

Conclusions

The response rate was above expectations as compared to typical Survey Monkey results, however, the respondents' representation of the community's demographics falls short in several areas. Staff suggests we do smaller populations surveys and focus groups with a purpose of reaching out to demographic groups that were underrepresented in this survey.

The significant increase in demand for 'events' on both an individual and family level warrants further exploration. Identifying types of events being sought, threshold for fee-based vs free events, and age groups to target could be topics in a future survey or focus group. Further, the impact of events to the department's revenue recovery, staff workload, and value for the citizenry should be explored and articulated. Generally, events have minimal cost recovery rate, high demand on staff resources (within and outside the P&R department), and lack the long-term impact of a skill class or program. While events generally reach a larger portion of the community at one time, it is difficult to design an event that attracts the broad spectrum of the population. In their favor, they can be customized to many types of interests, demand minimal time, commitment, and pre-planning effort by attendees, and generally have high marketing exposure.

Discussions will need to be had with programmers about how to guide our offerings to align with the community's needs and also with other staff and the Town Council about increasing event offerings and the impact upon cost recovery if we take this approach.

Interest in recreation amenities not currently present in town but that the community might seek was not covered in this survey. A future questionnaire might be of value to explore more urban style amenities as the downtown and HTOC redevelops, and those that would be attractive to either millennials or an aging population.

Comments concerning Herndon Community Center not having facilities and programs that are interesting to the respondent are another area that warrants additional research. Staff has suggested a focus group would be an appropriate way to get more specific information that would illuminate why these responses were made and if there are solutions available to the Department that would make a difference for respondents with this opinion.

Follow up surveys could include a clipboard (iPad) survey to travel along with National Night Out teams, reaching out to alternative community groups to get diverse opinions and doing a specific events focused survey to dig into this area of interest further.

The overall support to the department, its facilities and programs remained highly favorable. The conversion of more respondents from Agree to Strongly Agree when asked whether high quality parks and recreational areas are meaningful to the overall quality of life in Herndon demonstrates the value of the investment the town makes into parks and recreation facilities, programs and staff, as well as the importance of the town's relationships with the Fairfax County Park Authority, Neighborhood and Community Services, and NOVA Parks, which provide complementary facilities for the town's residents.