Households with the Greatest Needs for Facilities and Amenities

Q9c. Estimated number of households whose facility/amenity needs are only "partly met" or "not met"

by number of households with need based on an estimated 1,600 households

Facility/Amenity	Total
Off-leash dog park	730
Mountain bike trails	650
Picnic areas & shelters	633
Outdoor exercise/fitness area	587
Walking paths in parks & around lakes	572
Covered outdoor spaces	570
Multi-use hiking, biking, walking trails	539
Weight rooms	523
Splash pads or spray parks	522
Rectangular sports fields	507
Skateboarding parks	476
Outdoor pickleball courts	428
Community/City parks	428
Shade	429
Indoor, year-round space for soccer, gymnastics, & other activities	427
Small neighborhood parks	412
Swimming pool	411
Outdoor basketball courts	380
Pavilion at Ounalashka Community Park	380
Outdoor tennis courts	364
Playground at Eagle's View Elementary School	364
Playgrounds in parks	364
Playground at Unalaska City High School	347
Community center	332
Indoor community gathering spaces	301
Diamond sports fields	301
The Teen Room at PCR Community Center	270
Library	127

Not Met ▪ Partly Met ▨

The survey compared the importance residents place on recreation facilities for which their needs are unmet. This analysis demonstrates a gap in service in program areas that are both important and have significant unmet need. These are areas that should be prioritized as planning decisions are made.

GAPS IN RECREATION FACILITIES/AMENITIES

Figures 52 and 53 collectively suggest the following gaps in facilities offered:

- Weight rooms

- Indoor year-round space for soccer, gymnastics, and other activities

QUALITY OF PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

Looking at the quality of both programs and facilities is also an important determinant of high-quality recreation program delivery. Figure 54 demonstrates that Runs and Races, Father Daughter Dance, Missoula Children's Theater, and the Heart of the Aleutians Festival are rated as being of very high-quality, with a good or excellent rating ranging from 88% to 93%. The lowest-ranking program (Easter Egg Hunt) received a quality score of 63%. Note that 18% of respondents rated fitness classes, among the most important program offerings, as of poor quality.

Figure 54: Quality of Programs and Activities

Q7. Please rate the quality of the parks, culture and recreation department programs and events that you/your household have participated in during the past year.

by percentage of respondents (excluding "haven't used")
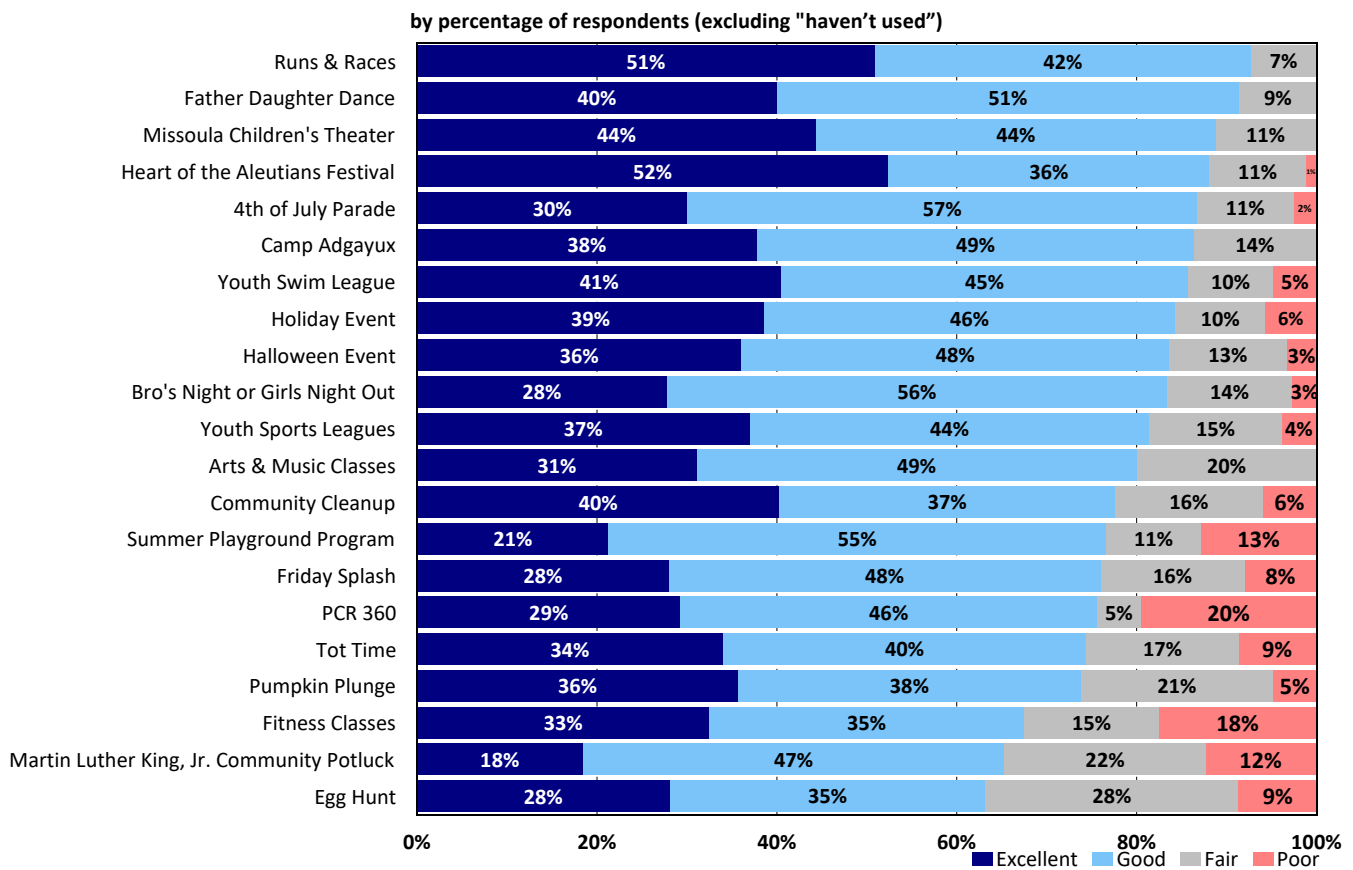
Recreation facilities were mostly rated high-quality. The library was the highest rated; 99% of respondents suggested the library facility was good or excellent. Sitka Spruce Park and the community center received high-quality ratings as well. The Aquatic Center was rated by 68% as good or excellent. However, due to its high importance rating, the data suggests a gap in service level. This gap was also clearly demonstrated during other parts of the engagement process. The only facility/amenity with notable poor rating was the skate park, which city leadership is already considering removing or rebuilding. See Figure 55.

Figure 55: Quality of Parks and Recreation Facilities

Q2. Please rate the overall quality of the parks/facilities (offered by the City of Unalaska).

by percentage of respondents (excluding "haven't used")

