



# **Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan**

**2026-2030**



**CITY OF  
SIOUX FALLS  
PARKS & RECREATION**





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank the many citizens, staff and community groups who provided extensive community input for the development of this Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Plan. The efforts of this community will continue to ensure the success of Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation.

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**In Association with:**

**CONFLUENCE**





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## CHAPTER ONE – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sioux Falls, the largest city in South Dakota, sits at the heart of the region and pairs a vibrant downtown and big-city amenities with small-city hospitality. The City's Parks and Recreation Department ("SFPR") maintains public open spaces, delivers a comprehensive system of parks and recreation facilities, and creates positive leisure opportunities for all residents, continuing a long legacy of high-quality service.

The SFPR system encompasses more than 3,200 acres of parkland across 83 parks and 7 undeveloped sites, plus one recreation center, five gymnasiums, three support sites, three golf courses, a refrigerated ice ribbon, six outdoor ice rinks, five outdoor pools, one indoor aquatic center, the Downtown River Greenway, and over 40 miles of paved, off-street trails. SFPR also partners with third parties to operate signature destinations including the Great Plains Zoo & Delbridge Museum of Natural History, Great Bear Recreation Park, the Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum & East Sioux Falls Historic Site, The Lodge at Jacobson Plaza, and the Falls Overlook Café, and recently added a Levitt performance venue, one of only seven in the nation. The system is well maintained and provides excellent citywide coverage.

Accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) since 2010, SFPR meets national best practices across more than 150 measured standards. CAPRA, the only national accreditation for parks and recreation, recognizes excellence in operations and service; SFPR is one of just 213 accredited agencies among 8,000+ systems nationwide, underscoring its accountability, quality management, and commitment to community outcomes.

This Parks and Recreation System Master Plan engaged the community to shape a shared vision for the future of parks and recreation in Sioux Falls. Input was gathered through focus groups, stakeholder interviews, public forums, a statistically valid needs assessment survey, and a project website (<https://engagepros.mysocialpinpoint.com/sioux-falls-parks-master-plan>) that provided more engagement tools such as a vision board, mapping activity, and online survey. Community feedback was integrated with technical research and analysis to produce the final plan from January to October 2025.



Figure 1 - SFPR System Overview

## 1.2 SYSTEM PLAN GOALS

The Master Plan comprehensively outlines the current and future needs of the community, updates level of service standards and presents a strategic action plan for the next five years. This Master Plan responds to the dynamic shifts within the Sioux Falls community since the adoption of the previous plan in 2020. Factors such as population growth, shifting demographics, evolving recreational trends, the establishment of new parks and facilities, increased usage of SFPR parks and facilities, and the resounding success of numerous programs have collectively influenced and redefined the demand for park and recreation services. Consequently, these changes necessitate innovative strategies to effectively manage the park and recreation system over the upcoming five years. The goals of the Master Plan include:

- A plan that is grounded in inclusive and accessible community engagement.
- A future strategy for parks, recreation and green spaces that are equitable to the entire community regardless of socioeconomic, cultural, racial, or geographic differences.
- Utilize a wide variety of data sources and best analytical practices to predict trends and patterns of use, community impact, and how to address unmet needs in the City of Sioux Falls.
- Enhance the environmental resiliency of the City by leveraging parks and green spaces as green infrastructure equitably distributed throughout the community.
- Shape the financial sustainability and organizational excellence to achieve the strategic objectives, identify revenue opportunities, and ensure future operational and maintenance needs are addressed.
- Develop a dynamic and realistic action plan.





### 1.3 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE LAST MASTER PLAN

The Department has made great strides in the past 5 years working towards achieving several of the objectives set forth in the 2020 Comprehensive Master Plan. The current plan approved, in February of 2020, included 4 overarching priorities including:

- **Equitable Access to Parks & Facilities**
  - The addition of the Hayward Park Splash Pad, an area of City that had a gap in aquatics services due to arterial street network and railroad tracks.
  - Acquired land for new parks and trail development.
  - Established policy in cooperation with the planning department to ensure trail corridors are preserved through private developments.
- **Maintaining & Growing Infrastructure:**
  - SFPR targeted aging infrastructure on pool replacements for the City's three oldest facilities. McKennan is under construction and Kuehn, & Frank Olson are currently in design which will be valuable to SFPR for the next 20 years regarding their replacement.
  - Added shade to Terrace Laurel Oak Family Aquatic Centers and looking at additional updates as part of the 5-year CIP.
  - Added new elements to existing parks like the Mini pitch at Terrace Park.
  - Continued to focus on priority facility investments with new neighborhood parks and trails.
- **Year-Round Programming:**
  - Shifted philosophy for school-based Community Centers to regional Recreation Centers and moved toward closing the gap on indoor recreation space needs with the purchase of the Westside Recreation Center. This, coupled with the Frank Olson recreation center, would provide over 150,000 square feet of indoor recreation space. Allowing the City to realize about half of the recommended service level of 300,000 SF for a City of its size.
  - The recently completed Jacobson Plaza also helps move the needle on year-round programming opportunities and is the City's first step towards moving towards refrigerated ice.
- **Financing A Parks System of Excellence:**
  - Established the Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation Foundation who has been instrumental in donations towards the Big Sioux River Trail System and McKennan Park Wading pool upgrades.
  - Continued to focus on public/private partnerships and maximizing private investment in our park system.

## 1.4 PROJECT PROCESS

The System Plan followed a process of data collection, public input, on-the-ground study, assessment of existing conditions, market research, and open dialogue with local leadership and key stakeholders. The project process followed a planning path, as illustrated below:

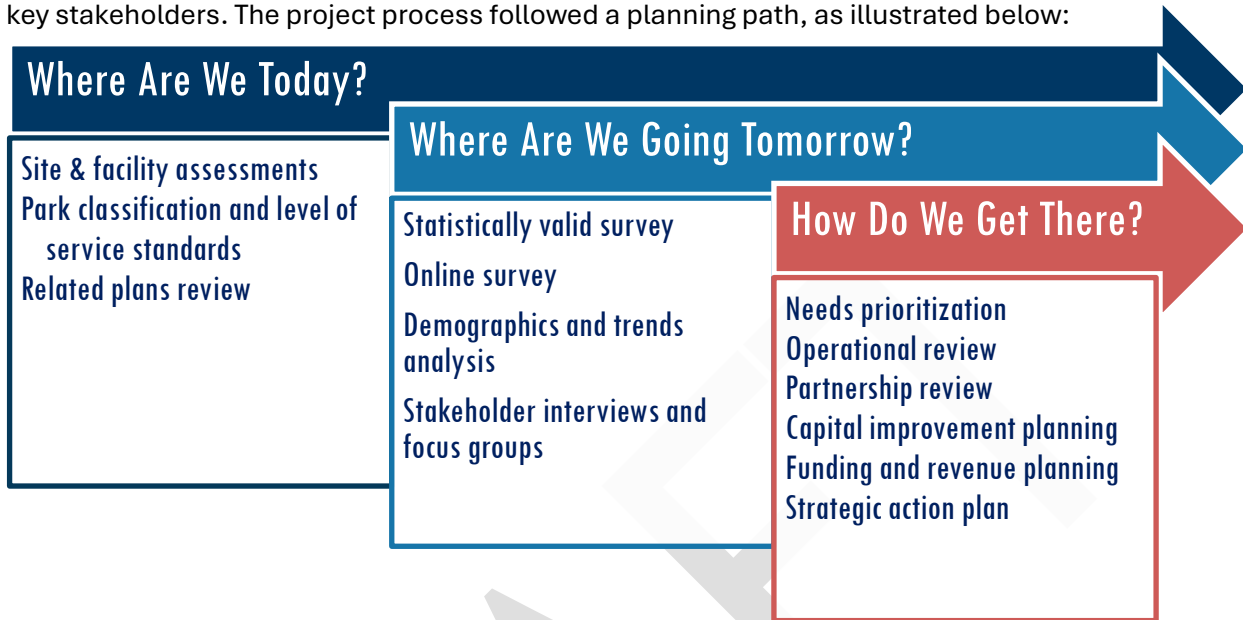


Figure 2 - Process Overview

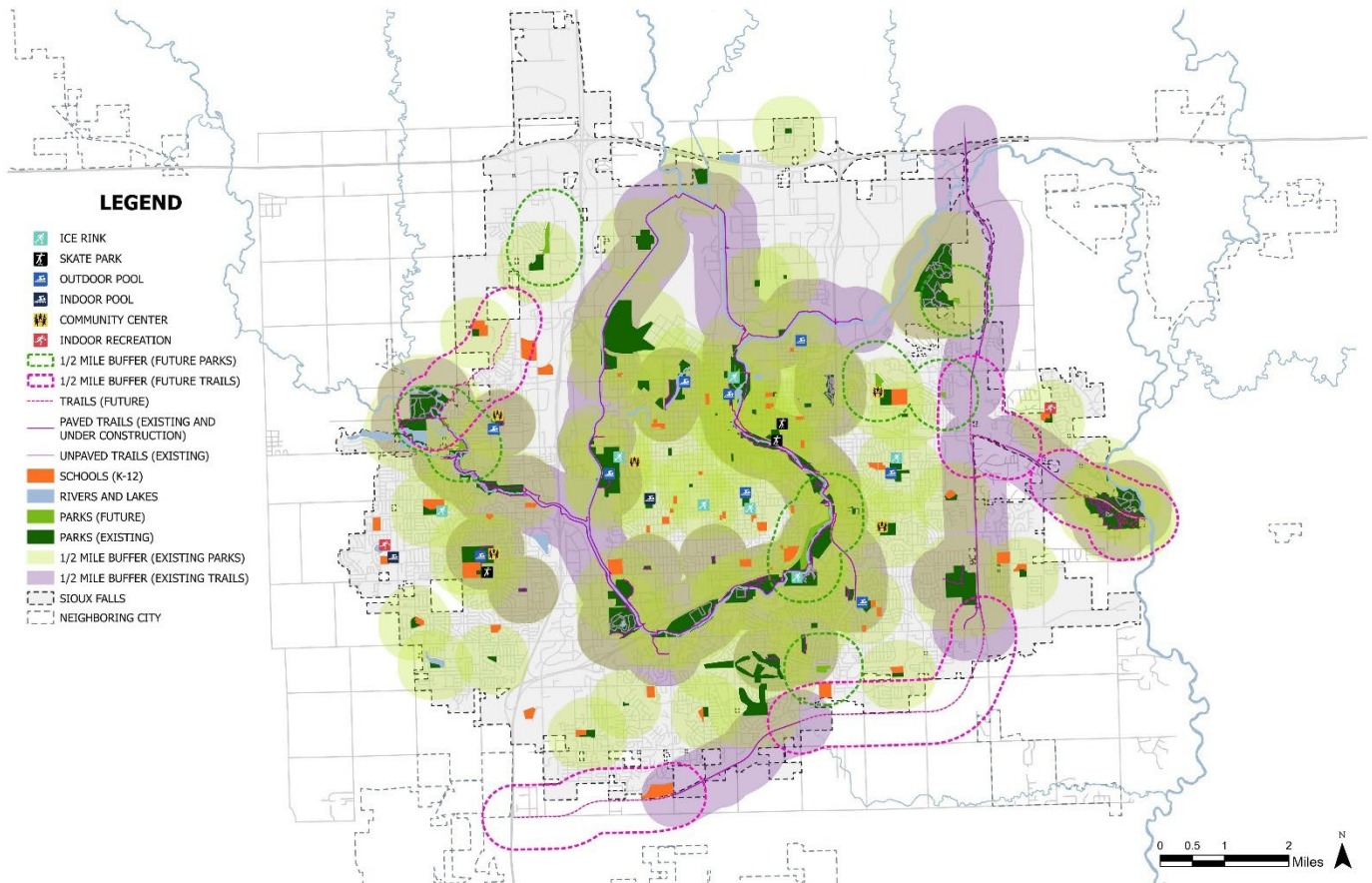
## 1.5 SFPR VISION & MISSION



Figure 3 - SFPR Vision & Mission

## 1.6 CURRENT PARKS AND FACILITIES MAP

The planning area for this Master Plan includes all areas within the boundaries of the City of Sioux Falls. While this plan recognizes that the actual service areas of some SFPR parks, facilities, and programs may extend beyond the defined boundaries of the planning area, the primary purpose of this plan is to first and foremost identify and address the park and recreation needs of Sioux Falls residents. **Map 1** depicts the planning area and location of SFPR parks and greenways, as well as a half-mile service level of service area surrounding parks and trails.



Map 1 - SFPR Park System Managed by SFPR



## 1.7 COMMUNITY DRIVEN PLAN

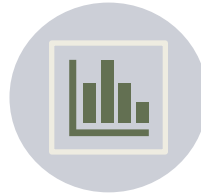
The Master Plan is built around key themes that were borne from the Sioux Falls community throughout the 10-month planning process. Multiple methods were used for the Sioux Falls community to provide their vision for the next five years. Below summarizes the methods used.



**SOCIAL PINPOINT  
MAP**  
(160 RESPONSES)



**COMMUNITY  
FOCUS  
GROUPS**  
(75+)



**STATISTICALLY  
VALID SURVEY**  
(483  
RESPONSES)



**ONLINE AND  
YOUTH SURVEY**  
(381 RESPONSES  
AND 440 YOUTH  
RESPONSES)



**STAKEHOLDER  
AND STAFF  
FOCUS  
GROUPS (16+)**

**1,500+ Community Participants**

## 1.8 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRIORITY AREAS



- **Park Maintenance & Cleanliness**
  - SFPR is highly valued by the community for maintaining clean and well-kept parks.
  - Continue to update existing neighborhood parks.



- **Diverse Parks & Amenities**
  - Continue to offer a wide variety of parks and amenities that cater to all age groups and interests, from large destination parks to neighborhood spaces.



- **Year-Round Recreation**
  - There is a call for more indoor recreational spaces, as well as adult fitness and wellness programs.
  - Year-round facilities to support activities during colder months, with also a focus on expanding outdoor winter activities.



- **Sustainable Growth & Existing Infrastructure Improvements**
  - As Sioux Falls grows, there is a need for strategic planning, investment in infrastructure, and securing parkland to meet future demands.
  - Continue to take care of existing parks and trails.



- **Accessibility & Connectivity**
  - Continue to promote walkability and multi-modal transportation.
  - Ensuring access to parks and recreational programs, particularly in underserved communities, is a major priority.

## 1.9 THEMES OF THE PLAN

### 1.9.1 ONE SIOUX FALLS

The Master Plan is organized under the guidance of the One Sioux Falls framework that the City administration and employees use to guide their work to provide excellent quality of life in Sioux Falls. Each of the four focus areas falls under the umbrella of innovation and investments in foundational growth for the community.

- **Safety and Health:** Provide a safe community in which the health and well-being of our citizens is above the national average.
- **Accessible Housing:** Foster the availability of housing options at all income levels, throughout the city.
- **Workforce:** Continue to develop a community with a quality of life that will attract and retain the best employee base in the United States.
- **Engaging People:** Engage, collaborate and partner with the community to solve our challenges and seize our opportunities.

### 1.9.2 SYSTEM MASTER PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles emerged from the Master Plan that are based on feedback from the community, technical assessments, and review of best practices, which in turn fall under the umbrella of One Sioux Falls. The five overarching guiding principles include:

- Long Term Sustainability
- Exceptional Customer Experiences
- Year-Round Programming
- Equitable Access to Parks & Facilities
- Maintaining & Growing Infrastructure



Figure 4 - Master Plan Guiding Principles

## 1.10 RECOMMENDATIONS

Grounded in community feedback, stakeholder input, technical analysis, and the Master Plan's priority rankings, the following key recommendations are designed to strengthen the park and recreation system and position SFPR to meet current and future needs of the community. While SFPR should pursue all recommendations in this Master Plan, the near-term priorities will require sustained commitment from the community, elected officials, Park Board members, and SFPR staff. Successful implementation will keep SFPR responsive to community needs and among the best-managed park systems in the nation. The following present recommendations are organized by strategic priorities. Chapter 7 – Strategic Action Plan also presents these recommendations, as well as additional strategies and action steps for consideration.

### 1.10.1 LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

- Continue to implement proactive asset and resource management.
  - Ensure proactive care for aging and expanding assets.
  - Use structured maintenance schedules and lifecycle planning.
  - Continue enhancing VUEWorks with accurate, consistent data entry.
  - Leverage historical data for forecasting resource needs when planning and developing new assets.
  - Integrate maintenance staff into key facilities.
    - Embed maintenance staff in future key facilities such as the Westside Recreation Center.
    - Ensure cleanliness, safety, and responsiveness.
  - Develop advanced seasonal operations planning.
    - Use advanced planning and resource deployment strategies.
    - Improve readiness for winter and event-based demands.
- Maintain alignment with CAPRA standards and consider application for NRPA Gold Medal.
  - Keep plans and procedures current to CAPRA standards.
  - Ensure consistent application of best practices across operations.
  - Consider application for the NRPA Gold Medal Award.
- Continue best practice for capital planning (reinvest 3-4% of asset valuation annually, balance reinvestment vs. new projects).
  - Reinvest 3% to 4% of total park system asset valuation in capital investment projects annually.
  - Ensure capital funding is balanced between Capital Reinvestment (60%), New/Upgraded Investments (20%), and Visionary Projects (20%).



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- Establish clear cost recovery and financial stewardship standards.
  - Implement clear cost recovery goals aligned with community benefit.
  - Allocate resources effectively and sustain operations amid rising costs.
  - Evaluate and adjust pricing for facilities (e.g., wedding venues, Arrowhead House).
  - Align programs to better meet cost recovery goals.
- Modernize the pricing policy and receive City Council approval.
  - Discuss existing fee approval process and investigate opportunities for implementation of a modern pricing policy.
  - Utilize the pricing of Basic and Supplemental used at the Westside Recreation Center programs and price programs accordingly across the system.
- Improve cost efficiency and resource allocation.
  - Use cost-per-user data and service analysis.
  - Prioritize high-impact areas and improve operational sustainability.



#### 1.10.2 EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

- Continue to strengthen sponsorships and partnerships.
  - Develop a formal sponsorship including multi-year (tiered) structure quantifying the value of sponsoring parks and recreation activities and spaces.
  - Create a standardized partnership framework to streamline negotiations.
- Enhance partnerships that support programs and facilities.
  - Formalize standards for community partnerships.
  - Promote shared investment in outcomes and facility stewardship.
- Standardize all partnership agreements.
  - Ensure agreements include KPIs, financial terms, and legal clauses.
  - Regularly evaluate performance.
  - Validate community impact of all agreements.
  - Foster stronger communication between partners.
  - Set timelines for agreement evaluation and renewal.
  - Establish regular meetings to review metrics, financials, and legal requirements.
- Continue to implement community-driven planning practices.
  - Use resident feedback from surveys, focus groups, and community meetings.
  - Ensure programs reflect evolving interests and priorities.
- Strengthen staffing and workforce development.
  - Refine full-time/part-time staffing models to improve retention.
  - Expand training in customer service and safety.





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### 1.10.3 YEAR-ROUND RECREATION

- Strengthen health and wellness programming for all ages.
  - Continue to prioritize health and wellness as a cross-generational core program area.
  - Provide tailored opportunities for youth, adults, and seniors.
- Continue to invest in year-round recreation programs, recreation facilities and amenities.
  - Continue to invest in indoor recreational spaces, as well as adult fitness and wellness programs.
  - Continue to have a focus on expanding outdoor winter activities.
  - Enhance Great Bear trails and amenities.



#### 1.10.4 EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS

- Expand equity in access through tiered pricing models and affordability.
  - Apply tiered pricing strategies.
  - Pursue scholarships to ensure affordability for all income levels while maintaining financial sustainability.
- Prioritize addressing the service gaps and eliminating geographic inequities in the availability of indoor recreation spaces.
  - Complete construction of Frank Olson Recreation Center to help reduce the level of service shortage and improve service area on the east side of the City.
  - Conduct a feasibility study on future multi-generational recreation center for underserved areas of the community.
- Strategically acquire land for additional parks and natural areas to keep pace with population growth.
  - As Sioux Falls grows, there is a need for strategic planning, investment in infrastructure, and securing parkland in population growth areas to meet future demands.
  - Determine where neighborhood parks may be lacking based on access and density maps used as part of the System Plan process and prioritize areas for new park development.
  - Begin to plan for a new community park.
  - Begin to plan for a new regional park.
  - Increase staff for operation and maintenance of newly acquired land.
  - Continue to offer a wide variety of parks and amenities that cater to all age groups and interests, from large destination parks to neighborhood spaces.
- Continue the initiative of a half mile strategy connecting residents to parks and trails.
  - Develop new neighborhood parks in areas of the City not currently served by a park, of any classification, within one half of a mile. Use equity mapping to identify best locations.
  - Work with developers to establish agreements for parks and trail development and connectivity alongside their development project.
- Continue investing in redevelopment of existing parks.
  - Continue to regularly evaluate existing parks and make investments to provide equity in facilities and services to all residents throughout the community.



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### 1.10.5 MAINTAINING GROWING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Upgrade existing maintenance shop campus.
  - Make upgrades at the existing park shop campus through renovation and expansion.
  - Expands capacity to accommodate staffing and equipment needs.
- Expand the Recreation Trail, river access, and the Big Sioux River Greenway.
  - Coordinate with transportation projects to promote walkability and multi-modal transportation.
  - Seek opportunities and partnerships to implement additional phases of the Downtown River Greenway.
  - Develop criteria where the highest area of population receives priority for connections to spine trails.
  - Work towards establishing trail connections to parks through bike trails, side paths, bike boulevards, bike routes, and bike lanes, where appropriate.
  - Prioritize greenway properties for acquisition citywide.
- Develop new earned income opportunities.
  - Look to implement one to two new earned income opportunities such as recreation service fees, leasing space, value added packages, naming rights, advertising, gift cards.
- Work with the Sioux Falls Parks Foundation to expand its role and to help raise funds.
  - Identify and prioritize Visionary Projects in the Capital Improvement Plan best suited for public-private partnerships.
  - Prepare materials to communicate the projects and needs to potential donors and community groups.
  - Train and regularly communicate with Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation staff and Sioux Falls Parks Foundation Advisory Board Members to foster an understanding of park needs and priorities.
  - Seek feedback from community philanthropists and tailor the project 'asks' to maximize success.
- Expand advertising sales to diversify revenue streams.
  - Broaden advertising beyond traditional opportunities (e.g., scoreboards) to include facility signage, digital displays, and branded community events.
  - Introduce advertising placements in high-visibility spaces within recreation centers, athletic complexes, and trail systems.
  - Establish clear guidelines for tasteful and appropriate advertising to maintain community trust.
  - Create flexible advertising packages that allow small businesses, nonprofits, and regional partners to participate at varying levels.

## 1.11 CONCLUSION

SFPR is widely recognized as a best-practice agency for delivering consistent maintenance excellence and equitable levels of service for residents and visitors. This Master Plan positions SFPR to continue offering innovative, well-balanced facilities and programs as the City grows over the next five years.

Public engagement consistently praised the quality of maintenance and the accessibility of diverse park experiences, from Falls Park to the Recreation Trail. Signature destinations, including the Great Plains Zoo & Delbridge Museum of Natural History, Great Bear Recreation Park, Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum & East Sioux Falls Historic Site, the Levitt Performance Venue, Jacobson Plaza, and the Westside Recreation Center, are major community assets, and SFPR’s program portfolio reaches all ages and interests.

The Sioux Falls community uses SFPR parks and recreation facilities, as evident in the table below, 95% of the community is using these assets based on the statistically valid needs assessment survey results with comparison to national benchmarks.

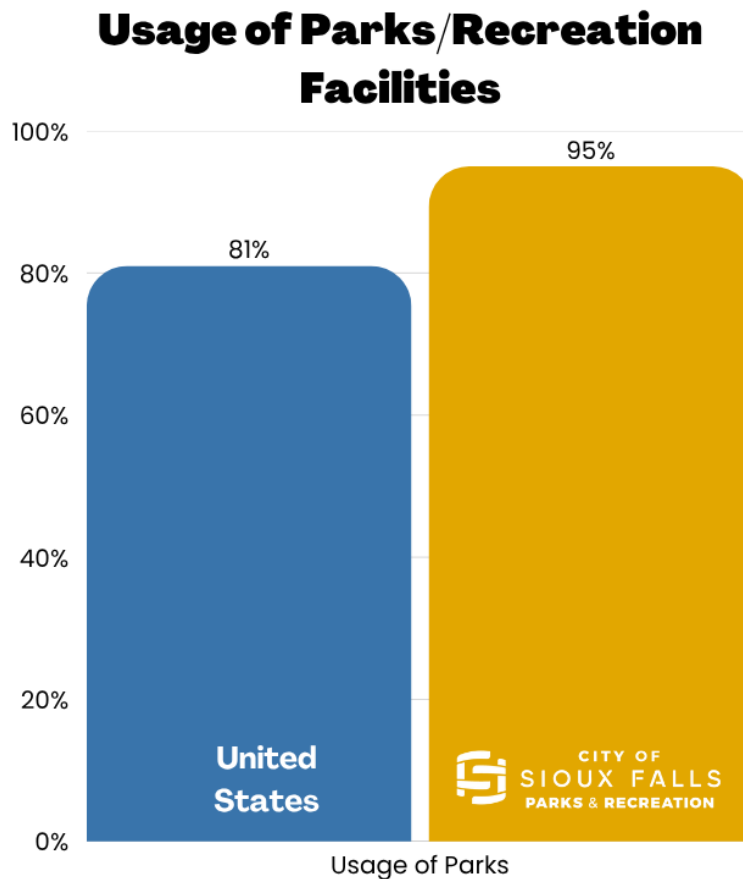


Figure 5 - Usage of Parks/Recreation Facilities

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

The Sioux Falls community takes pride in SFPR, as evident in the table below, based on the statistically valid needs assessment survey results with comparison to national benchmarks.

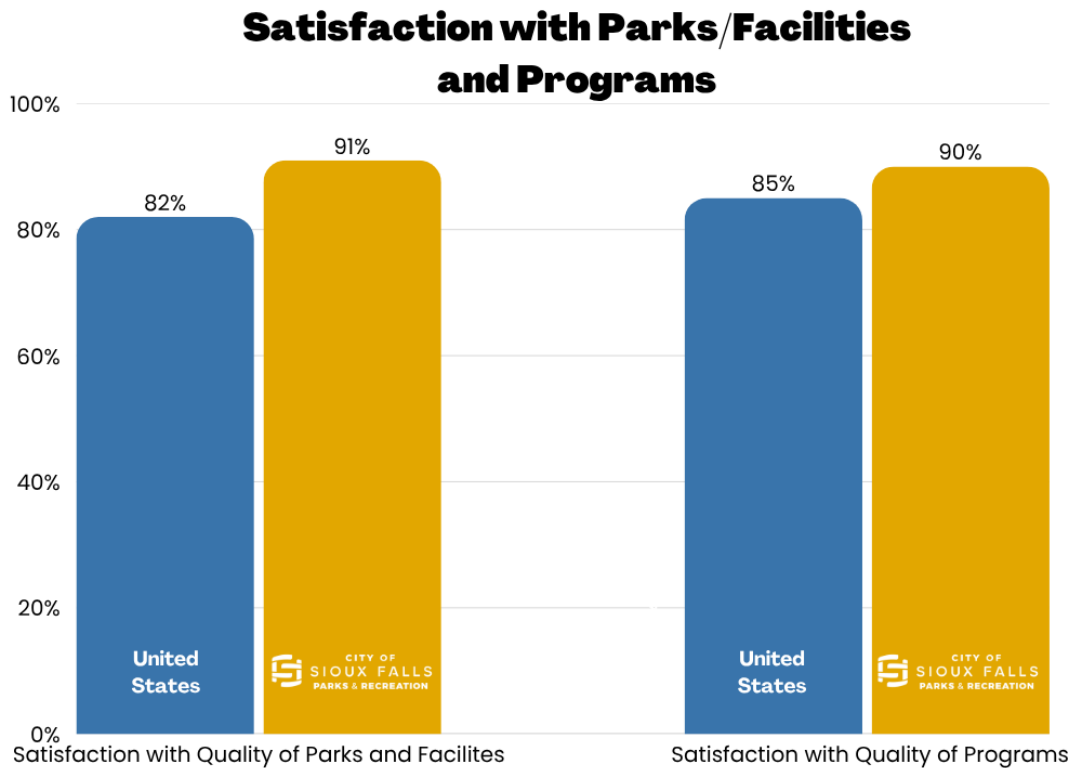


Figure 6 - Satisfaction Parks/Facilities & Programs

To sustain this high standard, SFPR must stay ahead of infrastructure and asset needs, invest in improvements to existing amenities and trails, and maintain equity across the system as the City expands. SFPR should also add amenities that meet evolving needs, such as year-round indoor space and winter recreation, acquire new land for future parks and trails, and secure additional funding sources to support a “park system of excellence.”

With these actions, SFPR is well-positioned to build on its legacy over the next five years, providing a comprehensive mix of high-quality parks, facilities, programs, and services that elevate quality of life across Sioux Falls.



## CHAPTER TWO – COMMUNITY PROFILE

A key component of the Master Plan for Parks and Recreation is a Demographics and Recreation Trends Analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to provide SFPR with insight into the makeup of the population they serve and identify market trends in recreation. The report also helps to quantify the market in and around the City and assists in providing a better understanding of the population the City provides parks, facilities, and services to align with the needs of residents.

### 2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

This analysis is two-fold; it aims to identify the who and the what. First, it assesses the demographic characteristics and population projections of City residents to understand who the Department serves. Second, recreational trends are examined on a national and local level to understand what the population may want to do. Findings from this analysis establish a fundamental understanding that provides a basis for prioritizing the community's need for parks, trails, facilities, and recreation programs. This assessment is reflective of the City's total population and its key characteristics such as age, race, and income levels. It is important to note that future projections are based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the analysis and could have a significant bearing on the validity of projected figures. **Figure 7** provides an overview of the City's populace based on current estimates of the 2024 population. A further analysis of each of these demographic characteristics can be found later in this section.

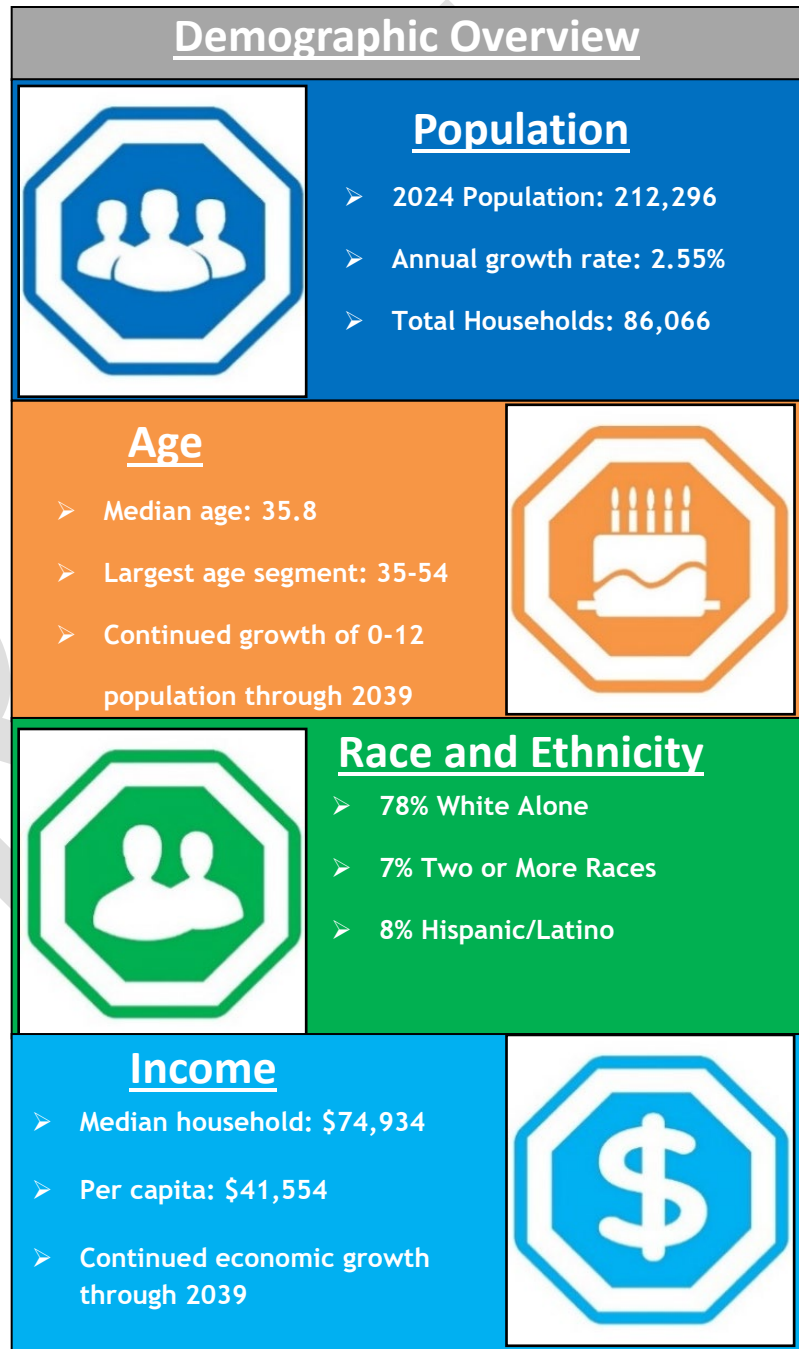


Figure 7 - Sioux Falls Demographic Overview

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in August 2024 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2020 Census. ESRI then estimates the current population (2024) as well as a 5-year projection (2029). PROS then utilized straight line linear regression to forecast demographic characteristics for 10 and 15-year projections (2034 and 2039).

### 2.1.1 RACE AND ETHNICITY DEFINITIONS

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined below. The Census 2020 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 2010 Census and earlier censuses; therefore, caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2020) definitions and nomenclature are used within this analysis.

- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic or Latino:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Census states that “the race and ethnicity categories generally reflect social definitions in the U.S. and are not an attempt to define race and ethnicity biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. We recognize that the race and ethnicity categories include racial, ethnic, and national origins and sociocultural groups.”

*Please note: The Census Bureau defines Race as a person’s self-identification with one or more of the following social groups: White, Black, or African American, Asian, American Indian, and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, or a combination of these. Ethnicity is defined as whether a person is of Hispanic / Latino origin or not. For this reason, the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity is viewed separate from race throughout this demographic analysis.*



### 2.1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS BOUNDARY

The Sioux Falls boundaries shown below were utilized for the demographic analysis (**Figure 8**).

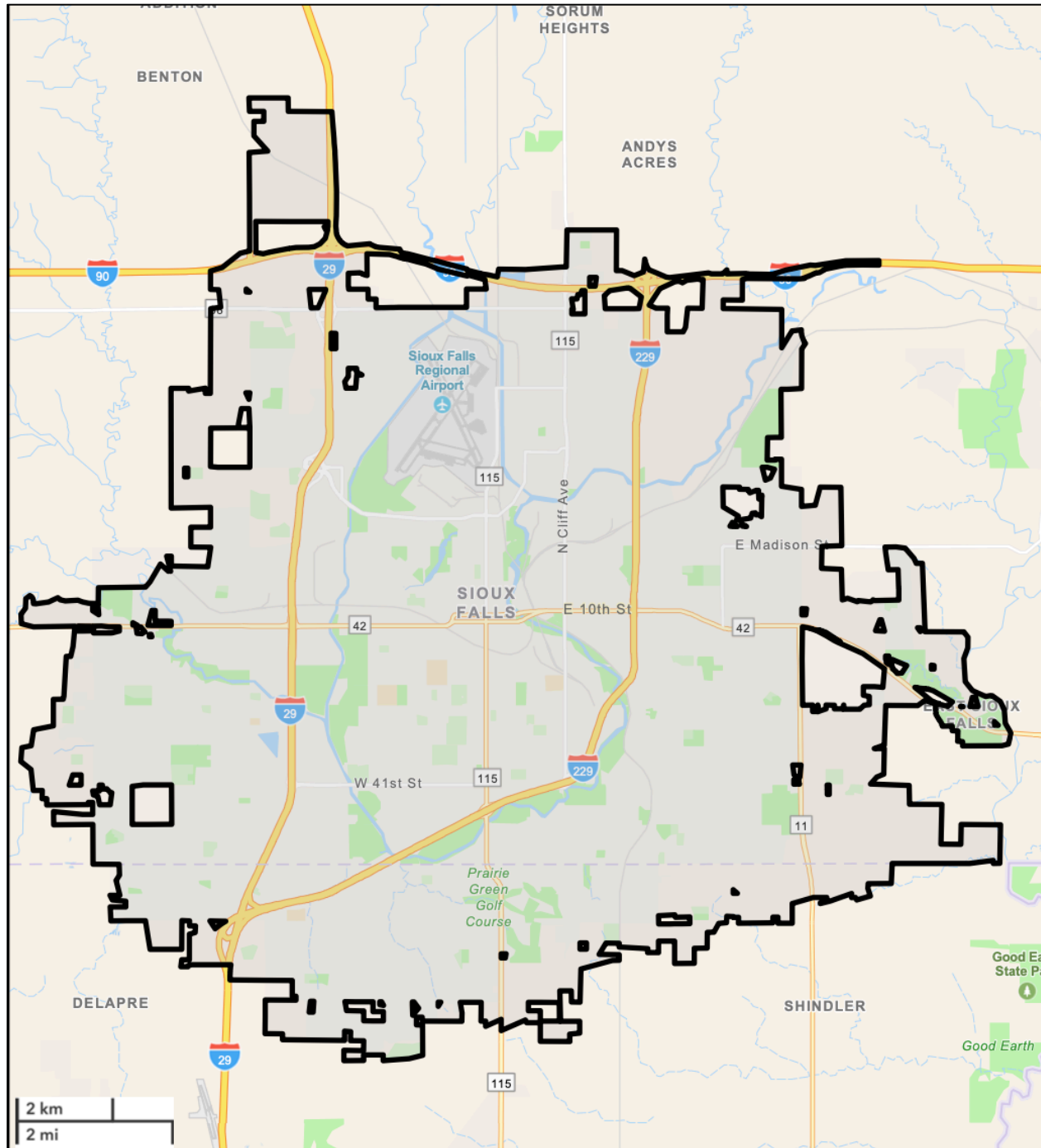


Figure 8 - Service Area Boundaries

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### 2.1.3 POPULATION

The City has a rapidly growing population with a minimal increase in yearly increase from 2020 to 2024. In fact, the population has increased from 154,146 in 2010 to an estimated 212,296 in 2024. The City's population is expected to continue to grow significantly in the following 15 years, where it is projected to reach 271,505 residents by 2039 (**Figure 9**). The total number of households has also grown at a rate proportional to the population growth, increasing from 61,810 in 2010 to an estimated 86,066 in 2024. By 2039, it is estimated that there will be 110,555 total households within Sioux Falls, which is likely to continue growing (**Figure 10**).

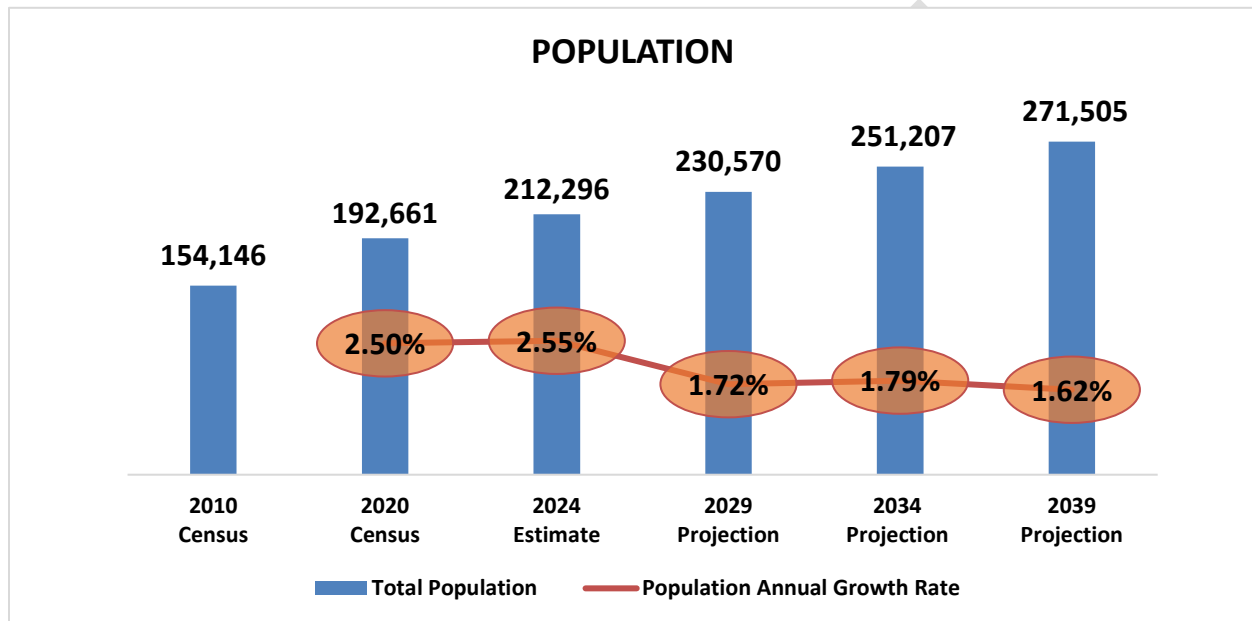


Figure 9 - Sioux Falls' Total Population and Annual Growth Rate

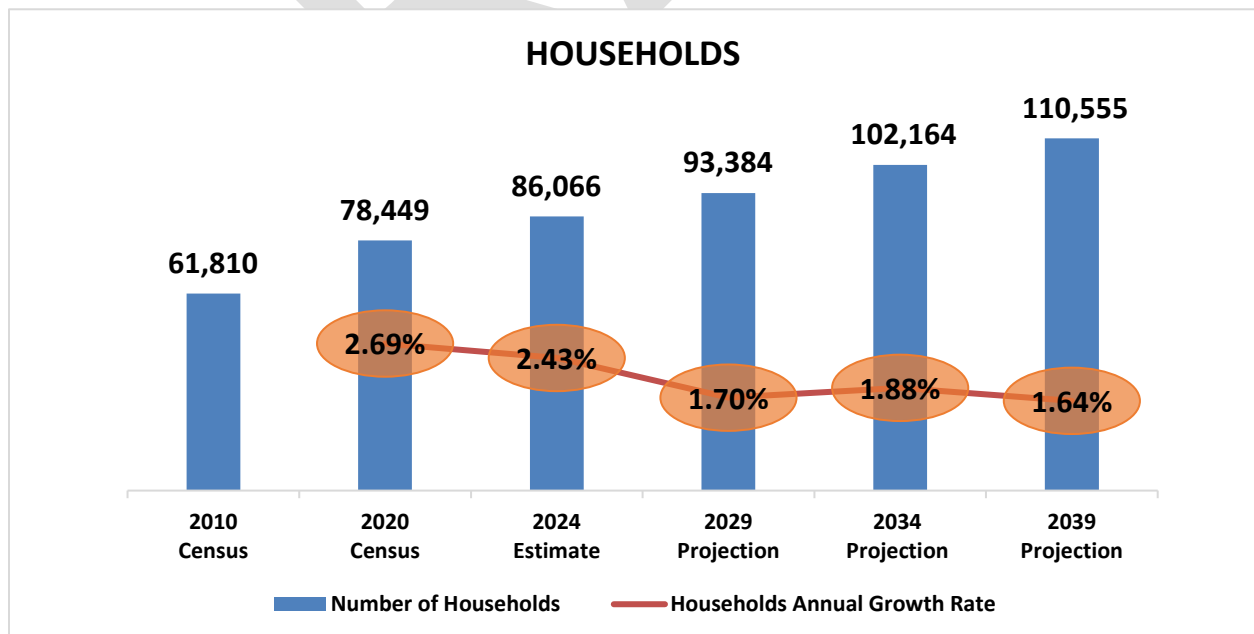


Figure 10 - Sioux Falls' Total Households and Annual Growth Rate

#### 2.1.4 AGE SEGMENTATION

The largest age segments of the City's current population are 35-54 (25%), 18-34 (25%), and 0-12 (18%), comprising a relatively well-distributed population. Within the community, there is an aging trend with people between the ages of 18-34, decreasing from 31% of the population in 2010 to 21% of the population by 2039, while the 65-74 and 75+ age groups project a 4% increase from 2020 to 2039. Similarly, the median age has risen from 33.7 in 2010 to 35.8 in 2024 and is projected to continue increasing in the coming years. Therefore, the amenities updated and developed for the City should likely be designed to appeal to an increasing middle-aged to older adult demographic. Determining whether the population is more active or inactive will help the department plan out new programs that aligns with the City's aging demographic (**Figure 12**).

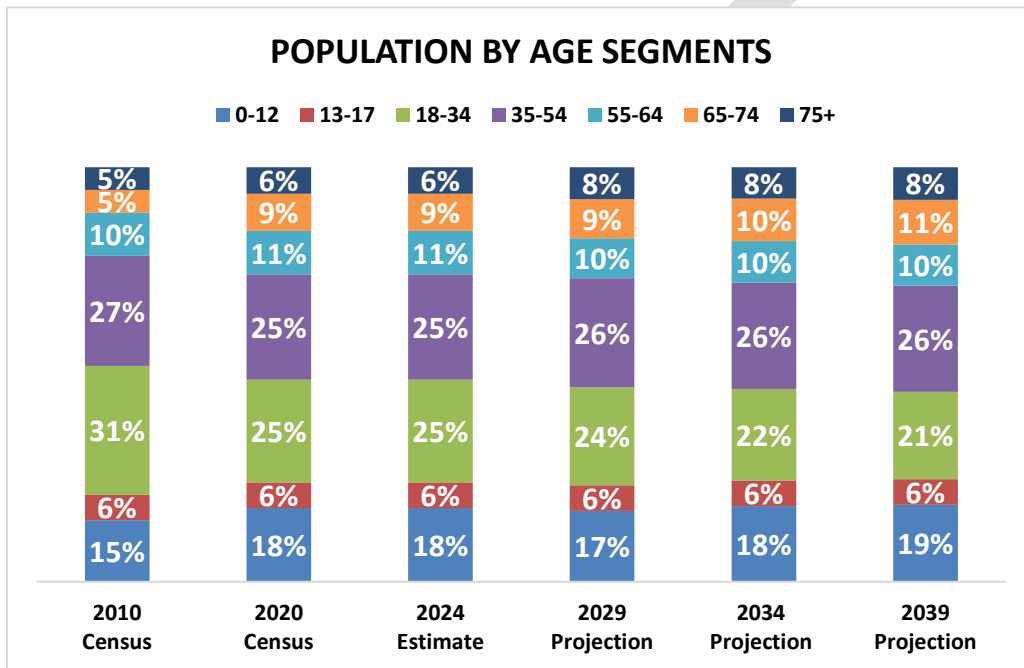


Figure 11 - Sioux Falls' Population by Age Segments

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### 2.1.5 RACE

Analyzing race, the City's current population makeup is majority White Alone, with the 2024 estimate showing 78% of the population being White Alone, along with 'Two or More Races' (7%), 'Black or African American Alone' (7%), and 'Some Other Race' (3%) representing the next largest categories. Predictions for 2029 and beyond expect the population to stay roughly the same, with a slight increase in the diversity of the population. This diversity will be led by increases in the 'Two or More Races', 'Some Other Race', and Black or African American Alone categories. (Figure 12).

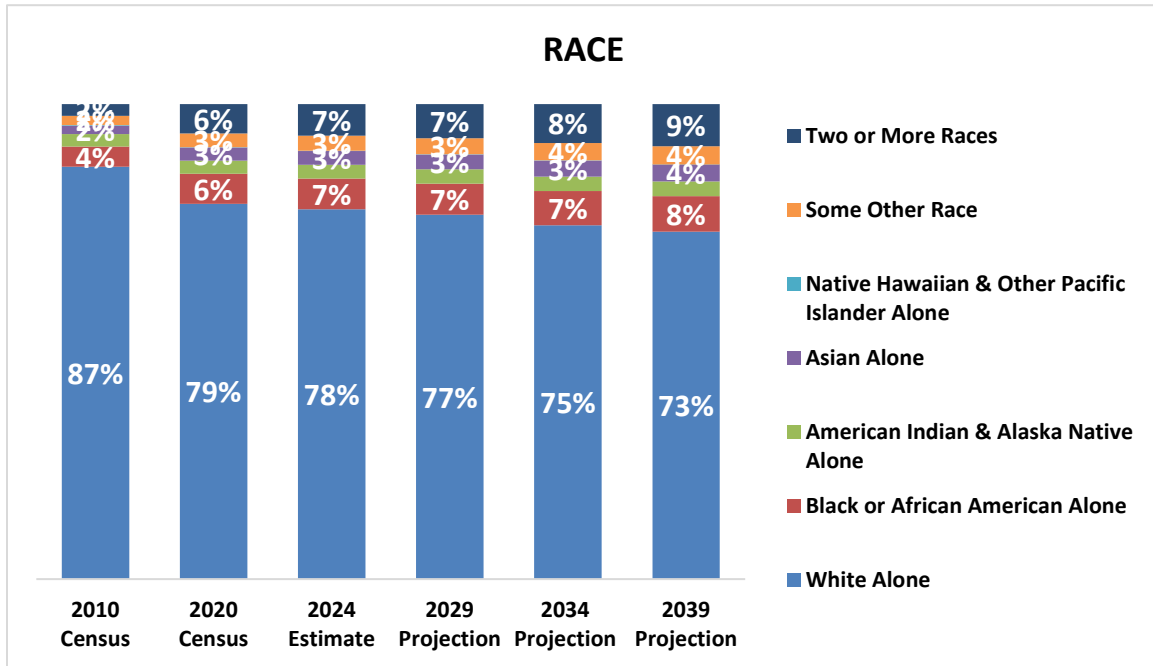


Figure 12 - Sioux Falls' Population by Race

### 2.1.6 ETHNICITY

The City's population was also assessed based on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, which by the Census Bureau definition is viewed independently from race. It is important to note that individuals who are Hispanic/Latino in ethnicity can also identify with any racial categories identified above.

Based on the 2024 estimate, people of Hispanic/Latino origin represent 7% of Sioux Falls' population, which is below the national average (19% Hispanic/Latino), but above the South Dakota average (4.9% Hispanic/Latino). The City's Hispanic/Latino population has experienced a slight increase over time and is expected to continue growing to 9% of the City's total population by 2039 (Figure 13).

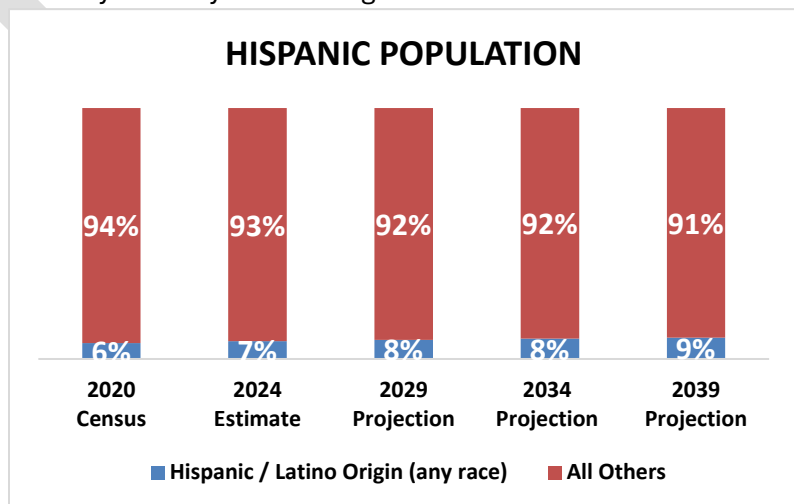


Figure 13 -Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity

### 2.1.7 INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

When analyzing income, the per capita income is earned by an individual while the median household income is based on the total income of everyone over the age of sixteen living within the same household. The City's per capita income (\$41,554) and median household income (\$74,934) is slightly above the South Dakota average (\$37,979). The City projections show an increase in both median household and per capita income, where the averages are expected to increase to \$60,163 and \$114,810 respectively by 2039. These income projections should be taken into consideration when the Department is establishing an appropriate fee structure for programs and services (Figures 14 and 15).

