



# Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study

Final Report  
January 10, 2016



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## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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### **Section I - Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the operations and management of the Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department, identify factors, issues, and concerns within the Department that need to be addressed, changed, altered or improved to increase the operational efficiency, and performance of the organization.

This report is based on information gathered from two site visits to Rock Island (June 2<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and July 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015), interviews with parks and recreation and City staff, the Parks and Recreation Board, a series of focus group meetings, and the results of an on-line survey.

The intent of the site visits was to gain a basic understanding of the Rock Island Parks and Recreation Department, how it is managed, how facilities/parks are operated and maintained, and how recreation programs and services are delivered.

In addition to the staff interviews, there was also a review of operational, program and administrative information, records, and material supplied by the City and Department staff.

#### **Specific Assessment Tasks Included:**

##### **Market Analysis**

- Determine who the alternative providers are
- Review market for existing Parks and Recreation services
- Review of national, regional and local trends
- Recommendation for appropriate market positions
- Comparison of operational factors with other providers
- Comparisons with similar communities

##### **Community Needs**

- Staff Meetings
- City Council and Parks and Recreation Board Meetings
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Focus Groups
- On-Line Survey

##### **Financial Assessment**

- Financial policies review
- Budget assessment
- Revenue generation plan review
- Individual profit centers assessment



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### Maintenance and Asset Management

- Maintenance plan review
- Asset management plan review
- Organizational partnership assessment
- Capital improvement plan review

### Organizational Structure and Performance

- Management structure review
- Review and prioritization of operations
- Review and prioritization of services
- Performance measures and outcomes assessment

### Recommendations and Action Plan

- Key recommendations for each area of study
- Performance indicators are determined
- Action plan priorities

What follows is a summary of the operations and organization of the Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department that has been outlined above with an assessment of what changes or improvements should be made to the Department while still supporting the mission and goals of the City. Any recommendations being made are with the knowledge that it may be difficult to implement all of the findings in this assessment with the current operational funding levels of the Department, the staffing levels of parks and recreation, and the necessary time/resource requirements for completion.



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### **Section II – General Assessment Summary**

The following is a basic summary of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the operation of the Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department as well as the challenges that are currently in place. A more detailed analysis of these points can be found in the body of this study.

#### ***Strengths:***

- The Department has a long history of providing parks and recreation facilities and services to the community.
- The Department serves a diverse population including non-residents.
- There are a significant number of parks, athletic fields, recreation facilities, golf courses, and other amenities in the system's inventory. Parks and recreation facilities are generally well run and maintained.
- The Department offers a broad range of programs and services to the community. These services are generally well organized and well run.
- There is a state of the art outdoor aquatic center (Whitewater Junction) in the City that draws users from around the Quad Cities area.
- The Department maintains and operates two first class golf courses, and the Highland Springs course draws users from the greater Quad Cities area.

#### ***Weaknesses:***

- The Department continues to operate as a quasi-independent entity and not as a true City department.
- With a decreasing population base in the City and a desire not to increase taxes, funding for parks and recreation has remained static in the past 5 plus years. This has impacted staffing and operations of the Department.
- To meet budget expectations, the Department has been utilizing its unrestricted fund balance for operations. This is not supportable long term.
- Due in part to a tight budget and the resulting staff limitations, there is a lack of time and resources being allocated to long range planning. Consequently, the Department operates



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more on a day to day basis and is in more of a reactionary position rather than being proactive.

- Even with limited resources, the Department continues to provide most services in-house and also continues to add new facility and program services.
- The Department would benefit greatly from a general reorganization to better address the challenges of providing parks and recreation services to the community in an efficient and effective manner.
- Staff needs to be challenged to be more efficient and effective in their work to improve the overall performance of the Department. This effort would benefit by having a strong Department vision that lines up with the vision of City Council and is backed up by specific goals for each area of operation. This will require strong leadership within the Department.

### ***Challenges:***

- With the expectation for continued flat lining of tax support for operations but with continuing increases in operating costs, operating the Department at the current level into the future will prove to be difficult.
- In an effort to be more self-sufficient, there has been an ever increasing emphasis on revenue generation and cost recovery. This has forced aggressive pricing for most services, especially when considering the demographics of the market area.
- The Department's enterprise operations (golf, Whitewater Junction, and RIFAC) are burdened with having to carry a significant depreciation allowance as well as any capital debt service payments on an annual basis. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department is assessed an internal service charge as part of the City's cost allocation plan. This pays for IT, human resources, legal, general administration, and finance services.
- For a City of Rock Island department, the Park and Recreation Board carries a great deal of budget and other operational responsibility. This makes it difficult for the Department to be fully integrated into the City's overall operation.
- Since the Parks and Recreation Department tends to operate with a slightly different structure than other City departments, there are strained relationships with these other departments. Many times Parks and Recreation is at odds with other City departments over a variety of management and administrative issues. This situation will need to



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improve dramatically if Parks and Recreation is going to meet its full potential. This will require that both sides work together to improve overall relationships.

- Many of the Department's parks and recreation facilities are aging and will need significant capital improvements in the coming years.
- The Department would benefit from having an update to the parks and recreation master plan that can be used to guide the future direction of parks and recreation services in the community.
- Besides parks and recreation, the YWCA, YMCA and others provide recreation services and facilities to the residents of the community. Coordinating efforts in the future will be important.
- Ultimately the City of Rock Island, its elected officials and the community as a whole, will need to determine if they want to continue to provide parks and recreation services at the current level. In order to do so, additional operational and capital replacement funding will be necessary. If not, then some existing parks and recreation assets as well as services will need to be curtailed or reduced in magnitude.
- Operational improvements are possible for the Parks and Recreation Department that will reduce costs and slightly improve revenues, but these measures by themselves will not be enough to balance the budget now or in the future.



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### **Section III – Market Analysis**

One of the key pieces of information that is important in the ability of the Rock Island Parks and Recreation Department to meet citizen needs in the future, is to understand the market for parks and recreation services.

**Demographics:** On the following pages is a summary of the demographic characteristics of the City of Rock Island as well as the Quad Cities area.



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**Table A – Rock Island and Quad Cities Demographic Characteristics:**

	<b>City of Rock Island</b>	<b>Quad Cities<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Population:</b>		
2010 Census	39,018 <sup>2</sup>	276,882 <sup>3</sup>
2015 Estimate	38,533	282,022
2020 Estimate	38,308	288,087
<b>Households:</b>		
2010 Census	15,930	113,868
2015 Estimate	15,776	116,885
2020 Estimate	15,690	119,769
<b>Families:</b>		
2010 Census	9,211	70,859
2015 Estimate	9,002	71,969
2020 Estimate	8,882	73,285
<b>Ave. Household Size:</b>		
2010 Census	2.30	2.37
2015 Estimate	2.29	2.35
2020 Estimate	2.29	2.34
<b>Ethnicity (2015 Est):</b>		
Hispanic	10.3%	10.3%
White	69.9%	80.7%
Black	18.9%	9.2%
American Ind.	0.3%	0.3%
Asian	2.6%	2.5%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Other	4.0%	3.5%
Multiple	4.3%	3.7%
<b>Median Age:</b>		
2010 Census	37.0	37.9
2015 Estimate	37.8	38.6
2020 Estimate	38.5	39.2
<b>Median Income:</b>		
2015 Estimate	\$41,649	\$48,921
2020 Estimate	\$46,455	\$55,937

<sup>1</sup> The boundaries that were used to for these boundaries were provided by the City of Rock Island.

<sup>2</sup> From the 2000-2010 Census the City of Rock Island saw a 1.7% decrease in total population.

<sup>3</sup> From the 2000-2010 Census the Quad Cities saw a 2.0% increase in total population.

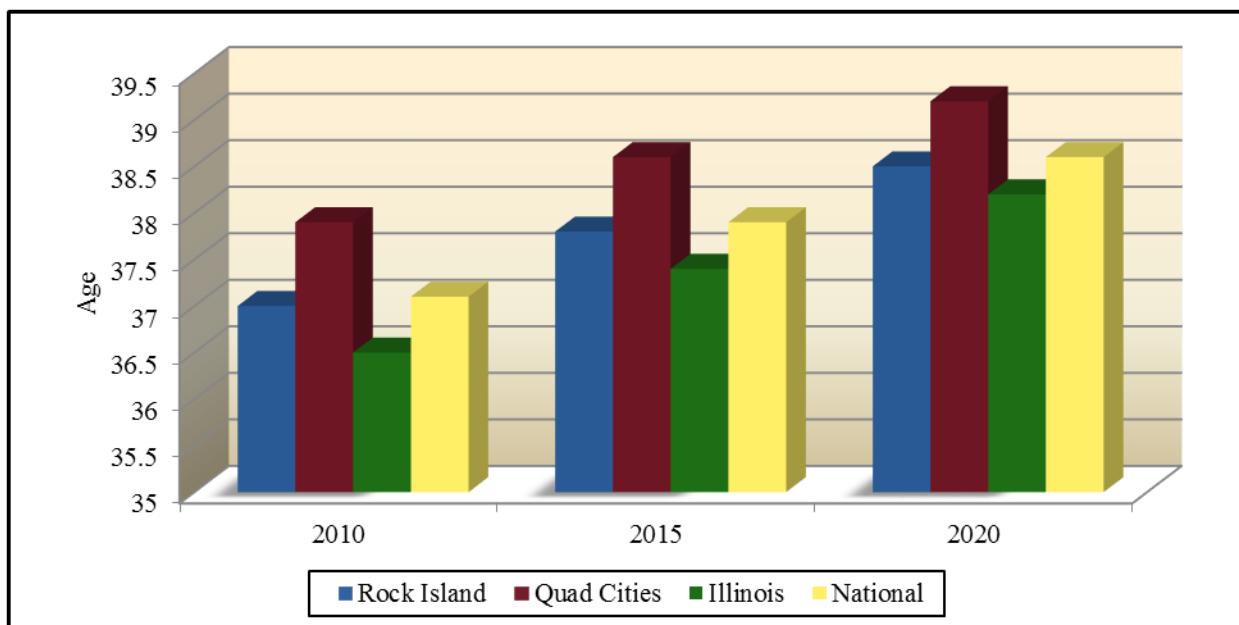
## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Age and Income:** The median age and household income levels are compared with the national number as both of these factors are primary determiners of participation in recreation activities. The lower the median age, the higher the participation rates are for most activities. The level of participation also increases as the median income level goes up.

**Table B – Median Age:**

	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>2015 Projection</b>	<b>2020 Projection</b>
City of Rock Island	37.0	37.8	38.5
Quad Cities	37.9	38.6	39.2
State of Illinois	36.5	37.4	38.2
Nationally	37.1	37.9	38.6

**Chart A – Median Age:**



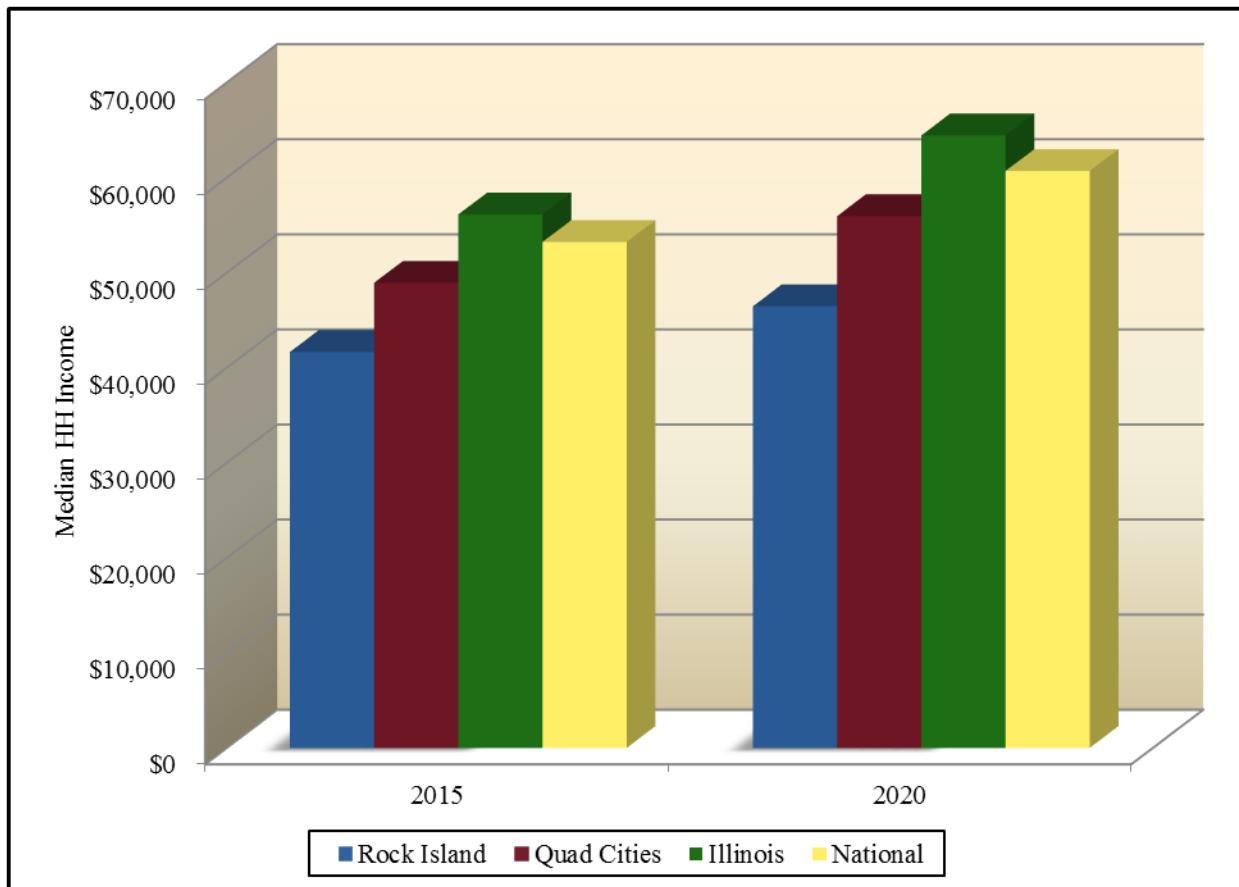
The median age in the City of Rock Island and the State of Illinois is slightly less than or equal to the National number while the median age in the Quad Cities is greater than all of the areas. This median age points to the presence of youth, families w/ and w/out children and seniors.

