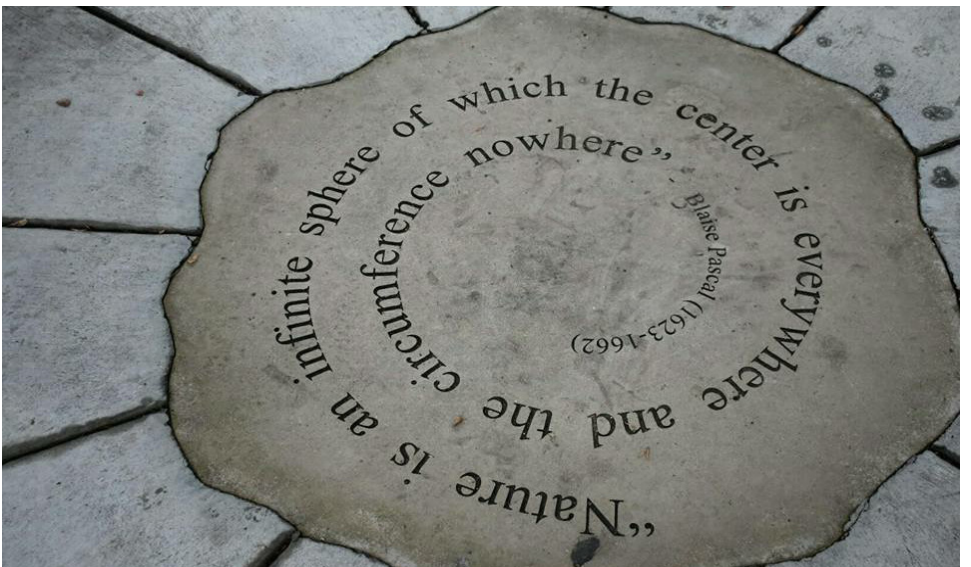


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# CHAPTER 3 RECREATION PROGRAMMING & PARTNERSHIPS

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

There are many reasons Ramsey is a remarkable city to reside: agricultural roots which provide a sense of authenticity, growing opportunities spurred by new development, extensive parks and trails system to connect residents, and a sense of community drawn from shared experiences. Uniqueness can even be found in the physical shape of Ramsey. Within the winding boundaries formed by the Mighty Mississippi and Wild and Scenic Rum River, a diversity of residents can be found—each with their own individual identity, background, family, means of living, and interests that influenced their reason for calling Ramsey home.

Parks and recreation agencies offer the ability to positively impact their respective communities through safe and accessible ways to recreate. Departments in this capacity work to increase economic value in their city and simultaneously provide ways to improve quality of life for residents. An established parks and recreation department increases the value of property, attracts business opportunities, and reduces costs of health care, social services, and police departments. On the individual basis, participants in recreation programs gain substantial benefits in both their physical and social health. Participation in Recreation can reduce self-destructive behavior, lower risk of diseases, improve longevity of life, build strong bonds within a community and enhance overall wellbeing (NRPA & American Planning Association Cite, Trust for Public Land). Services from parks and recreation departments are vital to achieve well-balanced human development. Section 3 will explore the impacts of a robust parks and recreation system on both the community and individual level.

Ramsey encompasses 29 square miles, and boasts 500 acres of municipal parkland which contain [x city parks], two regional parks, [x miles of trails], [x river miles]. With natural spaces as such, Ramsey proves to be an attractive place to start a family, retire, or invest. Businesses are drawn to the opportunities presented from a growing population, while residents are still able to appreciate the quaint roots of Ramsey the and extensive green-spaces provided by protected parks, greenways and open space As Ramsey continues to grow and change, the Parks and Recreation services is placed in an opportune position to establish itself and have a long-lasting effect on the community.

Ramsey's Park and Recreation department can help solidify



Figure 1.1 Agriculture



Figure 1.2 Natural resources

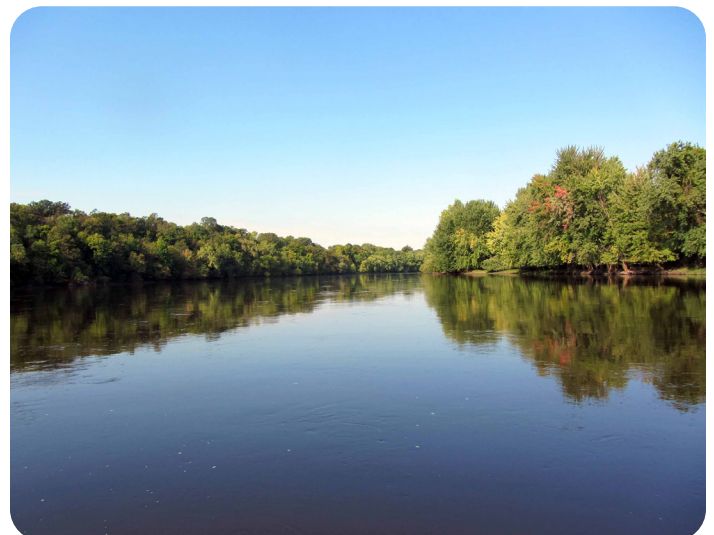


Figure 1.3 Inviting public places

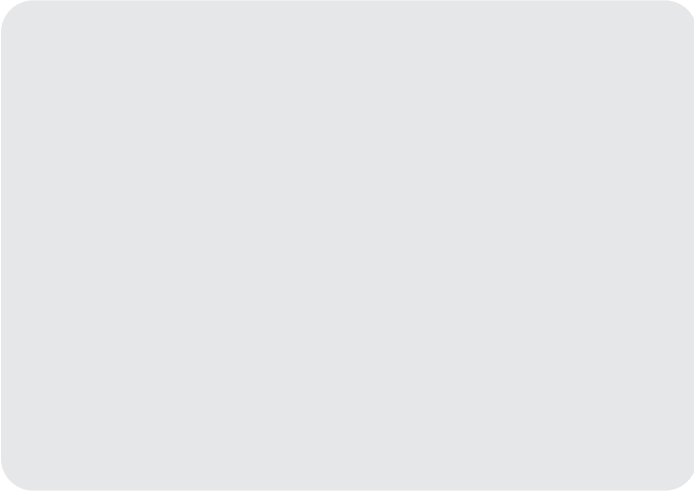


Figure 1.4 Age in



Figure 1.5 History of settlement

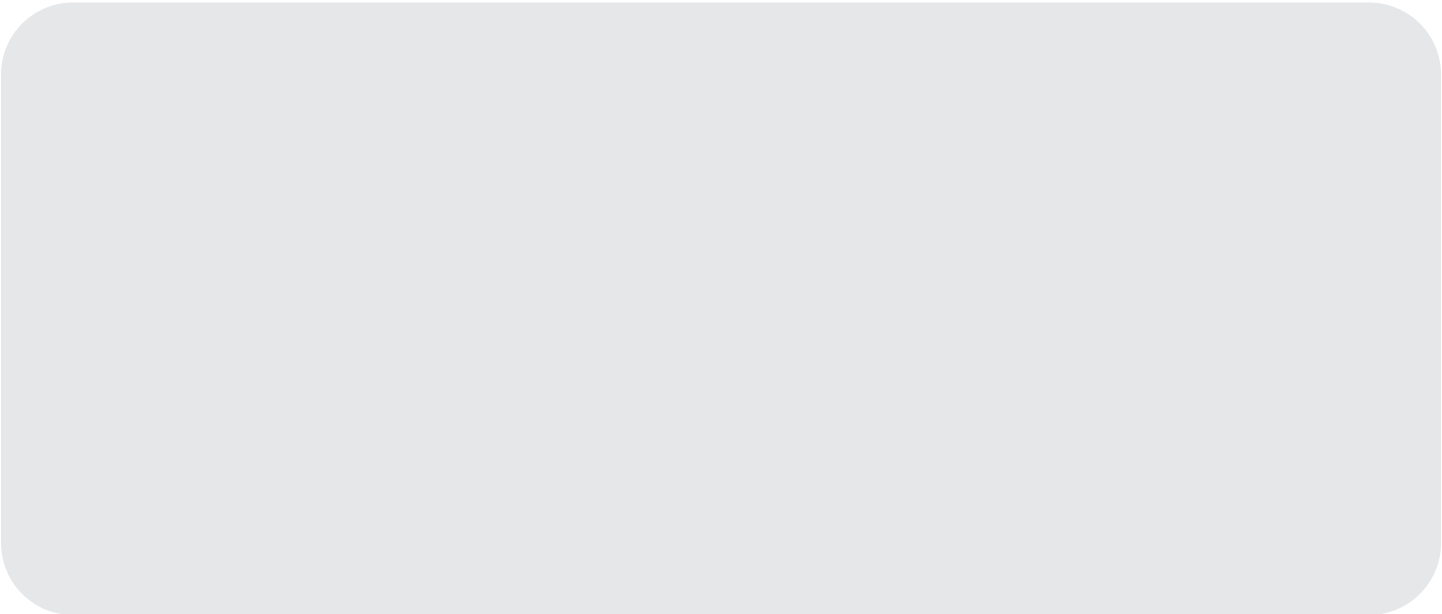


Figure 1.6 Mississippi River

positive growth with recreation opportunities that promote active and healthy lifestyles to improve the quality and longevity of life. An effective department adds significant value to the City by enhancing its livability.

The purpose of the [entire chapter name in PSP] is to explore relevant theory in recreation programming, identify a need and framework for future programs, and put in place realistic goals and strategies to achieve them. As the City that is relatively new to recreation programming, it is vital we build a strong foundation in recreation to effectively develop partnerships, create services that are efficient, effective and yield a continuing return on investments. This chapter is organized into x distinct sections. It will begin with background information on demographics and trends in Ramsey, [call for need/impact of recreation], .... [this chapter] is designed to interconnect with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and approved Strategic Action Plan. Additionally, it will support and respond to initiatives found throughout the Park Systems Plan.