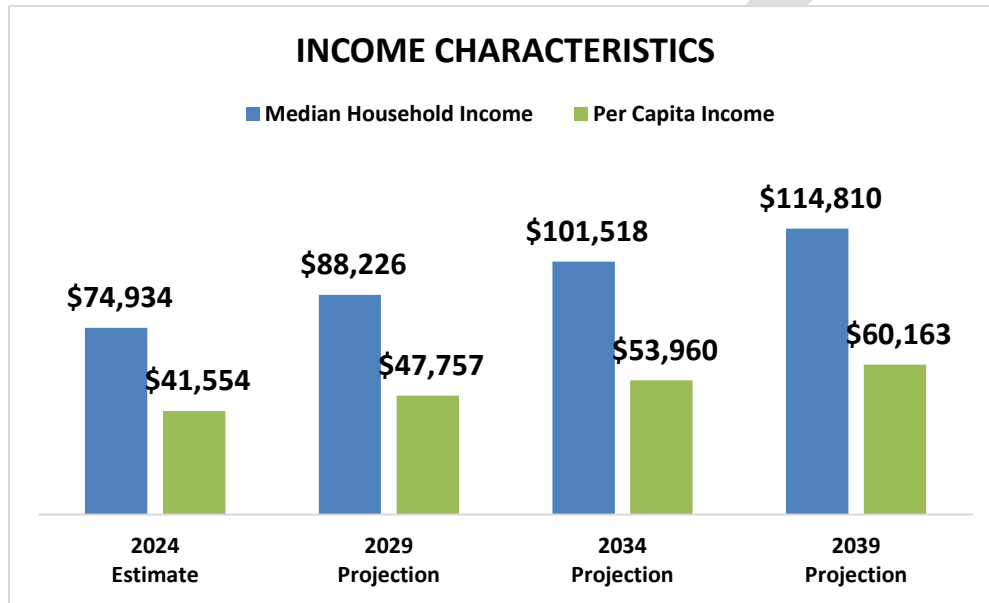


Figure 14 - Income Characteristics of Sioux Falls

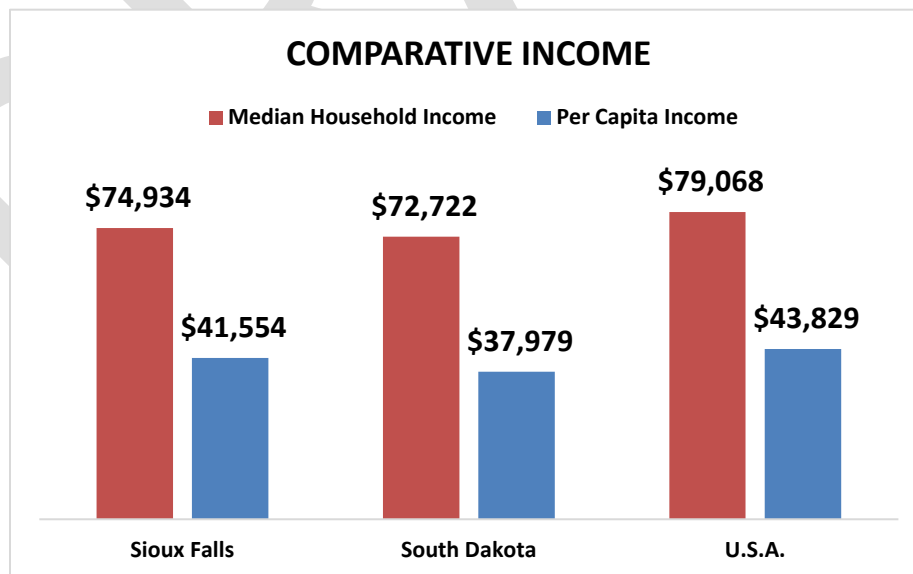


Figure 15 - Comparative Income Characteristics of Sioux Falls



2.1.8 HEALTH AND DIET

When analyzing health and diet, the City displays a relatively healthy population compared South Dakota and the United States. According to a CDC analysis based on population in 2022, The City’s population displays a smaller population proportion that has Arthritis (22.9%), Poor Mental Health (13.6%), and Poor Physical Health (9.8%) than the State and Nation. However, from a dataset by ©2024 Esri, the City’s population is less likely to diet for certain health concerns. This could be due to the City’s above average fitness participation discussed in the later Recreation Trends Analysis. The top priority of the population is Controlling Diet for Weight Loss (22.4%) which also exceeds the national average.

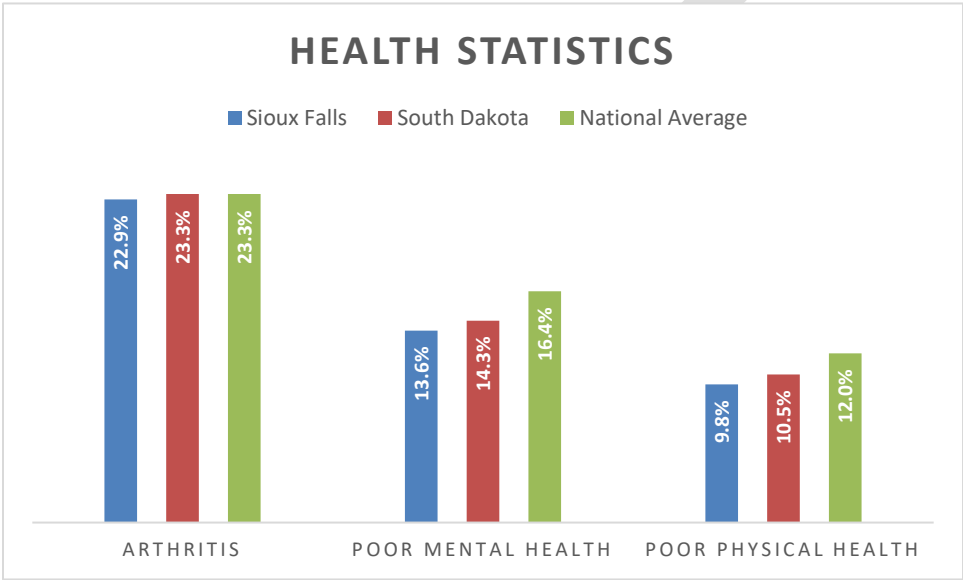


Figure 16 - Health Statistics of Sioux Falls

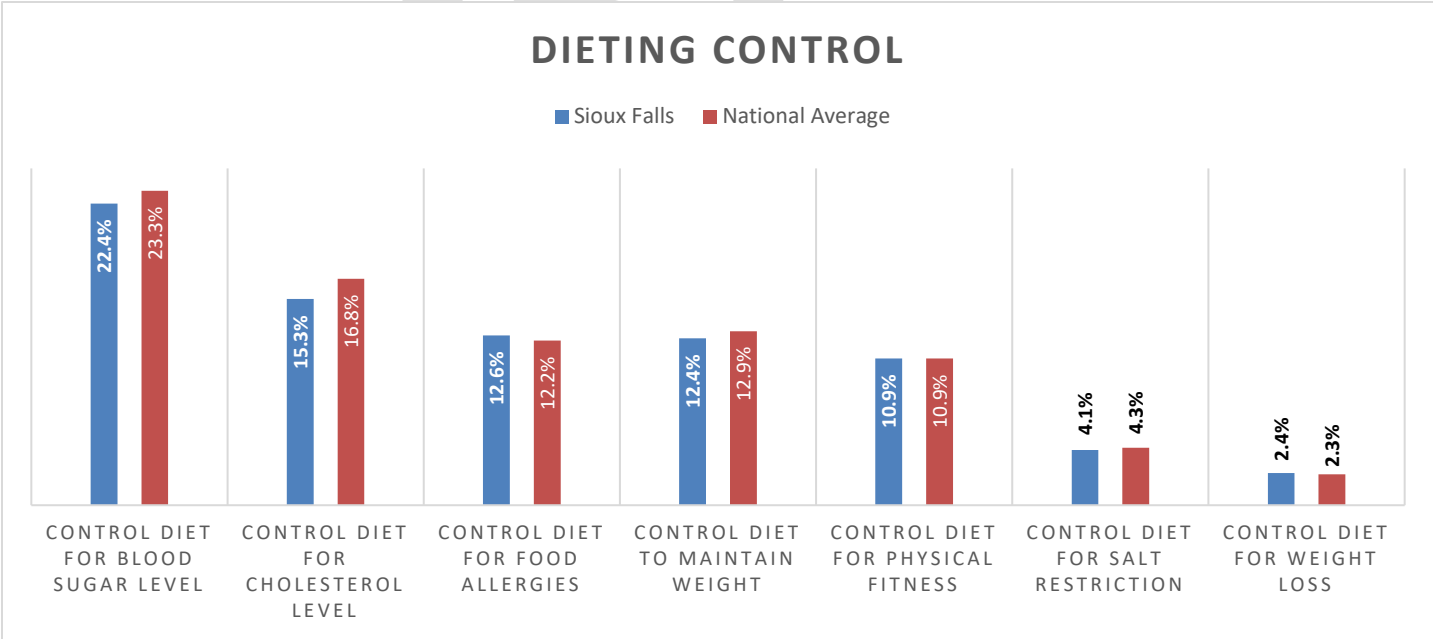


Figure 17 - Dieting Control of Sioux Falls

### 2.1.9 DEMOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS

While it is important not to generalize recreation needs and priorities based solely on demographics, the analysis suggests some potential implications for the City:

- The City's rising population trends may indicate a need to identify and understand the interests of all ages, especially middle-aged and older adults, or senior populations. SFPR has already taken steps to add more recreational activities on a year-round basis for the active adult population, such as exercise/yoga classes and recreational sports like pickleball through the Westside Recreation Center. It may prove to be beneficial to incorporate new nature trails for active adults to explore the rolling hills and riverbanks that the area is known for.
- The City's above-average household income characteristics in the State suggest potential disposable income at the family level. SFPR should be mindful of this when establishing appropriate fees for programs and activities while still ensuring opportunities for lower-income households. The City should build this approach into a council-approved pricing policy for implementation defining the City's philosophy on pricing, guidelines the city staff will follow to determine pricing and financial assistance for those facing difficulties.
- In comparison to the United States average (0.70%), Sioux Falls had a high annual growth rate from 2020 to 2024 (2.55%). However, the City's annual growth rate is projected to dip to 1.62% from 2024 to 2039, slowing a little, but still showing a continuation of the accelerated growth the community has seen in the past decade. This population growth should be considered and accounted for when planning new amenities and offerings for the community and the operational impact community growth will have on current services and lifecycle replacement, especially in areas of the City with higher population density.
- Finally, SFPR should ensure its diversifying population is reflected in its offerings, marketing/communications, and public outreach. With increasing diversity in both race and age, as well as uncommonly high population growth, SFPR should remain prepared to change its offerings over time to remain culturally relevant for its diversifying user base.

### 2.2 RECREATION TRENDS ANALYSIS

The Trends Analysis provides an understanding of national, regional, and local recreational trends as well recreational interest by age segments. Trends data used for this analysis was obtained from Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). All trend data is based on current and/or historical participation rates, statistically valid survey results, or NRPA Park Metrics. The following pages depict local trend data, for a complete summary of National Trend information, see **Appendix 2**.

#### 2.2.1 LOCAL SPORT AND LEISURE MARKET POTENTIAL

The following charts show sport and leisure market potential data for Sioux Falls residents, as provided by ESRI. Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the defined service areas. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident will participate in certain activities when compared to the U.S. national average. The national average is 100; therefore, numbers below 100 would represent lower-than-average participation rates, and numbers above 100 would represent higher-than-average participation rates. The service area is compared to the national average in four (4) categories – general sports, fitness, outdoor activity, and commercial recreation. For this report, the activity participation percentage will be used and compared to the state and national averages.

It should be noted that MPI metrics are only one data point used to help determine community trends; thus, programmatic decisions should not be based solely on MPI metrics.

Overall, when analyzing the City's MPIs, the data demonstrates almost entirely above-average participation numbers in assessed areas. For example, Soccer, Football, and Basketball all scored above the national average in the General Sport category while also leading all other activities in the category. Something to note about Sioux Falls' scores is that there are few activities below the national average, with 6 of the measured 47 activities doing so. This becomes significant when the Department considers starting up new programs or building new facilities, giving them a strong tool to estimate resident attendance and participation.

The following charts compare participation for 47 sport and leisure activities that are prevalent for residents within the City. The activities are categorized by activity type and listed in descending order, from highest to lowest participation percentage. Percentages above the national or state average are significant because they demonstrate that there is a greater likelihood that residents within the service area will actively participate in those offerings provided by the Department.

## 2.2.2 GENERAL SPORTS MARKET POTENTIAL

The following chart shows that some of the City's recorded General Sports are above the national average regarding participation. Golf (8.3%) and Basketball (5.8%) are the two posting participation scores above the national average. Tennis and volleyball scored similarly while baseball and softball scored lower than the national average participation. It is also worth noting that Sioux Falls outscored South Dakota average in 6 out of 9 activities (**Figure 18**).

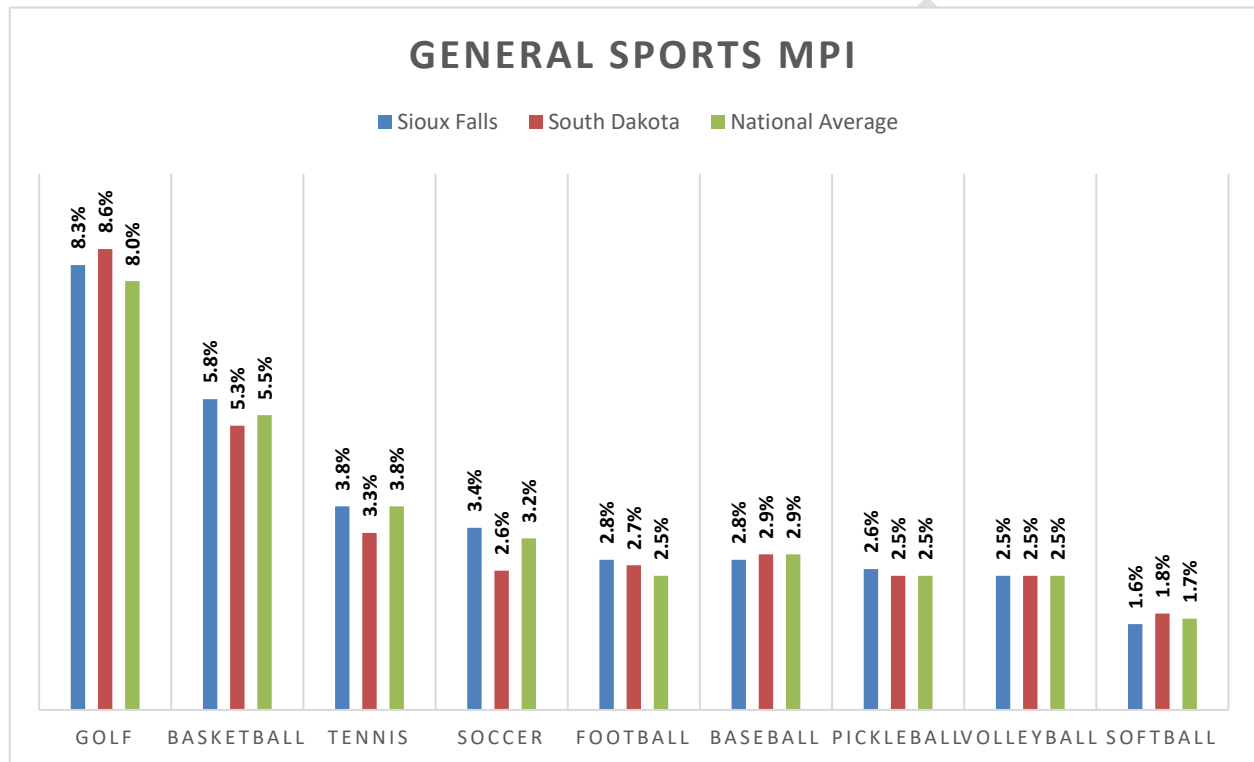


Figure 18 - General Sports MPI for Sioux Falls

### 2.2.3 FITNESS MARKET POTENTIAL

Assessing MPI scores for the Fitness Activity category reveals that most of the City's fitness activities are above the national average participation. Walking for Exercise (33.1%) and Swimming (16.7%) took the top two spots while outscoring the nation in participation, yet both activities are the only ones that did not outscore the State participation. Weight Lifting (15.4%) and Jogging/Running (11.3%) followed up in the next two spots. Alternatively, the lowest-scored activity was Pilates (2.7%), yet it outscored the South Dakota state average of 2.3% (**Figure 19**).

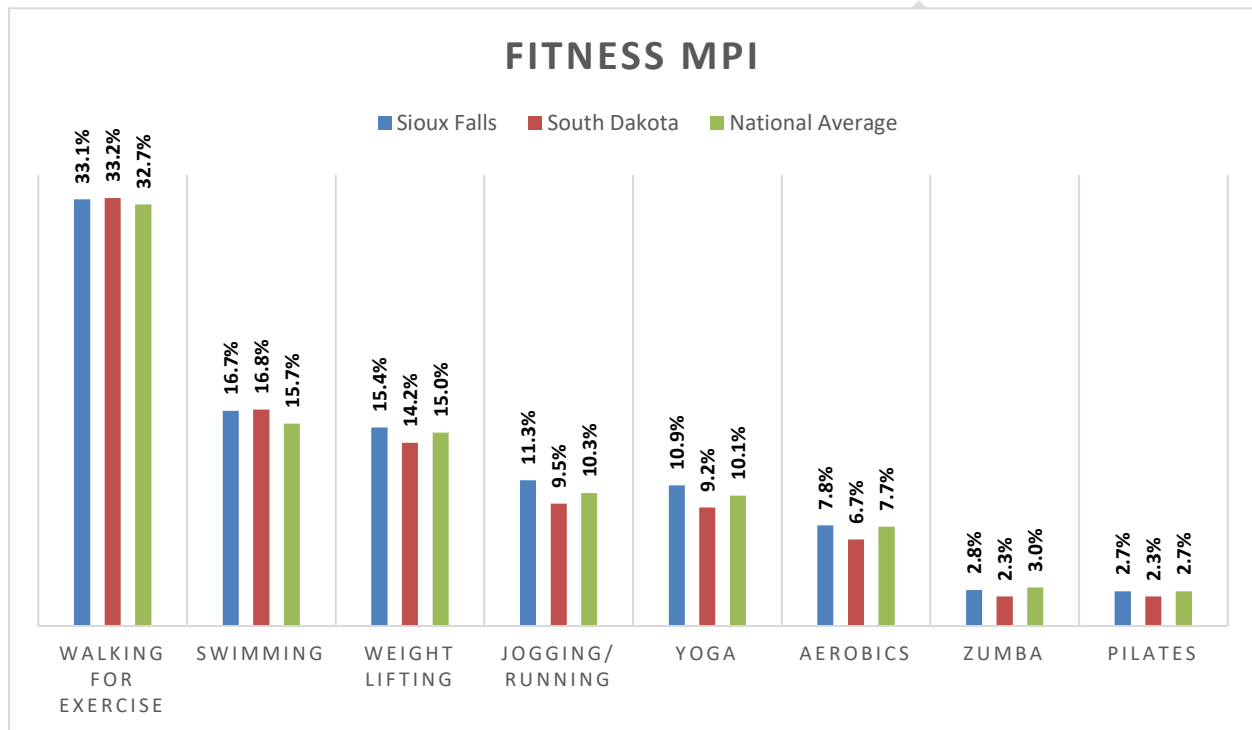


Figure 19 - Fitness MPI for Sioux Falls



#### 2.2.4 OUTDOOR ACTIVITY MARKET POTENTIAL

The City's Outdoor Activity MPI chart reflected relatively higher than average participation in all but one of the recorded activities; the City scored higher than the US average on 8 of the 9 activities, with the most popular activities being Hiking (19.9%), Road Biking (11.1%), and Fresh Water Fishing (10.2%). Alternatively, the lowest score in the City's Outdoor Activity participation belonged to Rock Climbing (1.9%), which still outscored the national and state average. It's worth noting that in the one activity that the City didn't outscore the national average, Horseback Riding (2.0%), it was by 0.1%. While outscoring the US average in most activities, Sioux Falls only outscored the South Dakota average in four of the activities. The City's exceptional participation for Outdoor Activities could give the Department insight into programs, clubs, and other projects that might prove to be beneficial for both the Department and residents (**Figure 20**).

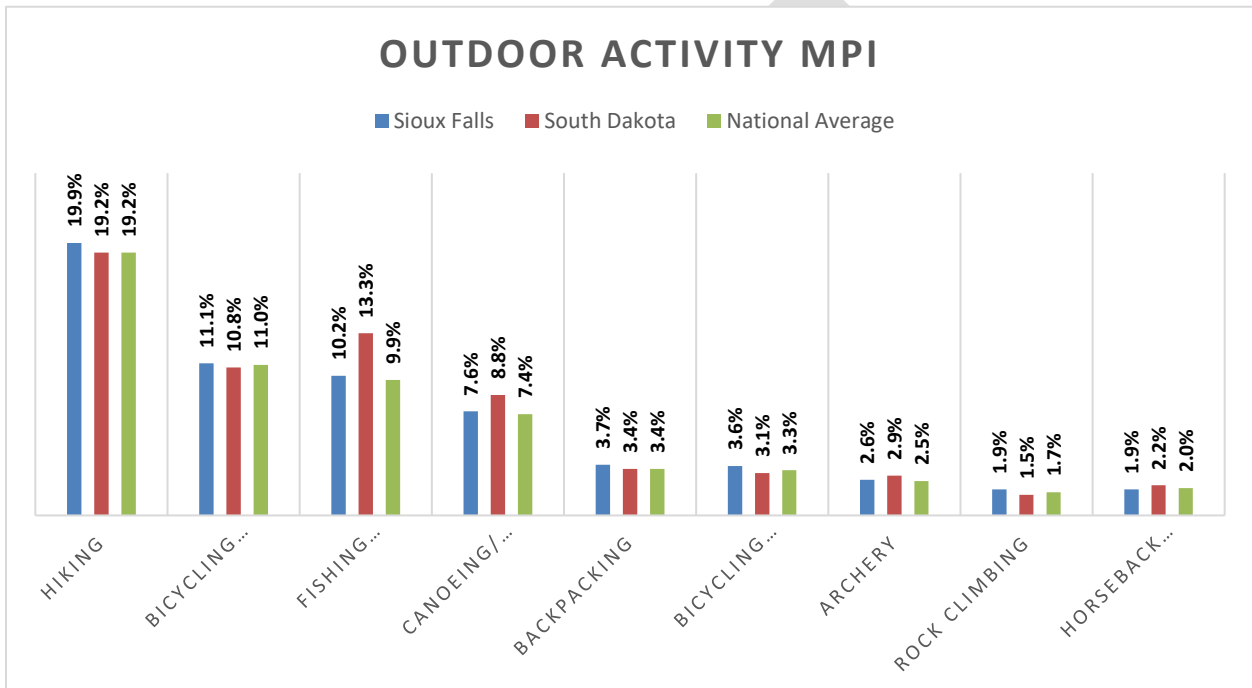


Figure 20 - Outdoor Activity MPI for Sioux Falls

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### 2.2.5 COMMERCIAL RECREATION MARKET POTENTIAL

The Commercial Recreation MPI category reveals that all of the City's recorded Commercial Recreation activities are above the national average. The most popular activities in the service area were 'Dined out' (56.7%), 'Attended Sports Event' (16.5%), and 'Visited a theme park' (15.9%). The lowest scoring activities were 'Spent \$1-99 on Sports/Rec Equipment' (7.1%) and 'Spent \$100-249 on Sports/Rec Equipment' (6.3%). Twelve of the Commercial Recreation Activity scored above the South Dakota average, and one tied. Paired with the other MPI ratings (General Sports and Fitness, and Outdoor Activities), these activities could signal potential target areas for new programs when developing the Department (**Figure 21**).

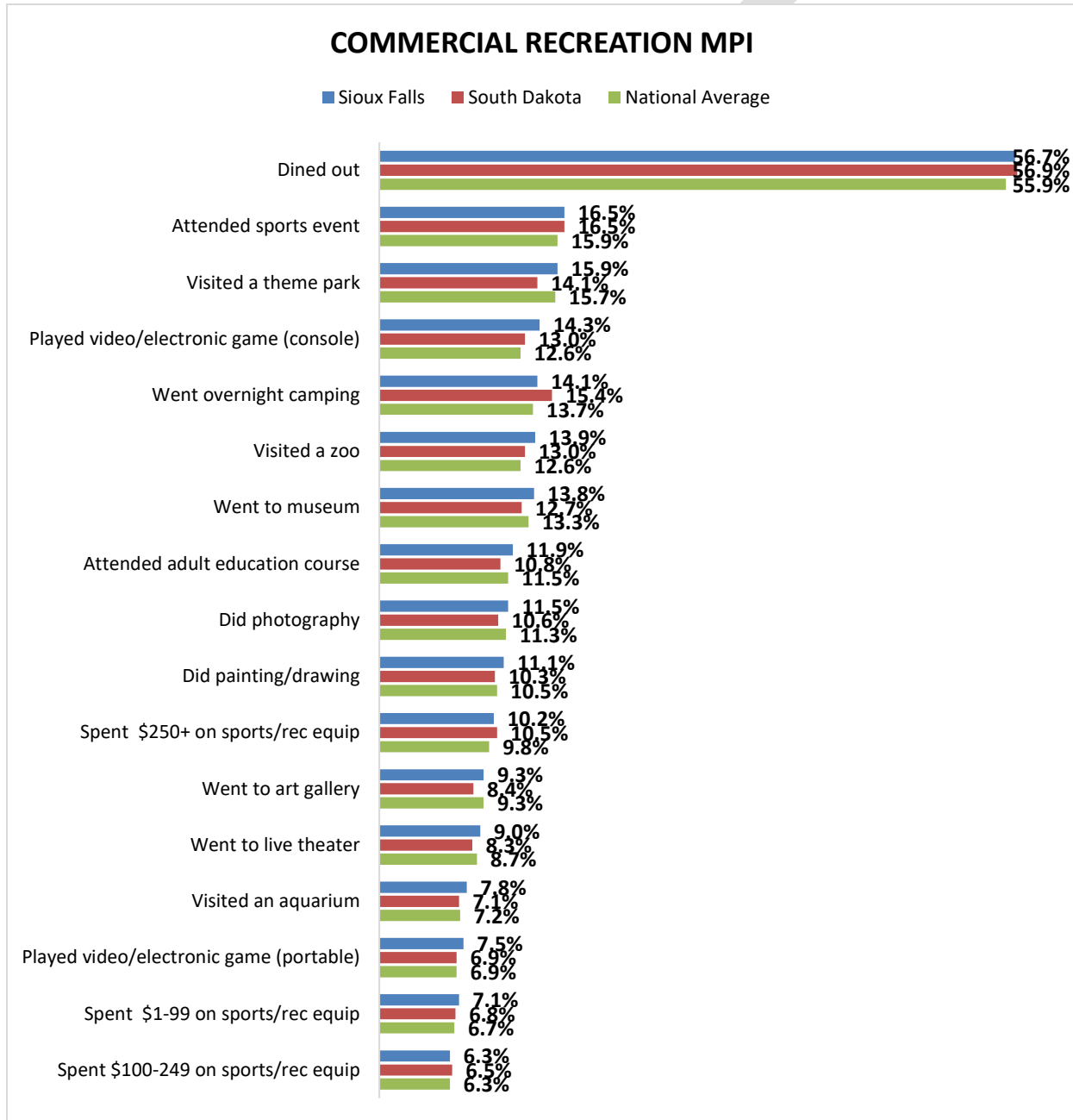


Figure 21 - Commercial Recreation MPI for Sioux Falls

## CHAPTER THREE – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Master Plan is built around key themes that were borne from the Sioux Falls community throughout the 10-month planning process. Multiple methods were used for the Sioux Falls community to provide their vision for the next five years. Below summarizes the methods used.

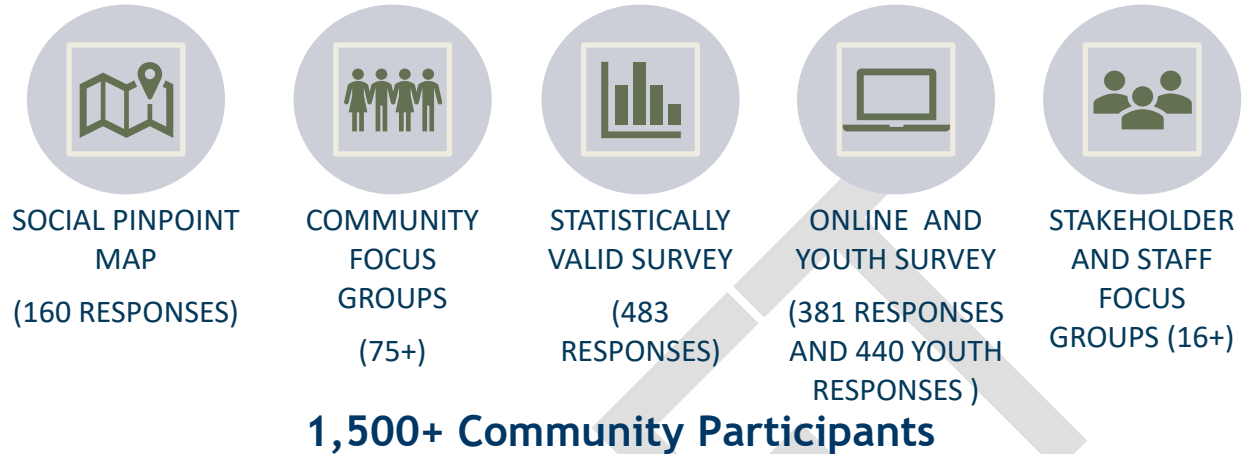


Figure 22 - Total Community Participants

### 3.1 KEY LEADER AND STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

#### 3.1.1 STAKEHOLDER AND ELECTED OFFICIAL INTERVIEW OVERVIEW

A method of understanding what part the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department has in the lives of the Sioux Falls community is the key leader and stakeholder engagement process. One-on-one interviews, sixteen (16) in total, or small group focus groups, five (5) in total, were conducted with approximately 80+ stakeholders. These focus group interviews were held during February 2025. Interviews with elected officials were completed as one-on-one interviews virtually in February 2025 and the focus groups were completed in-person at Sioux Falls City Center on February 25, 2025.

Answers from the interviews also helped to identify themes, key issues, as well as questions on the community survey that was administered in the Spring of 2025. The elected official interviews each lasted thirty (30) minutes, and the stakeholder focus group was approximately one (1) hour. Participants interviewed included representatives from the following:

- Sioux Falls City Council
- Sioux Falls Park Board
- Sioux Falls Parks Foundation
- Promising Futures Fund
- Harrisburg School District
- Siouxland Heritage Museum
- Experience Sioux Falls
- Sioux Empire United Way
- Great Bear Board
- Sioux Falls YMCA
- South Dakota State University
- Dakota Alliance Soccer
- Avera Hospital
- Let's Skate
- Disc Golf Sioux Falls
- Sioux Falls Boy's and Girl's Club
- Great Plains Zoo
- Active Generations

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- South Dakota Junior Football
- Sioux Falls Aquatics Association
- Sioux Falls School District
- Sioux Falls American Heart Association
- Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum
- Sioux Falls Christian School
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

The following summarizes the responses of the stakeholder and elected official interviews.

### 3.1.2 VALUE OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

**Maintenance and Cleanliness:** Residents of Sioux Falls place high value on the exceptional maintenance and cleanliness of their parks and recreational facilities. Across the board, participants commented on the well-kept appearance of green spaces and the high level of care, especially impressive given SFPR's staff resources. The efforts to preserve and maintain older facilities while continuing to invest in future improvements reflect a deep commitment to quality. Clean, safe environments are seen as essential, and SFPR consistently meets those expectations.

**Accessibility and Walkability:** Accessibility is a standout theme, with widespread appreciation for the City's focus on ensuring that parks are within a half-mile radius from homes. This is particularly evident in the central parts of Sioux Falls, where parks are abundant and easy to reach. Residents value being able to walk or bike to the trails and parks and consider this proximity a key contributor to their quality of life. This level of access helps promote community connection, physical activity, and equitable recreation opportunities.

**Trail System and Multi-Modal Transportation:** The City's trail system continues to be one of the most valued features, specifically the Recreation Trail. Residents frequently mentioned the importance of expanding and maintaining these trails, especially as the City continues to expand boundaries and development. The interconnected trails allow people to travel through much of the City without needing a car, supporting active lifestyles and multi-modal transportation. This network is seen not only as a recreational amenity but also as a practical way to move around the City, enhancing both mobility and environmental sustainability.

**Variety of Parks and Amenities:** People appreciate the diversity of parks and the broad range of features and programming SFPR offers. From destination parks like Falls Park to neighborhood spaces with age-appropriate play areas, the City provides something for everyone. Families, in particular, value the addition of amenities that serve all youth age groups, from toddlers to teenagers. This variety fosters public space where different community members can engage in recreation that suits their needs and interests.

**Year-Round Outdoor Recreation:** There is strong enthusiasm for outdoor recreation throughout the year, and many residents emphasized a desire to see continued growth in winter activities, which they acknowledge SFPR has made a priority over the past five years. The City continues to expand access to places like the Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum, Great Bear, and Falls Park, which are enjoyed year-round. However, some respondents expressed interest in expanding offerings to make cold-weather recreation more robust and accessible, such as the move toward regional community recreation centers, reflecting a growing demand for four-season activity options.

**Community Engagement and Planning:** Residents commend SFPR's proactive approach to community engagement and planning. SFPR is viewed as highly responsive, communicating well with stakeholders and making data-driven decisions that align with community needs. SFPR's response to public feedback ensures the parks system evolves alongside the City's growth and changing demographics.

**Partnerships and Special Facilities:** Special facilities like the Great Plains Zoo, Great Bear, golf courses, sports fields, and the Levitt are cherished by the community. Partnerships, such as the one between the City and Great Plains Zoo and Great Bear, were specifically mentioned as successful examples of collaboration that enhance the quality and appeal of public amenities. These facilities contribute significantly to the richness of Sioux Falls' recreation system and are seen as vital components of the overall park experience.

### 3.1.3 AREAS OF THE SYSTEM THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT OR ADDITIONAL FOCUS

**Neighborhood Park Revitalization:** Some stakeholders expressed the need for focused improvements in older neighborhood parks, particularly in areas of the community where redevelopment has yet to occur. There is a desire to revitalize these spaces with better amenities, updated playgrounds (especially for preschool-aged children), and more features for self-directed activities like swings or seating near sports fields. Partnerships with schools are also seen as critical. School Parks serve as neighborhood parks in many areas of the City, and they should continue to be updated to be welcoming and accessible to the public. There is a desire for clearer signage of the times the School Parks are available as these resources also function as neighborhood parks.

**Fairness and Access:** Concerns about fairness to access to parks and facilities was expressed by some participants. In lower-income areas, including neighborhoods with growing immigrant populations, there is a need for more soccer fields and inclusive programming. Transportation barriers were also highlighted, as many community and regional parks are difficult to reach for those without vehicles, limiting access for a portion of the population. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of ensuring youth and underserved communities can access recreational spaces safely and conveniently.

**Indoor Recreation and Year-Round Facilities:** There is a growing call for expanded indoor recreation opportunities. Residents noted there was a shortage of indoor spaces, especially in winter or when school is not in session. The loss of community centers within schools has created a gap, but the recent opening of Westside Recreation Center has been well-received. Recent developments like the future Frank Olson Recreation Center are welcome but may not meet future demand with the population increase. The current construction of Jacobson Plaza has the community excited about other outdoor year-round activities, as well as access to Great Bear. Overall, there is support for increasing year-round recreation options for all ages.

**Ice Rinks and Winter Amenities:** Outdoor ice rinks are seen as underdeveloped and unreliable due to weather conditions. The current construction of Jacobson Plaza has participants excited about using it next winter. Stakeholders suggested exploring refrigerated ice rinks in multiple locations to ensure longer seasons and broader community use. This reflects a desire to strengthen winter recreation and create consistent opportunities regardless of weather variability.

**Trail Expansion and Connectivity:** Residents continue to prioritize trails, calling for both natural and paved loop trails within parks, and stronger trail connections between neighborhoods and public spaces. As Sioux Falls expands, integrating the trail system with new developments and ensuring connections to other municipal systems is vital for long-term accessibility and mobility.

**Long-Term Growth and Land Acquisition:** While the current distribution of parks is appreciated, there is a shared understanding that additional parkland should be secured now to prepare for future growth, specifically toward the west and east. Stakeholders support institutionalizing the "park/trail within a half mile" standard and making it a foundational part of City planning as new neighborhoods are developed.



**Park Amenities and Infrastructure:** Several practical upgrades were suggested to improve the park experience. These include modernizing restrooms, installing app-controlled lighting for sports fields, addressing parking concerns before expanding programming, and ensuring parks have adequate infrastructure to support their users. Enhanced maintenance and cleanliness, especially in frequently used facilities, were also mentioned, specifically during peak times such as during sports tournaments. Many current parks, particularly those co-located with schools, lack early-childhood equipment. Enhancing these facilities would make parks more beneficial for families with young children.

**Natural Areas and Self-Directed Recreation:** There is growing interest in expanding natural, unstructured recreation spaces for outdoor experiences. Residents would like to see more emphasis on preserving and activating natural areas within parks, offering opportunities for exploration, quiet recreation, and connection with nature.

**Affordability and Program Access:** Stakeholders emphasized the importance of maintaining both free and “pay-to-play” recreational offerings to ensure accessibility across income levels. A tiered pricing structure that includes no-cost options is seen as essential to keeping recreation inclusive and equitable to all income levels.

### 3.1.4 CHALLENGES FACING THE PARK SYSTEM

**Planning for Growth and Urban Development:** As the City grows, there’s a need for proactive park planning in new residential areas, especially in the east and west. Stakeholders stressed the importance of securing land for parks early and called for a large regional park to serve newly developed areas.

**Infrastructure and Long-Term Sustainability:** Parks are seen as essential infrastructure requiring long-term planning. Deferred maintenance is rising as the system expands, and there are concerns about future costs and challenges if these issues are not addressed soon. Sustainable investment strategies are needed, especially for new indoor and aquatic facilities.

**Funding and Budget Concerns:** Concerns around funding and potential budget cuts are significant. Stakeholders stressed the need for more resources to maintain, expand, and modernize the system. Funding gaps threaten both current operations and future development.

**Affordability and Equity:** Rising program costs, especially from private sports groups using City facilities, are pricing out families with multiple children. There is a desire for the City to help regulate pricing to ensure access remains affordable for all residents.

**Leadership and Staffing Capacity:** With Mayoral change in leadership, there is a concern about maintaining momentum and institutional knowledge. As the system expands, especially with indoor recreation, intentional staffing and support will be essential to meet the growing demands placed on SFPR.

**Winter Recreation and Climate Adaptation:** Unpredictable winters challenge consistent winter recreation programming, especially for maintaining outdoor ice. Participants are cautious about investing in winter-specific infrastructure but support solutions like refrigerated rinks or indoor options to improve year-round activity.

**Shade and Comfort Amenities:** Adding both natural and man-made shade is increasingly important for park usability and climate adaptation, especially with the many ash trees removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer. More shade structures and tree plantings are desired, especially in active, high-traffic park areas.

**Transportation and Access:** Transportation limitations make it difficult for some residents, especially those without vehicles, to reach regional parks and facilities. Improving connectivity and access, especially for youth and underserved populations, remains a priority.

**Community Awareness and Engagement:** There is a need for continued enhancement of marketing and communication to raise awareness of park programs and amenities. Better outreach could drive participation to support future investments in facilities and programs.

**Private Development Partnerships:** As new neighborhoods are built, the City is encouraged to work with developers to ensure adequate outdoor recreation spaces. Updating planning standards could help ensure future developments include accessible green space and amenities, as well as linkages to regional trails.

### 3.1.5 FACILITY/AMENITIES MOST NEEDED

**Indoor Recreation Facilities:** A major priority is expanding indoor recreation options, particularly year-round access. More multipurpose indoor spaces are needed to support athletic programs and public use, especially during colder months.

**Winter Recreation Expansion:** There is a strong interest in enhancing winter recreation, including groomed trails for cross-country skiing using natural snow. Stakeholders see great potential in extending use of outdoor areas during winter, possibly with synthetic turf or additional amenities to support cold-weather activity.

**Pickleball and Tennis Facilities:** The demand for additional pickleball courts continues to grow, alongside interest in indoor tennis facilities. These amenities are seen as key for all-season, multi-generational recreation.

**Unique Outdoor and Nature-Based Amenities:** Suggestions include more community gardens, a greenhouse facility, activity stations in parks to allow for outdoor fitness near playgrounds, and increased canoe/kayak access with potential for local rental partnerships. These ideas support self-directed, nature-focused recreation for a wide range of users.

**Biking Options:** Support continues for expanded biking options, such as mountain biking at Great Bear, as well as a location for a flat track.

**Dog Parks and Inclusive Features:** More off-leash dog parks were requested, especially given issues like seasonal flooding at Spencer Park. Stakeholders also emphasized more inclusive and age-appropriate features, such as swings in neighborhood parks and those located within school parks.

**Golf and Disc Golf:** There are concerns about maintaining up with the growth of golf, as courses like Spring Creek may close. Golf courses have been very popular and keeping up with these types of public facilities as the City grows is a concern. Lastly, some disc golf players requested that there are a couple of beginner-friendly courses dispersed across the City.

### 3.1.6 RECREATION PROGRAMS MOST NEEDED

**Swim Lessons and Water Safety:** Swim lessons continue to be an important programming need. Stakeholders also advocated for more inclusive aquatics programming, especially adaptive swimming options that accommodate those with special needs, such as allowing life jackets for children with autism at City pools.

**Programs for Older Adults:** With a growing aging population, there is a desire for more free or low-cost fitness and wellness activities. Programs currently offered through the Westside Recreation Center are well-received, and there is interest in expanding similar services Citywide.

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**Equitable Youth Programming:** There is a strong need for more accessible and affordable youth programs, particularly in neighborhoods near Title 1 schools, where poverty rates are high. Neighborhood soccer leagues and better use of school gyms while schools not in session were highlighted as key opportunities to engage youth in underserved areas.

**Awareness and Outreach:** Improving communication and marketing for City programs is a priority. Stakeholders feel enhancements to current efforts could reach more of the community and want better promotion of events and services, especially in low-income communities.

**Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation:** Inclusivity was a recurring theme in all focus groups, with calls for more adaptive programs across the park system. This includes not just aquatics, but a broader push to ensure all residents, regardless of age or ability, have access to recreational opportunities.

**Cross-Agency Collaboration:** Suggestions were made for reciprocal membership across City and non-profit recreation facilities (e.g., City pools, Great Plains Zoo, Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum, Great Bear). This would increase access and encourage resource sharing between partners.

**Year-Round Outdoor and Family Programming:** Stakeholders want additional outdoor recreation programs in all seasons, as well as more Citywide family events and holiday-themed activities. Expanding special events and offering varied, engaging experiences across the park system is seen to bring more diverse communities together.

**Creative Partnerships:** The Westside Recreation Center's model of partnering with nonprofits to deliver programs in shared spaces was praised. Stakeholders suggested this co-op approach could be expanded to other facilities, leveraging community partners to broaden programming without duplicating efforts.

### 3.1.7 OUTCOMES ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SIOUX FALLS PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT IN 5 YEARS

**Major Projects:** Begin implementation of Falls Park Master Plan and continue to update and add extensions to the Recreation Trail loop are top infrastructure goals to improve connectivity and outdoor access across the City.

**Indoor and Regional Recreation Strategy:** Stakeholders want a clearly communicated, long-term strategy for indoor recreation. This includes a vision for regional recreation centers, defined milestones, and potential land or financial planning to support future growth. Also, the expansion of Great Bear to serve more of the community.

**Park and Facility Upgrades:** Improvements to soccer and baseball fields, more unstructured play areas, splash parks, and shade structures are seen as high-impact, family-friendly investments.

**Improved River Access and Natural Areas:** Increasing public access to the river for recreation and education is a top priority, as is expanding natural areas for self-directed activities like hiking, fishing, or nature exploration. Partnerships with South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks could enhance this effort.

**Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation:** Accessibility remains a key priority. This includes adaptive recreation, more inclusive design, and addressing transportation barriers, especially during winter, to ensure everyone can enjoy the system.

**Equity and Affordability:** Ideas include discounted passes for low-income residents. One thought was to explore a digital access system to streamline equitable participation. These approaches aim to ensure all community members can benefit from recreation offerings.

**Continued Community Engagement and Communication:** SFPR should continue to communicate its projects to the community, especially how each tie to the mission and vision. Stakeholders appreciate the transparency, messaging, and regular updates that show why investments matter to the community. Really to communicate that projects are not just “following the money” from specific donors.

**Expanding the Farmers Market and Special Events:** The Farmer’s Market is a major community draw, and there’s enthusiasm for expanding it into a larger, city-supported initiative, potentially closing nearby streets to create a more vibrant, festival-like experience at Falls Park. Stakeholders also want more event-based activation in parks.

### 3.1.8 KEY THEMES

The following summarizes the key themes of the community stakeholder and elected official interviews.

- **Park Maintenance & Cleanliness:** SFPR is highly valued by the community for maintaining clean and well-kept parks with its resources.
- **Accessibility & Connectivity:** SFPR is praised for providing access to parks, trails, and recreational areas, and it should continue to promote walkability and multi-modal transportation. Ensuring equitable access to parks and recreational programs, particularly in underserved communities, is a major priority.
- **Diverse Parks & Amenities:** The City offers a wide variety of parks and amenities that cater to different age groups and interests, from large destination parks to neighborhood spaces. Continue to expand these areas across the system as the community grows.
- **Year-Round Recreation:** There is a call for more indoor recreational spaces and year-round facilities to support activities during colder months, with also a focus on expanding outdoor winter activities.
- **Community Engagement & Planning:** SFPR is praised for its proactive community engagement and data-driven planning to meet the evolving needs of residents.
- **Sustainable Growth & Infrastructure:** As Sioux Falls grows, there is a need for strategic planning, investment in infrastructure, and securing parkland to meet future demands.

### 3.1.9 FOCUS ON INTERNALLY

The following summarizes the areas for SFPR to consider focusing on internally:

- School park sites are redeveloped with young / preschool child play areas, and restrooms that are open year-round.
- Parking during peak times at sports sites.
- Land acquisition to keep up with community growth areas.
- Identify alternative funding strategies.
- Identify the next refrigerated outdoor ice rink.
- Additional trail miles.
- Addition of indoor recreation space.

3.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

SFPR held an open forum on Monday, February 24, 2025, at 5:30-6:30 pm at the Westside Recreation Center. The forum began with a brief presentation explaining the master plan process, initial findings, and next steps. This was followed up with a live polling exercise with those in attendance on needs and desires for parks, facilities and programs. The full results are included in **Appendix 5** and below show some of the results.



Please rank how you would allocate the funds among the categories listed below?



Figure 23 - Public Meeting: Allocation of Funds

As the City explores current and potentially new indoor recreation amenities, please select your top amenity that your household would utilize?

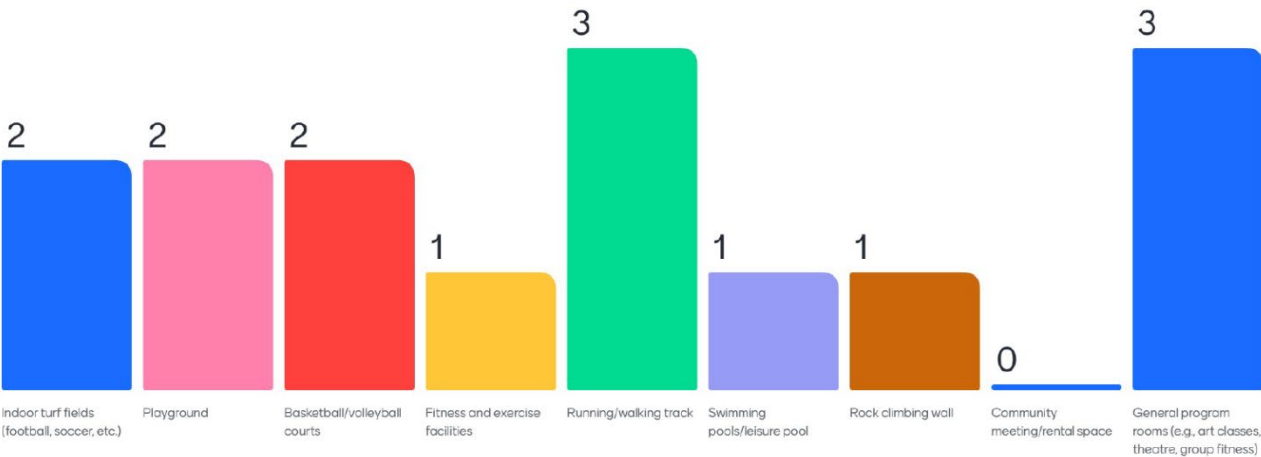


Figure 24 - Public Meeting: Indoor Spaces



### 3.3 YOUTH SURVEY

An online survey was administered to gain a better understanding of the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation Department (“Department”) youth users for the Department’s 2025 Master Plan. The survey responses were able to give insight into what youth in the City wanted to see prioritized and funded, as well as their satisfaction with the Department.

There were a few key takeaways from the survey. For one, major sports like soccer, basketball, and volleyball all had high responses when asked about how desired they are; some more niche activities and programs (like rugby or mountain biking) had lower usage by comparison. Another important point is that only 22% of respondents (98 out of 441 who answered) said that they had attended a Department program in the past year, with some of the key reasoning being that the things they want are not offered or that they do not know what is offered by the Department.

Additionally, some data was collected that may help the Department reach these youth participants. For example, 41% of respondents (or 140 respondents total) said that they did not participate in programs due to being unaware of said programs. To mitigate this, respondents clarified that they prefer social media, word of mouth, or email to find out about these programs and activities. Additionally, over half of respondents said they primarily attend parks or facilities when with a friend, indicating that participants may be easier to reach if you can reach their friends or group of friends as well.

#### 3.3.1 METHODOLOGY

This online survey was powered by SurveyMonkey, and was open for just over six weeks, from the week of late March 25th through May 16th, 2025 and received a total of 445 responses.

At the same time, survey respondents had the option to skip certain questions, which led to many questions having a high number of skipped responses. However, each question was analyzed individually, meaning that skipped responses were not considered.

Please note the language used in this document is not always word for word with the survey. Some questions or responses were shortened for the sake of brevity.



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### 3.3.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographically, the survey was answered by youth respondents ages 10 through 17; no other demographics questions were asked other than the first question which asked which school they attended. The results of both demographics questions can be found below.