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**Table C – Median Household Income:**

	<b>2015 Projection</b>	<b>2020 Projection</b>
City of Rock Island	\$41,649	\$46,455
Quad Cities	\$48,921	\$55,937
State of Illinois	\$56,107	\$64,426
Nationally	\$53,217	\$60,683

**Chart B – Median Household Income:**





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Based upon 2015 projections for median household income the following narrative can be provided the service areas:

In the City of Rock Island the percentage of households with median income over \$50,000 per year is 42.3% compared to 53.2% on a national level. Furthermore, the percentage of the households in the service area with median income less than \$25,000 per year is 29.5% compared to a level of 23.1% nationally.

In the Quad Cities the percentage of households with median income over \$50,000 per year is 49.2% compared to 53.2% on a national level. Furthermore, the percentage of the households in the service area with median income less than \$25,000 per year is 24.6% compared to a level of 23.1% nationally.

The median household income in the State of Illinois is greater than the National number, while the median income in the City of Rock Island and the Quad Cities is significantly less than the National number.



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**Household Budget Expenditures:** In addition to taking a look at Median Age and Median Income, it is important to examine Household Budget Expenditures. In particular looking at housing information; shelter, utilities, fuel and public services along with entertainment & recreation can provide a snap shot into the cost of living and spending patterns in the service areas. The table below looks at that information and compares the service areas.

**Table D – Household Budget Expenditures<sup>4</sup>:**

<b>City of Rock Island</b>	<b>SPI</b>	<b>Average Amount Spent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Housing	75	\$16,076.25	30.0%
<i>Shelter</i>	74	\$12,143.37	22.7%
<i>Utilities, Fuel, Public Service</i>	78	\$3,932.88	7.3%
Entertainment & Recreation	74	\$2,452.45	4.6%

<b>Quad Cities</b>	<b>SPI</b>	<b>Average Amount Spent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Housing	87	\$18,652.79	29.8%
<i>Shelter</i>	86	\$14,126.89	22.6%
<i>Utilities, Fuel, Public Service</i>	89	\$4,525.89	7.2%
Entertainment & Recreation	87	\$2,882.18	4.6%

<b>State of Illinois</b>	<b>SPI</b>	<b>Average Amount Spent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Housing	106	\$22,889.73	30.2%
<i>Shelter</i>	107	\$17,585.51	23.2%
<i>Utilities, Fuel, Public Service</i>	105	\$5,304.22	7.0%
Entertainment & Recreation	105	\$3,479.15	4.6%

**SPI:** Spending Potential Index as compared to the National number of 100.

**Average Amount Spent:** The average amount spent per household.

**Percent:** Percent of the total 100% of household expenditures.

**Note:** Shelter along with Utilities, Fuel, Public Service are a portion of the Housing percentage.

<sup>4</sup> Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2004 and 2005 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. ESRI forecasts for 2012 and 2018.

**Chart C – Household Budget Expenditures Spending Potential Index:**

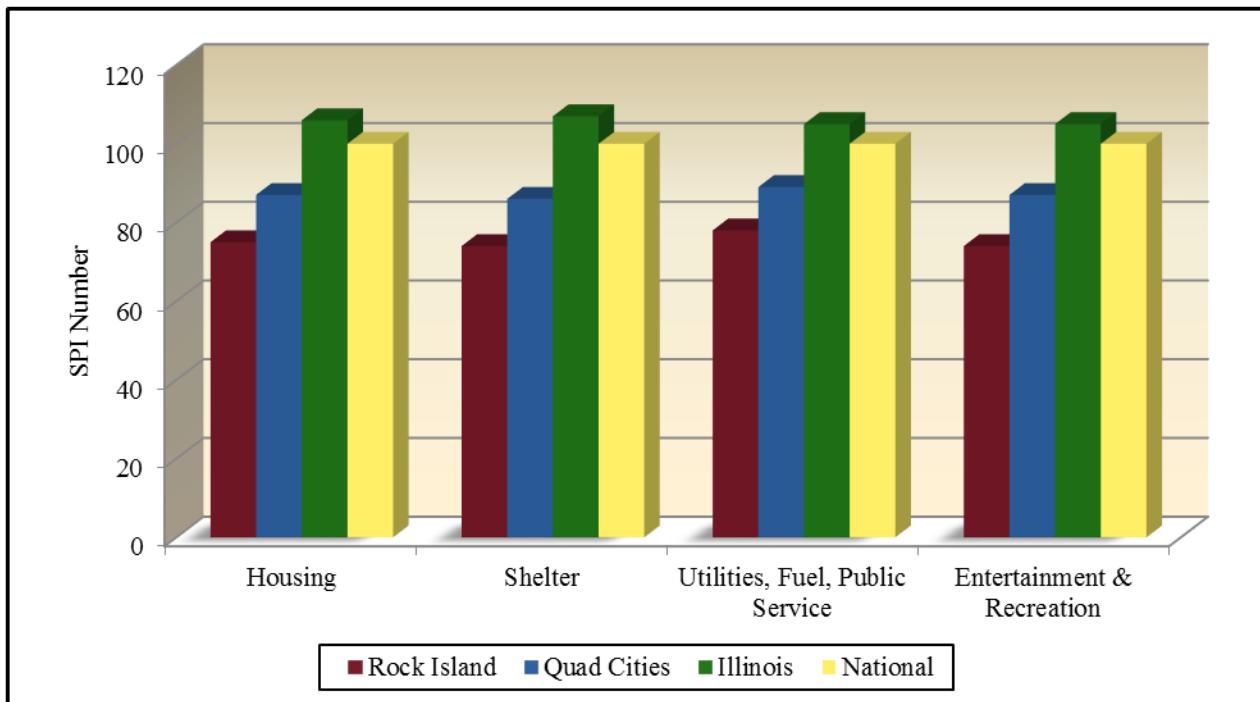


Chart C, illustrates the Household Budget Expenditures Spending Potential Index in the service areas. The SPI for the household budget expenditures follows the same pattern as that of the median age.



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**Recreation Expenditures Spending Potential Index:** Finally, through the demographic provider that B\*K utilizes for the market analysis portion of the report, we are able to examine the overall propensity for households to spend dollars on recreation activities. The following comparisons are possible.

**Table E – Recreation Expenditures Spending Potential Index by Household<sup>5</sup>:**

<b>City of Rock Island</b>	<b>SPI</b>	<b>Average Spent</b>
Fees for Participant Sports	72	\$86.83
Fees for Recreational Lessons	69	\$84.70
Social, Recreation, Club Membership	73	\$125.56
Exercise Equipment/Game Tables	62	\$47.43
Other Sports Equipment	70	\$2.15

<b>Quad Cities</b>	<b>SPI</b>	<b>Average Spent</b>
Fees for Participant Sports	86	\$103.42
Fees for Recreational Lessons	84	\$103.38
Social, Recreation, Club Membership	87	\$149.84
Exercise Equipment/Game Tables	77	\$59.39
Other Sports Equipment	87	\$6.95

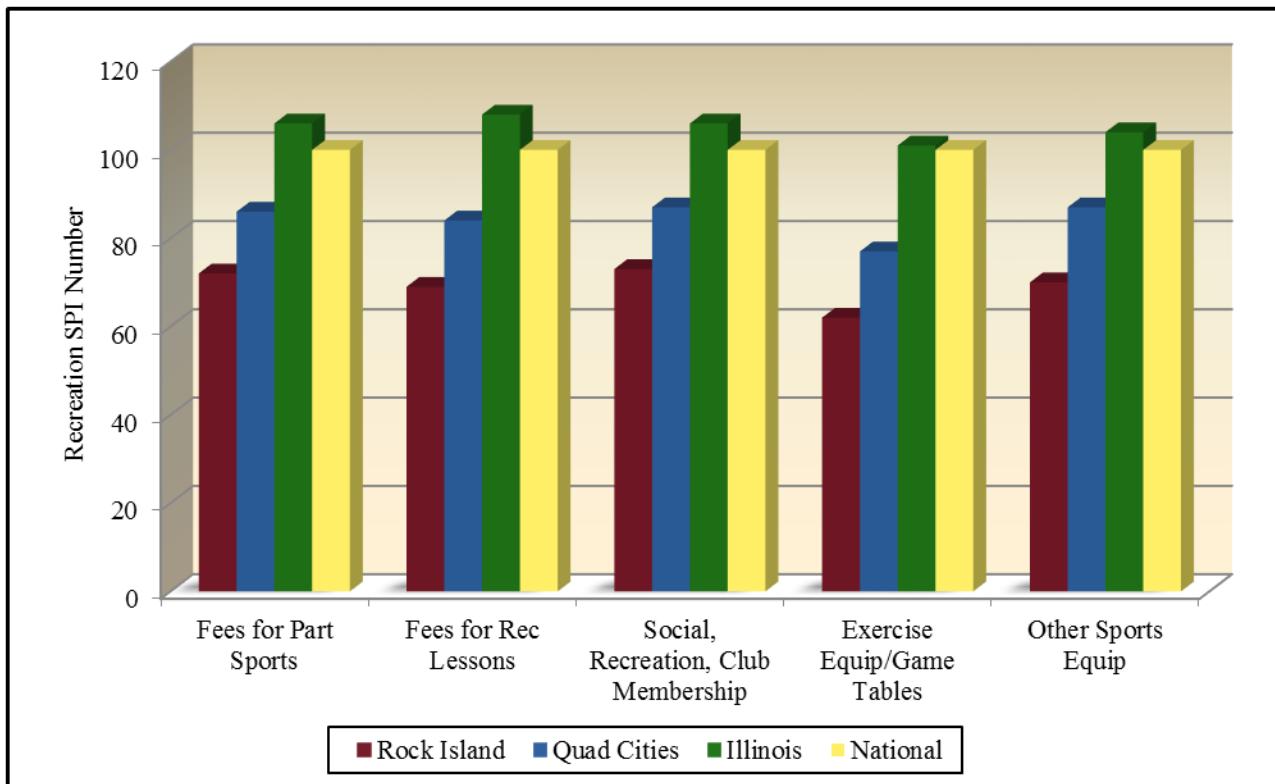
<b>State of Illinois</b>	<b>SPI</b>	<b>Average Spent</b>
Fees for Participant Sports	106	\$127.34
Fees for Recreational Lessons	108	\$132.83
Social, Recreation, Club Membership	106	\$182.14
Exercise Equipment/Game Tables	101	\$77.45
Other Sports Equipment	104	\$8.30

**Average Amount Spent:** The average amount spent for the service or item in a year.

**SPI:** Spending potential index as compared to the national number of 100.

<sup>5</sup> Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2006 and 2007 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Chart D – Recreation Spending Potential Index:**



The Spending Potential Index for Recreation is very similar to the Household Budgetary Spending. The SPI is similar to that of the SPI for Household Budget Expenditures.

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**Population Distribution by Age:** Utilizing census information for the City of Rock Island, the following comparisons are possible.

**Table F – 2015 Rock Island Age Distribution**

(ESRI estimates)

Ages	Population	% of Total	Nat. Population	Difference
-5	2,425	6.3%	6.3%	+0.0%
5-17	5,883	15.1%	16.6%	-1.5%
18-24	4,878	12.6%	10.1%	-2.5%
25-44	9,164	23.8%	26.1%	-2.3%
45-54	4,534	11.8%	13.4%	-1.6%
55-64	5,129	13.3%	12.8%	+0.5%
65-74	3,443	8.9%	8.6%	+0.3%
75+	3,075	8.0%	6.2%	+1.8%

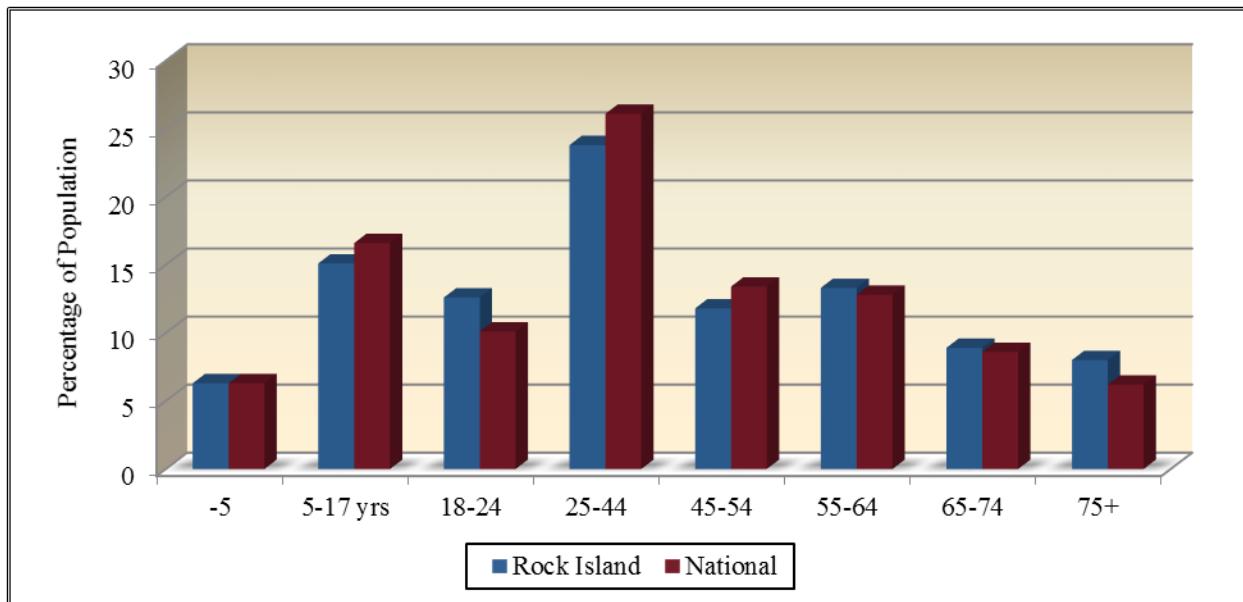
**Population:** 2015 census estimates in the different age groups in Rock Island.