### MISSION AND CORE VALUES

[Expand for parks as well, 2040 comp plan]

#### Mission

The City previously has adopted a mission to “work together to responsibility grow our community, and provide quality, cost-effective, and efficient government services.” [insert visual of mission & core value]. This section will describe how the Parks and Recreation Department will instill the City mission

throughout [insert for entire parks system] and various aspects of recreation programming. [statement about parks as a whole for the mission].

### Core Values

The Parks and Recreation Department will reflect of the City's Core values in program development, with a focus on the following:

**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY** The Department will evaluate programs with cost efficiency in mind. Fiscal responsibility will be achieved through careful planning to ensure services offered are beneficial and relevant for our residents. We aim to strike a balance between accessibility and cost recovery. The added community value from parks and recreation will be carefully analyzed and considered when planning for the future of parks and programming. **Section x** will highlight the framework for recreation program funding and cost analysis.

**COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK** The Department takes great pride in our partners. We seek to form mutually beneficial relationships with our local entities whenever possible. Healthy partnerships are essential to build a strong community and help us provide higher quality programs for residents, while promoting the local economy. **Section x** will provide details and examples on our partnerships.

**EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES** The Department will study the needs of residents to ensure provided services have significant benefits on both the individual and community levels. We seek to be responsive through constant communications and feedback from residents. **Framework for how these services will be provided can be found in section X.**

**ADAPTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING** The Department is proud to promote continuous learning for all. We will be adaptable to the needs of residents and trends in recreation. Services will be offered to keep regular participants engaged as well as encourage new users to participate. The impact of parks and recreation on continuous learning can be **found X**. Details on integration of adaptability and continuous learning can be found in **section Y**.

### HISTORY OF RECREATION IN RAMSEY

[Hold for background of Recreation in Ramsey, tee up for necessity of programs/call for need]

### WHY PROVIDE RECREATION IN RAMSEY?

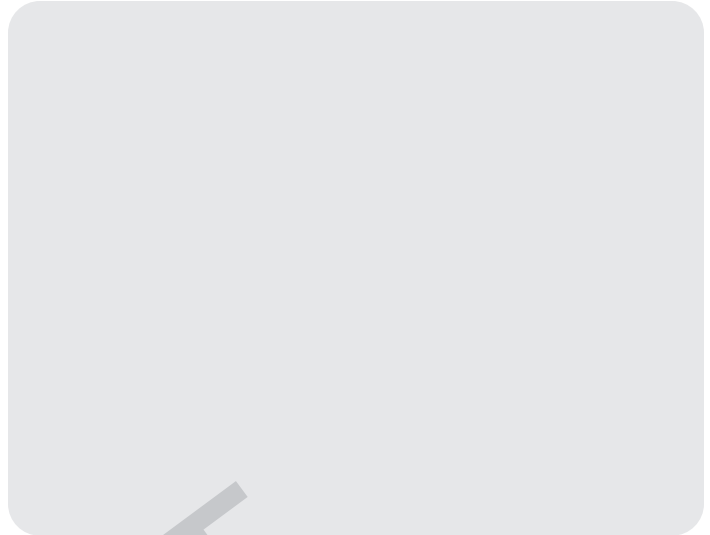


Figure 1.7 Health/living



Figure 1.8 Urban agriculture

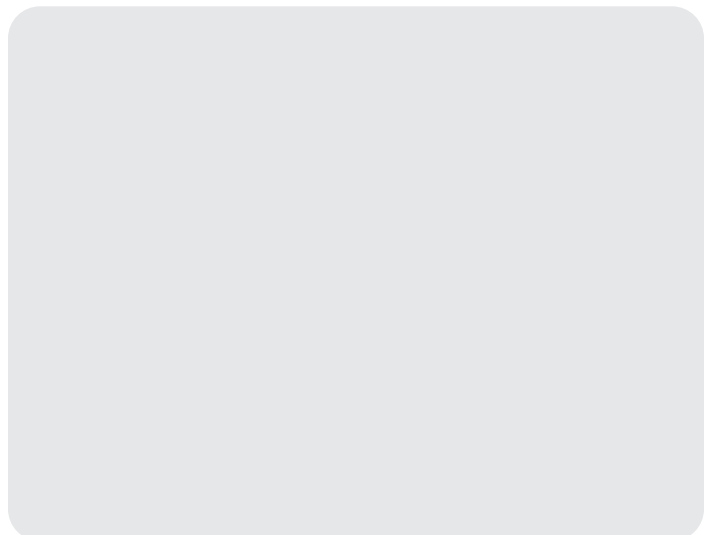


Figure 1.9 Green infrastructure



Figure 1.10 Green infrastructure

Parks and Recreation services are not only an important aspect of life in Ramsey, but are among the essential elements to the quality of life for residents. Residents interact with the Parks and Recreation Department on a daily basis—[walking paths witness footsteps year round; residents celebrating life milestones with their loved ones in reserved park buildings; an amphitheater filled with people enjoying music emanating from the Concert series; and a diverse offering of classes and events for residents to enroll.] Parks and recreation programming promote active living through providing these opportunities and facilities. They can enhance the wellbeing of residents by providing safe spaces to spend time in nature, fostering their hobbies through program offerings and help build a stronger community bond over shared experiences.

Well established recreation programs create an inviting atmosphere and become intertwined in the lives of residents. In the summer months, live music is welcomed at The Draw. Residents know to gather on Thursday evenings to watch a new band each week. As partnerships have grown stronger, and the series has expanded, supplemental programs have been added. [Art in the Park], [Car Show]. [speak more on partnerships].

The Concert Series is one example of the components that create a deeper value to what it means to reside in Ramsey. Recreation programs as such offer a space to come together, socialize and spend time outdoors. [other added values to community, briefly mention before next chapter elaborates]

Section 3 will discuss in detail the overall impact of engagement in parks and recreation and how a strong recreation program can impact the City of Ramsey.



Figure 1.12 Green infrastructure



Figure 1.11 Green infrastructure

### Summer Draw Series Highlight

2020 celebrates the 10th year of the Summer Concert Series here in Ramsey. Throughout the years...



# CHAPTER 2 | TRENDS

## INTRODUCTION

In an effort to enhance community engagement, be cost efficient, and offer services of quality...

## TRENDS IN RAMSEY

### Demographics

As of 2018, 27,051 people in 9,211 unique households called Ramsey home. Steady growth is seen from the year 2000, when the population was under 15,510, to now (Metropolitan Council, 2018). This growth in our population is projected to reach 39,500 residents living in 13,500 different households by 2040 (2040 Comp Plan).

As the population has grown, household dynamics have shifted. Within our 9,211 households; 30.45% are married families with children, 9.34% are unmarried families with children, 41.17% are families without children, 15.11% lived alone, and the remaining 3.93% are non-family households (The American Communities Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017). In comparison to the 2000 data, there are notable changes. The most significant being a decrease in married families with children. Part of the decrease can be attributed to a slight increase of unmarried families with children, increase in families without children, and increase in those who lived alone.

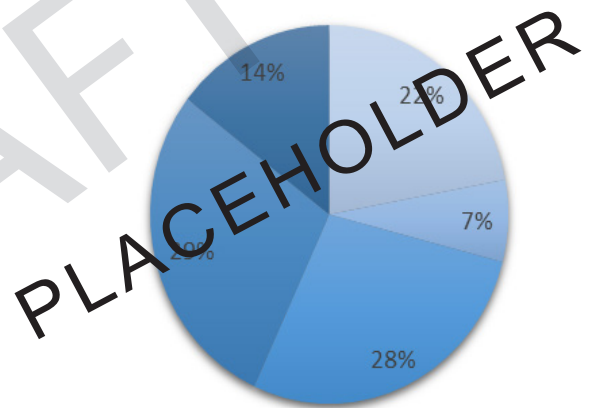
Age demographics of Ramsey provide both a dynamic and

insightful lens into the needs of residents. It is essential to understand how population age changes in order to offer appropriate services. Within recreation, we want to offer programs that respond to the needs of our residents. An example of this is noted above- while the proportion families with children has significantly gone down, due to an overall rising population, the total number of children has actually increased. By looking at age an age breakdown, we be sure to offer relevant programming for now, and predict future programming.