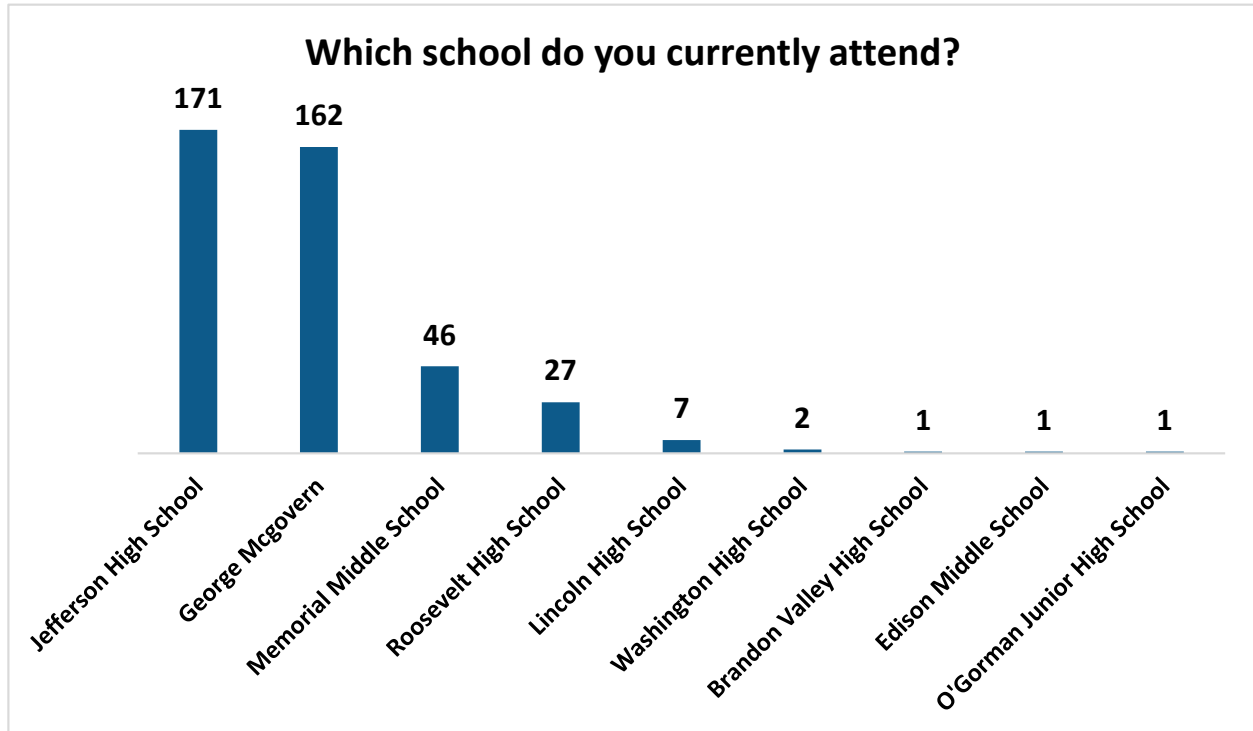


Figure 25 - Youth Survey: School Attended

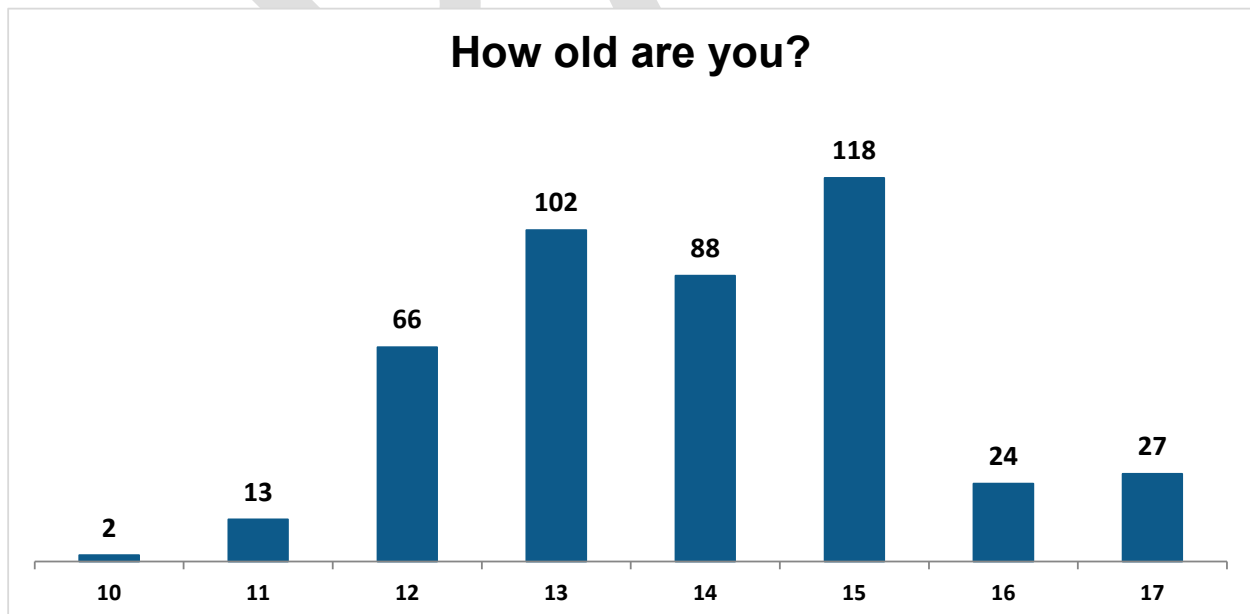


Figure 26 - Youth Survey: School Attended

### 3.3.3 OVERALL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

After the demographic questions, respondents were asked to clarify the top three methods that they prefer to hear about Department activities and offerings. The most chosen answers included social media (313 total responses), word of mouth (202 total responses), email (201 total responses), and the Department website (192 total responses).

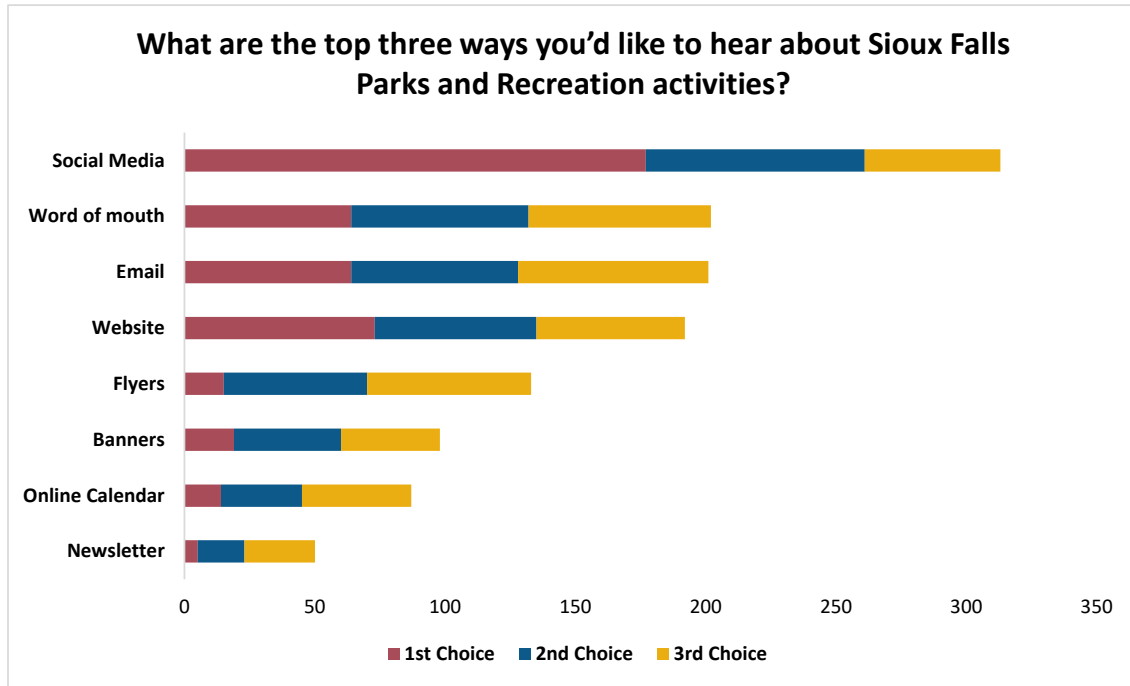


Figure 27 - Youth Survey: Top Communication

### 3.3.4 OVERALL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

When asked about the activities that they enjoy (not limited to Department offerings), respondents mostly answered a mixture of 'Other' (56), 'Basketball' (31), 'Soccer' (31), 'Volleyball' (30), 'Football' (27), 'Arts' (25), and 'Video Games' (20). The full results of this question, along with the open-ended responses provided with 'Other' answers, can be found in **Appendix 6**.

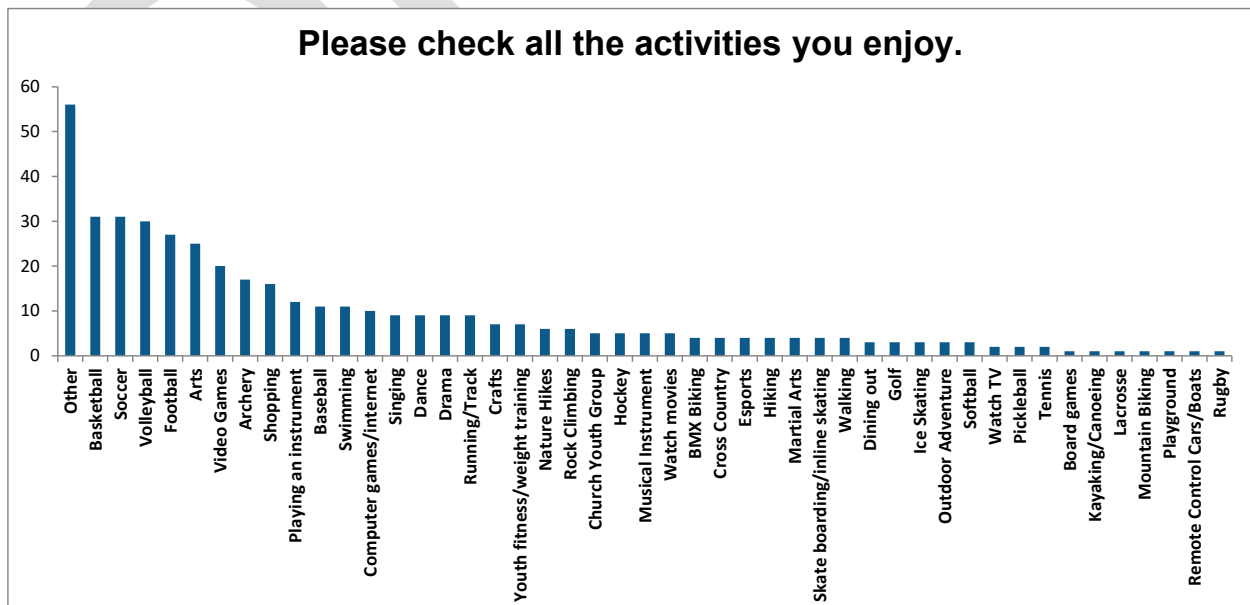


Figure 28 - Youth Survey: Top Activities

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### 3.3.5 DESIRED ACTIVITIES

Respondents were then asked which four activities that they wished were offered by the Department. 'Arts' (For the full results of this question, please see **Appendix 6**.

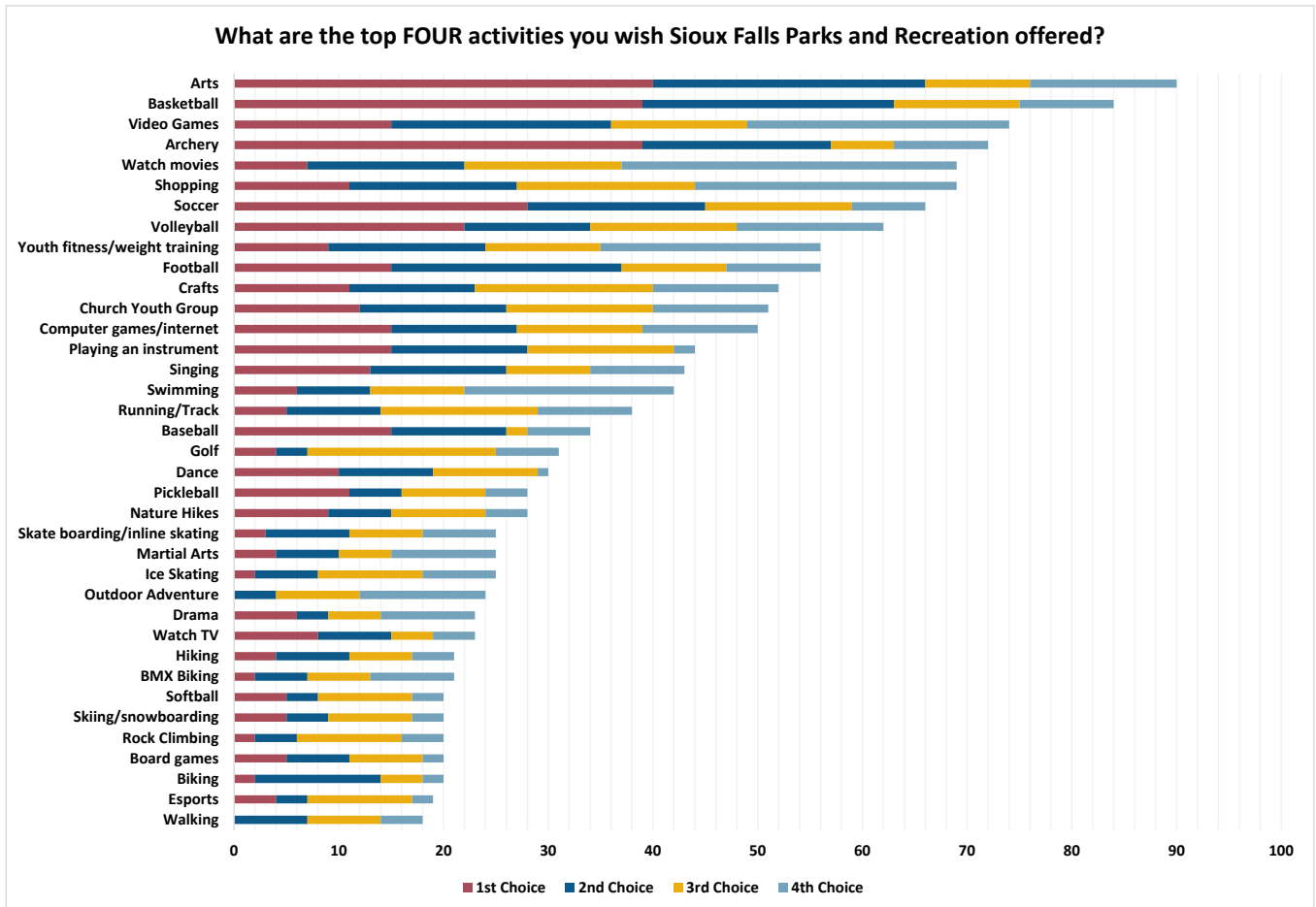


Figure 29 - Youth Survey: Desired Activities

### 3.3.6 PROGRAM AND EVENT PARTICIPATION

Respondents were asked if they had participated in any Department programs and/or events in the past year; 98 respondents said yes, while 343 said no.

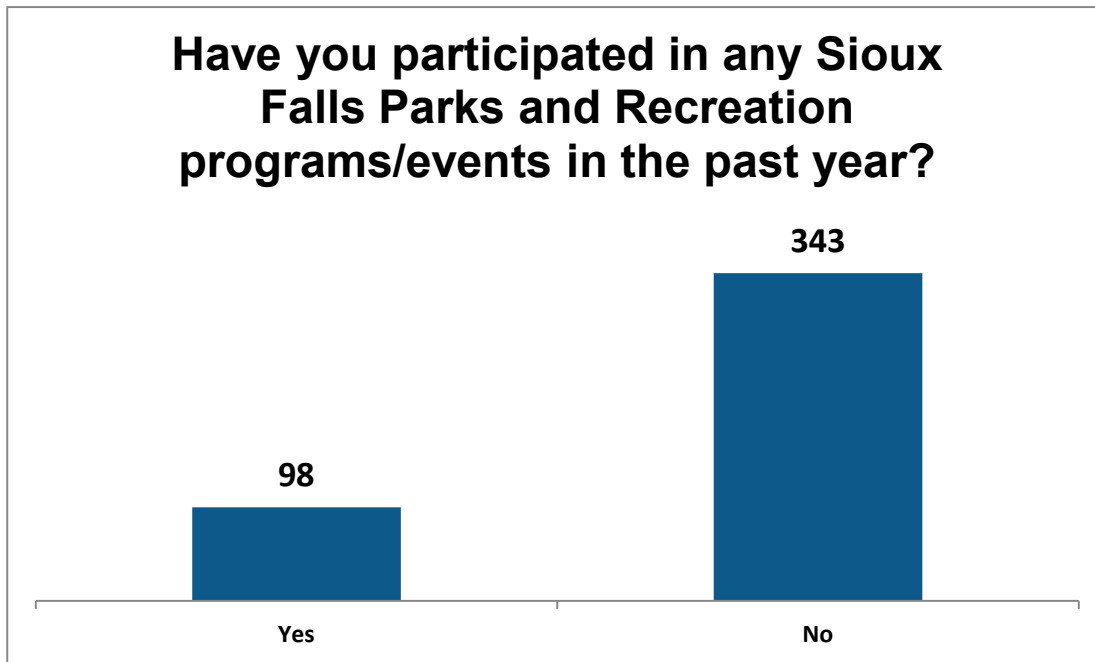


Figure 30 - Youth Survey: Program Participation

### 3.3.7 REASONS RESPONDENTS DID NOT USE FACILITIES/PROGRAMS

When asked why they did not participate in any Department programs, most respondents claimed that they were not aware of programs offered (140 total responses), they were too busy (87 total responses), or that the Department had no program offerings that they were interested in (30 total responses).

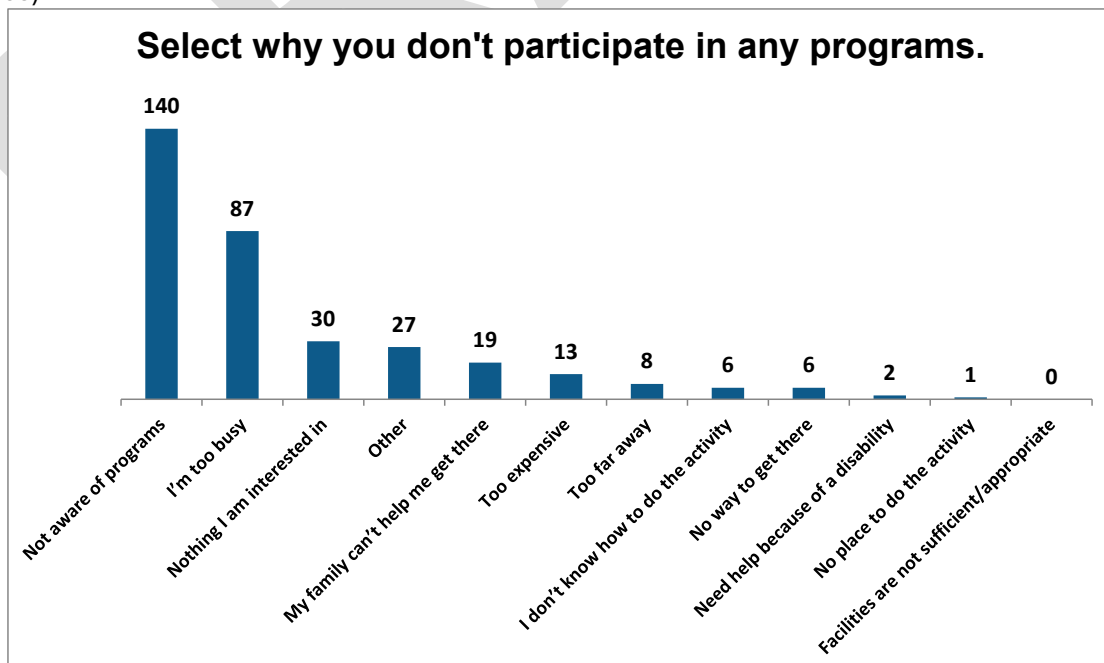


Figure 31 - Youth Survey: Barriers to Participation



### 3.3.8 TRANSPORTATION METHODS

Respondents were also asked how they got to Department or City parks and facilities. 295 respondents said that their parents drive them, 173 said that they walk there, 97 drive their own car, and 95 carpool with friends to parks or facilities.

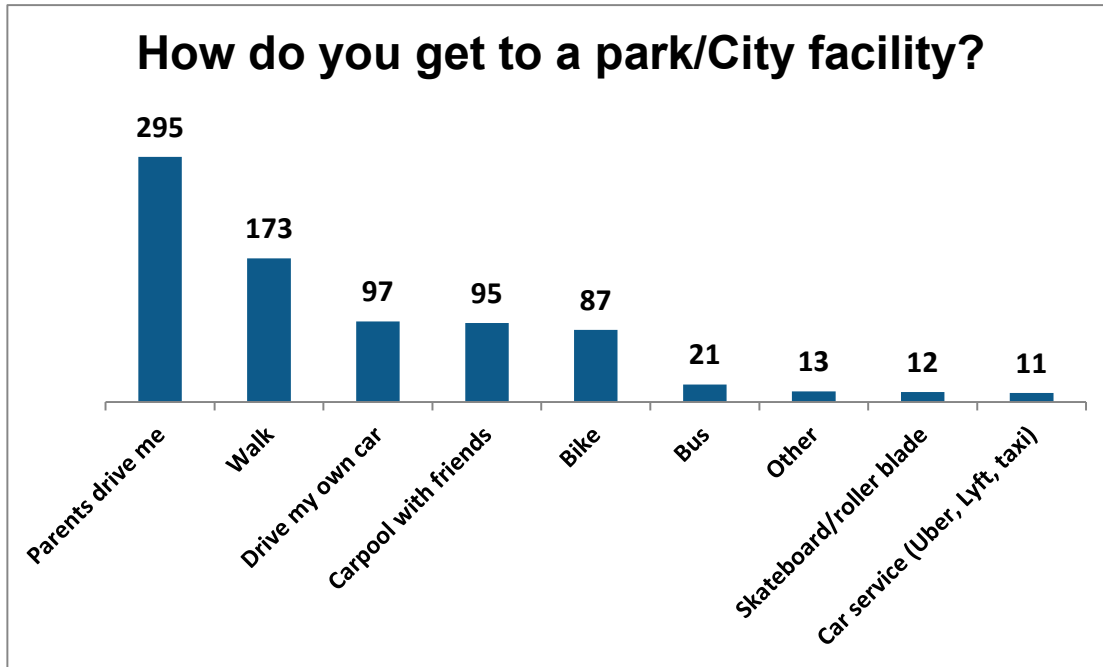


Figure 32 - Youth Survey: Transportation

### 3.3.9 VISITATION ATTENDING

Additionally, respondents were asked who they are usually with when attending Department or City parks and facilities. 208 respondents go with friends, 119 go with an adult, 62 said they do not visit parks and facilities, and 22 said they go by themselves.

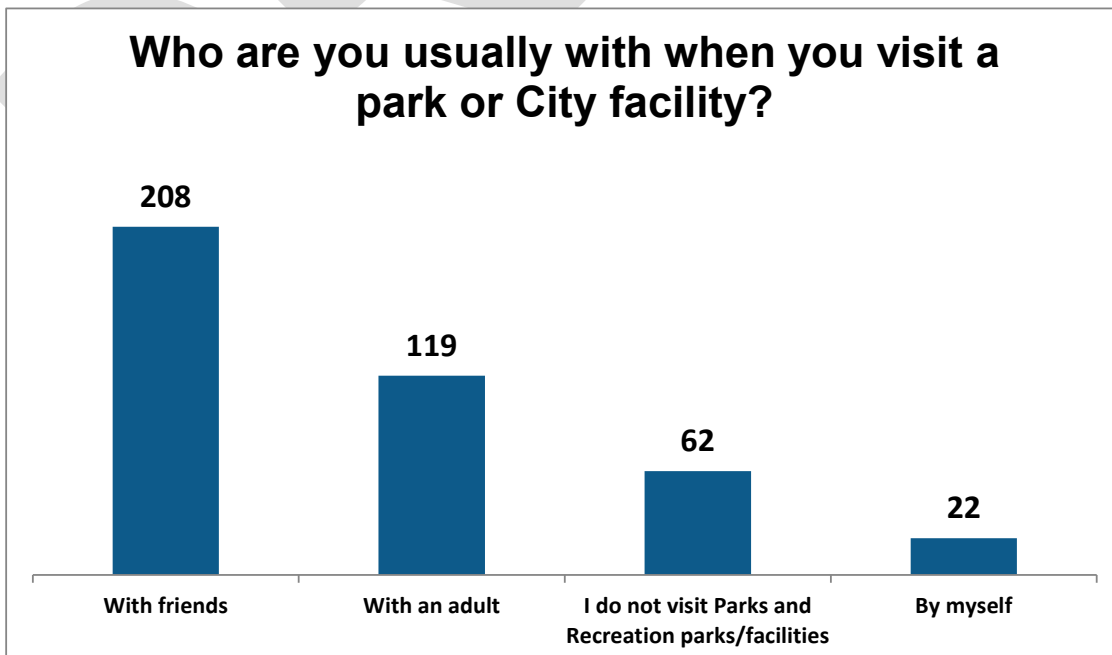


Figure 33 - Youth Survey: Visitation Attending With

### 3.3.10 FAVORITE PARK ACTIVITIES

Survey respondents were then asked to list their three favorite things to do at a park; the answers with the most total responses included utilizing swimming pools (189), playgrounds (146), trails (134), and basketball courts (105).

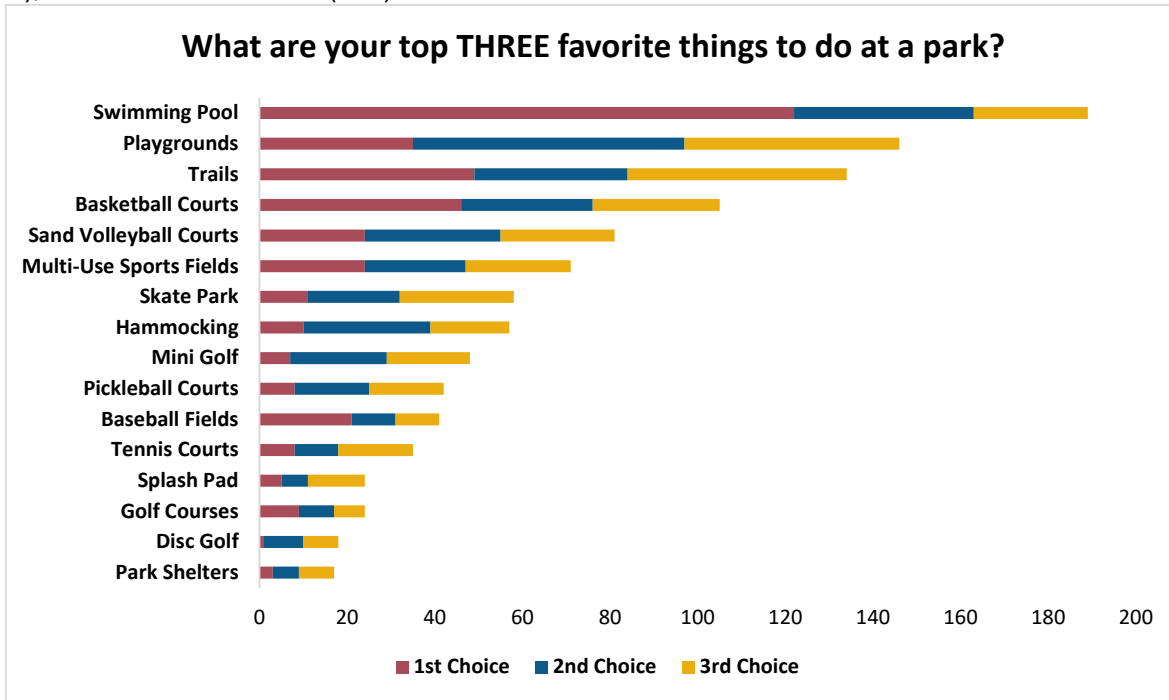


Figure 34 - Youth Survey: Top 3 Favorite Things to Do at a Park

### 3.3.11 AVAILABILITY OF HOME ELECTRONICS

Lastly, respondents were asked to check everything that they have available at home from the responses below. The three most common amenities included internet access (395), television (382), and smartphones (382).

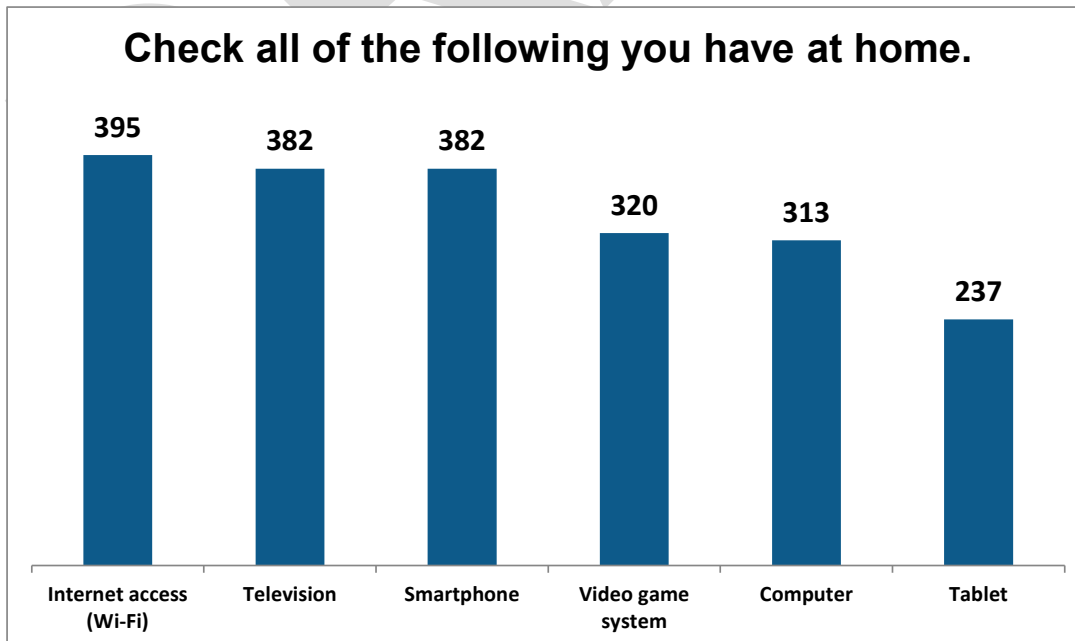


Figure 35 - Youth Survey: Technology at Home

### 3.3.12 KEY FINDINGS

#### 1. Activity Preferences

- Popular activities: Soccer, basketball, volleyball, football, arts, and video games.
- Less popular: Niche activities like rugby or mountain biking.
- Desired activities (not currently offered): Arts and others (see **Appendix 6**).

#### 2. Participation

- Only 22% (98/441) participated in Department programs/events in the past year.
- Reasons for non-participation: Lack of awareness (41%, 140 respondents), no appealing programs (30 respondents), or being too busy (87 respondents).

#### 3. Communication Preferences

- Preferred methods to learn about programs: Social media (313), word of mouth (202), email (201), and Department website (192).

#### 4. Social Context

- Over half attend parks/facilities with friends (208), followed by with an adult (119), alone (22), or not at all (62).

#### 5. Transportation

- Most common: Driven by parents (295), walking (173), driving own car (97), or carpooling with friends (95).

#### 6. Favorite Park Activities

- Top activities: Swimming pools (189), playgrounds (146), trails (134), and basketball courts (105).

#### 7. Home Amenities

- Most common: Internet access (395), television (382).

### 3.4 PROJECT WEBSITE ENGAGEMENT

Through the website client Social Pinpoint, an interactive project website was hosted to gain a better understanding of the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of SFPR users for the Department’s 2025 Master Plan. The interaction on the website provided SFPR with insight into what respondents wanted to see prioritized and funded, as well as their satisfaction with the Department itself. This interactive project website provided three opportunities for users to provide feedback, including an online survey, an interactive social mapping activity, and a vision board activity.

Demographically, the contributions did not collect data on participants’ gender, race, economic status, or age. It is important to note that the survey asked respondents to answer several questions for or in place of their family or household, meaning that some answers may be indicative of total households rather than individuals.

There were several key takeaways from the website. For example, there were some clear winners in terms of direction that SFPR should take with park amenities, including additional and upgraded restrooms, playgrounds, park shelters, and pickleball courts. Respondents also indicated that parks and trails are the two most important offerings from SFPR, with youth and family programs being a distant third. It will also be apparent throughout this report that survey respondents specifically had overwhelmingly positive feedback for the Department, with relatively few concerns.

#### 3.4.1 METHODOLOGY

This project website was powered by Social Pinpoint, and has been open for roughly two months, from February 13, 2025, through April 28, 2025, and had 4,330 views. It received a total of 381 individual survey responses, 160 individual social map interactions, and 32 vision board contributions. The survey included nine (9) questions total, while the interactive mapping activity had three preset categories (Something I Like’, ‘Ideas/Suggestions’, and ‘Make a Comment’).

Survey respondents had the option to skip certain questions, which led to many questions having a high number of skipped responses. However, each question was analyzed individually, meaning that skipped responses were typically not considered.

Please note: the language used in this document is not always word for word with the questions posed on the project website. Some questions or responses were shortened for the sake of brevity.

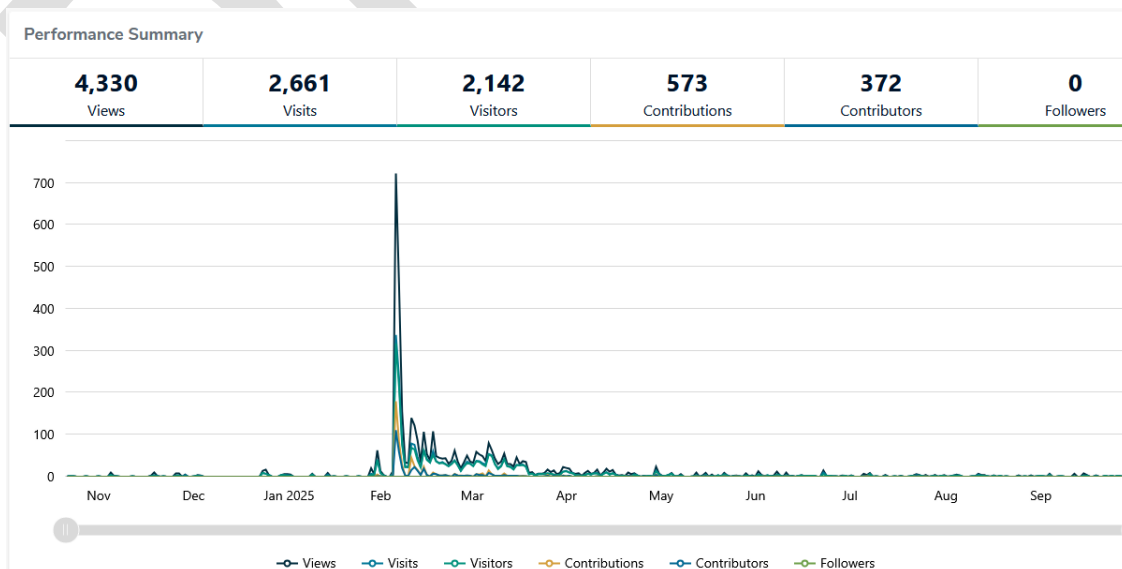


Figure 36 - Social Pinpoint: Performance Summary

3.4.2 SURVEY FINDINGS

The project site’s Interactive Social Map has been active for the same amount of time as the survey and has yielded 381 individual contributions. The following chart shows the contributions and when they were made.

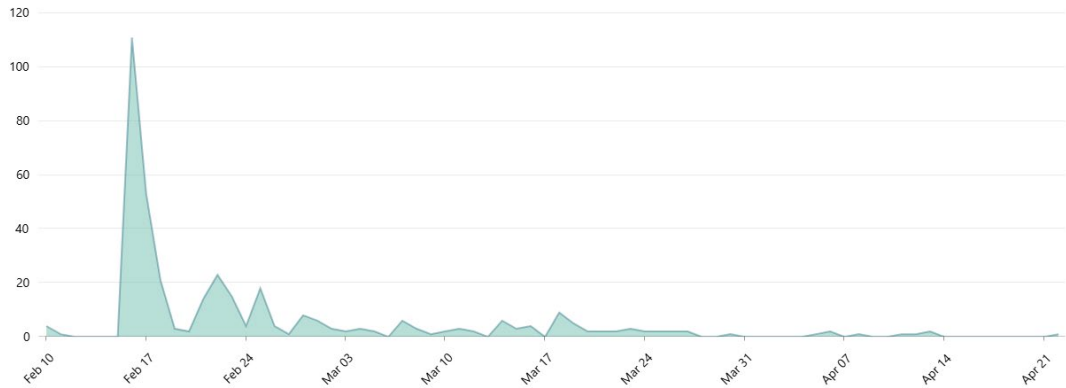


Figure 37 - Social Pinpoint: Survey Contribution Timeline

The following subsections show the response data for each individual question in the survey.

QUESTION 1: PARKS, FACILITIES, AND AMENITIES USAGE

When asked which Sioux Falls parks or facilities that the respondent or any members of their household have visited in the past, 286 respondents said they visited Falls Park, 238 visited McKennan Park, and 217 visited Tuthill Park. The following chart shows the top 15 choices in terms of responses, however, there were several more options that did not receive as many votes. This full dataset, along with the entire dataset of survey and social map responses, can be found in **Appendix 7**.

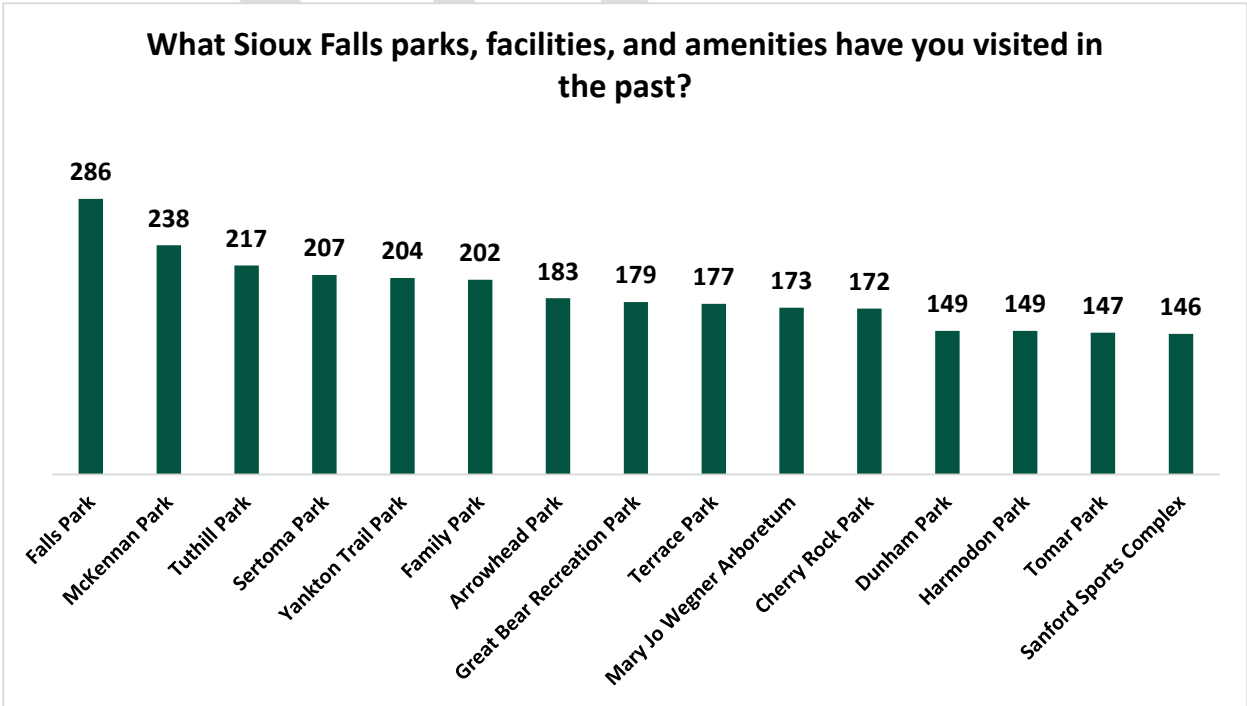


Figure 38 - Social Pinpoint: Park/Facility Usage



## QUESTION 2: TRAILS USAGE

Respondents were also asked about trails that they have visited in the past. 202 respondents said they visited Main Bike Loop, 145 visited Family Park's trails, and 142 visited Sertoma Park's trails.

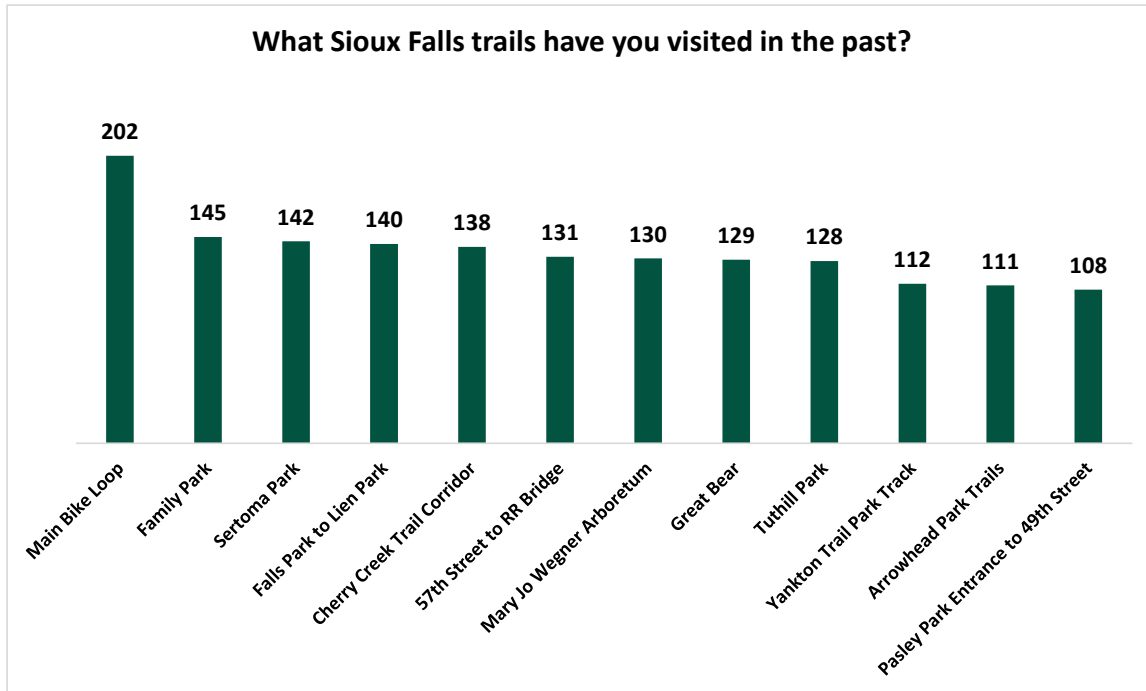


Figure 39 - Social Pinpoint: Trails Visited

## QUESTION 3: DESIRED AMENITIES IN LOCAL PARKS

In question 3, respondents were given options for which specific amenities they would like to see in their local neighborhood parks. While most respondents indicated they would like to see restrooms, playgrounds, park shelters, pickleball courts, and splashpads were also heavily sought after.

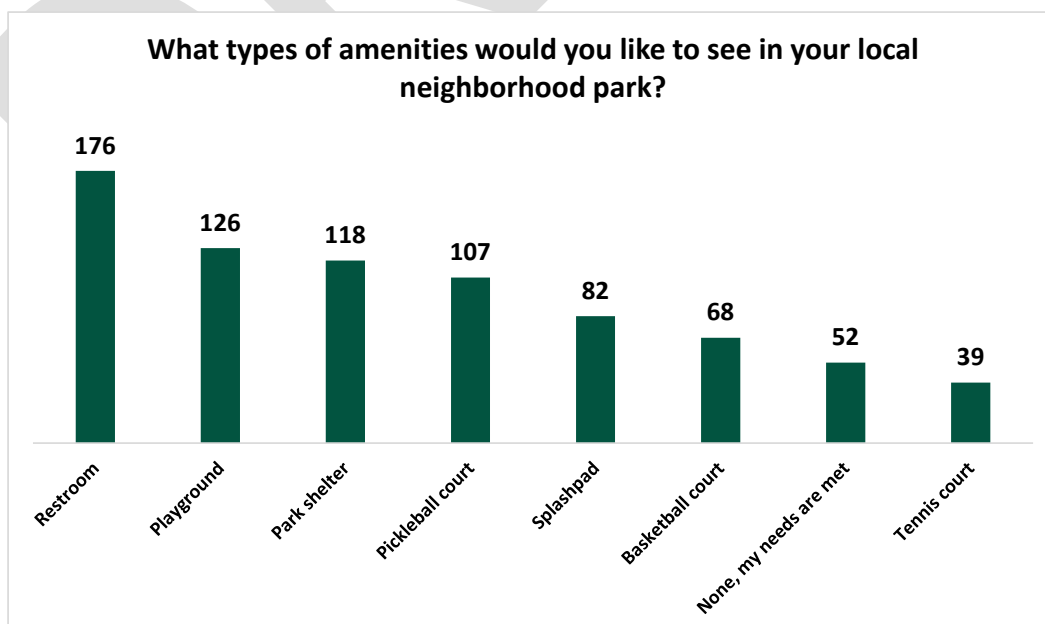


Figure 40 - Social Pinpoint: Desired Amenities in Local Parks

QUESTION 4: PROGRAM AND EVENT PARTICIPATION

When asked whether their household has participated in any Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation programs and/or events in the past two years, 218 respondents said ‘yes’, while 151 said ‘no’.

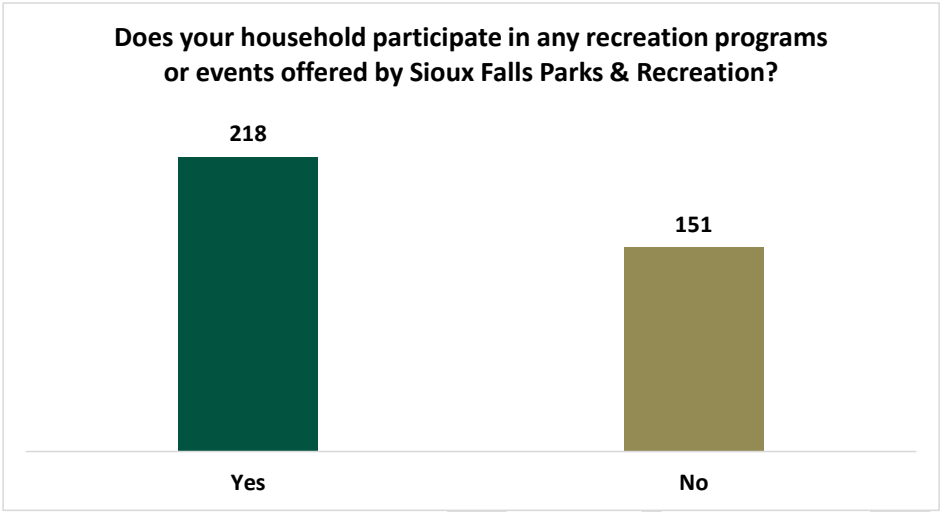


Figure 41 - Social Pinpoint: Program Participation

QUESTION 5: PROGRAM AND EVENT QUALITY

Respondents were also asked about their satisfaction levels with Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation’s programs and events; as seen below, the response was mostly positive, with 76 respondents choosing ‘Excellent’ and 155 respondents choosing ‘Good’.

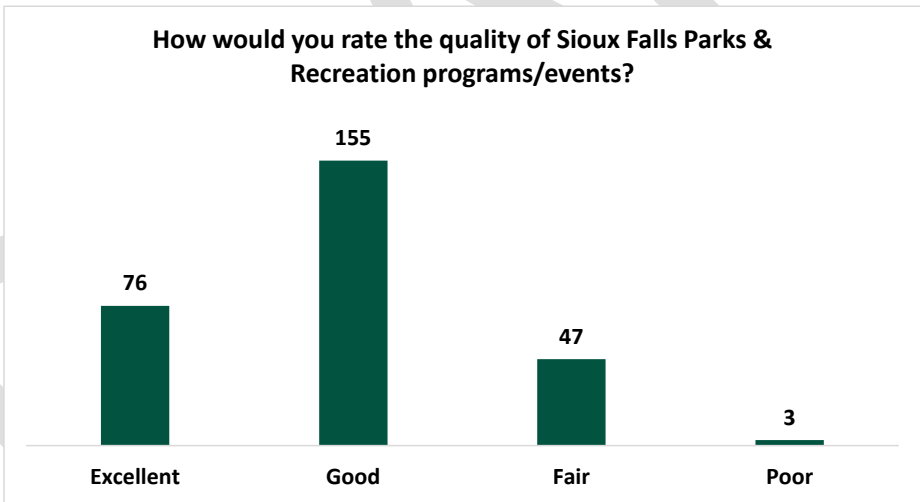


Figure 42 - Social Pinpoint: Program Quality

QUESTION 6: DESIRED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Question 6 asked respondents: “What new and exciting experiences or programs would you love to see offered by Sioux Falls in the next five years?” The following summarizes the response to this open ended question. The full results to this question can be found in **Appendix 7**.

Community feedback highlights a strong desire for expanded recreation opportunities and equitable access across Sioux Falls. Residents repeatedly emphasized the need for additional indoor recreation spaces such as walking tracks, playgrounds, ice rinks, pools, and multipurpose centers

particularly on the east and south sides of the City. There is also a clear call for more neighborhood parks, splash pads, and free or low-cost amenities that serve all ages. Many respondents expressed enthusiasm for extending and improving the City’s popular trail system, including new single-track and hiking trails, better access points, and connections to neighboring communities like Brandon.

A second major theme centers on wellness, fitness, and lifelong learning. Community members requested adult fitness opportunities such as yoga, tai chi, stretching, and aquatic exercise, as well as more recreation leagues, skill-based classes, and community events. Respondents also called for creative and educational offerings such as art fairs, live performances, and environmental programs focused on native plants, birding, and ecology, which indicates a strong interest in recreation that supports both physical health and cultural enrichment.

Another dominant theme involves the growing demand for dog-friendly and seasonal recreation. Residents voiced the need for more off-leash areas, fenced dog parks, and dedicated trails citywide, along with indoor options for cold weather. Some advocated for preserving the natural character of parks while others requested environmental safeguards in off-leash areas. In addition, participants suggested expanding winter and specialty recreation such as pickleball, mountain biking, skiing, ice trails, snow sculptures, and outdoor markets to create year-round activity.

#### QUESTION 7: MOST IMPORTANT OFFERINGS

Respondents were asked their opinion on the most important offerings provided by Sioux Falls. Of the responses, 302 said parks, 247 said trails, followed by 63 for youth programs.

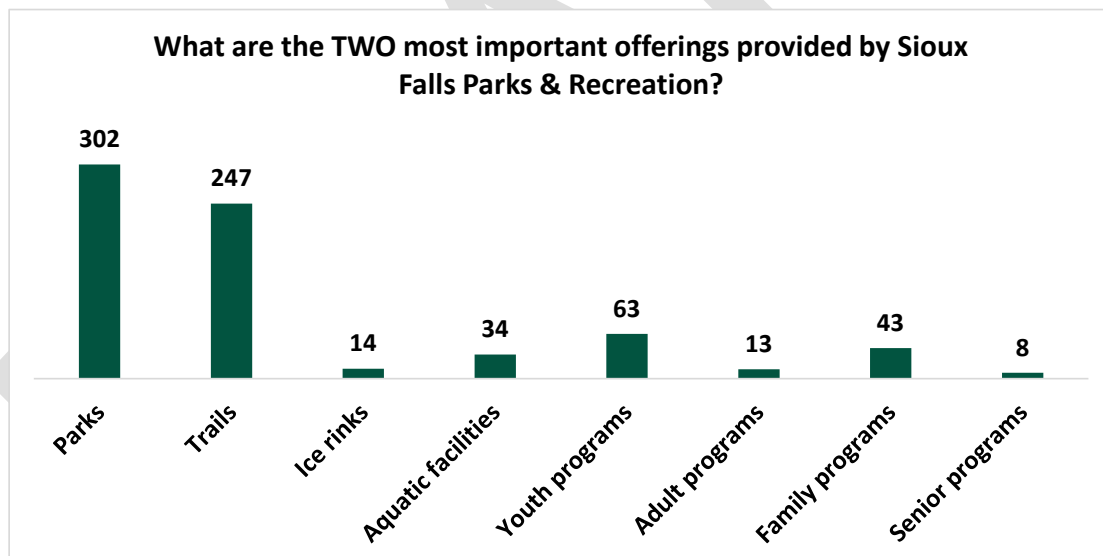


Figure 43 - Social Pinpoint: SFPR Most Important Offerings

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### QUESTION 8: SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH SIOUX FALLS PARKS & RECREATION

Respondents were also asked about their overall satisfaction with the value their household receives from Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation. This question was similarly positive to question 5, with 108 respondents being 'Very Satisfied' and 174 respondents being 'Satisfied'.