**% of Total:** Percentage of Rock Island/population in the age group.

**National Population:** Percentage of the national population in the age group.

**Difference:** Percentage difference between the Rock Island population and the national population.

**Chart E – 2015 Rock Island Age Group Distribution**





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The demographic makeup of Rock Island, when compared to the characteristics of the national population, indicates that there are some differences with an equal or larger population in the -5, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 and 75+ age groups and a smaller population in the 5-17, 18-24 and 25-44 age groups. The largest positive variance is in the 75+ age group with +1.8%, while the greatest negative variance is in the 18-24 age group with -2.5%.

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**Population Distribution Comparison by Age:** Utilizing census information from Rock Island, the following comparisons are possible.

**Table G – 2015 Rock Island Population Estimates**

(U.S. Census Information and ESRI)

Ages	2010 Census	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	Percent Change	Percent Change Nat'l
-5	2,613	2,425	2,398	-8.2%	+0.3%
5-17	6,112	5,883	5,795	-5.2%	-0.7%
18-24	4,963	4,878	4,738	-4.5%	+1.7%
25-44	9,252	9,164	9,112	-1.5%	+7.1%
45-54	5,263	4,534	4,108	-21.9%	-9.7%
55-64	4,782	5,129	4,825	+0.9%	+17.4%
65-74	2,827	3,443	4,148	+46.7%	+50.1%
75+	3,206	3,075	3,187	-0.6%	+22.0%

**Chart F – Rock Island Population Growth**

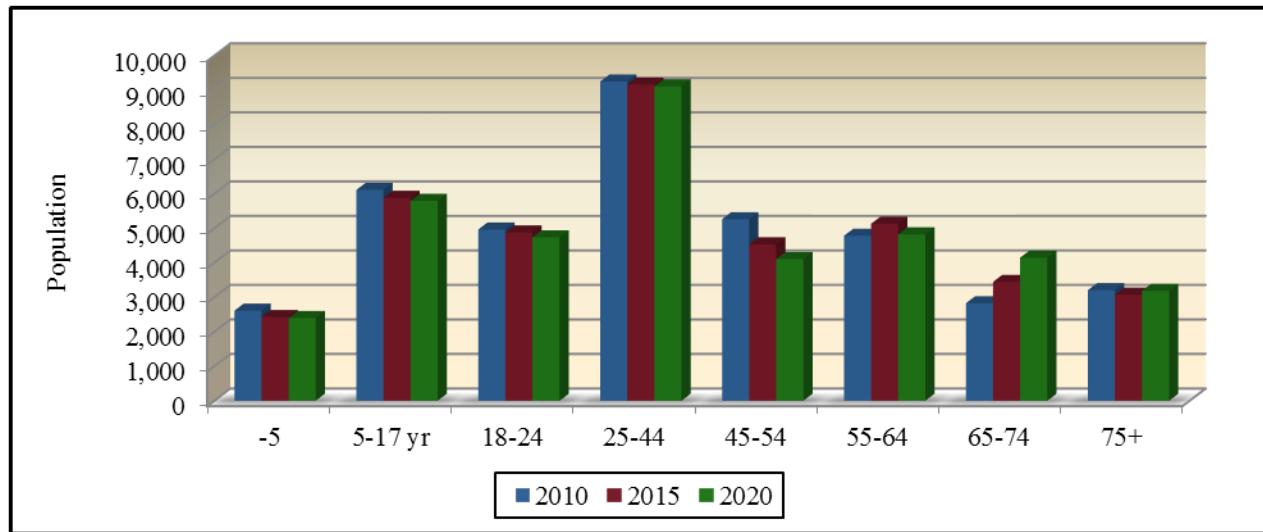


Table-G, illustrates the growth or decline in age group numbers from the 2010 census until the year 2020. It is projected that all of the age categories will see a decrease except for the age categories of 55-64 and 65-74. It must be remembered that the population of the United States as a whole is aging and it is not unusual to find negative growth numbers in the younger age groups and significant net gains in the 45 plus age groupings in communities which are relatively stable in their population numbers.



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**Ethnicity and Race:** Below is listed the distribution of the population by ethnicity and race for Rock Island's 2015 population projections. These numbers were developed from 2010 Census Data.

**Table H – Rock Island Ethnic Population and Median Age 2015**

(Source – U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI)

Ethnicity	Total Population	Median Age	% of Population	% of IL Population
Hispanic	3,985	24.0	10.3%	17.0%

**Table I – Rock Island Population by Race and Median Age 2015**

(Source – U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI)

Race	Total Population	Median Age	% of Population	% of IL Population
White	26,931	42.8	69.9%	70.4%
African Amer.	7,285	32.5	18.9%	14.3%
American Indian	106	31.7	0.3%	0.3%
Asian	1,002	28.0	2.6%	5.2%
Pacific Islander	15	42.5	0.04%	0.04%
Other	1,538	26.6	4.0%	7.2%
Multiple	1,655	14.9	4.3%	2.5%

2015 City of Rock Island Total Population: 38,533 Residents



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### **Demographic Summary**

- The City of Rock Island will continue to decrease in population over the next five years, while the Quad Cities will be increasing in population.
- Rock Island has a smaller household size indicating fewer households with children.
- The future age distribution of the population in Rock Island will result in fewer children and young adults while the senior population will increase dramatically.
- Rock Island has a large White population, with a significant African American population.
- The median age in Rock Island is right at the national number.
- Median Household Income levels for Rock Island are significantly lower than the Quad Cities, Illinois and national numbers.
- Household expenditures for entertainment and recreation are 25% less than the national numbers.



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### **Section IV – Community Needs Summary**

An integral aspect of the Operational Audit and Business Plan Study, was gathering information from the general community as well as specific user groups of Rock Island parks and recreation facilities and programs. To accomplish this, several input mechanisms were utilized. This included:

- Parks and Recreation Board Meeting
- Focus Groups
- On-Line Survey

#### **Parks and Recreation Board Meeting**

A meeting was held with the Rock Island Parks and Recreation Board on June 2, 2015. Key findings from this meeting included:

- City finances and funding of parks and recreation is a major concern. There has been an increase in the minimum wage but no increase in tax revenues. There have been 5 years of budget cuts and they have had to use their enterprise fund balance to cover the shortfalls.
- The Maximus study indicated that it was cheaper to have Public Works take on fleet maintenance and other duties. These used to be done in Parks & Recreation.
- With a reduction in population there may be too many parks and facilities to maintain but they do not want to sell off any park land due to budget constraints.
- The future direction of the department needs to be based on what the community will support.
- The department has a high level of cost recovery.
- Some parks need to be repurposed and improvements need to be made to other facilities.
- Staff morale is an issue.
- Depreciation needs to be taken out of the budget.
- They are very happy with staff.



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### **Focus Groups**

On July 21 and 22, 2015 a series of focus groups were held with a number of community organizations and key user groups of City parks and recreation facilities. What follows is a brief summary of the major findings:

#### *Sports Groups*

- City reserves fields and maintains them, most groups do not pay for use.
- Not all fields are well used and not all fields and facilities are well maintained.
- There is a need for more fields.
- Communications between Parks & Recreation and the sports groups is not always as strong as it should be.
- Parks & Recreation coaches want more training.
- There needs to be more sports related camps and clinics.

#### *Rock Island-Milan School District*

- The City needs to concentrate on long range planning.
- School District facilities are open for public use but they must pay for use of RIFAC.
- The IGA between the School District and the City needs to be updated.
- There appears to be too much emphasis on fee based programs. The scholarship program needs to be expanded to cover more programs.
- Parks & Recreation needs to focus more on collaboration with other community organizations.
- Not all parks and facilities are well maintained.

#### *Townships*

- Parks are an asset for the community and need to be well maintained.



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- Parks & Recreation does not have great working relationships with all community organizations.
- There are concerns over the strong emphasis on fee based programs.
- TRY Play provides some scholarship money for recreation programs.
- There is a need for broader based recreation programs especially for different ethnic groups.

### *YWCA and Botanical Garden*

- Both entities have joint programming efforts with Parks & Recreation.
- The YWCA hopes to increase its partnership with the City.
- Parks & Recreation needs to focus more services on at risk kids and wellness programs.
- There are concerns over what people are willing to pay for facilities and programs.
- People do not know what facilities and programs that Parks & Recreation has to offer.

### *Backwater Gamblers*

- The water ski show team utilizes a portion of Ben Williamson Park for their shows. They maintain their portion of the park and are willing to do more for the entire park.
- There is a need for improved maintenance of the park.
- A formal agreement is needed between Backwater Gamblers and the City.

### *Genesius Guild*

- This presenter of Greek tragedy, Greek Comedy, and Shakespeare; utilizes Lincoln Park for their performances.
- The City provides the space and pays the utilities, the Guild pays for everything else.
- There is a need for improved maintenance of the park.



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- An updated formal agreement is needed between Genesius Guild and the City.

### *RIFAC Users*

- The center has great customer service and the staff is excellent. The equipment is just OK.
- Prices are too low for many classes and programs. However, guest passes are too expensive.
- They like the flexibility in how you can participate in fitness classes.
- There needs to be improvement in the maintenance and cleaning of the center.
- The Silver Sneakers program needs to be expanded.
- RIFAC should look to partner with a physical therapy clinic for services.

### **On-Line Survey**

During the months of August and September, 2015, an on-line survey was administered to the community to learn their opinion regarding parks and recreation services and facilities. There were a total of 539 surveys that were completed.

The following is a summary of key survey findings.

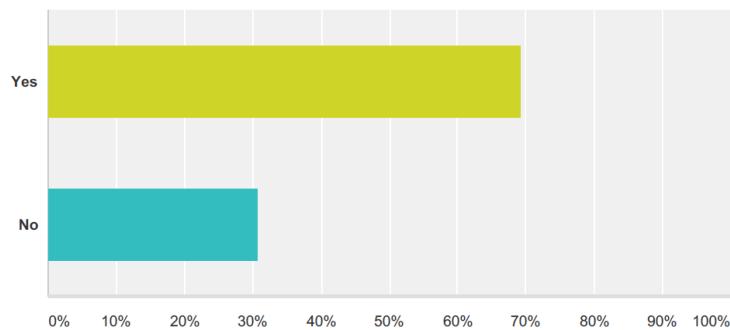


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### **Q2 Are you a resident of the City of Rock Island?**

Answered: 614 Skipped: 19



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	69.38%	426
No	30.62%	188
Total		614

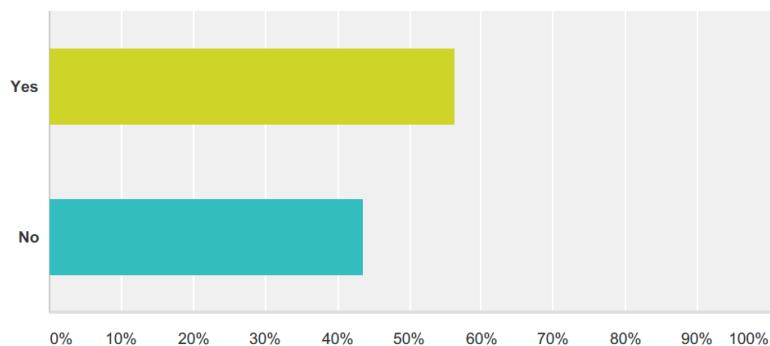


## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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### **Q4 Do you use City of Rock Island INDOOR Parks & Recreation facilities such as Hauberg Civic Center or Rock Island Fitness and Recreation Center (RIFAC)?**

Answered: 611 Skipped: 22



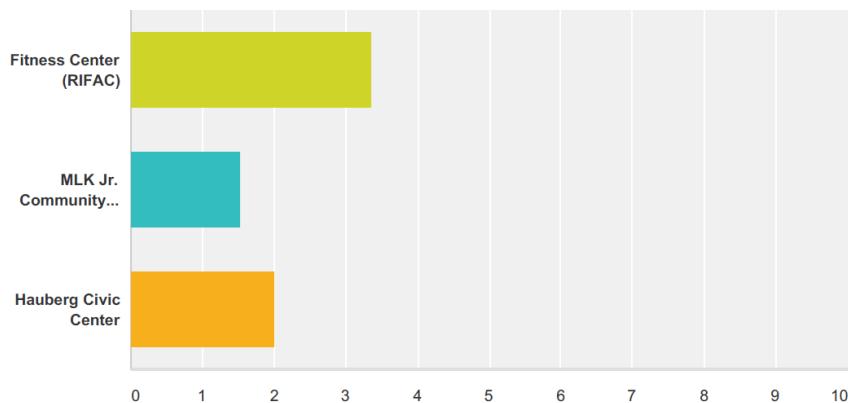
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	56.46% 345
No	43.54% 266
Total	611



