

### IV. Needs Analysis

#### A. General

The Needs Analysis consists of the following elements:

1. A discussion of the parks and recreation area needs by park types.
2. A discussion of the number of citizens served per park acre.
3. A summary of the public workshops and focus groups.
4. A summary of the Middletown Township Family Recreation Survey of 1990.
5. A summary of the Community Attitude and Interest Survey that was accomplished in 2007.
6. A summary of relevant items from a survey completed by the National Recreation and Park Association.
7. A facility needs analysis based upon accepted standards and guidelines and past experience of the Consultant.
8. A discussion of current trends on parks and recreation services.
9. A summary of a benchmark survey that was completed by communities in New Jersey.

#### B. Park and Recreation Area Needs by Park Type

A general set of goals for the various park types was established by the consulting team and agreed to by the Master Planning Steering Committee. These goals are consistent with several recent plans completed by the Consultants for communities throughout the nation and are consistent with previous National Recreation and Park Association standards. Table 9, Parks and Recreation Needs by Park Type, provides a breakdown of the needs for the Township. This table compares developed park acres which are the portions of open spaces that are used for recreation purposes and does not include the undeveloped wooded areas. The Township is over the minimum standards by over 2000 acres in 2007. The overage is mainly due to the large amount of County and Federal Parks in the Township, but there is a surplus in every category.

Table 10 includes a comparison to the Balanced Land Use Standards that are presented in the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has adopted a balanced land use approach to estimating long term goals for county and municipal public recreation land. The figures represent minimum goals for

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public recreation land. The balanced land use guidelines recommend that 3 percent of the developable area of the municipality be acquired from municipal level of public recreation and that 7 percent of the developable area of the County be acquired for County level public recreation. Based upon these standards, the municipal open space for the Township indicates the Township is 569 acres over the minimum standard and for County open space it shows 880 acres over the standard. Utilizing the NRPA 1983 standards of 8 acres of municipal park land per thousand residents and 12 acres per thousand residents for county land, the table indicates 705 acres over the standard in 2007 which is reduced to 691 acres by 2020. The County's park space on the table indicates 1657 acres over the standard in 2007 and then 1636 acres in 2020.

**Table 9: Parks and Recreation Needs by Park Type**

Park Type	Existing Developed <sup>2</sup> Park Acres	Recommended Acres/1000 Population <sup>1</sup>	2000 Recommended Acres	2000 Surplus Deficit(-)	2007 Target Acres	2007 Surplus(+) Deficit(-)	2020 Target Acres	2020 Surplus(+) Deficit(-)
Mini-Park	104.11	0.5	33.16	70.95	34.0	70.1	35.4	68.7
Neighborhood	249.48	2	132.65	116.83	136.1	113.4	141.5	108.0
Community	648.85	8	530.62	118.23	544.2	104.6	566.1	82.7
County/Regional	2486	10	663.27	1,822.73	680.3	1805.7	707.6	1778.4
Special Use	58.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Linear		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Developed Part of Open Space	3.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
National								
<b>Total</b>	<b>3550.94</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>1359.70</b>	<b>2128.74</b>	<b>1394.59</b>	<b>2093.85</b>	<b>1450.66</b>	<b>2037.78</b>

1. - Acres recommended in the Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, National Recreation and Park Association, 1983.

2. - "Developed" park acreage is any area that is mowed or designated for recreation use and is available to the general public. It does not include undeveloped open space, streams and waterways, wooded or wild areas, etc.

Population Sources: 2000 population by the U.S. Census Bureau - Population projections provided by the Monmouth County Planning Board and ESRI Bis.

2000 = 66,327

2007 = 69,029 - Source: ESRI Bis Forecasts

2020 = 70,764

**Table 10: Monmouth County Open Space Plan and NJ SCORP Minimum Standards**

	Balanced Land Use Standard <sup>1</sup>			Acres / population standard - 2007 <sup>2</sup>			Acres / population - 2020		
	Existing Open Space <sup>2</sup>	Municipal Land Area <sup>3</sup>	Target <sup>4</sup>	Surplus(+) Deficit(-)	Estimated Population	2007 Target Acres	2007 Surplus(+) Deficit(-)	2020 Target Acres	2020 Surplus(+) Deficit(-)
Municipal Open Space	1257.58	22,929	687.87	569.71	69,029	552.23	705.35	566.11	691.47
County Open Space	2486		1605.03	880.97		828.35	1657.65	849.17	1636.8

1. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has adopted a Balanced Land Use approach to estimating long term goals for county and municipal public recreation land (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2003, NJDEP). The figures represent minimum goals for public recreation land. The Balanced Land Use guidelines recommend that 3% of the developable area of the municipality be acquired for municipal-level public recreation and that 7% of the developable area of the county be acquired for county-level public recreation.

2. Based upon the current inventory and ROSI

3. Source: Monmouth County Open Space Plan, 2006.

4. Target of 3% of the municipal developable land area for municipal open space and 7% for county open space.

5. Utilizes the NRPA 1983 standard of 8 acres of municipal park land per 1000 residents and 12 acres per 1000 for county land.

### C. Citizen Served Per Park Area

The Parks and Recreation Resources Inventory, Tables 3 and 4, included a column indicating developed park land. This information is also included in Table 9 for the Parks and Recreation Needs by Park Type, which indicates a total of 3550 acres of developed park land in the Township. When compared to the population for the Township, it results in a figure of 20 citizens per park acre. The national median from a survey of 1242 parks and recreation departments throughout the United States indicated an average of 132 citizens per developed

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park acre. Therefore, the Township is much better served than the national median. If only the local mini-parks, neighborhood and community parks are considered, the result is 69 persons per park acre, which is still much better than the national median.

### D. Public Workshops

A full summary of the Public Workshops and Focus Groups can be found in Appendix A. Two public workshops were held at the beginning of the process with one being held at the Croydon Hall Senior Center and the other one at the Arts Center. These two public workshops were attended by approximately 65 residents. The process asked the participants to identify where they currently go for parks and recreation, what they like and do not like or what is missing from the parks and recreation system, and then they were divided into small groups to discuss their vision for the future of parks and recreation in Middletown. The following of the various categories and the items which were identified by the smaller groups in the vision exercise:

1. Indoor recreation space
  - a. Ice rink
  - b. Competition swimming pool
  - c. Teen Center
  - d. Multi-purpose facilities
2. Funding
  - a. Self supporting in ten years
  - b. Non-tax funding sources
  - c. Corporate sponsorships
  - d. Adequate funding for proper maintenance
3. Athletic Fields
  - a. Synthetic turf fields with lights
  - b. Adequate support facilities
  - c. New baseball complex
  - d. Improved field permit system
  - e. Additional lighting
4. Collaboration
  - a. Coordination with recreation leagues

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- b. Coordination with County, Township and volunteer organizations
- c. Cooperation with Schools

5. Park Improvements

- a. Improve existing parks
- b. Adequate parking

6. More Open Space

7. Trails

- a. More walking trails and bike paths
- b. Connect paths through the Township

8. New Facilities

- a. Campground
- b. Spray park
- c. Dog park
- d. Passive parks
- e. Gardens

### E. Stakeholder Meetings

Approximately 45 stakeholder meetings were held which included 95 participants. The stakeholder meetings included the following groups:

1. Athletic organizations

- a. River Plaza Youth Club
- b. Bayshore Youth Athletic Association
- c. Lincroft Baseball
- d. Middletown Youth Athletic Association
- e. Middletown Athletic Club
- f. St. Mary's Athletic Association
- g. Middletown Soccer
- h. Lincroft Soccer
- i. Middletown Tennis Association
- j. Middletown Little League
- k. Middletown Babe Ruth

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- l. Middletown Men's Soccer
- m. Sandy Hook Little League
- n. Lincroft Baseball
- o. Middletown Wrestling
- p. Challenger Youth Sport
- q. Lacrosse
- r. High School swim teams
- s. Youth ice hockey-Hockey in Middletown
- t. Roller hockey
- 2. Youth Advocates- Youth focus group
- 3. Senior Citizens and social services
  - a. Senior citizen focus group
  - b. Senior Center
  - c. Senior Transportation
  - d. Leisure Group
  - e. Senior housing
- 4. Partner and Program Organizations
  - a. Middletown Schools
  - b. Township Library
  - c. Poricy Park Conservancy
  - d. Middletown Arts Council
  - e. Lincroft Village Green Association
  - f. Monmouth County Parks
- 5. Government and Staff
  - a. Middletown Planning Staff
  - b. Middletown Township Engineering
  - c. Current and former Mayors
  - d. Current and former Committee persons
  - e. Maintenance staff focus group
  - f. Center Directors
  - g. Staff interviews

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Each group was asked about the current participation levels, trends in their organizations, park facility needs, and ultimately their vision for the future of their organization and Parks and Recreation in Middletown. The following are the consensus items from those groups:

1. Indoor recreation/community center
  - a. More use of school gyms
  - b. Need more Township controlled gyms
  - c. Covers over existing roller hockey rinks
  - d. Indoor ice rink
  - e. Indoor competition pool
  - f. Fitness facilities
2. Athletic Fields
  - a. Lights to extend the use
  - b. Synthetic turf fields with lights for all sports
  - c. Better use of school fields
  - d. Improved maintenance on all fields
  - e. Concession and restroom facilities at sports complexes
  - f. Soccer training facility with multiple lighted fields
  - g. Fields for lacrosse, field hockey and rugby
  - h. Concentrate on larger complexes for efficiency
3. Youth and Teens
  - a. Teen park
  - b. New skate park
  - c. Teen center
  - d. Expand the teen travel program
4. Seniors
  - a. Renovate Croydon facility
  - b. Advertise programs more
  - c. Add a second facility to increase access
  - d. Add a fitness room
  - e. Expand exercise program

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5. Trails
  - a. Safer bike lanes
  - b. Network to link schools, neighborhoods, parks, and shopping centers
  - c. Dedicated funding for trails and maintenance
  - d. Volunteers to assist with maintenance
6. Coordination/Cooperation
  - a. Coordinate programs and avoid duplication
  - b. Increase cooperation with schools
  - c. Establish a youth sports council
7. New Facilities
  - a. Dog park
  - b. Indoor ice rink
  - c. Skate park and teen facilities
  - d. Challenger Park
  - e. Family Destination Park
  - f. Sledding hill
  - g. More outdoor basketball courts
  - h. More passive parks
  - i. Outdoor public aquatic facility
8. Upgrade Existing Facilities
  - a. Restrooms in the parks
  - b. Pavilion and stage at Lincroft Village Green
  - c. Upgrade beaches
  - d. Upgrade all playground
  - e. Upgrade all centers
9. Volunteer Efforts
  - a. Trail maintenance
  - b. A friends organization

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10. Equitable Distribution of Facilities
  - a. Upgrade the Swim Club
  - b. Bathrooms
  - c. Accessibility
  - d. Concession facility
  - e. Program space
11. Programs
  - a. Nature education and science programs
  - b. Programs for people over forty
12. Open Space - More passive parks

### **F. Consensus Vision**

The three items identified the most throughout the entire and extensive public input process include these items:

1. Improved existing parks
2. Indoor ice rink
3. Indoor swimming pool

### **G. Middletown Township Family Recreation Survey 1990**

The Township conducted a survey in 1990 and had 432 forms completed. The following are the highlights from that survey:

1. The existing facilities that are used the most by the survey respondents include the following:
  - a. Poricy Park
  - b. Bodman Park
  - c. Croydon Hall
  - d. Tindall Park
  - e. Normandy Park
  - f. Bayshore Recreation Center
  - g. Dorsett Park
  - h. and several others

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2. The respondents were asked how interested they are for the following types of activities and those at the top of the list included the following in the order of those that were identified as "very interested".
  - a. Children's play area
  - b. Ice skating rink
  - c. Swimming pools
  - d. Public beaches
  - e. Organized team sports
  - f. Picnic facilities
  - g. Baseball/softball fields
  - h. Miniature Golf
  - i. Lighted baseball/softball fields
  - j. Gymnasium
  - k. Soccer fields
  - l. Recreation Center programs
  - m. Summer playground program
  - n. Outdoor basketball court
  - o. Golf courses
  - p. Tennis courts
  - q. Roller hockey rink
  - r. Lighted soccer fields
3. How do you and your family become aware of Township recreation facilities? The highest response was newspapers, followed by word of mouth, flyers and very few indicated posters, cable TV or radio.
4. Respondents were asked to identify how they feel about their Parks and Recreation Department and other related items and were asked to rate several categories as good, fair, poor, or do not know. The item with the highest "poor" was the "type and qualities of programs and activities". The items that were highest in the "good" and "fair" categories included the following:
  - a. Parks and recreation facilities in my area
  - b. The quality of programs provided by the Parks and Recreation Department
  - c. The quality of maintenance of parks provided by the Parks and Recreation Department

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- d. The recreation opportunities provided for seniors
- e. Recreation opportunities provided for handicapped persons

5. People were asked if they would be willing to volunteer their services to the Parks and Recreation Department with 58 stating "yes" and 249 'no'. There was also 231 that stated they were currently not volunteering their services.

### H. Community Attitude and Interest Survey Summary

#### Overview of the Methodology

The Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs conducted a Community Attitude and Interest Survey during June and July of 2007 to establish priorities for the future improvement of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Middletown Township. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs officials, as well as members of the Brandstetter Carroll Inc. project team in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

In June of 2007, surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in Middletown Township. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed, each household that received a survey also received an electronic voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed, Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys. This goal was far exceeded, with a total of 541 surveys having been completed. The results of the random sample of 541 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-4.2%.

The following pages summarize major survey findings:

Several of the questions asked on the survey are similar to those also asked in studies in more than 200 communities in over 35 states. Appendix C provides a comparison to responses to the national benchmarks from the other communities.

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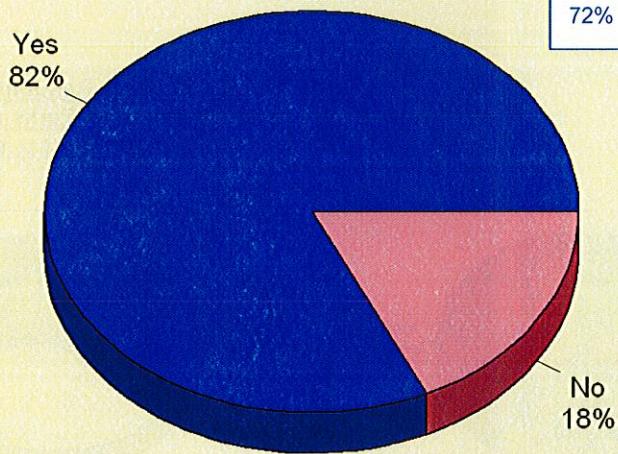
### 1. Visitation of Middletown Parks

Respondents were asked if any members of their household have visited any Middletown parks during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

- Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondent households have visited Middletown parks during the past 12 months.

### Q1. Have Respondent Households Visited Any Middletown Parks and Facilities During the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents



Park visitation in Middletown is higher than the national benchmark of 72%

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

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### 2. Frequency of visits to Middletown Parks

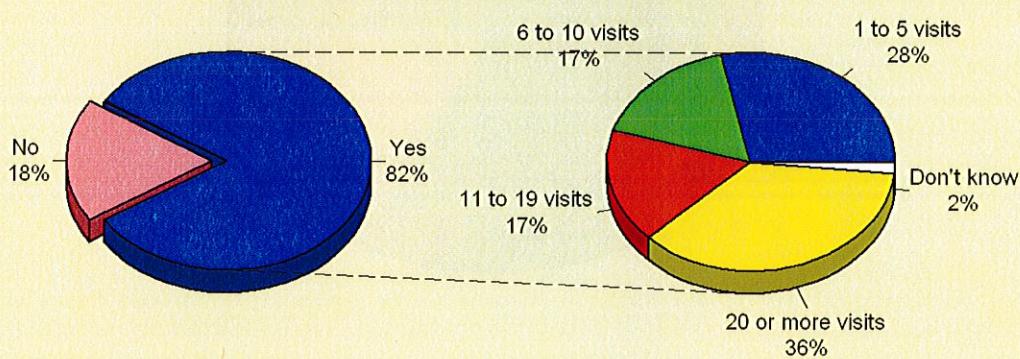
Respondent households that have visited Middletown parks during the past 12 months were asked how often they visited parks during that time. The following summarizes key findings:

- Of the 82% of respondent households that have visited Middletown parks during the past 12 months, 70% have made at least 6 visits to parks during this time. In addition, 53% have made at least 11 visits to parks during the past 12 months, and 36% have made at least 20 visits to parks.

### Q1. Have Respondent Households Visited Any Middletown Parks and Facilities During the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents

#### Q1a. How Often Have Respondent Households Visited Middletown Parks and Facilities During the Past Year



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

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### 3. Physical Condition of Middletown Parks

Respondent households that have visited Middletown parks during the past 12 months were asked how they would rate the physical condition of all the parks they have visited. The following summarizes key findings:

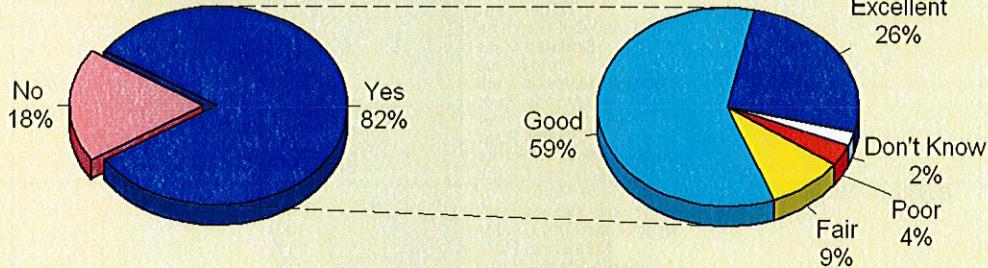
- Of the 82% of respondent households that have visited Middletown parks during the past year, 85% rated the parks as either excellent (26%) or good (59%). In addition, 9% rated the parks as fair and 4% rated them as poor.

#### **Q1. Have Respondent Households Visited Any Middletown Parks and Facilities During the Past 12 Months**

by percentage of respondents

The "Excellent" rating in Middletown is lower than the national benchmark of 30%. Combined "Excellent" and "Good" is equal to the benchmark.