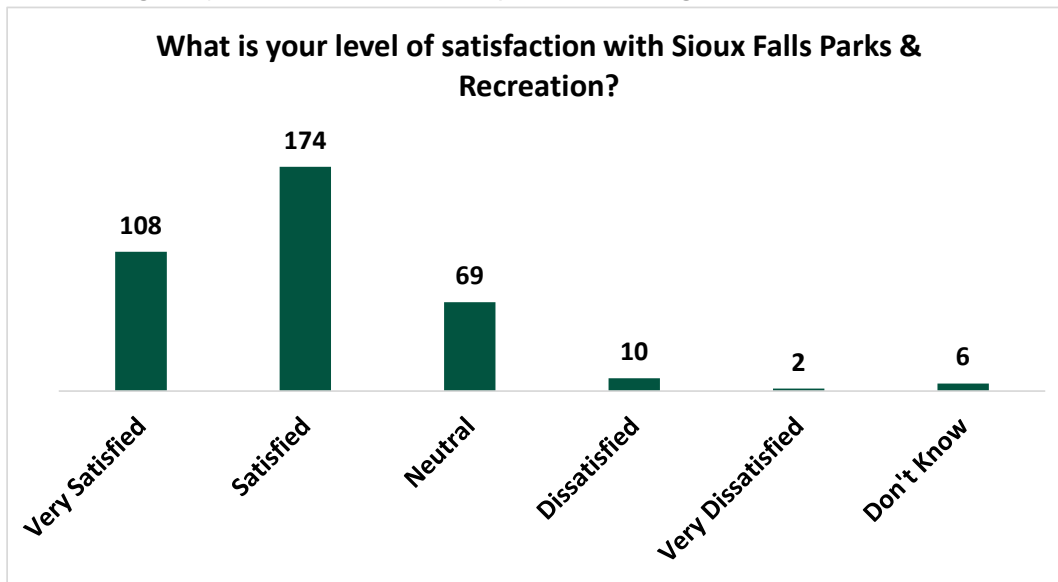


Figure 44 - Social Pinpoint: Satisfaction Level

### QUESTION 9: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The final question (Question 9) was for respondents to share any additional comments that could assist the Department with improving parks, trails, open space, or recreation programs and services. The results to this question can be found in **Appendix 7**.

## 3.5 INTERACTIVE SOCIAL MAP FINDINGS

The project site's Interactive Social Map has been active for the same amount of time as the survey and has yielded 160 individual contributions. The following chart shows the contributions and when they were made.

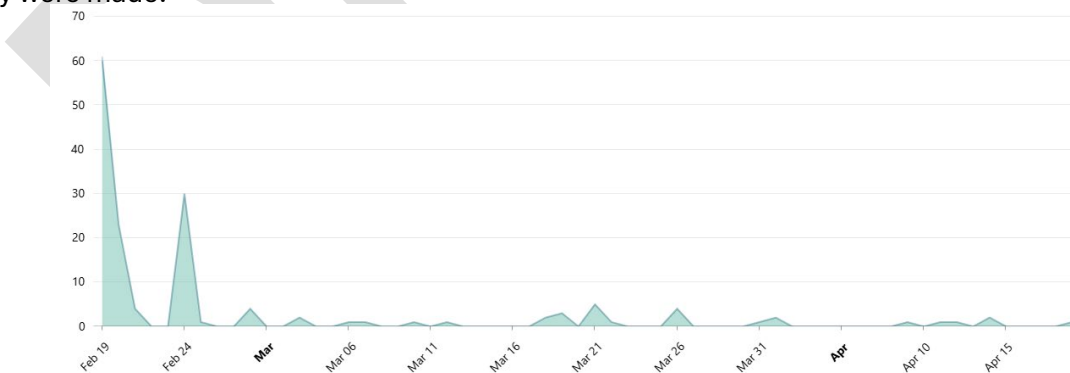
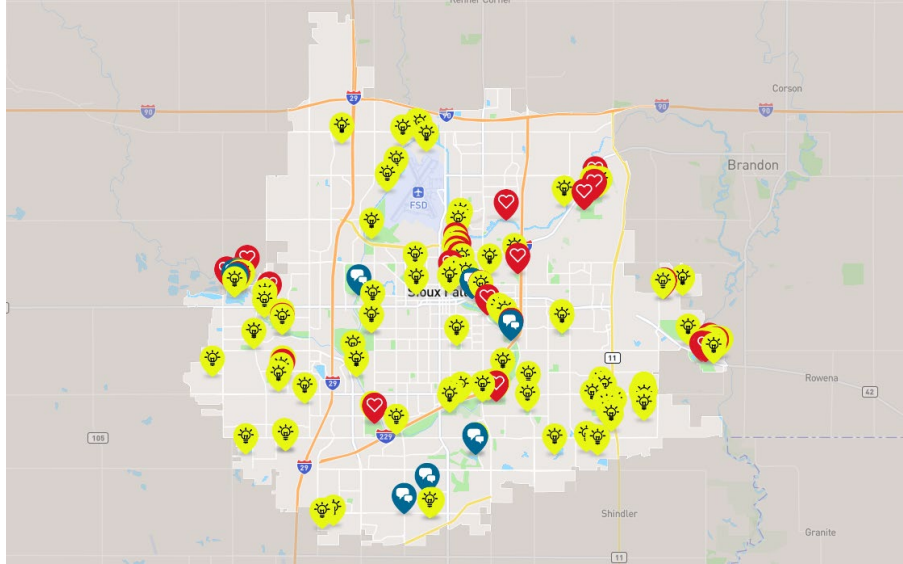


Figure 45 - Social Pinpoint: Mapping Contribution Timeline

Similarly, the maps below show the placement of each social map contribution. The social map function allowed for respondents to utilize three different categories to leave a contribution, including 'Ideas/Suggestions', 'Something I Like', and 'Make a Comment'.

### 3.5.1 OVERALL INTERACTIVE SOCIAL MAP CONTRIBUTIONS

The following map shows the geographical spread of each category, with each Ideas/Suggestions contribution tagged by a yellow and black light bulb, each ‘Something I Like’ contribution tagged by a red and white heart, and each ‘Make a Comment’ contribution tagged by a white and blue speech bubble. The full results of this activity, including a list of each individual response, can be found in **Appendix 7**. The top 5 parks receiving comments are summarized on the following pages.



**Figure 46 - Social Pinpoint: Map Contribution Locations**

### CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARK: FAMILY PARK

Of the 153 individual contributions made on the interactive social map, 13 comments or suggestions were made on Family Park. Those responses can be seen in the table below.

Contribution Type	Contribution	Date
Ideas/Suggestions	Pave the road, parking lots, and trail around the ponds.	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Add disc golf	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Fewer Dog parks	February 24, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Would love to see a playground, fishing shack, native plant garden, etc.	March 18, 2025
Something I Like	My family and I love the off leash trails, and we would like the access to them to remain the same!	February 24, 2025
Something I Like	I'm looking forward to the addition of more family-friendly facilities at Family Park!	February 24, 2025
Something I Like	Love the off leash park	February 19, 2025
Something I Like	I'm excited to see the new bike path expansion that will continue north past Family Park and connect more neighborhoods to the parks!	February 24, 2025

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Something I Like	Leave the off leash dog park area the way it is. It is the only place that we have.	February 19, 2025
Make A Comment	There is already an off-leash area that is fenced for dogs. That is where your dogs can be off leash. The north side of the park is being used as an off leash area. Owners do not pick up after their dogs and loose dogs are interacting with children. Disaster waiting to happen. Please add signage that indicates where dogs can and cannot be off leash. The name is FAMILY Park. It is for everyone. Dog amenities do not trump the safety of everyone, especially children.	March 18, 2025
Make A Comment	Leave the off leash dog park the way it is. Please no bike paths through it! If a playground is added, fence off a playground closer to the lake and leave the dog park alone.	February 20, 2025
Make A Comment	Family park needs picnic tables, swing set, and playground equipment. Make it family accessible.	February 19, 2025
Make A Comment	Dogs and playgrounds/bikes don't mix. There are plenty of other parks better suited to small children, leave the off leash dog area alone how it is. We all told you this in the meeting about it last summer and you've been ignoring it so far. Go "improve" the other parks with modern amenities and boardwalks and bike paths, leave Family Park alone.	February 20, 2025

### CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARK: ARROWHEAD PARK

Arrowhead Park also had a high number of contributions (10). Those comments are listed below.

Contribution Type	Contribution	Date
Ideas/Suggestions	I'm not sure if this is planned or not, but an expansion of the arboretum to this area could add so many more trees and shrubs and walking trails. I think the arboretum has so much great future potential.	April 12, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Add disc golf	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Would love to see outdoor nature playground added here	February 20, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	A pedestrian bridge here would be amazing! There are two wonderful parks that appeal to the same people and share a history. Imagine having a physical link that would join these into one big area,	February 20, 2025



	featuring lakes, trails, gardens, forests, and the stories of quarrying and East Sioux Falls.	
Ideas/Suggestions	Paved roadway, more paved walking paths	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	A pedestrian bridge/tunnel would be amazing here.	March 22, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	You can see the Arboretum/Perry Nature Preserve from this trail, many times we've wished there was a bridge or tunnel to cross Arrowhead Parkway to access these two areas on foot from Arrowhead Park.	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Pave the road and develop walking trails. Keep all activities passive i.e. no disc golf, play structures	February 19, 2025
Something I Like	Love this walking area.	February 21, 2025
Something I Like	Arrowhead is one of our family's favorite parks. We love that it doesn't have a playground and offers more of a quiet, woodsy environment.	February 19, 2025

#### CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARK: FALLS PARK

Falls Park had 11 individual contributions. Those comments are listed below.

<b>Contribution Type</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Date</b>
Ideas/Suggestions	I would love to see a beautiful carousel located in the Falls Park Area, perhaps in the restroom facility area. It would need to be completely enclosed with garage-type doors to open up all around. I visualize beautiful horses for anyone to ride on and pleasing music playing. A fee could be collected to cover expenses. Maybe there is a contributor that would like to have their name on it.	February 20, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Need more biking in Falls Park	March 26, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Place a 4-way stop sign on the street that runs between the Farmers Market and Falls Park. The traffic there on market days is so bad. And to walk across that street is downright dangerous at that time.	February 20, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	I would love to see more trees/flowers added to Falls Park, just to liven it up even more with color/vibrancy.	March 12, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	I would love to see a flower garden added to Falls Park, like the Sunken Gardens in Lincoln, NE. I think this corner of the park would be a great spot for it.	April 11, 2025

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

Ideas/Suggestions	A Ferris wheel with set operating hours and ticket cost affordable for all. The Falls Park view especially at Christmas time would be epic.	April 14, 2025
Something I Like	My family have attended every one of the area Bare Bodkins Shakespeare plays that are performed in the Queen Bee Mill ruins each Summer. Thank you to SF Parks and Rec for making this available and free! The setting is perfect! Don't change a thing here!	February 20, 2025
Something I Like	Love the greenway!	February 19, 2025
Something I Like	Looking forward to the land bridge connecting the farmers market/stockyards ag experience to the park. A great safety solution that also enhances the park!	March 3, 2025
Something I Like	Love the plans shared for Falls Park North and looking forward to seeing them implemented!	February 24, 2025
Something I Like	The free concerts at the Levitt are fantastic, this is the kind of thing that makes Sioux Falls a great place to live!	February 24, 2025

### CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARK: HARMODON PARK

Harmodon Park had 9 individual contributions. Those comments are listed below.

Contribution Type	Contribution	Date
Ideas/Suggestions	It would be nice to access the bike path without off-roading.	February 20, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	A southeast Farmers Market would be welcome for the increased growth and traffic infrastructure that is being developed in this area.	February 24, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Walking path that surrounds Harmodon Park or the nature area to the south of it.	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Community Center with indoor basketball court, turf fields, ice rink, and fitness center.	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Off-leash dog park	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	West side farmers market	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Park roads and parking lots need attention.	February 19, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Because the Falls Park Farmers Market is so huge and so congested, a west side farmers market would be great!	February 20, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Add field turf	February 19, 2025

### CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARK: GREAT BEAR RECREATION PARK

Lastly, Great Bear Recreation Park had 5 individual contributions. Those comments are listed below.

Contribution Type	Contribution	Date
Ideas/Suggestions	Less mountain bike trails. Please leave it to hikers and walkers.	February 24, 2025
Ideas/Suggestions	Add disc golf	February 19, 2025
Something I Like	Our family loves utilizing the archery range from early spring until late fall!	February 20, 2025
Something I Like	I can't wait to hike and ride the new singletrack trails at Great Bear! This update will make Great Bear a much better year-round destination.	February 24, 2025
Something I Like	Our family really appreciates having Great Bear in town for skiing and snowboarding. Prices have skyrocketed at ski resorts around the country and we're very fortunate to have an affordable option in Sioux Falls.	February 24, 2025



### 3.6 STATISTICALLY-VALID NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

#### 3.6.1 OVERVIEW

ETC Institute administered a parks and recreation needs assessment survey for the City of Sioux Falls, South Dakota during the winter of 2024-2025. The purpose of the survey was to help determine parks and recreation needs and priorities for the City of Sioux Falls.

#### 3.6.2 METHODOLOGY

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households throughout Sioux Falls. 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.

After the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute followed up with residents to encourage participation. To prevent people who were not residents of Sioux Falls 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 goal was to receive 400 completed surveys from households within the City of Sioux Falls. This goal was exceeded, with 483 completed surveys collected. The overall results for the sample of 483 residents have a precision of at least  $\pm 4.5\%$  at the 95% level of confidence.

This report contains the following:

- Executive Summary with major findings (Section 1)
- Charts showing the overall results of the survey (Section 2)
- Priority Investment Ratings (PIR) (Section 3)
- Tabular data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey (Section 4)
- A copy of the cover letter and survey instrument (Section 5)

The major findings of the survey are summarized in the following pages with the full report in **Appendix 1**.

## FACILITIES/PROGRAMS USE

**Facilities Use:** Ninety-five percent (95%) indicated that they have visited a park/facility that is offered by the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department. They rated the overall quality of the parks/facilities that they have visited. Thirty-eight percent (38%) rated excellent, fifty-three percent (53%) rated good, nine percent (9%) rated fair, and one percent (1%) rated poor.

**Q2a. How would you rate the overall quality of the parks and recreation facilities offered by the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department that you/your household have visited?**

by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")

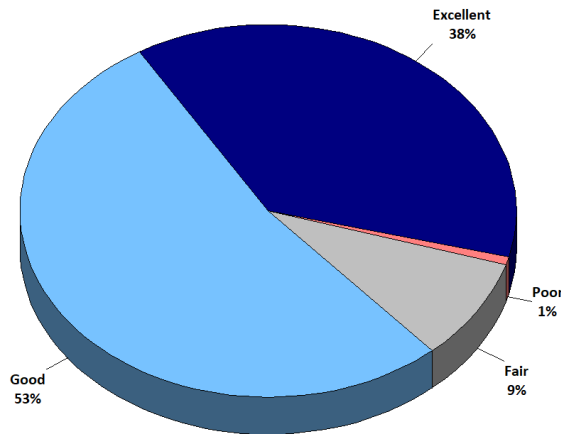


Figure 47 - SVS: Facilities Quality

**Programs Use:** Fifty percent (50%) indicated that they have participated in a program/event in the past year. They rated the overall quality of the programs/events they participated in. Thirty-nine percent (39%) rated excellent, fifty-one percent (51%) rated good, nine percent (9%) rated fair, and one percent (1%) rated poor. For those who did not participate in programs/events in the past year (50%), they selected reason why they did not participate. The common reasons were: I don't know what is offered (42%), too busy/not interested (33%), and program times are not convenient (18%).

**Q4a. How would you rate the overall quality of the recreation programs/events offered by the Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department that you/your household have participated in?**

by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")

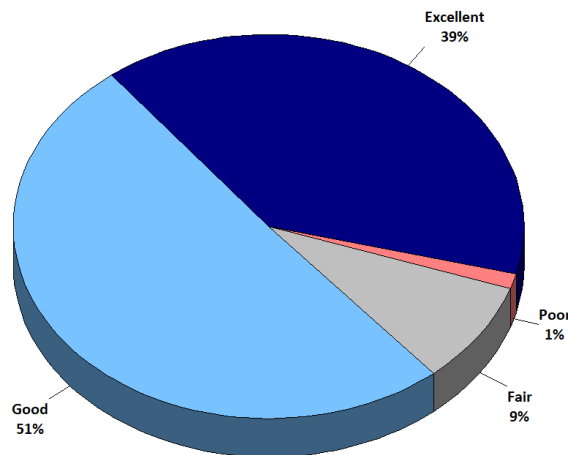


Figure 48 - SVS: Program Quality

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### NON-CITY ORGANIZATIONS

Respondents selected all the non-City organizations that they used for recreation and/or sports activities in the past year. The most used organizations were: South Dakota state recreation areas (63%), places of worship (48%), and school districts (44%).

**Q3. From the following list, please check all of the non-City organizations that you/your household have used for recreation and/or sports activities during the last year.**

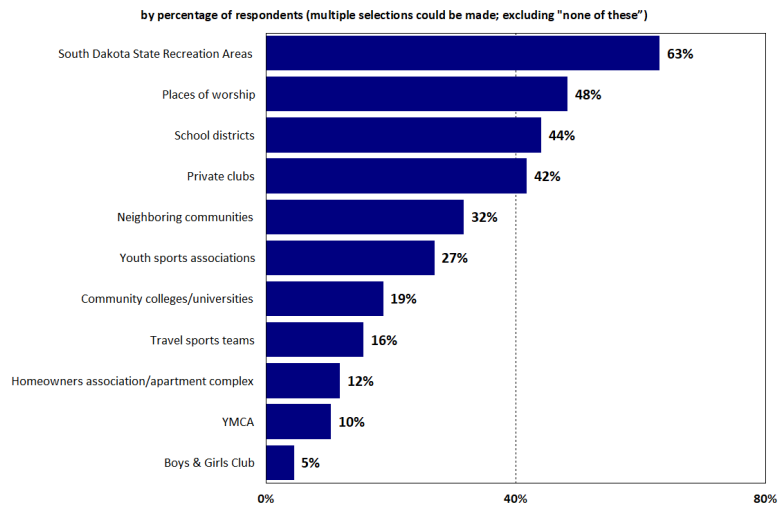


Figure 49 - SVS: Non City Organizations Used

### COMMUNICATION

Respondents selected the resources they used to keep up with the City's parks and recreation department. The most used resources were: social media (66%), website (56%), and from friends or neighbors (52%). Based on the sum of top three choices, the commonly used resources were: social media (63%), website (49%), and department program guide (39%).

**Q6. From the following list, please check all the ways you currently learn about the Sioux Falls Recreation Department.**

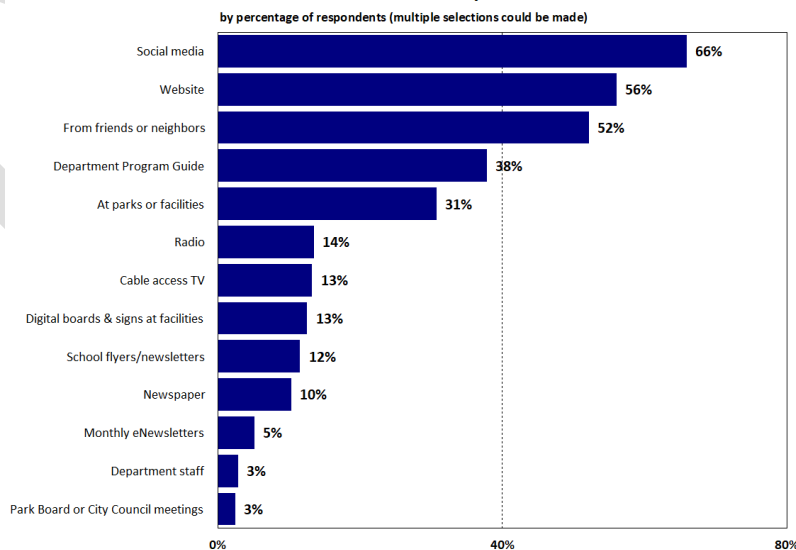


Figure 50 - SVS: Learn About SFPR



## BENEFITS, IMPORTANCE, AND IMPROVEMENTS TO PARKS AND RECREATION

**Potential Actions to Improve the Parks and Recreation System:** Respondents selected their level of support for potential actions the City could take to improve its parks and recreation system. The most supported actions were: improve existing small neighborhood parks (82%), improve existing paved walking & biking trails (79%), and develop new trails that connect to existing trails (79%). Based on the sum of top three choices, the three improvements they would be most willing to support with their tax dollars were: improve existing small neighborhood parks (35%), improve existing paved walking & biking trails (28%), develop new trails that connect to existing trails (25%).

### Q17. The following is a list of actions the City of Sioux Falls could take to improve its parks and recreation system. Please indicate your support for each potential action.

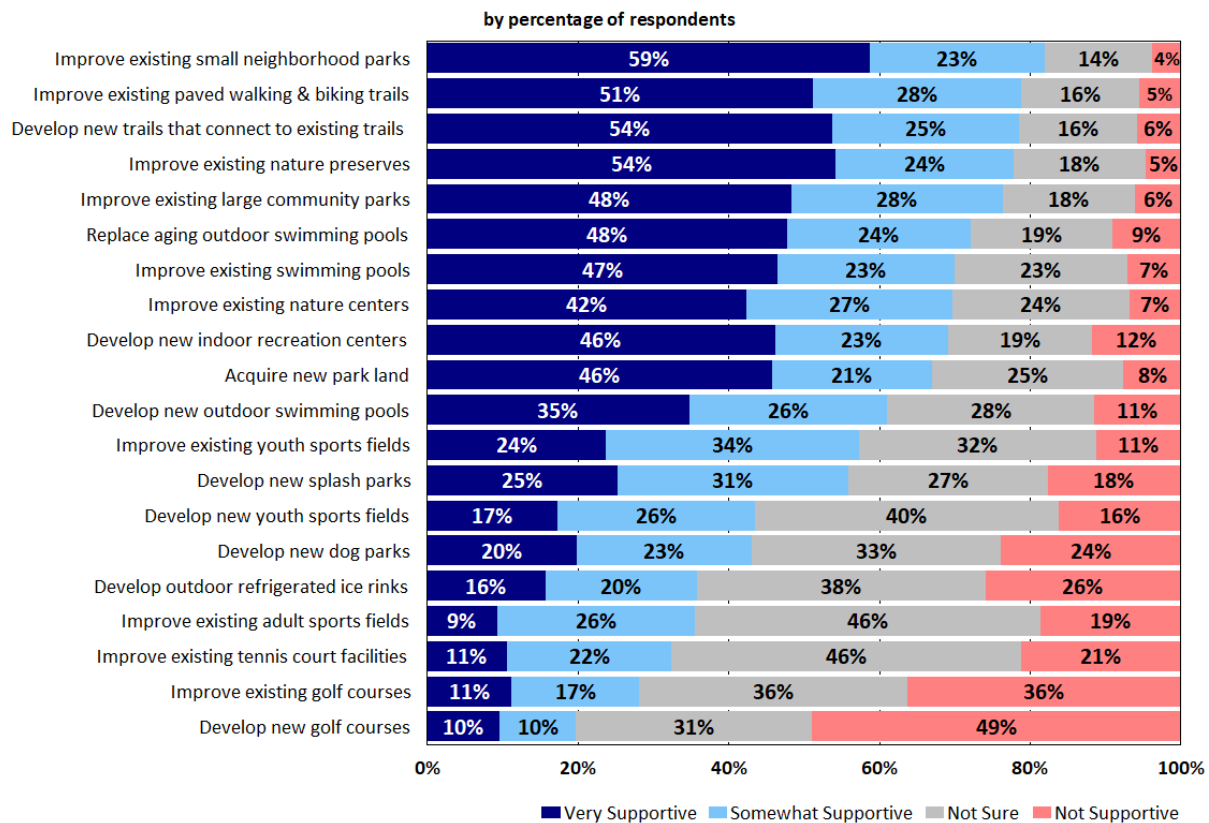


Figure 51 - SVS: Support for Potential Actions

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

**Potential Funding Mechanisms:** Respondents selected their level of support for the potential funding mechanisms that could be used to pay for those actions. The most supported funding mechanisms were: corporate sponsorship & donations (82%), grants from state, federal, & private sources (82%), and enterprise operations (73%). Based on the sum of top three choices, the most supported funding mechanisms are: grants from state, federal, & private sources (57%), corporate sponsorship & donations (56%), and existing sales tax revenue (34%).

**Q19. Listed below are the potential funding mechanisms that could be used to pay for the actions you indicated you most support in Question 18. Please rate your level of support for each of the following funding mechanisms.**

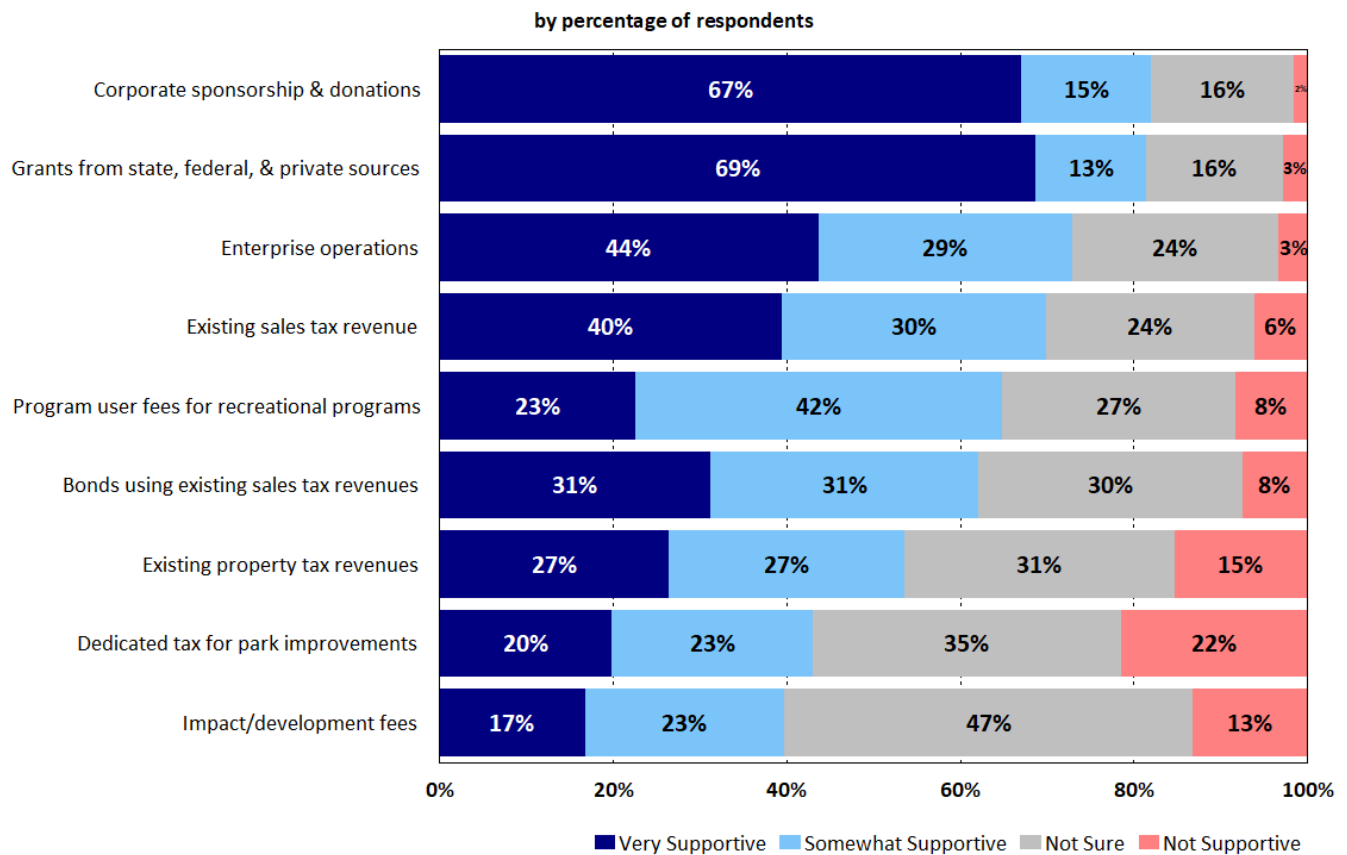


Figure 52 - SVS: Support for Funding Mechanisms

## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

**Satisfaction:** Respondents rated how satisfied they were with the overall value they received from facilities, programs, or services at Sioux Falls Recreation. Seventeen percent (17%) were very satisfied, forty-three percent (43%) were satisfied, thirty-two percent (32%) were neutral, five percent (5%) were dissatisfied, and three percent (3%) were very dissatisfied.

**Q16. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the overall value that your household receives from facilities, programs, or services at Sioux Falls Recreation.**

by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know")

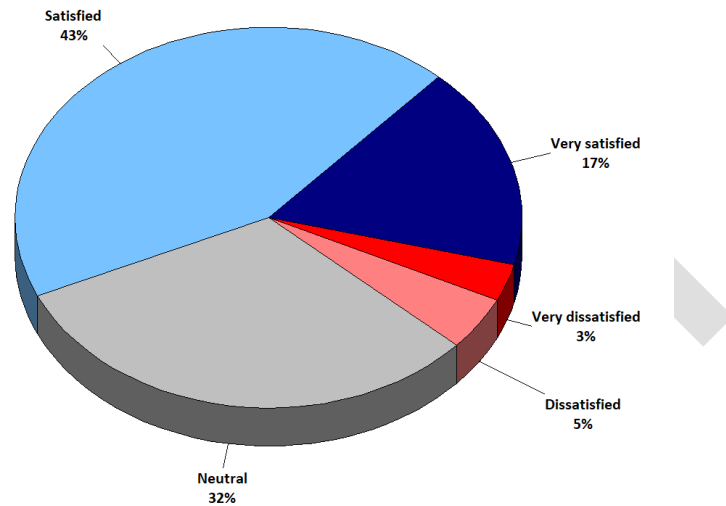


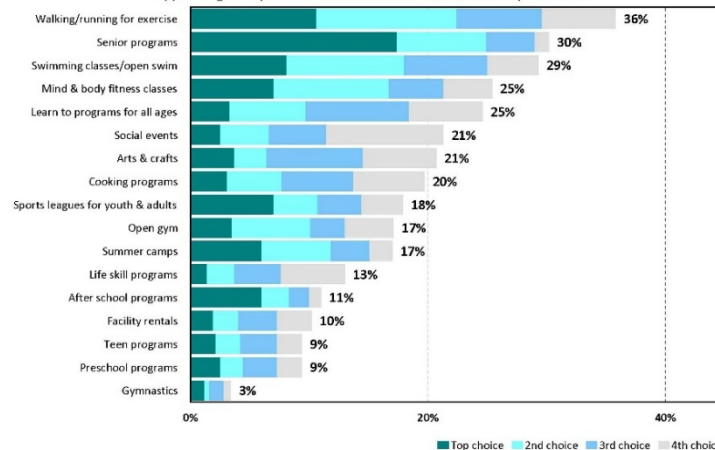
Figure 53 - SVS: Satisfaction with SFPR

**Indoor Recreation Amenities:** Respondents were asked to name their top four choices on what types of potentially new indoor recreation amenities they or their household would use for activities. Thirty-six percent (36%) said walking/running for exercise, thirty (30%) said senior programs, twenty-nine percent (29%) said swimming classes/open swim, and twenty-five (25%) said mind & body fitness classes, as well as twenty-five (25%) for learn to programs for all ages.

City of Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

**Q15. As the City of Sioux Falls explores their current and potentially some new indoor recreation amenities, please select up to four activities listed below that you/your household would like to utilize.**

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



ETC Institute (2025)

36

Figure 54 - SVS: Indoor Recreation Amenities You/Your Household Would Utilize

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

**Program Fees:** Overall, respondents feel programs serving more vulnerable members of the community or community-wide needs (like those for special populations, low-income residents, and learn-to-swim classes) should be more supported by tax dollars. At the same time, programs with more individual or competitive benefits (like adult sports leagues, field rentals, and adult classes) are seen as appropriate for higher user-fee contributions. The overall takeaway is that residents support a tiered funding approach where programs that benefit the broader public should rely more on taxes, while individual or exclusive (those of the more affluent) activities rely more on user fees.

**Q11. The cost to provide recreation programs are funded through a combination of participant fees and general tax revenues. The following are categories of programs offered by Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation. For each program category, please indicate what percent of the program cost should be paid by taxes and what percent by user fees.**

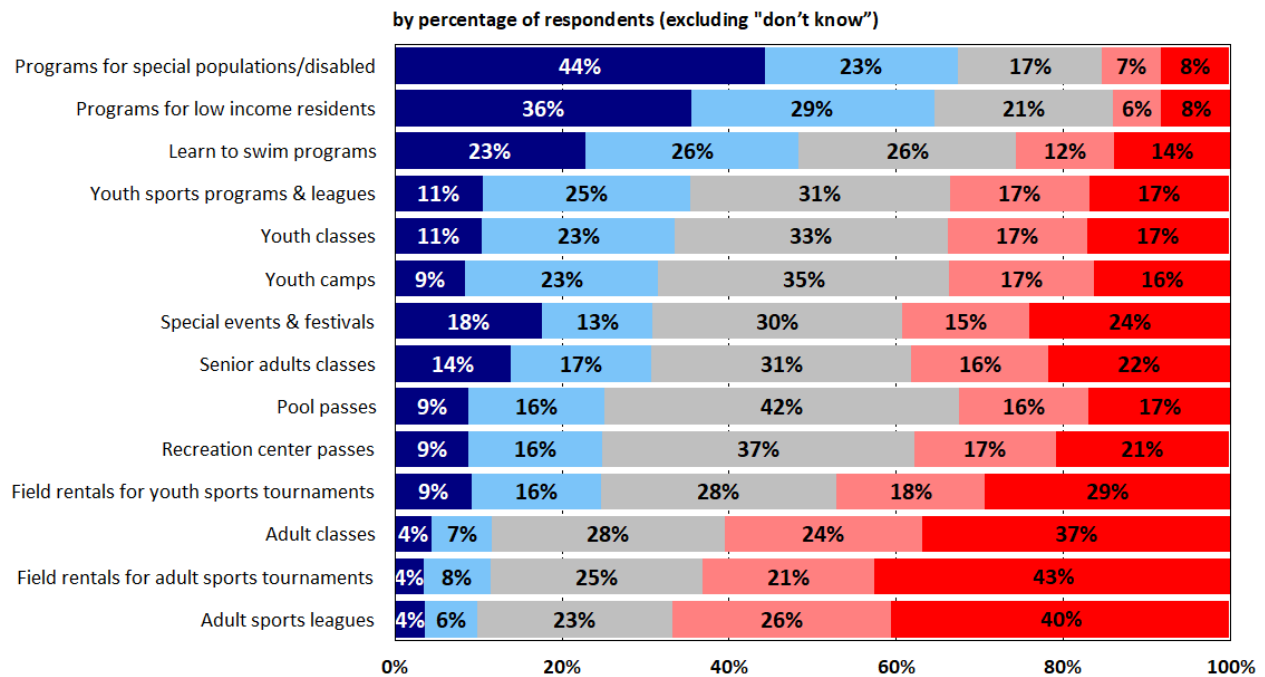


Figure 55 - SVS: Program Cost from Taxes vs User Fees

## PRIORITY INVESTMENT RATING FOR PROGRAMS

**Program Needs:** Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 24 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 facilities.

The three programs with the highest percentage of households that have a need:

1. Adult fitness & wellness programs
2. Nature programs
3. Special events

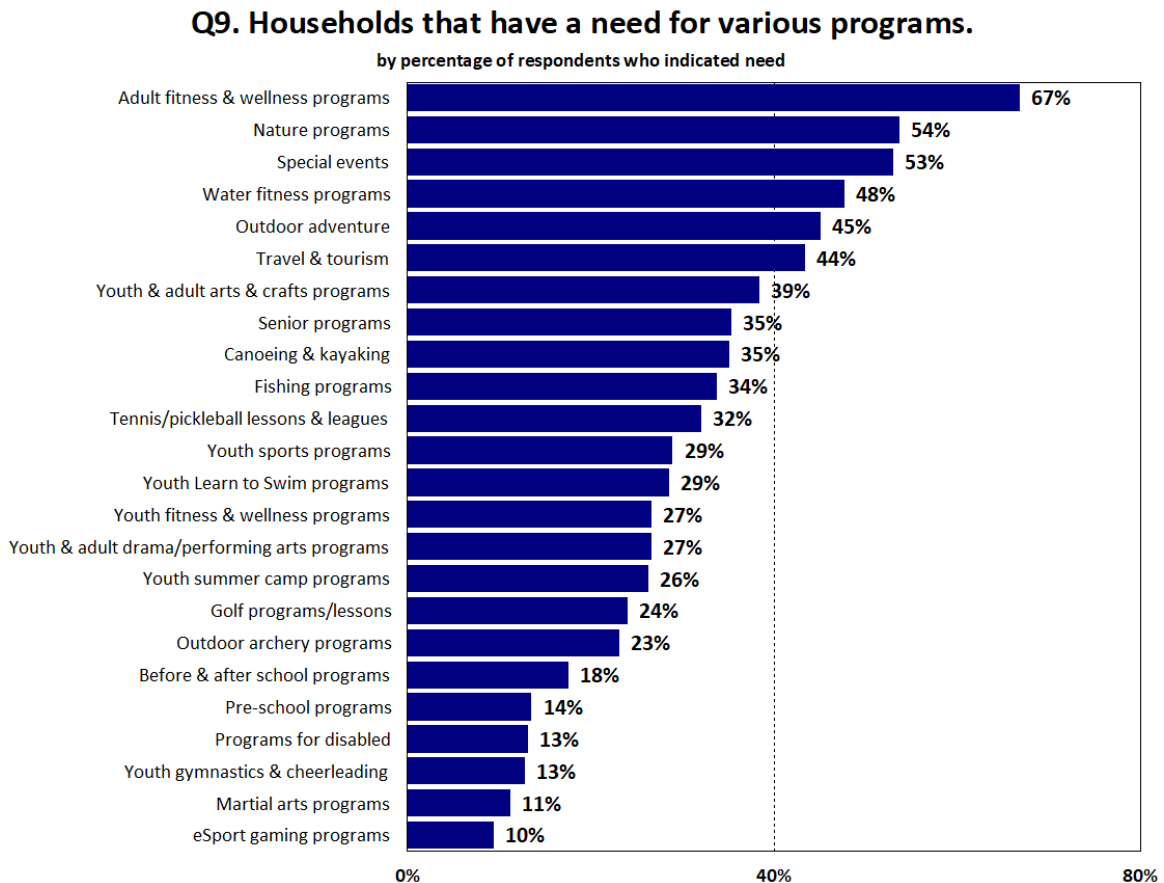


Figure 56 - SVS: Household Need for Programs

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

**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 facilities that ranked most important to residents:

1. Adult fitness & wellness programs
2. Senior programs
3. Nature programs
4. Special events

### Q10. Which four programs are most important to your household?

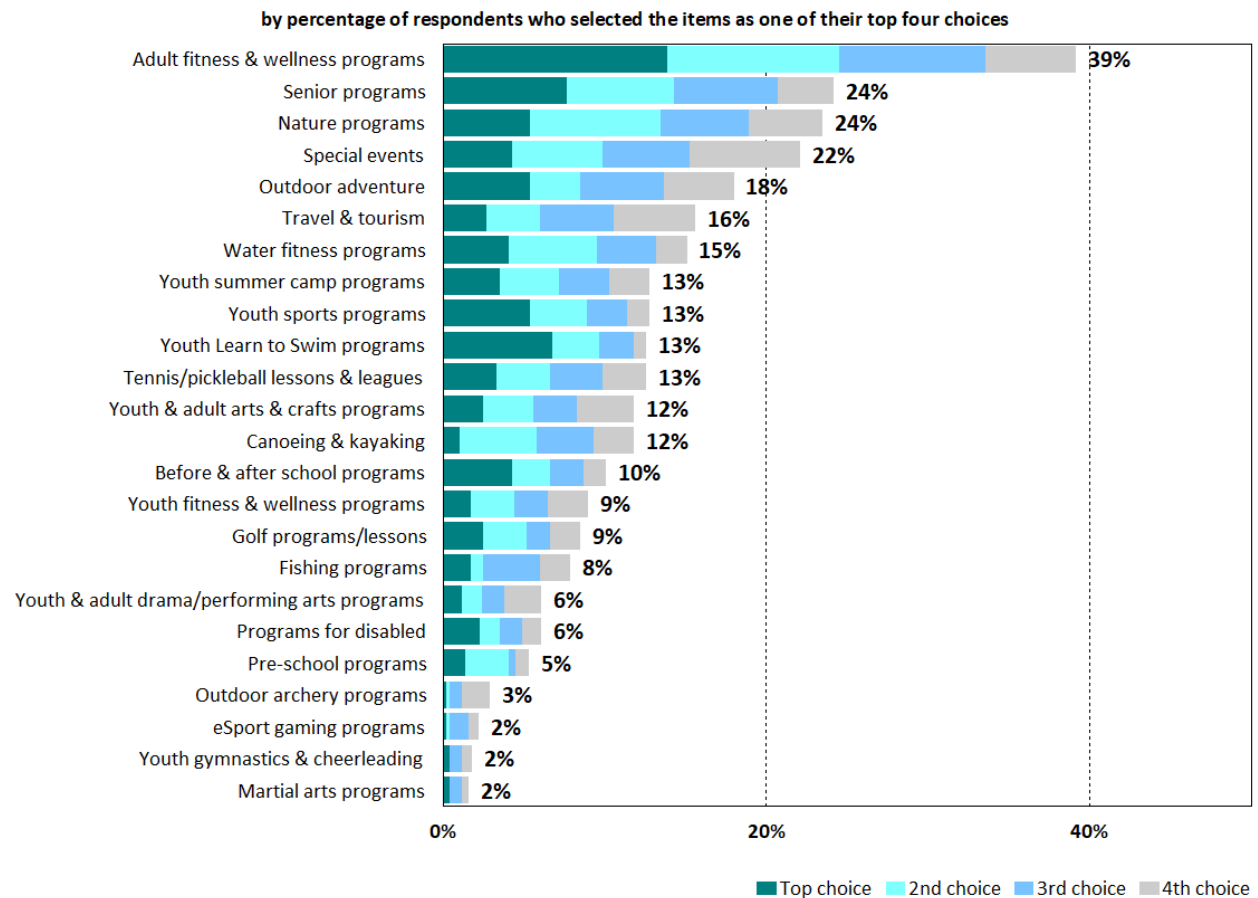


Figure 57 - SVS: Program Importance



**Needs Being Met:** Below is how well the needs for programs are being met. The three programs with the highest percentage of households that are met:

1. Golf programs/lessons
2. Youth sports programs
3. Youth learn to swim programs

### Q9c. How well needs are being met for various programs.

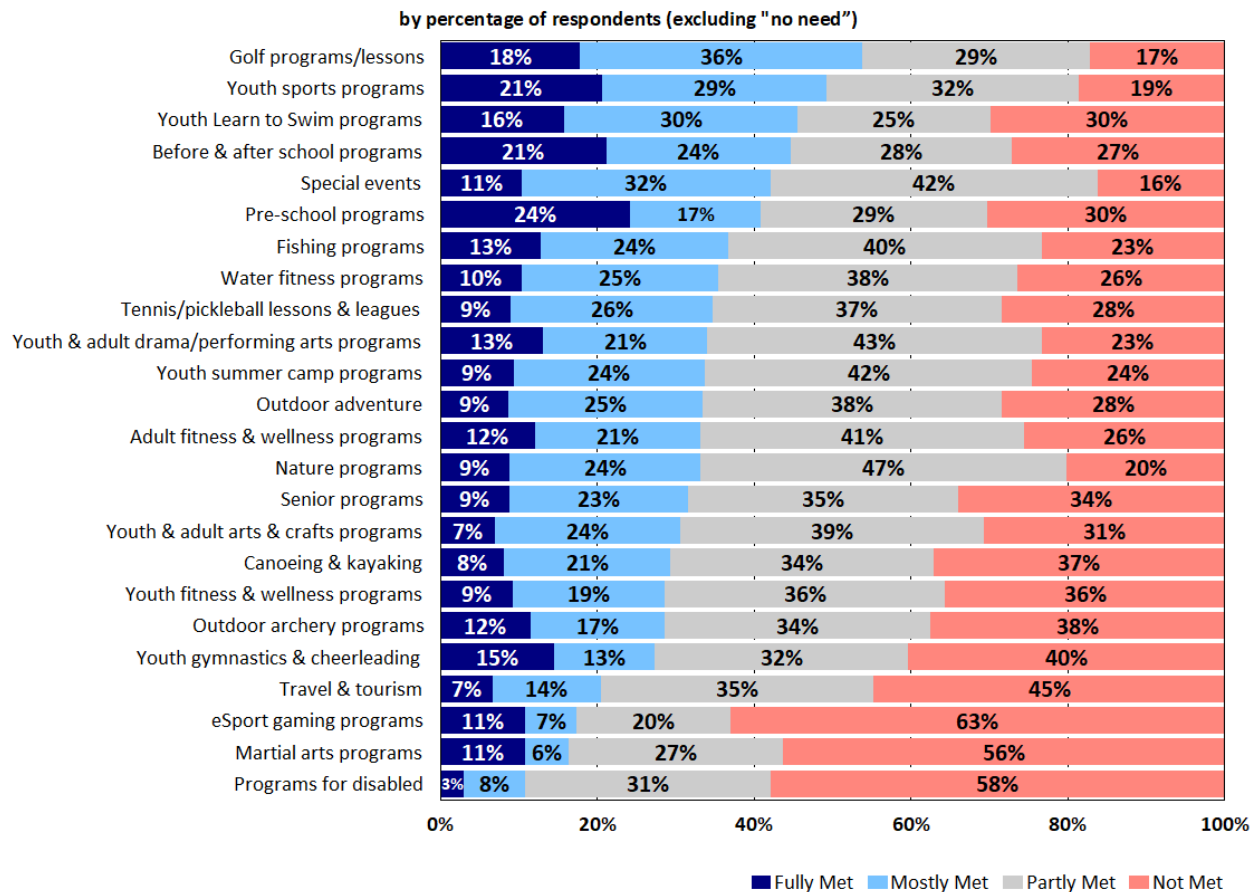


Figure 58 - SVS: Program Needs Being Met

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

**Priorities for Program Investments:** The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the programs. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Appendix 1.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following programs were rated as high priorities for investment:

1. Adult fitness & wellness programs (PIR=200)
2. Nature programs (PIR=140)
3. Special events (PIR=125)
4. Travel & tourism (PIR=117)
5. Senior programs (PIR=116)
6. Outdoor adventure (PIR=113)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 24 programs assessed in the survey.

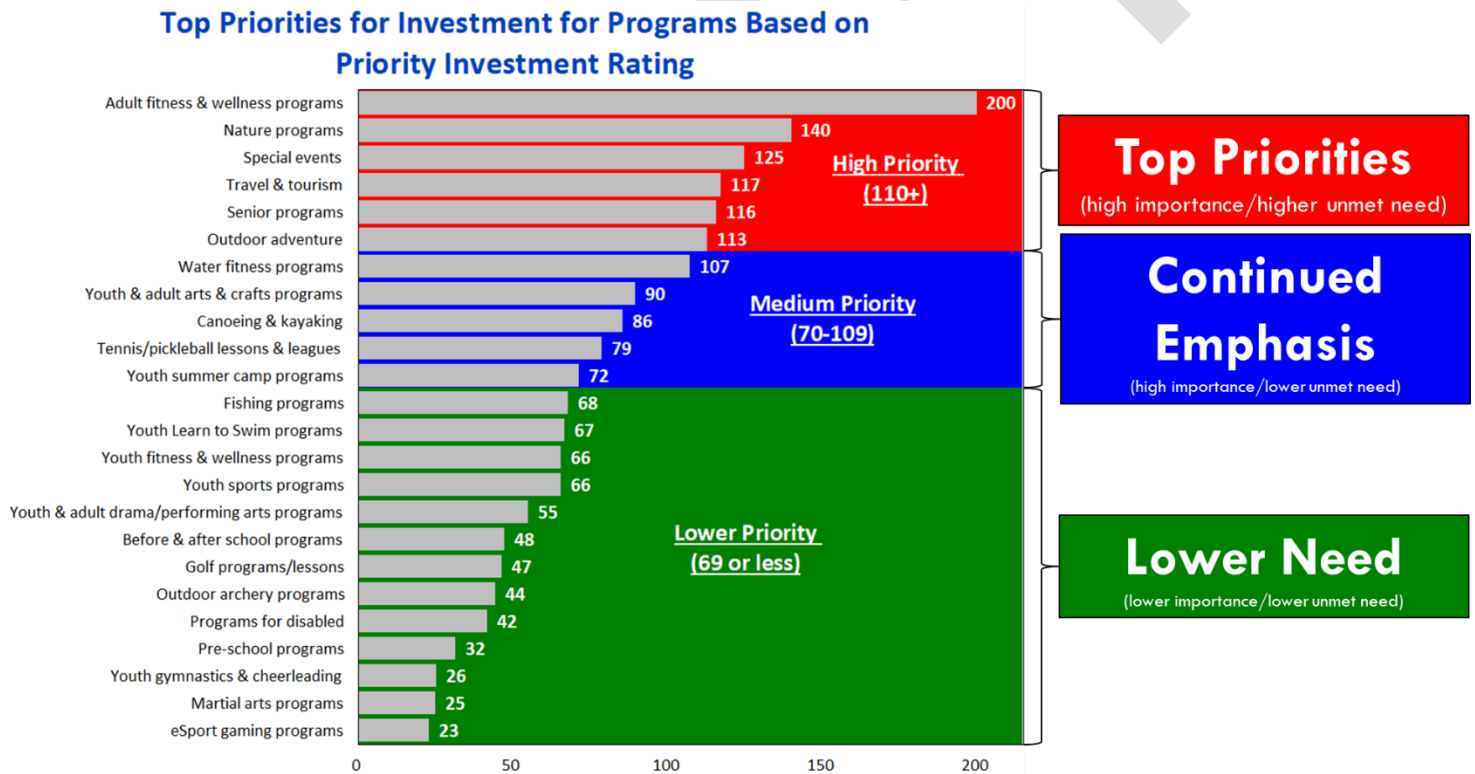


Figure 59 - SVS: Priorities for Program Investments

## PRIORITY INVESTMENT RATING FOR PROGRAMS

**Facility Needs:** Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 34 recreation 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 various facilities.