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

### **Q5 Which INDOOR facilities do you, or individuals at your residence use and how often?**

Answered: 339 Skipped: 294



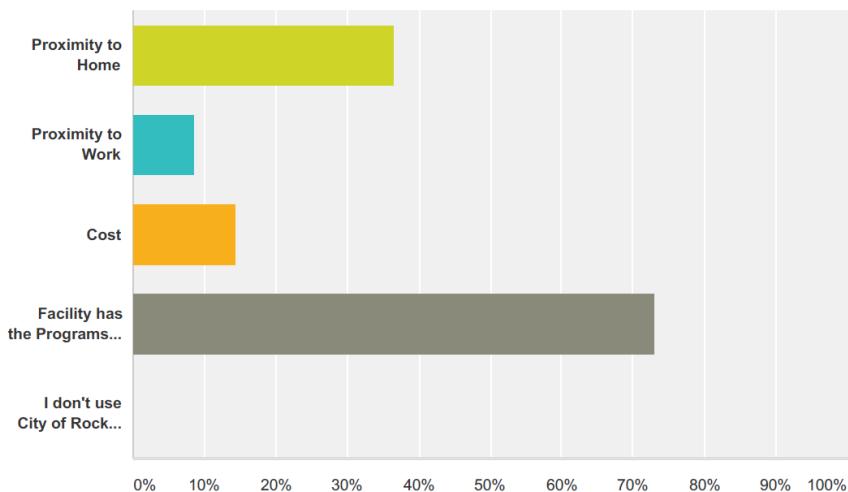
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Once	Never	Total	Weighted Average
Fitness Center (RIFAC)	17.46% 55	32.70% 103	24.44% 77	20.00% 63	5.40% 17	315	3.37
MLK Jr. Community Center	2.48% 6	1.65% 4	9.09% 22	18.60% 45	68.18% 165	242	1.52
Hauberg Civic Center	0.75% 2	3.00% 8	19.48% 52	50.19% 134	26.59% 71	267	2.01



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

### **Q6 What is the primary reason that you use City of Rock Island INDOOR facilities?**

Answered: 339 Skipped: 294



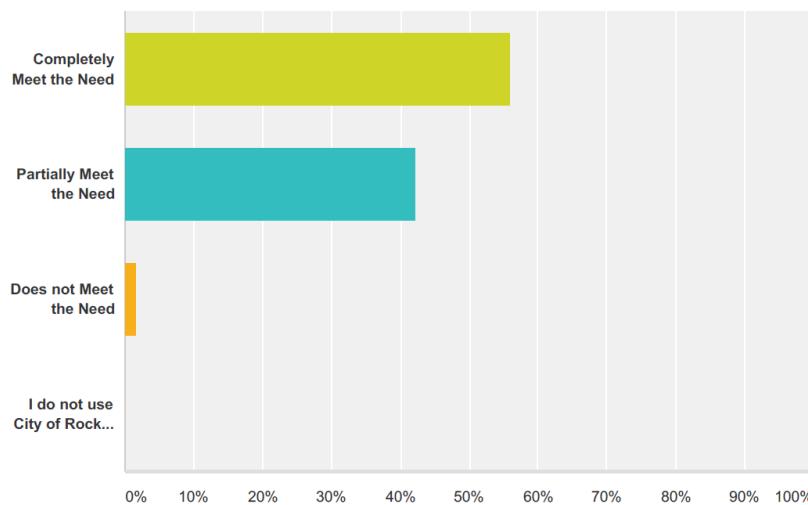
Answer Choices	Responses	
Proximity to Home	36.58%	124
Proximity to Work	8.55%	29
Cost	14.45%	49
Facility has the Programs and Amenities I desire	73.16%	248
I don't use City of Rock Island Indoor facilities	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 339		



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

### **Q7 How well do the City of Rock Island INDOOR facilities meet your needs and those of the other individuals that live at your residence?**

Answered: 339 Skipped: 294



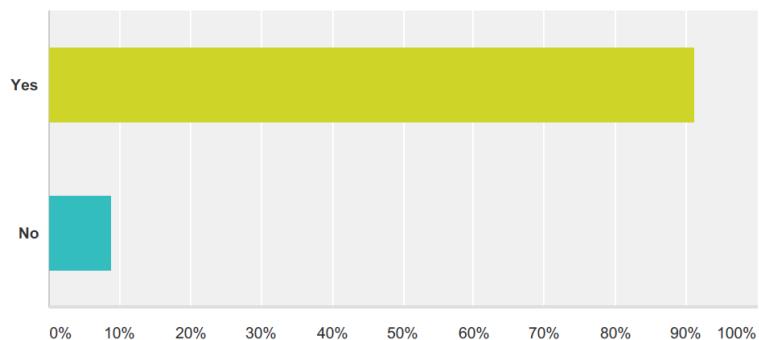
Answer Choices	Responses
Completely Meet the Need	56.05%
Partially Meet the Need	42.18%
Does not Meet the Need	1.77%
I do not use City of Rock Island Indoor Facilities	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Q8 Do you use City of Rock Island  
OUTDOOR Parks & Recreation facilities  
such as parks, open spaces, sports fields,  
trails and the like?**

Answered: 602 Skipped: 31



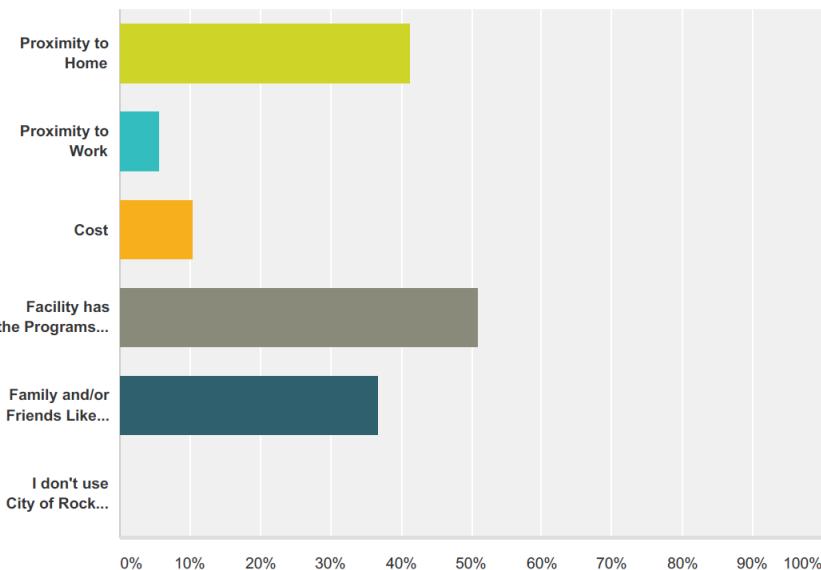
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	91.20%
No	8.80%
Total	602



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

### **Q10 What is the primary reason that you use City of Rock Island OUTDOOR facilities?**

Answered: 531 Skipped: 102



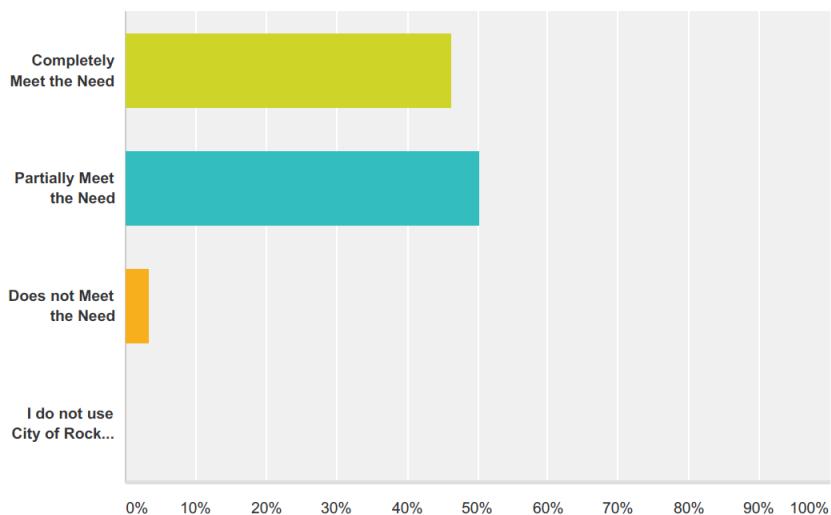
Answer Choices	Responses
Proximity to Home	41.43% 220
Proximity to Work	5.65% 30
Cost	10.36% 55
Facility has the Programs and Amenities I desire	50.85% 270
Family and/or Friends Like to Use These Facilities	36.72% 195
I don't use City of Rock Island Indoor facilities	0.00% 0
<b>Total Respondents: 531</b>	



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

### **Q11 How well do the City of Rock Island OUTDOOR facilities meet your needs and those of the other individuals that live at your residence?**

Answered: 531 Skipped: 102



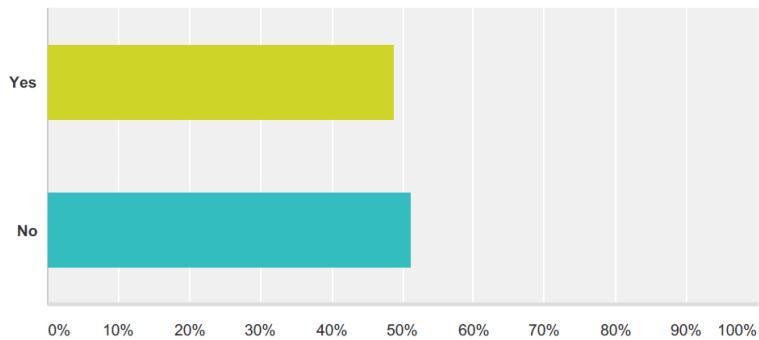
Answer Choices	Responses
Completely Meet the Need	46.33% 246
Partially Meet the Need	50.28% 267
Does not Meet the Need	3.39% 18
I do not use City of Rock Island Outdoor Facilities	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

### **Q12 Do you, or individuals at your residence participate in City of Rock Island Parks & Recreation Programs?**

Answered: 581 Skipped: 52



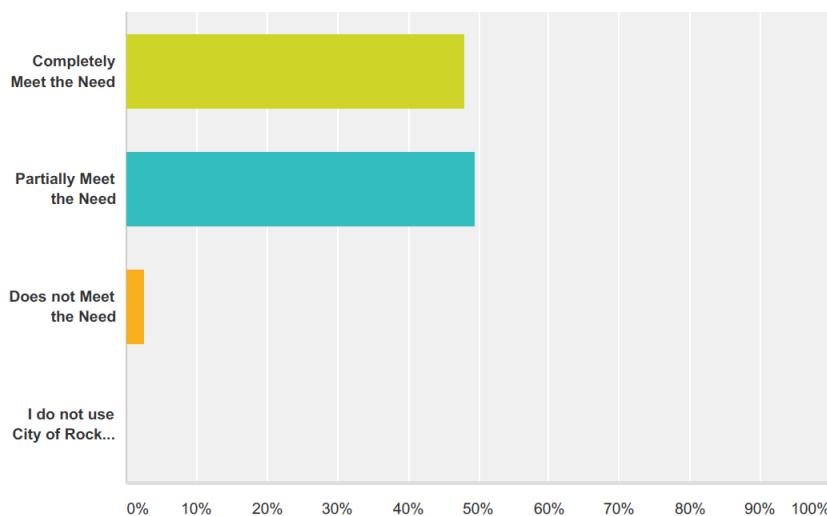
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	48.88%	284
No	51.12%	297
Total		581



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

### **Q14 How well do the City of Rock Island programs meet your needs and those of the other individuals that live at your residence?**

Answered: 281 Skipped: 352



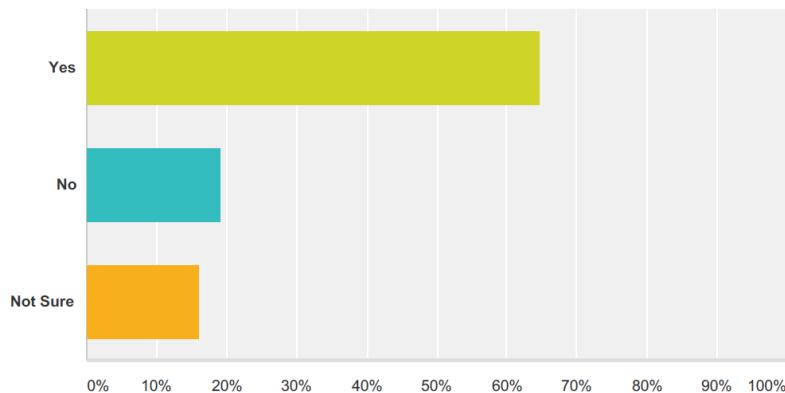
Answer Choices	Responses
Completely Meet the Need	48.04% 135
Partially Meet the Need	49.47% 139
Does not Meet the Need	2.49% 7
I do not use City of Rock Island programs	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Q15 Do you think that the fees charged for facilities, programs and services offered by the City of Rock Island are appropriate for the value received?**

Answered: 281 Skipped: 352



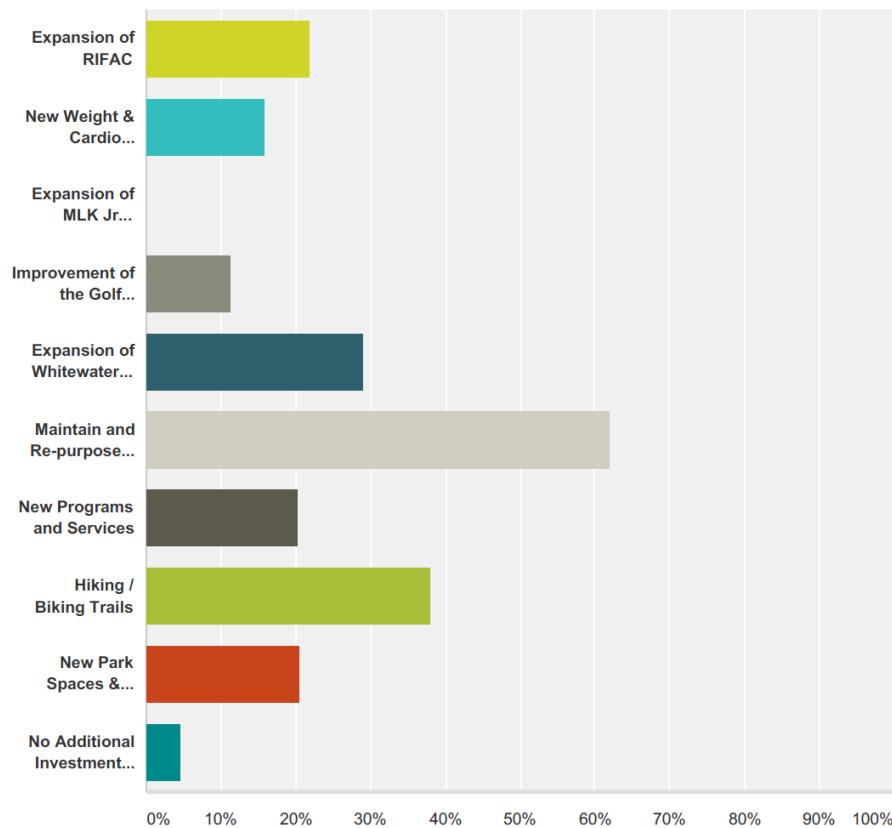
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	64.77%	182
No	19.22%	54
Not Sure	16.01%	45
Total		281