Facility	Excellent	Good	Fair	Below average	Poor
Library	78%	21%			1%
Sitka Spruce Park	33%	49%	16%		1%
PCR Community Center	38%	42%	19%		1%
Town Park	36%	36%	27%		1%
Ounalashka Community Park	31%	39%	29%		1%
Memorial Park	26%	43%	28%	1%	1%
Aquatic Center	26%	42%	26%	6%	1%
Expedition Park	13%	46%	29%	12%	
Tanaadakuchax Park	18%	36%	26%	18%	1%
Tutiakoff Field	16%	17%	41%	19%	7%
Skate Park	8%	17%	29%	24%	22%
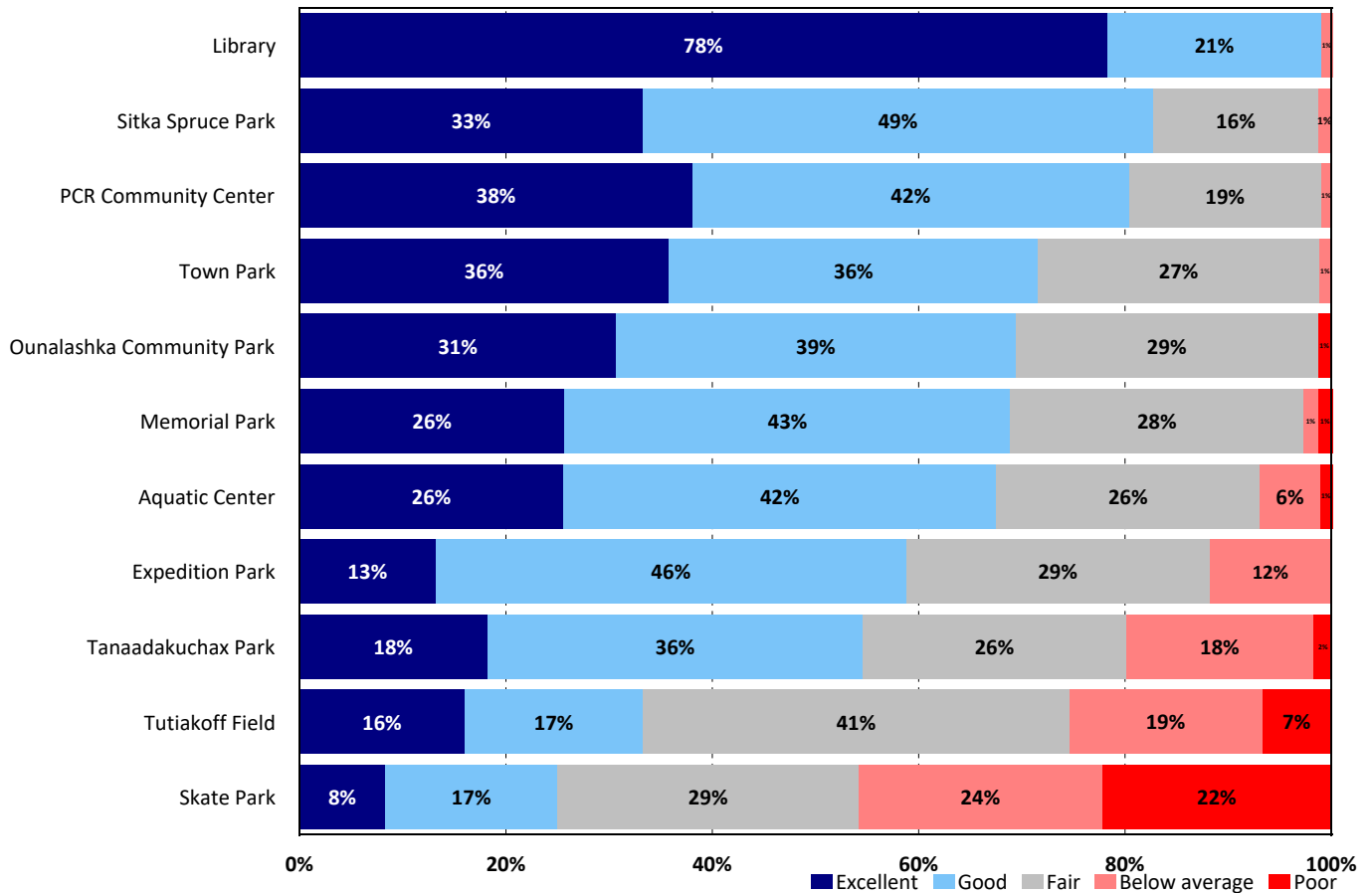
RECREATION PARTICIPATION

A key part of this assessment is to evaluate participation against the needs and desires expressed in the engagement process and survey.

Table 18 shows the program and activity registration for special event participation and all other registered activities. During 2023, the department provided activities to over 5,000 community members. Fifty-nine percent were from the very successful special events.

Table 18: PCR 2023 Program/Activity Registration

Core Program Service Area	Program/Activity Registration
Special Events	3,075
Arts & Culture	120
Sports, Fitness & Wellness	745
Youth, Teen & Leisure	260
Drop-In Self-Directed	N/A
Aquatics Programs	563
Library Programs and Services	454
Total	**5,217**

RECREATION SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events are a key part of the recreation program and achieve very high participation for a small community. Collectively, the seven annual special events the PCR offers boast over 3,000 individual participants. Note that reporting special events participation is not an exact science although most event staff can approximate participation with reasonable results.

- Egg Hunt and Activities   200

- Community Cleanup   250

- 4th of July Parade   750

- Halloween Event   525

- Holiday Event   400

- Heart of the Aleutians Festival 575

- Spring Festival   375

To accurately count participation in each of the program service areas, BerryDunn analyzed both unique registrations and actual participation. Actual participation is counted in participant contacts, which are the number of times the individual took part in the class or activity. For instance, one child registering for a camp that meets five times would be one registration and five contact hours. Contact hours can provide a better perspective and a much clearer picture of the effort required to provide a service than individual registrations. This was possible for both library services and aquatics.

AQUATIC CENTER FACILITY AND PROGRAMS

The aquatics program provided over 6,000 contact hours of program support, which is good for a community the size of Unalaska. Note that contact hours do not include drop-in, self-directed activities, such as use of the sauna.

Table 19 shows the core aquatics programs offered, along with registration, contact hours, and program efficiency (the greatest participation with the least staff investment). Note that green is very efficient, yellow is marginally efficient, and red may be considered somewhat inefficient.

The program with the greatest participation is the Eagle's View Elementary School Swimming Lessons. Programs that require the greatest staff investment are youth swim league, Movie Nights, and Friday Splash. The most efficient programs are the Pumpkin Plunge, St. Patty's Day Dive Day, and swimming lessons. The most inefficient programs are Tot-time Swim and Aqua-Fit.

Table 19: Unalaska Aquatic Registration, Contact Hours, and Program Efficiency

Unalaska Aquatics Programs	Registrations	Contact Hours	Program Efficiency
Youth Swim League	50	1200	24
Movie Nights	50	1200	24
Friday Splash	30	1080	36
Eagles View Elementary School Swim Lessons	150	750	5
Tot-time Swim	8	600	75
Youth Swimming Practice	30	360	12
Girls Night Out	70	280	4
Lifeguard Certification Class	12	240	20
Bros Night Out	40	160	4
Aqua-Fit	5	150	30
Pumpkin Plunge	60	120	2
Jr. Lifeguard Classes and Programs	10	100	10
Yoga	8	40	5
Water Polo Camp	8	32	4
Swim Instructor Class	3	30	10
Special Education Swim Lessons	5	30	6
St. Paddy's Day Dive	12	24	2
Swimming Lessons	8	20	2.5
Water Exploration and Safety Class	4	6	1.5
TOTAL	563	6422	11

AQUATIC CENTER FACILITY NEEDS

The Aquatic Center provides a number of important community programs that not only contribute to quality of life in Unalaska but also are critical in the well-being and safety of residents. While the facility remains popular, well-used, and well-liked, a number of needs should be considered. Those needs are illustrated in the FY25 Aquatic Center Business Plan and during the master planning process. The following are observations related to the Aquatic Center:

- It is near the end of the facility's useful life and will need to be replaced

- The facility roof leaks and requires a major investment

- The pump room equipment is obsolete

- Rebar in the pool has rusted and is leaking through the bottom of the pool

- The air quality is low and needs HVAC enhancements, repairs, or replacement

- The sauna is too small for demand

- The recreation slide is poorly placed in the facility and creates viewing challenges

- The weight rooms, although improved in the recent past, require significant enhancements

Library Program Analysis

LIBRARY FACILITY AND PROGRAMS

Participation in library programs is significant and is noted in Table 20. A majority of programming is self-directed (57%). Over 175 hours of programming are offered, resulting in 2,432 contact hours—the greatest number being PCR 360 library time and family story time. Not surprising, 70% of program contacts support youth.

Table 20: Unalaska Library Facility and Programs

Unalaska Library Programs and Services	Registrations	Number of Contact Hours
PCR 360 Library Time	20	600
Family Story Time	15	540
Special All-Ages Programs	50	400
LEGO® Club–Younger	8	240
LEGO® Club–Older	5	200
Special Adult Programs	20	160
Special Story Times	25	100
Cookbook Club	8	80
Book Club	6	54
Filipino Story Time	12	36
Author Signings/Readings	15	22.5

Unalaska Library Programs and Services	Registrations	Number of Contact Hours
School Fields Trips & Outreach	30	Varies
Summer Reading Program	50	Self-Directed
1,000 Books Before Kindergarten	5	
20-20 Reading Challenge	20	
Book Bingo	25	
Book & Treat (Halloween)	100	
Seasonal Self-Directed Crafts	40	

Library Peer Comparisons

As part of the recreation assessment, BerryDunn conducted a peer comparison of library services. Comparing a library with similar institutions is a common method for evaluating performance. Libraries regularly use industry standards to measure and compare data with others to identify best practices. This helps highlight performance indicators and pinpoint strengths and weaknesses for setting strategic goals.