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

1. Walking/hiking trails
2. Small neighborhood parks
3. Large community parks

### Q13. Households that have a need for various facilities/amenities.

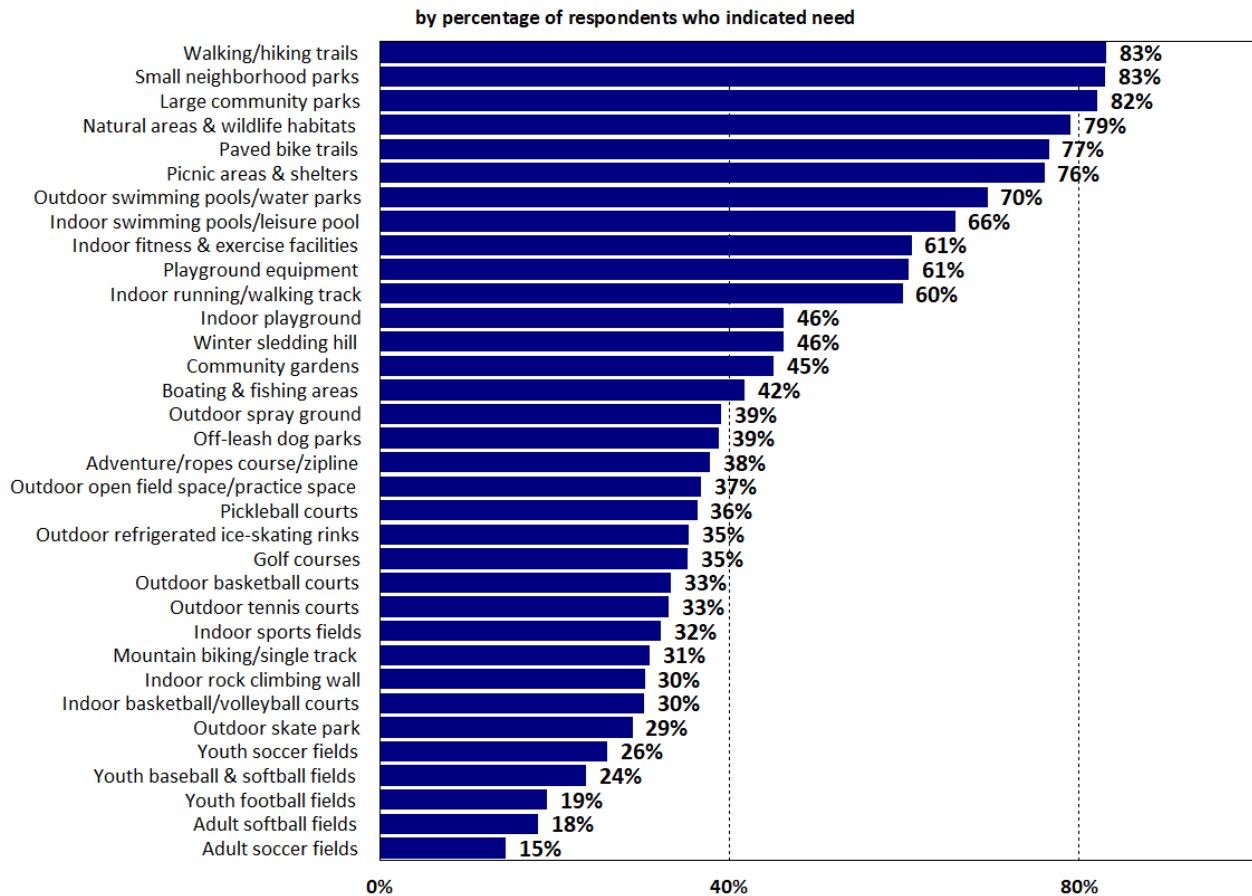


Figure 60 - SVS: Need for Facilities/Amenities

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

**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. Small neighborhood parks
2. Walking/hiking trails
3. Paved bike trails
4. Natural areas & wildlife habitats

### Q14. Which four facilities/amenities are most important to your household?

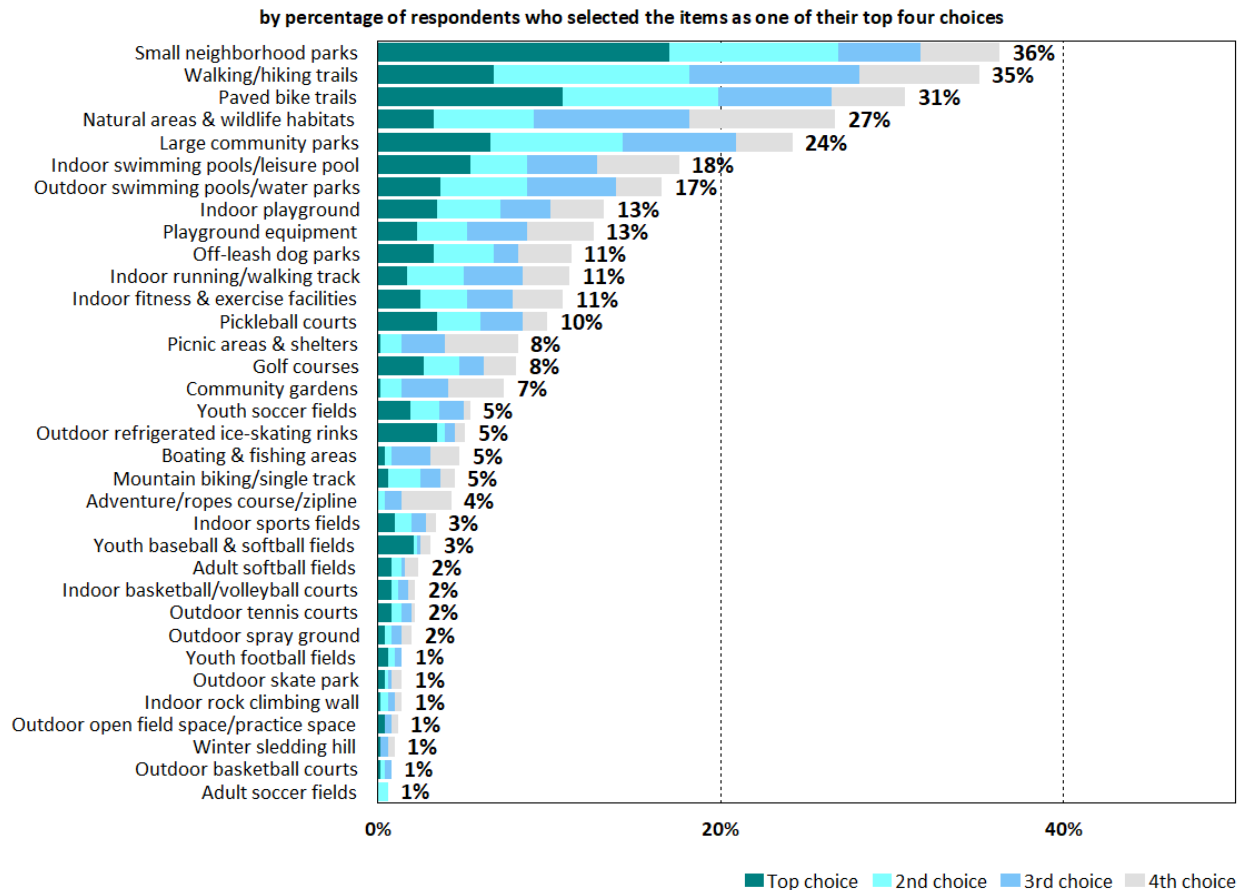


Figure 61 - SVS: Facility Importance

**Needs Being Met:** Below is how well the needs for facilities are being met. The three programs with the highest percentage of households that are met:

1. Youth soccer fields
2. Adults softball fields
3. Golf courses

### Q13c. How well needs are being met for various facilities/amenities.

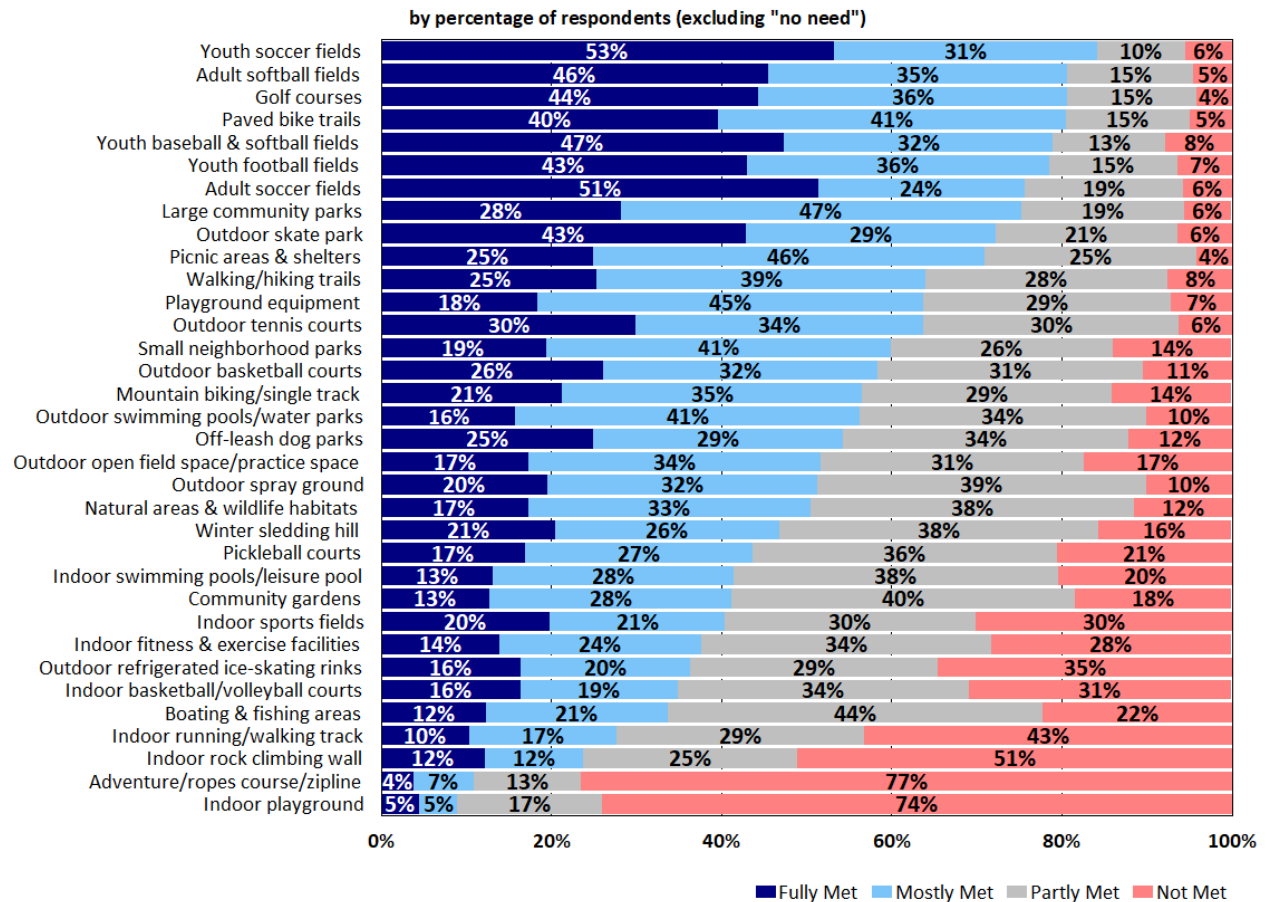


Figure 62 - SVS: Facility Needs Being Met

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

**Priorities for Facility Investments:** The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs

(1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facilities. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 4 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

1. Small neighborhood parks (PIR=177)
2. Walking/hiking trails (PIR=166)
3. Natural areas & wildlife habitats (PIR=164)
4. Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool (PIR=137)
5. Indoor playground (PIR=134)
6. Indoor running/walking track (PIR=131)
7. Paved bike trails (PIR=119)
8. Indoor fitness & exercise facilities (PIR=117)
9. Outdoor swimming pools/water parks (PIR=116)
10. Large community parks (PIR=113)

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

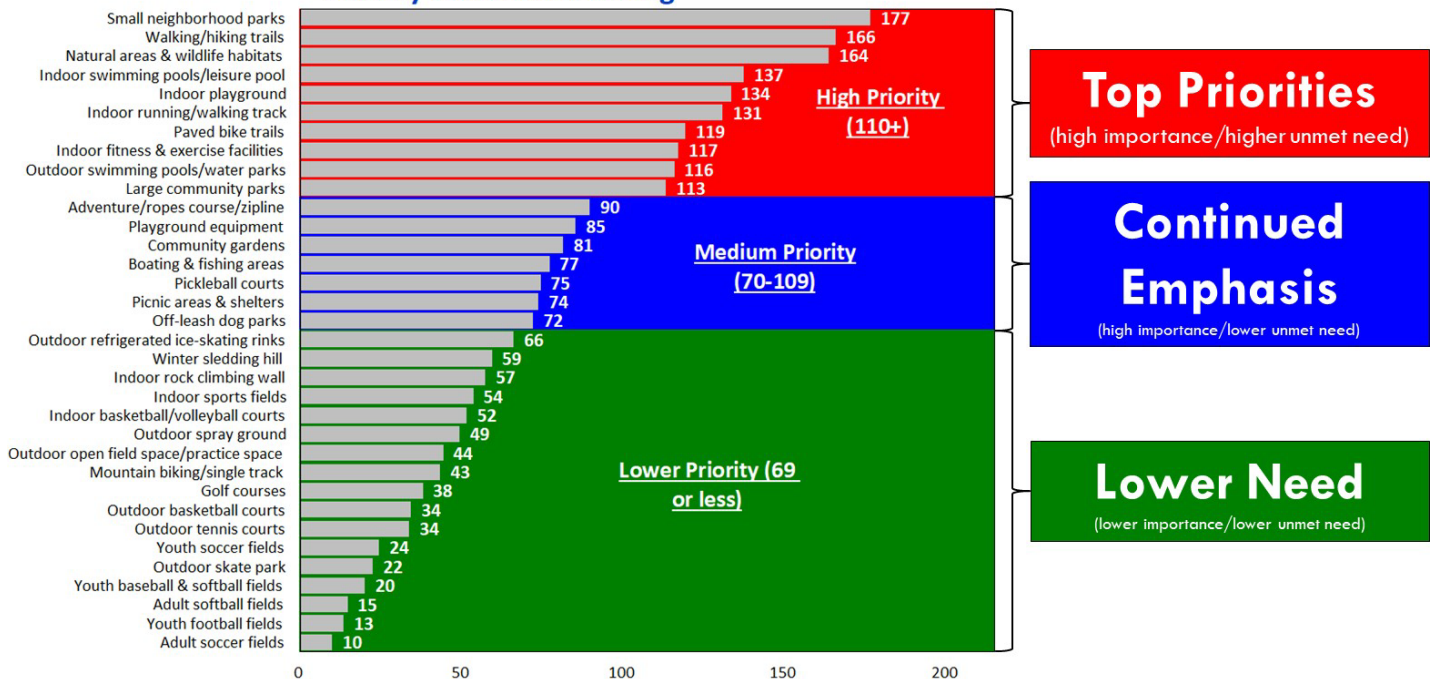


Figure 63 - SVS: Priorities for Facility Investments



### 3.7 THEMES FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Based on the quantitative and qualitative methods used to engage the Carmel community, themes emerged around programming, connectivity, parks and facilities, and funding that are summarized below:



- Park Maintenance & Cleanliness
  - SFPR is highly valued by the community for maintaining clean and well-kept parks.
  - Continue to update existing neighborhood parks.



- Diverse Parks & Amenities
  - Continue to offer a wide variety of parks and amenities that cater to all age groups and interests, from large destination parks to neighborhood spaces.



- Year-Round Recreation
  - There is a call for more indoor recreational spaces, as well as adult fitness and wellness programs.
  - Year-round facilities to support activities during colder months, with also a focus on expanding outdoor winter activities.



- Sustainable Growth & Existing Infrastructure Improvements
  - As Sioux Falls grows, there is a need for strategic planning, investment in infrastructure, and securing parkland to meet future demands.
  - Continue to take care of existing parks and trails.



- Accessibility & Connectivity
  - Continue to promote walkability and multi-modal transportation.
  - Ensuring access to parks and recreational programs, particularly in underserved communities, is a major priority.

# CHAPTER FOUR – PARKS, FACILITIES, AND OPEN SPACE ANALYSIS

## 4.1 PARK DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

### 4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

In developing design principles for parks, it is important that each park be programmed, planned, and designed to meet the needs of its service area and classification within the overall park and recreation system. Every park, regardless of type, needs to have an established set of outcomes. Park planners/designers design to those outcomes, including operational and maintenance costs associated with the design outcomes.

Each park classification category serves a specific purpose, and the features and facilities in the park must be designed for the number of age segments the park is intended to serve, the desired length of stay deemed appropriate, and the uses it has been assigned. Recreation needs and services require different design standards based on the age segments that make up the community that will be using the park. A varying number of age segments will be accommodated with the park program depending on the classification of the park. The age segments used for this purpose are broken into the following sets and subsets:

- Ages 0-17
  - Ages 0-5
  - Ages 6-12
  - Ages 13-17
- Ages 18-34
  - Ages 18-24
  - Ages 25-34
- Ages 35-54
  - Ages 35-44
  - Ages 45-54
- Ages 55-74
  - Ages 55-64
  - Ages 65-74
- Ages 76+

### 4.1.2 DEFINITIONS

**Land Usage:** The percentage of space identified for active or passive use within a park. A park master plan should follow land usage guidelines.

- **Active Use:** An area that requires more intensive development to support the desired recreation activities. Spaces are designed specifically to encourage people to congregate and interact with each other. Active areas include built amenities, such as playgrounds, splash pads, sports courts or fields, community centers, program pavilions, swimming pools, rentable shelters, and similar amenities. Active may also be used in reference to a program or activity that requires a more vigorous physical effort to participate, such as playing sports, swimming, working out, skating, etc.
- **Passive Use:** An area that has minimal to no development, usually for the purpose of providing non-programmed open space and/or preserving or restoring natural habitat. Areas that are developed are designed to promote casual and frequently self-directed activities,

such as hiking, fishing, bird watching, wildlife viewing, picnicking, kite-flying, Frisbee, or similar generally unstructured activities. Built amenities may include trails, boardwalks, fishing piers, benches, picnic tables, grass meadows, etc. Passive may also be used in reference to a program or activity that requires minimal physical exertion to participate, such as attending an arts and crafts class, continuing education program, etc.

**Park/Facility Classifications:** Includes Urban Plaza, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Special Use Park/Facility, School Grounds, Greenways/Trails, and Nature Preserves/Open Space.

**Signature Facility/Amenity:** This is an enhanced facility or amenity which is viewed by community as deserving of special recognition due to its design, location, function, natural resources, etc. A signature facility/amenity is frequently synonymous with the park from the general public's perspective. A signature facility/amenity may also be a revenue facility. Examples include a standalone sports complex, community center, waterpark, destination playground, amenities or natural features.

**Site Features:** The specific types of facilities and amenities included within a park. Site features include such elements as a community center, playground, splashpads, picnic shelters, restrooms, game courts, trails, open meadows, nature preserves, etc. These types of amenities are categorized as lead or support amenities. Community demographics and needs should be considered when identifying site features for a park.

**Revenue Facilities:** These include facilities that charge a fee to use in the form of an admission fee, player fee, team fee, or permit fee. These could include pools, golf courses, tennis courts, recreation centers, sport field complexes, concession facilities, hospitality centers, reservable shelters, outdoor or indoor theatre space, and special event spaces.

**User Experiences:** The type of intentional recreation experiences a user has available to them when visiting a park. A park master plan should incorporate user experience recommendations based on the following types of experiences:

- **Leader-Directed Experiences:** An experience received from a facility, amenity or service where participant involvement is directed by a leader and supervision is required for participation. These experiences, usually provided through an organized class, often promote skill development or learning, but may be for recreational purposes only. Leader-directed experiences typically require advance registration and include a user fee to participate. Examples include day camps, learn-to-swim programs, environmental education classes, sports leagues, etc. Certain types of special events, such as concerts, 5K fun runs/walks, or similar events that rely on the performance or significant coordination of someone to occur are also considered leader-directed experiences.
- **Self-Directed Experience:** An experience received from a facility, amenity or service that provides opportunities for individuals or groups to participate independently and at their own pace. Supervision, when provided, is primarily to promote safety or regulate attendance. A user fee may or may not be charged, depending on the setting. Advance registration is often not required. Examples include playground or splashpad usage, picnicking, disc golf, nature walks, walking a dog, etc. General use of a community center, such as using fitness equipment, using the gym or indoor aquatic during open times or walking the track, are also considered self-directed experiences.

### 4.2 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

#### 4.2.1 URBAN PLAZAS

An urban plaza is a small outdoor space, usually less than 0.5 acres, but maybe up to 8 acres, and most often located in an urban area surrounded by commercial buildings or higher-density housing. Urban plazas are small, urban open spaces that serve a variety of functions, such as small event space, play areas for children, spaces for relaxing and socializing, taking lunch breaks, etc.

Successful urban plazas have four key qualities: they are accessible, allow people to engage in activities, are comfortable spaces that are inviting, and are sociable places. In general, pocket parks offer minimal amenities on site and are not designed to support organized recreation services. The service area for urban plazas is usually less than a quarter mile and they are intended for users within close walking distance of the park.

This type of park is not commonly found in a public park system, and is normally designed, constructed and maintained as a common area within a downtown corridor. The City of Sioux Falls inventory includes Fawick Park, Fort Sod, Philips Avenue Plaza, Pioneer Plaza, and VanEps Park.

Urban plazas are not designed to accommodate more than very limited recreation services. They are typically able to provide recreation services for one user group such as a playground, splashpad, benches for walkers, landscape and trails for enjoyment of the natural environment or display of public artwork.

- Size of park: Urban plazas are usually under one acre in size. Anything larger would typically be considered a neighborhood park.
- Service radius: Several city blocks or less than 1/4 mile in a residential setting.
- Site selection: Servicing a specific recreation need, ease of access from the surrounding area, and linkage to the community pathway system are key concerns when selecting a site. Ideally, it will have adjacency to other park system components, most notably greenways, and the trail system. Location is determined by the needs of the neighborhood, partnership opportunities and the availability and accessibility of land.
- Length of stay: One-hour experience or less.
- Site features: Community input through the public meeting process needs to be the primary determinant of the development program for this type of park. Urban Plazas are not designed to accommodate more than very limited recreation use. They are typically able to provide recreation use for one user group such as a playground or splash pad for youth, benches for walkers, landscape and trails for enjoyment of the natural environment or display of artwork for the local neighborhood. Amenities are compliant with ADA. Although demographics and population density play a role in location, the justification for an Urban Plaza lies more in servicing a specific recreation need or taking advantage of a unique opportunity. Given the potential variety of Urban Plaza activities and locations, services can vary.
- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience.
- Revenue facilities: None.
- Land usage: 90% active/10% passive. The character may be one of intensive use or aesthetic enjoyment. Businesses and residents should be encouraged to assist in policing and the day-to-day maintenance of this type of park, as they are located in downtown areas. The primary

function of such a park is to provide recreation space to those areas of the City where population densities limit the available open space.

- User experiences: Predominately self-directed, but a signature amenity may be included which provides opportunities for leader-directed programs. Depending on the size and location, special events could be activated.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience.
- Parking: Parking is typically not required.
- Lighting: Site lighting is typically used for security and safety.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, or natural landmark.

#### 4.2.2 NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

A neighborhood park is typically 3-10 acres in size; however, some neighborhood parks are determined by use and facilities offered and not by size alone. The service radius for a neighborhood park is one half mile or six blocks. Neighborhood parks should have safe pedestrian access for surrounding residents; parking may or may not be included but if included it accounts for less than ten cars and provides for ADA access. Neighborhood parks serve the recreational and social focus of the adjoining neighborhoods and contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity. Currently, the Department has many neighborhood parks within its inventory such as Glenview Park, Emerson Park, Marion Park, Leaders Park, Town One Park to name a few.

- Size of park: 3 to 10 acres (usable area measured). Preferred size is eight acres.
- Service radius: 0.5-mile radius.
- Site selection: On a local or collector street. If near an arterial street, provide natural or artificial barrier from traffic. Where possible, next to a school. Encourage location to link subdivisions and link trails to other parks.
- Length of stay: One-hour experience or less.
- Site features: One signature amenity (e.g., playground, splashpad, sport court, gazebo); no restrooms unless necessary for a signature amenity; may include one non-programmed sports field; playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some shaded elements; typically, no reservable shelters; loop trails; one type of sport court; no non-producing/unused amenities; benches, small picnic shelter(s) next to play areas. Amenities are compliant with ADA.
- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Customized to demographics of neighborhood; safety design meets established Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards; integrated color scheme throughout.
- Revenue facilities: None.
- Land usage: 85% active/15% passive.
- User experience: Typically, self-directed, but a signature amenity may be included which provides opportunities for leader-directed programs.

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- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage to the park, as well as within the park, and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience.
- Parking: Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park, when feasible. Goal is to maximize usable park space. As necessary, provide 5-10 spaces within park including accessible parking spaces. Traffic calming devices encouraged next to park.
- Lighting: Security only. Lighting on all night for security.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, donor, or natural landmark.

### 4.2.3 COMMUNITY PARK

Community parks provide diverse recreation opportunities to serve the residents of Sioux Falls. These include active and passive recreation, as well as self-directed and organized recreation opportunities for individuals, families and small groups. Community Parks often include facilities that promote outdoor recreation and activities such as walking and biking, picnicking, playing sports, playing on playgrounds, and fishing. These sites also include natural areas, emphasizing public access to important natural features. Since community parks may attract people from a wide geographic area, support facilities are required, such as parking and restrooms. Self-directed recreation activities such as meditation, quiet reflection, and wildlife watching also take place at community parks.

Community parks generally range from 10 to 100 acres depending on the surrounding community. Community parks serve a larger area – radius of one to three miles – and contain more recreation amenities than a neighborhood park. Currently, the City of Sioux Falls has many Community Parks that include Rotary Park, Memorial Park, Spencer Park, and Laurel Oak Park to name a few.

- Size of park: 10 to 100 acres, but ideally 20 to 40 acres.
- Service radius: One to three-mile radius.
- Site selection: On two collector streets minimum and preferably one arterial street. If near arterial street, provide natural or artificial barrier from traffic. Minimal number of residences abutting site. Preference for adjacent or nearby proximity with school or other municipal use. Encourage trail linkage to other parks.
- Length of stay: Two to three hours' experience.
- Site features: Four signature amenities at a minimum: (e.g., trails, sports fields, large shelters/ pavilions, community playground for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some shaded elements, recreation center, pool or family aquatic center, sports courts, water feature); public restrooms with drinking fountains, ample parking, and security lighting. Amenities are compliant with ADA. Multi-purpose fields are appropriate in this type of park.
- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Enhanced landscaping at park entrances and throughout park.
- Revenue facilities: One or more (e.g. picnic shelters, program pavilion, dog park).
- Land usage: 65% active and 35% passive.



- User experiences: Mostly self-directed experiences, but may have opportunities for leader-directed programs based on available site features and community demand.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage to the park, as well as within the park, and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility.
- Parking: Sufficient to support the amenities; occupies no more than 10% of the park. Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park. Goal is to maximize usable park space. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to the park.
- Lighting: Security lighting and lighting appropriate for signature amenities.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, donor, or natural landmark.
- Other: Strong appeal to surrounding neighborhoods; integrated color scheme throughout the park; partnerships developed with support groups, schools and other organizations; loop trail connectivity; linked to trail or recreation facility; safety design meets established CPTED standards.

#### 4.2.4 REGIONAL PARK

Regional parks provide access to unique recreation features, natural areas, and facilities that attract visitors from the entire community and beyond. Regional parks often accommodate small and large group activities and have infrastructure to support group picnics. As community attractions, Regional parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region. These parks may include significant natural areas and wetlands, trails and pathways, gardens and arboretums, ponds, and other water features. They add unique facilities, such as destination or thematic playgrounds, community centers, aquatic centers, sledding hills, viewing knolls, skateparks, and other interesting elements.

Regional parks can and should promote tourism and economic development. Regional parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region. Regional parks are typically 100 or more acres in size. Currently, the City of Sioux Falls has Falls Park and Sherman Park to name a few that fall under the regional park designation.

- Size of park: 100+ acres.
- Service radius: Three miles or greater radius.
- Site selection: Prefer location which can preserve natural resources on-site such as wetlands, streams, and other geographic features or sites with significant cultural or historic features. Significantly large parcel of land. Access from public roads capable of handling anticipated traffic.
- Length of stay: 4-8-hour experience.
- Site features: 10 to 12 amenities to create a signature facility (e.g., community center, waterpark, lake, destination playground, 3+ reservable picnic shelters, outdoor adventure amenities, arboretum, trails, and specialty facilities); public restrooms with drinking fountains, concessions, restaurant, ample parking, special event site.

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- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Enhanced landscaping at park entrances and throughout park.
- Revenue facilities: More than two; park designed to produce revenue to help offset operational costs.
- Land usage: Up to 50% active/50% passive.
- User experiences: Significant mix of leader-directed and self-directed experiences. More than four recreation experiences per age segment with at least four core programs provided.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage to the park, as well as within the park, and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility.
- Parking: Sufficient for all amenities. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to park.
- Lighting: Security lighting and lighting appropriate for signature amenities.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, donor, or natural landmark.
- Other: Safety design may meet CPTED safety standards; integrated color scheme throughout the park; linked to major trails systems, public transportation available, concessions, food and retail sales available, dedicated site managers on duty.

### 4.2.5 SPECIAL USE PARK

Special use parks are those spaces that do not fall within a typical park classification. A major difference between a special use park and other parks is that they usually serve a single purpose whereas other park classifications are designed to offer multiple recreation opportunities. It is possible for a special use facility to be located inside another park.

Special use parks generally contain one facility or amenity that falls into the following categories:

**Historic/Cultural/Social Sites** – Unique local resources offering historical, educational, and cultural opportunities. Examples include arboretums, memorials, historic downtown areas, commercial zones, arboretums, display gardens, and amphitheaters. Frequently these are in community or regional parks.

**Golf Courses** – 9- and 18-hole complexes with ancillary facilities such as club houses, driving ranges, program space and learning centers. These facilities are highly maintained and support a wide age level of males and females. Programs are targeted for daily use play, tournaments, leagues, clinics and special events. Operational costs come from daily play, season pass holders, concessions, driving range fees, earned income opportunities, and sale of pro shop items.

**Outdoor Recreation Facilities** – Examples include aquatic parks, disk golf, skateboard, BMX, and dog parks, ski area, standalone sports complex, which may be in a park.

The City of Sioux Falls has many different special use facilities within its current inventory, such as Great Bear Recreation Park, Yankton Trail Park Soccer Fields, Sanford Sports Complex, among others.

- Size of park: Depends upon facilities and activities included. The diverse character of these parks makes it difficult to apply acreage standards.
- Service radius: Depends upon facilities and activities included. Typically serves special user groups while a few serve the entire population.
- Site selection: Given the variety of potential uses, no specific standards are defined for site selection. As with all park types, the site itself should be located where it is appropriate for its use.
- Length of stay: Varies by facility.
- Site Features: Varies by facility.
- Revenue facilities: Due to nature of certain facilities, revenue may be required for construction and/or annual maintenance. This should be determined at a policy level before the facility is planned and constructed.
- Land usage: Varies by facility.
- User experiences: Varies by facility.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage to the park, as well as within the park, and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility.
- Parking: On-street or off-street parking is provided as appropriate for facility.
- Lighting: Security lighting and lighting appropriate for facility.
- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, donor, or natural landmark.
- Other: Integrated color scheme throughout the park; safety design meets established CPTED standards.

#### 4.2.6 SCHOOL GROUNDS

By combining the resources of two public agencies, such as the City of Sioux Falls the Sioux Falls School District, as well as adjacent school districts, the school grounds classification allows for expanding the recreation, social, and educational opportunities available to the community in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Through a partnership agreement, the City uses schools for after school programming.

Facilities may include one to three meeting rooms, a kitchen, a game room, a computer lab, and a gym with either three volleyball courts or two basketball courts. The important outcome in the joint-use relationship is that both the school district and the park system benefit from shared use of facilities and land area.

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Depending on circumstances, school grounds often complement other community open lands. As an example, an elementary school can serve as neighborhood park providing a playground and open space to the surrounding community during non-school hours. Similarly, a middle school or high school may serve in several capacities that could include indoor sport courts, athletic fields, tennis courts, etc.

- Size: Variable as it depends on function.
- Location: Determined by location of school district property.
- Site features: May include playgrounds, tennis courts, basketball courts, athletic fields, and trails.
- Signage: Directional signage to the park, as well as within the park, and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the School Grounds for public use.
- Recreation services: Mainly self-directed recreation activities. Where feasible, if athletic fields are developed on school grounds, they are oriented to youth programming. Establishing a joint-use agreement is recommended to make school ground designations work for both agencies. This is particularly important to maintenance, liability, use, and programming of the facilities.

### 4.2.7 NATURE PRESERVES/OPEN SPACE

Nature preserves/open space are undeveloped but may include natural or paved trails. Grasslands under power line corridors are one example and creek areas are another. Nature preserves/open space contain natural resources that can be managed for recreation and natural resource conservation values such as a desire to protect wildlife habitat, water quality, and endangered species. Nature preserves/open space also can provide opportunities for nature-based, self-directed, low-impact recreational opportunities such as walking and nature viewing. These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources.
- Lands that are unsuitable for development but offer natural resource potential.
- Parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainage ways and ravines, surface water management areas (man-made ponding areas), and utility easements.
- Protected lands, such as wetlands/lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes, and ponds.

The intent of nature preserves/open space is to enhance the livability and character of a community by preserving as many of its natural amenities as possible. Integration of the human element with that of the natural environment that surrounds them enhances the overall experience. The City of Sioux Falls offers many unique nature preserves/open space parks that include Perry Nature Area, Legacy Park, and Arrowhead Park to name a few.

- Amenities: May include paved or natural trails, wildlife viewing areas, mountain biking, disc golf, nature interpretation, and education facilities.
- Maintenance standards: Demand-based maintenance with available funding. Biological management practices observed.

- Lighting: None.
- Signage: Directional signage to the park, as well as within the park, and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility.
- Landscape design: Generally, none. Some areas may include landscaping, such as entryways or around buildings. In these situations, sustainable design is appropriate.

#### 4.2.8 GREENWAYS/TRAILS

Greenways/trails include natural and built corridors that typically support trail-oriented activities, such as walking, jogging, biking, skating, etc. Greenways/trails function as linear parks by linking features together and providing green buffers. Greenways/trails may be located along abandoned railroad lines, transportation or utility rights-of-way, riparian corridors, or elongated natural areas. Greenways/trails and linear parks may be of various lengths and widths, and these corridors typically support facilities such as viewing areas, benches, and trailheads. Greenways/trails between key destinations can help create more tightly knit communities, provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation, and link to the regional trail system. The Main Bike Loop Trail, Norlin Greenway, Downtown River Greenway, and Veteran Parkway Trail to name a few are examples of greenways/trails.

- Size: Typically, unencumbered land is at least 30 feet wide. It may include a trail to support walk, bike, run, and sometimes equestrian type activities. Usually, an urban trail is at minimum 10 feet wide to support pedestrian and bicycle uses. Trails incorporate signage to designate where a user is located and where the trails connect in the community.
- Site selection: Located consistently with approved a community's comprehensive plan and/or alternative transportation plan as appropriate.
- Amenities: Parking and restrooms at major trailheads. May include station points, which include a bench, drink fountain, trail map, and bike repair station, pocket parks/public plazas along the trail.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Lighting: Security lighting at trailheads is preferred. Lighting in urbanized areas or entertainment districts as appropriate.
- Signage: Mileage markers at half mile intervals. Interpretive kiosks as deemed appropriate.
- Landscape design: Coordinated planting scheme in urban areas. Limited or no landscape planting in open space areas with a preference for maintaining natural areas as a buffer to neighbors.
- Other: Connectivity to parks or other community attractions and facilities is desirable.

#### 4.2.9 INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

Indoor Recreation Facilities, such as the Westside Recreation Center, is an indoor facility designed to serve people of various ages, backgrounds, and interests within a community. Typically, a multi-generational recreation center offers a wide range of programs, activities, and services to cater to the needs and interests of different generations, from young children to seniors. These indoor centers often provide recreational, educational, cultural, health, fitness, wellness, and social opportunities to promote interaction, learning, and well-being across generations. These facilities

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can be accessed by residents who want to utilize the facility as a member, as a daily fee user, as a program participant through a reserved registration program fee, as well as opportunities for drop in free play use at certain times of the day.

Multi-generational recreation centers typically feature various types of multifunctional spaces to accommodate diverse recreation needs and activities for youth, families, teens, adults, and seniors. These may or may not include the following program spaces:

- Recreation areas: Such as gymnasiums, sports courts, fitness centers, indoor walking tracks, and swimming pools for physical activities and sports.
- Education and learning spaces: Such as classrooms, computer labs, libraries, and tutoring rooms for educational programs, workshops, and classes.
- Social gathering areas: Such as multipurpose rooms, lounges, and cafeterias for socializing, hosting special events, and for community gatherings.
- Cultural and arts spaces: Such as theaters, art studios, music rooms, and galleries for cultural performances, art classes, and exhibitions.
- Outdoor spaces: Such as playgrounds, sports fields, gardens, and walking paths for outdoor activities, recreation, and relaxation.
- Support services areas: Such as counseling offices, health clinics, and family resource centers to provide support services and resources for individuals and families.

These facilities aim to provide a comprehensive range of spaces to cater to the diverse interests, needs, and preferences of people of all ages within the community.

### 4.2.10 INDOOR SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Indoor Special Use Facilities can be specialized or single purpose facilities, such as the MIDCO Aquatic Center, Jacobson Plaza Warming House, Arrowhead House and Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum. Examples include senior centers, performing arts facilities, and special even venues. Frequently these are in community or regional parks.

A public indoor special use facility is a publicly owned and operated indoor building or complex that is designed and programmed to support a specific type of recreational, cultural, educational, or social function. Unlike general-purpose indoor recreation centers that offer a broad range of activities for all age groups, special use facilities are purpose-built to serve a particular user group, activity, or operational need. These facilities often include specialized infrastructure, equipment, and amenities tailored to the intended use, such as swimming pools and diving wells in aquatic centers, ice surfaces in ice arenas, studios in performing arts venues, or courts and turf fields in indoor sports complexes.

Public indoor special use facilities play a vital role in addressing targeted community needs, expanding access to specialized programming, and supporting health, wellness, and lifelong learning. They are often developed in response to demonstrated demand or gaps in service and may operate under unique scheduling, staffing, and cost-recovery models to reflect their specialized nature. These facilities are typically supported by municipal governments, park and recreation agencies, or special districts and are open to the public, with access often provided through memberships, drop-in fees, program registrations, or rental opportunities. Their primary goal is to



enhance quality of life by offering high-quality, mission-driven services in a space purposefully designed for specific activities.

## 4.3 LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

### 4.3.1 OVERVIEW

Level of Service (LOS) standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities. LOS standards are updated over time as industry trends and community demographics change.

The consulting team evaluated park facility standards using a combination of resources. These resources included market trends, demographic data, community and stakeholder input, the statistically valid community survey, and general observations. The existing level of service was based on analysis of the City of Sioux Falls inventory. This information allowed standards to be customized to Sioux Falls.

It is important to note that these LOS standards should be viewed as a guide. The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the situation and needs of the community. By applying these standards to the population of Sioux Falls, gaps or surpluses in park and facility types are revealed.

### 4.3.2 PER CAPITA “GAPS”

According to the Level of Service, the City is performing well in meeting the Sioux Falls needs to properly serve the Sioux Falls community today and in the future. The existing level of service meets and exceeds best practices and recommended service levels for many items; however, there are several areas that do not meet recommended standards. Although Sioux Falls meets the standards for total park acres, there is a deficit for neighborhood parks (12 acres), community parks (28), nature preserves/open space (11 acres), as well total miles of trails. Also, there is a need for additional special use and greenway park types.

For outdoor amenities, Sioux Falls is doing quite well and only shows a need for tennis courts (2).

**Regarding indoor recreation space, there is a shortage of 83,921 square feet, with the assumption that the Frank Olson Recreation Center development takes place. Also, we worked off the assumption Frank Olson Recreation Center Indoor Aquatic space is added, and the development of Kuehn Park Pool and McKennan Wading Pool. For aquatic facilities, SFPR exceeds standards.**

The standards that follow are based upon population figures for 2024 and 2029, the latest estimates available at the time of analysis.

### 4.3.3 HALF MILE STRATEGY

Level of service was also completed using SFPR's half-mile strategy to combined trails and parks. SFPR is doing an excellent job with access to parks and trails.

The Level of Service Standard helps to determine community unmet needs based on the Community Survey, NRPA National Standards, best practices in Midwest area communities of similar size and nature.

2025 Inventory - Developed Facilities										Current Facility Needs				Forecasted Five-Year Facility Needs					
Inventory:	Sioux Falls	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			2025 NRPA Park Metrics Median Metric by Jurisdiction Population 100,000 to 250,000			2025 Survey Needs Assessment Priority	Recommended Service Levels		Meet Standard/ Need Exists		Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists		Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	
PARKS:																			
Urban Plaza	9.58	9.58	0.05	acres per	1,000					0.05	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	1	Acre(s)	Need Exists	2	Acre(s)	
Neighborhood Parks	147.55	147.55	0.70	acres per	1,000				High	0.75	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	12	Acre(s)	Need Exists	25	Acre(s)	
Community Parks	502.69	502.69	2.37	acres per	1,000				High	2.50	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	28	Acre(s)	Need Exists	74	Acre(s)	
Regional Parks	1,255.41	1,255.41	5.91	acres per	1,000					5.50	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	13	Acre(s)	
Special Use	526.01	526.01	2.48	acres per	1,000					2.50	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	5	Acre(s)	Need Exists	50	Acre(s)	
School Parks	207.70	207.70	0.98	acres per	1,000					0.75	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	
Nature Preserves/Open Space	487.97	487.97	2.30	acres per	1,000				High	2.35	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	11	Acre(s)	Need Exists	54	Acre(s)	
Greenways	72.77	72.77	0.34	acres per	1,000					0.35	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	2	Acre(s)	Need Exists	8	Acre(s)	
Total Developed Park Acres	3,209.68	3,209.68	15.12	acres per	1,000					14.75	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	191	Acre(s)	
Undeveloped Acres	84.38	84.38	0.40	acres per	1,000					0.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	
Total Park Acres	3,294.06	3,294.06	15.52	acres per	1,000	10.3		acres per	1,000		14.75	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	107	Acre(s)
TRAILS:																			
Paved Trails	42.02	42.02	0.20	miles per	1,000	29.0 Miles of Trail			High	0.20	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	0	Mile(s)	Need Exists	4	Mile(s)	
Hiking/Nature Trails	21.60	21.60	0.10	miles per	1,000				High	0.15	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	10	Mile(s)	Need Exists	13	Mile(s)	
Single Track	5.59	5.59	0.03	miles per	1,000				Low	0.05	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	5	Mile(s)	Need Exists	6	Mile(s)	
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:																			
Small Shelters	32.00	32.00	1.00	site per	6,634				Medium	1.00	site per	7,000	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)	Need Exists	1	Sites(s)	
Medium Shelters	45.00	45.00	1.00	site per	4,718				Medium	1.00	site per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Sites(s)	Need Exists	1	Sites(s)	
Large Shelters	3.00	3.00	1.00	site per	70,765				Medium	1.00	site per	70,000	Need Exists	0	Sites(s)	Need Exists	0	Sites(s)	
Baseball Fields	35.00	35.00	1.00	field per	6,066	1.0	field per	6,821	Low	1.00	field per	7,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	
Softball Fields	61.00	61.00	1.00	field per	3,480				Low	1.00	field per	3,500	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Need Exists	5	Field(s)	
Multi-Use Field (Soccer/Lacrosse/Football/Rugby)	75.00	75.00	1.00	field per	2,831	1.0	field per	7,993	Low	1.00	field per	3,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Need Exists	2	Field(s)	
Basketball Courts	48.50	48.50	1.00	court per	4,377	1.0	court per	9,742	Low	1.00	court per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	
Tennis Courts	40.00	40.00	1.00	court per	5,307	1.0	court per	8,587	Low	1.00	court per	5,000	Need Exists	2	Court(s)	Need Exists	6	Court(s)	
Pickleball Courts	20.00	20.00	1.00	court per	10,615	1.0	court per	19,822	Medium	1.00	court per	18,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	
Playground (Youth & Tot)	78.00	78.00	1.00	site per	2,722	1.0	site per	5,000	Medium	1.00	site per	3,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	
Dog Park	6.00	6.00	1.00	site per	35,383	1.0	site per	76,509	Medium	1.00	site per	40,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	
Sand Volleyball	15.00	15.00	1.00	site per	14,153					1.00	site per	15,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)	
Skate Board Park	3.00	3.00	1.00	site per	70,765				Low	1.00	site per	70,000	Need Exists	0	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)	
Splashpad	5.00	5.00	1.00	site per	42,459				Low	1.00	site per	50,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	
RECREATION SPACE:																			
Indoor Special Use Space	80,440.00	80,440.00	0.38	SF per	person	1.0	site per	Senior Centers - 123,671 Teen Centers - 131,166 Nature Centers - 143,480 Ice Rinks - 106,395 Indoor Aquatic - 109,454		0.40	SF per	person	Need Exists	4,478	Square Feet	Need Exists	11,788	Square Feet	
Indoor Community Recreation / Gym Space	154,083.00	154,083.00	0.73	SF per	person	1.0	site per	Community Center - 58,027 Recreation Centers - 57,200	High	1.10	SF per	person	Need Exists	79,443	Square Feet	Need Exists	99,544	Square Feet	
Total Indoor Recreation Space	234,523.00	234,523.00	1.10	SF per	person					1.50	SF per	person	Need Exists	83,921	Square Feet	Need Exists	111,332	Square Feet	
AQUATIC FACILITIES:																			
Outdoor Water	47,950.00	47,950.00	225.86	SF per	1,000				High	110.0	SF per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	
Indoor Water	33,554.00	33,554.00	158.05	SF per	1,000				High	110.0	SF per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	
Training Water	27,820.00	27,820.00	131.04	SF per	1,000					110.0	SF per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	
Recreational Water	53,684.00	53,684.00	252.87	SF per	1,000					110.0	SF per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	
2024 Estimated Population	212,296																		
2029 Estimated Population	230,570																		

Notes:

School Parks inventory only includes school facilities that have partnerships between the City and School District to provide additional land and/or play equipment.

Aquatic Facilities are broken out by outdoor vs indoor in the total inventory and training vs recreational is the total inventory. These are just two different ways to look at the definition of a pool from USA Swimming and NRPA standpoints.

MIDCO Aquatic Center is included as Indoor Water and not as Indoor Recreation Space as it's a single use indoor facility.

Indoor Recreation Space includes school gymnasium space has been reduced to ten percent due to the limited availability to the general public.

Indoor Recreation Space includes future Frank Olson Recreation Center.

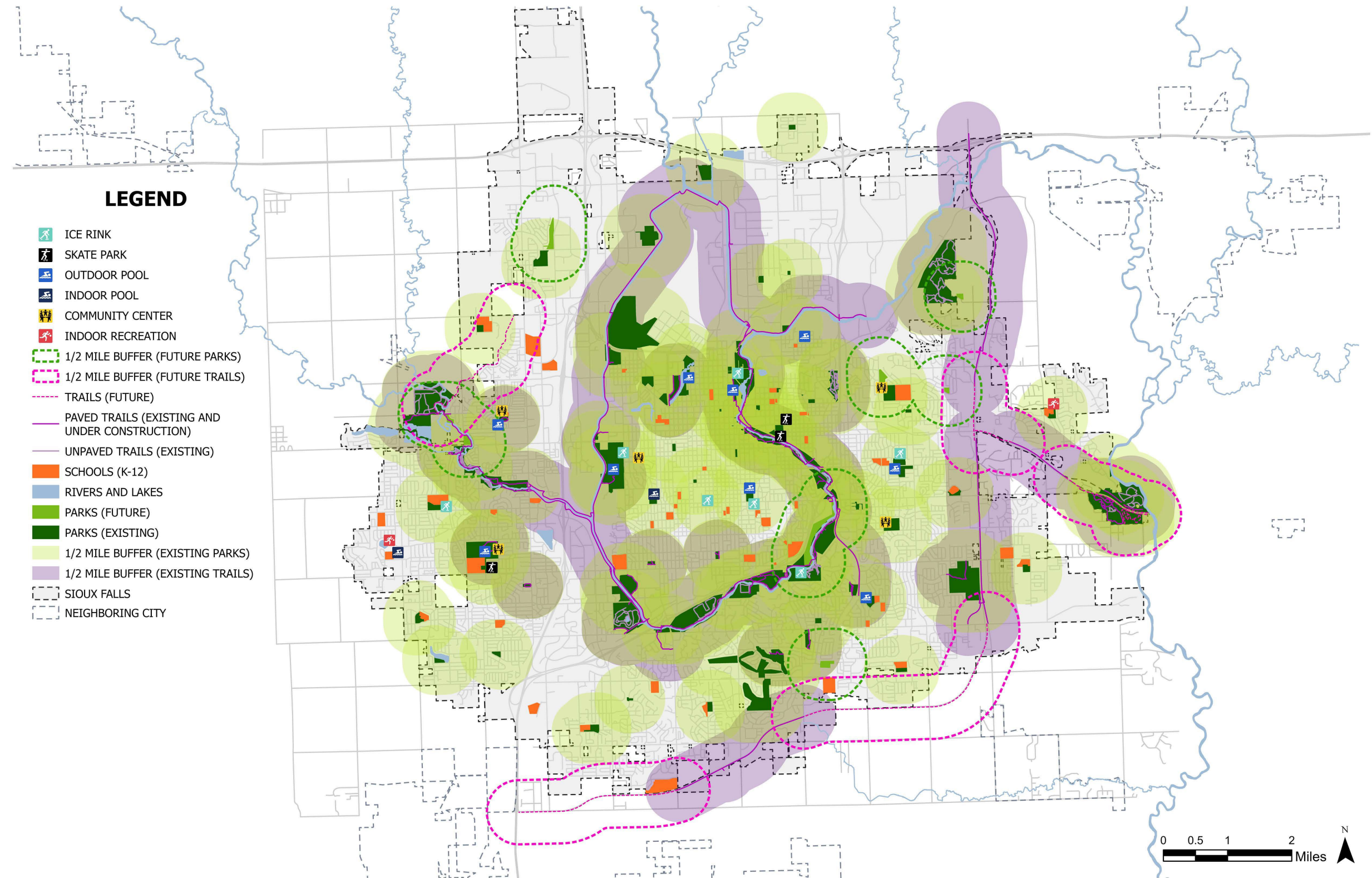
SFPRD also maintains 59 acres of maintenance support sites, 99 acres of trail coordiors, 111 acres of streetscapes, and 1,126 acres of right away.

Softball fields include the loss of Frank Olson Park redevelopment.

Aquatic Facilities takes into account changes at Kuehn, McKennan, and Frank Olson.

Figure 64 - SFPR Population Based Level of Service Standards

Sioux Falls has historically used a half-mile strategy to parks and trails, which is depicted graphically in the map below. The City has excellent distribution for parks and trails combined.



Map 2 - Half Mile Distribution for Parks and Trails



### 4.4 GIS MAPPING

The maps on the following pages outline various methodologies toward mapping. Maps were created to depict service area maps based on the level of service standards.

#### 4.4.1 SERVICE AREA MAPS

Service area maps and standards assist SFPR in assessing where services are offered, how equitable the service distribution and delivery is across the Sioux Falls service area, and how effective the service is as it compares to the demographic densities. In addition, looking at guidelines with reference to population enables SFPR to assess gaps in services, where facilities are needed, or where an area is over saturated. This allows the SFPR management to make appropriate capital improvement decisions based upon need for the system as a whole and the ramifications those decisions may have on a specific area.