#### **Q1b. How Respondent Households Rate the Physical Condition of All the Middletown Parks and Facilities They Have Visited**



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

## Needs Analysis

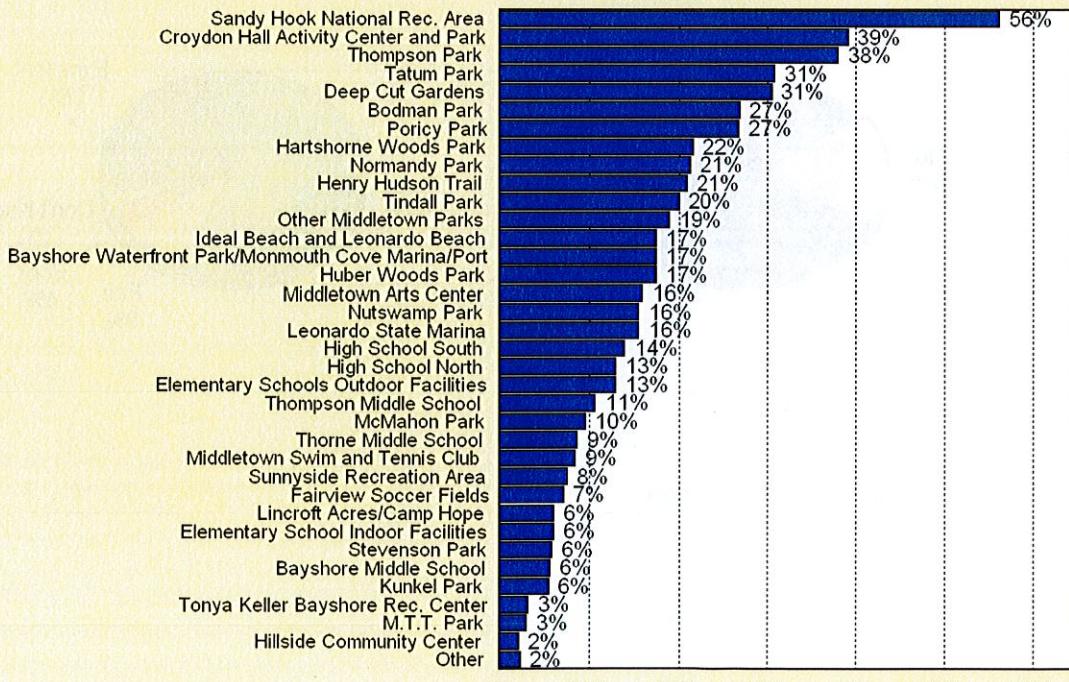
### 4. Parks and Recreation Facilities Respondent Households Have Visited

From a list of 35 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones their household has visited in the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

- There are five parks and recreation facilities that over 30% of respondent households have visited in the past 12 months: Sandy Hook National Recreation Area (56%), Croydon Hall Activity Center and Park (39%), Thompson Park (38%), Tatum Park (31%) and Deep Cut Gardens (31%).

### Q2. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Respondent Households Have Visited in the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

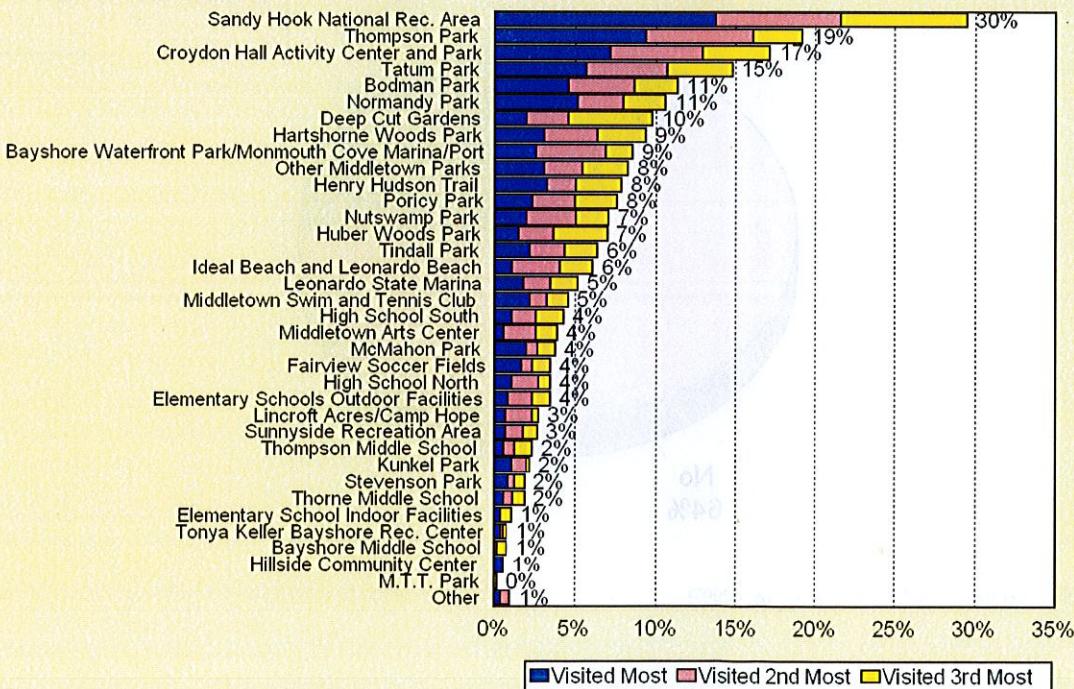
### 5. Parks and Recreation Facilities Respondent Households Have Visited the Most

From the list of 35 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate the three that their household has visited the most in the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top three choices, the parks and recreation facilities that respondent households have visited the most in the past 12 months are: Sandy Hook National Recreation Area (30%), Thompson Park (19%), Croydon Hall Activity Center and Park (17%) and Tatum Park (15%). It should also be noted that Sandy Hook National Recreation Area had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as park and recreation facility they visit most often.

### Q3. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Respondent Households Have Visited the Most in the Past 12 Months

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



Source: Leisure Vision ETC Institute (August 2007)

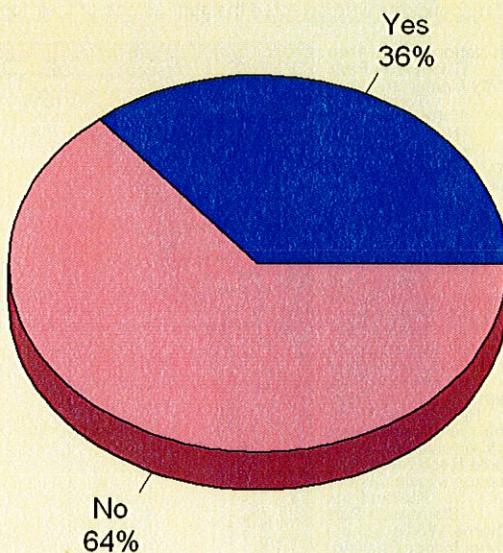
### 6. Participation in Middletown Recreation Programs

Respondents were asked if any members of their household have participated in any recreation programs offered by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs over the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

- Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondent households have participated in recreation programs offered by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs during the past 12 months.

#### **Q4. Have Respondent Households Participated in Any Recreation Programs Offered by Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Over the Past 12 Months**

by percentage of respondents



Program participation in Middletown is higher than the national benchmark of 30%.

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

### 7. Quality of Middletown Recreation Programs

Respondent households that have participated in recreation programs offered by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs over the past 12 months were asked to rate the overall quality of the programs they have participated in. The following summarizes key findings:

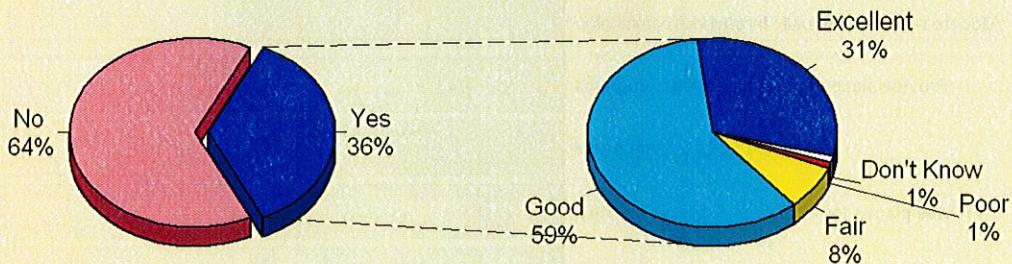
- Of the 36% of respondent households that have participated in Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs recreation programs during the past 12 months, 90% rated the programs as either excellent (31%) or good (59%). In addition, 8% of respondents rated the programs as fair and only 1% rated them as poor.

#### **Q4. Have Respondent Households Participated in Any Recreation Programs Offered by Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Over the Past 12 Months**

by percentage of respondents

"Excellent" rating in Middletown is lower than the national benchmark of 33%. Combined "Excellent" and "Good" is slightly higher than the benchmark.

##### **Q4a. How Respondent Households Rate the Quality of the Programs They Participate in**



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

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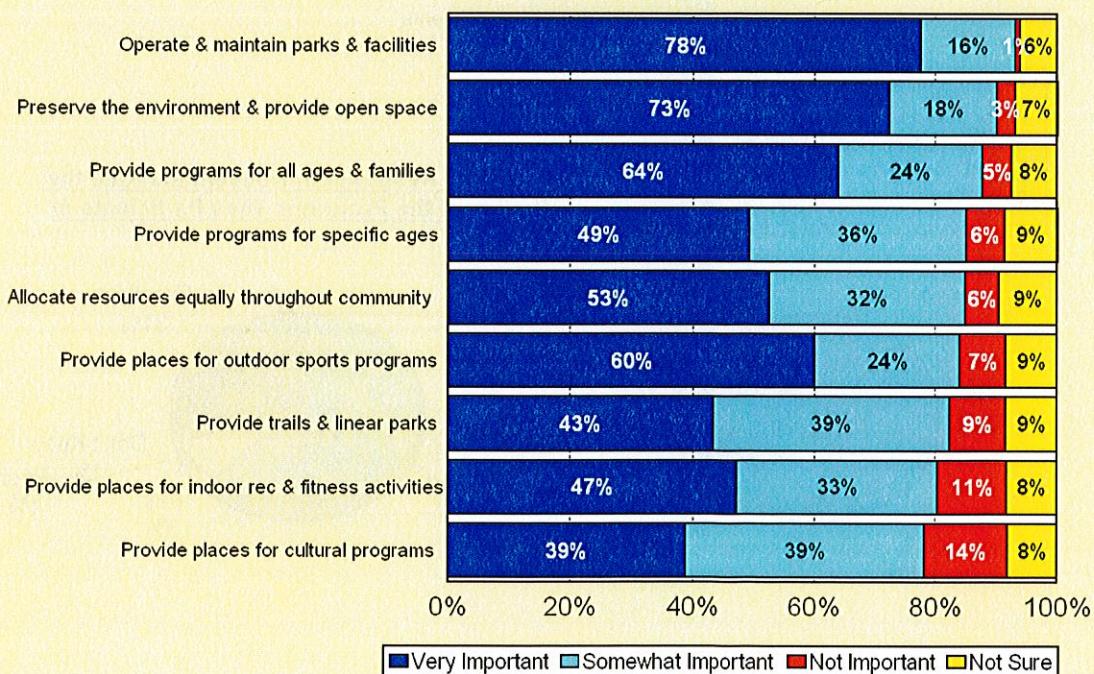
### 8. Importance of Functions That Could Be Performed by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

From a list of nine functions that could be performed by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each one. The following summarizes key findings:

- The functions that the highest percentage of respondents rated as very important are: operate and maintain parks and facilities (78%) and preserve the environment and provide open space/green space (73%). It should also be noted that all nine functions had over 75% of respondents rate them as being either very important or somewhat important.

#### Q5. Importance of Various Functions That Could Be Performed by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision ETC Institute (August 2007)

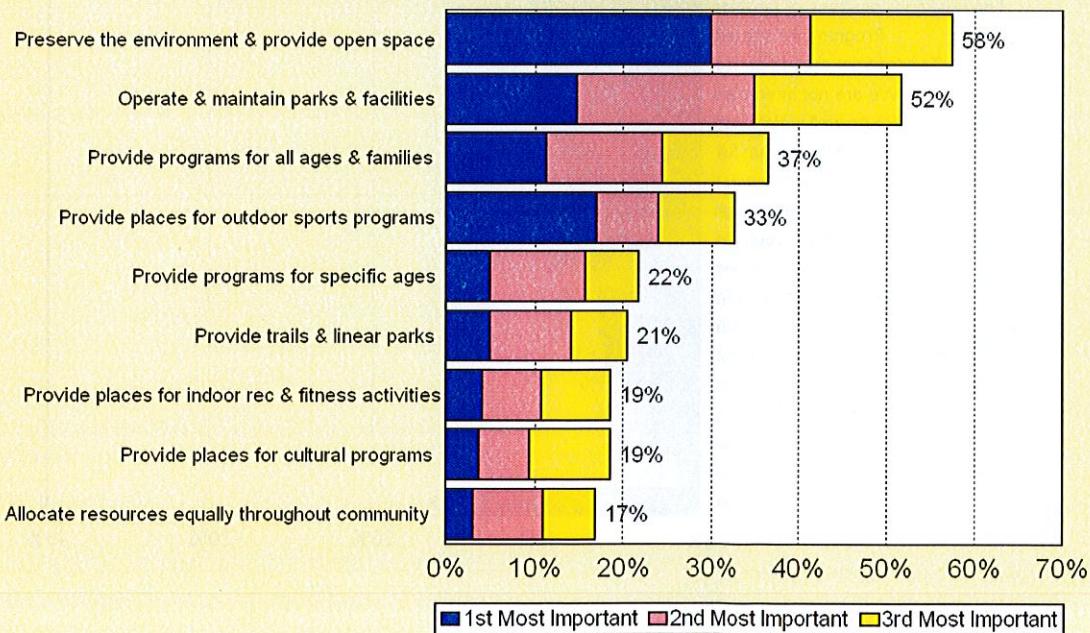
### 9. Most Important Functions to Perform

From a list of nine functions that could be performed by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, respondents were asked to select the three they think should be the most important for the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to provide. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top three choices, the functions that respondents feel are the most important to provide are: preserve the environment and provide open space/green space (58%) and operate and maintain parks and facilities (52%). It should also be noted that preserve the environment and provide open space/green space had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the function that is the most important to provide.

#### Q6. Functions That Respondent Households Think It's Most Important for the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to Provide

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



Source: Leisure Vision ETC Institute (August 2007)

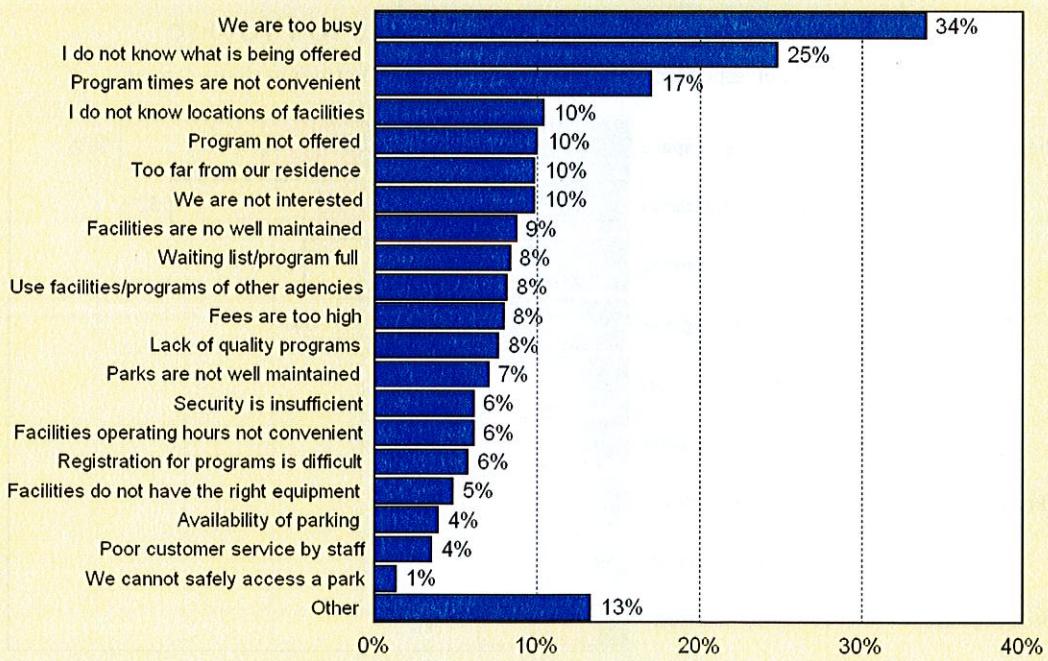
### 10. Reasons for Not Using Parks, Recreation Facilities & Programs More Often

From a list of 20 options, respondents were asked to select all the reasons that prevent members of their household from using parks, recreation facilities and programs more often. The following summarizes key findings:

- The most frequently mentioned reasons that prevent respondent households from using parks, recreation facilities and programs more often are: "we are too busy" (34%), "I do not know what is being offered" (25%) and "program times are not convenient" (17%).

#### Q7. Reasons Preventing Respondent Households From Using Parks, Recreation Facilities & Programs of the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs More Often

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)

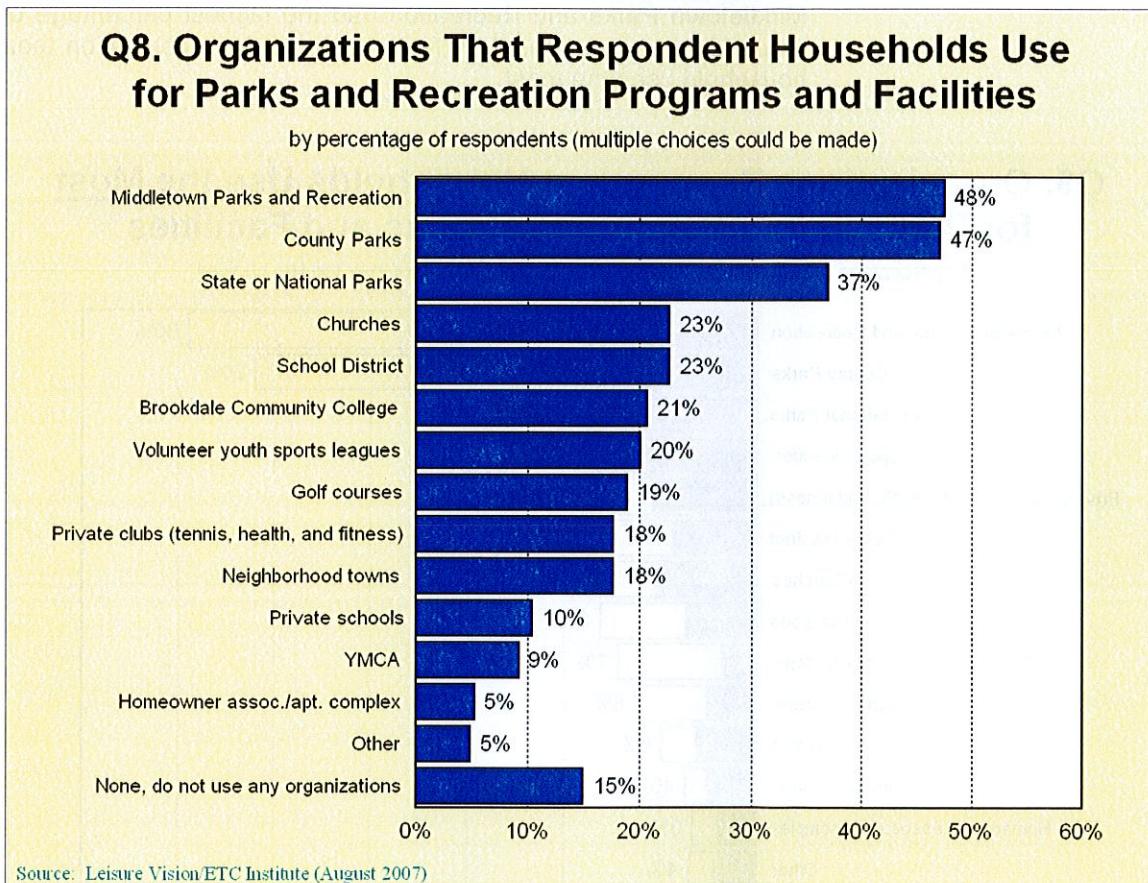


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

### 11. Organizations Used for Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

From a list of 13 options, respondents were asked to indicate all the organizations their household uses for parks and recreation programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

- The organizations that the highest percentage of respondent households use for parks and recreation programs and facilities are: Middletown Parks and Recreation (48%), County Parks (47%) and State or National Parks (37%).