## *Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study*

### **Q16 Where do you feel that the City of Rock Island should invest future dollars? (pick 3)**

Answered: 526 Skipped: 107



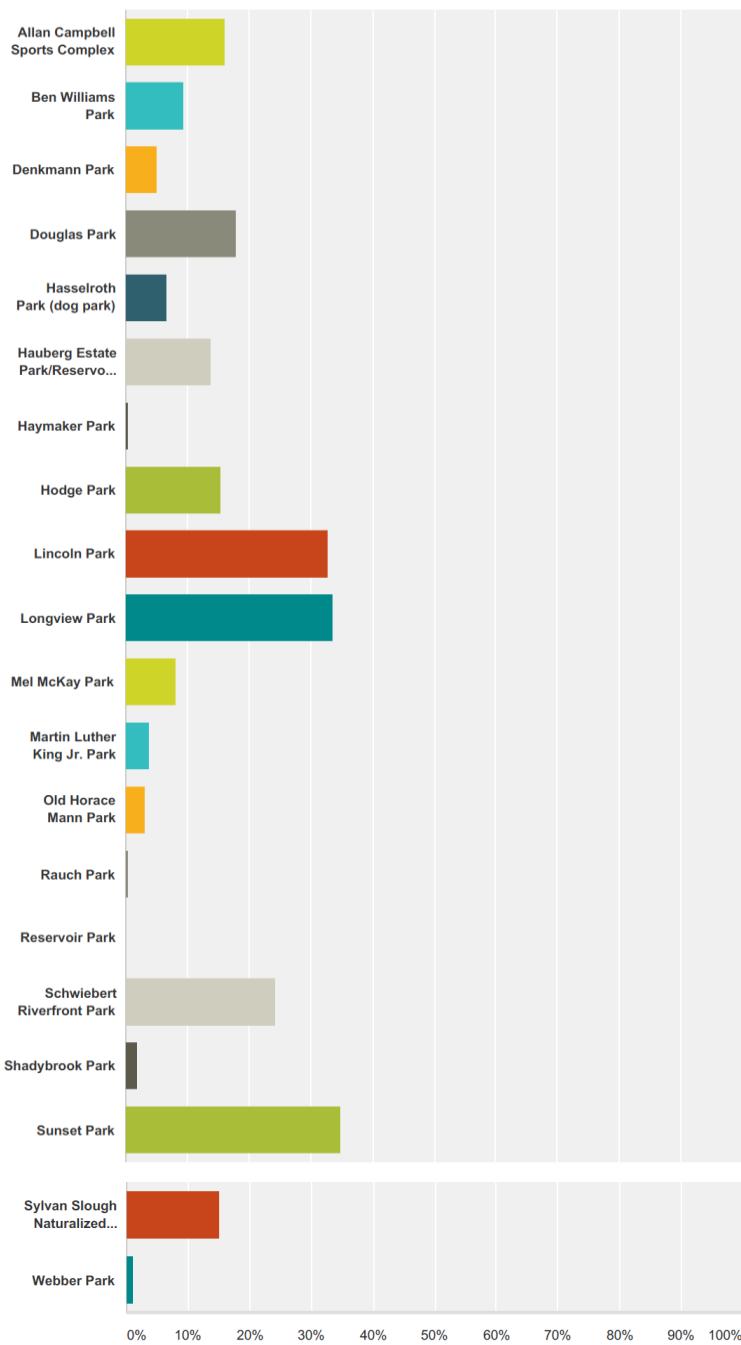
Answer Choices	Responses
Expansion of RIFAC	21.86% 115
New Weight & Cardio Equipment @ RIFAC	15.97% 84
Expansion of MLK Jr Community Center	0.00% 0
Improvement of the Golf Courses	11.22% 59
Expansion of Whitewater Junction	29.09% 153
Maintain and Re-purpose Existing Parks	61.98% 326
New Programs and Services	20.34% 107
Hiking / Biking Trails	38.02% 200
New Park Spaces & Recreation Amenities	20.53% 108
No Additional Investment Should be Made	4.56% 24



## *Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study*

### **Q17 Which parks do you feel the City of Rock Island should invest future dollars in? (pick 3)**

Answered: 549 Skipped: 84

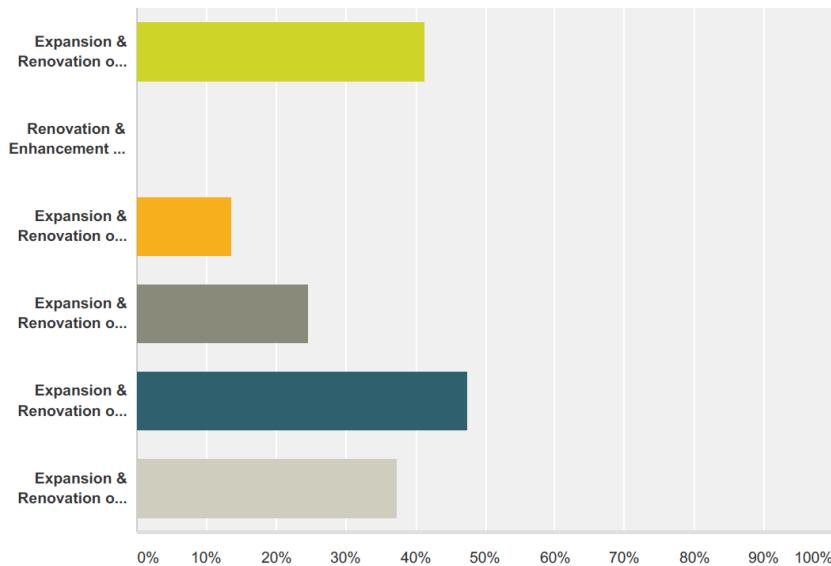




## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Q18 Based upon the park properties identified in the previous question, how do you feel those dollars should be invested?**

Answered: 549 Skipped: 84



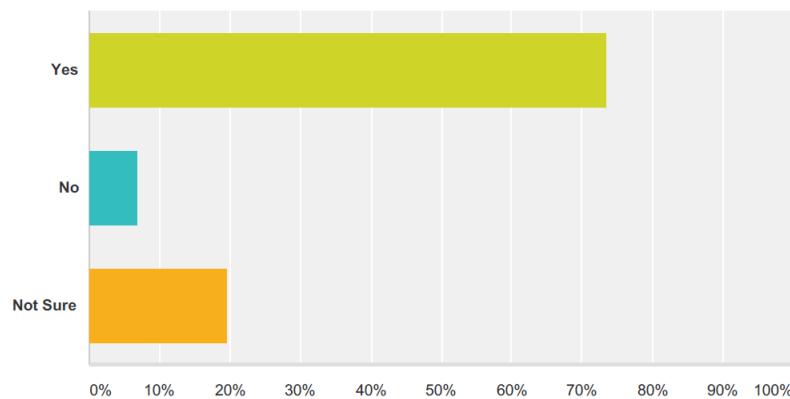
Answer Choices	Responses
Expansion & Renovation of Trail System	41.35% 227
Renovation & Enhancement of Golf Course(s)	0.00% 0
Expansion & Renovation of football/soccer/lacrosse fields	13.66% 75
Expansion & Renovation of baseball/softball diamonds	24.59% 135
Expansion & Renovation of playgrounds	47.36% 260
Expansion & Renovation of shelters	37.34% 205
<b>Total Respondents: 549</b>	



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Q19 Do you feel that the City of Rock Island should continue to operate and maintain the current inventory of INDOOR and OUTDOOR facilities?**

Answered: 549 Skipped: 84



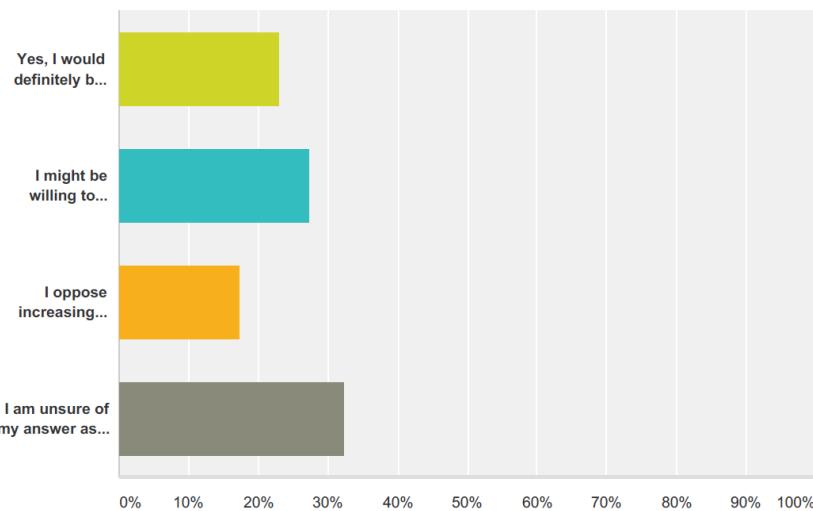
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	73.41%	403
No	6.92%	38
Not Sure	19.67%	108
Total		549

## *Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study*

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**Q20 Would you support an increase in tax levy to support the INDOOR and OUTDOOR facility improvements that means the most to you and your household?**

Answered: 549   Skipped: 84



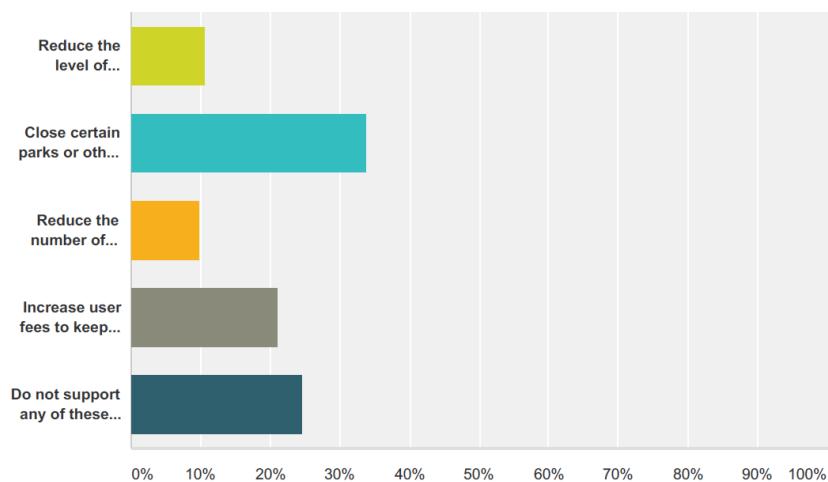
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes, I would definitely be willing to increase taxes for this purpose.	22.95%	126
I might be willing to increase taxes for this purpose.	27.32%	150
I oppose increasing taxes for this purpose.	17.30%	95
I am unsure of my answer as I need more information	32.42%	178
<b>Total</b>		<b>549</b>



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Q21 If the City of Rock Island needs to cut operating expenses in the future due to budget limitations, which one of the following options would you support:**

Answered: 549 Skipped: 84



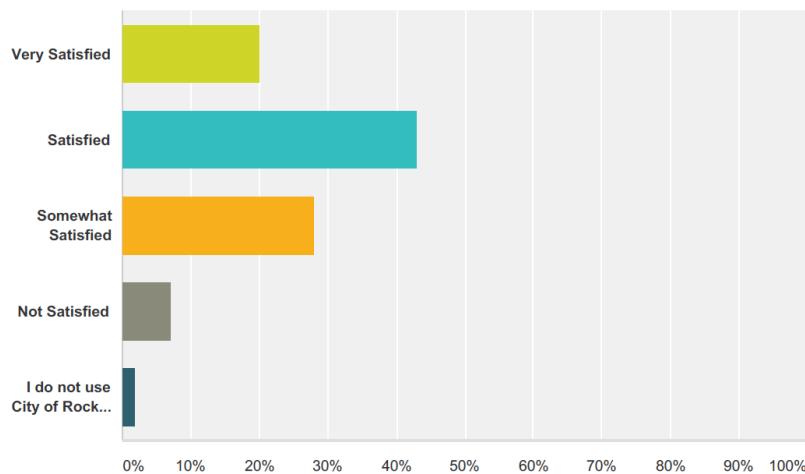
Answer Choices	Responses
Reduce the level of maintenance in certain parks and facilities but keep all of them open	10.56% 58
Close certain parks or other facilities that are not heavily utilized by the public	33.88% 186
Reduce the number of programs and services that are offered to the community	9.84% 54
Increase user fees to keep facilities open and well maintained	21.13% 116
Do not support any of these options	24.59% 135
<b>Total</b>	<b>549</b>



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Q22 Please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with the maintenance that is provided for City of Rock Island Parks & Recreation facilities and programs.**