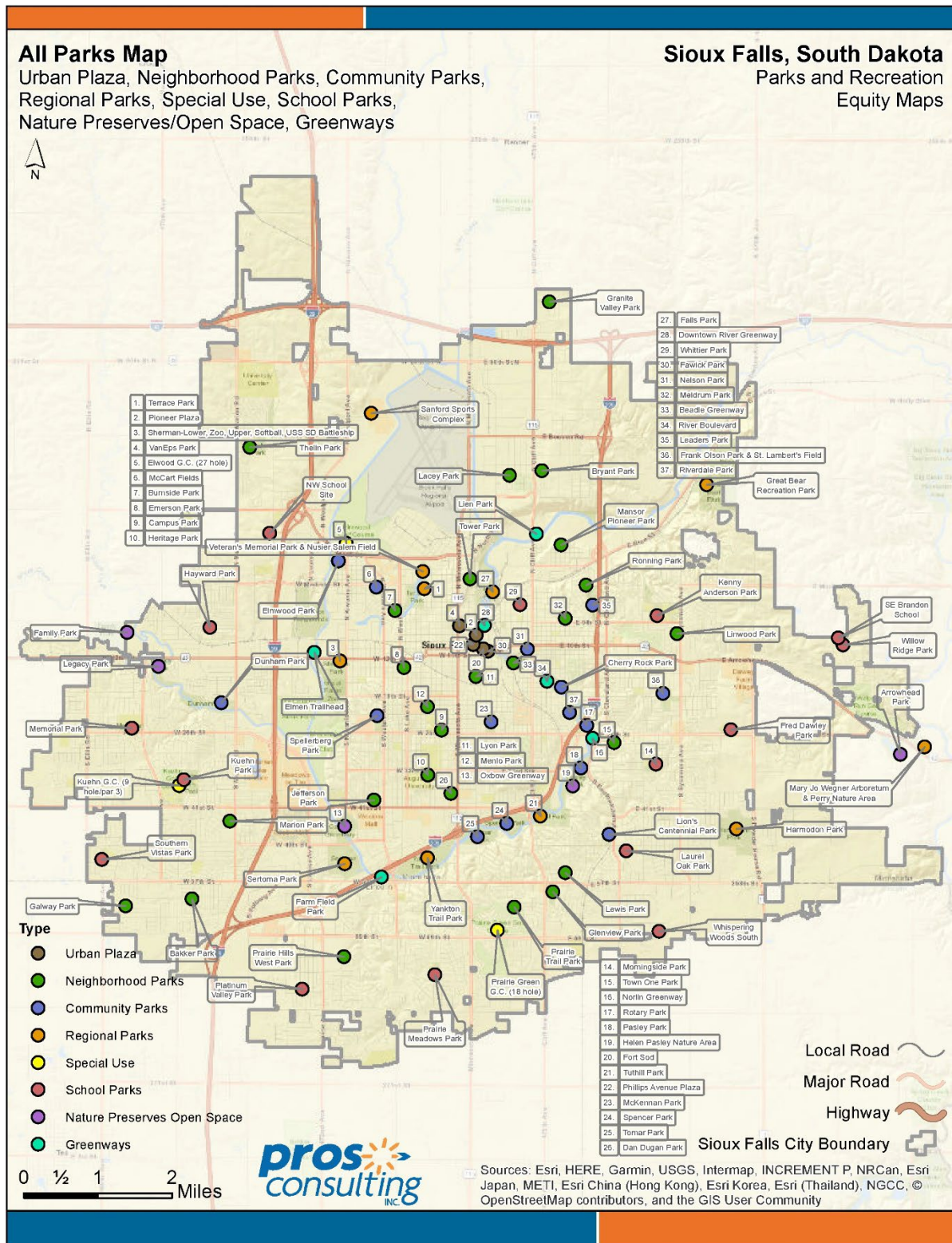
The maps contain several circles, which represent the recommended per capita LOS found on the previous page. The circles' size varies depending upon the quantity of a given amenity (or acre type) located at one site and the surrounding population density. The bigger the circle, the more people a given amenity or park acre serves and vice versa. There is a legend in the bottom left-hand corner of each map depicting the various owners included in the equity mapping process. The areas of overlapping circles represent adequate service, or duplicated service, and the areas with no shading represent the areas not served by a given amenity or park acre type. Maps were created for:

- All Parks Location (**Map 3**)
- All Trails (**Map 4**)
- Neighborhood and School Parks Service Area (**Map 5**)
- Community Parks Service Area (**Map 6**)
- Regional Parks Service Area (**Map 7**)
- Nature Preserves/Open Space Service Area (**Map 8**)
- Indoor Community Recreation/Gym Space Service Area (**Map 9**)
- Indoor Special Use Service Area (**Map 10**)
- Indoor Water Service Area (**Map 11**)
- Outdoor Water Service Area (**Map 12**)



#### 4.4.2 ALL PARKS

The map below details the location of all parks managed by SFPR, as well as their park classification.



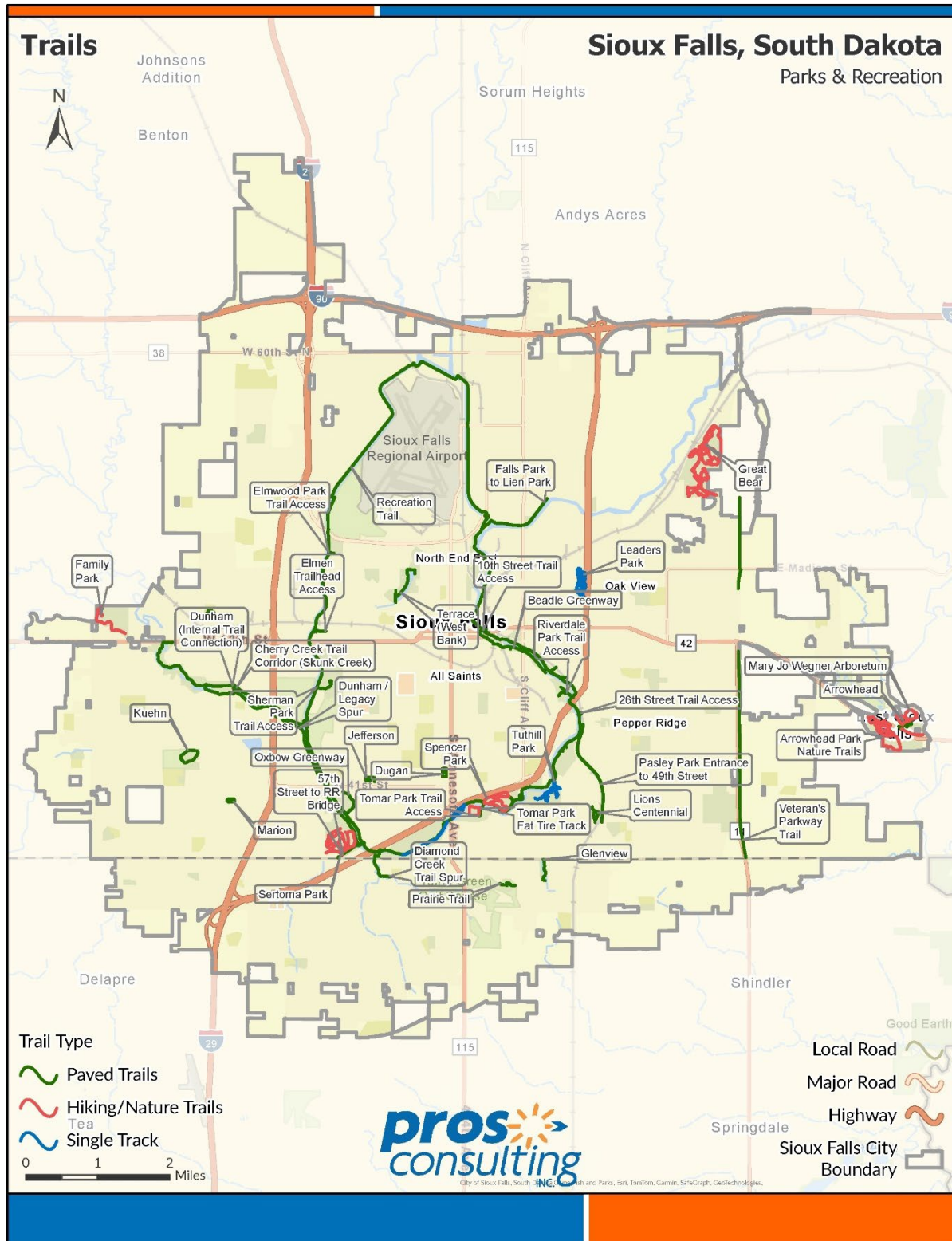
Map 3 - Park Location



## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### 4.4.3 ALL TRAILS

The map below details the location of all trails, paved, single track, and hiking/nature trails, managed by SFPR. Paved and Hiking/Nature Trails area a high priority in the Sioux Falls community.



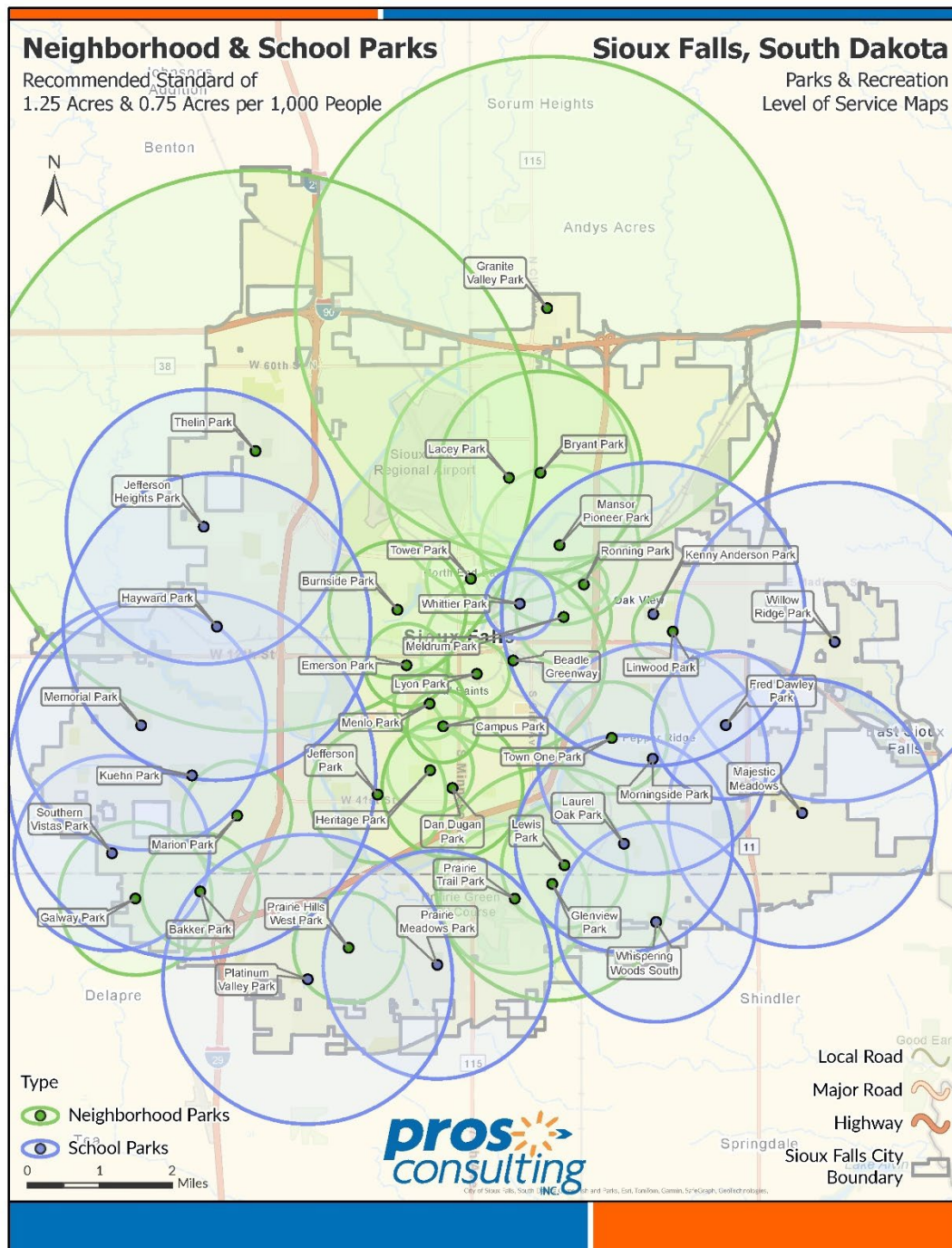
Map 4 - All Trails



#### 4.4.4 SERVICE AREA MAPS

##### NEIGHBORHOOD AND SCHOOL PARKS MAP

The map below details the service area coverage of neighborhood and school park classifications, as these two park classifications have similar user experiences and amenities. Neighborhood Parks was one of the most desired park/facility types based on community input.

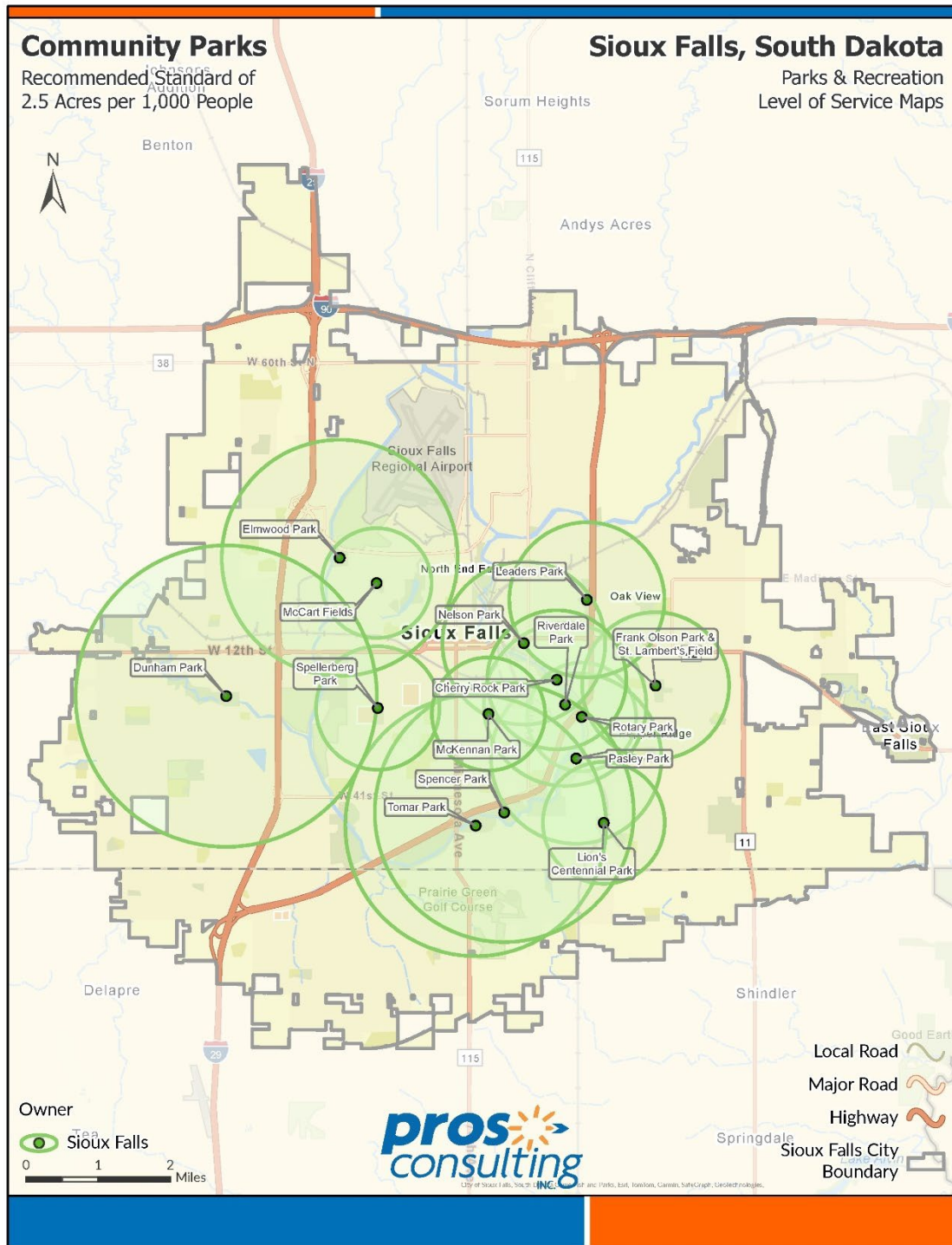


Map 5 - Neighborhood and School Parks Service Area

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### COMMUNITY PARKS MAP

The map below details the service area coverage of the Community Park classification. As the City continues to grow, it is important to take this park classification into consideration in future development. Community Parks were one of the most desired park/facility types based on community input.

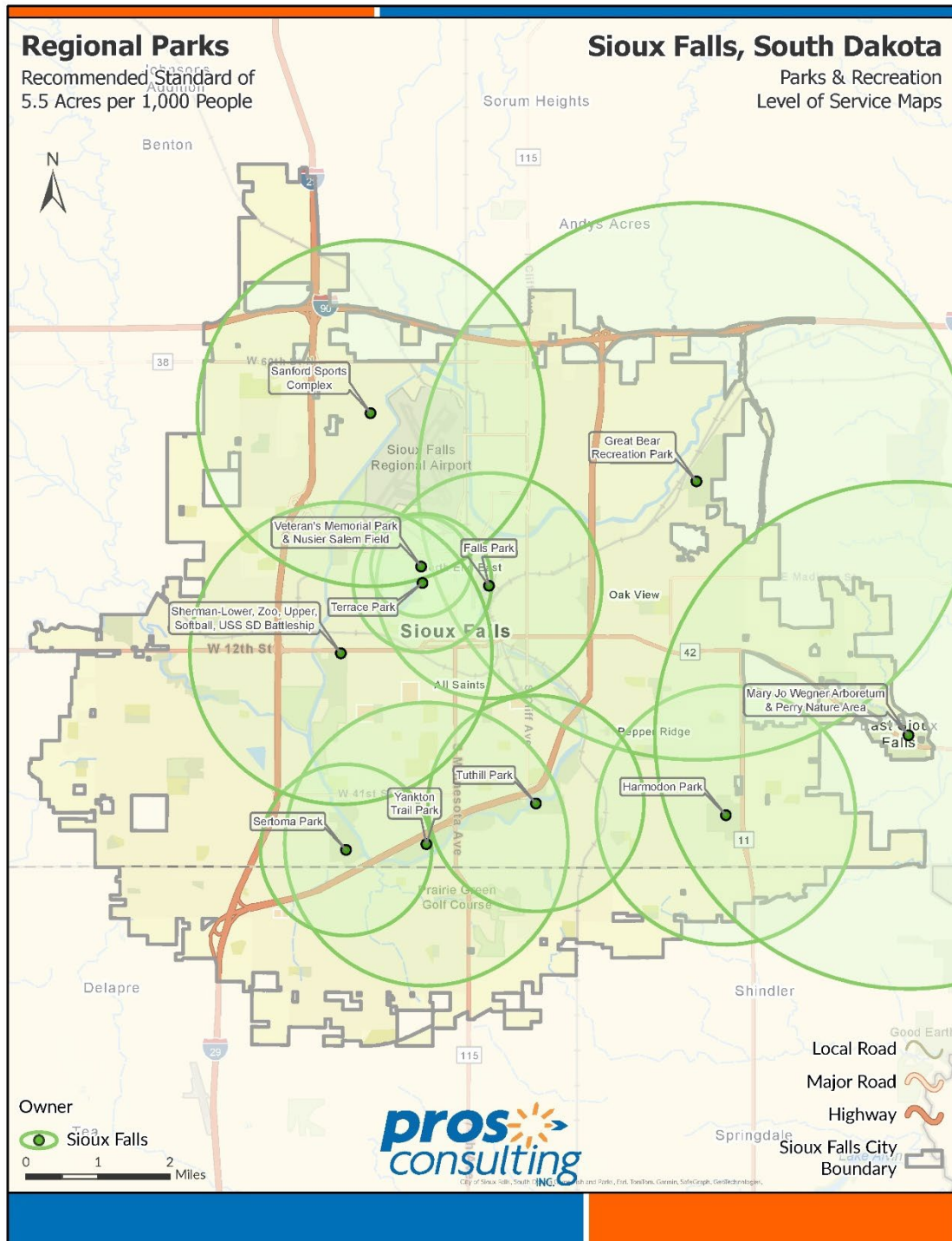


Map 6 - Community Parks Service Area



## REGIONAL PARKS MAP

The map below details the service area coverage of the Regional Park classification. As the City continues to grow, it is important to take this park classification into consideration in future development.

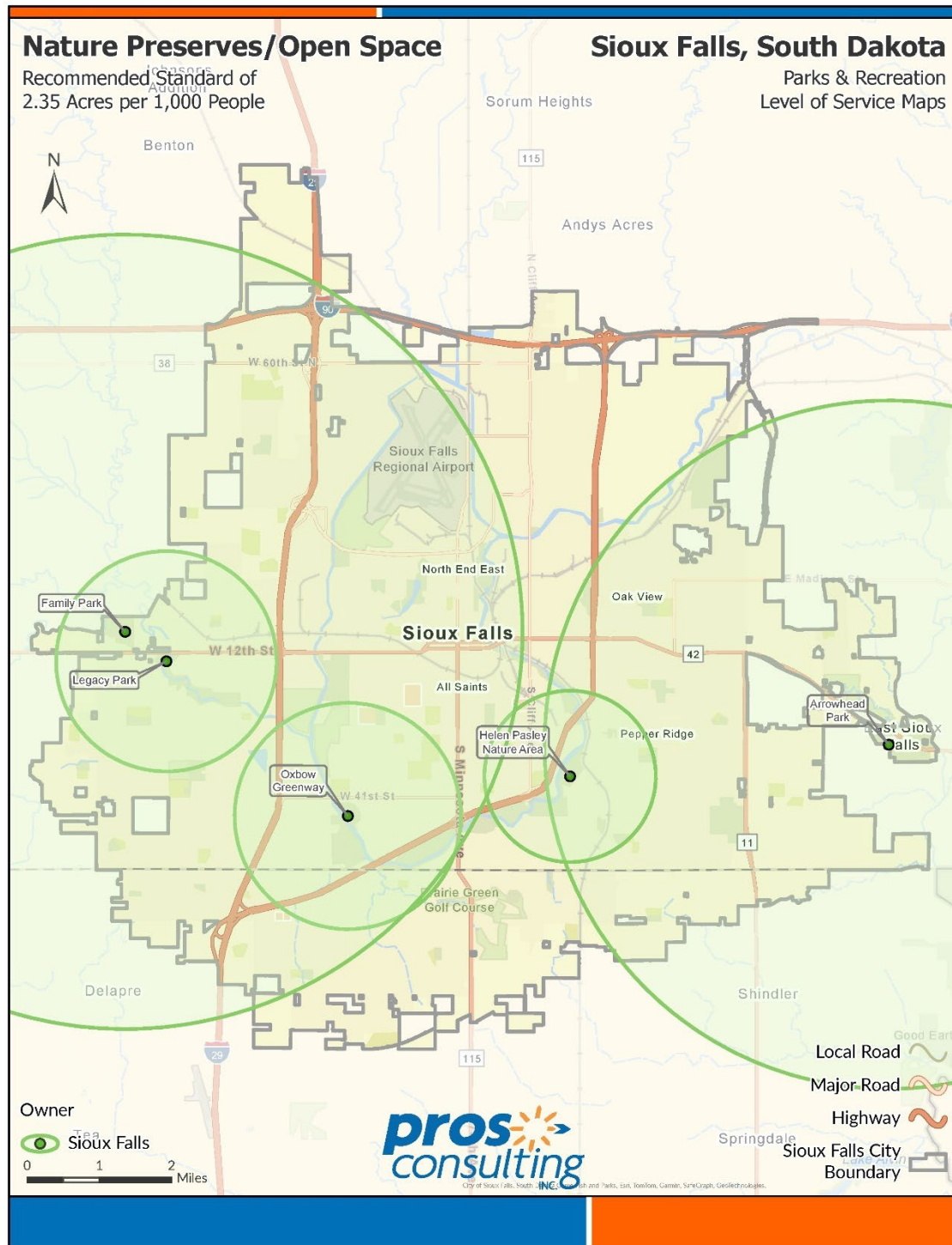


Map 7 - Regional Parks Service Area

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### NATURE PRESERVES/OPEN SPACE MAP

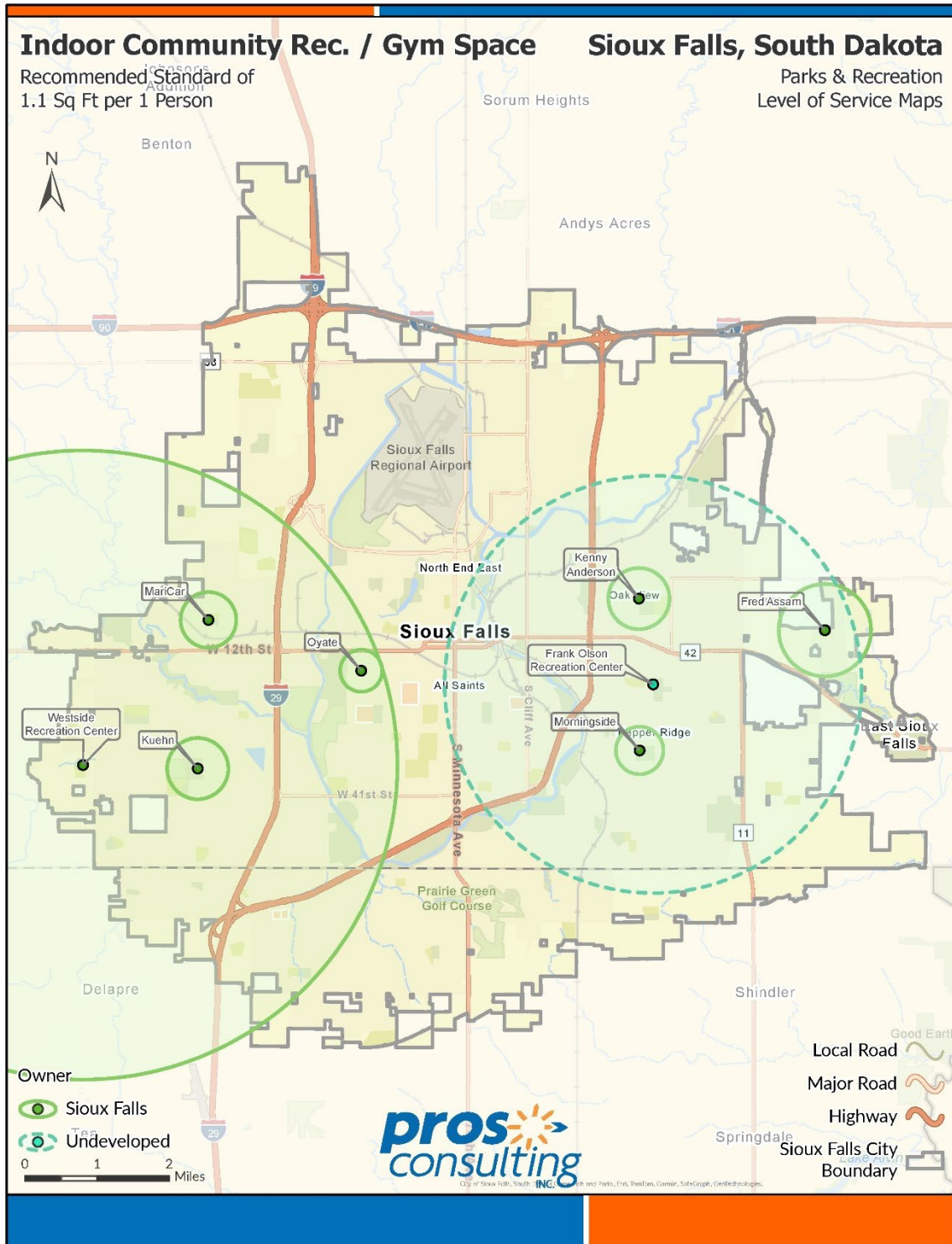
The map below details the service area coverage of the Nature Preserves/Open Space classification. As the City continues to grow, it is important to take this park classification into consideration in future development, as it was one of the most desired park/facility types based on community input.



Map 8 - Nature Preserves/Open Space Service Area

## INDOOR COMMUNITY RECREATION/GYM SPACE

The map below details the service area coverage of Indoor Community Recreation/Gym Space. Indoor Recreation Space were one of the most desired park/facility types based on community input.



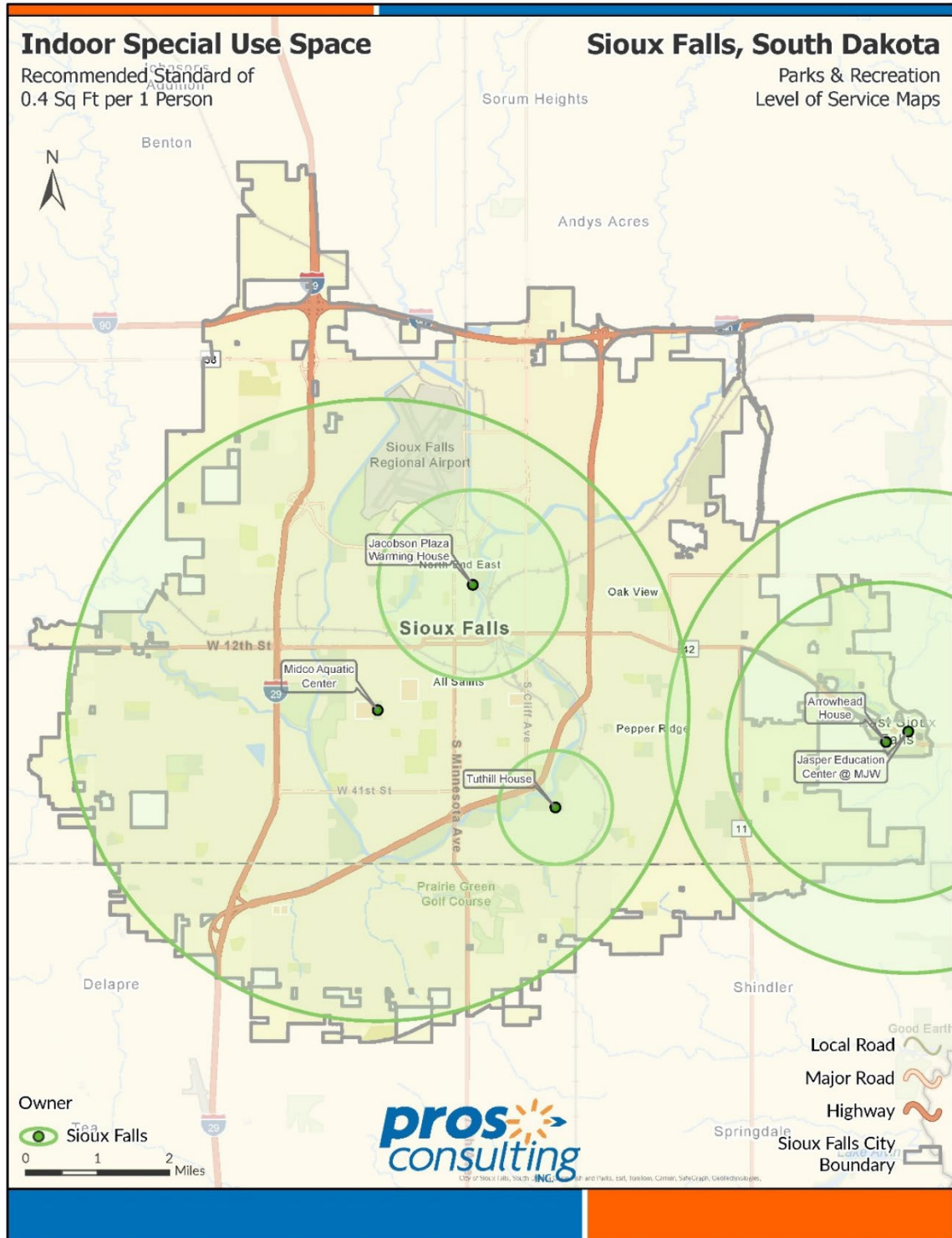
Map 9 - Indoor Community Recreation/Gym Space Service Area



## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### INDOOR SPECIAL USE SPACE

The map below details the service area coverage of Indoor Special Use Space. Indoor Special Use Facilities are specialized or single purpose facilities, such as the MIDCO Aquatic Center, Jacobson Plaza Warming House, Arrowhead House and Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum.

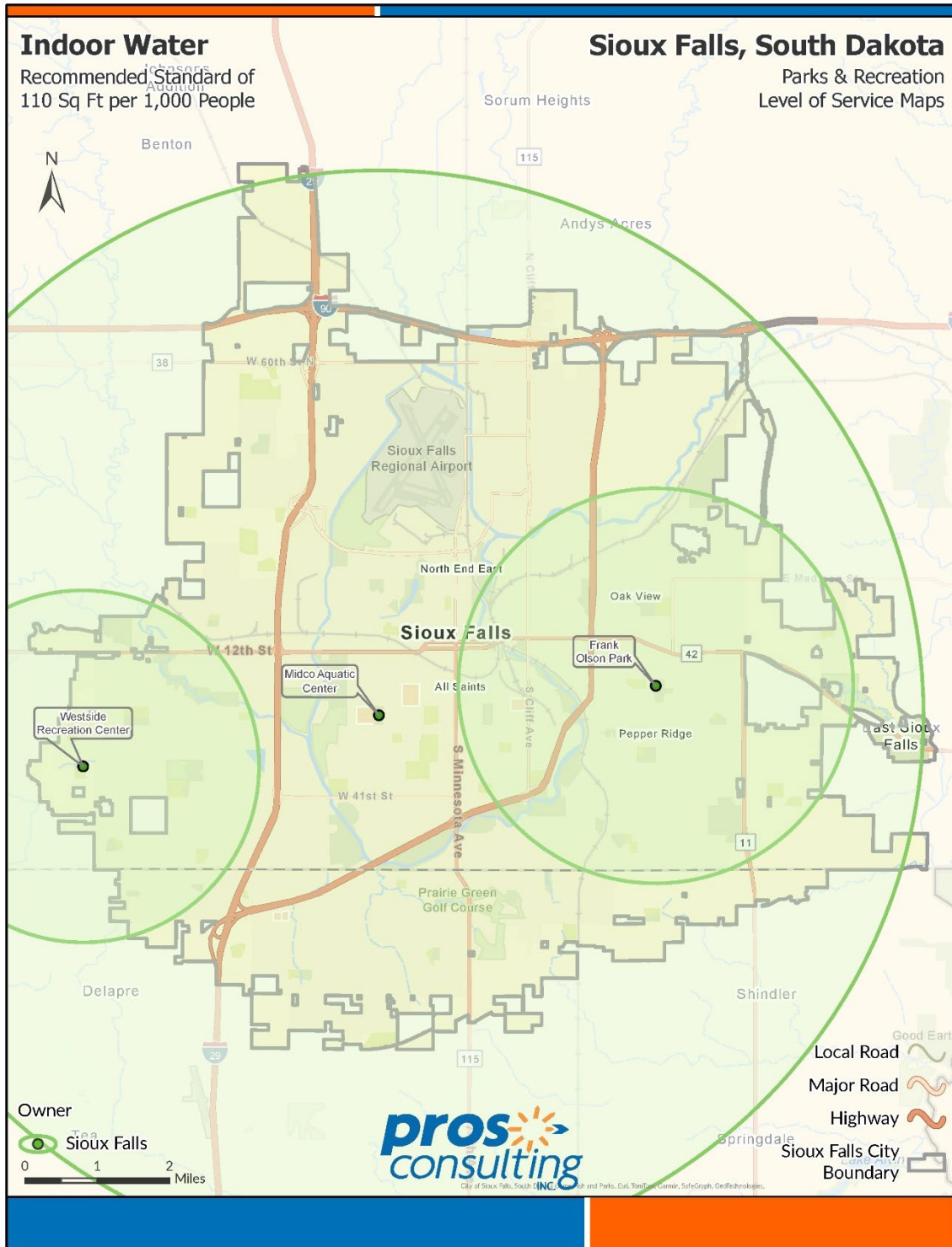


Map 10 - Indoor Special Use Service Area



## INDOOR WATER

The map below details the service area coverage of Indoor Water. The City has excellent service coverage for indoor water. It should be noted that the future Frank Olson Recreation Center indoor water is depicted below. Indoor water is a high priority in the Sioux Falls community.



Map 11 - Indoor Water Service Area



## 4.5 INDOOR RECREATION – LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Planning for and strategically siting indoor recreation centers based on community-specific factors is essential to ensuring equitable access, long-term sustainability, and broad community benefit. Unlike outdoor spaces, which are often distributed more evenly across cities, indoor recreation centers serve a wide range of purposes—from fitness and aquatics to youth programs, senior wellness, and community events—all within a single facility. Because of their scale and cost, careful planning is required to ensure that these centers are accessible to the greatest number of residents, especially those who may face barriers due to income, transportation, age, or physical ability.

Equitable access means intentionally locating indoor facilities in areas where they can reduce service gaps, particularly for undeserved populations. This includes low-income neighborhoods, fast-growing residential areas, and parts of the city where youth, seniors, or diverse populations lack convenient access to structured recreational opportunities. Multi-generational recreation centers are most successful when they are located within walking or biking distance of residential neighborhoods, transit lines, schools, and other civic amenities, creating hubs of activity that support health, inclusion, and community connection.

Community-specific planning also ensures that each facility reflects the unique demographic, cultural, and recreational needs of its surroundings. For example, a center located in a younger

neighborhood may prioritize child care and youth sports, while a facility in an aging neighborhood might focus on wellness classes, indoor walking tracks, and low-impact fitness. Locational planning should also account for existing assets and infrastructure—such as vacant or underused parcels, former industrial sites, or areas targeted for redevelopment—to maximize public investment and catalyze neighborhood revitalization.

Ultimately, planning and siting indoor recreation centers with community specifics in mind ensures that these facilities become not just buildings, but essential, inclusive, and dynamic public spaces. They serve as equalizers—providing year-round access to health, wellness, and social opportunities that foster belonging, improve quality of life, and strengthen the fabric of the community. For Sioux Falls, this approach is critical to building a resilient and responsive recreation system that can meet the needs of today while adapting to the growth and challenges of tomorrow.

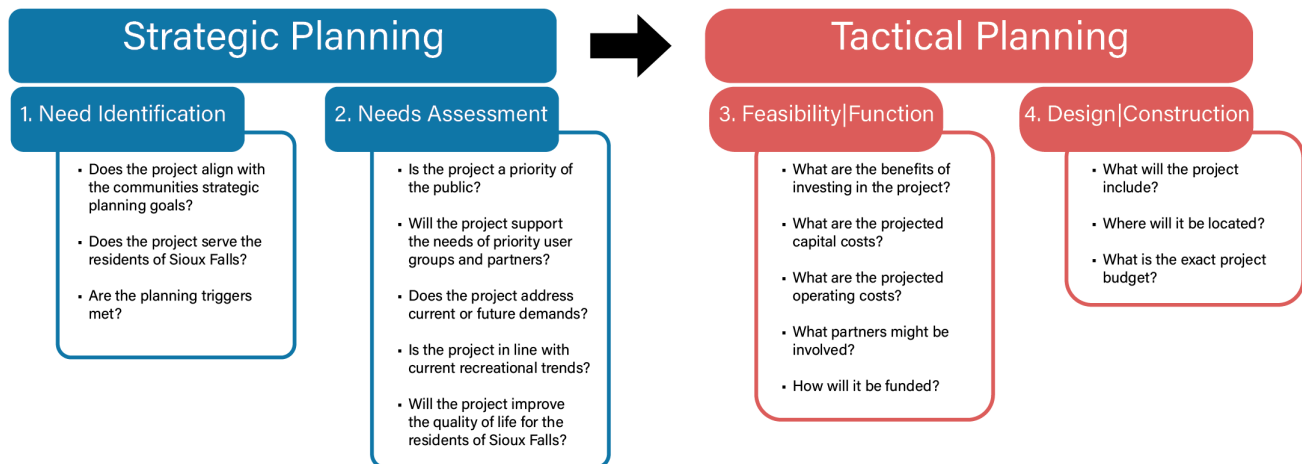


Figure 65 - Indoor Recreation: Long Range Planning Process

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### 4.5.1 LEVEL OF SERVICE STUDY MAPS

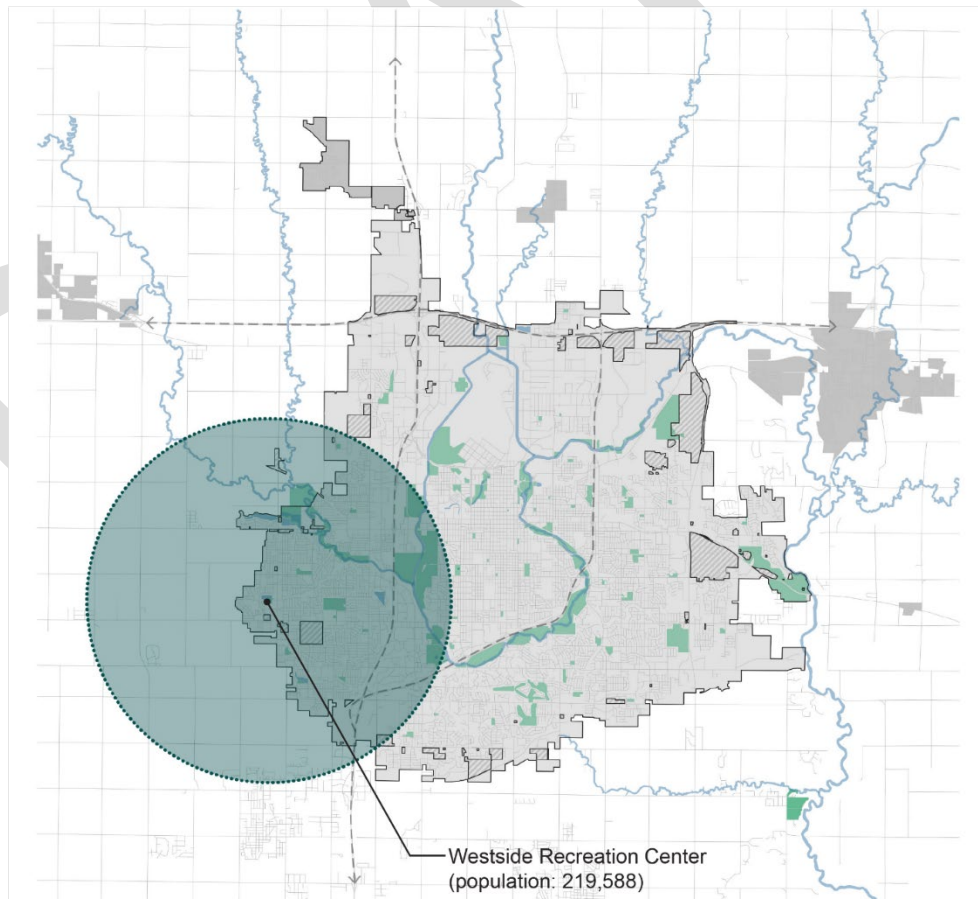
The city of Sioux Falls has seen unprecedented growth over the past 20 years, and anticipates significant growth to continue over the next 25 years. The below maps illustrate where future growth is expected to take place, and where future Indoor Recreations Centers could be located to provide access to programming opportunities. It's important to point out that future/potential locations are not specific, and meant to illustrate potential service areas based on geography and density.

*Note: As Sioux Falls continues to grow, and density increases, the service rings for existing and potential recreation centers shrinks.*

City of Sioux Falls Estimated Population Growth						
		Tier 1		Tier 3		Tier 3
Estimated Population	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Low	219,588	243,700	270,600	300,300	333,400	370,000
Med	219,588	247,000	278,000	312,700	351,700	395,700
High	219,588	249,200	282,900	321,100	364,400	413,600

Figure 66 - Long Range Planning Estimated Population Growth

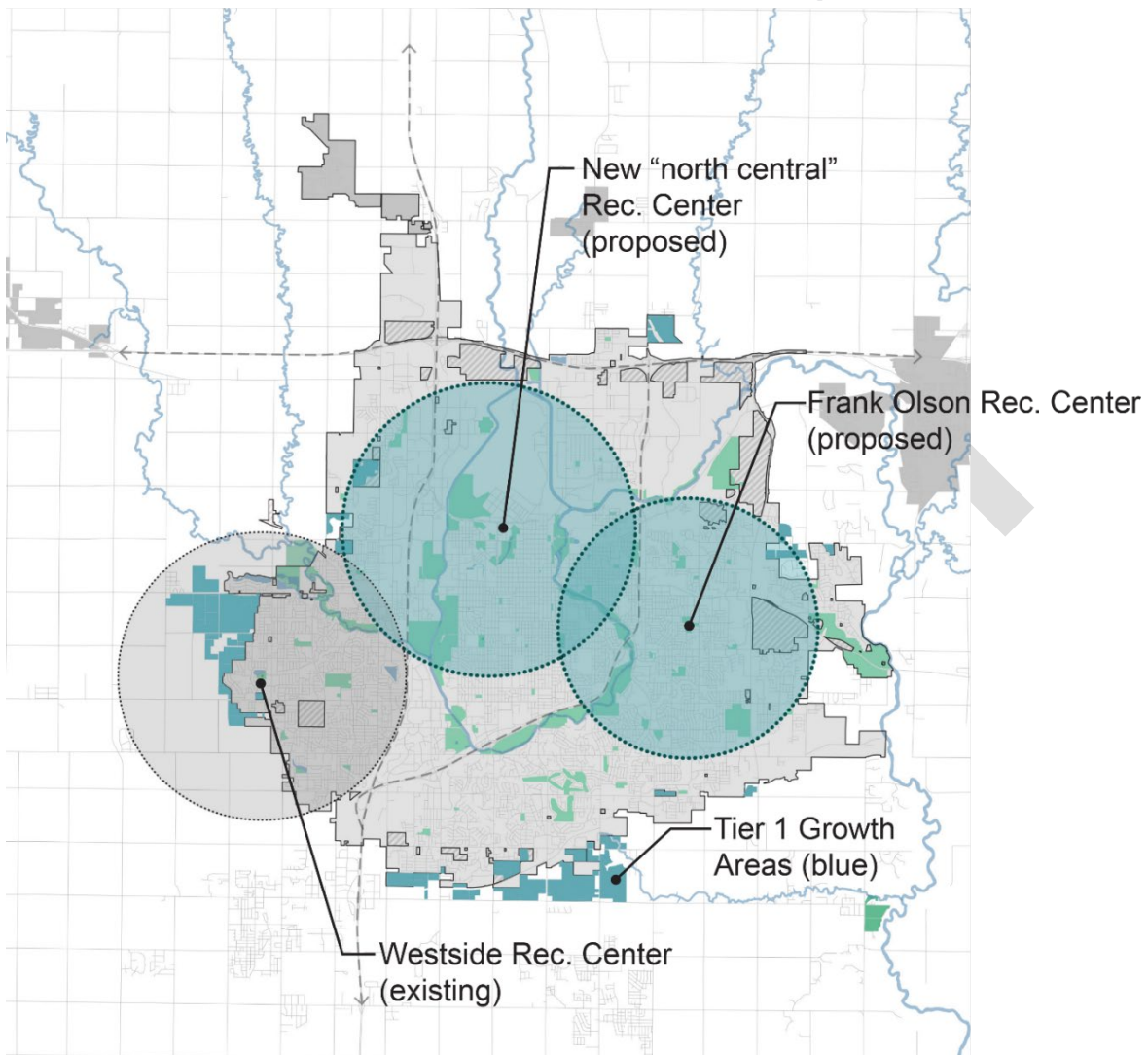
### 2025 Existing Service



Map 13 - Existing Level of Service for Indoor

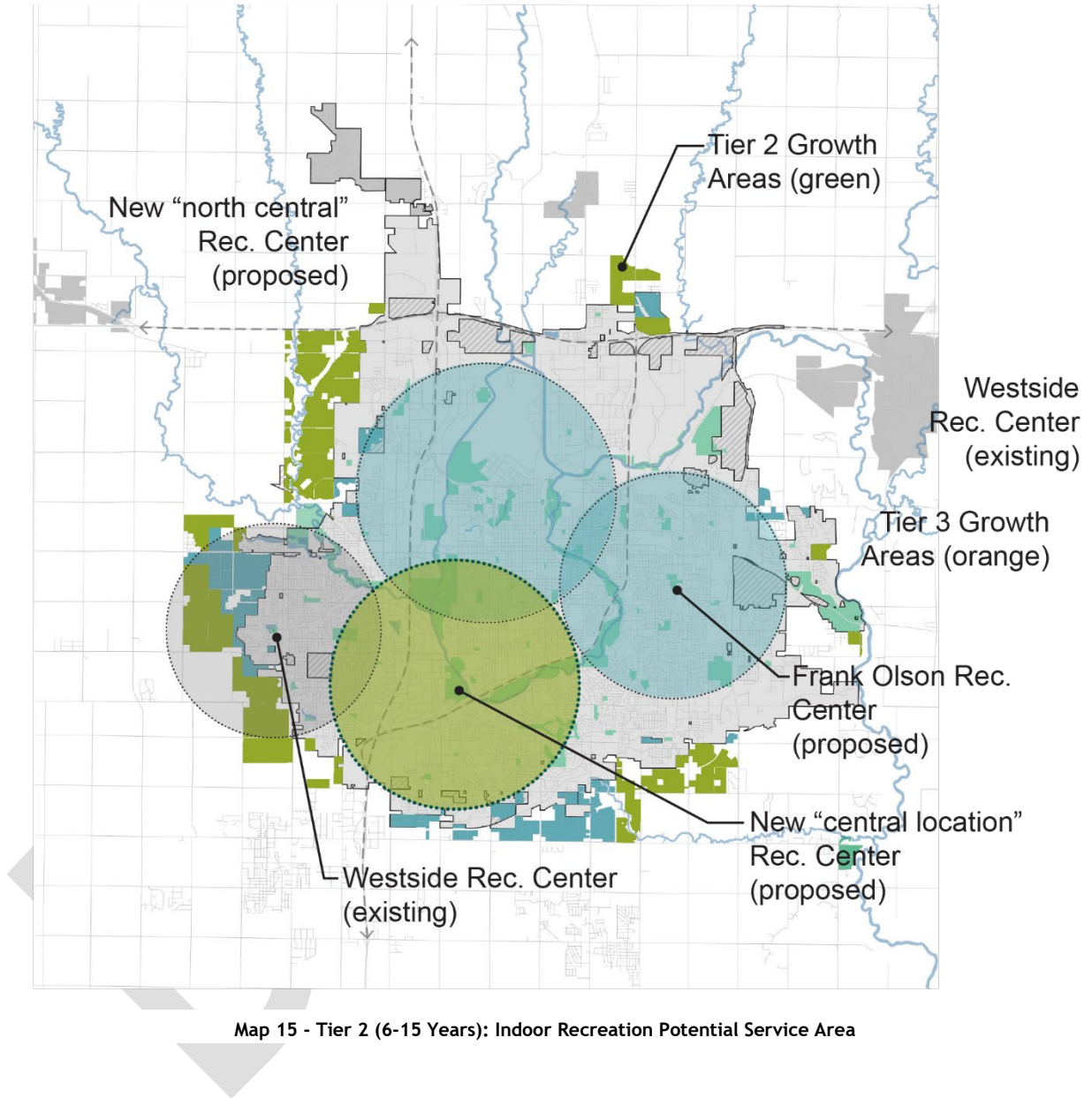


## Tier 1 (3-5 Years) Indoor Recreation - Potential Service Map



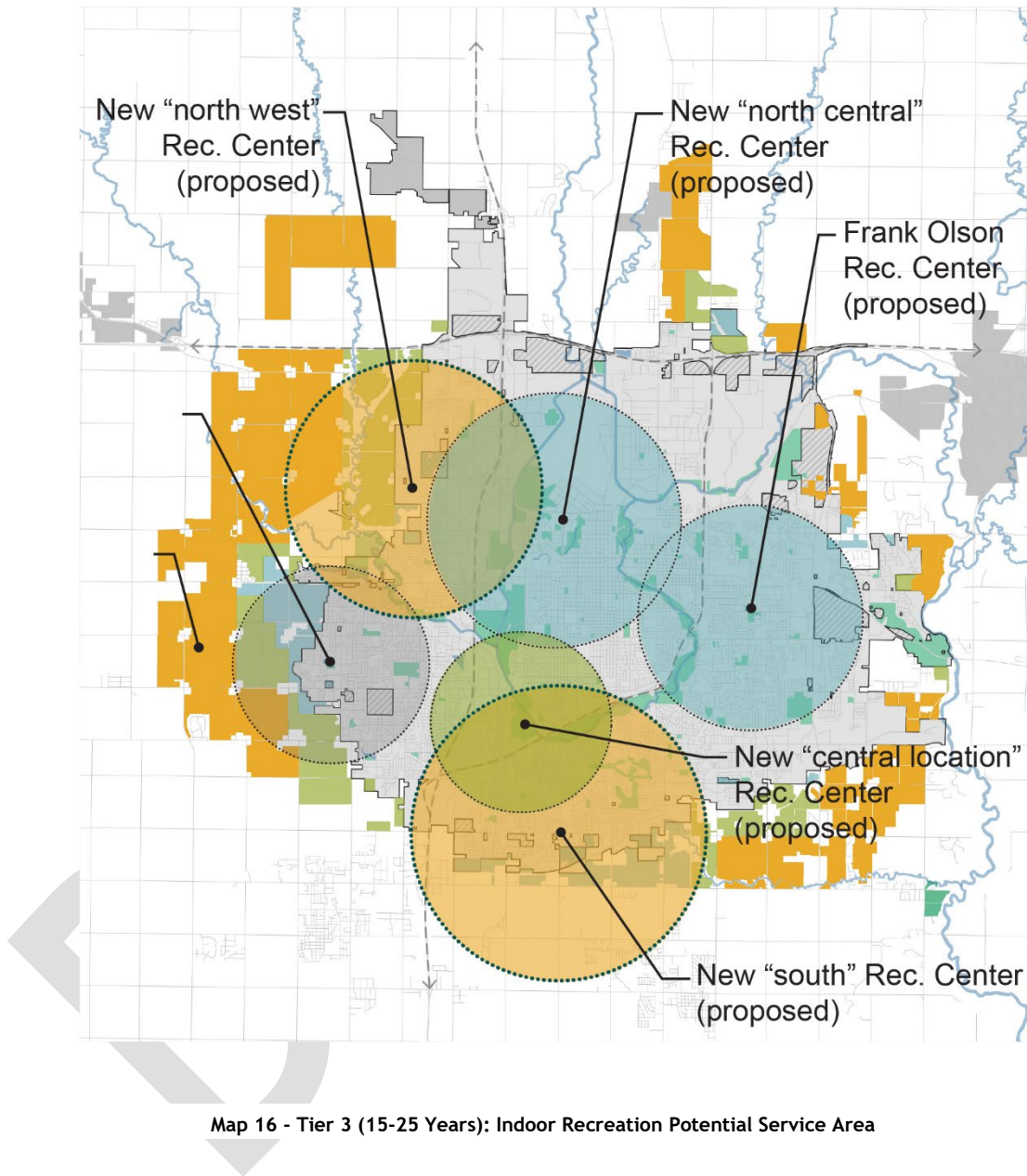
Map 14 - Tier 1 (3-5 Years): Indoor Recreation Potential Service Area

## Tier 2 (6-15 Years) Indoor Recreation - Potential Service Map





## Tier 3 (15-25 Years) Indoor Recreation - Potential Service Map



# CHAPTER FIVE - RECREATION PROGRAM, PARTNERSHIP, AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW

## 5.1 RECREATION PROGRAM ANALYSIS

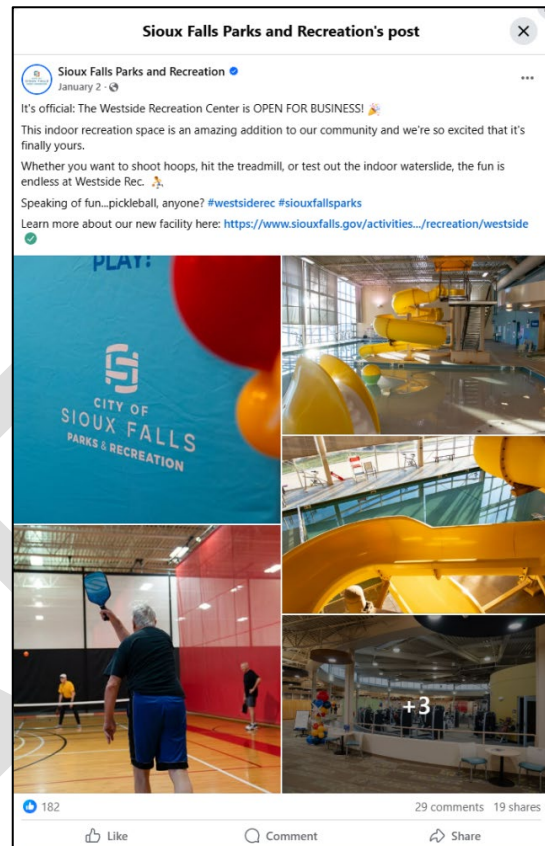
The Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation (“SFPR”) Program Assessment provides an in-depth evaluation of the SFPR program offerings, service delivery, and alignment with community needs and expectations. This assessment is a foundational component of the broader planning process for the Master Plan, guiding strategic improvements in program development, pricing, resource allocation, and community engagement.