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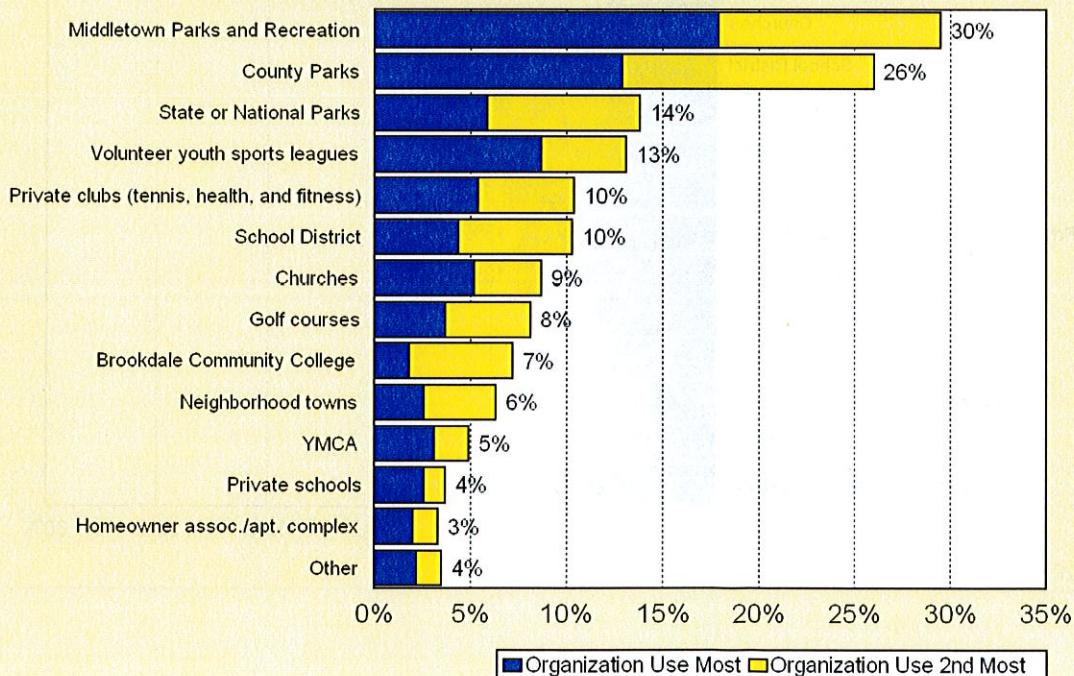
### 12. Organizations Used the Most for Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

From a list of 13 options, respondents were asked to indicate the two organizations their household uses the most for parks and recreation programs and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top two choices, the organizations that respondent households use the most for parks and recreation programs and facilities are: Middletown Parks and Recreation (30%) and County Parks (26%). It should also be noted that Middletown Parks and Recreation had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the organization their household uses the most.

#### **Q9. Organizations Respondent Households Use the Most for Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities**

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices

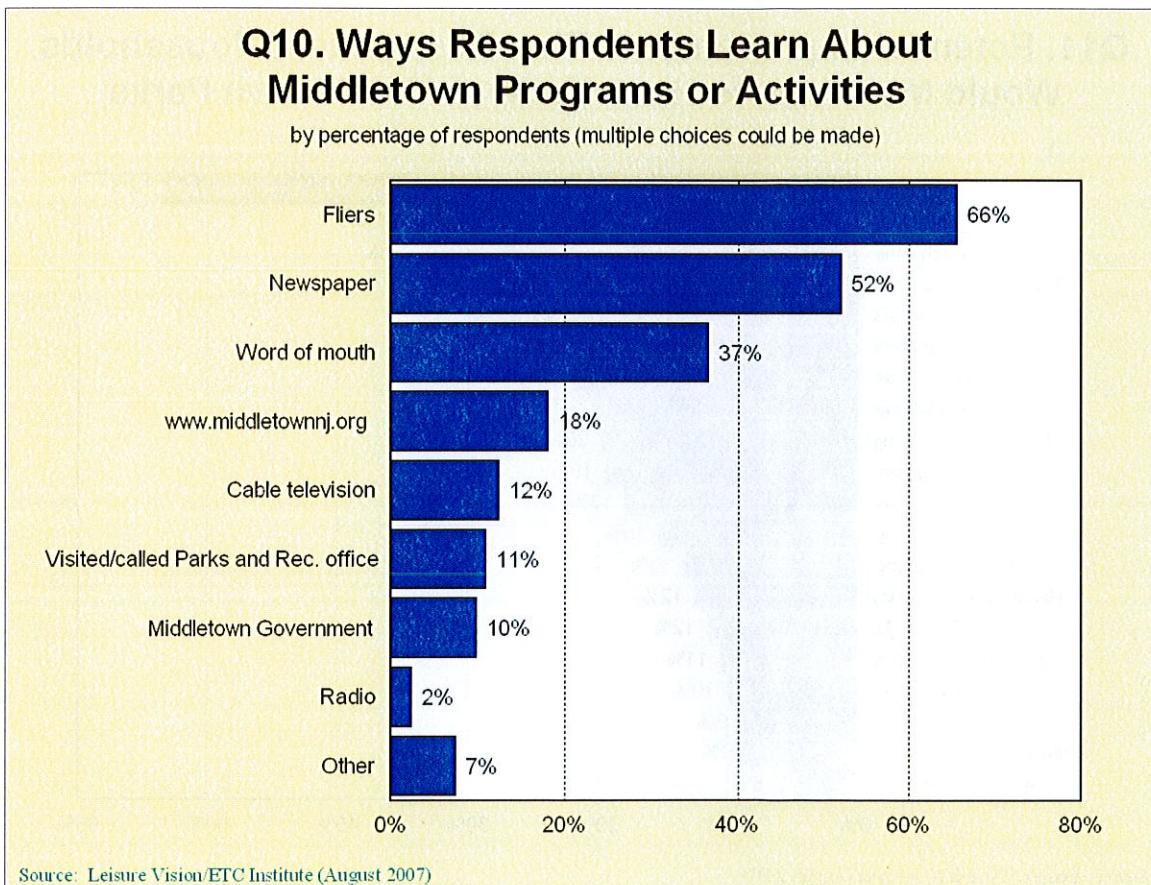


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

### 13. Ways Respondents Learn About Middletown Programs and Activities

From a list of eight options, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ways they learn about Middletown programs and activities. The following summarizes key findings:

- The most frequently mentioned ways that respondents learn about Middletown programs and activities are: fliers (66%), newspaper (52%) and word of mouth (37%).



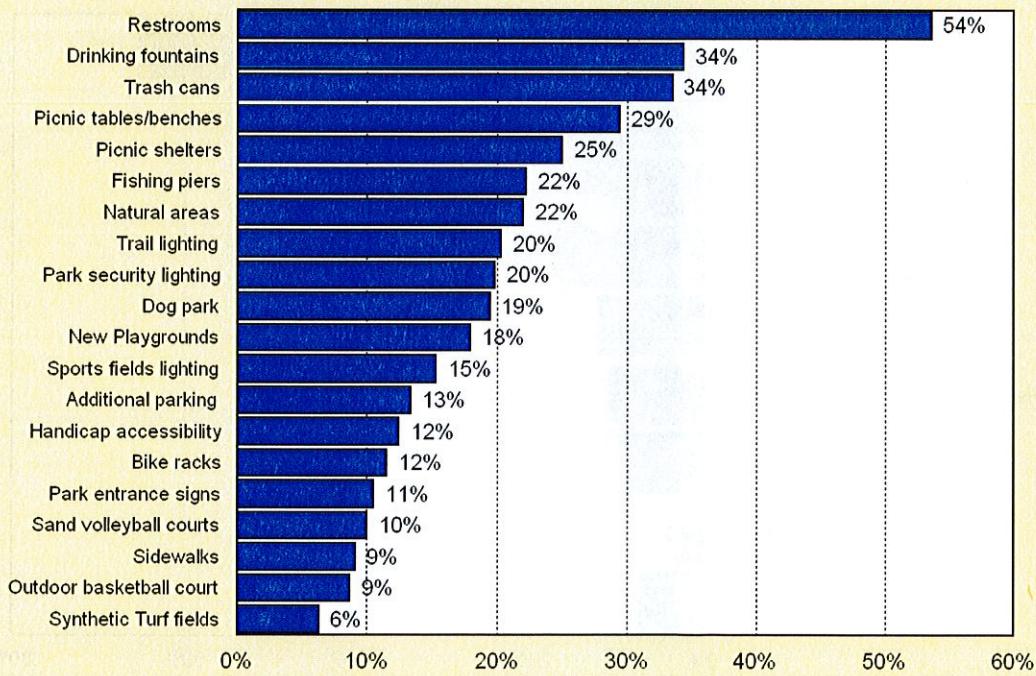
### 14. Potential Improvements to Middletown Parks

From a list of 20 improvements that could be made to Middletown parks, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones they would like to have made. The following summarizes key findings:

- The improvements that respondents would most like to have made to Middletown parks are: restrooms (54%), drinking fountains (34%), trash cans (34%) and picnic tables/benches (29%).

### Q11. Potential Improvements That Respondent Households Would Most Like to Have Made to Middletown Parks

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

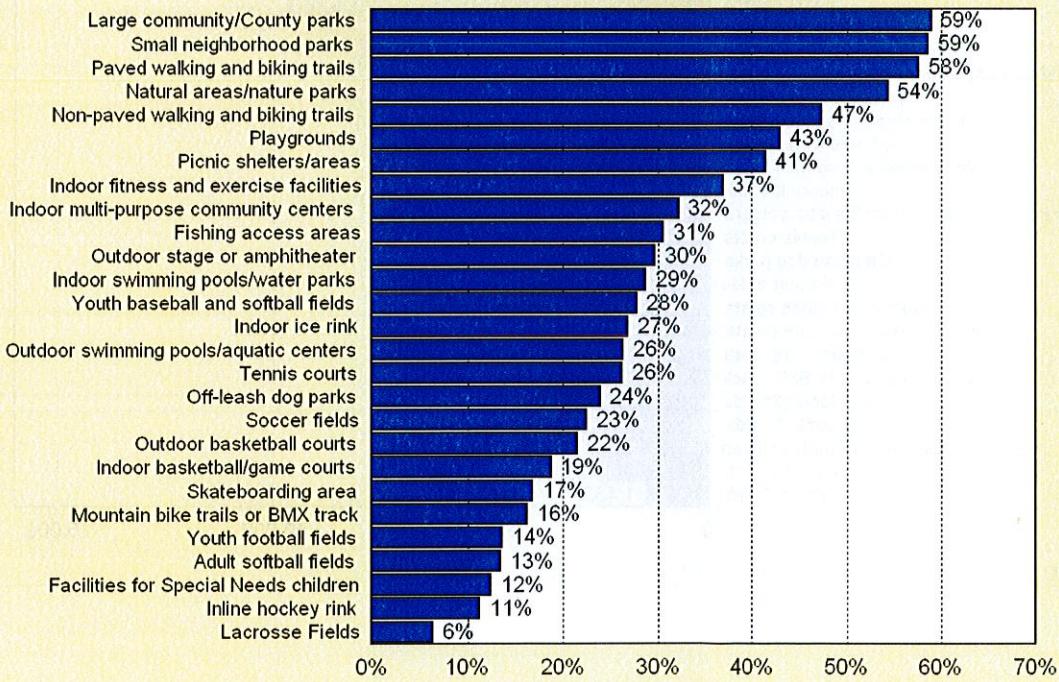
### 15. Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities

From a list of 27 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones members of their household have a need for. The following summarizes key findings:

- There are four facilities that over 50% of respondent households have a need for: large community/County parks (59%), small neighborhood parks (59%), paved walking and biking trails (58%) and natural areas/nature parks (54%).

### Q12. Respondent Households That Have a Need for Various Parks and Recreation Facilities

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

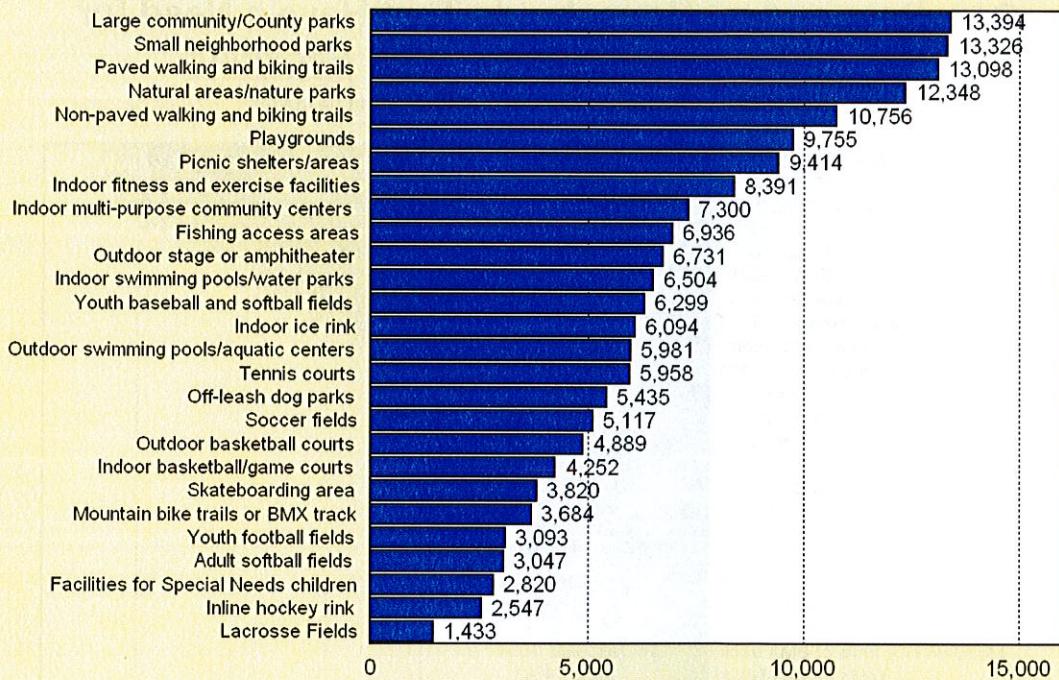
## Needs Analysis

### 16. Need For Parks and Recreation Facilities in Middletown

From the list of 27 parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones members of their household have a need for. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Middletown that have a need for various parks and recreation facilities, based on a total of 22,740 households in Middletown.

#### **Q12a. Estimated Number of Households in Middletown That Have a Need for Various Parks and Recreation Facilities**

by number of households based on 22,740 households in Middletown



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

## Needs Analysis

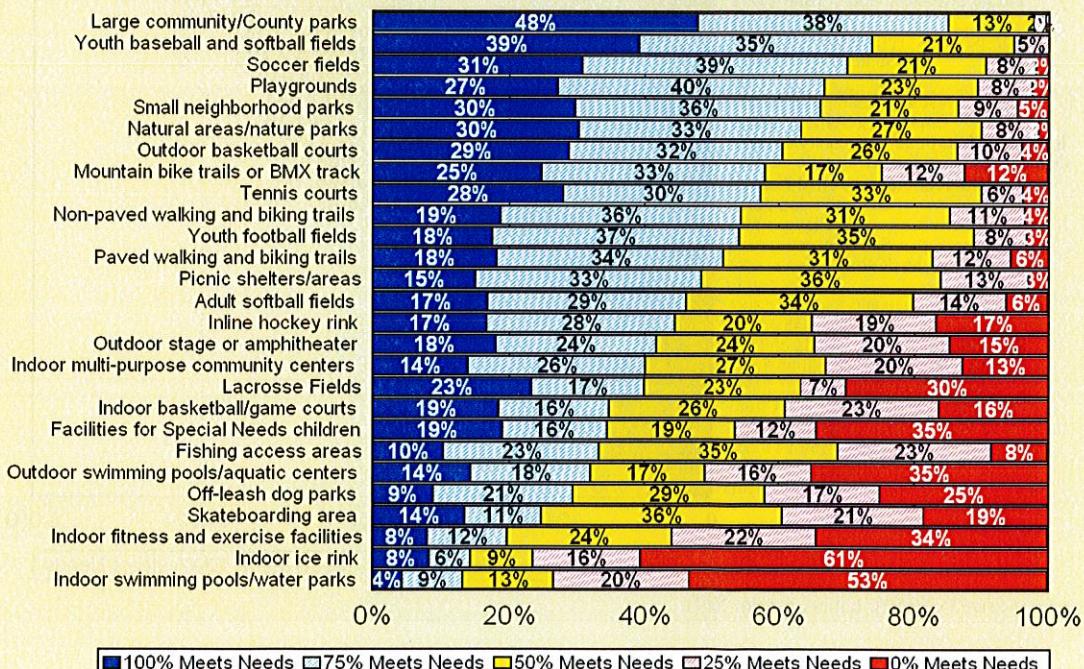
### 17. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities Meet Needs

From the list of 27 parks and recreation facilities, respondent households that have a need for facilities were asked to indicate how well these types of facilities in Middletown meet their needs. The following summarizes key findings:

- Of those respondent households with a need for facilities, the facilities that completely meet the needs of the most respondent households are: large community/County parks (48%) and youth baseball and softball fields (39%).