### Demographic Influences on Recreation

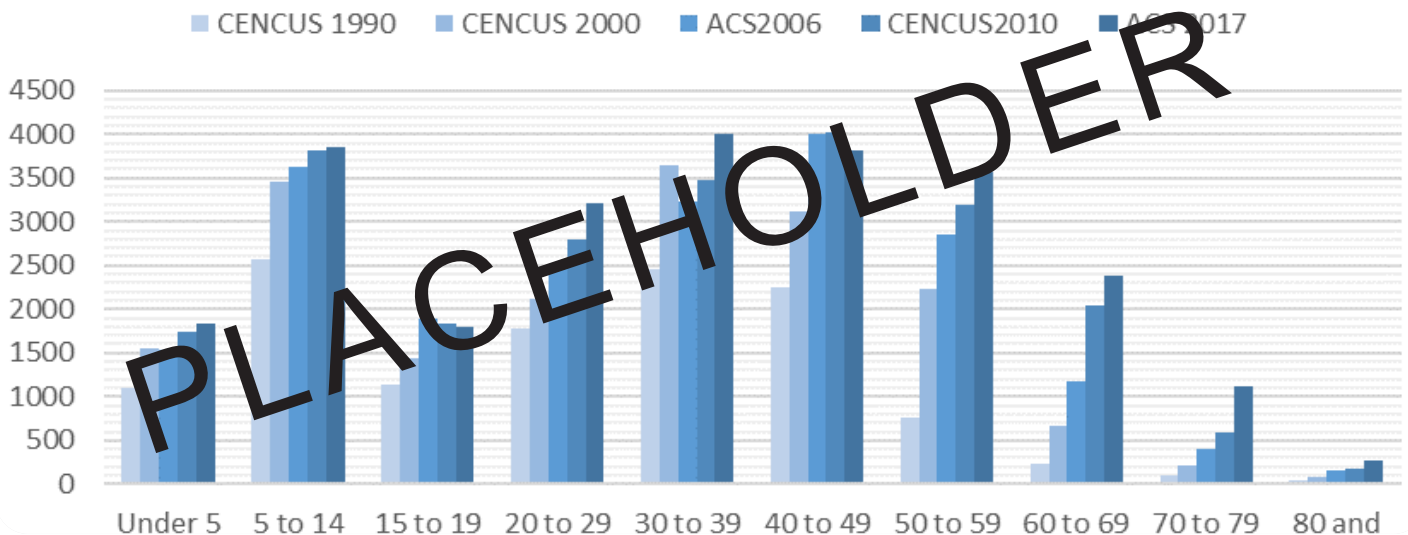
Human development is ever-changing. From the time we are born, to the time we retire, different things are required to satisfy our

ACS 2017 age breakdown

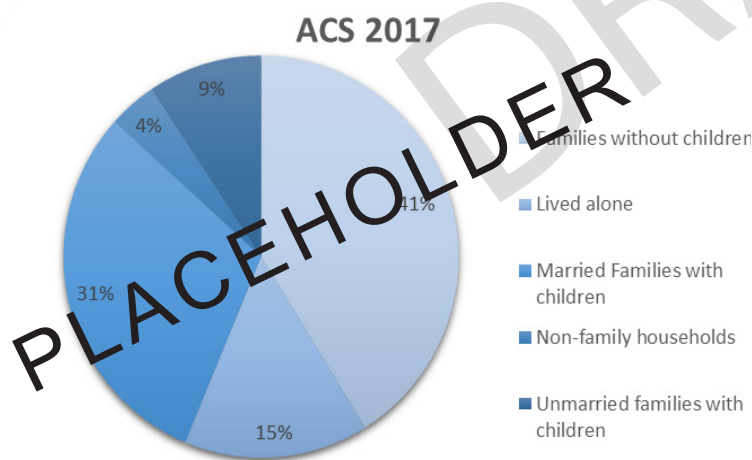
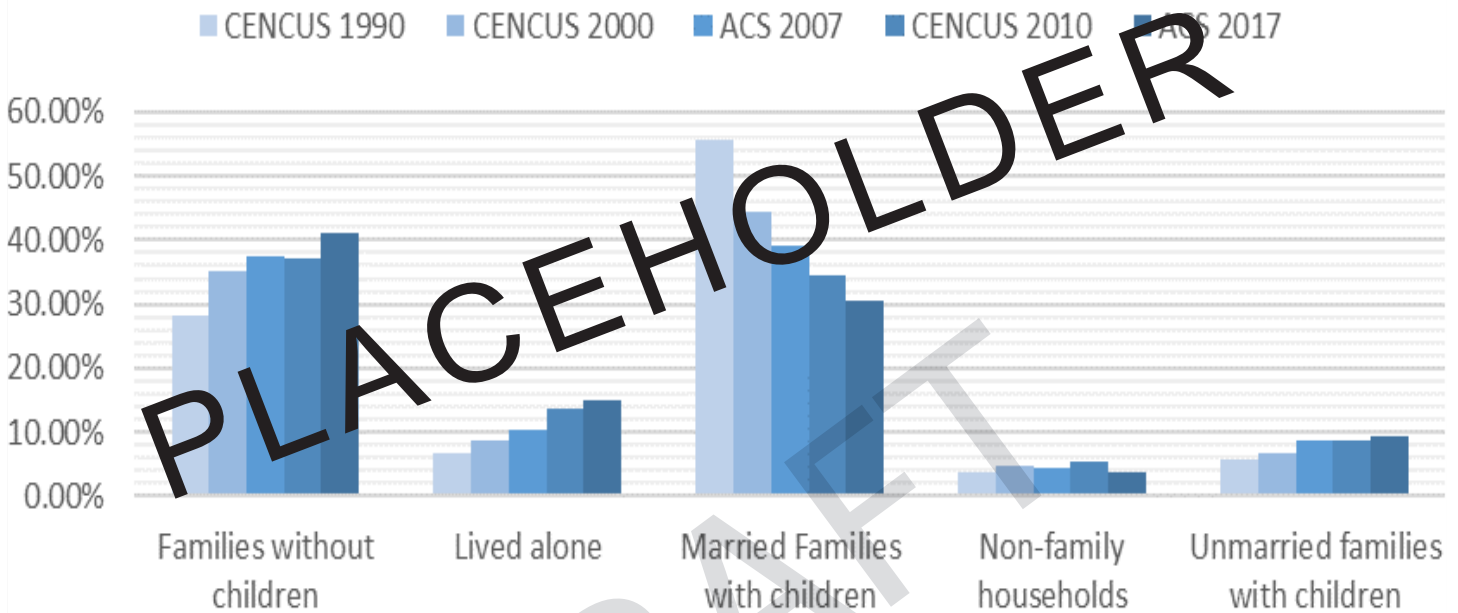


Legend: 14 and under, 15 to 19, 20 to 39, 40 to 59, 60 and over

## Population Age Trends



## Family Type Trends



will carry with them throughout their life. This is especially important now with the newest generations seeing an exponential increase of screen time in youth, impacting their development. In Ramsey about 40% of households have children. Those under 5 were 7.12% of the population from 2013-2017 (ACS).

**YOUTH:** Time spent outdoors in childhood is rapidly diminishing, as are the benefits children receive from it. This decreased time recreating in nature can contribute to a more sedentary lifestyle that will follow youth through adulthood (Bento, Dias/ Porto Biomed Journal Cite). Biologist E.O.Wilson, notes that children are naturally “biophilic”- or drawn towards wildlife and to the outdoors. Children have a natural affinity for environmental education, making it an effective springboard for the inclusion of many other areas of study and the development of critical life skills (Mann & Hensley, 2002). Children between the ages of 5 and 14 are 14.94% of Ramsey’s population. This proportion of the population can benefit from recreation opportunities as they provide positive self-esteem, healthy lifestyles and develop skills for a successful adulthood. Section X will speak more on the impacts of recreation on the development of youth.

interests and wellbeing. Age groups are frequently utilized as a means to classify programs in a way to account for these changes proceed through development. Age categories can be broken down into the following: 1-5 years, preschool; 6-12, youth; 13-18, teen; 19-54 adult; and 55+, senior.

**PRESCHOOL:** Recreational play is a necessity in the early development of youth. It helps develop the emotional, social, cognitive and physical aspects of life for children that they

**TEEN:** As youth transition into their teenage and early adulthood years, they are tasked with developing a sense of self and responsibility. At this point they go through a tremendous amount of biophysical and neurobehavioral changes. Approximately 7% of Ramsey’s population is in this period of development (7% is an estimate, as available data encompasses 15 to 19, not 13-18). In this point of adolescents, the brain is easily shaped by social learning through experience, direct interaction, self-reflection, education, and interaction with adults and peers. It is important to remember that adolescents are valuable resources to invest in, and not problems to be solved. Adolescents want to develop their capacities, and they need the type of opportunities that recreation programs can provide for them (cite NRPA 3).

**ADULT:** Adult programs are targeted to a range of ages and interests, as these opportunities are typically available to anyone ages 18 years and older. For the sake of clear cut categories, we will separate adult and senior programming. While youth and seniors tend to be most targeted in recreation, it is important that we do not overlook the benefits adults can receive from programming as well. [briefly mention physical and mental health for adults] It is notable that in the United States only 3

in 10 adults are regularly active during their leisure time, and 4 in 10 adults are not active at all (Schoenborn, 2002). In Anoka County, one in four residents meet the CDC recommendations for activity. Beyond physical fitness, recreation opportunities offer increased well-being for adults, which can be found further discussed in Section 3. Those who are aged 20-54 are 50.1% of the population.

**SENIOR:** As our Baby Boomer generation ages, there will be a greater need for services for seniors. Inactivity is known to increase with age. Recreation can enhance the lives of seniors through active living. Seniors who participate in recreation can limit the potential onset of diseases and impairment often associated with the aging process. Engaging in recreation activities that include a physical element can also help the aging population lead independent by helping them remain mobile, flexible and keeping their cognitive abilities sharp (source). About 1 in 5 (20.87%) of residents fall into the 55+ category and can benefit from senior programming. More information on the impact of programs for seniors can be found in section X.

### Economy State of the Economy in Ramsey



Economic standing can be indicative of a person’s ability to participate in recreation programs, especially those with fees. The 2016 average annual wages were \$47,527. This puts Ramsey slightly under the Anoka County average of \$49,918. However, median household income was \$86,800 in Ramsey, compared to \$70,900 in Anoka County. In 2015, approximately 3.5% of Ramsey lived below the poverty level (income of \$24,250 per year for a family of four), 4.5% between 100% and 149%, and 5.2% between 150% and 184% of the poverty line.

In 2018, an estimated 6,864 people held jobs in the City. The job breakdown is as follows (INSERT CHART INSTEAD OF TEXT):

- 34 % manufacturing, 11% retail trade, 6% wholesale trade, 6% health care and social assistance, 6% educational services, 5% accommodation and food services, 4% administrative and waste services, 3% public administration, 2% finance and insurance, 1% arts, entertainment, and recreation, 1% information, 19% all other industries (Metropolitan Council, 2016).