Peer comparisons are a valuable tool for assessing library performance, but it is important to recognize their limitations. Variations in community needs, funding, and organizational structures can affect the outcomes and may not fully capture the unique context of each library. Despite this, peer comparisons offer useful insights and serve as a foundation for further exploration. They can help inform management discussions, identify areas for improvement, and provide a broader perspective when developing strategic goals.

PEER LIBRARY SYSTEMS AND DATA SOURCE

Unalaska recommended the following libraries for peer comparisons based on type of library organization, population size, or geographic location:

- Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library

- Big Lake Public Library

- Kodiak Public Library

- Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library

- Palmer Public Library

- Petersburg Public Library

- Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library

- Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library

- Valdez Consortium Library

The reviewed data is only a selection of what the Alaska State Library collects. Full data sets and additional information are available on the Alaska State Library Statistics website. All data used comes from the Alaska State Library Public Library Statistics, for the most recently available reporting period, FY 2022 (Home - Alaska Public Library Statistics: FY1987 - Date - Libraries, Archives, Museums at Alaska State Library; last accessed July 31, 2024).

When comparing with the nine peer libraries, the rankings are shown as "[2/10]" meaning that Unalaska is second out of the 10 total libraries, from high to low. When shown with a number less than 10, it means that a peer or peers did not report data in that category.

POPULATION SERVED AND REGISTERED BORROWERS–FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following metrics were assessed to gauge the library's reach in the community:

- Population served

- Registered borrowers

Unalaska ranked seventh out of 10 in population served, with 4,766 people. However, it ranked second in registered borrowers, with 10,459 users, nearly double the size of its population. The high number of registered users relative to the population suggests that Unalaska Library has strong community engagement, indicating effective outreach and service offerings despite serving a smaller community. Table 21 and Table 22 below show the full rankings for population served and registered borrowers.

Table 21: Population Served

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Population Served**
Palmer Public Library	28,295
Kodiak Public Library	12,761
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	11,031
Big Lake Public Library	10,066
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	6,325
Unalaska Public Library	**4,766**
Soldotna-Joyce K, Carver Soldotna Public Library	4,342
Valdez Consortium Library	3,985
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	3,699
Petersburg Public Library	3,398

Table 22: Registered Borrowers

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Registered Users**
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	10,860
Unalaska Public Library	**10,459**
Palmer Public Library	9,784
Kodiak Public Library	9,360
Valdez Consortium Library	3,880
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	2,944
Petersburg Public Library	2,897
Big Lake Public Library	2,867
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	2,232
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	2,062

OPERATIONS - FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following metrics were reviewed to assess the library's operations:

- Number of employees

- Annual operating expenditures

- Total collection use

- Attendance (library visits)

These metrics can provide insights into the library's operational capacity, resource management, and community impact. They help assess how well the library is staffed, how much is being invested in its operations, and how engaged the community is with its services.

Within its peer comparison group, Unalaska ranks sixth in staffing, with 5.25 FTE employees. Kodiak Public Library has the most employees (9.0 FTE), and Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library has the fewest (2.25 FTE). Ranking sixth in staffing suggests that Unalaska is mid-range in its capacity to support services and programs. This indicates that the library may have enough staff to meet current needs but could be limited in expanding services compared to libraries with more staff. Table 23 shows the full rankings for number of employees.

Table 23: Number of Employees FTE

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Number of Employees FTE**
Kodiak Public Library	9.00
Palmer Public Library	6.25
Big Lake Public Library	6.00
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	5.81
Petersburg Public Library	5.80
Unalaska Public Library	**5.25**
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	5.00
Valdez Consortium Library	5.00
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	2.50
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	2.25

For operating expenditures, Unalaska ranks third with $874,938. Valdez Consortium Library spends the most ($1,085,713), and Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library spends the least ($241,204). Ranking third in operating expenditures suggests that Unalaska has significant financial resources, allowing better funding of programs, materials, and services. This relatively high ranking implies that the library is well-funded compared to most of its peers, which could help balance its moderate staffing levels. Table 24 below shows rankings for operating expenditures.

Table 24: Operating Expenditures

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Operating Expenditures**
Valdez Consortium Library	$ 1,085,713
Kodiak Public Library	$ 911,658
Unalaska Public Library	**$ 874,938**
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	$ 847,949
Palmer Public Library	$ 626,633
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	$ 546,157
Petersburg Public Library	$ 436,363
Big Lake Public Library	$ 394,686
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	$ 372,643
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	$ 241,204

For collection use, Unalaska ranks fifth, with 43,060 items circulated. Palmer Public Library leads with 222,959 items, while Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library has the lowest usage (10,685). Unalaska's fifth-place ranking in collection use indicates moderate community engagement with its materials. Since 2022, circulation has decreased due to fewer DVD circulation (impacted by high-speed internet). The library is looking at different types of collections to grow (e.g., games, tools, craft/cooking equipment) in place of this collection, which was once essential but is becoming outdated.

Table 25: Total Collection Use

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Total Collection Use**
Palmer Public Library	222,959
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	149,582
Petersburg Public Library	63,337
Kodiak Public Library	62,983
Unalaska Public Library	**43,060**
Big Lake Public Library	36,934
Valdez Consortium Library	24,856
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	24,053
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	15,153
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	10,685

Unalaska ranks eighth in annual attendance, with 15,478 visits. Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library has the most visitors (67,347), while Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library has the fewest (5,000). Ranking eighth in annual attendance shows that the library sees fewer physical visits compared to its peers. It should be noted that participation figures are from FY22, during part of which the library was under construction. One reason the door count was lower is a result of a temporary closure to relocate to a smaller building. This could indicate a need to strengthen in-person engagement, offer more in-library programs or services, or explore why fewer community members are visiting. Table 26 shows total rankings for total attendance.

Table 26: Total Attendance

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Total Attendance**
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	67,347
Palmer Public Library	38,568
Kodiak Public Library	34,780
Petersburg Public Library	30,000
Big Lake Public Library	27,063
Valdez Consortium Library	18,699
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	17,843
Unalaska Public Library	**15,479**
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	12,817
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	5,000

PUBLIC COMPUTERS AND INTERNET USE— FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following metrics were assessed to gauge the library's role in providing internet access to the community:

- Number of public internet terminals

- Number of public internet terminal sessions

- Number of wireless sessions

These metrics can help evaluate the library's role in providing digital access for its patrons and how well it meets the community's technology needs. The metrics also help gauge the demand for internet services and the library's capacity to support digital inclusion.

Unalaska ranks second for the number of public internet terminals, with 17 computers available. Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library has the most (29), while Valdez Consortium Library has the fewest (4). Unalaska's second-place ranking shows it provides a strong level of access to public computers compared to its peers. This is particularly important for patrons who rely on the library for internet access. Table 27 shows the full rankings for public internet terminals.

Table 27: Public Internet Terminals

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Public Internet Terminals**
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	29
Palmer Public Library	17
Unalaska Public Library	**17**
Petersburg Public Library	15
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	13
Kodiak Public Library	10
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	8
Big Lake Public Library	7
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	6
Valdez Consortium Library	4

For public internet sessions, Unalaska ranks fourth, with 2,416 sessions. Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library has the most sessions (6,512), and Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library has the fewest (623). Ranking fourth in the number of sessions indicates steady usage of the library's public computers. Although Unalaska offers a high number of terminals, the slightly lower usage could suggest that while the computers are available, there may be potential to encourage more use or that users prefer other options, like wireless access, or shorter sessions. Table 28 shows the full rankings for public internet sessions.

Table 28: Public Computer Sessions

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Internet Sessions**
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	6,512
Big Lake Public Library	4,252
Kodiak Public Library	2,707
Unalaska Public Library	**2,416**
Petersburg Public Library	2,304
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	2,147
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	1,902
Palmer Public Library	1,766
Valdez Consortium Library	1,158
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	623

Unalaska ranks first in wireless sessions, with 22,510, showing strong usage of this service. Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library has the fewest wireless sessions (310). Leading in wireless sessions shows that Unalaska's Wi-Fi service is highly popular. This suggests that many community members prefer to bring their own devices to use the internet at the library. The strong wireless usage highlights the library's role in supporting digital access beyond simply providing computers. Table 29 shows the full rankings for wireless sessions.