Answered: 549 Skipped: 84

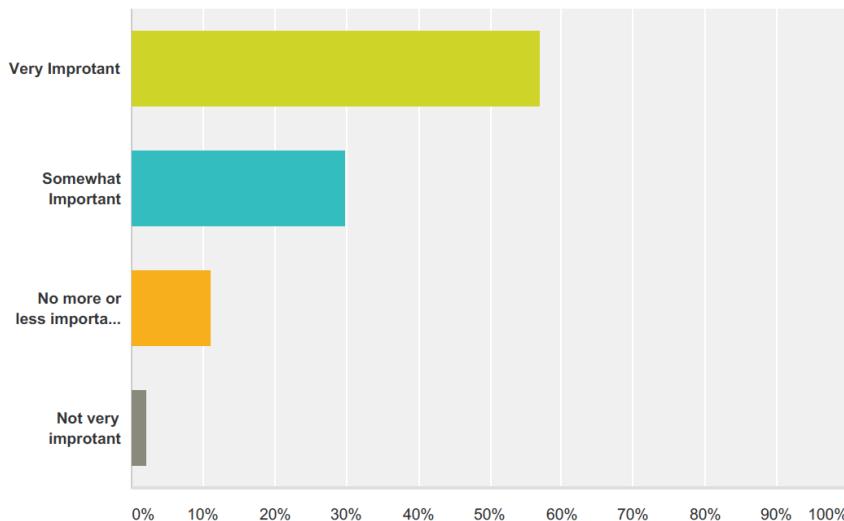


Answer Choices	Responses	
Very Satisfied	20.04%	110
Satisfied	42.99%	236
Somewhat Satisfied	28.05%	154
Not Satisfied	7.10%	39
I do not use City of Rock Island Parks & Recreation facilities and programs	1.82%	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>549</b>

## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

**Q23 Compared to the other services that the City of Rock Island provides tax payers, where would you rank Parks & Recreation?**

Answered: 549   Skipped: 84



Answer Choices	Responses	
Very Improtant	57.01%	313
Somewhat Improtant	29.87%	164
No more or less important than other services	11.11%	61
Not very improtant	2.00%	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>549</b>

A basic summary of the survey findings include:

- Indoor Facilities
  - There is strong use, especially RIFAC
  - Primary reason for use is programs and amenities
  - Indoor facilities meets people's needs
- Outdoor Parks/Facilities
  - There is strong use of the following parks and facilities
    - Schwiebert
    - Sunset
    - Whitewater Junction

## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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- Longview
    - Lincoln
  - The primary reason for use is programs and amenities and proximity
  - These facilities meet people's needs (but not as strong as indoor)
- Programs
  - There is reasonably high participation in these programs
    - Youth sports
    - Special events
    - Aquatics
    - Fitness
  - Program offerings meets people's needs (but not as strong as indoor and outdoor facilities)
- Fees are good for the value received
- Respondents want funding going to:
  - Maintaining and repurposing parks
  - Hiking/biking trails
  - Whitewater Junction expansion
- Specific parks that need improvements include:
  - Sunset
  - Longview
  - Lincoln
  - Specific amenities
    - Playgrounds
    - Trails
    - Shelters
- Other responses include:
  - Overwhelming support for operating and maintaining the current parks and recreation system
  - There is reasonable support for a tax increase for Parks and Rec. There were a large number of "unsure" responses which is not unusual
  - If expenses have to be cut, close parks that are not heavily used
  - Parks and Recreation services are very important



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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### **Section V – Financial Assessment**

This section analyses the financial aspects of the Parks and Recreation Department's operation.

#### ***General***

- The City has established specific budgeting procedures and policies that guide the overall process of establishing and expending budgets. The Parks and Recreation Department has not always been in compliance with these procedures which creates issues with the Finance Department.
- Parks and Recreation and the Finance Department are often at odds over the actual level of expenditures, revenue figures, and reserve fund balance due in part to differences in how the Department tracks expenditure and revenue information. However, the Department should utilize the same figures that are generated by Finance rather than their own internal accounting system.
- Parks and Recreation has a dedicated property tax allocation but the tax level has not increased since 2011. During this time operational costs have continued to increase for staffing, utilities, operating supplies and other categories.
- There are internal charge backs for finance, human resources and IT services to parks and recreation enterprise operation budgets based on a cost allocation plan and formula developed by an independent consultant for the Finance Department.
- Parks and Golf are assessed a fleet cost by Public Works and all vehicles are amortized through this fund.
- Enterprise funds are burdened with having to carry depreciation and capital debt in their operations budget. While capital debt is often part of an enterprise fund budget, it is highly unusual to have depreciation included.
- The Department has had to rely on unrestricted fund balance from long term revenues that have been generated from the enterprise funds to help cover yearly operations. This is not a sustainable practice and if continued will result in these funds being exhausted in the coming years.
- The City has just changed over to a January 1, fiscal year which will require some extra steps to make budget comparisons with past years. However, this should be less of an issue in the coming years.



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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- The Department currently recovers approximately 39% (according to the Finance Department) of its operating budget through fees and charges. This is a figure that is slightly higher than the national cost recovery numbers which are often closer to 30%.
- Despite limited funding and staff, the Department continues to take on new facility responsibilities and new programs and services. Some of these actions have come from the Department itself while others have been mandated by the City.

### ***Budget Development and Monitoring***

- The Department has four different enterprise operations
  - Golf
    - Highland Springs Golf Course
    - Saukie Golf Course
    - Golf Pro-Shop
  - Rock Island Fitness and Activity Center (RIFAC)
  - Whitewater Junction
- In addition to these funds there are a number of other operations which rely on property tax support
  - Administration
  - Parks Maintenance
  - Recreation Programs
- The Department has a 5 year CIP budget for each major budget account but there is a strong need to develop one overall prioritized CIP budget for the entire Department.
- Currently the Parks and Recreation Board is involved in the approval of the Department's budget, the approval of individual expenditures, as well as overall budget monitoring. Based on the future role of the Board (see Organizational Structure and Performance), this is not an appropriate function.
- The Department currently has a budget that has a number of sub categories to track expenditures and revenues by some facilities, parks maintenance, and program areas. However, there must be an even stronger budgeting process that identifies and manages Parks & Recreation as a series of "cost centers". Some of the existing budget categories are too broad. Establishing general cost centers by facility and program area is essential. The "cost center" accounting process not only needs to include expenses but also must attach any associated revenues to give a true net cost.



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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For facilities or parks, large amenities should have their own separate budget and other smaller facilities could be in one single budget but should be tracked by individual amenities if at all possible. Under recreation programs and services separate budget accounts need to be set up for different program areas (youth, sports, special events, etc.) From this a true cost of service can be determined and matched with the level of service that is being delivered to residents.

- The Department does a good job with on-going budget comparisons (in Golf, White Water Junction and RIFAC) with previous years, quarters and months as a way to benchmark current operations. However stronger efforts are needed with Parks Maintenance and Recreation Programs.
- Within the overall Department, yearly budget priorities should be directed by long term operational and management goals that are updated on an annual basis. There must be realistic and measurable goals established and staff held accountable for reaching these goals.
- There should be stronger budget control at the superintendent and supervisor level. Full-time staff should have budget development and monitoring accountability for their areas of responsibility. There also needs to be improved financial practices focusing on good budget monitoring procedures and strong record keeping.
- A stronger more concerted effort to find alternative funding sources for facility operations, programs and services will need to be pursued. This includes additional grants and fundraising as well as sponsorships.

The Department should identify 3-5 grants a year to pursue for funding specific aspects of recreation programming and/or facility development. This will need to be coordinated at the director or superintendent level. Grants should focus on energy savings, wellness, teen services and senior activities.

- The City will need to recognize that there will be continued increases in the minimum wage at the state and national level over the next five years. At minimum the City and Parks & Recreation will need to plan for a minimum wage of at least \$10 an hour and the fact that it could go to as high as \$15 an hour. There is virtually no way that the Department will be able to continue to absorb these additional costs within their operating budget.
- It must be recognized that recreation is a discretionary use of an individual's time and money and as a result there needs to be an adequate budget and staff commitment to marketing and promotions on an annual basis. The current level of funding will need to



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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be increased in the coming years with key measures of the effectiveness and return on investment of these efforts.

- Budget allocations for staff training and certification also needs to be increased. Particular areas of focus should be customer service, emergency situations, team building, and other factors. Funding levels should support a well thought out training plan that is developed annually.
- Sound financial practices require good budget monitoring procedures and strong record keeping. The operational budgets need to continue to be monitored on at least a monthly basis with any possible deviations or modifications noted at that time. This should occur not only on the management level but also at the supervisory level as well.
- The Department should utilize, the soon to be formed, Parks and Recreation foundation to help as a conduit for donations, grants and other potential revenue sources specifically for parks and recreation.
- The Department should consider conducting an economic impact study on athletic tournaments and other activities and events that draw outside users to the City.

### ***Revenue Generation and Fees***

- Revenue generation through facility use (golf courses, Whitewater Junction, RIFAC, etc.) and recreation programs is a primary goal of the Department. However, this focus lacks a formal, established, operations plan to support this effort.
- A formal fee philosophy and policy for facility use, rentals, and programs and services, should be developed. The tiering of programs and services should be formalized and be a key aspect of this policy. There should be limited free facility or program use.
- The Department does not currently have a resident/non-resident fee structure and with the need to attract as many users as possible for facilities and programs, this differentiation is not recommended as part of the fee structure in the future.
- An annual fee survey should be conducted with the other facilities and organizations in Rock Island and the Quad Cities area to determine where Parks and Recreation fees fall in comparison. This appears to be done for golf on a regular basis but not for other facilities and programs.



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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- It is critical that there is a policy that encourages an adjustment of fees at least every two years to keep from falling behind on increases in expenditures or increases in fees from other providers. However, fees must be competitive with other providers in the area.
- Ensure that rental policies and fees are being enforced for every use of Parks and Recreation facilities. There needs to be a conscious effort to reduce or even eliminate free use of facilities by organizations or individuals that want exclusive use.
- The fees that are charged for field usage (especially at the Campbell Sports Complex) for outside tournaments are too low at \$90 a day. This results in the cost of prepping and maintaining the fields to be considerably higher than the revenue that is generated. At the same time the tournament hosts are generating significant profits from each tournament. All direct expenses associated with any outside tournament should be covered by direct field rental fees and an actual “profit” should be the goal from any such event.
- The Department has an existing scholarship program in place for RIFAC but this should be expanded to recreation programs. The full scholarship program needs to be formalized. The existing plan includes a sliding scale for participant payment and the utilization of an existing agency (Rock Island County Area) for eligibility and administration. However, there needs to be an established maximum value per household that can be awarded in one year, a percentage of the total fee that must be paid by the participant (could be up to 25%), and tracking actual use and attendance for scholarship recipients.

### ***Individual Profit Center Assessment***

Golf – Golf maybe the most well managed and effective division in Parks and Recreation. They have excellent record keeping, survey their users on a regular basis, and follow golf trends. This enterprise fund has performed well financially (with only a small operational loss), especially considering other public golf course operations of similar nature. Golf should remain as an enterprise fund. If the changes that have been recommended in this report are implemented, there is the real possibility that revenues could cover expenses in the future.

The golf courses themselves are well maintained but the clubhouses are older buildings that are in reasonably poor condition and will ultimately need to be renovated or replaced. The maintenance yards and buildings are also older but should be adequate well into the future with only minimal improvements.

Operational changes that should be considered include:

- Establish set open and closure dates for the Highland Springs course.



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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- Convert Saukie from a year round course to a seasonal operation with set open and closure dates.

RIFAC – RIFAC, considering its amenities, operates with a high level of financial performance for a public recreation center. Typically less than 10% of facilities nationally are able to cover their cost of operation. Most recreation centers are not operated as an enterprise fund, so this facility should be part of the general parks and recreation budget but with the same overall financial goals.

The RIFAC building is in reasonably good condition and is well maintained for the most part. However, the fitness equipment while still functional, is no longer considered state of the art and this impacts membership and revenue.

Operational changes that should be considered include:

- Upgrade the weight/cardio equipment and put the cardio equipment on a 4 year replacement schedule and all strength equipment on a 10 year plan. All weight cardio equipment should be formally inspected at least once a week.
- Strong considerations should be given to eliminating the tanning beds. The health risks associated with this amenity is simply too high to justify having them as an element in a public recreation center.
- As a cost savings measure do away with towel and laundry service. Most public recreation centers no longer have towels and virtually no public center has laundry service.
- Track and limit the drop-in child care hours to times when there is an average of at least 4 children utilizing the service.
- Strongly consider including fitness classes in the membership fees of RIFAC to more closely reflect the fee structure of a YMCA and the private sector. A second, but less desirable option, is to develop a Fitness Plus membership at a slightly higher rate.

Whitewater Junction – This outdoor aquatic center has a regional appeal and also performs well financially. For outdoor aquatic centers that have a strong recreational orientation, it is the expectation that they should be able to cover operating costs on an annual basis. The only wild card, is the weather which can have a profound impact on overall revenues. Whitewater Junction should remain as an enterprise fund.



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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Whitewater Junction is in great condition and is well maintained. Over the next 5 years consideration should be given to adding an additional slide to the facility as well as a small splash pad. These two additions should add capacity and ultimately revenue for the facility. However, parking could be an issue with any expansion.

Operational changes that should be considered include:

- Closely monitor the season and days of operation and the resulting use numbers and make changes to manage or reduce operating costs where possible.

Other Facilities – In addition to the profit center facilities noted above there are some basic recommendations for other facilities.

- Hauberg Civic Center – this facility should basically only be open for rentals or events. Strong consideration should be given to having the facility managed and operated by a private vendor. It also must be realized that the building needs substantial infrastructure improvements. The name should also be changed to Hauberg Mansion or House.
- Old Parks and Recreation Office – this building is located next to Hauberg and currently is not being used. This structure should not be renovated further to be used for parks and recreation activities.
- Schwiebert Riverfront Park – due to the unique nature of this park, the operation and maintenance of this park should continue to be funded in part by a General Fund transfer.

### ***Key Recommendations***

- The City should find an alternative to assessing depreciation costs to Parks and Recreation enterprise funds as this is not a “best practice” for most agencies. The other option would be to remove the four facilities from the enterprise designation altogether.
- The Parks and Recreation Department should work diligently to be in full compliance with established City budget procedures and policies. Any resulting issues need to be resolved at the department level.
- It is appropriate that Golf and Whitewater Junction remain as enterprise funds but strong consideration should be given to not having RIFAC be such a fund.
- A comprehensive operations plan for the Department must be developed and a formal fee policy established.