The employment forecast is positive, with an estimated increase to 7,500 by the year 2030, and 8,100 by 2040 (MET Council source) Unemployment rates remain steady around 3.5%. Ramsey falls slightly under the national average of 4% according

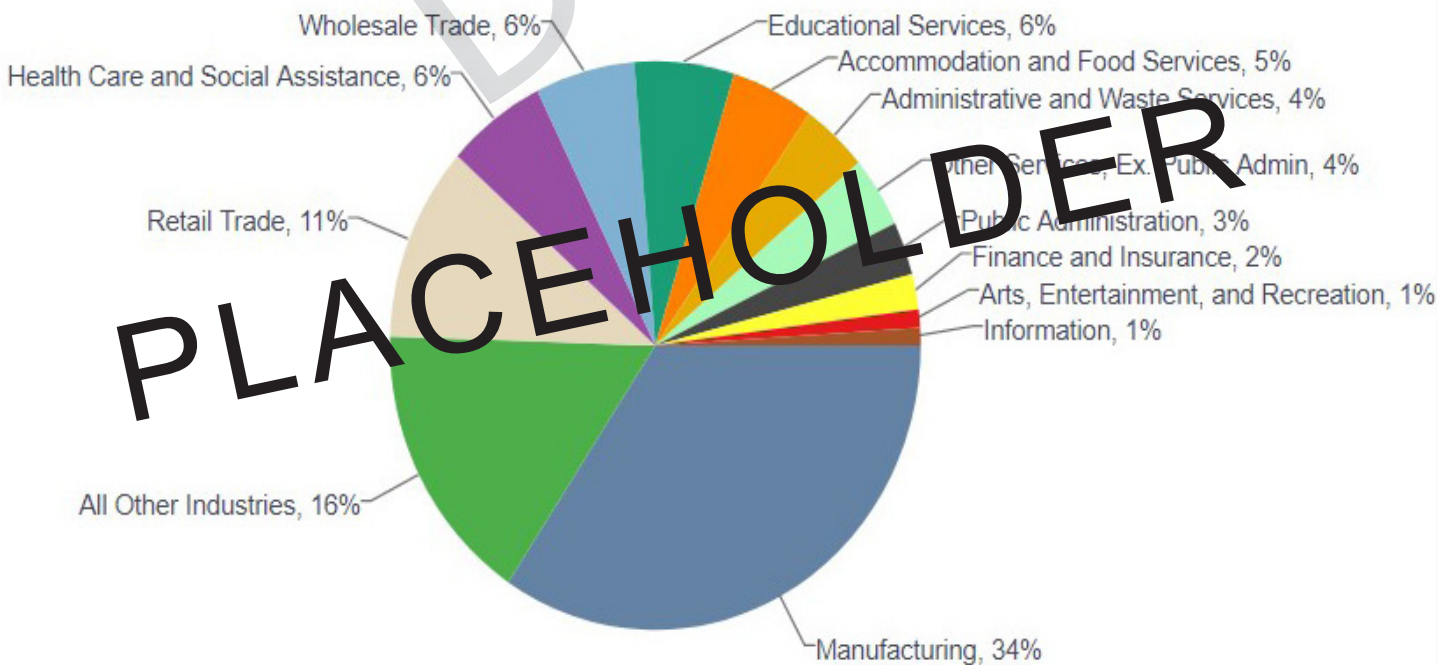
to the National Conference of State Legislature. Unemployment is projected to steadily decrease over the next few years (Congressional Budget Office, 2017).

### Recreation Impact on Economics

Local and regional public park agencies directly provided more than 356,000 jobs in the United States during 2013 (NRPA 2). In 2015 alone, America’s local public park and recreation agencies generated more than \$154 billion in economic activity and their operations and capital spending supported more than 1.1 million jobs. (NRPA) (INSERT MINNESOTA STATS & GRAPHIC) . Local and regional park systems spent an estimated \$22.4 billion on capital programs, leading to about \$59.7 billion in economic activity, a contribution of \$29.2 billion to the GDP, \$19.6 billion in labor income and more than 340,000 jobs (NRPA 2). In Minnesota alone, \$2.8 billion in Economic Activity, and 22,411 jobs created (NRPA 2). The City of Ramsey is fortunate to have two Regional Parks and two Regional trails within its borders.

A University of Minnesota study has found every dollar invested in conserving natural lands nets a return of \$1.70 to \$4.40. During the summer months, Minnesota’s state parks generate \$1 million every week from camping, vehicle permits, and sales of wood, pop, ice, and merchandise in state parks. Similarly,

Employment by Industry in Ramsey



Minnesota’s non-motorized trail users spend approximately \$2.7 billion annually on trips and equipment, and support 37,000 jobs statewide. Communities located along state and regional trails are the primary beneficiaries of this economic activity. For example, the Paul Bunyan State Trail, Heartland State Trail, and Root River State Trail each generate between \$1.2 million and \$2.2 million for their local regions respectively. The majority of this spending – 90% or more – comes from trail users who reside outside the local economy, and thus are “new” dollars that would not otherwise be spent in the community. A similar study in Wisconsin found biking-related tourism and recreation contributes nearly a billion dollars to the state economy (MN Parks and Trails). [while applies to state parks, can be seen on a smaller scale with connected opportunities and Ramsey’s unique river features]

**Recreation**  
**Recreation Trends in Ramsey**

The 2018 Community Livability Report (NCS, 2018) studied a sample of residents to better understand their perception of the city and level of engagement [create visuals for this section].

Some of the key findings (2018 NCS Community Survey):

- 85% of residents rated the City as an excellent or good place to live
- On par with national averages, 59% of residents rated health and wellness as positive, and 64% rated fitness opportunities
- Only 50% rated recreational opportunities as positive, which is considered lower in comparison to the national benchmark
- In regards to governance, 76% of citizens rated City parks at positive, and 59% rated recreation centers as positive.
  - There is not a City-owned recreation center in Ramsey. Respondents may have been referring to school facilities or private businesses.

50% of citizens stated they had attended a City-sponsored  
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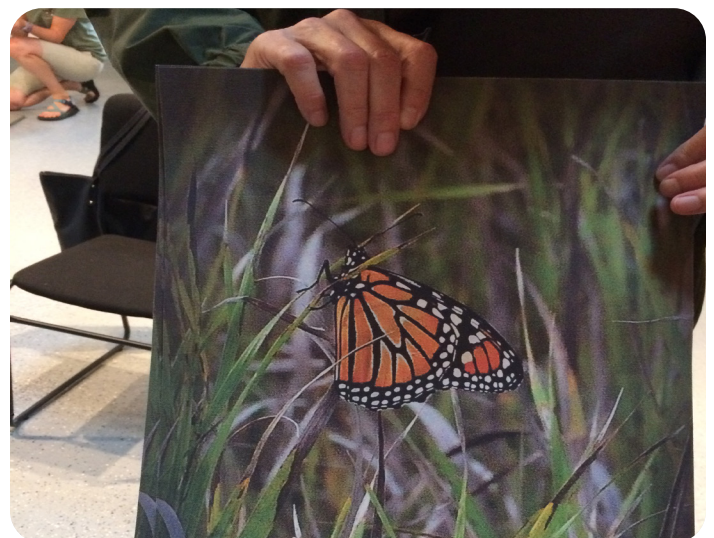
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Figure 1.13 xxxx



Figure 1.14 xxxxxx

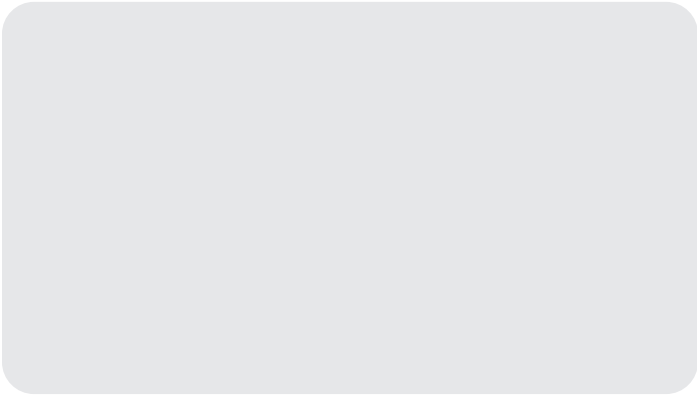


**80%** of home buyers say walking trails are a top community characteristic when choosing a new home.

**53%** of home buyers say they would prefer a home with a small yard close to a park to a home with a large yard but no nearby parks.

**52%** of home buyers say nearby bike trails are an important deciding factor when choosing a new home.

**30%** of homeowners say their neighborhood has too few parks and playgrounds.



event, up from 42% in 2016.

- Major City-sponsored events prior to 2017 include Safety Camp, The Draw Summer Event Series, Happy Days, pet clinics, recycling events, Nite to Unite, and the spring business expo.
- Only 17% have volunteered in the community, lower than comparable communities
- 87% of residents visited a City park

Overall, ratings in Ramsey for 2018 generally remained stable. Of the 94 items for which comparisons were available, 78 items were rated similarly in 2016 and 2018 and 16 showed an increase in ratings; no items showed a decrease in ratings. Some notable trends for recreation include:

- Survey respondents were more likely in 2018 to favorably rate aspects of government performance such as welcoming citizen involvement and overall confidence in City government.
- In the pillar of Community Characteristics, Ramsey residents were more likely in 2018 than in 2016 to give positive ratings to the city as a place to retire as well as to employment, fitness and cultural/arts/music activities.

[Great to see positive trends, areas that were lower than the benchmark seem to be due to lack of opportunity, especially with the high number who visit parks. programming at parks could be a great option]

### Statewide trends in Recreation

In 2017, the Minnesota DNR updated a statewide outdoor recreation household survey that had previously been conducted in 2004. Key findings from the survey included positive news that outdoor activities are an increasingly important part of most Minnesotan's lives. In 2004, data suggested that outdoor recreation participation was declining, causing concern for public agencies charged with providing outdoor recreation. Fortunately, the 2017 survey results indicate that from 2004 to 2017, the percentage of Minnesotans who reported that outdoor activities are very important increased from 57 to 70 percent. Findings also revealed that "Minnesotans see the outdoors as a place to rest and relax, connect with family and friends, and improve their health."