A significant milestone informing this assessment was the opening of the Westside Recreation Center in January 2025. In preparation for this new facility, SFPR undertook extensive efforts throughout 2024 to recruit and train staff, design new programs, and coordinate operations to ensure a successful launch. These preparations were grounded in the SFPR mission to provide inclusive, high-quality recreational opportunities, and marked a major step in expanding services to meet the needs of a growing and diverse community.

The Westside Recreation Center (“WRC”) continues to evolve in 2025, program planning remains active to fully activate all spaces within the facility. Staff are focused on enhancing self-directed activities, expanding health and wellness offerings, and refining programs based on early user feedback. These efforts, supported by the findings of this assessment, position Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation to deliver responsive, equitable, and sustainable services well into the future.

The methodology for this assessment involved a multi-faceted data collection and analysis process. Focus groups with community leaders, staff, and stakeholders were conducted to gather qualitative insights into program effectiveness, gaps, and emerging needs. A detailed review of program data including participation levels, program lifecycle stages, and age segment alignment which offered a quantitative perspective on performance and reach. In addition, a statistically valid community survey was distributed at random to capture broad-based public input on priorities, satisfaction, and preferences for future investments. This was complemented by an analysis of demographic and recreation trends data, which provided critical context on the city’s growing and diversifying population, shifting age segments, income characteristics, and regional recreation patterns.

Together, these methods created a well-rounded understanding of how SFPR is currently serving the community and where adjustments or enhancements may be needed. The insights gained will inform future program strategies, resource prioritization, and the continued evolution of services in a sustainable manner that remains responsive to community needs. For the full findings see **Appendix 3**.



### 5.1.1 KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

Based on the detailed assessment of SFPR programs, the following key areas should remain in focus while delivering services to residents to ensure equity, sustainability, and responsiveness to community needs:

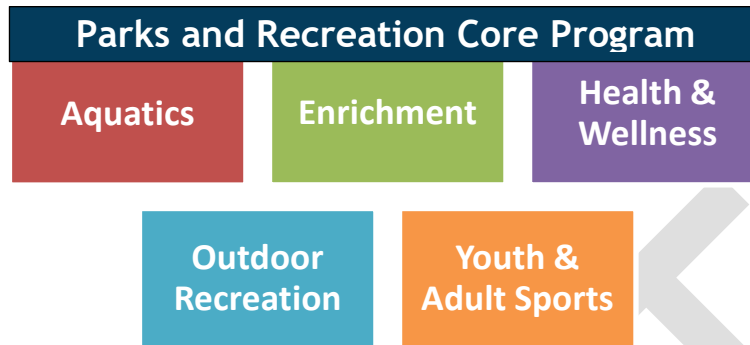
Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Key Focus Areas	
Focus Area	Importance
Community-Driven Planning	Use resident feedback from surveys, focus groups, and community meetings to ensure programs reflect evolving interests and priorities.
Equity in Access & Pricing	Apply tiered pricing strategies and scholarships to ensure affordability for all income levels while maintaining financial sustainability.
Health & Wellness for All Ages	Continue to prioritize health and wellness as a cross-generational core program area, with tailored opportunities for youth, adults, and seniors.
Program Lifecycle Management	Monitor participation trends and adjust offerings by expanding high-growth programs, refining mature ones, and phasing out those in decline or saturation.
Cost Recovery & Financial Stewardship	Implement clear cost recovery goals aligned with community benefit to allocate resources effectively and sustain operations amid rising costs.
Cultural Relevance & Inclusivity	Ensure programs, marketing, and outreach reflect the City's increasing diversity in age, race, and household structure.
Data-Driven Decision Making	Track KPIs like participation, cancellation rates, and customer satisfaction to inform continuous improvement and performance management.
Staffing & Workforce Development	Address staffing limitations by refining full-time/part-time models, improving retention, and expanding training in customer service and safety.
Facility Lifecycle Planning	Align new development (e.g., Westside, Frank Olson Park, Jacobson Plaza) with long-term maintenance, operations planning, and Central Facilities coordination.
Partnership Enhancement	Formalize standards for community partnerships that promote shared investment in outcomes and facility stewardship.

Figure 67 - SFPR Program Focus Areas

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### 5.1.2 EXISTING CORE PROGRAM AREAS

Through discussions with the SFPR staff, (5) Core Program Areas were identified as currently being offered for recreation programs



### PROGRAM CLASSIFICATION

The chart outlines how SFPR classifies its programs into Core, Enhanced, and Specialized categories based on public benefit versus individual benefit (exclusivity). Classification factors such as public interest, access, benefits, market competition, and financial sustainability help staff determine the appropriate classification.

Core programs (24% of offerings) meet high public expectations, provide substantial community benefit, and are typically free or low-cost, relying heavily on public funding due to limited or no market alternatives. Basic programs (23%) serve both public and individual needs, may have some access restrictions, and aim for a balanced funding model with partial cost recovery. Supplemental programs (53%) are driven by individual or group demand, often have limited access, and primarily benefit the participant. These programs operate in competitive markets and aim for the highest cost recovery, relying mostly on user fees with minimal public subsidy.

This classification supports strategic resource allocation, ensuring essential services remain accessible while more individualized offerings contribute to financial sustainability. Programs are classified in these categories first then when determining pricing, are broken into six levels depending upon cost recovery.

Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Program Classification			
Factors	Core	Basic	Supplemental
Public interest; Legal Mandate; Mission Alignment	High public expectation	High public expectation	High individual and interest group expectation
Access	Open access by all	Open access Limited access to specific users	Limited access to specific users
Benefits (health, safety, protection of assets, etc.)	Substantial public benefit (negative consequence if not provided)	Public and individual benefit	Primarily individual benefit
Competition in the Market	Limited or no alternative providers	Alternative providers unable to meet demand or need	Alternative providers readily available
Financial Sustainability	Free, nominal or fee tailored to public needs, Requires public funding	Fees cover some direct costs, Requires a balance of public funding and a cost recovery target	Fees cover most direct and indirect costs, Some public funding as appropriate
Best Practice Cost Recovery Goal	0 - 40%	40% - 80%	80% - 100%+
Program Distribution	24%	23%	53%

Figure 68 - SFPR Program Classification

## PRICING STRATEGIES

To ensure equitable access, financial sustainability, and market competitiveness, best practice pricing strategies can be applied to limit the amount of subsidy required for sustainability, especially during periods when operational costs are increasing significantly. These strategies consider factors such as age, household status, and residency, allowing pricing to reflect user characteristics and encourage participation across demographics. Operational variables like day of the week, time of day, and location help align pricing with demand patterns and facility use. Additional considerations for alignment with SFPR's cost recovery goals to achieve a balanced and responsible financial model. SFPR has begun using best practices to pricing programs and services at the Westside Recreation Center.

Best Practice Pricing Strategies	
Pricing Strategy	Description
Age Segment	Different prices offered for different ages
Bundle Pricing	Programs/ services are grouped together at a single, often discounted, price
By Competition (Market Rate)	Competitors' prices influence your price
By Cost Recovery Goals	Dept. cost recovery goals influence your price
By Customer's Ability to Pay	Scholarships, subsidies, discounted rates offered for low-income
By Location	Different prices at different locations
Family / Household Status	Different prices offered for family / household groups
Group Discounts	Different prices for groups
Introductory Pricing	Program/ service is offered at a lower price for a limited time when it's first launched
Prime / Non-Prime Time	Different prices for different times of the day
Residency	Different prices for resident vs non-resident
Subscription/ Member Pricing	Pay a recurring fee at regular intervals (i.e., memberships, member/ non-member)
Weekday / Weekend	Different prices for different days of the week

Figure 69 - SFPR Pricing Strategies

## BASIC PROGRAMS

Basic programs are included with the facility pass and encompass access to all physical amenities such as aquatics, fitness areas, open gym, and the indoor playground. This includes routine programming that offers broad community benefit without significant additional cost. These programs include activities like open gym sports (basketball, volleyball, pickleball), group games, aqua fitness, cycling classes, and drop-in sessions like Storytime or arts and crafts.

## SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS

Supplemental programs, by contrast, incur an additional fee due to their individualized nature, higher operational costs, or the inclusion of take-home materials. Examples include themed events (e.g., Superhero Dance), STEM and art camps with materials or kits, organized adult sports leagues with officiating, and specialized rentals such as party rooms. Notably, some programs like swim lessons carry a fee not due to higher cost, but to ensure equitable access for all users regardless of pass status and supported by scholarships where needed.

This approach allows SFPR to maintain inclusive baseline access while applying fees to value-added or specialized experiences, ensuring both financial sustainability and community equity.



## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

Sioux Falls also incorporates ability-to-pay pricing tools, such as discounted subsidies, to support affordability and access for low-income residents. Together, these strategies form a flexible and responsive pricing framework that supports both community benefit and long-term departmental sustainability. One example of this is through their summer swim passes. Reduced-income season passes are available during the summer season for qualified families.

### COST RECOVERY

Cost recovery in parks and recreation refers to the process of generating revenue through user fees, rentals, and other sources of earned income to offset the operational costs of delivering programs, services, and facilities. It reflects the percentage of expenses that are recouped from participants rather than relying solely on tax-based funding.

Having cost recovery goals is especially important during periods of rising operational costs such as increases in staffing, utilities, maintenance, and material prices, for several key reasons:

- **Financial Sustainability:** Clear cost recovery targets help ensure that the SFPR can continue offering quality services without compromising its budget or overburdening general funds.
- **Resource Prioritization:** Cost recovery goals guide decisions on which programs should be subsidized for public benefit and which should be expected to pay for themselves, enabling the agency to allocate limited resources more effectively.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Setting goals helps explain to the public and policymakers why certain fees are charged and what level of subsidy is being provided, aligning pricing with community benefit.
- **Equity and Access:** A structured cost recovery model allows agencies to subsidize high-benefit, widely accessible programs (e.g., youth enrichment, adaptive services, senior health) while charging more for individualized or premium services, ensuring fairness in who pays for what and who benefits.
- **Adaptability:** In inflationary periods, cost recovery goals provide a framework for adjusting pricing in a strategic, data-informed way, rather than reacting ad hoc to budget shortfalls.



SFPR has always been conscious of financial limitations and recognize the importance of service delivery with financial responsibility, especially as operational costs are climbing.

### COST RECOVERY AND NEEDS QUANTIFICATION

The Cost Recovery and Needs Quantification System provides a structured framework to guide how programs and services are classified (building on Section 1.2.3), priced, and supported within the community. This model helps determine the appropriate balance between public benefit and individual benefit, aligning the level of cost recovery with the type of service offered, ranging from

core community programs that serve broad public needs to supplemental individual programs that provide personalized value at market rate. By categorizing programs into tiers such as Core, Basic, and Supplemental, the system ensures fiscal responsibility while promoting affordable access. Additionally, the City applies an ability to pay approach using the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to adjust or waive fees for qualifying participants, ensuring that all residents can benefit from recreational opportunities regardless of current financial circumstances.

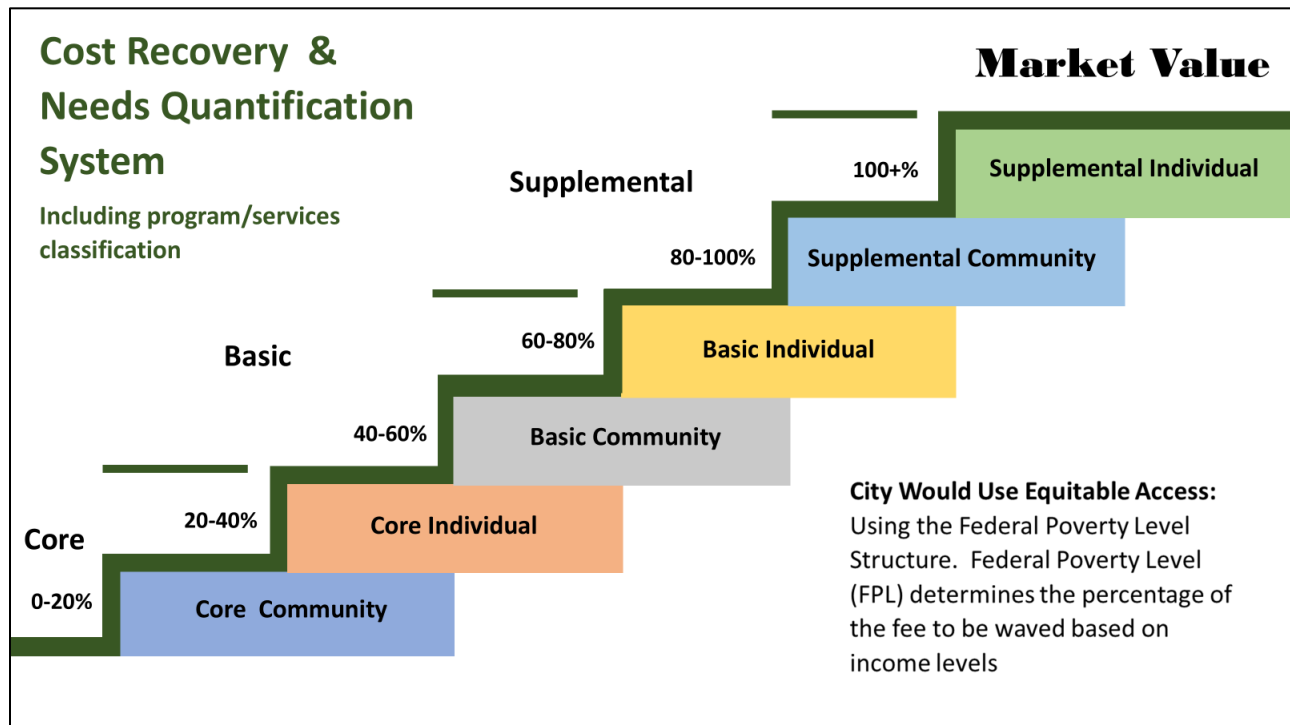


Figure 70 - SFPR Cost Recovery & Needs Quantification System

### 5.1.3 CONCLUSION

The Recreation Program Assessment demonstrates that SFPR is well-positioned to build on its strong foundation of inclusive programming, fiscal responsibility, and community engagement. The opening of the Westside Recreation Center has both expanded opportunities and highlighted the importance of thoughtful planning, cost recovery strategies, and continuous evaluation of programs against community needs. Demographic trends point to continued growth, diversification, and rising expectations, making it essential for SFPR to remain agile in its program design, pricing, and resource allocation. By leveraging its identified strengths, addressing operational challenges, and capitalizing on emerging opportunities, SFPR can ensure long-term sustainability and equitable access to recreation services. Ultimately, this assessment reinforces the Department's commitment to delivering high-quality, responsive, and financially sound programs that enhance quality of life for all residents of Sioux Falls today and into the future.

### 5.2 OPERATIONAL REVIEW

The SFPR Operational Review was conducted to assess the effectiveness of current practices and identify opportunities to enhance service delivery in response to a growing and evolving community. With a focus on improving guest experiences, the review explores how SFPR can build on its strengths while adapting to shifting demands across its extensive park system. The City's rapid growth has significantly impacted the department, requiring SFPR to expand operations and staffing in order to keep pace. This growth has stretched resources thin, placing additional pressure on the department to maintain its high standards of service and avoid any decline in the quality of life experienced by residents. The review analyzes key operational areas including maintenance standards, staffing structures, policy management, performance tracking, draws on staff and stakeholder input, and site observations. As a CAPRA-accredited agency, SFPR remains committed to continuous improvement and ensuring that operations grow in alignment with the community's needs while upholding excellence in parks and recreation services. This was demonstrated in SFPR's most recent CAPRA reaccreditation on-site visit.

#### 5.2.1 OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT

SFPR plays a vital role in enriching community life by providing a wide array of recreational programs, facilities, and natural spaces that promote health, wellness, and community connection. Guided by its mission and its vision of offering unmatched recreational experiences in the region, the department oversees a vast and diverse system. This includes over 3,200 park acres, 80 parks, 69 miles of trails, multiple aquatics and sports facilities, and hundreds of programs and special events that serve all age segments. SFPR's commitment to safety, excellence, and accessibility is reflected not only in the scale of its assets such as ice rinks, pools, ball fields, dog parks, and playgrounds but also in its structured and efficient approach to maintenance and operations. Through a combination of district-based park management, central park services and embedded facility maintenance teams, including those at the new Westside Recreation Center, the department ensures that every space is well-maintained, welcoming, and ready to meet the evolving needs of residents and visitors alike.





### 5.2.2 CURRENT OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

SFPR takes a structured, data-driven approach to managing operations across its park system. This approach enables SFPR to maintain high-quality services, respond effectively to trends, and plan for sustainable system growth.

#### CORE MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS

SFPR has a set of core maintenance functions that are summarized as follows:

##### GENERAL PARK MAINTENANCE

- Mowing, turf care, irrigation system monitoring, trash collection, facility cleaning, and minor repairs.
- Preventive and seasonal work to maintain quality and safety standards.
- Annual and perennial flower planting in parks and city properties.

##### FORESTRY

- Tree trimming and removal in parks and public rights-of-way.
- Enforcement of the street tree ordinance.
- Management of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) through planned removals and treatment.
- Project T.R.I.M. inspects trees for clearance over streets and sidewalks.

##### CENTRAL SERVICES

- Light mechanical repairs to equipment.
- Scheduling and allocation of specialized maintenance equipment.
- Supply distribution to crews.
- Carpentry work for park structures.



### OTHER CITY PROPERTIES

- Maintains 679 separate locations totaling ~1,864 acres, including city-owned lots, right-of-way areas, drainage ways, and detention ponds.
- Landscaped medians (26+ miles; 29 acres of turf and 8 acres of plant beds) are mowed twice a week and receive year-round plant, shrub, and tree care.

### 5.2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN & STAFFING

SFPR organizes park maintenance through six geographic districts. Each district encompasses numerous parks, greenways, and public spaces, with a unique mix of community and neighborhood assets. To effectively manage the daily upkeep of these areas ranging from mowing and litter removal to irrigation and playground inspections each district relies on a dedicated crew of caretakers and technicians. These crews are responsible for not only routine maintenance but also responding to weather events, special projects, and public use fluctuations. This team-based approach ensures that the large and diverse portfolio of properties within each district is maintained to consistent, high-quality standards that support safe, attractive, and usable park spaces for the community.

Maintenance at the Westside Recreation Center has been strategically incorporated into the facility's operational structure to ensure a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for all visitors. A dedicated Lead Building Maintenance Worker oversees daily facility upkeep, supported by Building Maintenance Workers who handle custodial duties, equipment care, and routine repairs. This team works proactively to address facility needs, from managing infrastructure to ensuring gym floors, locker rooms, and common areas meet the highest cleanliness and safety standards. Their close coordination with recreation staff allows for responsive support during high-traffic times, special events, and seasonal program changes. By embedding maintenance staff within the operational core of the center, the department ensures an efficient and effective approach that enhances both facility longevity and the overall visitor experience.







### 5.2.4 PLANS, POLICIES & STANDARDS MANAGEMENT

CAPRA Accreditation standards require that SFPR have a structured approach to policy review and updating plans. All documents designated for periodic review, such as administrative policies, master plans, and operational procedures are to be evaluated and updated on a regular timetable. There must be clear evidence of review, revision dates, and adoption by appropriate authorities. Collectively, these standards emphasize structured governance, accountability, and continuous improvement in SFPR operations. This commitment to regular review and updates ensures that the department's operations remain current, relevant, address public identified priorities, and in alignment with best practices.

SFPR maintains a comprehensive set of plans, policies, and standards to guide its operations, support strategic growth, and ensure high-quality service delivery. The table identifies which items are current, in progress, or pending development, and includes key areas such as business planning, recreation programming, land use policies, maintenance standards, and operational procedures. This framework enables SFPR to remain proactive and aligned with its mission to enhance quality of life for residents through well-managed parks and recreation services. See next page for more information.



SFPR Plans, Policies, & Standards			
Plans	Yes	No	Notes
Business Plans	X		(2025)
Recreation Plan	X		
Maintenance Management Plan	X		Supporting documentation exists and data within VueWorks that could be incorporated into a plan. There is also a turf management plan.
Marketing Plan	X		
Master Plan	X		In process of updating
Site Development Plans	X		
Trails and Greenways Plan	X		
Emergency Action Plan	X		
Other – Succession Plan	X		SFPRD has begun identifying the key positions where there are core competencies needed for advancement
Policies	Yes	No	Notes
Park Rules & Regulations ordinance and enforcement Policy	X		
Land Acquisition & Use Policy	X		
Land Management Policy	X		
Purchasing Policy	X		
Pricing Policy	X		
Earned Income Policy	X		
Refund Policy	X		
Cost Recovery Policy		X	
Facility Use Policy	X		
Partnership Policy	X		
Sponsorship Policy	X		
Volunteer Policy	X		
Special Event Policy (outside orgs.)	X		
Communications Policy (social media, lead time, methods, review/approval of materials)	X		
Other – Naming Rights Policy	X		
Standards/Procedures	Yes	No	Notes
Recreation Program Development	X		
Recreation Program Standards	X		
Parks and Recreation Employee Handbook / Manual (Fulltime, Pt, Seasonal)	X		
Maintenance Standards	X		
Facility Standards	*	X	Developing with WRC as the case study for future facilities. *Standards are established for MIDCO Aquatic Center.
Marketing Standards & Brand Style Guide	X		
Office Standard Operating Procedures		X	
Marketing Procedures	X		
Performance Evaluation Procedure	X		
Onboarding Procedure	X		
Training Standards (annual calendar, inhouse, specialty)	X		
Customer Print Materials	X		

Figure 72 - SFPR Plans, Policies, & Standards

## 5.2.5 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Current operations are monitored using key performance indicators (KPIs) to support more informed decision-making, particularly during this time of rapid growth and evolving recreational trends. Public feedback continues to highlight strong demand for adult fitness and wellness programs as a top priority. SFPR is actively analyzing collected data to explore more effective strategies for system expansion while maintaining the accessibility of special use facilities at the same high level as its parks.

SFPR utilizes VUEWorks to help manage the system. VUEWorks is an asset management software that helps SFPR track, plan, and maintain its infrastructure and park assets. The system allows staff to log labor and equipment hours, schedule maintenance, monitor work orders, and document service history. By centralizing this data, VueWorks supports more efficient resource allocation, improves long-term planning, and enhances accountability, ultimately helping SFPR maintain safe, high-quality facilities and park spaces.

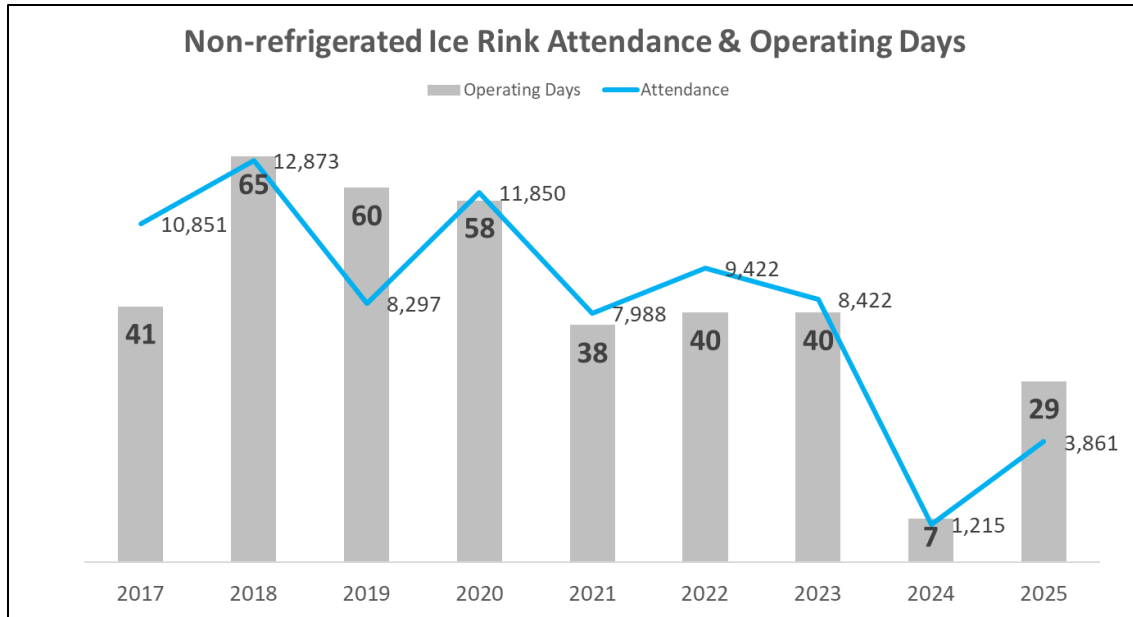
One example of how KPIs are being used to understand usage trends is the analysis of ice rinks. This has prompted consideration of a potential regional approach to ice rinks, like the model being adopted for recreation centers, which could help reallocate resources toward higher-priority community needs. Taking a strategic, system-wide approach will improve operational efficiency and support sustainable growth while maintaining the quality standards that are essential to effective maintenance.

Falls Park - Hours from VueWorks	
<b>SPECIAL EVENTS - Cinco De Mayo</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
72	6
<b>STORM DAMAGE - May 16, 2022</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
86	12
<b>WINTER WONDERLAND - Setup 2023</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
1394.5	499.5
<b>WINTER WONDERLAND - Maintenance 2023-2024</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
84	0
<b>WINTER WONDERLAND - Tear Down 2024</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
629	185
<b>WINTER WONDERLAND - Prep 2024-2025 (Jan-March)</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
268	0
<b>MOWING- 2022</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
822.75	822.75
<b>MOWING - 2023</b>	
Total Labor Hrs	Total Equipment Hrs
866.5	866.5

Figure 73 - Falls Park KPI from VUEWorks

## ICE RINK ATTENDANCE

Since 2017, attendance and operating days for Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation's non-refrigerated ice rinks have varied significantly. Attendance peaked in 2018 at 12,873 across 65 operating days and again reached 11,850 in 2020 over 58 days. However, both attendance and operating days declined in recent years, with only 7 operating days and 1,215 attendees in 2024, the lowest on record. A slight recovery occurred in 2025 with 29 operating days and 3,861 attendees. Year-to-year fluctuations reflect the challenges of maintaining consistent ice conditions for outdoor, non-refrigerated rinks.



**Figure 74 - Non-Refrigerated Ice Rink Attendance and Operating Days**

#### IMPLICATIONS:

- The heavy reliance on favorable weather makes non-refrigerated rinks an increasingly unreliable recreational offering.
- Variability in operating days undermines consistency in service delivery and public expectations.
- Maintaining staffing, equipment, and marketing for unpredictable usage patterns adds strain to SFPR resources.
- This trend supports the rationale for investing in refrigerated ice facilities, like the Jacobson Plaza refrigerated ribbon, to ensure consistent and extended seasonal ice programming.



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### COST PER ATTENDEE

At McKennan Park Ice Rink, the current cost per attendee using natural ice is estimated at \$55. By converting to refrigerated ice, the cost per attendee drops to \$33 even with no attendance gain. With a mild increase in attendance, the cost falls to \$16 per attendee, and with a moderate (likely) gain, it decreases further to \$8. In the case of an aggressive attendance gain, the cost per attendee could be as low as \$3.

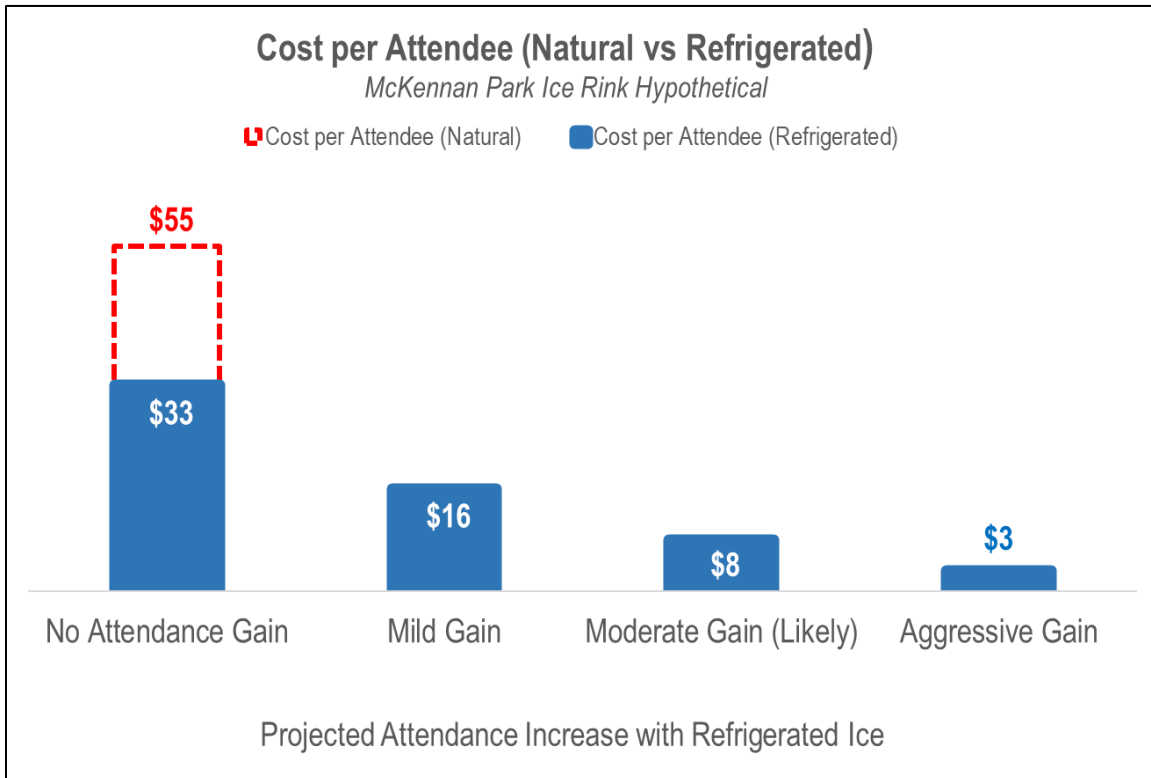


Figure 75 - Ice Cost Per Attendee Example

### IMPLICATIONS:

- Refrigerated ice becomes significantly more cost-effective as attendance increases. The difference between \$55 and \$8 (under likely gain) represents an 85% decrease in cost per attendee.
- Even at modest gains, the cost recovery and operational sustainability improve.
- Refrigerated systems allow for predictable programming, which can help build attendance over time and maximize community value.
- Lower per-user costs could enable broader access to ice programming, especially when paired with free skate events or inclusive programming.
- These projections support long-term investment in refrigerated ice infrastructure to stabilize operations, attract more users, and reduce volatility in service delivery.

### 5.2.6 DEPARTMENT FOCUS GROUPS

An operational review of SFPR was conducted to assess current practices and identify opportunities to strengthen service delivery as the system evolves. With a focus on enhancing positive guest experiences, the review explored what SFPR can continue to build on and where change may be needed to meet community expectations. The process included data review, on-site observations, focus groups and Division S.W.O.T. analysis focused on key areas of operational capacity.

The key areas of operational capacity provide a framework for evaluating and strengthening how SFPR functions. These areas include Processes, Management, Resources, Technology, and Communications. They represent the essential components needed to deliver effective and efficient services. Together, they support the achievement of strategic goals, guide decision-making, and ensure the agency can adapt to changing community needs while maintaining high standards of service delivery.

<u>Processes</u>	<u>Management</u>	<u>Resources</u>	<u>Technology</u>	<u>Communications</u>
A series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve outcomes identified through approved plans, policies, and standards for parks and recreation services	The organization, coordination, and supervision of all business activities in a park and recreation agency to achieve defined outcomes	A stock or supply of money, inventory, staff, information, and other assets in a parks and recreation agency that can be utilized in order to function effectively	The application of software, devices, tools and equipment for practical parks and recreation purposes, especially to increase efficiency	The internal and external exchange of information regarding parks and recreation operations, promoting services, and capital projects

### STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SPFPR Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities		
Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities
Public perception of the department is high	Fees and lack of a pricing policy	Technology advancements in maintenance automation
Accessibility of park spaces, rates, financially, communications	Stretched too thin staffing wise	Expanding partnerships and volunteers
Equitable programming	Behind on communication in different languages	Prescriptive programming
Collaborative mindset within the team	Digital footprint not user friendly	Reflecting community demographics in staff
Support from administration	Lengthy seasonal hiring process	Developing strategies on fees and cost recovery
Funding from private donations	Population growth impacting field maintenance	Federal grant for trees
The trail system	Employee retention and turnover	Expanding senior programs
Level of care regarding maintenance	Overreliance on part-time staff	
The addition of recreation indoor space for year-round offerings		
Constant evolution as a Department by being innovative		

Figure 76 - SFPR Operations Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities

### 5.2.7 SURVEY RESULTS

ETC Institute administered a parks and recreation needs assessment survey during the winter of 2025. The purpose of the survey was to help determine parks and recreation needs and priorities for the City of Sioux Falls. Overall, satisfaction with the system is extremely high and continues with public identified priorities:

- 92% of respondents provided a Very Satisfied, Satisfied, or Neutral response compared to only 8% who provided a Dissatisfied response type
- SFPR is highly valued by the community for maintaining clean and well-kept parks.
- There is a call for more indoor recreational spaces, as well as adult fitness and wellness programs.
- Year-round facilities to support activities during colder months, with also a focus on expanding outdoor winter activities.

### IMPLICATIONS TO SFPR:

- Continued population growth and park development will increase the number of assets to maintain, making it more challenging to uphold current satisfaction levels without added support in park maintenance and recreation programming.
- Growth in indoor recreational spaces and year-round facilities will require additional recreation staff and maintenance staff to manage specialized equipment. Increased acreage and facility types will necessitate additional staff and will require investment in professional development or contracted services.
- Investments in more efficient tools, vehicles, and potentially automated equipment will be essential to maintain service levels at scale.
- As satisfaction is currently high, any decline in visible maintenance quality due to stretched resources could negatively impact public perception, underscoring the need for adequate planning.

### 5.2.8 KEY FOCUS AREAS

The SFPR Key Operational Focus Areas represent a strategic approach to strengthening core maintenance functions and recreation services. These priorities are designed to help the department respond to the demands of a growing population, an expanding park system, and increasing expectations for high-quality year-round recreational experiences. By focusing on areas such as infrastructure management, district-based staffing, recreation planning, and data-driven decision-making, SFPR will be better equipped to maintain consistent service delivery and ensure long-term sustainability. These efforts directly benefit the community by enhancing park safety, cleanliness, and reliability, while also supporting equitable access and ensuring quality recreational experiences.

SFPR Key Operational Focus Areas	
Focus Area	Importance
Asset and Resource Management	Ensure proactive care for aging and expanding assets through structured maintenance schedules and lifecycle planning.
	Continue enhancing VUEWorks utilization by maintaining accurate, consistent data entry to track expenses and leverage historical data for forecasting resource needs when planning and developing new assets.
District-Based Maintenance Staffing	Maintain service quality by aligning staffing levels within geographic districts to support equitable coverage and workload distribution.
Facility-Specific Maintenance Integration	Embed maintenance staff in future key facilities like the Westside Recreation Center to ensure cleanliness, safety, and responsiveness.
Seasonal Operations Planning	Improve readiness for winter and event-based demands with advanced planning and resource deployment strategies.
Technology and Data Utilization	Continue enhancing RecTrac, and KPIs to track labor, analyze trends, and guide decision-making for future needed resources such as staffing.
	Continue enhancing VUEWorks utilization by maintaining accurate, consistent data entry to track expenses and leverage historical data for forecasting resource needs when planning and developing new assets
Staffing Capacity and Training	Address growth pressures with additional staff and training focused on specialized systems, safety, and seasonal readiness.
	Use Succession planning efforts to offer structured advancement opportunities
	Invest in professional development, competitive benefits and wages
Policy and Standards Alignment	Keep plans and procedures current to CAPRA standards, ensuring consistent application of best practices across operations.
Cost Efficiency and Resource Allocation	Use cost-per-user data and service analysis to prioritize high-impact areas and improve operational sustainability.
Climate-Responsive Maintenance Strategy	Develop approaches for dealing with weather variability and climate impacts, particularly for outdoor and seasonal assets.

Figure 77 - SFPR Key Operational Focus Areas

### 5.3 PARTNERSHIP ANALYSIS

SFPR works with several partners to help offer programs as well as operate signature parks and facilities. These partnerships help SFPR by expanding the capacity of the department to serve the community in a variety of ways. As a part of the overall parks and recreation master plan update, a partnership analysis looked at the main partnership agreements provided by SFPR staff that support SFPR's programs and daily operations. The report shares the purpose for each partnership agreement, what type of agreements are in place, what goals have been set, and how the partnership outcomes are regularly measured. The goal of this report is to help SFPR better understand and manage partnerships in the best possible way for the community.

#### 5.3.1 PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS

Ideally, each partnership agreement should adhere to common standards including:

- Each partner will meet with or report to the SFPR staff on a regular basis to plan and share activity-based costs and equity invested.
- Partners will establish measurable outcomes and work through key issues to focus on for the coming year to meet the desired outcomes.
- Each partner will focus on meeting a balance of equity agreed to and track investment costs accordingly.
- Measurable outcomes will be reviewed at least annually and shared with each partner, with adjustments made as needed.
- A working partnership agreement will be developed and monitored together depending on the term of the agreement or on an as-needed basis.
- Each partner will assign a liaison to serve each partnership agency for communication and planning purposes. A secondary contact for each partner should also be identified.
- Each partner should develop a plan on how to promote each other and the benefits of the partnership to the community.

Finally, each SFPR partnership agreement should include the following core partnership elements.

Core Partnership Elements		
Element	Definition	Purpose
<b>Partnership Description</b>	A summary of what the partnership is and why it exists.	To provide context and explain the goals or services supported by the partner.
<b>Partnership Agreement Recitals</b>	The background section of a formal agreement that outlines the reasons and intent for entering the partnership.	To document the mutual understanding of purpose and establish the foundation of the partnership.



<b>Role and Responsibility (Services, Programs, Facilities)</b>	A clear outline of what each partner is expected to do, including who provides services, manages programs, or maintains facilities.	To avoid confusion by clearly assigning duties and expectations between partners.
<b>Point of Contact</b>	The designated person or people responsible for managing communication between the two organizations.	To ensure accountability and streamline coordination.
<b>Key Issues</b>	Any challenges, risks, or concerns related to the partnership that could affect success.	To proactively address problems and identify areas needing improvement.
<b>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</b>	Specific, measurable outcomes are used to evaluate how well the partnership is working.	To track performance and make data-driven decisions for improvement.
<b>Reporting Process and Communication</b>	How and when partners will share updates, reports, and hold meetings.	To maintain transparency, build trust, and monitor progress.
<b>Partnership Dates and Termination Clause</b>	The start and end dates of the agreement and terms under which it can be ended early.	To define the length of the partnership and ensure there is a clear exit process if needed.
<b>Financial Arrangements</b>	Details about funding, reimbursements, in-kind contributions, or any cost-sharing agreements.	To make sure both partners understand their financial responsibilities.
<b>Insurance/Legal Requirements</b>	Any insurance coverage, liability protections, or legal terms both parties must follow.	To protect both organizations from legal and financial risk.

Figure 78 - Core Partnership Elements

### 5.3.2 PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The table below outlines each partnership that was analyzed including the type of organization and agreement as well as the primary goals or outcomes.

Partner	Type (Public, Private, Nonprofit)	Area (Programming/O&M)	Agreement Type	Primary Goals
Downtown Farmers Market, Inc.	Nonprofit	Programming	Operations Agreement	Priority use for shelter, vending stalls, and parking spaces in Falls Park to operate the farmers market.

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Falls Area Single Track, Inc.	Nonprofit	Programming	Use Agreement	Use of SFPR trails for mountain biking events and races.
Friends of Levitt Shell Sioux Falls, Inc.	Nonprofit	Programming/O&M	Operations Agreement	Operate the Levitt Shell
Great Bear Management Company	Private	Programming/O&M	Operations Agreement	Operate Great Bear Recreation Park
Landscapes Management Company, LLC ("LMC")	Private	O&M	Operations Agreement	Golf management services for Elmwood, Kuehn, and Prairie Green Golf Courses
Wegner Arboretum Society	Nonprofit	O&M	Operations Agreement	Management of Mary Joe Wegner Arboretum and East Sioux Falls Historic Site
Midcontinent Communications	Private	Programming	Sponsorship Agreement	Title Sponsorship Agreement for Aquatic Center at Spellerberg Park
Sioux Empire Baseball Association	Nonprofit	Programming	Advertising Agreement	Advertising at Harmodon, Pasley, and Terrace Parks
Stensland Enterprises, Inc.	Private	O&M	Operations Agreement	Management of Falls Overlook Café
Volunteers of America Dakotas	Nonprofit	Programming	Operations Agreement	Provided afterschool programming and transportation at the VOA Dakotas Youth Center
Weller Brothers, LLC	Private	Programming	Operations Agreement	Voucher program for street tree replacements
YMCA of Sioux Falls	Nonprofit	Programming	Operations Agreement	Afterschool programming and transportation for six middle schools
Zoological Society of Sioux Falls	Nonprofit	O&M	Operations Agreement	Operations and management of Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum

Figure 79 - Partnership Overview

### 5.3.3 KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from that partnership analysis include:

- SFPR maintains a variety of partnerships, including those involving nonprofit organizations, private vendors, and public entities. The scope of the various partnerships span program delivery, land and facility use, and operational responsibilities.
- While some agreements clearly define roles, financial terms, and performance indicators, others lack basic components such as termination clauses, reporting protocols, or formal recitals. This inconsistency can increase risk and makes performance difficult to evaluate.
- Most agreements do not include clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), making it challenging to measure success or hold partners accountable.
- Most agreements outline a process for regular communication, progress reporting, or conflict resolution, through operations or financial reports which are essential for long-term success.
- Most agreements include detailed insurance and legal provisions.

### 5.3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Purpose	Timeline
<b>Create a standardized partnership agreement template</b>	Ensure consistency across all agreements with required sections such as KPIs, financial terms, and legal clauses.	Short-Term (0–6 months)
<b>Conduct a legal and financial audit of current agreements</b>	Clarify and formalize any missing terms related to payment, liability, or program responsibilities.	Short-Term (0–6 months)
<b>Establish measurable KPIs for all partnerships</b>	SFPR should regularly evaluate performance and validate community impact of all agreements.	Mid-Term (6–12 months)
<b>Implement regular reporting and check-in processes</b>	Improve transparency and foster stronger communication between partners.	Mid-Term (6–12 months)
<b>Develop a partnership review schedule</b>	Set timelines for agreement evaluation and renewal, tied to performance. A regular meeting should be established to review performance metrics and financials and make necessary adjustments to terms. SFPR should also build in time to regularly review legal requirements with City legal representation.	Long-Term (1–2 years)
<b>Train staff on partnership management best practices</b>	Build internal capacity to negotiate, track, and evaluate partnership agreements effectively. Also provide training on maximizing partnership benefit while minimizing risk for SFPR.	Long-Term (1–2 years)

Figure 80 - Partnership Recommendations

## CHAPTER SIX - PRIORITY RANKINGS, CIP AND FUNDING AND REVENUE STRATEGIES

### 6.1 FACILITY/AMENITY AND PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

The purpose of the Facility/Amenity and Program Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity and program needs for the community served by SFPR. Quantitative data was used from the statistically valid community survey, which asked residents to list unmet needs and rank their importance. A weighted scoring system is used to determine the priorities for SFPR facilities/amenities and programs:

Data Source	Component	Weighting
Quantitative Data	<b>Unmet Needs Reported by the Community Survey</b> – This is used as a factor from the total number of households stating whether they have a need for a facility/amenity and the extent to which their need for facilities/amenities has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify this for 34 different facilities/amenities and 24 program areas.	50%
	<b>Importance Rankings Reported by the Community Survey</b> – This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility/amenity by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important 34 facilities/amenities and 24 program areas.	50%

From this analysis, the Citywide priorities were compared to the following areas of the City:

- Southeast
- Central
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southwest

### 6.1.1 FACILITY/AMENITY PRIORITY RANKINGS

Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following 10 parks and facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Small neighborhood parks (PIR=177)
- Walking/hiking trails (PIR=166)
- Natural areas & wildlife habitats (PIR=164)
- Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool (PIR=137)
- Indoor playground (PIR=134)
- Indoor running/walking track (PIR=131)
- Paved bike trails (PIR=119)
- Indoor fitness & exercise facilities (PIR=117)
- Outdoor swimming pools/water parks (PIR=116)
- Large community parks (PIR=113)

The following “heat map” depicts facility/amenity priority overall for the 34 facility/amenities, as well as by each geographic area of the City.

Facilities	Total	Central	Northeast	Southeast	Southwest	Northwest
Small neighborhood parks	1	2	1	1	2	1
Walking/hiking trails	2	3	2	2	4	2
Natural areas & wildlife habitats	3	1	3	3	1	3
Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	4	7	5	4	3	5
Indoor playground	5	4	8	5	6	7
Indoor running/walking track	6	5	4	6	9	9
Paved bike trails	7	9	6	7	8	8
Indoor fitness & exercise facilities	8	6	9	8	14	6
Outdoor swimming pools/water parks	9	12	7	9	5	4
Large community parks	10	8	11	10	7	10
Adventure/ropes course/zipline	11	11	15	11	10	14
Playground equipment	12	10	12	16	11	12
Community gardens	13	13	10	15	12	17
Boating & fishing areas	14	16	19	12	13	11
Pickleball courts	15	19	16	13	16	13
Picnic areas & shelters	16	14	13	14	15	18
Off-leash dog parks	17	15	14	18	19	15
Outdoor refrigerated ice-skating rinks	18	17	17	17	21	16
Winter sledding hill	19	20	18	23	17	19
Indoor rock climbing wall	20	18	26	20	18	21
Indoor sports fields (football, soccer, etc.)	21	21	20	21	20	25
Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	22	24	22	19	22	22
Outdoor spray ground	23	25	21	22	23	26
Outdoor open field space/practice space	24	23	23	27	24	20
Mountain biking/single track	25	22	24	25	25	24
Golf courses	26	28	29	24	28	23
Outdoor basketball courts	27	26	27	28	26	27
Outdoor tennis courts	28	27	28	26	30	28
Youth soccer fields	29	33	25	29	29	29
Outdoor skate park	30	31	30	30	27	31
Youth baseball & softball fields	31	30	31	31	31	30
Adult softball fields	32	29	34	33	33	32
Youth football fields	33	34	32	32	32	33
Adult soccer fields	34	32	33	34	34	34

Figure 81 - Facility/Amenity Priority Investment Ranking by Citywide & Council District



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### 6.1.2 PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

Based on the priority investment rating (PIR), the following eight programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment:

- Adult fitness & wellness programs (PIR=200)
- Nature programs (PIR=140)
- Special events (PIR=125)
- Travel & tourism (PIR=117)
- Senior programs (PIR=116)
- Outdoor adventure (PIR=113)

The following “heat map” depicts program priority overall for the 24 programs, as well as by each geographic area of the City.