### Q12b. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities in Middletown Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities

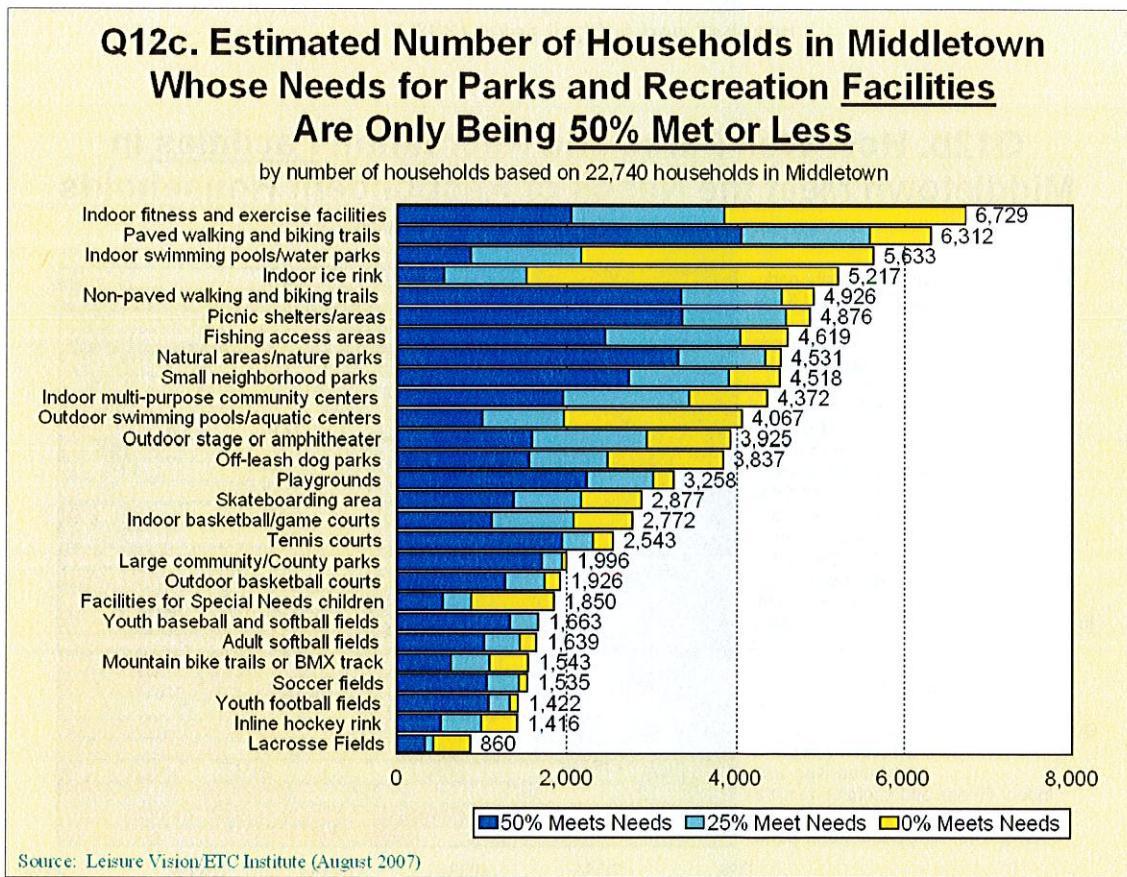


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

## Needs Analysis

### 18. Middletown Households with Their Facility Needs Being 50% Met or Less

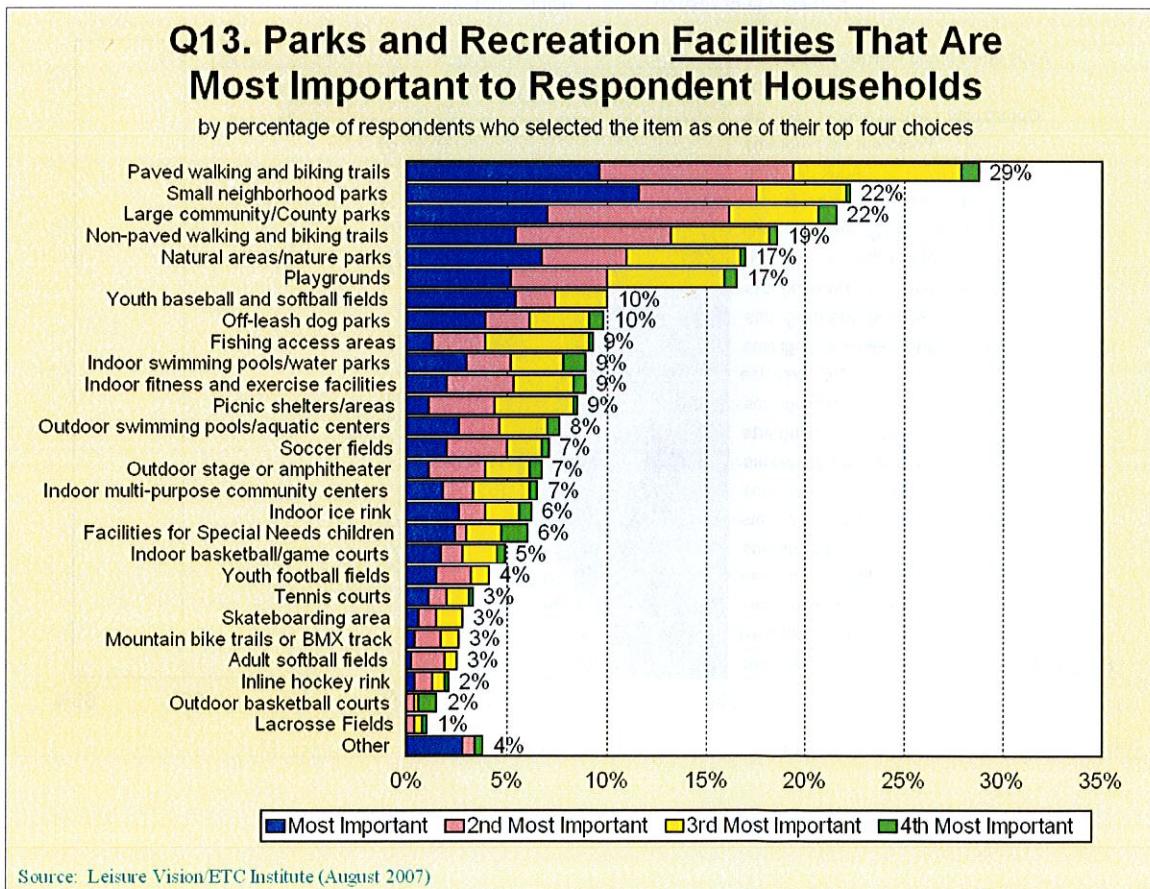
From the list of 27 parks and recreation facilities, respondent households that have a need for facilities were asked to indicate how well these types of facilities in Middletown meet their needs. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Middletown whose needs for facilities are only being 50% met or less, based on a total of 22,740 households in Middletown.



### 19. Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities

From the list of 27 parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to select the four facilities that are most important to their household. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the facilities that respondent households rated as the most important are: paved walking and biking trails (29%), small neighborhood parks (22%), large community/County parks (22%) and non-paved walking and biking trails (19%). It should also be noted that small neighborhood parks had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the most important facility.



## Needs Analysis

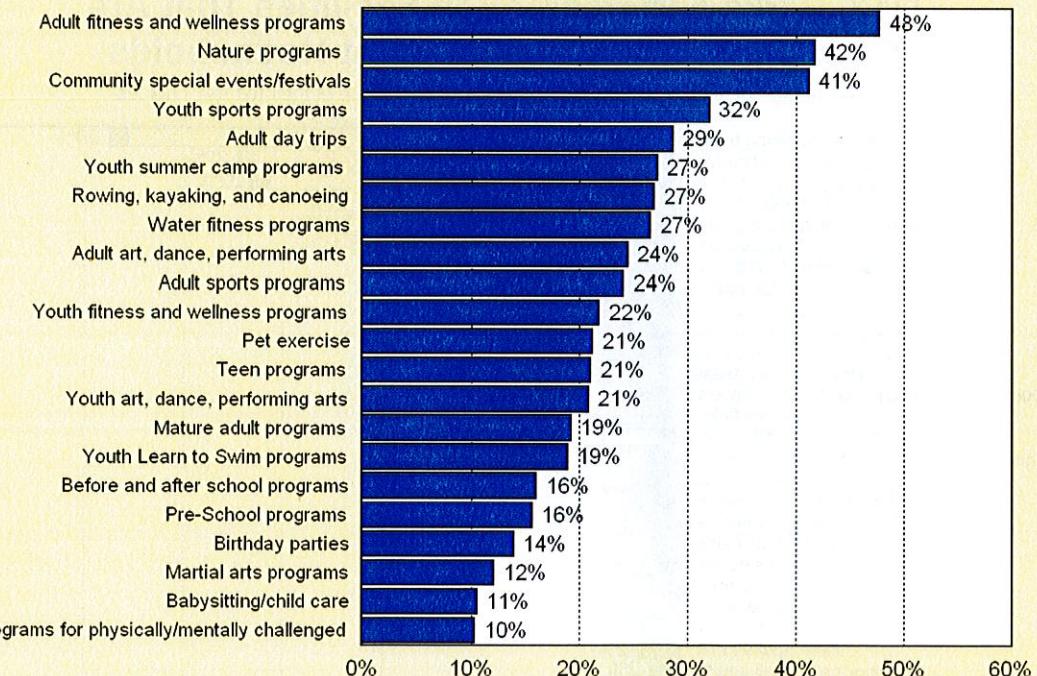
### 20. Need for Recreation Programs

From a list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones that members of their household have a need for. The following summarizes key findings:

- There are three programs that over 40% of respondent households have a need for: adult fitness and wellness programs (48%), nature programs (42%) and community special events/festivals (41%).

#### Q14. Respondent Households That Have a Need for Various Recreation Programs

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



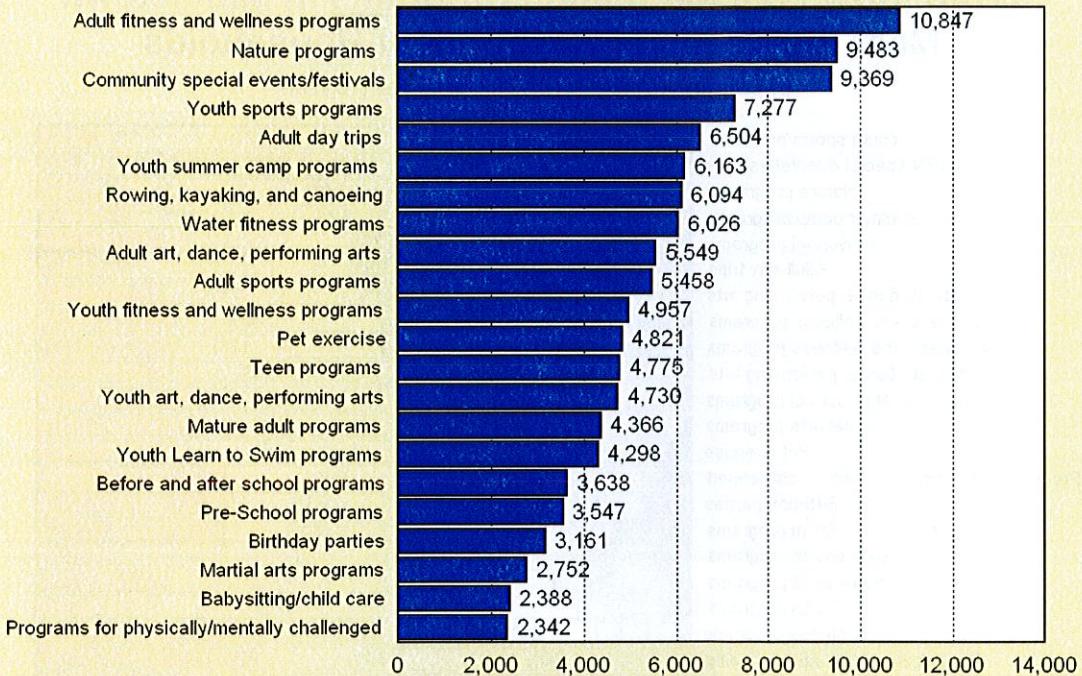
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

### 21. Need For Recreation Programs in Middletown

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they and members of their household have a need for. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Middletown that have a need for recreation programs, based on a total of 22,740 households in Middletown.

#### **Q14a. Estimated Number of Households in Middletown That Have a Need for Various Recreation Programs**

by number of households based on 22,740 households in Middletown



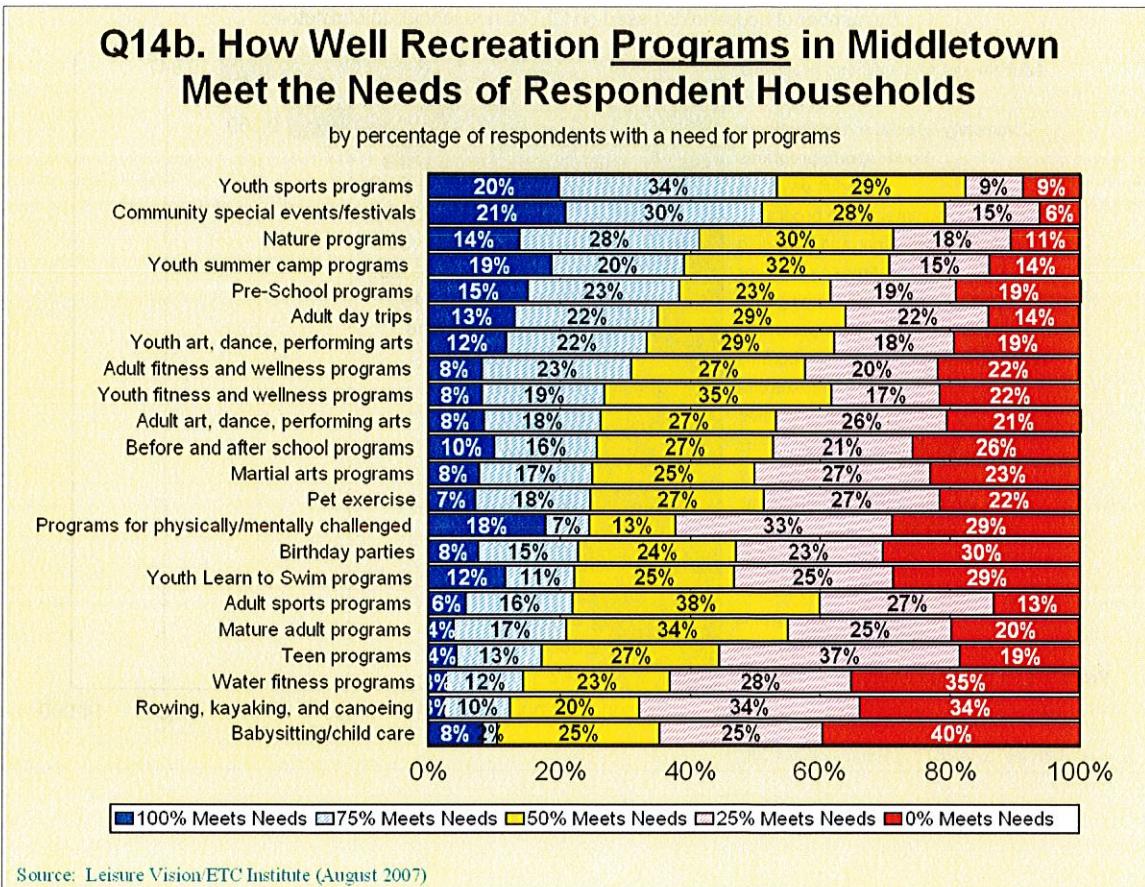
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

## Needs Analysis

### 22. How Well Recreation Programs Meet Needs

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondent households that have a need for programs were asked to indicate how well these programs in Middletown meet their needs. The following summarizes key findings:

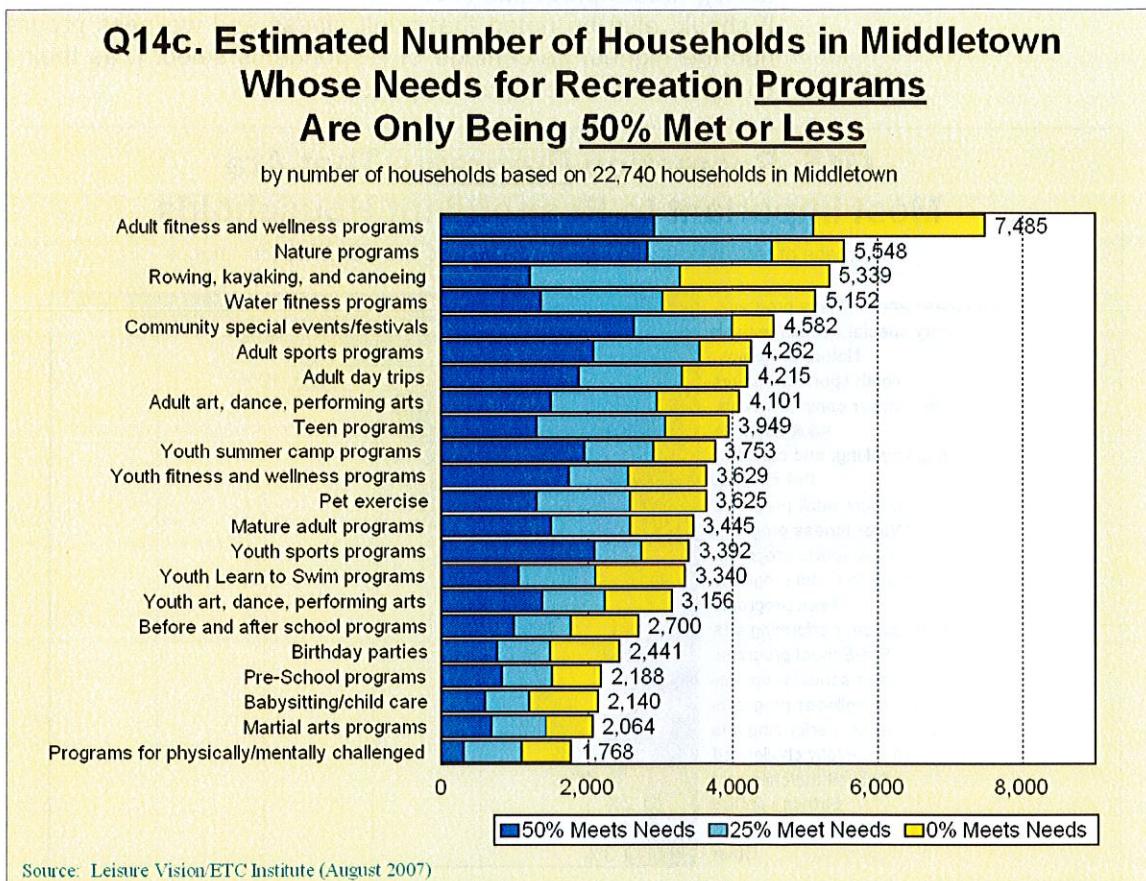
- Of those respondent households with a need for programs, the programs that completely meet the needs of the most respondent households are: community special events (21%) and youth sports programs (20%).