Table 29: Wireless Sessions

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Wireless Sessions**
Unalaska Public Library	**22,510**
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	15,000
Petersburg Public Library	14,542
Kodiak Public Library	13,921
Palmer Public Library	11,012
Big Lake Public Library	4,326
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	4,234
Valdez Consortium Library	3,017
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	310
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	-

Table 30: Total Adult Programs

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Total Adult Programs**
Big Lake Public Library	139
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	27
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	24
Petersburg Public Library	24
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	17
Palmer Public Library	8
Unalaska Public Library	**7**
Valdez Consortium Library	5
Kodiak Public Library	4
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	1

PROGRAMS–FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following metrics were assessed to gauge the library's effectiveness with providing adult and children's programming:

- Number of adult programs offered

- Adult program attendance

- Number of children's programs offered

- Children's program attendance

These metrics can assess the library's effectiveness in offering programs that attract participants and meet the educational and recreational needs of both adults and children.

Unalaska ranks eighth in its peer comparison groups for the number of adult programs offered (8), and eighth with total attendance, with 72 attendees. Big Lake Public Library offered the most adult programs (139) and has the highest attendance (1,133). Unalaska's eighth-place ranking in the number of adult programs and low attendance suggests that its adult programming may not be as robust compared to that of peer libraries. The relatively low numbers may indicate a need for expanding adult programming options and improving outreach to better engage adult patrons. Table 30 and Table 31 show the full rankings for adult programming and adult programming attendance.

Table 31: Adult Program Attendance

Library Peer Comparisons	
Library	**Adult Programs Attendance**
Big Lake Public Library	1,133
Palmer Public Library	913
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	859
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	446
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	186
Petersburg Public Library	167
Unalaska Public Library	**69**
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	63
Kodiak Public Library	24
Valdez Consortium Library	3

In children's programming, Unalaska ranks sixth in its peer group for both programs, with 50 offered, and program attendees, with 770. Valdez Consortium Library offers the most children's programs (249), while Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library offers the fewest (26). Ranking sixth for children's programs and attendance places Unalaska in the mid-range compared to its peers. While the library offers a moderate number of children's programs, it could look to increase offerings and explore ways to boost attendance. Table 32 and Table 33 show the full rankings for children's programming and children's programming attendance.

Table 32: Total Children's Programs

Library Peer Comparisons

Library	Total Children's Programs
Valdez Consortium Library	249
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	126
Big Lake Public Library	85
Palmer Public Library	75
Kodiak Public Library	71
Unalaska Public Library	**50**
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	42
Petersburg Public Library	35
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	34
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	26

Table 33: Total Children's Programs Attendance

Library Peer Comparisons

Library	Child. Programs Attendance
Big Lake Public Library	4,847
Valdez Consortium Library	4,598
Palmer Public Library	3,535
Soldotna-Joyce K. Carver Soldotna Public Library	3,354
Kodiak Public Library	2,208
Unalaska Public Library	**770**
Bethel-Kuskokwim Consortium Library	719
Utgiagvik-Tuzzy Consortium Library	712
Nome-Kegoayah Kozga Library	650
Petersburg Public Library	498

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

One of the greatest barriers to participation is the capacity of community members, due a lack of discretionary time due to work, school, etc. Many residents work more than one job, which limits leisure time capacity.

The needs assessment survey demonstrates the greatest barriers to recreation participation, reflected in Table 34.

Table 34: Greatest Barriers to Recreation Participation

Barriers to Participation in Programs, Events, and Activities	Percent of Survey Respondents Who Reported the Barrier
Too Busy	23%
I do not know what is offered	21%
Program times are not convenient	12%
Lack of quality programs	11%
Lack of the right program equipment	9%
Lack of quality instructors	8%

Program Assessment

Assessing the quality of programs is both an ongoing responsibility for recreation staff and an opportunity to help ensure the program remains fresh, relevant, and well received. This is done with after-program surveys and use of tools such as program life cycles and performance measures.

Program Life Cycle

Parks and recreation agencies must acknowledge that certain programs and activities have a finite lifespan and require ongoing evaluation. This assessment found activities offered and advertised in the program guides that did not occur due to lack of program registration.

It is advisable for the city to continue to conduct annual audits of programs. This entails tracking those that did not proceed and, after two or three sessions, considering their removal from the program lineup.

Additionally, implementing a service assessment matrix, such as the McMillen Matrix shown as Figure 56, could prove beneficial in determining whether programs are best suited to be offered by the PCR in partnership with other organizations, or not at all. To facilitate this evaluation, a few simple questions should be posed to both participants and staff regarding each program:

Is participation increasing or decreasing? If participation is increasing, then it could mean that the program should be continued. If participation is decreasing, are there steps to take to increase interest through marketing efforts, changes to the time/day of the program, format, or instructor? If not, it may be time to discontinue the program.

Is there information contained in the participation/staff feedback that can be used to improve the program?

Is there another provider of the program that is more suitable to offer it? If yes, PCR could provide referrals for its customers.

- PCR can also use cancellation rates to help make decisions regarding resource allocation and to focus marketing efforts.

Figure 56: McMillan Service Provision Matrix
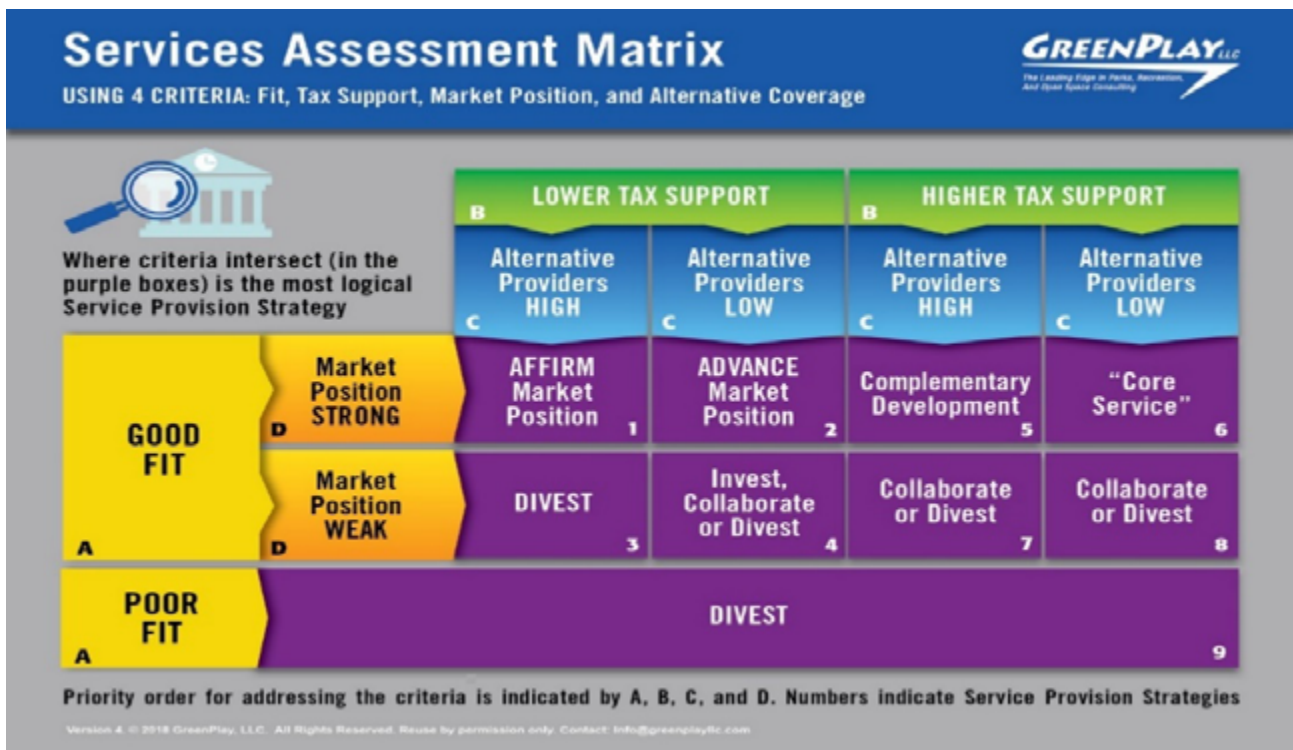
PROGRAM EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Successful recreation programs typically track and report on performance measures that help to describe successful recreation program delivery. A few examples are included for consideration in Table 35.

Table 35: Performance Measure Examples

Performance Measure	Purpose	Outcome
# Of new classes per quarter	Maintain a fresh and novel recreation program	Attract new and returning participants
# Of program cancellations	Keep programming from stagnating	Make efficient use of coordination time and marketing budget
Participant satisfaction rates	Maintain and attract advocates; strong, sustainable revenues; and word-of-mouth marketing	Encourage high-quality program delivery
Ongoing patron satisfaction surveys	Receive continuing data to improve programs	Survey at least 75% of program participants

Recreation Program Opportunities

Many additional program opportunities are available to consider. Two that were highlighted in the engagement process were:

- Mobile recreation program—opportunities that include mobile climbing walls may be well received at special events and other functions.