## ***Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study***

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- Increase the utilization of budget sub-categories and establish “cost center” accounts. Budget responsibility needs to be at the supervisor level.
- Identify 3-5 grants a year to pursue for funding specific aspects of recreation programming and/or facility development.
- Consider working with other communities in the Quad Cities to conduct an economic impact study on athletic tournaments and other activities and events that draw outside users to the Quad Cities.
- To improve operations at the golf courses:
  - Establish open and closure dates for Highland Springs.
  - Consider making Saukie a seasonal course only.
  - Plan for the renovation or replacement of the club houses at both courses.
- To improve operations at RIFAC:
  - Upgrade the weight/cardio equipment and develop a replacement plan.
  - Eliminate the tanning beds as well as towel and laundry service.
  - Limit the hours of drop-in child care.
  - Include fitness classes in the membership fees.
- Consider adding a new slide and splash pad to Whitewater Junction.
- Change Hauberg Civic Center to a rental and events center only. Consider contracting management and operations of the facility.
- Due to its unique features and role as an events facility, consider moving Schwiebert Park’s enterprise budget out of the Parks and Recreation Department or augmenting the existing budget with other sources of funding.
- Due to the current budget concerns, no new facilities or programs should be added in the next couple of years.
- Capital investment in existing parks and recreation parks and facilities will need to grow in the coming years, especially considering the age of many of these amenities.
- Develop a prioritized 5 year CIP budget for the entire Parks and Recreation Department.
- Establish long term operational and management goals to guide the budget process.



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- A comprehensive scholarship program for all parks and recreation facilities and services needs to be established.
- The City will either need to increase the level of funding for parks and recreation programs and facilities or begin to curtail services.
- If the City must reduce operating costs this could include closing underutilized parks and facilities, reducing the level of maintenance, or contracting operations and maintenance of other facilities.

## **Section VI – Maintenance and Asset Management**

This section of the study examines how the Parks and Recreation Department maintains its parks and facilities as well as how the Department's overall assets are managed.

### *General*

- The City's parks and recreation facilities are generally well maintained and provide a great asset to the residents of Rock Island. However, many of the focus group participants indicated that parks and facilities needed to be better maintained.
- Many of the City's parks and recreation facilities are aging and will require additional maintenance and capital improvements in the coming years. This will continue to place a strain on Department budgets and resources.
- It is critical that Parks and Recreation develop a comprehensive, formal written, maintenance plan that deals not only with day to day care, but also with park/facility and equipment maintenance tasks and frequency. This written plan should serve as the guide for long term upkeep and maintenance of all parks and recreation facilities. In addition, the plan should focus on specific measures that are needed in the area of preventative maintenance. Once a general maintenance plan is developed, a more specific stand-alone written maintenance plan should be developed for each major park or facility. The plan should be updated on a regular basis.

Once the formal written maintenance plan is in place the process needs to develop to the next level where actual time and resource allocations are utilized to validate the planning numbers that have been used. This could take several years until enough real world numbers are available to adjust the existing standards. From this, specific benchmark standards can be determined (cost per acre, per square foot, etc.).

- Maintenance tasks and procedures should be handled by a maintenance management software program and work order system. Public Works has an existing computerized work order system that could be utilized by the Department. If this is not sufficient, there are a number of packaged systems currently on the market that could serve this purpose.
- An emergency action plan for the Department as a whole as well as for each individual facility needs to be in place. This should cover natural disasters, terror attacks, user actions, hold-ups, assaults, blood borne pathogens, lost children, etc.



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- While there are some basic safety and security procedures in place for individual facilities, there needs to be an updated, comprehensive, safety and security plan as well as a policy manual for the Department as a whole.
- Almost all of parks and facility maintenance functions are performed in-house by Department staff (with the exception of custodial services). This even includes construction of new improvements to facilities. A significant number of parks and recreation agencies now contract out a variety of parks and facility maintenance functions. An independent, objective, cost-benefit analysis should be completed regarding key maintenance functions that could possibly be contracted to outside vendors in the future. This analysis should include the development of specific criteria for determining when it is appropriate for contracting to be considered. All contract services must have a detailed contract in place (no more than 3 years in length) and should be monitored on a daily/weekly basis for compliance. Contract services could include, mowing, irrigation, tree trimming, chemical/fertilizer applications, basic building trades, etc. General guidelines could include:
  - Basic maintenance functions that occur on a regular basis should probably not be contracted if they occur in highly visible locations or for facilities where there is a very strong level of public use.
  - Specialized functions that require special training or equipment, are inherently dangerous, or do not occur on a regular basis could be considered for contract service.
  - Basic maintenance functions that occur in remote or low use areas should be considered for contract.
  - Very small parks (under one acre) that require the allocation of a high level of time and resources should be considered for contract.
  - Remote locations that take significant travel time to maintain should also be considered for contract.
- There are a very large number of deferred maintenance items associated with the various parks and recreation facilities. A complete master list of these items needs to be developed for each park and facility and then prioritized by facility and the Department overall.
- A comprehensive ADA assessment of every major parks and recreation facility is needed with a resulting plan as to how any deficiencies will be addressed.



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- Complete and administer a comprehensive asset inventory of all equipment, furnishings and other items with a value of over \$5,000 that are present in parks and recreation facilities. This inventory should be updated every 2-3 years.
- The Public Works Department handles vehicle maintenance and replacement costs for Parks and Recreation (Parks and Golf) while Parks handles small engine repair. Public Works charges back their vehicle services to individual accounts in the Department. In addition, when necessary, Public Works will provide assistance to Parks or Golf operations. Despite the fact that it could be cheaper and less time consuming to have outside vendors do some of this work, the City has the system in place to manage vehicle maintenance and this should be supported by Parks and Recreation.
- The Department should have direct input on the design of any new proposed park or recreation facility prior to construction, if they are going to be responsible for operations and maintenance of the amenity.
- For each new proposed park or recreation facility, a detailed projection of the cost of maintaining (and operating) the amenity on an annual basis should be completed. This could include not only additional manpower requirements but also equipment, operating supplies and necessary contractual services. An on-going system with specific procedures should be in place to accomplish such estimates in a consistent and organized fashion.

### *Parks Maintenance*

- Parks maintenance has 10 full-time staff and 25 seasonal staff (mid-May to mid-August).
- The Parks Maintenance Plan mentioned above should include:
  - Classification of outdoor parks, right of ways and open space into 6 levels of maintenance standards (see below).
  - A listing of specific maintenance tasks that need to be performed, their frequency and the quality level that is expected.
  - A determination of manpower, equipment and operating supplies that are required to complete the tasks.
  - Tracking of maintenance tasks and overall performance.
  - The establishment of a preventative maintenance plan.
- The Parks Division should develop specific levels of service for each facility that is under their responsibility utilizing the NRPA's maintenance standards that divides outdoor park maintenance into 6 different levels. These include:



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- *Level 1* – High visibility areas that require the highest level of maintenance.
- *Level 2* – Is the normal standard and what an individual expects to see on a regular basis.
- *Level 3 & 4* – These two levels are just below the norm and include reductions in frequency of maintenance with a focus on safety. These levels are often utilized when there are budget and manpower reductions.
- *Level 5* – This level is one step above allowing the land to return to its original state.
- *Level 6* – This level allows the land to return to its original natural state or open space that is already in its natural condition.

It appears that most of Rock Island's organized parks are in at least a Level 2 category and some are definitely Level 1. The Parks Division should take the time to classify all existing parks by the existing level of maintenance with specific recommendations to increase or decrease maintenance levels for specific parks in the future.

When assigning levels of maintenance to a park, it is acceptable to have different levels within different areas of the same park.

- The Maximus study was completed in 2006 that examined how Parks and Recreation maintenance operations should be organized and integrated with Public Works. The findings of this study need to continue to guide relations and job responsibilities between these two departments and may need to be revised and updated over time. This is particularly true for ROW and green area maintenance as well as vehicle repairs.
- Maintenance is primarily organized by job function with most personnel reporting to the central maintenance facility in Longview Park. The Department may be better served by having maintenance zones within the city with parks staff reporting to satellite locations.
- Parks currently has only two CPSI's (Certified Playground Safety Inspectors). Additional staff (1-2) should be certified for this purpose.
- A specific maintenance plan and standards are needed for athletic fields.
- The Department should strongly consider closing the current greenhouse operation and contracting for these services while moving the show greenhouse to the Quad Cities Botanical Center.



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### ***Recreation Facilities Maintenance***

- Most facility custodial services are by contract through Public Works. However, RIFAC manages its own custodial contract while also having one seasonal maintenance staff. Parks also supplies one full-time maintenance person.
- Parks and Recreation in concert with Public Works should develop a 3 level classification for building maintenance functions (that is similar to the 6 level classifications for parks). Each of the existing indoor facilities should then be classified in the same manner as parks.
- Lifecycle cost estimates for all furniture, fixtures and equipment in Department facilities should be developed. This should be utilized to develop long range capital funding needs for facilities.
- The cardio-equipment in RIFAC should be put on a capital replacement schedule where the pieces are turned over at least every four years with approximately 25% being replaced annually.
- All facilities must have their MSDS books prominently displayed.
- All chemical recording sheets (at Whitewater Junction), opening and closing checklists, and fitness equipment inspections, should be archived for a minimum of one year. Ideally these should be entered into a computer data base for improved record keeping.

### ***Golf Course Maintenance***

- Golf course maintenance is handled by its own Division within the Department. Staffing consists of a Golf Course Superintendent as well as two assistant superintendents (one for each course), plus a mechanic and spray technician. All other maintenance functions are handled by part-time seasonal staff.
- Golf receives some maintenance support from Parks when needed.

### ***Key Recommendations***

- Establish a comprehensive, formal, written maintenance plan for Parks and Recreation including a preventative maintenance program. Track actual costs by function and facility.
- Establish and classify parks by the 6 levels of maintenance service. Do the same for indoor facilities based on 3 levels.



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- Develop a specific maintenance plan and standards for athletic fields.
- Utilize a maintenance management software program for tracking all maintenance work.
- Develop a comprehensive emergency action plan for the Department and each individual facility.
- Determine what maintenance functions could/should be contracted to outside vendors.
- Complete an asset inventory as well as a prioritized listing of deferred maintenance items.
- Complete a full ADA assessment of all parks and facilities.
- Determine if it is more cost effective to close the greenhouse.
- Establish lifecycle cost estimates for all furniture, fixtures and equipment.
- Strong consideration should be given to having groups or organizations that are primary users of specific parks and recreation facilities, be responsible for the actual maintenance of these areas.
- The maintenance of athletic fields (especially lining and dragging) needs to either be the responsibility of the organization using the fields or they should pay at least a portion of the cost.



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### **Section VII – Organizational Structure and Performance**

The most critical aspect of the Parks and Recreation Department's operation is its organizational structure and performance. The following is an assessment of these factors by different areas.

#### *Management Structure Review*

- For some time the Parks and Recreation Department has tended to operate as almost an independent agency (park district) rather than as a City of Rock Island department. This has caused friction between Parks and Recreation and other departments in the City (including Finance, Human Resources and Public Works) and resulted in administrative and operations issues for the department. There will need to be acceptance of the fact that Parks and Recreation must work within the City's organizational structure and policies and procedures if this situation is going to improve.
- Related to this issue is the need to revamp the role and expectations for the Parks and Recreation Board. This should be an advisory board only with no budget or operations authority. There should be term limits and board attendance requirements for board members to remain active. However, the board should still be a strong advocate for the Department.
- Parks and Recreation has some very basic operating policies and procedures but it lacks strong, comprehensive, directives in these areas and these must be developed to cover all aspects of operations and management including safety and security, maintenance, financial matters, staffing, and even marketing.
- The Department does not appear to have an overall staffing philosophy. Currently most all of the decision making power and responsibilities for operational and administrative staff are held at the administrative level of the Department. This is not an effective way to manage a diverse operation. Staff at the manager/supervisor level and below must be empowered (and expected) to make decisions.

Supervisory and line staff should be given more responsibility in their areas in terms of level of service, budget compliance, and work production.

- A long term staffing plan will need to be developed that ensures that the Department is managed and operated at a consistently high level. Key areas of responsibility that need to be clearly identified as part of this process include:
  - Budget development and monitoring
  - Human resources
  - Facilities management



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- Recreation program and service delivery
- Maintenance operations and coordination of contract services
- Marketing coordination
- Safety/security and risk management coordination
- Staff training coordination

The administrative roles and functions of the Park Superintendent and Recreation Superintendent need to be enhanced with a number of these functions.

It is not necessary to have a full-time (or even a part-time) employee dedicated to each function. It may be possible for a couple of areas of responsibility to be shared by a single staff member. However, one individual should be the identified person that is responsible for coordinating and monitoring each of these functions.

Job descriptions need to be updated (full-time and part-time) to adequately reflect the actual duties of each position and the performance expectations of the individual in that role. These job descriptions should include specific educational and experience requirements for the position. The existing job descriptions are the formal position narratives but a more functional depiction is required.

- There must be a strong staff training and education program instituted to provide opportunities for staff growth and improvement. This staff training program should focus on customer service, program development, budgeting, revenue growth, safety/security, and operations. Specific priorities for the training program will need to be developed.
- Full-time and part-time staff compensation appears to be at the low end of the market and as a result it is more difficult to attract and keep good staff.
- The Department would benefit from having 3-4 general categories for part-time personnel that cover most of the existing job functions and delineate levels of responsibility and supervision. For each of these general positions, there should be 3 steps in the pay plan that represent a combination of time worked (hours vs. years) and job performance.
- The Department needs to develop a succession plan for key administrative and operations staff that will be retiring in the next 5 years. This plan should also cover staff possibly leaving for other purposes as well.
- While the Department has decent financial accountability with some cost center accounting, this area could still be improved to provide greater financial knowledge regarding individual facilities and programs. Cost center accounting will allow for true



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costs and revenues to be tracked to individual facilities, programs or services. Ultimately this will allow for data driven decisions on future budget needs and priorities to be made.