Programs	Total	Central	Northeast	Southeast	Southwest	Northwest
Adult fitness & wellness programs	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nature programs	2	2	4	2	2	3
Special events	3	5	3	3	4	11
Travel & tourism (day trips)	4	4	5	5	6	4
Senior programs	5	8	2	4	5	5
Outdoor adventure (camping, backpacking, climbing, etc.)	6	3	7	6	3	7
Water fitness programs	7	6	6	7	8	2
Youth & adult arts & crafts programs	8	7	9	8	7	9
Canoeing & kayaking	9	9	8	13	9	10
Tennis/pickleball lessons & leagues	10	13	10	10	13	6
Youth summer camp programs	11	12	11	11	11	13
Fishing programs	12	16	12	15	12	8
Youth Learn to Swim programs	13	11	19	12	10	14
Youth sports programs	14	17	13	9	15	12
Youth fitness & wellness programs	15	14	15	14	14	15
Youth & adult drama/performing arts programs	16	10	14	17	19	19
Before & after school programs	17	20	18	18	17	16
Golf programs/lessons	18	19	20	16	18	17
Outdoor archery programs	19	15	17	20	20	18
Programs for disabled	20	18	16	19	16	21
Pre-school programs	21	23	23	21	21	20
Martial arts programs	22	22	21	23	23	24
Youth gymnastics & cheerleading	23	21	22	24	22	23
eSport gaming programs	24	24	24	22	24	22

Figure 82 - Program Priority Investment Rating by Citywide and Council District

## 6.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

### 6.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a five-year projection of planned physical improvements to the park system. The current 2026 to 2030 CIP provides revenue projections and a blueprint for spending priorities to support the desired outcomes of the City of Sioux Falls Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

One of the core functions of the Parks & Recreation Board and Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation administration team is to preserve and protect existing park system assets. The CIP strives to provide necessary funding through the annual budget process for the ongoing capital maintenance or replacement of existing assets before allocating funds for new parks and recreation facilities.

Public input is integral to the success of Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation. The public has opportunities for input on capital improvements through the planning process for this master plan, park-specific site plans prepared before renovation or development occurs, public input at monthly Park Board meetings and annual budget approvals by the City Council.

The CIP should be viewed as a working document, updated annually to reflect projected revenue collections, refined cost projections, potential changes in community or park system needs, shifts in overall city priorities and other unique opportunities. Opportunities for new revenue sources and/or partnerships to help share costs will need to be explored in order to support new capital and visionary development.



### 6.2.2 BEST PRACTICES FOR CAPITAL PLANNING

#### BEST PRACTICE #1 – 3% TO 4% OF TOTAL ASSETS INVESTED ANNUALLY IN PROJECTS:

As of 2025, the total Sioux Falls Park System Asset Valuation (less land & equipment) is estimated at \$350.7 million. Best Practice guidelines is to budget and amount equal to 3-4% of total assets annually for capital investment projects. A \$350.7 million asset valuation would equate to an investment of \$10.5 million to \$14.0 million annually.

- 100% Best Practice 60/20/20 funding over a 1 Year CIP Budget: \$10.5 to \$14.0 million
- 100% Best Practice 60/20/20 funding over a 10 Year CIP Budget: \$105 to \$140 million

#### BEST PRACTICE #2 – 60/20/20 FUNDING LEVELS:

Over a 5 to 10-year CIP planning period, the following recommendations for proposed improvements should be used as a guide to allocate CIP funding. The following percentages may vary during specific funding years and are based on an established system that is not experiencing significant growth. The 60/20/20 metric serves as a good reference marker but a growing community like Sioux

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

Falls will see more volatility of the funding percentages over the life of the CIP as new growth of the community is accounted for.

- 60% funding for Capital Reinvestment Projects = \$6.3 to \$8.4 million annually
- 20% funding for New Investment Projects = \$2.1 to \$2.8 million annually
- 20% funding for Visionary Projects = \$2.1 to \$2.8 million annually

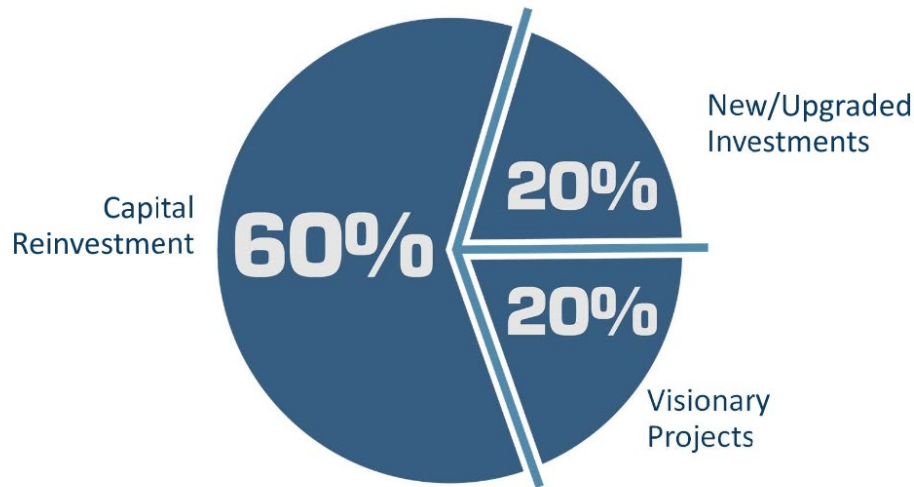


Figure 83 - Best Practice in Capital Planning

### 6.2.3 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

For the purpose of this CIP, capital improvements are defined as projects that have a monetary value of at least \$7,500 and have an estimated life of greater than one year to serve the park and recreation needs of our community. Examples of capital improvements include construction, major remodeling, equipment replacements, purchase of parkland, park fixtures and buildings. Planning efforts associated with capital improvements, including architectural, engineering, and legal services, are also considered capital expenditures and incorporated within the CIP.

It is important to note that CIP investments in parks have been reviewed over the past 10 years to determine the annual investment level. Funding priorities across departments can shift the use of sales tax revenue from year to year, especially in years when an especially large investment is made.

Proposed capital improvements within this CIP are divided within three classifications:

**Capital Reinvestment:** The improvement or replacement of existing park assets and any related planning efforts. Capital Reinvestment is required to preserve the usefulness and extend the life of existing park assets and may be the result of capital replacement plans or unexpected, emergency needs. Capital Reinvestment for the current 2026 to 2030, 5-year planning period are projected at \$19.2 million in sales tax dollars.

**New Investment:** The purchase and/or development of new parks, recreation facilities, and/or equipment. New Investments are typically identified and designed through an extensive planning process with input from many stakeholders, including the community, user groups, elected officials,

other governmental entities, partners, staff, and the Parks & Recreation Board. There is an projected need for \$15.0 million in sales tax dollars in new investments during the 5-year planning period.

**Visionary Investment:** The purchase and/or development of “visionary” new community parks, recreation facilities, and/or equipment. Recent examples include a new indoor recreation center at Frank Olson Park, Jacobson Plaza and Downtown River Greenway projects. A new Visionary Project is not currently planned in the 2026 to 2030 5-year planning period. A visionary project may only occur once every 5 to 10 years.

#### PRIORITIZATION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Continued investment in the park system is critical to providing quality parks and recreation experiences for the residents of Sioux Falls. Since funding for capital improvements is finite, projects are prioritized based on the following best practices, criteria and subject to the permitted uses of available funding.

**All Improvements:** All capital improvements support the goals, objectives and community needs of the most current Parks and Recreation Master Plan as approved or amended by the Parks & Recreation Board and City Council.

#### ***Priority 1 – Capital Reinvestment Projects***

Capital reinvestment for existing parks and recreation facilities and equipment. Residents and community leaders consistently place a high priority on maintaining existing assets. This was validated by the 2025 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, in which 76 to 82% of respondents supported improvements to existing neighborhood parks, trails, improvements to existing community parks and improvements to existing nature preserves. Typically, capital reinvestment projects are paid for by sales tax funding sources.

#### ***Priority 2 – New Investment Projects***

As the community grows, new investments in park assets is also important to the public with 67% in support of acquiring new park land. Development of new trails that connect to existing trails was supported by 79% of the public.

#### ***Priority 3 – Visionary Projects***

Projects such as the proposed indoor recreation center at Frank Olson Park add new recreation experiences and help enhance the community’s quality of life. Visionary projects often require public-private partnerships for funding. 82% of the public is in favor of funding mechanisms that include corporate sponsorship, donations and grants.

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

### HISTORICAL FUNDING SUMMARY FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS (2015-2025)

Funding in this 2015-2025 summary consists of sales tax, bond proceeds, and private contributions. Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation annual investment compared to asset value during this period ranged from 1.4% to 12.7%. Over the past 10 years an average of **\$13.97 million** has been invested annually in parks. Averaging 4.0% annually, this meets Best Practice recommendations.

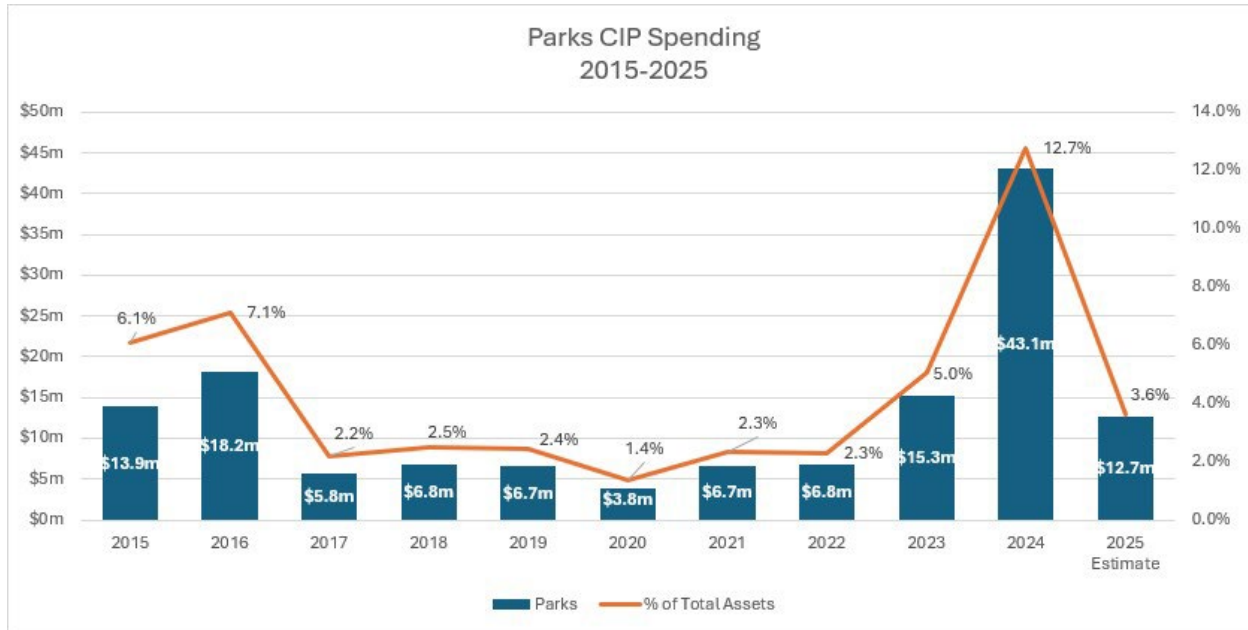


Figure 84 - Parks CIP Spending 2015-2025

### FUNDING SOURCES FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The following is a summary of current and historical funding sources used by or available to Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation to pay for capital improvements within the park system.

#### SALES TAX

The largest revenue source for capital investment is the second penny sales and use tax, there is an anticipated \$34 million to invest in Parks and Recreation capital assets after debt service for the 2026-2030 CIP. This program anticipates sales and use tax growth rate of 4 percent each year from 2026 through 2028 and 5 percent in 2029 and 2030. As in past years, the City will adjust these figures in future years as needed, based on economic changes. Sales tax funding is allocated towards improvements, equipment and debt service on past bonds.

Investment Type	2026 – 2030 CIP (Sales Tax Only)	
	Amount	Percentage
Level One – Capital Reinvestment	\$19,157,000	56%
Level Two – New Investment	\$14,997,000	44%
Level Three – Visionary Projects	\$0	0%
Total Five-Year Investment	\$34,154,000	100%

Figure 85 - 2026-2030 CIP (Sales Tax Only)



Allocation of 2015-2025 CIP sales tax funding breaks out as follows:

Sales tax funding has recently been used primarily for Level One and Level Two investments. Level Three Visionary investments have been funded by bonding or donations from outside sources. The 2026-2030 CIP anticipates \$8.7 million in donations from outside sources to fund park improvement projects.

### BONDING

While much of the park system has been built by the City on a "pay as you go" basis using existing cash on hand to fund capital improvements, the City has periodically issued bonds that directly impact the park system. The 2026-2030 CIP plans for debt service to support a new outdoor aquatic experience at Kuehn Park and an indoor recreation center at Frank Olson Park.

### GIFTS, DONATIONS, SPONSORSHIPS, & GRANTS

The Sioux Falls community has been very generous in the past and finding support to build a new project is often the easiest part. Securing additional dollars for repair, maintenance and eventual rehabilitation is more difficult. In years when funding for park capital projects is tight, the City has focused on maintaining existing assets rather than funding new construction.

The Sioux Falls Parks Foundation was officially launched in 2021 as a result of recommendations from the 2020 Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Parks Foundation is an affiliate of the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation and many visionary park projects have benefited from the foundation, including Kirby Dog Park at Fort Sod, Jacobson Plaza, and trail expansion along the Big Sioux River to Bahnson Avenue.

*The Sioux Falls Parks Foundation seeks to enrich the quality of life in Sioux Falls by aligning philanthropic investment in the city parks system with community vision.*

The Sioux Falls Parks Foundation will be instrumental to move future large, visionary projects forward. Such projects might include implementation of the Falls Park Master Plan, new outdoor refrigerated ice, a new Chalet at Great Bear, Great Plains Zoo expansion and new community and regional parks.

### HOW THE MASTER PLAN KEY PLAN FINDINGS ARE BEING ADDRESSED BY THE 2026 TO 2030 CIP



## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

**Long Term Sustainability** is addressed by the 2026 to 2030 CIP through the continued use of cyclic projects for regular maintenance or replacement of existing infrastructure including trails, parks and play structures. Existing inventory and areas needing improvement are identified through funding regular updates of the Park and Recreation System Master Plan.

**Exceptional Customer Experiences** are provided by keeping up with park and recreation industry trends and introducing new amenities and experiences in new capital investments where appropriate. Additional experiences and amenities, such as shade, are incorporated in existing parks through cyclic improvement and play structure replacement programs.

**Year-Round Recreation** includes expanded opportunities for winter uses and investment in indoor recreation centers.

**Equitable Access to Parks & Facilities** is implemented through the half mile strategy for access to neighborhood parks and trails. Cyclical play court and playground replacements, trail access/reconstruction projects reinvest in existing neighborhoods.

**Maintaining & Growing Infrastructure** is a priority of the cyclic improvement program which is used for projects such as restroom upgrades, athletic facilities renovation and maintenance of roads and parking lots. Investment in the maintenance shop campus is also included in the 2026-2030 CIP. This initiative is also met by continuing land acquisition and new park and trail development in community growth areas. Wild Meadows Park and Cherry Creek trail expansion are two examples of new investments identified in the CIP to meet the needs of the growing community.

### SUPPORT FOR POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Summary of Public Support for Potential Actions the City of Sioux Falls could take to improve its parks and recreation system:

**Q17. The following is a list of actions the City of Sioux Falls could take to improve its parks and recreation system. Please indicate your support for each potential action.**

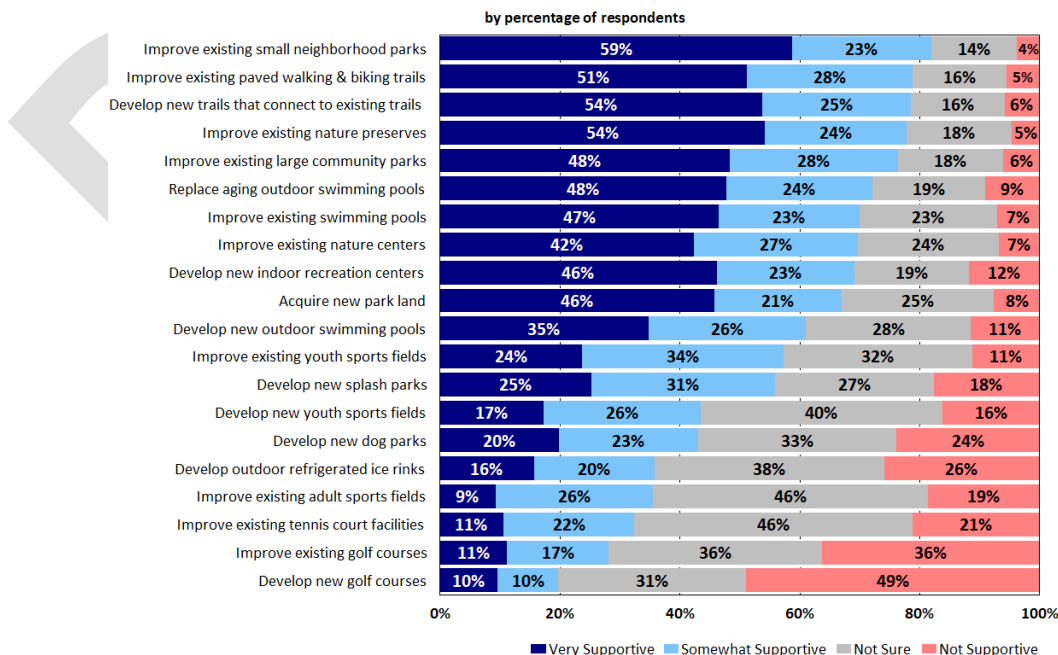


Figure 86 - SVS: Support for Various Actions to Support Park System

#### 6.2.4 CONCLUSION

Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation has done a great job of maintaining and developing park assets to meet the recreational needs of the community, while adding visionary projects to improve the quality of life in Sioux Falls. Continual investment in the park system is needed to account for the growth of the City, while also maintaining current assets. Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation must continue to take appropriate measures to extend the life of existing assets to mitigate the impact of deferred capital reinvestment projects.

Critical funding decisions will need to be made by community leaders that will have a significant impact on both the current 2026-2030 CIP period and long-term future of the park system. While the capital funding sources anticipated during the current 5-year planning period are significant, Sioux Falls Parks & Recreation will rely on the Sioux Falls Parks Foundation and generosity of the community to fund future visionary projects.





### 6.3 FUNDING AND REVENUE STRATEGIES

Public recreation agencies like the City of Sioux Falls and its Parks and Recreation Department face an ongoing challenge of being all things to all people and securing stable and sufficient funding to support capital projects, programs, daily operations, maintenance, and lifecycle replacement. Traditional funding sources such as tax revenues, user fees, capital funding sources, and grants remain foundational but are increasingly subject to economic and political fluctuations. To ensure long-term sustainability and resilience, the City must diversify its funding portfolio and actively pursue new and innovative revenue streams.

A dynamic funding and revenue strategy will help align resources with both community expectations and organizational goals, addressing needs for the City and at the departmental level for specific facilities and core program areas. Though identifying and securing these sources requires time and strategic effort, the result will be a more financially sustainable system capable of maintaining quality services and reinvesting in what the City already has (existing assets) and the future of the parks and recreation system.



### 6.3.1 FUNDING STRATEGIES

#### EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES

External funding sources within parks and recreation agencies are contributions and partnerships that supplement traditional taxes and user fee-based revenues. These sources include corporate sponsorships, partnerships, conservancies, friends' groups, volunteerism, private donations, irrevocable remainder trusts, and special fundraising events. These sources play a vital role in enhancing the delivery of quality programs, maintaining facilities, and pursuing capital improvements. By leveraging community and corporate support, parks and recreation agencies can expand their impact, foster civic pride, and ensure long-term financial sustainability while maintaining affordability and access to facilities and services for all residents.

#### EXTERNAL FUNDING IMPLICATIONS FOR SFPR

SFPR benefits from a range of external funding sources including corporate sponsorships, partnerships, conservancies, friends groups, volunteerism, and private donations. These external sources have strengthened financial capacity and community engagement in recent years. These sources have been part of funding strategies that have allowed SFPR to tackle both capital and operational initiatives. SFPR's continued growth is vital to sustaining recently added high-quality services. Moving forward, the City should focus on increasing and enhancing partnerships in a way that directly advances SFPR's public-facing outcomes, aligning collaborations with community priorities and measurable results. Likewise, expanding and formalizing sponsorship activities for both programs and physical assets will allow SFPR to make public identified priorities a reality. This will continue to build the shared ownership in the park system's success with the community. A more structured approach, potentially supported by dedicated staff or a foundation partnership, will help maximize the value of these external resources and ensure long-term sustainability for the parks and recreation system.

#### USER FEES

User Fees within parks and recreation agencies refers to earned income revenue generated directly from the delivery of services, programs, and facility use rather than from taxes or external funding. This includes sources such as program (user) fees, memberships, rentals, concessions, admissions, and sponsorships. Earned income reflects the agency's ability to operate with entrepreneurial efficiency leveraging its assets, programs, and events to generate revenue that supports financial sustainability. By strategically managing and growing earned income, SFPR can enhance service quality, expand offerings, and reinvest in facilities and programs to ensure these assets remain beloved by the community.

#### USER FEES IMPLICATIONS FOR SFPR

SFPR currently utilizes a variety of user fees including daily fees, permits, reservations, equipment rentals, memberships, and admissions to support operations and maintain community access to facilities and services. While these revenue sources remain active, there is an opportunity to modernize the fee schedule to make it more dynamic and responsive to current market conditions in the city and continue to align with community needs. Formalizing processes for reservations and



## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

permits, evaluating the return on investment for certain equipment rentals, and introducing reduced rates for residents with financial limitations will help ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation. By creating an earned income/ pricing policy and updating the fee schedule in this way, the City can enhance access, improve consistency when staff create new programs/services, and maintain a high quality of life for all residents.

### GRANTS

Grants can be a great funding source as part of a greater overall funding strategy for capital projects and some for specific services. For most parks and recreation agencies, grants are seen as an opportunity to obtain free money, increased credibility with fiscal stewardship, increased access to valuable data, and the ability to augment funding for projects or initiatives that may not have the full support of leadership otherwise. Grants should not be a major funding in an overall funding strategy.

### GRANT IMPLICATIONS FOR SFPR

SFPR has been awarded State, Federal, and Community Foundation grants in the past. It is important for SFPR to understand each grant's requirements. In the instance of SFPR, staff understand the cost-to-benefit ratio that exists with grants. Staff look at the pros and cons of each individual grant to understand the level of commitment required by the department and the city. SFPR should continue to consider the following when determining if a grant opportunity will be a part of the overall funding strategy:

- The overall time commitment to pull information together for the application process.
- What is the level of competition.
- How well does the project or service meets the application requirements.
- Is there an opportunity to renew the grant or will SFPR be able to fund for the long-term.
- What are the reporting requirements and length of time to continue, if awarded the grant

### CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES

Parks and recreation agencies rely on capital funding sources such as capital improvement fees for new development and redevelopment to support the creation, expansion, and modernization of infrastructure, administrative costs, and revitalization programs for targeted areas including parks and facilities. These fees are typically collected from development projects or property improvements and help ensure that growth contributes to the cost of necessary public improvements. By reinvesting these revenues into infrastructure and facility upgrades, the City can maintain high-quality public spaces that meet the needs of a growing population and increased visitation while reducing the burden on general tax funds. This approach promotes sustainable community development and ensures that future residents benefit from well-planned and well-maintained public spaces.

### IMPLICATIONS OF CAPITAL FUNDING FOR SFPR

The City can strategically use capital funding sources as mechanisms to ensure that the park system continues to grow commensurate with city growth and improvement initiatives. New development contributes to projects that enhance residents' well-being and attract future investment. By dedicating a portion of these collected fees to parkland acquisition, facility upgrades, and

neighborhood enhancements, the City can sustain the high standard public spaces. This approach promotes access with the growth, ensures long-term reinvestment in community infrastructure, and reinforces Sioux Falls' reputation as a vibrant and livable city.

### FRANCHISE LICENSES

Parks and recreation agencies can generate additional revenue through franchises and licensing agreements that leverage public assets and partnerships. These sources include opportunities such as pouring rights, concession management, private concessionaires, and land leases that provide recurring income while enhancing visitor experiences. Naming rights and advertising sales offer mutually beneficial arrangements that connect local and regional businesses to the community's parks and facilities. Greenway utilities and easements can also create steady income streams tied to infrastructure access, while inter-local agreements foster cost-sharing and operational efficiencies among public entities. Together, these strategies diversify funding, reduce overreliance on tax revenues, and strengthen the City's quality of life.

### FRANCHISE LICENSING IMPLICATIONS

SFPR currently utilizes franchise and licensing and has opportunities to expand several of these revenue strategies to further strengthen its financial stability. Existing agreements, such as the exclusive pouring rights partnership with Premium Beverage (Coca-Cola), demonstrate the potential of corporate collaborations that the City has already expanded. Concession management and private concessionaire partnerships such as the Lodge Bar and Grill at Jacobson Plaza have built the City's contract or lease operations to private vendors, generating revenue while enhancing visitor experiences in Falls Park.

Naming rights has been utilized and is increasing with the most recent park and facility developments. Advertising sales represent growing opportunities for SFPR to attract private investment and visibility for both facilities and programs, especially with new indoor recreation spaces. Additionally, land leases and inter-local agreements provide mechanisms for shared development, operations, and increased cost recovery for SFPR and its partners. Expanding and formalizing these efforts will help SFPR maximize asset value, diversify revenue streams, address lifecycle replacement and reinvest in the ongoing improvement of the park system.

### CITY TAXES

Parks and recreation agencies are supported in part by tax revenues as most departments are in a municipal structure. Taxes are a foundational source of funding to sustain essential operations and ensure affordable community access. These public funds primarily support staffing, maintaining parks and recreational assets, and provide subsidies for programs and services that benefit residents with financial limitations. Tax-based funding allows agencies to uphold community standards for safety, cleanliness, and accessibility while keeping participation fees affordable. By strategically balancing tax support with earned income and external revenue sources, agencies can maintain a high level of quality services and continue delivering the social, health, and economic benefits that parks and recreation have become known for providing to keep the community livable.

### CITY TAXES IMPLICATIONS FOR SFPR

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

The City utilizes a variety of tax-based funding mechanisms to support operations, maintenance, and community improvements. Property taxes, redistributed from the state, provide a core source of general funding for parks and recreation services. Special Improvement and Public Improvement Districts generate targeted revenues for enhancements that benefit specific properties or public amenities, such as parks, boulevards, and nearby developments. Sales tax revenues, commonly used in tourism-driven cities, can also support parks and facilities with high visitor activity. In Sioux Falls, the sales tax revenue is allocated to fund capital purchases, debt service, and various government programs and services. Specifically, the "second penny" sales tax is used for capital purchases and debt service.

Additionally, while the City currently applies an entertainment tax to venues that attract people for fun, there is potential to explore extending this funding strategy to park and recreation facilities that align services with community identified priorities. Leveraging all of these existing and potential tax tools allows the City to continue to sustain its parks system while aligning investment with areas of greatest community and economic benefit. Leveraging these revenue sources is something the City has done for decades which has led to a high level of satisfaction from the community when asked about their perception of City parks and recreation.

One example is the City of Sioux Falls contributing \$8 million to the development of Jacobson Plaza at the Falls, which was built with a combination of public and private funding. This public funding came from the city's capital budget and sales tax funds which helped leverage additional significant donations from private donors, including a \$5.5 million gift from the Jacobson family, a \$1.5 million gift from T. Denny Sanford, and a \$1 million gift from the Lloyd family.

### 6.3.2 KEY FOCUS AREAS

Sioux Falls Key Focus Areas	
Key Area of Focus	Importance
Diversify and Stabilize Revenue Streams	Reduces reliance on traditional funding sources and builds financial resilience through earned income, sponsorships, and franchise agreements.
Modernize the Fee Schedule and Pricing Policy	Ensures programs and facilities remain accessible while improving cost recovery and aligning fees with market conditions and community affordability goals.
Strengthen Public–Private and Community Partnerships	Unlocks new resources and innovation through collaboration with businesses, nonprofits, and conservancies to advance public-facing goals and civic pride.
Leverage Capital and Development Fees for Growth	Directs development-driven funding toward parkland acquisition, facility upgrades, and neighborhood enhancements to sustain livability as the city grows.
Expand Sponsorships and Naming Rights	Generates substantial revenue by formalizing opportunities for corporate engagement and consistent branding across park assets and programs.
Optimize Use of Tax Tools and Special Districts	Expands creative tax mechanisms to support park operations, capital projects, and high-traffic destinations like downtown and Falls Park.
Invest in Dedicated Revenue Management Capacity	Provides ongoing focus on business development, grants, and sponsorships through dedicated staff or foundation support to maximize funding impact.

Figure 87 - Funding Strategies Focus Areas

### 6.3.3 CONCLUSION

The City of Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation Department (SFPR) has established a strong foundation of fiscal stewardship through the strategic use of diverse funding and revenue sources. However, as community expectations evolve and operational demands increase, continued innovation in funding strategies will be essential to sustain and enhance the park system's success. A balanced approach that integrates tax support, user fees, capital reinvestment, external partnerships, and franchise opportunities will help SFPR maintain financial stability while advancing equity and access for all residents. By modernizing fee structures, formalizing partnerships, and leveraging both private and public investments, the City can ensure that growth and reinvestment in parks directly contribute to the community's overall quality of life. These efforts will not only preserve Sioux Falls' reputation as a leader in parks and recreation but also strengthen its role in shaping a vibrant, healthy, and connected city for generations to come.



## CHAPTER SEVEN – STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Based on community feedback, stakeholder input, technical analysis, and the priority rankings outlined within this Master Plan, the following key recommendations were developed to enhance the park and recreation system and position it to best serve the current and future needs of the community. The full Strategic Action Plan can be found in **Appendix 4**.

### 7.1 VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following outlines the foundational framework for SPFR including vision and mission, as well as guiding principles shown below:

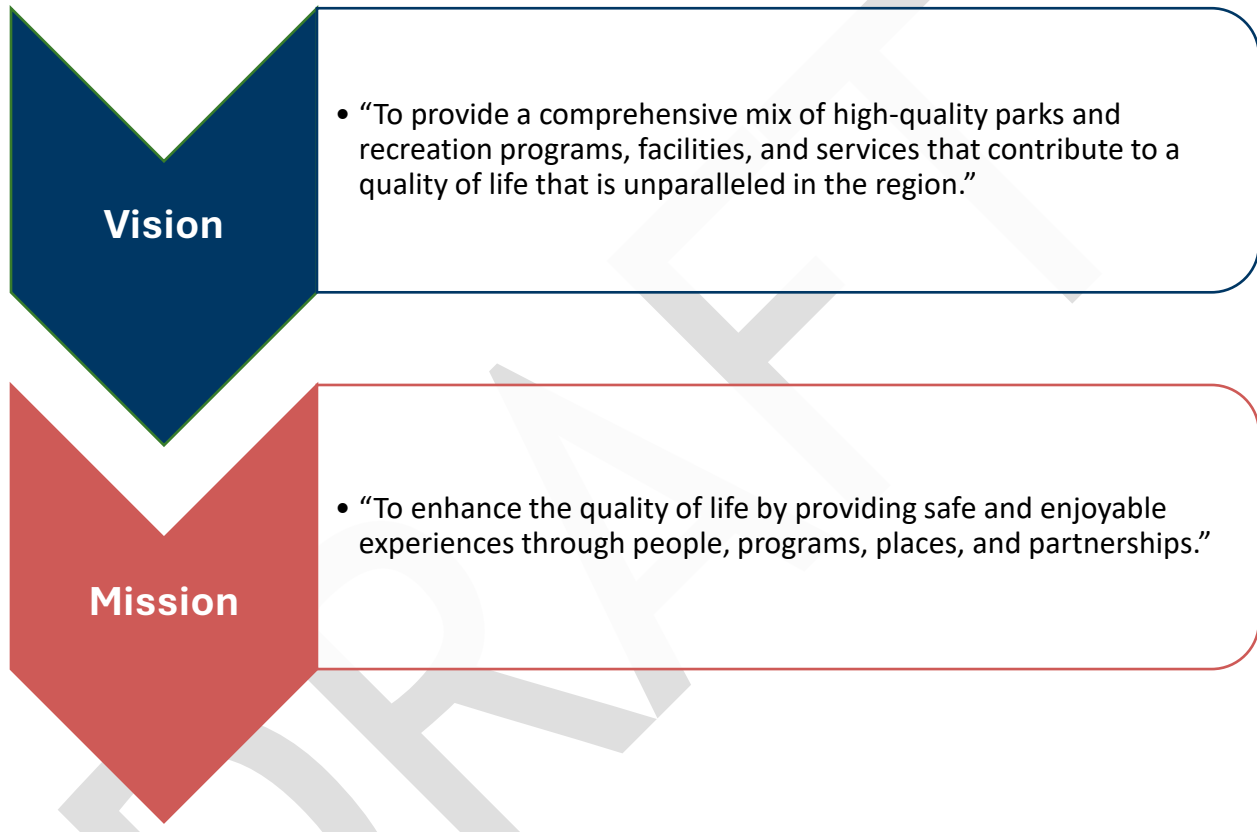


Figure 88 - SFPR Vision and Mission



## 7.2 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Guiding Principles emerged from the Master Plan that are based on feedback from the community, technical assessments, and review of best practices, which in turn fall under the umbrella of One Sioux Falls. The five overarching guiding principles include:

- Long Term Sustainability
- Exceptional Customer Experiences
- Year-Round Programming
- Equitable Access to Parks & Facilities
- Maintaining & Growing Infrastructure



Figure 89 - Master Plan Guiding Principles

### 7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Grounded in community feedback, stakeholder input, technical analysis, and the Master Plan's priority rankings, the following key recommendations are designed to strengthen the park and recreation system and position SFPR to meet current and future needs of the community. While SFPR should pursue all recommendations in this Master Plan, the near-term priorities will require sustained commitment from the community, elected officials, Park Board members, and SFPR staff. Successful implementation will keep SFPR responsive to community needs and among the best-managed park systems in the nation. The following present recommendations are organized by strategic priorities.

#### 7.3.1 LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

- Continue to implement proactive asset and resource management.
  - Ensure proactive care for aging and expanding assets.
  - Use structured maintenance schedules and lifecycle planning.
  - Continue enhancing VUEWorks with accurate, consistent data entry.
  - Leverage historical data for forecasting resource needs when planning and developing new assets.
  - Integrate maintenance staff into key facilities.
    - Embed maintenance staff in future key facilities such as the Westside Recreation Center.
    - Ensure cleanliness, safety, and responsiveness.
  - Develop advanced seasonal operations planning.
    - Use advanced planning and resource deployment strategies.
    - Improve readiness for winter and event-based demands.
- Maintain alignment with CAPRA standards and consider application for NRPA Gold Medal.
  - Keep plans and procedures current to CAPRA standards.
  - Ensure consistent application of best practices across operations.
  - Consider application for the NRPA Gold Medal Award.
- Continue best practice for capital planning (reinvest 3-4% of asset valuation annually, balance reinvestment vs. new projects).
  - Reinvest 3% to 4% of total park system asset valuation in capital investment projects annually.
  - Ensure capital funding is balanced between Capital Reinvestment (60%), New/Upgraded Investments (20%), and Visionary Projects (20%).
- Establish clear cost recovery and financial stewardship standards.
  - Implement clear cost recovery goals aligned with community benefit.
  - Allocate resources effectively and sustain operations amid rising costs.

- Evaluate and adjust pricing for facilities (e.g., wedding venues, Arrowhead House).
- Align programs to better meet cost recovery goals.
- Modernize the pricing policy and receive City Council approval.
  - Discuss existing fee approval process and investigate opportunities for implementation of a modern pricing policy.
  - Utilize the pricing of Basic and Supplemental used at the Westside Recreation Center programs and price programs accordingly across the system.
- Improve cost efficiency and resource allocation.
  - Use cost-per-user data and service analysis.
  - Prioritize high-impact areas and improve operational sustainability.
- Develop a full cost of service assessment for the Department to determine unit costs in parks and recreation services and set cost recovery level goals in recreation programs and facilities.
  - Price services per the cost recovery goals for each program and facility using the updated pricing policy.
- Advocate to receive a portion of the City's entertainment F&B tax revenue allocated to parks and recreation.
  - Track and analyze data that demonstrates the Department's ability to impact economic impact from facilities/events that attract tourism.
- Adopt a deliberate approach to pursuing grants by carefully assessing their true value and long-term fit before committing staff time and resources.
  - Develop a standardized grant evaluation process that considers time investment, competitiveness, and alignment with City priorities.
  - Weigh the long-term sustainability of programs or facilities once grant funding ends to avoid creating unfunded obligations.
  - Prioritize grants that contribute funding to operations but also enhance the City's credibility, data access, or ability to leverage future funding.



### 7.3.2 EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

- Continue to strengthen sponsorships and partnerships.
  - Develop a formal sponsorship including multi-year (tiered) structure quantifying the value of sponsoring parks and recreation activities and spaces.
  - Create a standardized partnership framework to streamline negotiations.
- Enhance partnerships that support programs and facilities.
  - Formalize standards for community partnerships.
  - Promote shared investment in outcomes and facility stewardship.
- Standardize all partnership agreements.
  - Ensure agreements include KPIs, financial terms, and legal clauses.
  - Regularly evaluate performance.
  - Validate community impact of all agreements.
  - Foster stronger communication between partners.
  - Set timelines for agreement evaluation and renewal.
  - Establish regular meetings to review metrics, financials, and legal requirements.
- Continue to implement community-driven planning practices.
  - Use resident feedback from surveys, focus groups, and community meetings.
  - Ensure programs reflect evolving interests and priorities.
- Strengthen staffing and workforce development.
  - Refine full-time/part-time staffing models to improve retention.
  - Expand training in customer service and safety.
- Apply data-driven decision-making to programming.
  - Track KPIs such as participation, cancellation rates, and customer satisfaction.
  - Use results to inform continuous improvement and performance management.
- Expand staffing capacity and training systems.
  - Add staff and training focused on specialized systems, safety, and seasonal readiness.
  - Use succession planning efforts for structured advancement opportunities.
  - Invest in professional development, competitive benefits, and wages.
- Continue to improve business management and customer experience.
  - Work with and train recreation program staff on appropriate pricing of services to achieve desired outcomes.
  - Formalize sponsorships, philanthropy, naming rights, advertising, and partnerships.



- Introduce a volunteer rewards program to grow and retain the volunteer base.
  - Capture volunteer hours as a “financial equivalent” in reports to show their impact as in-kind revenue.
- Continue to modernize the reservation platform and expand online access to reserve sites and amenities.
  - Introduce dynamic pricing (peak/off-peak, weekday/ weekend) to capture more revenue.
- Optimize the City’s equipment rental program to maximize revenue and community benefit.
  - Phase out equipment rentals that provide low or no return on investment.
  - Outsource equipment concessions to private operators where appropriate to reduce risk and operating costs.
  - Expand into trending, high-demand items such as e-bikes, skates, kayaks, and pickleball sets to support use of city developed facilities.
- Build staff expertise in partnership management.
  - Build internal capacity to negotiate, track, and evaluate agreements.
  - Provide training on maximizing partnership benefit while minimizing risk.





### 7.3.3 YEAR-ROUND RECREATION

- Strengthen health and wellness programming for all ages.
  - Continue to prioritize health and wellness as a cross-generational core program area.
  - Provide tailored opportunities for youth, adults, and seniors.
- Continue to invest in year-round recreation programs, recreation facilities and amenities.
  - Continue to invest in indoor recreational spaces, as well as adult fitness and wellness programs.
  - Continue to have a focus on expanding outdoor winter activities.
  - Enhance Great Bear trails and amenities.
- Continue to monitor programs and manage tenured programs through lifecycle planning to better align with community identified priorities.
  - Monitor participation trends.
  - Expand high-growth programs, refine mature ones, and phase out those in decline or saturation.
- Develop advanced seasonal operations planning.
  - Use advanced planning and resource deployment strategies.
  - Improve readiness for winter and event-based demands.
- Develop a responsible approach to providing ice rinks with additional winter recreation enhancement, regionally, for citizens to enjoy more consistently during the winter season.
  - Move toward a regional model of providing non-refrigerated ice equitably.
  - Continue to invest refrigerated ice, like Jacobson Plaza, at other locations equitably.



#### 7.3.4 EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS

- Expand equity in access through tiered pricing models and affordability.
  - Apply tiered pricing strategies.
  - Pursue scholarships to ensure affordability for all income levels while maintaining financial sustainability.
- Prioritize addressing the service gaps and eliminating geographic inequities in the availability of indoor recreation spaces.
  - Complete construction of Frank Olson Recreation Center to help reduce the level of service shortage and improve service area on the east side of the City.
  - Conduct a feasibility study on future multi-generational recreation center for underserved areas of the community.
- Strategically acquire land for additional parks and natural areas to keep pace with population growth.
  - As Sioux Falls grows, there is a need for strategic planning, investment in infrastructure, and securing parkland in population growth areas to meet future demands.
  - Determine where neighborhood parks may be lacking based on access and density maps used as part of the System Plan process and prioritize areas for new park development.
  - Begin to plan for a new community park.
  - Begin to plan for a new regional park.
  - Increase staff for operation and maintenance of newly acquired land.
  - Continue to offer a wide variety of parks and amenities that cater to all age groups and interests, from large destination parks to neighborhood spaces.
- Continue the initiative of a half mile strategy connecting residents to parks and trails.
  - Develop new neighborhood parks in areas of the City not currently served by a park, of any classification, within one half of a mile. Use equity mapping to identify best locations.
  - Work with developers to establish agreements for parks and trail development and connectivity alongside their development project.
- Continue investing in redevelopment of existing parks.
  - Continue to regularly evaluate existing parks and make investments to provide equity in facilities and services to all residents throughout the community.
- Continue investing in redevelopment of existing parks.
  - Continue to regularly evaluate existing parks and make investments to provide equity in facilities and services to all residents throughout the community.

## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

- Develop a feasibility study to understand if a south side pool is necessary to develop over the next five years.
  - Complete financial feasibility study of appropriate concept utilizing all data sources available such as placer.ai and the level of service maps.

### 7.3.5 MAINTAINING GROWING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Upgrade existing maintenance shop campus.
  - Make upgrades at the existing park shop campus through renovation and expansion.
  - Expands capacity to accommodate staffing and equipment needs.
- Expand the Recreation Trail, river access, and the Big Sioux River Greenway.
  - Coordinate with transportation projects to promote walkability and multi-modal transportation.
  - Seek opportunities and partnerships to implement additional phases of the Downtown River Greenway.
  - Develop criteria where the highest area of population receives priority for connections to spine trails.
  - Work towards establishing trail connections to parks through bike trails, side paths, bike boulevards, bike routes, and bike lanes, where appropriate.
  - Prioritize greenway properties for acquisition citywide.
- Develop new earned income opportunities.
  - Look to implement one to two new earned income opportunities such as recreation service fees, leasing space, value added packages, naming rights, advertising, gift cards.
- Work with the Sioux Falls Parks Foundation to expand its role and to help raise funds.
  - Identify and prioritize Visionary Projects in the Capital Improvement Plan best suited for public-private partnerships.
  - Prepare materials to communicate the projects and needs to potential donors and community groups.
  - Train and regularly communicate with Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation staff and Sioux Falls Parks Foundation Advisory Board Members to foster an understanding of park needs and priorities.
  - Seek feedback from community philanthropists and tailor the project 'asks' to maximize success.
- Expand advertising sales to diversify revenue streams.
  - Broaden advertising beyond traditional opportunities (e.g., scoreboards) to include facility signage, digital displays, and branded community events.
  - Introduce advertising placements in high-visibility spaces within recreation centers, athletic complexes, and trail systems.

- Establish clear guidelines for tasteful and appropriate advertising to maintain community trust.
- Create flexible advertising packages that allow small businesses, nonprofits, and regional partners to participate at varying levels.
- Incorporate facility lifecycle planning into new developments.
  - Align new development (e.g., Westside, Jacobson Plaza, Frank Olson Park) with long-term maintenance.
  - Ensure cleanliness, safety, and responsiveness.
- Integrate maintenance staff into key facilities.
  - Embed maintenance staff in future key facilities such as the Westside Recreation Center.
  - Coordinate with Central Facilities on operations planning.
- Align maintenance staffing by geographic districts.
  - Maintain equitable coverage and workload distribution.
- Optimize technology and data utilization.
  - Enhance RecTrac and KPIs to track labor.
  - Analyze trends and guide decision-making for staffing needs.
  - Continue enhancing VUEWorks with consistent data entry.
  - Track expenses and use historical data for forecasting.
- Implement innovative staffing solutions.
  - Convert part-time roles consistently working near full-time hours into full-time positions.
  - Maintain a core full-time staff with seasonal/part-time staff during peak demand.
  - Expand structured volunteer programs and work-study partnerships with local colleges.
  - Combine complementary part-time roles into full-time equivalents.
  - Provide loyalty bonuses, recognition programs, or incremental pay increases.
- Continue to refresh aging aquatic facilities with current uses combined with new trends in aquatic design.
  - Continue to renovate and update the Terrace Park Family Aquatic Center, Drake Springs Aquatic Center, and Laurel Oak Family Aquatic Center sites with a refreshed look with trending aquatic play features that have wide age segment appeal to extend their useful life.
- Coordinate development of Falls Park Master Plan with philanthropic opportunities and sponsorships.



## Comprehensive Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

- Begin development of Falls Parks updates when funding/partnerships become available.
- Seek additional funds and partnerships to complete this visionary capital project.
- Continue to look for opportunities to implement visionary capital projects.
  - Seek public-private partnerships for implementation of large visionary projects in areas such as aquatics, refrigerated ice and golf.
- Increase sponsor value through integrated packages.
  - Integrate advertising opportunities into multi-tiered sponsorship levels to create bundled, high-value packages.
  - Offer sponsors added benefits such as naming rights for facilities, programs, or events to deepen recognition.
  - Use digital and social media platforms to extend sponsor visibility beyond physical facilities.
  - Develop sponsor impact reports that highlight return on investment, community reach, and visibility metrics to encourage renewal and long-term partnerships.





## CHAPTER EIGHT – CONCLUSION

### 8.1 CONCLUSION

SFPR is widely recognized as a best-practice agency for delivering consistent maintenance excellence and equitable levels of service for residents and visitors. This Master Plan positions SFPR to continue offering innovative, well-balanced facilities and programs as the City grows over the next five years.

Public engagement consistently praised the quality of maintenance and the accessibility of diverse park experiences, from Falls Park to the Recreation Trail. Signature destinations, including the Great Plains Zoo & Delbridge Museum of Natural History, Great Bear Recreation Park, Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum & East Sioux Falls Historic Site, the Levitt Performance Venue, Jacobson Plaza, and the Westside Recreation Center, are major community assets, and SFPR's program portfolio reaches all ages and interests.

The Sioux Falls community uses SFPR parks and recreation facilities, as evident in the table below, 95% of the community is using these assets based on the statistically valid needs assessment survey results with comparison to national benchmarks.

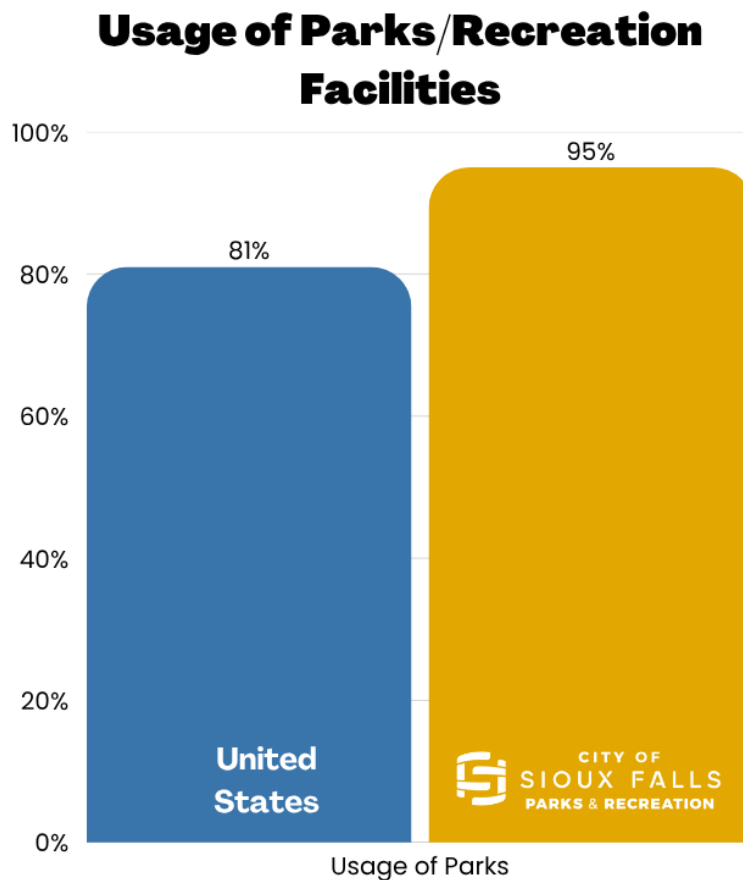


Figure 90 - Usage of Parks/Recreation Facilities

The Sioux Falls community takes pride in SFPR, as evident in the table below, based on the statistically valid needs assessment survey results with comparison to national benchmarks.

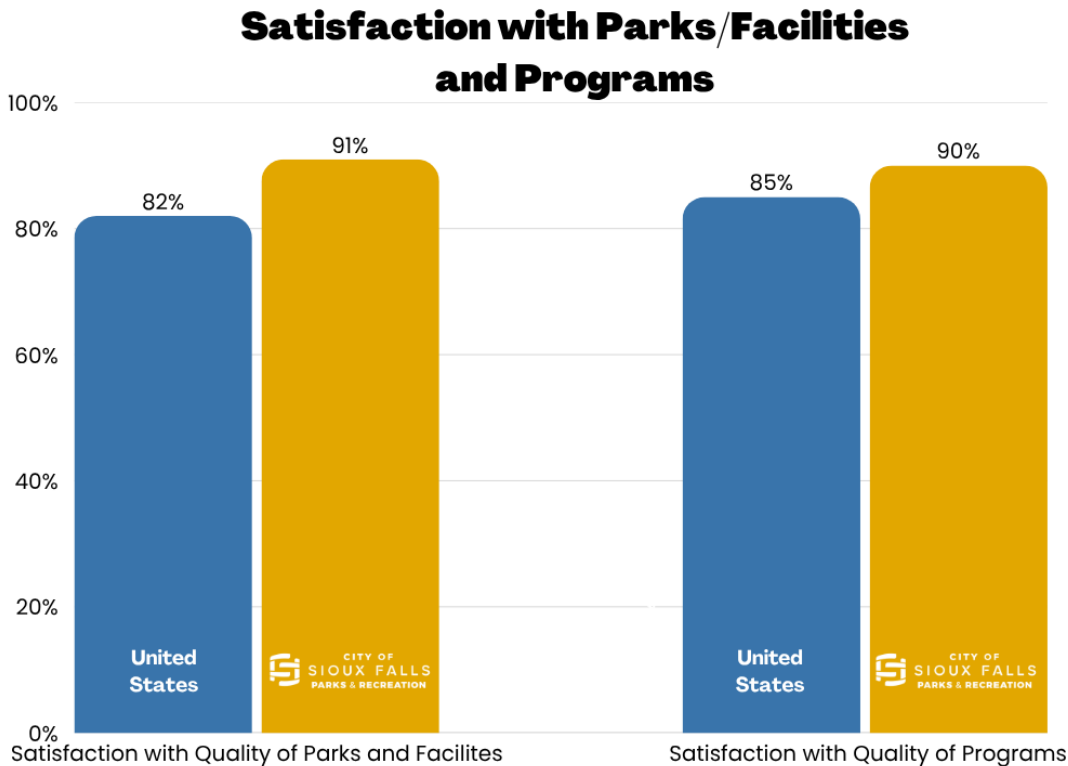


Figure 91 - Satisfaction Parks/Facilities & Programs

To sustain this high standard, SFPR must stay ahead of infrastructure and asset needs, invest in improvements to existing amenities and trails, and maintain equity across the system as the City expands. SFPR should also add amenities that meet evolving needs, such as year-round indoor space and winter recreation, acquire new land for future parks and trails, and secure additional funding sources to support a “park system of excellence.”

With these actions, SFPR is well-positioned to build on its legacy over the next five years, providing a comprehensive mix of high-quality parks, facilities, programs, and services that elevate quality of life across Sioux Falls.