Favorite activities were broken up into seasonal categories, with activities such as "relaxing in the outdoors," "walking or hiking,"



“relaxing by the water,” and “picnicking outdoors” identified as highly popular year-round and three-season activities. In winter, top activities were “sledding and snow tubing,” and “ice fishing.”

These findings suggest a number of interesting possibilities: that Minnesotans prefer activities that require less equipment or advanced skills, and/or that they have not had the opportunity to develop interests and skills to participate in other activities. This is an area for additional exploration for Ramsey programs.

How we spend our time at work, with our families and in leisure has rapidly changed in recent decades considering with technological advances. As dynamics shift, some of the traditional nature based activities are declining. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Recreation Plan,

outdoor Recreation Participation Minnesota is not escaping this broad trend—evident since the 1990s—of declining per-capita participation in nature-based outdoor recreation in the United States. This is a national trend that impacts national parks, national trails, state parks, state trails and other outdoor recreational facilities. It includes activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and wilderness use (Kelly, 2008). Although the decline in these activities in Minnesota is not as large as the national decline, it is still present. The primary driving factor behind this trend is a decline in involvement among young adults (ages 20–45) and their children. Today’s young adults and youth are not as engaged in traditional nature-based activities as older generations were. Declines in participation reduce the number of Minnesotans who receive the personal and community benefits of outdoor recreation.



These include physical activity, social and family bonding, sense of place, community pride and overall quality of life benefits that being active outdoors produces. (MN DNR REC PLAN).





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## SECTION 3 | [NECESSITY/IMPACT OF PROGRAMS]

### INTRODUCTION

“Minnesota’s outdoor recreation opportunities connect everyone to the outdoors. They create experiences that inspire a legacy of stewardship for the natural world and they provide fun, outdoor recreational opportunities that strengthen friendships, families, health and spirit now and into the future. Minnesotans experience the full range of benefits that outdoor recreation provides, reinforcing our identity as an outdoor culture.”

*MN DNR COMP PLAN*

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## RECREATION NEEDS SURVEY

### Summary

[Mesh together UMN project, and other PSP survey to be more encompassing and average out data] [notes/comments from resident feedback]

Surveys are frequently utilized in parks and recreation to assess current operations, determined the direction they are headed and quantify the need for services. Ramsey staff conducted a recreation inventory analysis in 2015 to determine offerings within a 15 minute drive of Ramsey. Public and private entities from the following areas were included: Anoka County Parks, Andover, Blaine, Champlin, Coon Rapids, Elk River, Maple Grove, Nowthen, Ramsey, Rogers, Three Rivers Park District, Elk River School District 728, and Anoka-Hennepin School District 11.

The programs gathered from these groups were separated into 127 categories and entered into a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was divided by age group and into non-athletic, athletic non-competitive, and athletic competitive categories, and details of each offering were listed in comment boxes. These potential areas to increase opportunities will be evaluated for feasibility and likely interest and then will be put into a community interest survey to find out which of these areas community members would actually like offered through programming.

Following this initial 2015 inquiry, in 2017-2018, Ramsey was selected as one of the University of Minnesota's Resilient Community Partners. There were over 21 projects across 16 different academic departments. Some of which touched on recreation offerings in the City. [findings from U of M survey & resilient communities ]

### Findings

#### Overall Trends:

[Ramsey lacking], [not much provided in the area], [residents must drive far for YMCA] [insert feedback from other survey too] [rework following section, inserted from 2017]

#### Senior Programming:

- Programming, especially outdoor and athletic programming, for ages 55+

#### Youth Programming:

- A teen center/teen specific programming
- Programming for children and adults with special needs

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#### Revamp of traditional programs:

- Programming for all ages and abilities for emerging recreational activities such as stand-up paddle boarding, bubble soccer, ultimate Frisbee, video game programming and gardening
- New twists on common programming like combining wine and cheese tasting with an art class for adults 21+.

#### Areas that are unlikely to benefit from additional programming:

- Privately operated training facilities for activities like gymnastics, aerobics, dance, and karate
- Athletic activities covered by the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association
- Activities with many organizations offering them such as ice skating lessons, swimming lessons, and musical

instrument class

#### Limitations of the study:

- Some organizations put out catalogs every season, so by the time each was studied, there may be new information available and the links referenced in the comments may be outdated. However, because most organizations put out a similar roster of programming each year, the overall data should remain accurate.
- Some catalogs were only available for the current season, so programming from other seasons may have been omitted.
- Though effort was made to include as many categories as necessary, some activities did not fall neatly into a category, so users of the information may not find what they are looking for in the spot they think it should be.

[What this means for Ramsey]

Overall this survey tells us there is room to grow. From these studies, we have found there is a hole around Ramsey where many recreation opportunities are lacking. This is a great opportunity for the City to offer new and unique programs for all age groups. Additionally, we want to continue to improve on areas we are doing well in. We affirmed from the survey that the Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association is a valuable partner to offer residents a variety of physical sport activities. **Section X will talk more about partnerships in recreation programming, and Section Y will outline goals and strategies to expand programming.**