## Needs Analysis

### 23. Middletown Households with Their Program Needs Being 50% Met or Less

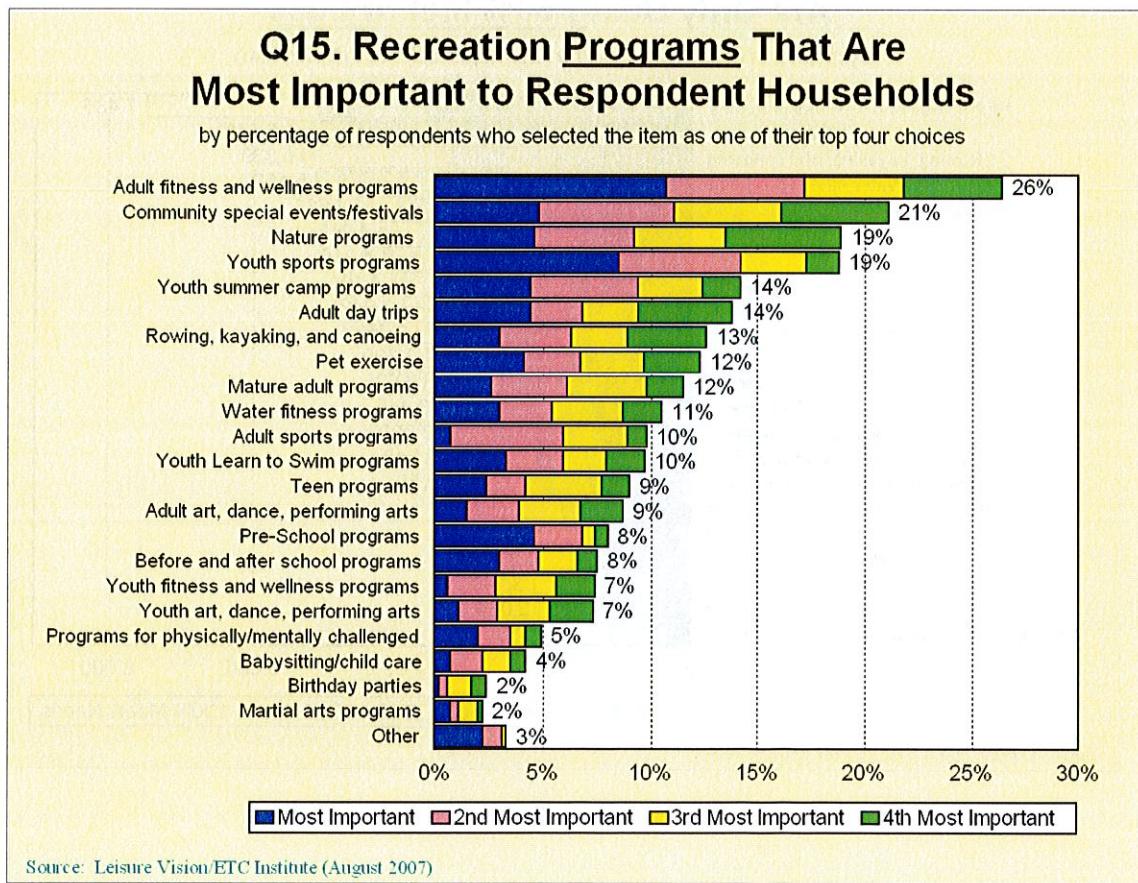
From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondent households that have a need for programs were asked to indicate how well these programs in Middletown meet their needs. The graph below shows the estimated number of households in Middletown whose needs for programs are only being 50% met or less, based on a total of 22,740 households in Middletown.



### 24. Most Important Recreation Programs

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to select the four that are most important to their household. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the programs that are most important to respondent households are: adult fitness and wellness programs (26%), community special events/festivals (21%), nature programs (19%) and youth sports programs (19%). It should also be noted that adult fitness and wellness programs had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the most important program.



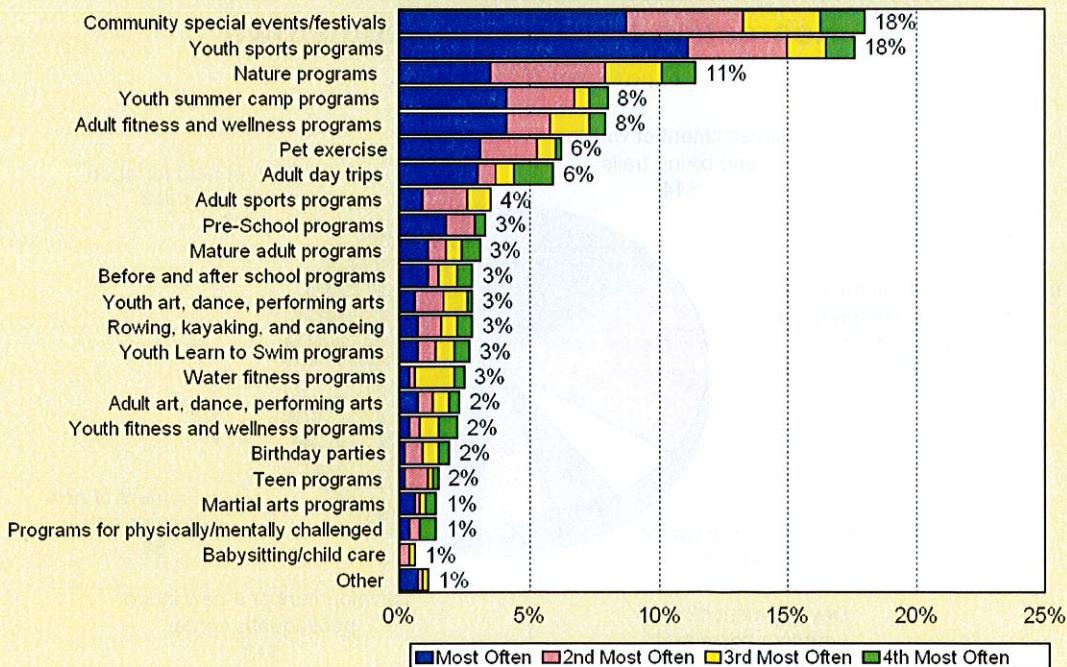
### 25. Programs Respondents Currently Participate in Most Often

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to select the four that their household currently participates in most often at Middletown facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the programs that respondent households participate in most often at Middletown facilities are: community special events/festivals (18%) and youth sports programs (18%). It should also be noted that youth sports programs had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the program they participate in most often at Middletown facilities.

### Q16. Recreation Programs That Respondents Currently Participate in Most Often at Middletown Facilities

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



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

## Needs Analysis

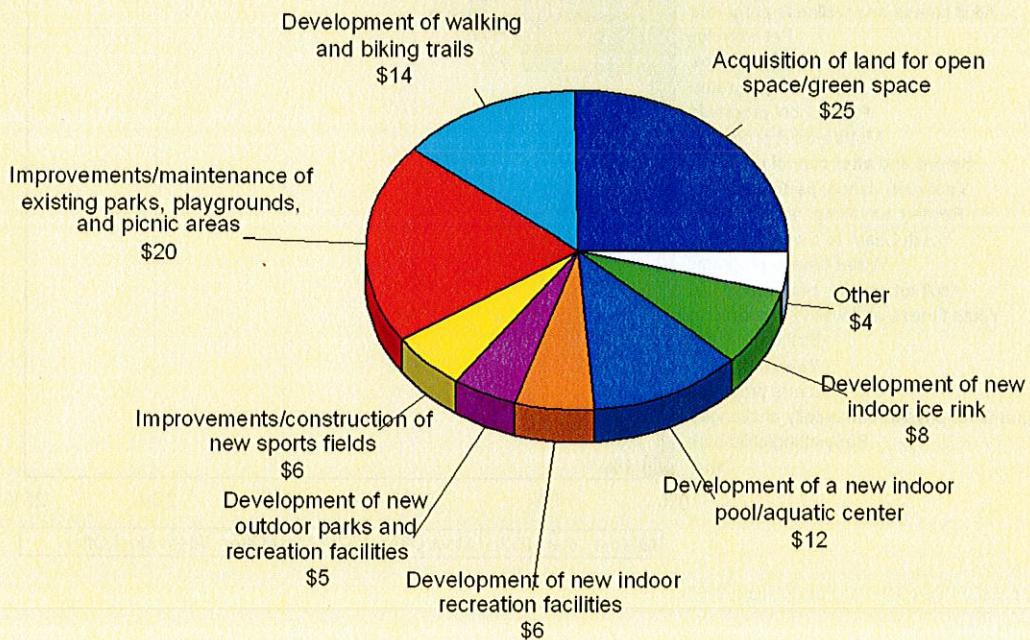
### 26. Allocation of \$100 Among Various Parks and Recreation Facilities

Respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 among various types of parks and recreation facilities in Middletown. The following summarizes key findings:

- Respondents would allocate \$25 out of every \$100 on the acquisition of land for space/green space. The remaining \$75 were allocated as follows: improvements/maintenance of existing parks, playgrounds, and picnic areas (\$20), development of walking and biking trails (\$14), development of a new indoor pool/aquatic center (\$12), development of new indoor ice rink (\$8), improvements/construction of new sports fields (\$6), development of new indoor recreation facilities (\$6), development of new outdoor parks and recreation facilities (\$5) and other (\$4).

### Q17. How Respondent Households Would Allocate \$100 in Funding Among Various Types of Parks and Recreation Facilities in Middletown

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

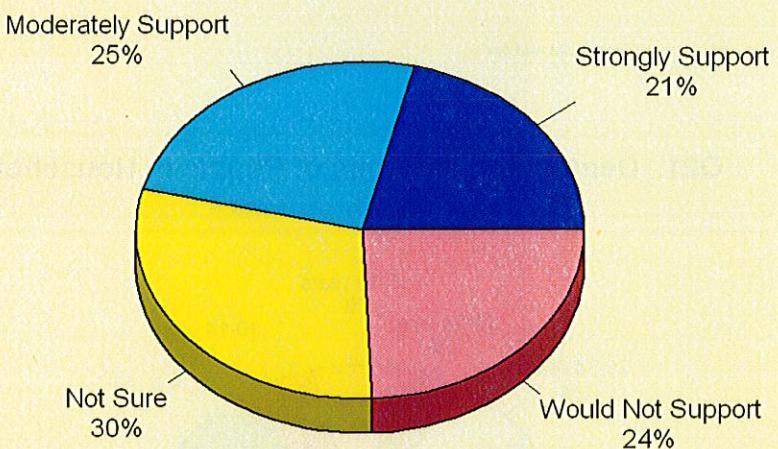
### 27. Level of Support for a Dedicated Tax Increase

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for a dedicated tax increase to fund the development and operations of the types of parks, recreation, trails, programming and facilities and activities that are most important to their household. The following summarizes key findings:

- Forty-six percent (46%) of respondents indicated they would either strongly support (21%) or moderately support (25%) a dedicated tax increase. In addition, 24% of respondents would not support a dedicated tax increase, and 30% indicated "not sure".

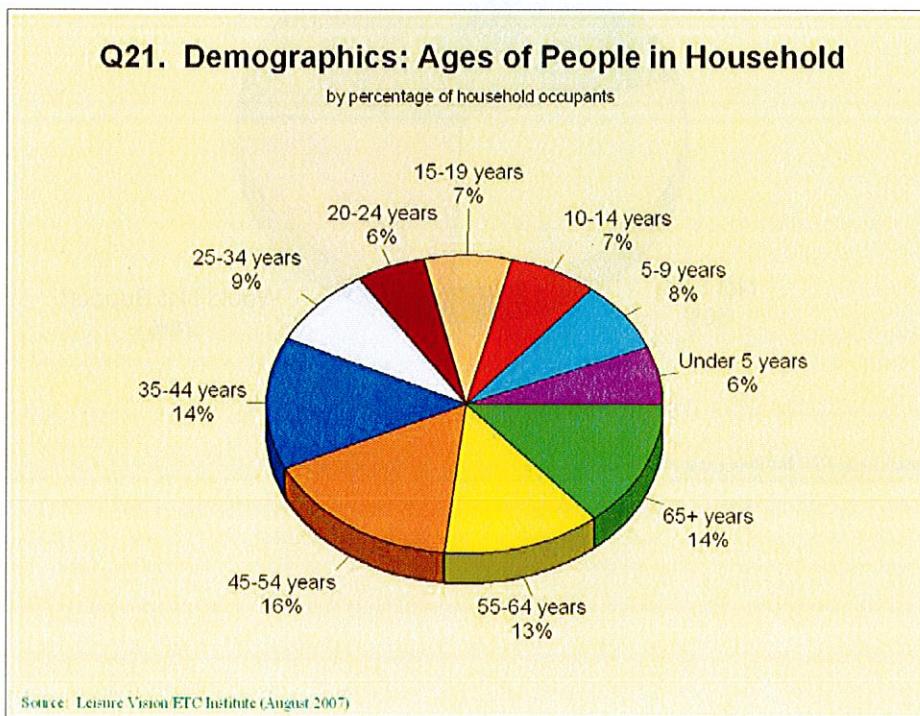
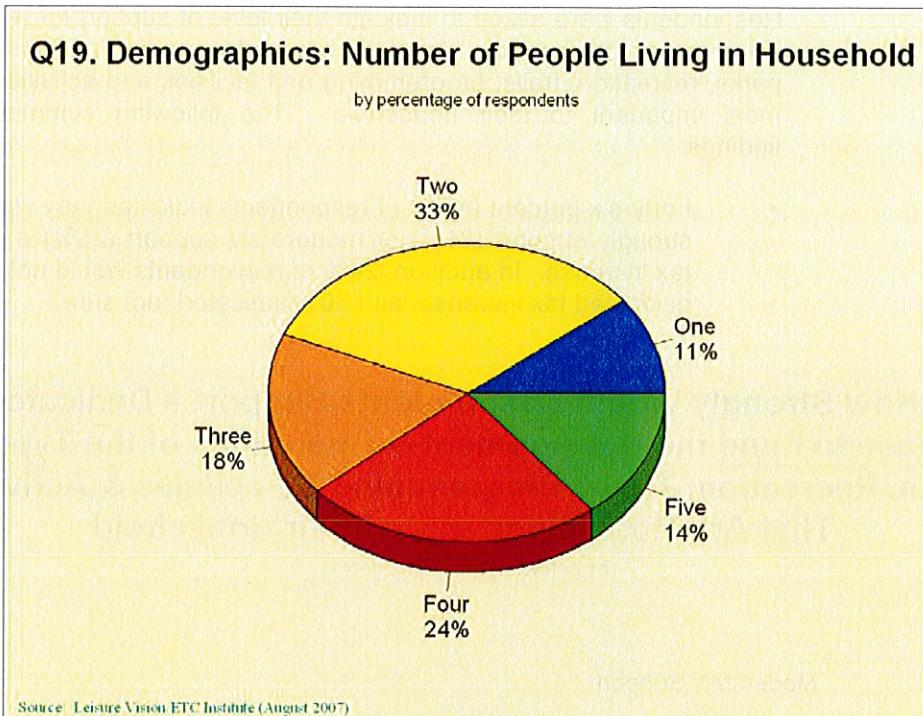
### Q18. How Strongly Would Respondents Support a Dedicated Tax Increase to Fund the Development & Operations of the Types of Parks, Recreation, Trails, Programming & Facilities & Activities That Are Most Important to Their Household

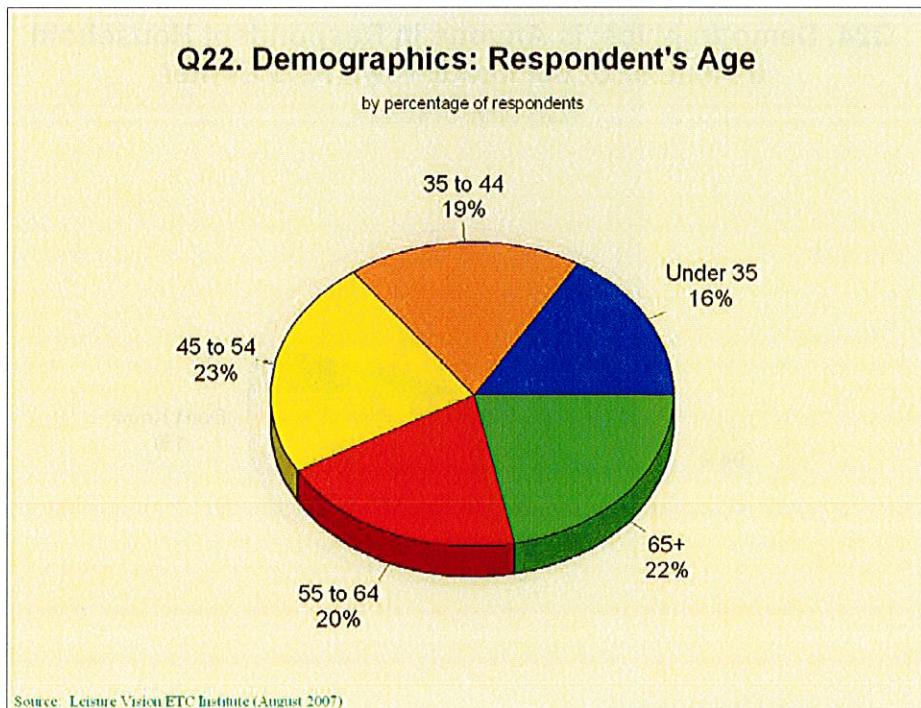
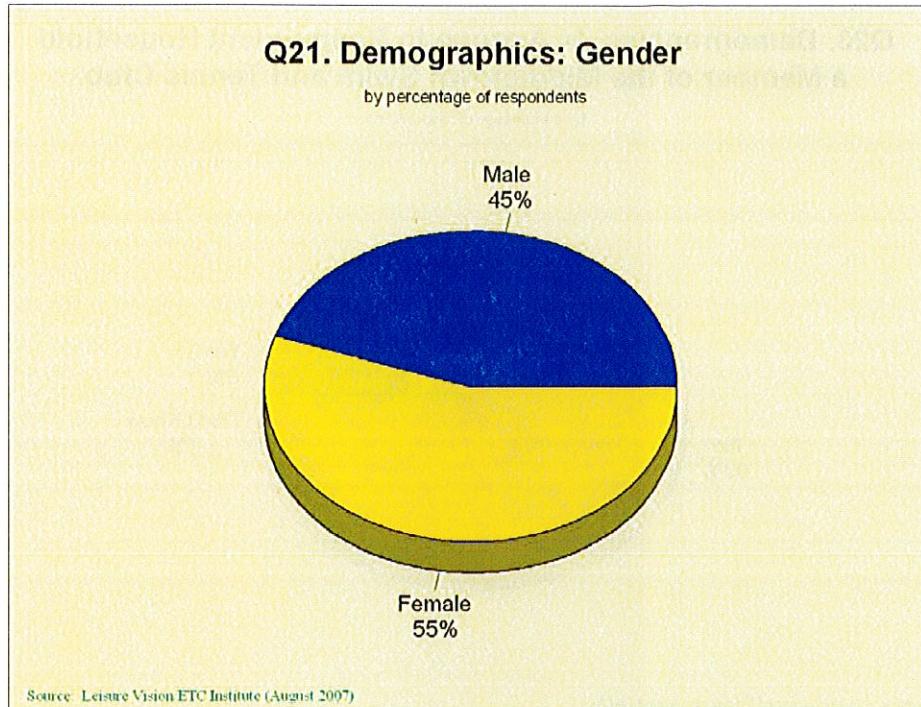
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (August 2007)