- Themed fun runs that may include holiday event runs, mini-triathlons and -biathlons,

and coordination with other communities to rate and rank participants over time. Themed events may include tax-time event (depositing a blank tax form at the end of the race), creating a "blarney stone" for runners to run to on St. Patrick's day, New Years Eve run at midnight, Valentine's day run with significant others, Facil-i-thon races between facilities and park components with a treasure hunt style map, and much more. Particularly, 5K races for five dollars in a series over time can be very popular.

Key Findings from the Recreation Assessment

Business plans are published annually, which serve as quality recreation program plans.

Unmet program needs are for exercise classes, adult fitness and wellness programs, adult visual arts and crafts programs, and outdoor environmental/nature camps and programs.

Facility needs to enhance recreation delivery include weight rooms and paths around lakes and in parks. An indoor fieldhouse facility supporting gymnastics, tumbling, soccer, and

other turf-related activities would greatly improve recreational opportunities. Opportunities for an indoor fieldhouse facility may be available at Community Park.

The Skate Park is of lower quality and is being considered to be moved or taken offline and replaced.

Programs and high-quality races are rated at the highest point, although a decline in participation

has been seen over the past years. Themed fun runs can be very popular.

Aquatic opportunities receive continual assessment for efficiency. There are opportunities for increased programs, but facility needs must be addressed first.

A series of performance measures should be developed and implemented to better assess and adjust programs on a regular basis.

The PCR annually rents space from the Unalaska United Methodist Church. The amount of time received vs. the cost of over $20,000 is not efficient. A new rental agreement needs to be pursued or the rental and program should be considered for abolishment.

Communication Effectiveness

Survey ratings of the levels of effectiveness of the city's communication indicated that word of mouth is the primary way residents learn of parks and recreation opportunities (69%). However, when compared to preferences for which methods of communication residents would like the PCR to use, word of mouth was preferred by only 16.5% of survey respondents, suggesting a much greater desire for formal communication. Otherwise, there was concurrence between the next three methods which social media, is the most well-used and preferred communication tool.

Figure 57: How Unalaska Residents Receive Information from the PCR

Q5. Please check all the ways you learn about parks, culture and recreation facilities, programs, and events.

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)
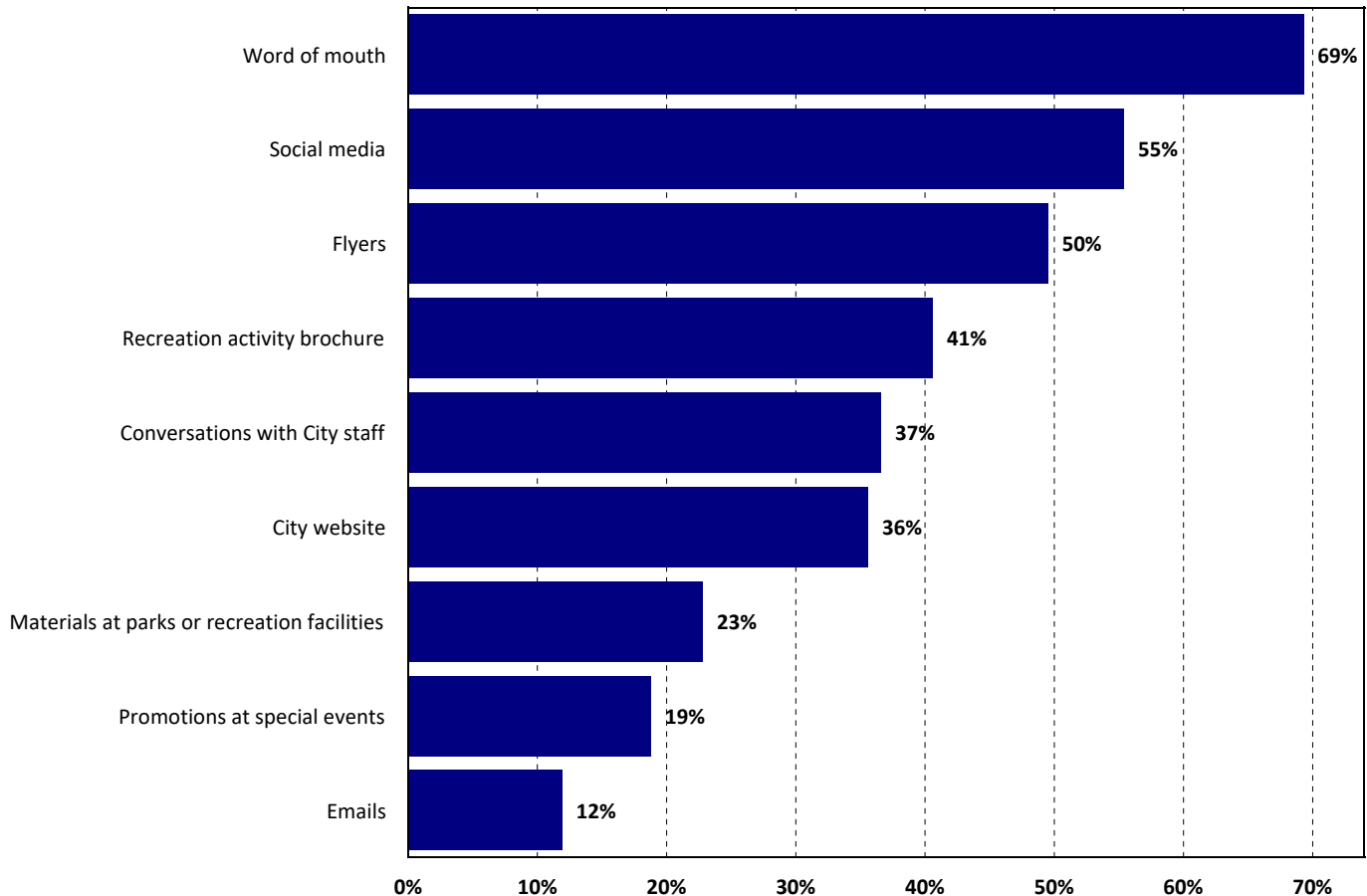
Figure 58: Unalaska Residents' Preferences on How to Receive Information

Q6. Which three methods of communication would you most the City use to communicate with you about parks, recreation facilities, programs, and events?

by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices
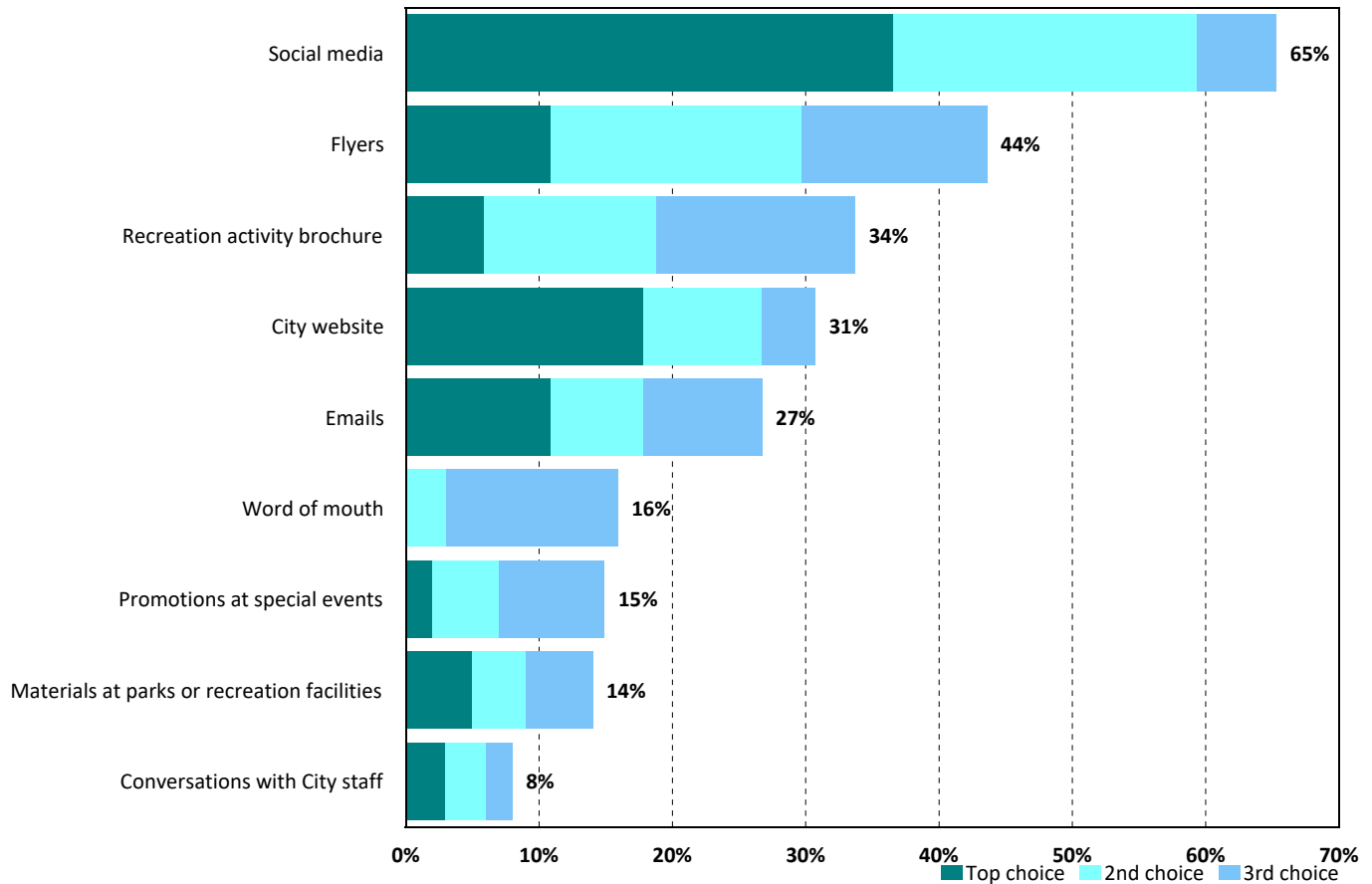
Also of interest is that 97% of households speak English as the primary language. Tagalog was spoken in 10.9% of households and Spanish in 5%.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES (GPS), GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