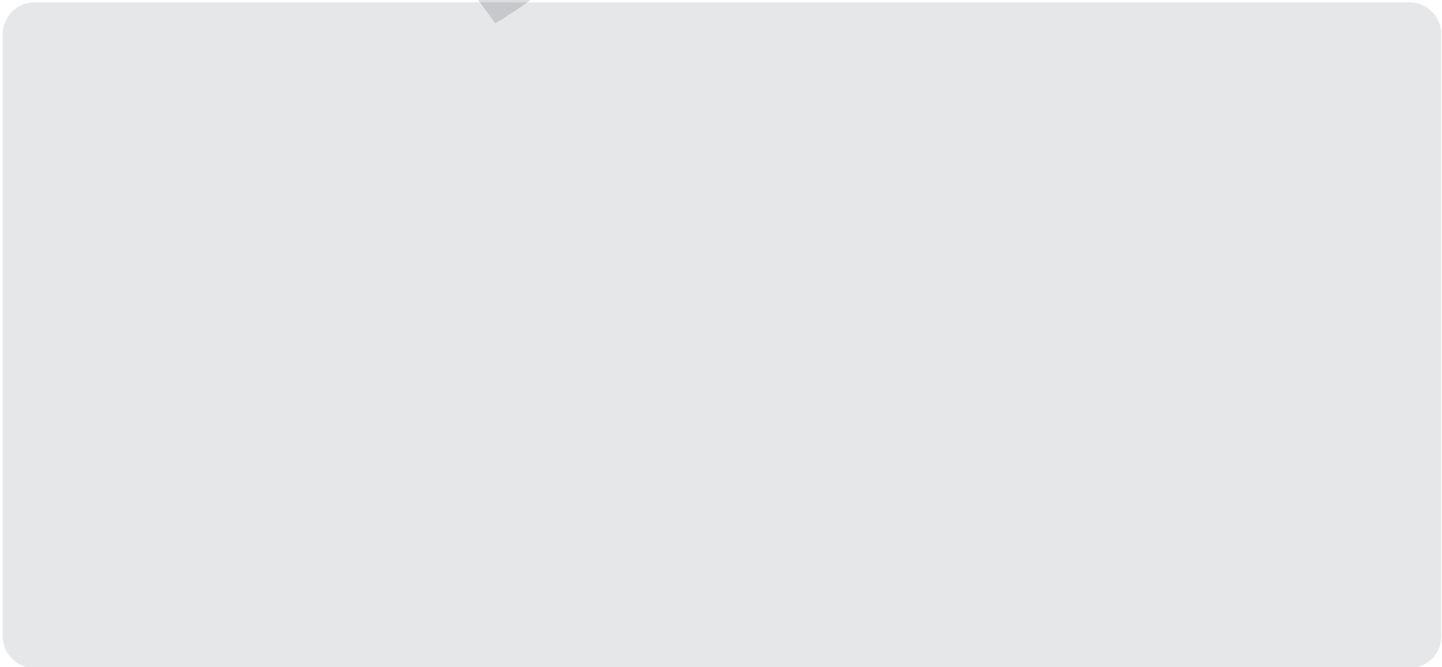
PROMOTING PERSONAL HEALTH

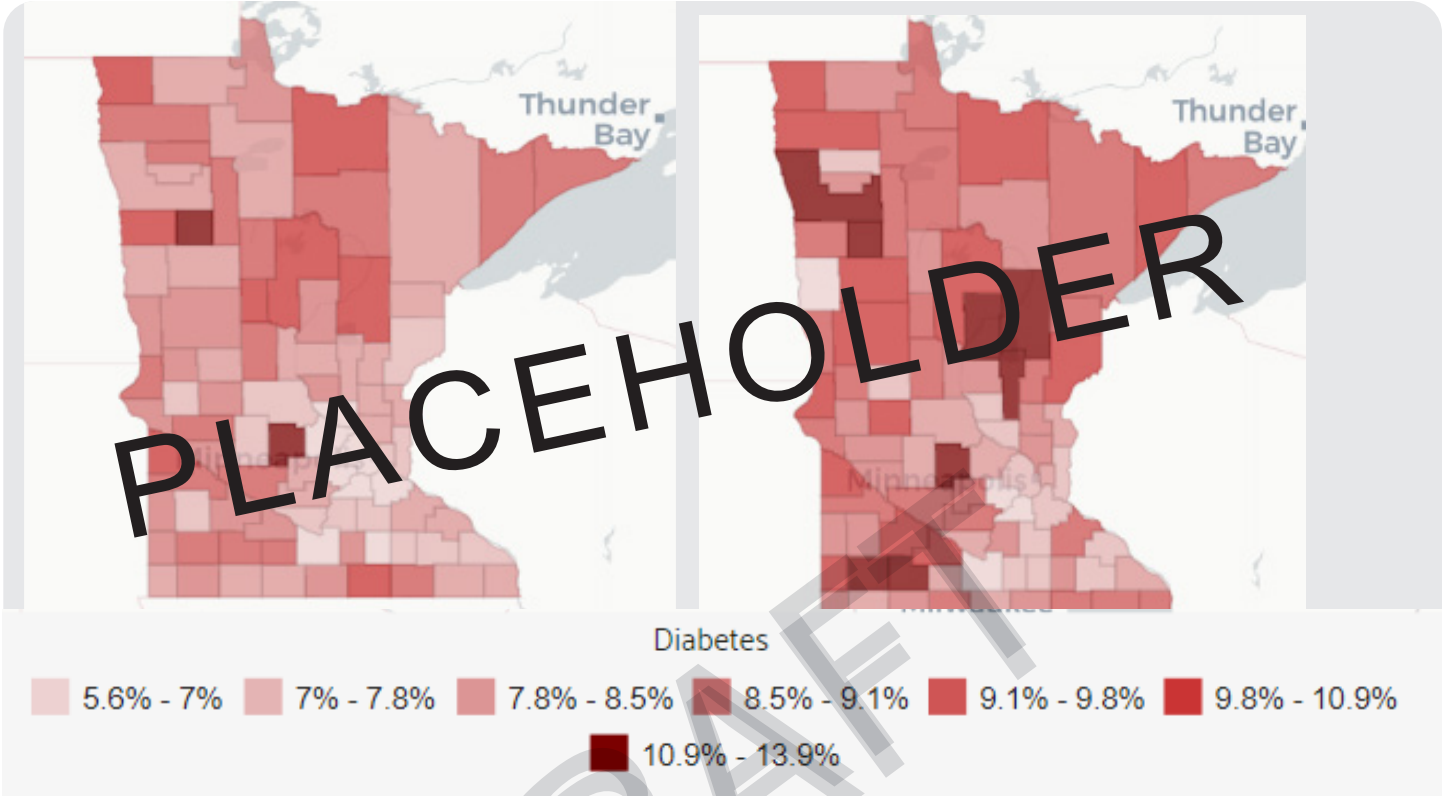
(MNDRN SCORP). “As of 2019, there have been over 400 studies that demonstrate the numerous health benefits that nature provides. Most of the research on health and nature has focused on physical health benefits. Many of the benefits discovered are helpful in preventing leading causes of chronic disease, including stress reduction; reduced blood pressure; faster healing; addiction recovery; and reduced cardiovascular, respiratory and long-term illness.

Benefits of nature exposure for cognitive development is increasingly recognized in the fields of education and human development, among others. Studies illustrate nature’s positive

effects on attentional restoration, reduced mental fatigue, improved academic performance, improved cognitive function in children and improved productivity. Increased self-esteem, improved mood, reduced anger/frustration and reduced anxiety are some of the key examples of the improvements documented by research on nature interactions for mental health.

Finally, a less well-known, but critically important benefit of time outdoors is the positive social effects at an individual or community public health scale. Several articles have found that nature facilitates social interaction, enables social empowerment, reduces crime rates and violence, and enables



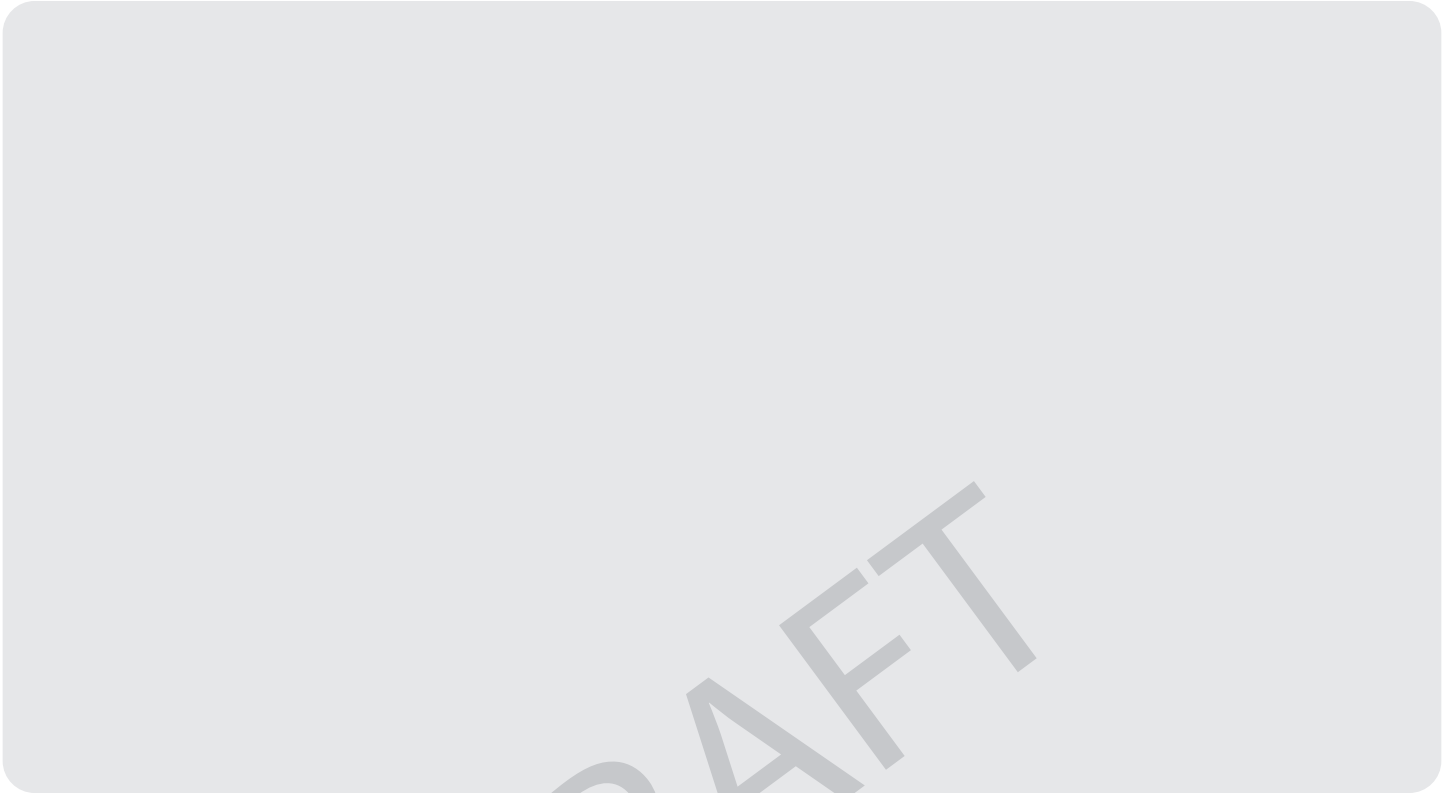


“interacial interaction, among other positive social behaviors”

**Physical Health**  
**Fitness**

Failure to engage in sufficient physical activity has potentially serious consequences. Indeed, an estimated 10.8 percent of all deaths in the United States is attributable to physical inactivity. Physical inactivity is responsible for 6.7 percent of U.S. deaths from coronary heart disease. Physical activity affects multiple systems in the body, particularly the circulatory and musculature systems. Fully one-third of all U.S. adults over age 20 have hypertension, a cause of both heart disease and stroke. This number is even higher among African Americans, among whom 44 percent are affected. (NRPA 4)

Physical activity can reduce the risk of numerous health issues, ranging from diabetes and heart disease to osteoporosis and obesity. The American Planning Association states that exposure to nature can result in lowered blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, enhanced survival after a heart attack, and improved recovery after surgery. Parks and recreation departments promote and provide numerous opportunities for physical activity. The US Centers for Disease Control found that creating places and opportunities for physical activity could lead to a 25% increase in the number of people who exercise at



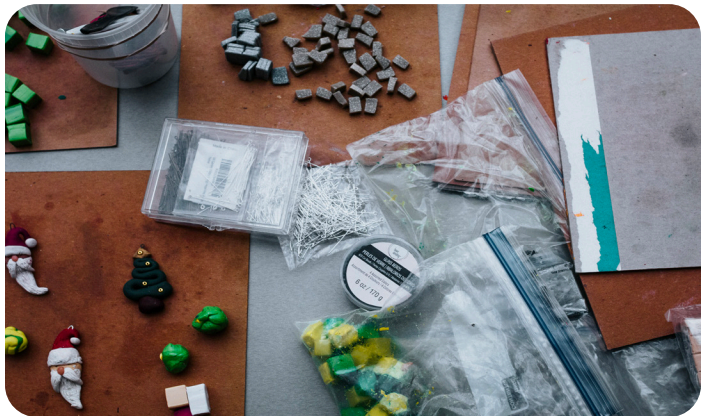
least three days a week (Recreation Management, 2007).

More than one-third of Anoka County residents are obese and one-third are overweight. The proportion is comparable to Minnesotans overall. The CDC recommends 30 or more minutes of moderate activity per day five or more days per week and 20 or more minutes of vigorous activity per day four or more days per week. Only one-quarter of Anoka County Residents met these CDC recommendation for either vigorous or moderate physical activity. Three-quarters of respondents got insufficient or no physical activity. 22% of residents reported they had not participated in any physical activity or exercise in the past 30 days. This is a slight increase from 15% in 2013 15%.