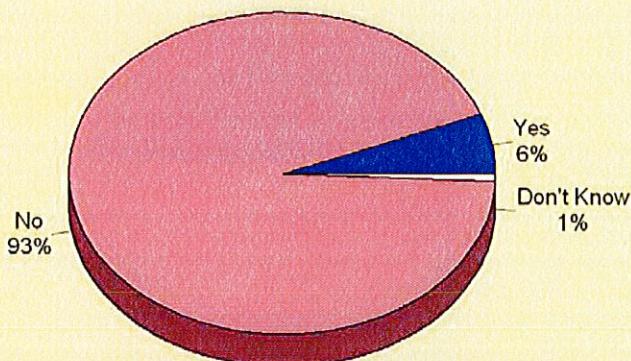
28. Demographics





**Q23. Demographics: Is Anyone in Respondent Household a Member of the Middletown Swim and Tennis Club**

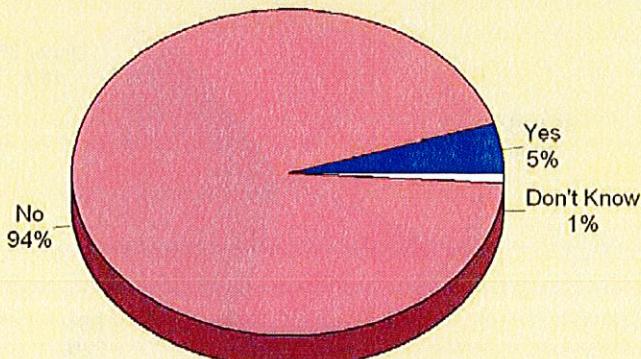
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision ETC Institute (August 2007)

**Q24. Demographics: Is Anyone in Respondent Household a Member of the Middletown Arts Center**

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision ETC Institute (August 2007)

## Needs Analysis

### **I. 2007 Student Survey**

A survey similar to the one which was mailed to residents throughout the Township was completed by students in the Middletown Schools. This included 67 students from Middletown South High School, 58 from Middletown North High School, 33 from Thorne Middle School, 40 from Bayshore Middle School and 49 from Thompson Middle School. This provides a very good cross section of the community. The following are the results of that survey of students:

• **What is the primary color of your home?** **White**  
• **What is the primary color of your car?** **White**  
• **What is the primary color of your shirt?** **White**

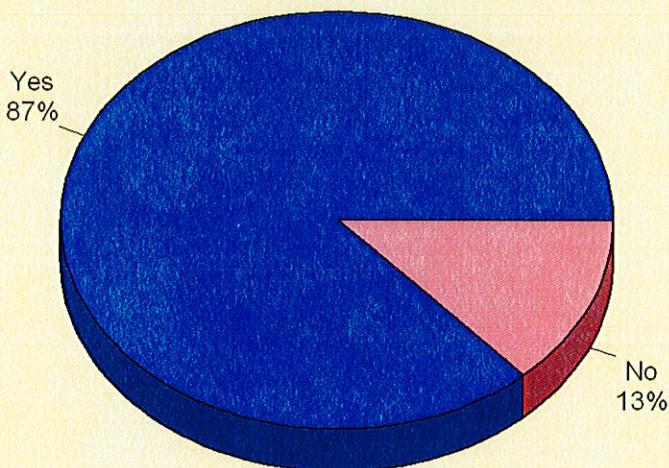
### 1. Visitation of Middletown Parks During the Past Year

Respondents were asked if they or any members of their household have visited any of the Middletown parks and facilities during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

- Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondent households have visited Middletown parks and facilities during the past 12 months.

#### **Q1. Have Respondent Households Visited Any of the Middletown Parks and Facilities During the Past Year**

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

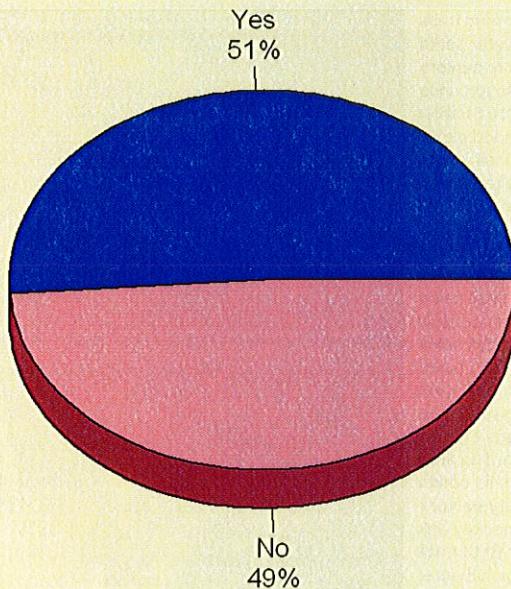
### 2. Participation in Middletown Recreation Programs During the Past Year

Respondents were asked to indicate if they or any members of their household have participated in any recreation programs offered by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs over the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

- Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondent households have participated in recreation programs offered by the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs over the past 12 months.

#### **Q2. Have Respondent Households Participated in Any Recreational Programs Offered by Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Over the Past Year**

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

## Needs Analysis

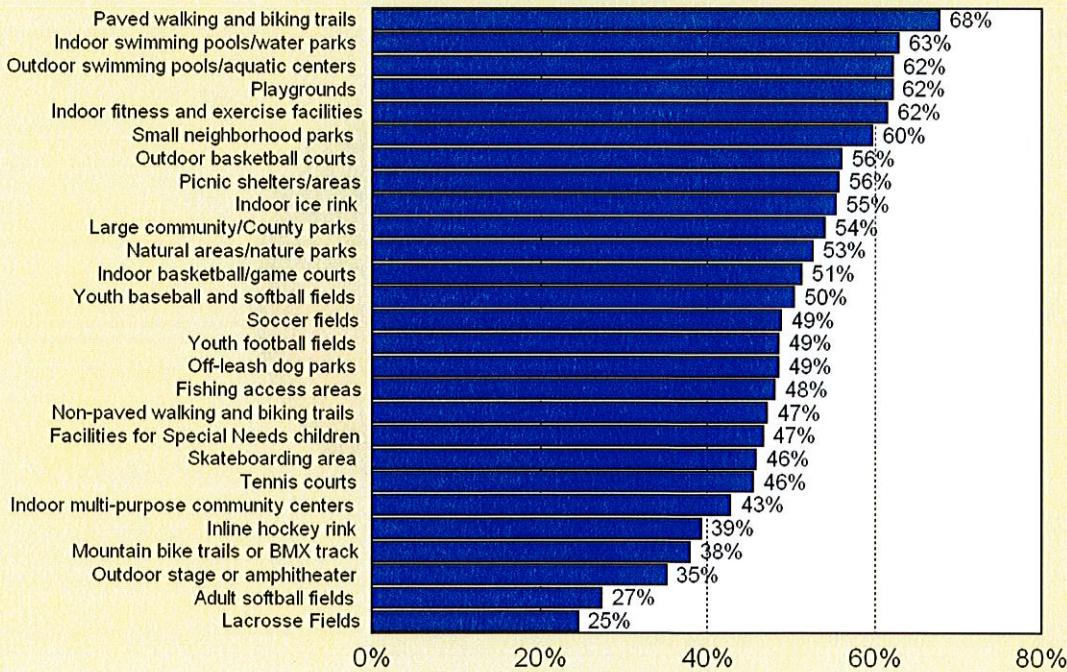
### 3. Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities

From a list of 27 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they and members of their household have a need for. The following summarizes key findings:

- Six of the 27 parks and recreation facilities had at least 60% of respondent households indicate they have a need for them. These six facilities include: paved walking and biking trails (68%), indoor swimming pools/water parks (63%), outdoor swimming pools/aquatic centers (62%), playgrounds (62%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (62%), and small neighborhood parks (60%).

### Q8. Respondent Households That Have a Need for Various Parks and Recreation Facilities

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

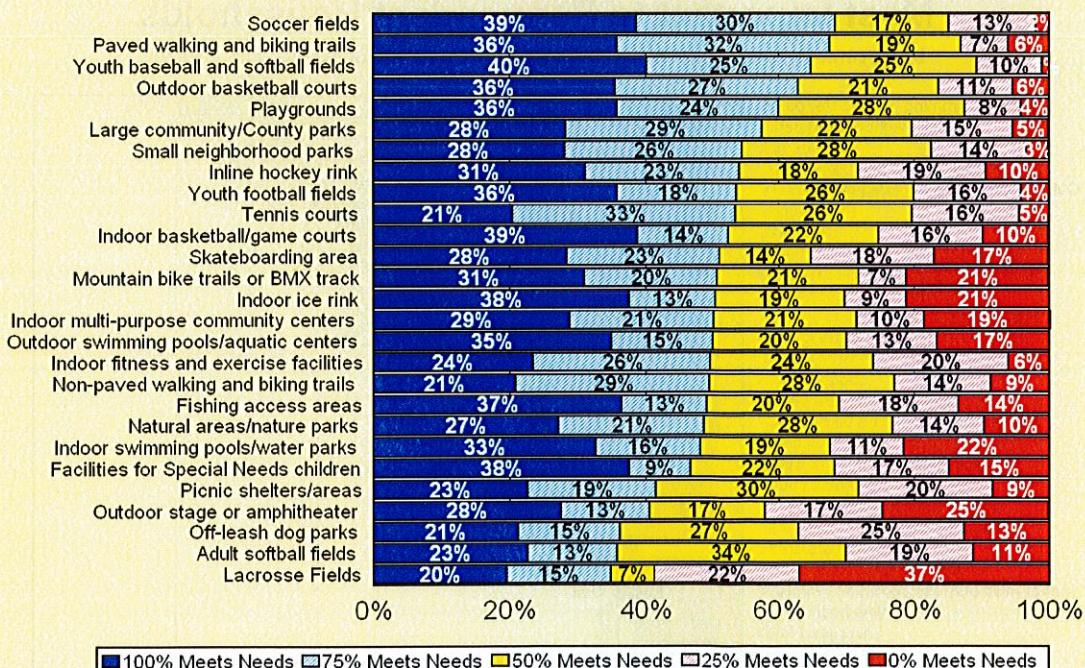
### 4. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities Meet Needs

From the list of 27 parks and recreation facilities, respondent households that have a need for facilities were asked to indicate how well these types of facilities in Middletown meet their needs. The following summarizes key findings:

- Of those respondents that have a need for facilities, the facilities that completely meet the needs of the highest percentage of respondent households are: youth baseball and softball fields (40%), soccer fields (39%), indoor basketball/game courts (39%), indoor ice rink (38%) and facilities for Special Needs children (38%).

### Q8a. How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities in Middletown Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

## Needs Analysis

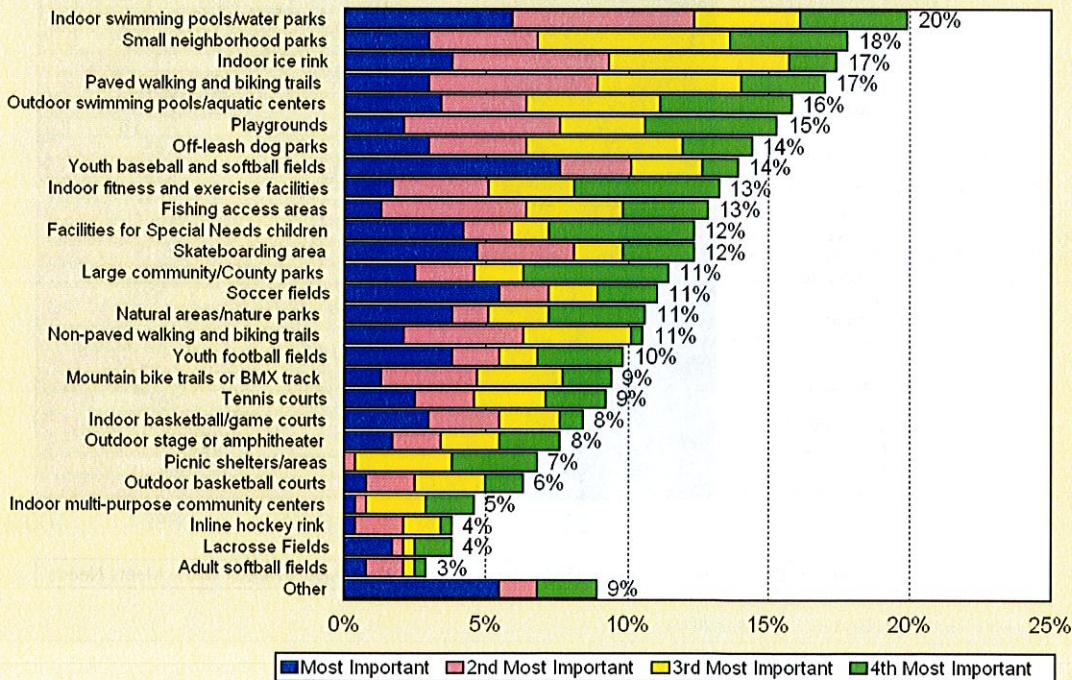
### 5. Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities

From the list of 27 parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to select the four facilities that are most important to their household. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the parks and recreation facilities that are most important to respondent households include: indoor swimming pools/water parks (20%), small neighborhood parks (18%), indoor ice rink (17%), paved walking and biking trails (17%), outdoor swimming pools/aquatic centers (16%), and playgrounds (15%). It should also be noted that youth baseball and softball fields had the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as their first choice as the parks and recreation facility that is most important to their household.

### Q9. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Respondent Households

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



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

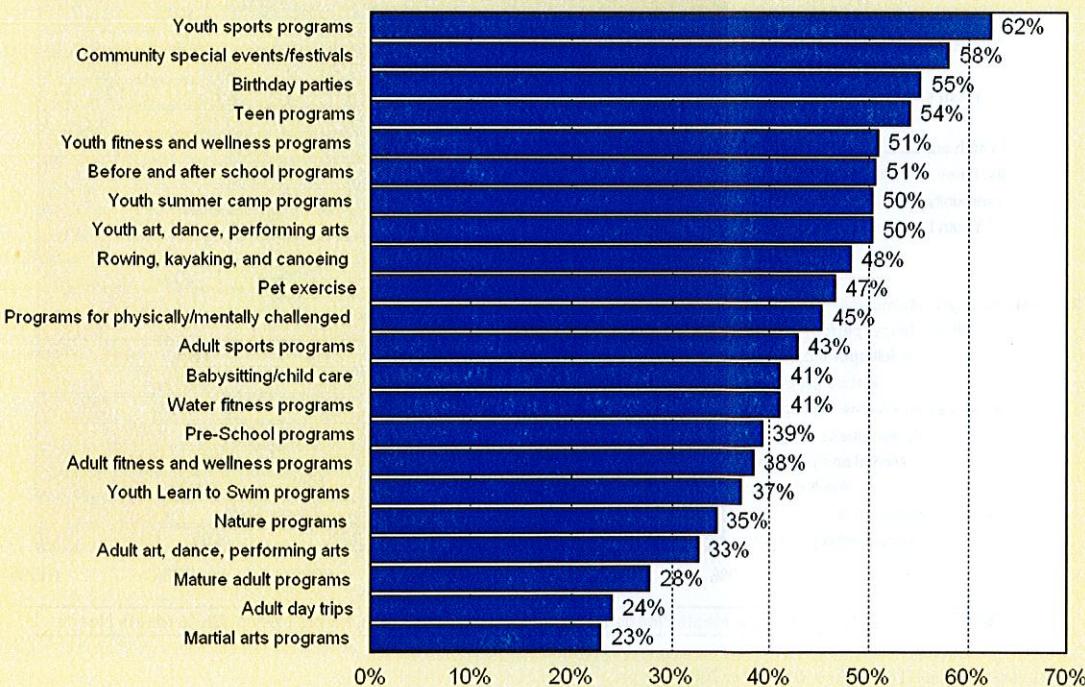
### 6. Need for Recreation Programs

From a list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones that they and members of their household have a need for. The following summarizes key findings:

- There are eight recreation programs that at least 50% of respondents indicated they have a need for including: youth sports programs (62%), community special events/festivals (58%), birthday parties (55%), teen programs (54%), youth fitness and wellness programs (51%), before and after school programs (51%), youth summer camp programs (50%), and youth art, dance, performing arts (50%).