This section of the PRMP describes key findings identified during each phase of the project. GPs for the PCR are presented along with goals, strategies, and actions to address the key findings. Collectively, the PRMP GPs and actions help to create a blueprint for the next 10 years and beyond.

The terms used in this section are operationally defined in this PRMP as:

- **GPs:** Values that provide standards that help shape and guide city operations and decision-making

- **GOALS:** Recommended outcomes from the PRMP

- **STRATEGIES:** Individual objectives for eachgoal

- **ACTIONS:** Steps or processes that collectively assist the city to meet goals and strategies

Key Findings Identified During the Planning Process

Key findings were identified throughout the project. Some findings were identified in a key matrix document shown in Appendix 6. The document shows where the key findings matrix were identified, both in qualitative and quantitative data points.

GPs

The following GPs can help direct the city in both day-to-day operations and long-term management. BerryDunn developed the principles from a combination of industry best practices, the PRMP engagement process and needs assessment, and the consultants' expertise.

Follow and adopt NRPA's three pillars to guide current and future parks and program decisions.

- **GP 1.1:** Focus on Health and Well-Being–Creating healthy, connected, and thriving communities.

- **GP 1.2:** Focus on Equity–Fostering social connection and belonging.

- **GP 1.3:** Focus on Environmental Resilience–Stewarding and expanding healthier parks and natural spaces for current and future generations.

Create Opportunities for Equitable Use of Parks, Trails, and Open Space

- **GP 2.1:** Provides an array of service-based activities, funded to maintain fees at a level that all residents can afford.

- **GP 2.2:** Supports accessible recreation opportunities for individuals with disabilities and other members of the city with special needs in accordance with ADA regulatory requirements.

Provide Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

- **GP 3.1:** Provides parks that invite a variety of uses for the enjoyment of all age groups.

- **GP 3.2:** Provides parks and services in partnership with other Unalaska agencies, most notably the Unalaska School System.

- **GP 3.3:** Support environmentally sustainable actions and the sustainable use of natural resources.

- **GP 3.4:** Parks and recreation facilities will be multigenerational and multifunctional, requiring designs and plans that create spaces to accommodate all users.

Provide Appropriate Administrative Policies

- **GP 4.1:** The PRMP should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals, as a best practice, every 5 to 10 years.

- **GP 4.2:** PCR policies should be reviewed at a minimum of every five years to help ensure alignment with the city's strategic and general planning and available resources.

- **GP 4.3:** PCR policies should be developed using the NPRA accreditation standards as guidelines for administrative plans, policies, and tools.

Provide Parks and Recreation Services in a Sustainable and Resilient Manner

- **GP 5.1:** PCR shall strive to provide services efficiently, working to provide the greatest outcomes in a fiscally resilient and sustainable manner.

- **GP 5.2:** PCR shall maintain up-to-date mission and vision statements, and values. The department should develop and maintain a "tag line" for branding and marketing purposes.

- **GP 5.3:** PCR shall strive to regularly measure community satisfaction with recurring surveys, program assessments, and other forms of applicable evaluation in addition to community outreach efforts.

Goals, Strategies, and Action Items

The PRMP identified six interrelated goals:

GOAL 1: Deliver high-quality recreation facilities that provide the greatest level of support for residents and the seasonal fishing industry

GOAL 2: Provide high-quality aquatics facilities that support recreation and the safety of Unalaska residents

GOAL 3: Deliver recreation programs that continue to build a sense of community as the focal point for Unalaska residents' and visitors' quality of life

GOAL 4: Maintain, preserve, and enhance safe parks and park experiences

GOAL 5: Deliver parks and recreation services in a financially resilient and sustainable manner

GOAL 6: Provide library services that connect residents to educational opportunities, digital literacy, and the power of reading

Park Master Plan Actions With Operating and Capital Costs

One way to prioritize capital projects can be based in part on the LOS and access to parks, trails, and open spaces as well as funding and community priority. Each project includes order of magnitude capital and operating costs and a target time frame in one of the following categories:

- Ongoing
- Short-term (0–3 years)
- Mid-term (4–7 years)
- Long-term (8 years and beyond)

GOAL 1: Deliver high-quality recreation facilities that provide the greatest level of support for residents and the seasonal fishing industry			
ACTION		**PRIORITY**	**CAPITAL COSTS**
1.1	Strategy: Provide improved indoor recreation facilities		
a	Consider use of the recreation center for additional activities	Mid-term	N/A
b	Improve weight and cardio opportunities in the Community Center and the Aquatic Center	Mid-term	**
1.2	Strategy: Provide additional indoor recreation facilities		
a	Consider development of an indoor ice rink (aspirational action item) at the high school, with use of a thermal conductor system to provide efficiencies	Long-term	Based on size and program of the ice rink. Cost may be approximately @23,100 per square foot (conceptual cost estimate developed for an ice rink in Fairbanks in 2022 with 10% escalator and 30% remote location costs).

** Cost is based on amount and type of equipment, and shipping. An average cost of $5,000 per machine + shipping, 20 may cost up to $130,000.

Equipment Type	Brand Examples	Price Range
Commercial Treadmill	Life Fitness, Precor, Matrix	$2,500 - $10,000+
Commercial Elliptical	Nautilus, Octane, Precor	$2,500 - $6,000+
Commercial Exercise Bike	Schwinn, Keiser, Life Fitness	$1,500 - $4,500+
Commercial Recumbent Bike	Life Fitness, Matrix, Nautilus	$2,500 - $5,500+
Commercial Rowing Machine	Concept2, WaterRower, Stamina	$900 - $2,500+
Commercial Stair Climber	StairMaster, True Fitness, Life Fitness	$3,000 - $7,000+
Commercial Spin Bike	Keiser, Schwinn, Stages	$1,500 - $4,500+

GOAL 1: Deliver high-quality recreation facilities that provide the greatest level of support for residents and the seasonal fishing industry

	ACTION	PRIORITY	CAPITAL COSTS
b	Provide a modular indoor facility for turf, soccer, gymnastics, indoor playground, etc., in part due to weather–located outside the tsunami zone and potentially funded by emergency shelter funds. Potential location is the Community Park by the triangle the OC is developing into a cultural center.	Long-term	Based on size and program, a turfed fieldhouse may cost approximately $1,148 per square foot (conceptual cost estimate developed for an ice rink in Fairbanks in 2022 with 10% escalator and 30% remote location costs).
c	Consider a new aquatic facility	(See Goal 2)	

GOAL 2: Provide high-quality aquatics facilities that support recreation and the safety of Unalaska residents

	ACTION	PRIORITY	CAPITAL COSTS
2.1	Replace existing aquatic center with new 25-yard by 25-meter competition and recreation aquatic facility		
a	Complete a feasibility assessment for a new aquatic center. Consider space at Tutiakoff Park and the adjacent church property for a permanent aquatic facility	Short-term	$150,000-$200,000
b	In the interim, prior to a full aquatic facility replacement, implement correction actions to failing facility equipment that impedes daily operations. These include a new roof, a drain in the sauna, and depending on the length of time before a new or renovated facility is constructed, extensive repairs on erosion cracks throughout the pool and updating the mechanical room equipment.	Short-term	Corrective actions based on implementation decisions but would generally be: Roof replacement - $60-$75 per square foot or approximately $2,400,000, Pool surface $500,000 to $600,000, mechanical room upgrades to new $5,600,000 = $8,600,000. Cost to provide a new drain in the sauna requires additional study and will be based on existing conditions in the center.