### Independent Living/Life Expectancy

Recreation services can be a valuable asset as we age. Minnesota has consistently been a national leader for various health measures, including life expectancy. Today the average life expectancy in Minnesota is 80.9 years, with Ramsey slightlying under the average at 80.0 years. This comes from the 2019 County Health Rankings that utilized data from 2015-2017 for current estimates. As much of our population transitions into their golden years, we want to ensure adequate resources to live happy and healthy lives.



It should come as no surprise the benefits of physical activity to protect elderly residents against chronic diseases and improve their daily functioning. Other than the positive effects of regular physical activity, recreation services have more to offer in terms of independent living and overall wellbeing of seniors. Often, seniors who live on their own can be prone to feel cut off from their mainstream community. This may prompt them to lose their purpose for being, and retreat further into their homes, thus increasing their health risks. It is generally accepted that as we age, our risk of depression increases. Recreation activities provide opportunities to socialize and reduce feelings of alienation and loneliness. With seniors active in the community there is an increase intergenerational understanding and bonding. Older adults involved in an organizational/recreation activity scored significantly better on the happiness scale than those who were not involved (Parks CA Source). Benefits of recreation expand well into the latter years of life. Staying active physically and socially within our communities can help us live longer, and happier lives.

**Mental Health**  
**Depression/Stress**

As our society is increasingly fast paced, stress has become a major contributor to poor health. Left unresolved, long-term stress can lead to immune system issues and illness. One in

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four Anoka County residents has been told by a health care professional that they have anxiety (24%) or depression (23%). Females were twice as likely to have depression than males (anoka county source). The experience of nature is one antidote to stress, and the body's positive response is remarkably fast, occurring within minutes. Studies by environmental psychologists show that visual exposure to nature, in the form of trees, grass and flowers, can effectively reduce stress, particularly if initial stress levels are high (source). Staying physically active is another common way to cope with mental health issues. Parks and recreation services can be a powerful tool to help those suffering tackle some of the obstacles to cope. They provide safe and accepting atmospheres to spend time outside, be physically active, foster social interactions and introduce others to new skills. [By spending time in recreation, impact]

#### Quality of life/self-esteem/growth/satisfaction

It is becoming more common to identify with the activities we participate in, seeing ourselves as "hikers," "swimmers" or "soccer players," rather than with the positions we hold at work. Parks and natural environments also have great spiritual meaning and represent a strong sense of place for many of us. They elicit fond memories of family outings, fun times, bonding with children and freedom, representing the less stressful side of our lives. Personal and Spiritual Growth Self-expression and identity affirmation is positively reinforced through participation in

recreation activities. Recreation helps us explore our inner spirit and sense of self, creating new behaviors and a new identity. This is especially important as the effects of social media have shown trends of lower self esteem. It makes it easier for us to compare ourselves to others' online personas. Recreation activities can help subdue these negative effects as improvements are made on physical abilities and socialization.

Recreation activity is important to personal life satisfaction and those who participate in recreation are notably happier. Those who recreate more often are likely to be completely satisfied with their choice of careers, friends, and their perceived success in life. The evidence strongly suggests that participation in outdoor recreation, particularly as a child, leads people to have more satisfying and fulfilling lives. Nine out of ten outdoor recreation participants express satisfaction with their personal health and fitness while the six out of ten who don't participate are unsatisfied with their personal health and fitness (ARC, 2000). Close to half of those who participate in recreation several times a week say they are "completely satisfied with the quality of their lives," compared to just one quarter of nonparticipants (ARC, 2000). The enjoyable experiences we pursue directly affect our quality of life. (Source).

Parks and recreation services not only promote time spent outside, but create an atmosphere to feel comfortable atmosphere to try things that may be daunting to try on our



own.

### Productivity

Mental, or cognitive fatigue can occur following periods of intense concentration or directed attention. Symptoms of cognitive fatigue include: irritability, lack of concentration, inability to solve problems, and increased likelihood of making mistakes or causing accidents. Working adults and students alike are prone to cognitive fatigue as there is an increased demand for their concentration for long periods, often without frequent breaks or a changes in scenery. This is especially true at a time where Americans generally tend to be overworked. We have more structured activities and tasks that extend far past the end of our workdays. The Attention Restoration Theory, or ART, suggests that certain environments can actually help individuals recover from mental fatigue. Restorative environments provide time away from tasks that require voluntary or directed attention, which allows the mind to recharge. Natural settings are particularly effective as restorative settings. These environments allow the mind to pay attention with little effort so it can relax and recover. Even brief glimpses or short amounts of time spent in a natural setting can improve brain performance and reduce stress. Visiting parks or engaging in recreation activities can act as a way to be in nature, socialize with others, and gain the benefits from being in a restorative environment.

More than 80% of the United States population now lives in

developed cities and towns (cite all of previous). In modern times work and study involve primarily mental and cognitive processes, and the use of computers has further focused human productivity indoors. The biophilia hypothesis describes an innate attraction that humans have for nature due to a long history of being directly dependent on living things for basic needs. This deep connection persists, and may explain why the experience of nearby nature may help people perform better in the office or at school (source).

## PROMOTING COMMUNITY HEALTH

Parks and recreation departments build communities by providing a place for people to gather, socialize and be around others. Today, we realize that parks are more than recreation and visual assets to communities; they are valuable contributors to larger community policy objectives, such as public health, youth development, job opportunities, social and cultural exchange, and community building.

Parks play a special role for gathering and socialization. They have something to offer everyone from young children and teens, to families, adults and the elderly. They are more than places to recreate and relate to nature; parks also offer a multi-

tude of opportunities to engage in arts and music.

A park can be a community focal point, a symbol of its vitality and character, adding to its overall health, well-being and quality of life. *“Parks and trails provide an outlet for refreshing my spirit and keeping me fit and active” – Parks & Trails Legacy Plan Public Workshop Participant.* Community members near parks value them because they give members a feeling that their community is a special place to live and that it is a natural setting in which the community can take pride (Minnesota Legacy).

### Livability Safer Neighborhoods

Safety was a top rated concern for residents of Ramsey (cite survey). Recreation services can be used to provide youth with positive ways to fill out-of-school time and reduce their risk to commit a crime. The department can service students by providing a safe place to go and engage in stimulating activities when school is not in session. Recreation program staff can help staff ensure parks and public spaces are properly maintained for safe use and provide an additional figure outside of home and school for developing youth to look up to.

Youths who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely than non-participants to have higher self-esteem, greater academic achievement and in turn, lower incidences of delinquency. Furthermore, at-risk youths have been found to especially benefit from guided recreation programming. Data has also shown that students who reported spending no time in afterschool extracurricular activities were 57 percent more likely to drop out of high school, 49 percent more likely to use drugs and 27 percent more likely to have been arrested than students who spend as much as four hours in structured activities. Park and recreation agencies have the ability to provide the programs that can address the root causes of juvenile crime. Because the types of leisure in which youth participate have profound impacts on social development, active and adult-supervised recreation programming available through park agencies are positioned perfectly to equip youth with the tools that develop positive social and cognitive skills, self-confidence and a sense of community (source).

[Safety Camp and the Home Alone Safety class example]

### Community Pride and Identity

[Draw Summer Series Placeholder]

Public parks and recreation agencies ensure community members have equal access to recreation opportunities, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, ability, ethnicity, or age. Agencies have the ability to create community “buy-in” and bring people together through nature (NRPA, 2017). Parks and recreation systems foster social interactions by providing gathering places for residents regardless of their age, economic status or ability to pay for access. This in turn aids in developing a sense of belonging across demographics (Bradley, 2013). Whether visiting a neighborhood park or attending an art class, residents have the chance to meet new people in an inviting setting. This can create community ties and make living in the area more desirable.

Engagement in parks and recreation opportunities are vital to maintaining a healthy community and provide significant positive impacts. Other than bringing neighbors together, participation encourages safer, cleaner neighborhoods and creates a livelier community atmosphere. Facilities provided by parks and recreation help improve a community’s image, socioeconomic status and enhance the areas desirability. When individuals move, they seek out a desirable community, when they retire they search for a community that will accommodate their needs. Residents recognize the numerous benefits that well-maintained open spaces and recreation programs can



have for a community (source).

### [Youth Engagement]

The amount of time that the youth of today spend outdoors is rapidly diminishing. Whether this be a rise of technology, increased school requirements, or some combination, the lack of nature play is taking a toll on physical health and well-being.