- There is good record keeping regarding program statistics, budget expenditures, and revenue history, and quantifiable numbers on people that have been served. However, this needs to be more uniform in format across all budget, facilities and program areas.

### *Operations and Services*

- The roles and responsibilities of the Recreation Division need to be revised slightly among the existing staff. This includes:
  - Special Events – City wide events under the direction of one Supervisor
  - Youth/Adult Programs – All activities (other than Sports) under one Supervisor
  - Sports – All sports related programs under the Sports Supervisor plus the Sports Complex and other fields.
  - Aquatics/Fitness – Remains under the RIFAC Manager. This position should have Certified Pool Operator (CPO) certification.
  - Office staff – there needs to be distinct differences in the responsibilities of the Department Office Manager position and the Front Office Manager. These two positions should not have the same title either.
- For the Golf Division strong consideration should be given to combining the Golf Course Superintendent position with the Golf Services Supervisor and placing this division under Recreation.
- The Department will need to develop a well-conceived plan for the delivery of recreation services to the citizens of Rock Island for the next 5 to 10 years. This plan should take into consideration the future core services of the Department along with the role of other organizations and recreation providers in the area. There will need to be clearly identified areas of programmatic responsibility to ensure that there is not overlap in resource allocation. From this, the Department needs to establish a five year program plan that identifies the priorities for program development, the responsible staff member and the required resources. Each program area and facility would then develop their own five year plan with a specific and detailed implementation plan for each year.
- Every program or service should be required to develop a program proposal form to determine the direct cost of offering the activity as well as the minimum number of registrants needed to conduct the program. This proposal form should also evaluate the need for the program, its market focus, and the ability to support the program priorities of the Department.



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- Once each program or service is completed a program report should be completed that itemizes the exact cost and revenues that were generated by the program and the number of individuals served. This will determine if the program or service met its financial goals and also its service goals.
- Each program should also have a calculation of the cost per participant to determine the value that is received for the cost.
- The Parks and Recreation Department should conduct a lifecycle analysis for major activities where program registrations by interest area are tracked and reviewed on a seasonal basis. Programs should be slotted into the following categories:
  - *New* – programs in the start-up phase that are just starting to build in popularity.
  - *Mature* – programs that have consistent high levels of registrations and are still growing in popularity.
  - *Old* – programs that are seeing a decline in popularity.

Ideally programming should be evenly split between the three categories to ensure a well-rounded and robust set of program offerings.

- The Department should also track program trends on a regional and national basis to ensure that program offerings are current and reflect the opportunities that are available.
- As the demand for programs and services continues to grow the Parks and Recreation Department should expand opportunities for partnering with other organizations and providers in the community.
- The Department will need to develop programs that have not only an appeal for different age groups (youth, teen, adult and seniors) but also to the family unit and the different ethnic groups in the city.
- As part of a greater programming philosophy, a determination of what programs and services will be offered directly by the recreation staff and which will be contracted to other individuals or organizations must be determined. Increasingly recreation departments are turning to contracted services or the outright rental of facilities to other providers to broaden programming and limit the role of in-house employees.

Before determining which programs, and services to contract or have provided by others, an assessment of the specific pros and cons of such a move needs to be completed. A major aspect of this analysis should be to determine the financial impacts and quality of the services that will be provided. Key questions to be asked include:

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- Will this be the most cost effective method to obtain the program, service or function?
- Does the Department have the knowledge and equipment to provide the program, service or function?
- Will the quality of the program, service or function suffer if it is contracted to other organizations?
- Are there other more qualified organizations that should provide the program, service or function?
- Is the service, program or function only available from a contract provider?
- Are the safety and liability risks too high to provide the program or service in house?
- All contract programs and service providers should be on a 70%-30% split of revenues (or 60%-40% if possible) to provide the Department with a strong revenue stream.

### *Marketing and Promotion*

- The Department needs to have a basic marketing plan developed that guides promotional efforts. The first priority must be the establishment of a concise and pointed annual marketing plan as well as a more visionary five year plan. The yearly plan should be a simple document that is built on an overall promotional philosophy and contains bullet points for specific goals. This straight forward document should identify 3 to 4 areas of focus for the year, the specific marketing tasks that will be completed, a timeline for implementation, a cost estimate, the responsible staff, and a way to measure success.
- The marketing plan must take into consideration the market position of the City's facilities and programs. The lower income status and other social service issues that are present in certain areas will have to be considered. The plan must recognize other varied demographic characteristics (age, ethnicity) of the city as well.
- The marketing plan's direction and focus will need to be guided by the key target markets that will be served. This should include different ethnic groups, age groups, interest areas, and socio economic groups.
- While the overall marketing effort should continue be coordinated and directed by a single staff member, clear areas of responsibility for all staff as it relates to promoting facilities and programs must be developed and endorsed by all staff.
- As has been noted, it is critical that the Department continue to budget some funding for marketing efforts. The level of funding should be tied to implementing the annual marketing plan.



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- Increasing the use of on-line registration for programs should be emphasized and the ability to sign up for golf tee times as well as facility rentals should be explored. In addition, it should be possible to register for any parks and recreation program or service at RIFAC anytime that the center is open.
- There needs to be continuing efforts to “brand” the Department through all publications, promotional materials, flyers, signs, web site, and other items. All marketing materials need to have the same format, look, logo, etc.
- The annual marketing efforts should continue to have a formal evaluation mechanism to determine the overall effectiveness of the plan as well as specific marketing efforts.
- Expanding sponsorship opportunities for key programs and services (both existing and new) will not only help to promote the programs themselves but may also provide funding to maintain or add new programs. This should be a simple program with basic levels of sponsorships established based on a yearly basis, the magnitude of the program, and the cost of providing the program. It is recognized that it could take a number of years to totally institute a full sponsorship program. This could include the establishment of naming rights for existing and new facilities.
- The areas of focus for marketing in the short term should be:
  - Increasing the retention rate for RIFAC members.
  - Increasing utilization rates for facilities.
  - Increasing overall participation rates in recreation programs and services.
  - Promoting facility rentals.
  - Increasing the use of on-line program registration.
- There are a number of specific marketing tools that should be utilized, these include:
  - A survey of residents should be conducted on a 3-4 year basis. This survey should be conducted in-house and should gather opinions regarding facilities, staff, programs and services, and future needs.
  - The use of email as a viable communications medium needs to be encouraged and should include specific demographic groups and program participants. It is recognized that not all individuals in the city may have access to email.
  - On a yearly basis a series of focus groups should be held with individuals who are both users and non-users of Department facilities or programs to determine future needs and expectations.



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- The manner in which users find out about Department facilities, programs and services, needs to be tracked on a regular basis and should guide future marketing resource allocation and areas of focus.
- The existing Department website needs to be updated with more interactive features and much more information on programs and services, more pictures of events and activities, and how parks and facilities can serve the community. All facility schedules, fees, programs and services should be available from the website. Website content should be updated at least every six months.
- There will need to be better utilization of social media as communication and promotional tools for programs and activities offered by the Department. This should be particularly effective for youth and young adults. This will require greater latitude in the specific social media policies that are in place in the City.

### *Performance Measures*

- There needs to be a greater emphasis placed on tracking actual use of the individual facilities on an hourly, daily, and annual basis to determine how they are in fact being used. Hours of operation, staffing levels, and resource allocation should all be tied to this assessment.
- All full-time staff should continue to have an annual performance appraisal completed that clearly outlines not only superior and acceptable performance but also identifies where improvement is necessary. A formal work plan should be instituted as part of this process (this is currently underway). The work plan should establish specific measurable goals and areas of focus for the next year. Staff should then be held accountable to meet these goals. This should include on-going monitoring and write-ups for poor performance and/or failure to follow policies.

All part-time staff should also have a yearly evaluation completed and areas of needed improvement noted.

- Full-time job assignments should be by function and driven by overall organizational needs, not based on personal abilities or likes.
- Formal agreements need to be in place for all user groups utilizing City recreation and parks facilities.



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- Specific priorities of use for each space in each facility should be developed to guide programming use, drop-in use, and rentals. The priorities should be set up by time of day, day of week, and season of the year. This will ensure that all spaces are being used to their maximum potential.
- A capacity/use analysis (number of uses/activities for the hours available) should be completed for each major space in recreation facilities (primarily RIFAC) to determine the current percentage of utilization.
- All in-house programs should have strict minimum numbers of registrants that ensure enrollment and revenues are adequate and there is the best use of space and time at Department facilities.
- In general, programs should have an overall cancellation rate of approximately 15%-20%. Numbers that are higher than this level indicates that either too many or not the right type of programs are being offered. Levels below 15% indicate that not enough new program ideas are being explored.
- The retention rate for RIFAC memberships should be at least 70% on a yearly basis.
- The Sports Division needs a code of conduct for participants and players and an in-house youth coaches training program or a comprehensive coaches manual. In addition all coaches and officials should have background checks completed (as should any staff or volunteers in the Department who have contact with children). The Division should also require that any youth sports organizations that utilize City fields have the same.

### ***Key Recommendations***

- The role of the Parks and Recreation Board needs to be changed to more of an advisory function.
- The department needs to update its operations policies and procedures.
- Establish an overall staffing philosophy and plan.
- Develop a strong staff training and education program.
- Develop 3-4 general categories for part-time staff.
- Reorganize job responsibilities of the Recreation and Golf Divisions.



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- Develop a five year program plan to guide future recreation programs and services.
- Complete a lifecycle analysis of existing recreation programs.
- Determine what programs and services should be offered in-house vs. contracting for the program.
- Parks and Recreation needs to develop a basic marketing plan for the Department.
- Expand the sponsorship opportunities for programs and services.
- Formal agreements need to be in place for all organizations that utilize City parks and recreation facilities.



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### **Section VIII – Action Plan**

Based on the findings of the Rock Island Parks & Recreation Department Operational Audit and Business Plan Study, the following is the recommended action plan as developed by Ballard\*King & Associates. Ultimately, the action plan will need to be accepted by the Parks and Recreation Department, endorsed by the Parks and Recreation Board and adopted by the City of Rock Island's administrative staff and elected officials. It also must be recognized that this action plan will require considerable staff time to implement. Each of the action items are listed in a summary form. For more detailed information, refer to the original description in the body of this report.

#### ***Short Term (1 year)***

There are an extensive number of challenges facing the Parks and Recreation Department but this list of short term action items should be able to be accomplished within the next year.

- Determine the City's commitment to parks and recreation facilities and services. The level of funding will either need to be increased or services curtailed. If services are going to be reduced a specific analysis will need to be completed to determine which facilities and parks should be closed, services reduced, or management moved to another organization.
- Determine the viability of asking the voters to increase the level of funding for parks and recreation.
- Develop alternatives to having to assess depreciation costs directly to Parks and Recreation enterprise funds.
- Ensure that the Parks and Recreation Department is in full compliance with established City budget procedures and policies.
- Change the role of the Parks and Recreation Board to more of an advisory function.
- Reorganize job responsibilities of the Recreation and Golf Divisions.
- Establish and classify parks by the 6 levels of maintenance service and indoor facilities by 3 levels of maintenance.
- Establish long term operational and management goals to guide the budget process.



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- Update Department operations policies and procedures.
- Develop a comprehensive emergency action plan for the Department.
- Develop a formal fee policy.
- Develop a basic marketing plan for the Department.
- Establish an overall staffing philosophy and plan.
- Eliminate the towel and laundry service at RIFAC and limit the drop-in child care hours.
- Include fitness classes as part of the membership fees for RIFAC.
- Change Hauberg Civic Center to a rental and events center only.

### ***Middle Term (2-3 years)***

There are a significant number of middle term action items that will need to be addressed in the 2-3 year time frame.

- Determine funding levels and sources for capital investment in existing parks and recreation facilities.
- Revise the current budget by establishing true “cost center” accounts for parks, facilities and services in the Department.
- Develop a prioritized 5 year CIP plan for the entire Department.
- Develop a five year program plan.
- Determine what recreation programs and services should be offered in-house and which should contracted.
- Develop a comprehensive operations plan for the Department.
- Establish a comprehensive written maintenance plan with a preventative maintenance program.



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- Introduce a maintenance management software program for tracking all maintenance work.
- Develop a specific maintenance plan and standards for athletic fields.
- Complete a full ADA assessment of all parks and facilities.
- Determine which maintenance functions should be contracted to outside vendors.
- Determine which user groups or organizations can be responsible for the actual maintenance of parks or facilities under the direction of Parks and Recreation.
- Identify 3-5 grants a year to pursue for funding specific aspects of recreation programming and/or facility development.
- Complete a cost-benefit analysis of possibly closing the greenhouse.
- Study converting Saukie Golf Course to a seasonal operation and establish strict open and closing dates for Highland Springs.
- Upgrade the weight/cardio equipment at RIFAC and develop a replacement plan.
- Explore the viability of contracting for the management and operation of Hauberg Civic Center.
- Study moving the operations and maintenance budget of Schiebert Riverfront Park out of Parks and Recreation.
- Adopt a policy that requires user groups to either help with the maintenance of athletic fields or require that they pay at least a portion of the cost of the service.
- Establish a comprehensive scholarship program with outside funding.
- Develop a strong staff training and education program.
- Develop 3-4 general categories for part-time staff.
- Establish formal agreements for all organizations that utilize City parks and recreation facilities.



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### ***Long Term (4-5 years)***

There will need to be a concerted effort and a specific plan to complete all of the action items that have been listed in the Short, Middle and Long Term categories.

- Track all maintenance and costs by function and facility.
- Complete an asset inventory and complete a prioritized list of deferred maintenance items.
- Establish lifecycle cost estimates for all furniture, fixtures and equipment.
- Plan for the addition of another slide and splash pad at Whitewater Junction.
- Conduct an economic impact study on athletic tournaments and other activities and events that draw outside users to the City.
- Complete a lifecycle analysis of existing recreation programs.
- Expand the sponsorship opportunities for programs and services.
- Update the City's parks and recreation master plan.