GOAL 2: Provide high-quality aquatics facilities that support recreation and the safety of Unalaska residents		
ACTION	**PRIORITY**	**CAPITAL COSTS**

c **Option 1 (Renovation)**
Consider a renovated/upgraded aquatic facility that includes:
• Renovate the pool
  » New rebar, gunite, and plaster, making the shallow end deeper for flip turns
  » Separate the warming alcove and turn it into a hot tub
  » Remove the slide and add a Splash pad/kiddy pool
• Second-floor renovations
  » Spectator seating
  » xpanding the Mezzanine to allow for staff offices and additional space for events and workout classes.
Option 2 (Relocation and/or rebuild)
Consider a new location for a new aquatic facility that includes:
• 25-yard by 25-meter competition and lap pool
• Separate leisure pool area
  » Instructional pool (three to four lanes)
  » Lazy river (therapy feature
  » Hot tub
  » Sauna(s)–Male and female, large
  » Splash pad/kiddy pool
• Second-floor renovations
  » Spectator seating
  » Workout/exercise space with state-of-the art, interactive cardio and weight equipment
• Facility staff offices
• Additional event space
	Long-term	Option 1: Costs based on renovation decisions – Mezzanine expansion: $1,200,000, Splash Pad $750,000, Pool surface $500,000 to $600,000, hot tub $75,000 to $100,000 (Plumbing costs not included – based on existing conditions in the center)
		
		Option 2: A 40,000 square foot aquatic center is based on size and program. Costs estimated at $2,970 per square foot and include 10% escalator and 30% remote location costs.

GOAL 3: Deliver recreation programs that continue to build a sense of community as the focal point for Unalaska residents' and visitors' quality of life		
ACTION	**PRIORITY**	**CAPITAL COSTS**
3.1 Strategy: Apply data-driven decision-making to programming to address community member participation capacity		
a Offer programs with the highest prioritization and continue removing programs that have limited community priority	Ongoing	N/A
b Address unmet need for exercise classes, adult fitness and wellness programs, adult visual arts and crafts programs, and outdoor environmental/nature camps and programs	Ongoing	N/A
c Implement recreation life cycle analysis on a continual basis	Short-term	N/A
d Continue to prioritize special events open to the public	Ongoing	N/A
e Publish a recreation program plan that aligns resources with program desires/set program minimum registration. Use the annual business plans and CAPRA standard for recreation plans as a guide	Short-term	N/A
3.2 Strategy: Conduct continual program evaluation		
a Complete program surveys for customer satisfaction and input after each program	Ongoing	N/A
b Implement performance measures (examples shown in the services assessment of the PRMP)	Ongoing	N/A
3.3 Strategy: Consider additional program support for youth and teens, ages 13–18		
a Consider adjusting hours at the community center teen room so it is open only to 13- to 18-year-olds, and identify hours specific for ages 13–15 and 16–18	Short-term	N/A

	ACTION	PRIORITY	CAPITAL COSTS
GOAL 3: Deliver recreation programs that continue to build a sense of community as the focal point for Unalaska residents' and visitors' quality of life			
b	Consider creative ways to offer football, baseball, climbing, and skating opportunities for teens, e.g., flag football leagues–6-on-6	Short-term	N/A
c	Consider providing additional and enhanced exercise equipment that teens prefer and adding vending machines in facilities	Short-term	Based on equipment chosen, $6,500 per cardio-exercise machine.
d	Consider e-gaming opportunities in the community center space	Short-term	Costs based on a per station – four stations that each include gaming PCs, Monitors, and other peripherals, furniture, etc. Cost is $36,400 including escalator and remote location costs.
e	Consider additional national program opportunities using traveling sports and theater camps	Short-term	N/A

GOAL 3: Deliver recreation programs that continue to build a sense of community as the focal point for Unalaska residents' and visitors' quality of life		
ACTION	**PRIORITY**	**CAPITAL COSTS**
3.4 Strategy: Consider mobile recreation programming		
a Develop a mobile equipment lending space. Stock with outdoor adventure recreation equipment for rent or programming that may include: • Kayaks, standup paddleboards • Mountain bikes • Fishing equipment	Mid-term	Space costs based on size and location; equipment ~$10,000
b Consider purchasing a portable climbing wall for: • Programs • Use at events • Use at after-school activities	Mid-term	$60,000–$80,000 includes shipping costs
3.5 Strategy: Improve fitness and wellness opportunities in Unalaska		
a Offer 3K to 5K fun runs with creative themes, and mini-biathlons and -triathlons to use existing facilities and attempt to reverse a decline in participation	Ongoing	N/A
b Prioritize introductory cheer/gymnastics/ tumbling programs and after-school programs for youth of all ages (as a staple of a new indoor recreation facility)	Ongoing	N/A

GOAL 4: Maintain, preserve, and enhance safe parks and park experiences

ACTION		PRIORITY	CAPITAL COSTS
4.1	Strategy: Provide improved outdoor sports opportunities		
a	Prioritize improved maintenance of sports fields	Short-term	$100,000–$200,000.
b	Convert sports fields at Kelty field and at UCSD fields to artificial turf	Long-term	$1,500,000–$2,000,000
4.2	Strategy: Provide additional outdoor park opportunities		
a	Provide one new dog off-leash area	Long-term	$60,000
4.3	Strategy: Provide improved playground opportunities		
a	Renovate playground at Eagle's View Elementary School	Short-term	$1,750,000–$2,800,000
b	Consider all-inclusive and culturally relevant playground equipment as current equipment ages and requires replacement	Mid-term	Based on components. Typical component may cost `$10,000 including shipping

GOAL 4: Maintain, preserve, and enhance safe parks and park experiences		
ACTION	**PRIORITY**	**CAPITAL COSTS**
4.4 Strategy: Improve LOS by adding components		
a Upgrade low-scoring components and amenities in parks with immediate need: • Sitka Spruce Park 　» Reset site sign 　» Update interpretive signage • Tutiakoff Park 　» Sign parking (off-street along King Street) • Town Park 　» Replace bike rack 　» Relocate and install bench seating to a more level space • Memorial Park 　» Replace benches that are in poor shape and align the benches with better viewing opportunities 　» Consider opportunities for interpretive signage 　» Consider separation of park and cemetery property and update GIS data for this park • Expedition Park 　» Add picnic tables (2) 　» Replace bench seating 　» Replace signage at west entry • Tanaadakuchax 　» Replace bike parking and rotting boards 　» Replace benches • High School Park 　» Pave track/walking path • Eagle's View Elementary School–Improve the following spaces used for recreational use: 　» Upgrade basketball backboards, court area, and add lines for multiple sports and activities • Replace picnic tables as needed	Short-term	$1,000 $12,000 $7,000 $5,200 Staff costs $19,200 $12,000 Staff Costs $10,000 $6,400 $4,000 $6,400 $4,000 $400,000 See 4.3a