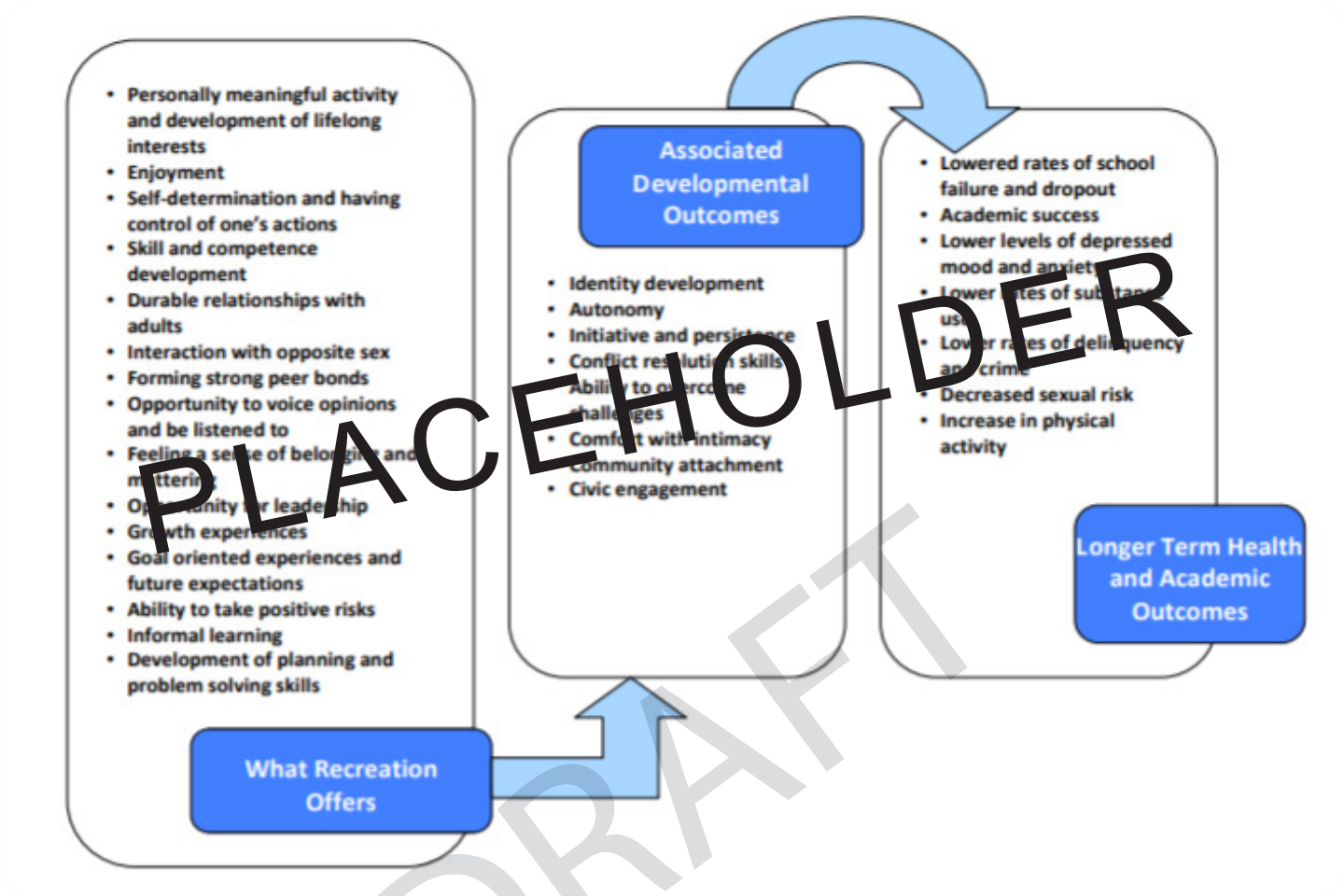
Park and recreation departments have been significant players youth development through providing services and programming. However, the case for the importance of the departments has not always been fully made. Parks and recreation departments provide more than just fun and games, or gym and swim programs. When youth participate in these programs, they gain excellent opportunities to develop and gain necessary skills to become fully functioning adults. Participation in these activities is associated with autonomy and identity development, positive social relationships, and learning conflict resolution, academic success, mental health, and civic engagement. (Witt and Caldwell, 2010, p.4, MRPA 3)

Parks and recreation programs can achieve these outcomes by providing programs that follow standards that will be outlined in (SECTION X).

When parks and recreation departments provide out-of-school time recreation programs, individuals who participate and the community at large gain valuable outcomes.

- Contribute to reducing juvenile delinquency
- Contribute to increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors
- Expose youth to less violence
- Improve children’s education performance and thus impact the quality of the future work force and the national economy
- Help decrease health care costs related to childhood obesity
- Increase the economic contributions of young people to society when they become adults
- Help youth develop self-confidence, optimism, and initiative (MRPA 3).

Park and recreation departments are ideally situated to afford both opportunities and adult guidance through activities that are intrinsically motivating. Adolescents do not need



adults to do things “to” or “for” them; rather they need to have opportunities to “develop themselves” through active experience or experiential learning. Too many parents hover over their children directing all their experiences, being involved with all their problems, and making too many decisions for them (so called “helicopter parents”). Children of helicopter parents often have little opportunity to make meaningful decisions on their own

### Family Development

Parks often serve as places for families and friends to enjoy public spaces in each other’s company (Bradley, 2013). Playgrounds may serve as a meeting place for young families, and as a family develops, they are able to use other park amenities, such as sports fields, trails, and open spaces. Families that recreate together tend to be closer and more cohesive, and have a greater chance of staying together (California State Parks, 2005). A very important aspect of parks and recreation programs is that children and families can create lasting memories in these spaces. By providing the opportunity to create those special memories, recreation agencies create a positive relationship between people and parks and often encourage future

participation.

[Parks as valuable spaces for families in just green spaces, making memories and rentals for larger occasions]

### Economic Development Economic Growth and Value

Operations and capital spending pertaining to parks and recreation created \$2,834,173,626 in economic activity, and supported 22,411 jobs in Minnesota in 2013 (The Economic Impact..., 2015). Nationally, parks and recreation created nearly \$140 billion in economic impact, added \$68 billion in GDP, and one million jobs. The National Association of Home Builders reports that the presence of parks seriously influences 65% of home-buyers. A 2001 study conducted by the National Association of Realtors found that 50% of survey respondents would be more likely to choose a neighborhood near parks or open spaces, and are willing to pay more to live near a park.

Municipalities with strong parks and recreation systems benefit from improved health and a greater sense of community. This all leads to lower healthcare costs, higher property values, and increased standard of living. Research shows that areas with a

**Highlight**

Local property values around the park ????????

high quality of life attract businesses, as this also attracts and retains high quality workers (Local Government..., 2017). Parks and recreation opportunities can have a major impact on quality of life, as having the chance to engage with parks is crucial to leading a healthy lifestyle

“Beyond the impact of their expenditures, park and recreation agencies generate even more economic value through their promotion of health and wellness, as well as conservation and resiliency that foster higher property values and increase tourism. Most critically, park and recreation amenities are the cornerstones to improving a region’s quality of life, a major factor in enticing employers and workers to an area. The powerful impact parks and recreation has on economic activity, when combined with the ability to deliver healthier and happier communities, highlights the fact that these offerings are not merely a “nice-to-have,” luxury government service. Rather, parks and recreation is a critical aspect of what makes a city, town or county a vibrant and prosperous community.” (source)

[Example of archery tournament, bringing in visitors—concert series, car counter, partnerships]

**Volunteering/Stewardship**

[Master naturalist program] [volunteer opportunities lacking in the city] [value volunteers can add to a city] [recreation can be that avenue to create opportunities, but only with a developed system, people will volunteer where they have fun, and see that their time is of impact]

**Local Businesses/partners**

[Through partnerships, we can reach more people, provide more services, and maintain higher quality facilities than we could do on our own. Strategies 1. Build relationships with organizations and community leaders that help us better reach our target markets. • Develop long-lasting, trusting relationships with new immigrant and racial and ethnic minority group organizations and community leaders. Devote ongoing staff resources to these interactions. • Invest in relationship-building with schools, recreation centers, and youth groups in order to reach youth and young adults. Promote opportunities for field trips, site visits, and summer camps. • Reach out to faith-based organizations as a means to reach our target markets. • Reach out to senior centers and group tour operators in order to maintain visitorship by older adults. • Support interconnections for wildlife watching opportunities (e.g. Minnesota’s birding trails).]-mn DNR

PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES CAN BENEFIT BY PARTNERING WITH THEIR FELLOW PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES IN NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS TO PRESENT A UNIFIED IMAGE OF A DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE (source)

[Pearson family farms, kitchen table, scouts, rum river arts, athletic association] [community pride, supports local]

[Section x will talk more about partnerships] [Importance of partnerships within Ramsey]

[Talk about tournaments ARAA]

### Encourages Investment

Opportunities for outdoor recreation can attract new business and talented workers and help keep established businesses competitive. Small business owners have cited quality of life as a key reason for choosing a location (Crompton, Love & Moore, 2007). High quality of life makes it easier for businesses to attract and maintain a highly educated professional workforce and has been shown in at least one instance to be a bigger draw than a favorable business climate (Crompton, 2007a). Park, recreation, and open space amenities are among the most important components of quality of life. Furthermore, providing and promoting quality outdoor recreational opportunities can be a more sustainable way of attracting and retaining businesses than offering tax or other cash incentives. Companies that relocate to an area for tax incentives alone will likely continue seeking out other tax incentives and move on when they are able. High-quality outdoor recreational opportunities cannot be so easily replaced (Minnesota Legacy).

### Property Values

As a general guideline, researchers have found nearby parkland increases home values 5%-15%, depending upon proximity and quality of the park. Trails have a similar effect: researchers estimate homeowners are willing to pay an additional \$4,000-\$9,000 to be located within a thousand feet of a trail. Minnesotans value open space, leading a Wilder Research analysis to conclude:



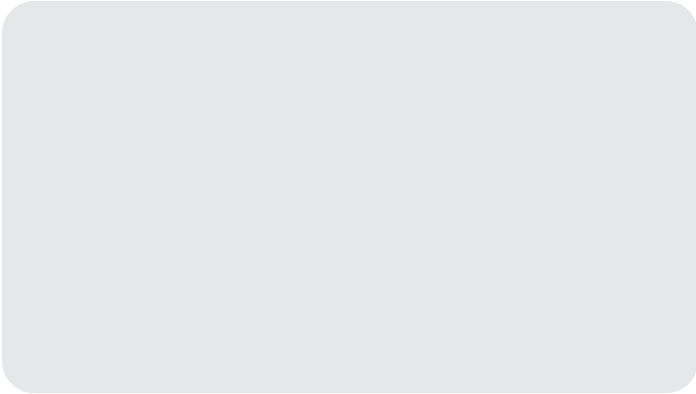
Figure 1.16 Green infrastructure



Figure 1.15 Green infrastructure



“the additional future tax revenues generated by residential properties near an open space may be sufficient to pay the debt service on funds borrowed to acquire and/or develop a park.” Overall, the message is clear: Minnesota’s economy benefits when we invest in parks and trails (MN Parks & Trails).





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