#### Q10. Respondent Households That Have a Need for Various Recreation Programs

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

## Needs Analysis

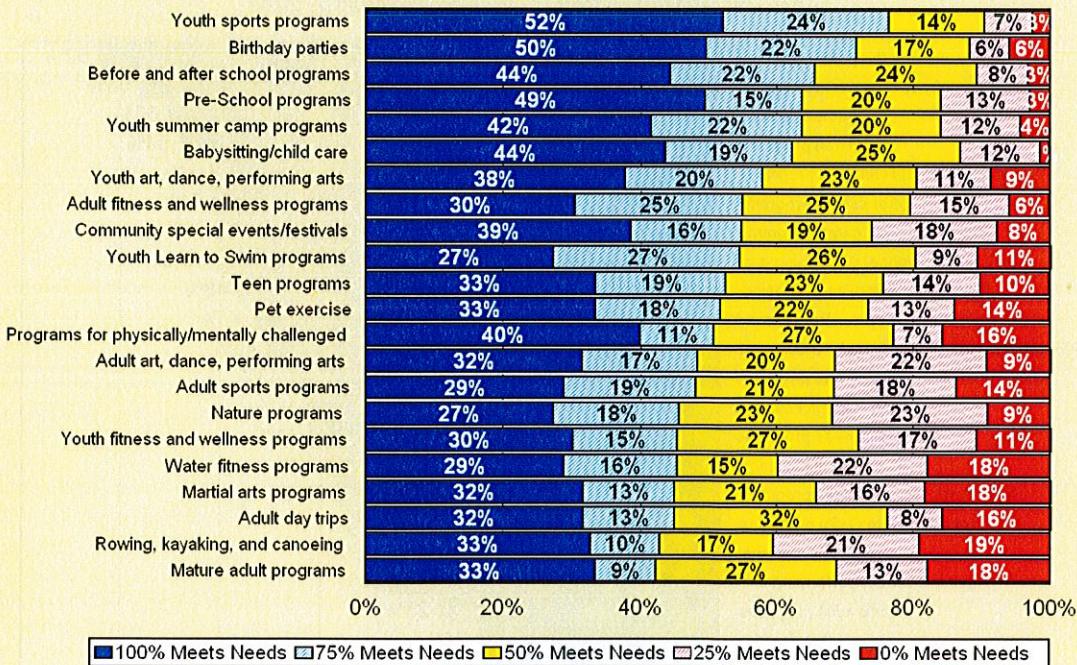
### 7. How Well Recreation Programs Meet Needs

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondent households that have a need for programs were asked to indicate how well those programs meet their needs. The following summarizes key findings:

- Of those respondents that have a need for programs, the programs that completely meet the needs of the highest percentage of respondent households are: youth sports programs (52%), birthday parties (50%), pre-school programs (49%), before and after school programs (44%) and babysitting/child care (44%).

#### Q10a. How Well Recreation Programs in Middletown Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

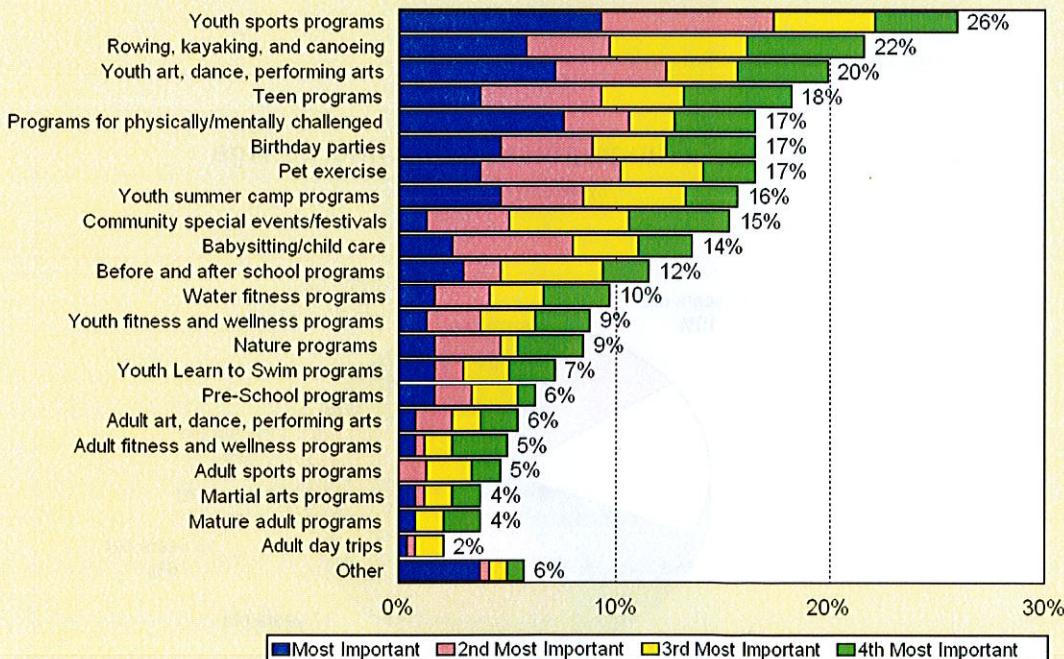
### 8. Most Important Recreation Programs

From the list of 22 recreation programs, respondents were asked to select the four that are most important to their household. The following summarizes key findings:

- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the recreation programs that are most important to respondent households include: youth sports programs (26%), rowing, kayaking, and canoeing (22%), youth art, dance, performing arts (20%), teen programs (18%), programs for physically/mentally challenged (17%), birthday parties (17%), and pet exercise (17%). It should also be noted that youth sports programs had the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as their first choice as a recreation program that is most important to respondent household.

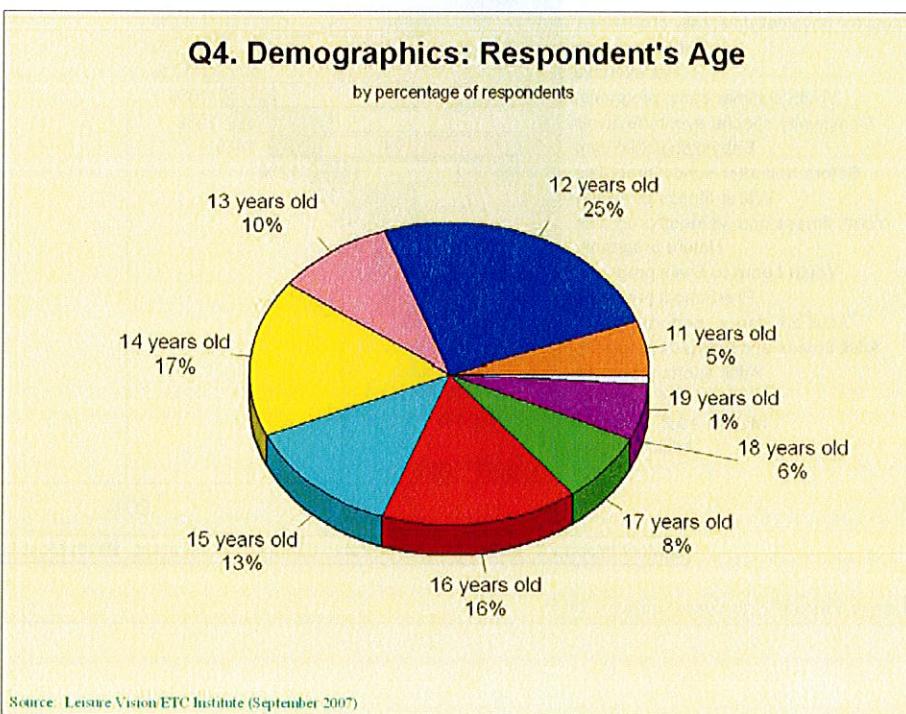
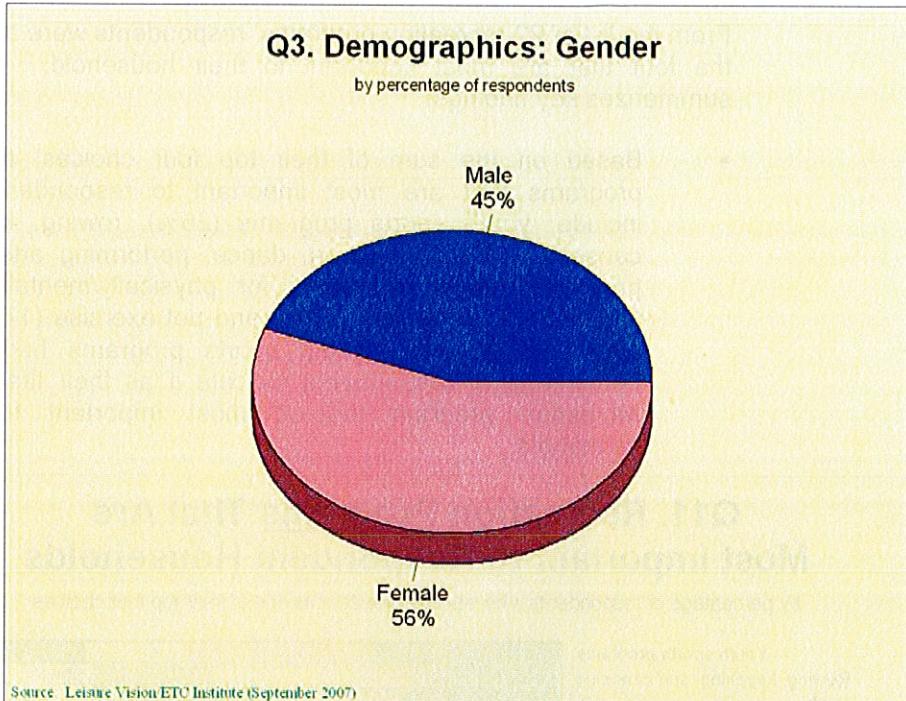
### Q11. Recreation Programs That Are Most Important to Respondent Households

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



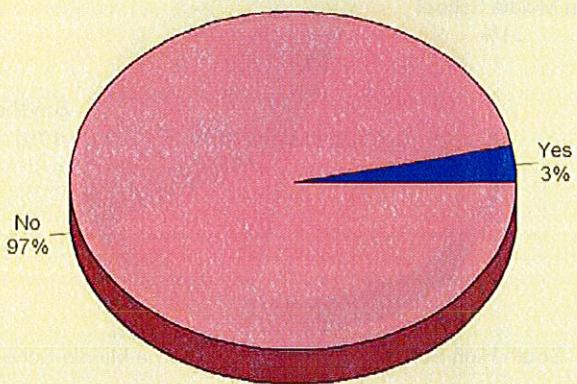
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2007)

### 9. Demographics



**Q5. Demographics: Are You a Member of the Middletown Swim and Tennis Club**

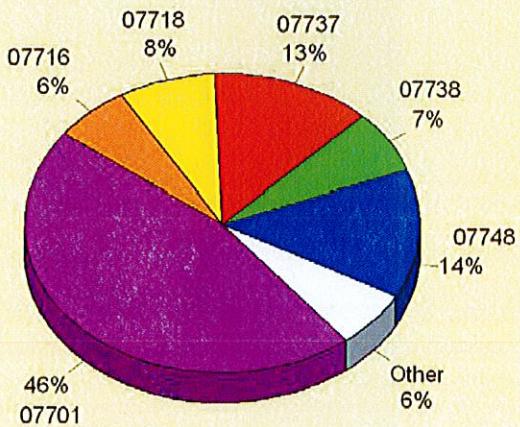
by percentage of respondents



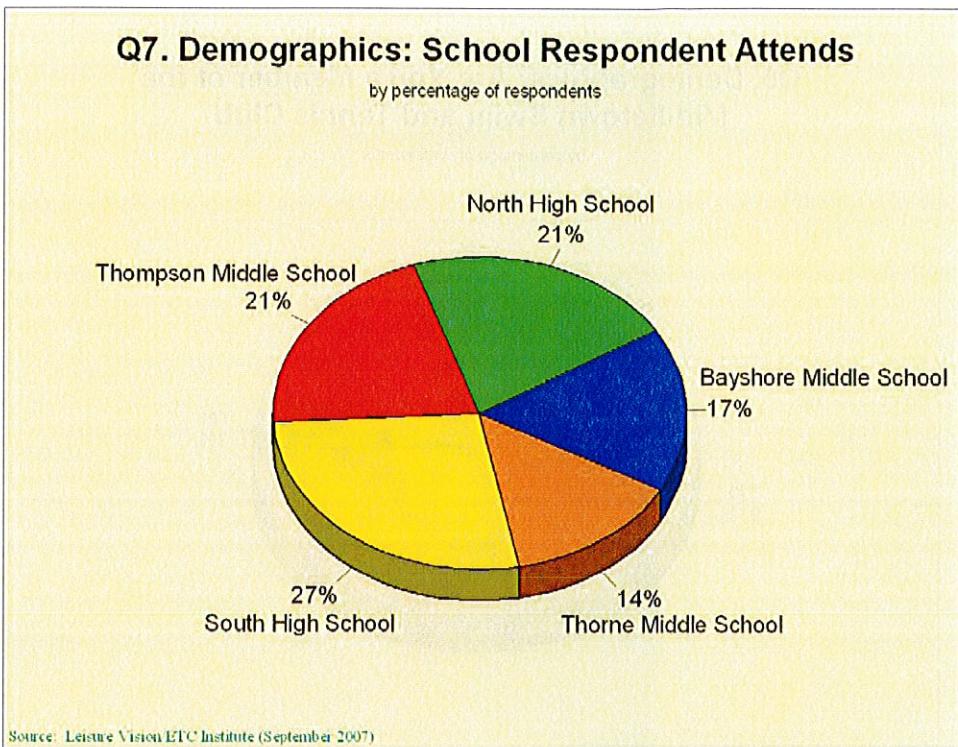
Source: Leisure Vision ETC Institute (September 2007)

**Q6. Demographics: Home Zip Code**

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision ETC Institute (September 2007)



### J. National Recreation and Park Association Survey

The National Recreation and Park Association published a book titled "Local Park and Recreation Facilities and Sites" which was prepared by PKF Consulting in 1995. This included a survey of over 1500 parks and recreation departments throughout the country with 1092 of those being for municipalities. New Jersey is in the Northeast region, which included 302 responses. In addition, the survey was divided by the number of residents and Middletown would fall into the category 50,000 – 99,999. Below are some statistics that provide a benchmark for Middletown. These are for areas with a population between 50,000 and 99,999 in the northeast region of the country.

1. 60% did not have an indoor swimming pool.
2. 70% did not have an indoor ice rink.
3. 50% had one or more outdoor swimming pools.
4. 70% had recreation centers.
5. 20% had indoor multiple game courts.
6. 30% had golf courses.
7. 70% had community parks.
8. 80% provided neighborhood parks.
9. Nationally, 71% of communities of this size had at least one recreation center.

### K. Level of Service Analysis

Table 11 indicates the application of recreation facility goals for a variety of recreation facilities. These goals have been adapted from previous standards by the National Recreation of Park Association, in comparison to other communities, the consultant's experience, and most importantly they are based upon the needs identified in the public input process. These goals have been used in previous master plans for several communities throughout the Nation and in New Jersey. Keep in mind, that the ultimate determination of the facility is not the standard, but the community input process. These goals are useful as a tool to predict the expanding need for facilities as the population grows. The table indicates the current needs in 2007 and projected needs for the year 2020. The table indicates the needs for the following facilities:

1. 10 picnic shelters
2. 6 playgrounds
3. 14 miles of paved trails
4. 7 miles of unpaved trails
5. 1.7 outdoor swimming pools

## Needs Analysis

6. 1 outdoor theater
7. 6 baseball and softball fields
8. 1 football field
9. 5 outdoor basketball courts
10. 4 outdoor volleyball courts
11. 1 indoor pool
12. nearly 4 gyms

The table indicates that there is a surplus of 1.3 community centers, but you must keep in mind that the existing centers at Tonya Keller Bayshore and Hillside are very small facilities.

**Table 11: Recreation Facility Goals**

RECREATION FACILITY GOALS MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY						
FACILITY	POPULATION GOAL (1 PER)	EXISTING SUPPLY Public Facilities <sup>4</sup>	2007 NEEDS		2020 NEEDS	
			2007 REQUIRED <sup>1</sup>	2007 SURPLUS (+) DEFICIT (-)	2020 REQUIRED <sup>1</sup>	2020 SURPLUS (+) DEFICIT (-)
<b>Outdoor Areas</b>						
A. Picnic Shelter	5000	4.0	13.8	-9.8	14.2	-10.2
B. Playground	1500	40.0	46.0	-6.0	47.2	-7.2
C. Paved Trails (miles)-includes gravel	1500	32.4	46.0	-13.6	47.2	-14.8
D. Unpaved Trails (miles)	1500	39.0	46.0	-7.1	47.2	-8.2
E. Swimming Pool	40000	0.0	1.7	-1.7	1.8	-1.8
F. Outdoor Theater	50000	0.0	1.4	-1.4	1.4	-1.4
<b>Outdoor Fields &amp; Court Areas</b>						
A. Baseball/Softball Field	1000	63.0	69.0	-6.0	70.8	-7.8
B. Soccer Fields	2000	41.0	34.5	6.5	35.4	5.6
C. Football Fields	20000	2.0	3.5	-1.5	3.5	-1.5
D. Basketball Courts	1600	38.0	43.1	-5.1	44.2	-6.2
E. Tennis Courts	2000	44.0	34.5	9.5	35.4	8.6
F. Volleyball Courts	8000	4.0	8.6	-4.6	8.8	-4.8
<b>Indoor Areas/Specialized Facilities</b>						
A. Indoor Pool	50000	0.0	1.4	-1.4	1.4	-1.4
B. Community Center (Public Owned)	40000	3.0	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.2
C. Gymnasium (Public Owned)	15000	1.0	4.6	-3.6	4.7	-3.7

1. Based on a year 2007 population of 69,029 for the Township of Middletown. - (Source: ESRI Bis Forecasts)  
 2. Based on a year 2020 population of 70,764 for the Township of Middletown. - (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monmouth County Planning Board)  
 3. Due to rounding, all figures do not add exactly.  
 4. Existing facilities were considered public if they were accessible to the general public.

### L. National Trends in Parks and Recreation

#### 1. The Aging Population

Throughout the Country, the average age of the population is increasing and the numbers of persons in the age groups of 55 and over is growing rapidly. Census data and state population data indicate that the percentage of the population age 65 and older was 10.8% in 1990, 11.2% in 2000 and is expected to increase to 14.37% in 2020. In addition, the health of these individuals is better than ever before and the activities they desire are more active than in the past. The days of the old senior citizens centers, where they play cards and do more sedentary activities, is being replaced by incorporation into larger, more active, community and recreation centers where individuals participate in fitness programs, walking, cardiovascular exercises, aerobics, and many other more active pursuits.

This trend encourages parks and recreation agencies to invest more in activities, programs, and facilities for the older population, which is also a very large voting block that supports local taxes. The impact on outdoor recreation facilities is the demand for more paved walking trails, fishing areas, gardens, cultural arts, nature education, and other activities that are also popular with several age groups.

#### 2. Family Oriented Aquatic Facilities

The older rectangle and L-shaped swimming pools had a very limited appeal. The desire to have 3 ½' depths of water for kick turns, or competition swimming, dictated a deep water depth of the pool resulting in a lack of shallow water for younger children. A child is 10 years old or older before they feel comfortable standing in the larger pool. Younger children were regulated to a "baby" pool, which really only appeals to tots, leaving the 4-10 year olds with no desire to visit the swimming pools.