GOAL 4: Maintain, preserve, and enhance safe parks and park experiences		
ACTION	**PRIORITY**	**CAPITAL COSTS**
b Add additional components to Expedition Park, which has few components; adding components could create a greater LOS. This is one of the only parks within walking distance to some transient worker-housing. Consider adding: A fit lot (adult exercise equipment), which would provide exercise options for local cannery workers who cannot otherwise get to the rec center An outdoor game such as corn hole or futsal (outdoorconcretegames.com), which would add interest for teenagers or adults; a covered equipment box would be needed for loose parts	Mid-term	$45,000–$75,000 $15,000
c Add additional component to Tuitiakoff Memorial Park (on city property) to create a greater LOS. Consider adding: A covered tot lot (for ages 2–5), which would provide a year-round play opportunity for an under-served age group. This location is ideal because of the adjacent below-market value housing	Long-term	$1,000,000
d Upgrade low-scoring components and amenities in parks: Sitka Spruce Park–Consider a covered pavilion to support outdoor picnic opportunities Town Park–Replace portable restroom with permanent restroom Memorial Park–Organize parking for greater access Expedition Park–Consider improvements that create better park access and parking opportunities; add a permanent restroom Eagle's View Elementary School–Improve the spaces used for recreational use: Replace all playground elements and consider reimagining the space for better usage Renovate the shelter, install plexiglass for wind and rain Convert the playing field to synthetic turf	Long-term	$200,000 $40,000 $700,000 See 4.3a above

	GOAL 4: Maintain, preserve, and enhance safe parks and park experiences		
	ACTION	**PRIORITY**	**CAPITAL COSTS**
4.5	Strategy: Create additional walking opportunities in parks and around the city		
a	Complete gaps along Airport Beach Road walking paths	Long-term	$800,000
b	Consider walking paths through the cemetery, connecting to Memorial Park. Above-grade steel grate steps and walkway would work to help prevent a need for grading	Long-term	$1,000,000
c	Consider additional trails at Sitka Spruce Park if additional land can be obtained	Long-term	$60 LF for trails, cost also depend on surfacing
d	Consider adding a boardwalk around Lake Unalaska from the city property southeast of the library. This could be a loop connecting with East Broadway or a shorter out-and-back trail. Cost estimate represents entire loop	Long-term	$5,000,000
e	Create a half-mile interpretive walk around the city center with signs about history, climate, and geology. Add additional wayfinding signs to Memorial Park, Town Park, and historic Russian Orthodox Church	Long-term	$18,000
4.6	Strategy: Move or update the skate park to an all-wheels park		
a	Replace with skate spots (one or two elements) and consider an all-wheels park	Short-term	$92,000
b	Relocate the skate park due to the expansion of the adjacent clinic to Ounalashka Community Park	Short-term	$4,000,000

GOAL 5: Deliver parks and recreation services in a financially resilient and sustainable manner

	ACTION	PRIORITY	CAPITAL COSTS
5.1	Strategy: Focus on methods of formal communication		
a	Use more formal social media and written communication to residents to reduce informal (word of mouth) communication	Short-term	N/A
5.2	Strategy: Work to improve access to high-quality and consistent recreation programs		
a	Improve online program registration system with phone app	Ongoing	N/A
b	Offer incentives (advancement opportunities over time) to help retain recreation coordinators for longer periods	Short-term	N/A
c	Implement a formal succession plan (mentoring, training, and identifying positions) that over time include training positions to address turnover rates among recreation coordinators	Short-term	N/A

GOAL 6: Provide library services that connect residents to educational opportunities, digital literacy, and the power of reading

	ACTION	PRIORITY	CAPITAL COSTS
6.1	Strategy: Place a greater focus on adult and child programs		
a	Enhance the number of adult programs and participation with a goal of meeting or exceeding other peer library programs among small Alaskan communities	Ongoing	N/A
b	Continue coordination with the community center to avoid programming duplication	Ongoing	N/A
c	Enhance the number of children's programs and participation with a goal of meeting or exceeding other peer library programs among small Alaskan communities	Ongoing	N/A
d	Provide enhanced access to online and alternative collection opportunities	Short-term	N/A

IMPLEMENTING THE PRMP

Presented in this section are suggestions aimed at helping ensure the successful implementation of the PRMP. These components underscore the dedication and discipline needed to seamlessly integrate the PRMP into planning and daily operations, both currently and in the long-term.

Establish the PRMP as the guiding document for decision-making within PCR. This helps ensure consistency and clarity in responses to community needs and priorities

Incorporate PRMP information into the orientation program for new employees to familiarize them with PCR's strategic direction

Publish the Executive Summary of the plan on the website and regularly update progress to inform the community about strategic goals and achievements. Additionally, consider distributing a concise brochure summarizing the plan to interested parties for quick reference

Appoint a dedicated project manager or champion to oversee the implementation process, working closely with staff, city management, and other departments to integrate the plan effectively

Assign specific staff members or team's responsibility for each recommendation, with designated project leads tracking progress

Provide regular progress reports on plan implementation, dividing tasks into annual milestones and reporting annually on achievements and challenges

Conduct an annual review of the PRMP to adapt objectives and action items according to changing priorities, integrating this process into the annual budgeting cycle

Keep interested parties informed of progress and outcomes annually

Hold quarterly or semi-annual staff meetings to review progress and address any challenges encountered during implementation

Display a visual representation of each year's recommendations in administrative areas, with a system for tracking completion
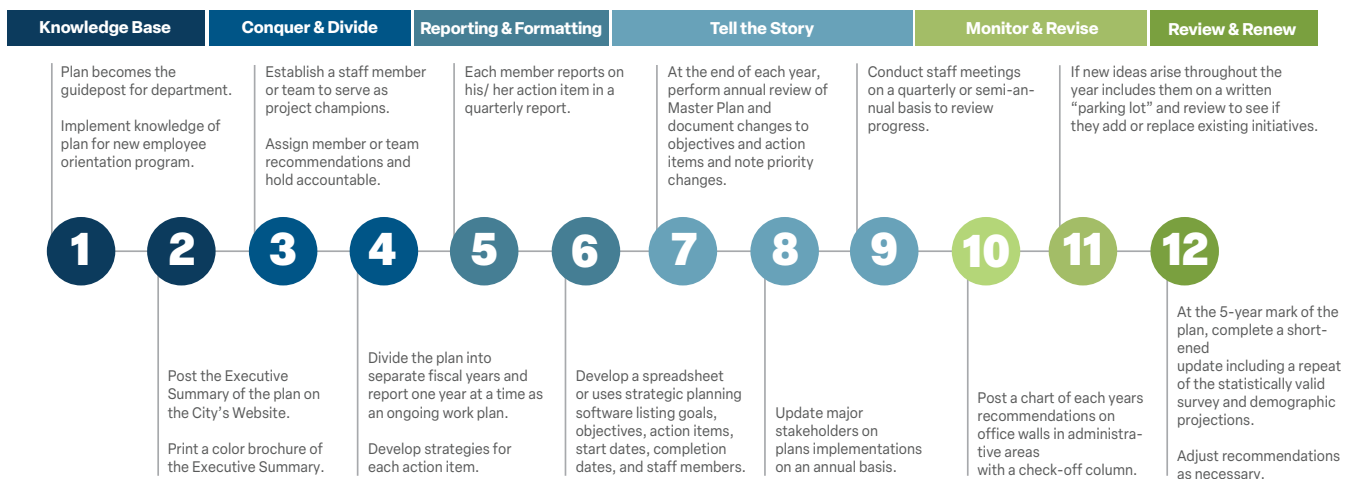
Establish a "parking lot" for new ideas and strategies that arise throughout the year, reviewing them annually to incorporate any necessary adjustments

Conduct a comprehensive update at the five-year mark, including revisiting surveys and demographic projections to help ensure alignment with current needs and trends

Figure 59: Implementation Strategies

Implementation Guidelines

Strategies for Success

Knowledge Base	Conquer & Divide	Reporting & Formatting	Tell the Story	Monitor & Revise	Review & Renew
Plan becomes the guidepost for department. Implement knowledge of plan for new employee orientation program.	Establish a staff member or team to serve as project champions. Assign member or team recommendations and hold accountable.	Each member reports on his/ her action item in a quarterly report.	At the end of each year, perform annual review of Master Plan and document changes to objectives and action items and note priority changes.	Conduct staff meetings on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to review progress.	If new ideas arise throughout the year includes them on a written "parking lot" and review to see if they add or replace existing initiatives.
1 **2**	**3** **4**	**5** **6**	**7** **8**	**9** **10**	**11** **12**
	Post the Executive Summary of the plan on the City's Website. Print a color brochure of the Executive Summary.	Divide the plan into separate fiscal years and report one year at a time as an ongoing work plan. Develop strategies for each action item.	Develop a spreadsheet or uses strategic planning software listing goals, objectives, action items, start dates, completion dates, and staff members.	Update major stakeholders on plans implementations on an annual basis.	Post a chart of each years recommendations on office walls in administrative areas with a check-off column. At the 5-year mark of the plan, complete a shortened update including a repeat of the statistically valid survey and demographic projections. Adjust recommendations as necessary.

Park and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan

BerryDunn