The newer family aquatic centers are geared toward the entire family with zero depth access, shallow water, interactive water spray activities, along with the traditional competition lanes and diving boards. Newer aquatic facilities are also incorporating lazy rivers, which are popular with people of all ages. The newer facilities also provide large water slides. These elements, along with providing shade structures, larger grass beach areas, and quality concessions, have resulted in a complete turn around in the operating costs for aquatic facilities. Whereas the older pools were a drain on the budget, the newer facilities are able to generate funds for the operations cost and some have even shown a surplus, which has been used to pay off some of the debt service for the capital construction. Where older pools have been renovated to include the newer features, communities have seen as much as a 200% increase in attendance and

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also the community has a reason for charging higher fees than the old style pools.

Another new concept that is sweeping the country is the development of spraygrounds. These have replaced the wading pools at the aquatic facilities and are also developed as freestanding wet playgrounds in other park areas. These have several benefits in that they still recirculate the water, but since there is no standing water, there is no need for lifeguards. Therefore, the operation costs are considerably lower than a swimming facility. Communities which have had several smaller wading pools, have replaced them with spraygrounds to reduce operation costs.

### 3. Indoor Family Activity Centers

The typical recreation center that included gymnasium space, locker rooms and a few other facilities have been replaced by much larger and multi-generational facilities, which are described later in this text.

The newer facilities have a much stronger emphasis on fitness with aerobics rooms, free weights, exercise machines, cardiovascular areas, walking tracks, indoor swimming pools for both family oriented and lap swimming, lounges, concessions, climbing walls, along with the traditional basketball and volleyball gymnasiums. These facilities also include multipurpose rooms, which are used for a wide variety of indoor programming, such as arts and crafts, dance classes, and other community education programs.

### 4. Trail Linkages and Linear Parks

This trend has been going for a long time, but is still very important in nearly every community where surveys have been conducted. Communities that have long trail systems still have a strong desire to continually connect and link the trails to neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, and other community facilities. These communities are very livable communities with a high quality of life.

### 5. Revenue Generating Facilities

Another trend with tightening budgets throughout the Country is for the development of facilities that will generate revenue to offset some of the operating costs. A wide variety of methods have been used, including increased concessions in the parks, development of ballfields and multi-field complexes to generate more concession income, miniature golf courses, carousels, paddleboats and canoes, and a wide variety of other methods.

### 6. Dog Parks

The trend has been sweeping the Country in the last five to ten years, which include the development of fence enclosed areas where dogs can run leash free. These have also proven to be good for improving the social interaction skills of the dogs and have been a very social attraction for the dog owners.

### 7. Extreme Parks

Due partly to the growth of extreme sports shown on television, the pursuit of extreme sports activities, especially by teenagers, has increased by hundreds of percent. Nearly every community that does not have a skatepark has a very large contingent of teens and young adults that are strong advocates for their development. Other types of active pursuits in this park type include BMX tracks, mountain bike trails, climbing walls, as well as the skateparks. These activities appeal to a demographic that has been left out of the traditional parks and recreation programming activities.

The communities that have developed successful skateparks will have hundreds of teens gathered at the park. Another trend, which could be considered is that these parks should not be viewed as skateparks, but are actually teen oriented parks and should be supplemented with other facilities, such as basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, and snack bars.

### 8. Fitness

We are reminded every day through the media that Americans are becoming less fit and there is a strong emphasis at the state to the federal levels to improve the fitness of individuals throughout the United States. Local parks and recreation departments are building upon this message and are probably the best organizations to make an impact in the overall fitness of the community through programs, promotions, and facilities that are available to the residents to improve their health and fitness.

### 9. Tournament Facilities

As mentioned in the revenue generation section, tournaments can be a revenue generator through the fees involved with entering the tournament as well as the concession sales. There is a trend to develop facilities that are of tournament level quality to attract better teams and better tournaments. These facilities provide a high quality facility for the local leagues and activities when not being used for tournaments. A balance does need to take place with the local leagues versus the use for tournaments.

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Facilities must be designed to accommodate tournaments with larger parking lots and arrangement of fields in a cluster such as a wagon wheel configuration in baseball and softball fields. There must be quality restroom facilities, concessions, shade and other amenities throughout the park that make it a desirable place to spend the day or a weekend.

### 10. Synthetic Turf Fields

Many school systems and municipalities are developing synthetic turf fields to meet the ever increasing demand for soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby and other fields. These are higher cost initially, but the ability to play on the fields continuously without the need to water, fertilize, mow, stripe, etc. is a maintenance savings to the community. The fields can be developed to be flat and can accommodate substantial rains without damage to the surface. In addition, the fields are safer than overused grass fields.

### 11. Universal Access

Many larger park systems are developing unique facilities, and especially playgrounds, that are designed to go well beyond the minimum for the Americans with Disabilities Act by creating an environment that is totally accessible to persons of all ages and abilities. In the case of playgrounds, this results in playgrounds with several ground level activities, multiple ramps providing access to the decks, and the use of poured-in-place rubber surface. Several major facilities have developed trails utilizing paved, level surfaces that also have textured edging for the site impaired, fragrant plants and sensory gardens, and interactive displays that allow a hands-on approach to education. While it may not be cost effective to develop this level of universal access at every playground facility, it is the practice of several departments to develop some destination facilities that are developed to this level.

Universal access applies to a lot more than playgrounds; it also applies to aquatic facilities, interpretive facilities, trails, access into buildings and providing access to all programs and facilities offered by the Township. The Township of Middletown has recently completed a Transition Plan to evaluate access issues at all Township owned facilities.

### 12. Corporate Team Building

Corporate Team Building facilities have been developed throughout the country with many being associated with colleges and universities. These facilities typically include ropes courses, a lodge for meetings and retreats, and a variety of other activities in which corporations, non-profit groups and other organizations can participate in a variety of team building exercises. In addition to rope courses they could include hiking trails, various team sports such as volleyball, golf courses, disc golf, and other activities. This would seem to be a natural in Monmouth County

with the business community located in the region, but these facilities may be better suited to larger county parks.

### 13. Cultural Education

As the population of cities and counties becomes diverse, there is a strong desire for more heritage programs. In addition, there has been strong participation in many programs for the visual and performing arts that are becoming more common as program offerings through parks and recreation departments.

Cultural education covers a lot of ground. This includes the arts, such as visual and performing arts, as well as heritage. There are portions of the Middletown Community with very diverse ethnic backgrounds and these programs are geared toward better understanding and strengthening of this heritage along with an understanding of the artistic cultural aspects to build a strong community. The Middletown Arts Center will be able to support many of the cultural arts programs.

### 14. Nature Education

The success of environmental education centers throughout the country indicates that there is a strong desire and need to better educate the public, and especially children, in natural processes, resource management, and similar nature education activities and programs. These work well in conjunction with school systems to supplement their science curriculum. This is also a method of developing a strong base of support for the large expanses of open space and natural habitats that are owned by the County. Many park departments and commissions take an outreach approach with their staff and take the programs to the schools at other locations as well as bringing people into the parks. This is also a method of promoting more use and appreciation of the parks. This is also an opportunity for the county park system to work closely with the municipal parks and recreation departments to provide a level of programming that the municipalities could not perform on their own.

### 15. Nationwide Sports Participation

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts a survey every two years of 10,000 households throughout the United States. These are selected from 300,000 pre-recruited households. These surveys are used to generate a series of tables that identify trends in sports participation. Table 12 - The Nationwide Ten-Year History of Selected Sports Participation Table identifies the major activities which are surveyed through this study. The activities are listed by their rank order in the year 2006. For example, exercise/walking is the most participated activity at 87.5 million participants. This is followed by swimming at 56.5 million, exercising with equipment at 52.4, and camping at 48.6 million. The table shows baseball and soccer, as two of the most

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common activities requested as part of the study, as 19th and 20th on the list with 14.6 and 14.0 million participants respectively. When combining baseball and softball it increases to a total of 27.0 million. The table indicates that for the ten year period, baseball has dropped in the last two years and soccer has increased fairly steadily.

Table 13 indicates that statistics are different for youth participation in the various activities indicating that youth baseball has grown nationally by 3.5% and soccer has grown nationally by 2.7% over the ten year period. This information must be tempered by the 2003 State Index which identifies some key activities which each state participates at higher levels than the average. For the State of New Jersey, residents participate in in-line roller skating at 194% of the national average, soccer at 192% and baseball at 161%. This indicates that nearly double the number of people participate in these activities in New Jersey than in the average of the other 49 states.

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**Table 12: Nationwide Ten-Year History of Selected Sports Participation**

Participated more than once (in millions)  
Seven (7) years of age and older

Sport	2006	2004	2002	2000	1998	1996
Exercise Walking	87.5	84.7	82.2	86.3	77.6	73.3
Swimming	56.5	53.4	53.1	60.7	58.2	60.2
Exercising with Equipment	52.4	52.2	46.8	44.8	46.1	47.8
Camping (vacation/overnite)	48.6	55.3	55.4	49.9	46.5	44.7
Bowling	44.8	43.8	42.4	43.1	40.1	42.9
Fishing	40.6	41.2	44.2	49.3	43.6	45.6
Workout at Club	36.9	31.8	28.9	24.1	26.5	22.5
Bicycle Riding	35.6	40.3	39.7	43.1	43.5	53.3
Aerobic Exercising	33.7	29.5	29	28.6	25.8	24.1
Weight Lifting	32.9	26.2	25.1	24.8	na	na
Billiards/Pool	31.8	34.2	33.1	32.5	32.3	34.5
Hiking	31	28.3	27.2	24.3	27.2	26.5
Boating, Motor/Power	29.3	22.8	26.6	24.2	25.7	28.8
Running/Jogging	28.8	26.7	24.7	22.8	22.5	22.2
Basketball	26.7	27.8	28.9	27.1	29.4	31.8
Golf	24.4	24.5	27.1	26.4	27.5	23.1
Hunting with Firearms	17.8	17.7	19.5	19.1	17.3	18.3
Target Shooting	17.1	19.2	18.9	14.8	12.8	14.7
Baseball	14.6	15.9	15.6	15.6	15.9	14.8
Soccer	14	13.3	13.7	12.9	13.2	13.9
Backpack/Wilderness Camp	13.3	15.3	14.8	15.4	14.6	11.5
Softball	12.4	12.5	13.6	14	15.6	19.9
Football (tackle)	11.9	8.6	7.8	7.5	7.4	9
Volleyball	11.1	11.8	11.5	12.3	14.8	18.5
In-Line Roller Skating	10.5	11.7	18.8	21.8	27	25.5
Tennis	10.4	9.6	11	10	11.2	11.5
Skateboarding	9.7	10.3	9.7	9.1	5.8	4.7
Scooter Riding	9.5	12.9	13.4	11.6	na	na
Mountain Biking (off road)	8.5	8	7.8	7.1	8.6	7.3
Paintball Games	8	9.4	6.9	5.3	na	na
Canoeing	7.1	7.5	7.6	6.2	7.1	8.4
Skiing (alpine)	6.4	6.3	7.4	7.4	7.7	10.5
Water Skiing	6.3	5.3	6.9	5.9	7.2	7.4
Hunting w/Bow & Arrow	5.9	5.8	4.6	4.7	5.6	5.5
Wrestling	3.8	na	na	na	na	na
Muzzleloading	3.7	3.8	3.6	2.9	3.1	3.2
Hockey (ice)	2.6	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.1
Skiing (cross country)	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.6	3.4

SOURCE: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt Prospect IL 60056

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**Table 13: 2006 Youth Participation in Selected Sports with Comparisons to 1997**

Participated more than once (in thousands)

Seven (7) years of age and older

	Year	Total	Change vs 1997	Total 7- 11	Change vs 1997	Total 12- 17	Change vs 1997
Total U.S.	1997	240,325		19,466		23,071	
Total U.S.	2006	263,138	9.50%	19,472	0.00%	25,261	9.50%
Sport							
Baseball							
Baseball	1997	14,146		4,739		3,678	
Baseball	2006	14,646	3.50%	3,691	-22.10%	3,910	6.30%
Basketball							
Basketball	1997	30,660		6,837		7,880	
Basketball	2006	26,735	-12.80%	5,427	-20.60%	7,218	-8.40%
Bicycle Riding							
Bicycle Riding	1997	45,119		11,190		8,482	
Bicycle Riding	2006	35,621	-21.10%	7,872	-29.60%	6,341	-25.30%
Bowling							
Bowling	1997	44,770		5,731		7,118	
Bowling	2006	44,779	0.00%	5,060	-11.70%	7,612	6.90%
Fishing (Fresh water)							
Fishing (Fresh water)	1997	38,956		4,831		5,025	
Fishing (Fresh water)	2006	36,637	-6.00%	4,470	-7.50%	4,067	-19.10%
Football (Tackle)							
Football (Tackle)	1997	8,219		1,841		2,983	
Football (Tackle)	2006	11,888	44.60%	2,199	19.50%	4,149	39.10%
Golf							
Golf	1997	26,216		1,049		2,255	
Golf	2006	24,428	-6.80%	879	-16.10%	2,150	-4.70%
Ice Hockey							
Ice Hockey	1997	1,925		304		406	
Ice Hockey	2006	2,559	32.90%	430	41.30%	335	-17.50%
In-line Skating							
In-line Skating	1997	26,550		9,152		7,163	
In-line Skating	2006	10,497	-60.50%	3,103	-66.10%	3,054	-57.40%
Mountain Biking (off road)							
Mountain Biking (off road)	1997	8,109		997		1,192	
Mountain Biking (off road)	2006	8,543	5.40%	863	-13.50%	1,000	-16.10%

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Participated more than once (in thousands)

Seven (7) years of age and older

	Year	Total	Change vs 1997	Total 7- 11	Change vs 1997	Total 12- 17	Change vs 1997
Skateboarding							
Skateboarding	1997	6,334		2,654		2,401	
Skateboarding	2006	9,731	53.60%	2,910	9.60%	4,437	84.80%
Skiing (alpine)							
Skiing (alpine)	1997	8,866		913		1,321	
Skiing (alpine)	2006	6,394	-27.90%	422	-53.80%	882	-33.20%
Snowboarding							
Snowboarding	1997	2,816		476		1,093	
Snowboarding	2006	5,205	84.80%	859	80.50%	1,686	54.30%
Soccer							
Soccer	1997	13,651		5,624		4,109	
Soccer	2006	14,024	2.70%	4,796	-14.70%	4,095	-0.30%
Softball							
Softball	1997	16,339		2,385		3,431	
Softball	2006	12,442	-23.90%	2,339	-1.90%	2,824	-17.70%
Tennis							
Tennis	1997	11,106		1,022		1,766	
Tennis	2006	10,356	-6.80%	787	-23.00%	2,216	25.50%
Volleyball							
Volleyball	1997	17,836		1,801		4,869	
Volleyball	2006	11,062	-38.00%	1,095	-39.20%	3,971	-18.40%

### M. Benchmark Comparison to Other New Jersey Municipalities

One method of evaluating the parks and recreation programs and services offered in the community is to perform a benchmarking comparison to other communities. This was prepared as part of the master planning process and responses were received from 17 communities and the consultant included detailed information from previous surveys of 21 municipalities in Somerset County and 39 municipalities in Morris County. Detailed comparisons of the survey are included in Appendix "D". These tables include separate tables for the following:

1. Park Land Comparison
2. Budget comparison
3. Staff comparison
4. Athletic Field Comparison
5. Aquatic Center Comparison
6. Recreation Center Comparison

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The following is a summary of those results.

The Park Land Comparisons Table identified the active and passive park acreage that is offered by the town, in their specific department, and the Board of Education or school properties, private park land and the total. The final columns indicate the percentage of park land for active recreation, the citizens per active park acre and the total park acre per 1,000 residents.

The percentage of park land for active recreation identified Middletown with 20% (column K). The average is 34%; median is 18%, so it is within that range. The citizens per active park acre (column L) indicate 55 citizens per acre with the average being 231 and the median being 181. A national average of 1,242 communities throughout the United States indicated a median of 132 citizens per developed park area. Therefore, Middletown is better served than the average community in the United States. The total park acres per 1,000 residents (column M) indicated approximately 90 acres with the average being 40 and the median 34; therefore, Middletown is much better served.

The Budget Comparisons Table identified the expenditure per person in the community, the source of income and revenue, five year capital improvement budgets and details of expenses. The expenditure per person (column C) in the community of Middletown was \$33, which is lower than the average of \$46 and the median of \$47 within these communities. A percentage of budget from the general fund (column D) was 63%, which is lower than the average of 77% and the median of 86%. The salaries (column M) are 85% of the budget which is higher than the average of 62% and the median of 63%. The percent of budget as expenses (column O) is 15%, which is lower than the average of 34% and median of 36%.

The Staff Comparison Table identifies the park acreage again, total staff and a breakdown of full time, part time, seasonal, etc., total acreage per employee, total acreage per 1,000 population and information on the maintenance staff. The table indicates that in Middletown there are 3.55 total acres per employee (column K) which is lower than the average of 7 and the median of 5 in the communities. The total employees per 1,000 population (column X) is 5.13, which is higher than the average of 4.8 and the median of 4.7. The number of full time employees per 1,000 population (column Y) is 0.51 which is higher than the average of 0.38 and the median of 0.36.

The Athletic Field Comparisons Table identified the quantity of fields that the communities have access to and if they line and prepare soccer, softball/baseball, football and lacrosse fields. It also identifies whether there was any contract work or synthetic turf fields. For each of the various sports, there is a common comparison of citizens per field during the prime season. The prime season is used because of varying popularity of items such as fall baseball, etc. In Middletown, there are 5,308 citizens per field during the prime season for soccer (column E), which is much higher, almost double of the average of 2,599 and the median of 2,471. For baseball/softball fields, (column I) Middletown is

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better served than other communities with 1,095 citizens per field in the prime season, compared to the average of 2,369 and the median of 1,943. For football facilities (column M), there are 34,500 citizens per field in the prime season which is higher than the average of 24,468 and the median of 19,122.

Of the 17 communities, 6 indicated that they have contract work on their fields with most of these being mowing, sprinkler maintenance, and fertilization. Eight of the 17 communities operated artificial turf athletic fields.

The Aquatic Center Comparisons was more difficult since many of the communities did not have outdoor aquatic facilities and Middletown's is a private club rather than a facility that is open to the general public. The size of the aquatic facility in Middletown is 7,000 square feet which is between the average of 8,064 and the median of 6,775 at other communities which had aquatic facilities.

The Recreation Center Comparisons also varied considerably because of the varying types of facilities. The table identifies the attendance, income, expenses, and the types of facilities included within the facility. Middletown has three recreation centers, but two of those do not have anything larger than a multi-purpose room and not full size gymnasiums. Most of the communities had one recreation center and the only large center within the comparison was West Deptford Township at 112,000 square feet. Otherwise, most of the facilities were in the 16,000 square foot range. The average of the three in Middletown would be about that same range of 16,000.

